

An Introduction to the Books of the Bible

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The purpose of this material is to help develop a better sense of the chronological and theological flow of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. A comfortable understanding of the *Big Picture* that this overview is designed to facilitate will help each of us to better understand the particular events and teachings we encounter in Bible study. Please set aside time to study this overview, because with a small, consistent expenditure of time, the things covered in this class can significantly improve the quality of our overall studies of the Scripture.

A SYSTEMATIC, CHRONOLOGICAL APPROACH TO BIBLE STUDY

Introduction

- A typical Bible student can readily give accurate information about Moses, Abraham, Joseph, Daniel, the Flood, the Exodus, and the birth of Jesus.
- However, understanding how those individuals and events fit into the complete picture of God's revelation is often another matter entirely.
- The "why" of persons and events is a major part of Bible study that often goes neglected and unappreciated.
- Mature Bible study must take into account such consideration as overview, perspective, context, and progressive, systematic development.
- Before this can be done, the systematic way in which the Bible message is unfolded must be clearly understood and allowed to direct our study of the Scriptures.
- We must learn to think developmentally about the Bible and its application to life.

The Basic Blocks of the Bible's Story and Their Emphasis

- Genesis (the book of universal, chaps. 1-11, and Jewish, chaps. 12-50 beginnings).
- Exodus – Deuteronomy (with Genesis, the remainder of the Torah, the Law of Moses).
- Joshua -- Esther (the Historical development of the Old Testament from the entrance into the Promised Land to the Return from Babylonian Captivity).
- Job, and Proverbs – Song of Solomon (the Wisdom Literature of Israel).
- Psalms (the song book of Israel).
- The Writing Prophets (the interpretation of God's plan and Man's condition).
- Matthew – John (the life of Jesus).
- Acts (salvation).
- Romans – Jude (Christian Living).
- Revelation (ultimate hope for the faithful).

The Old Testament Pattern of History (Genesis – Esther)

- The Book of Genesis
 - The universal foundation (Genesis 1-11).
 - The origin of sin and its consequences.

- God's plan begins moving toward redemption.
 - The foundation for the Jews (Genesis 12-50).
 - God' selects a man, Abraham that will become a nation.
 - Israel will be used as the people God works with to bring the Messiah.
- Exodus – Numbers
 - The formation of the Jewish nation.
 - The initial giving of the law (teaching) for the Jews and their struggles in the wilderness.
- Deuteronomy
 - The explanation of the law for the religious and civil practices of the Jews (Cf. Deut. 1:5).
 - The application of God's teaching to the nation of Israel living in the Promised Land.
 - An emphasis on the trust and heartfelt service that was required in acceptable obedience to God's teachings
 - The most influential book of the Law of Moses.
- Joshua 1:1 – Judges 3:11, the conquest of Canaan.
 - The Promised Land is conquered.
 - God kept all His promises, but the people failed to receive all the benefit because of unbelief and idolatry.
- Judges 3:12 0 I Sam. 12:25, the period of the Judges.
 - A time of disunity and weakness.
 - The pagan influences from an incomplete conquest led to a severe weakening of Israel.
- I Sam. 13:1 – I Kings 11:43; I Chron. 10:1 – II Chron, 9:31, the United Kingdom.
 - The rise and fall of a united nation.
 - Sin is seen living in the midst of faith and weakening the vitality of a nation that had grown strong.
- I Kings 12:1 – II Kings 18:12; II Chron. 10:1-28:27, the divided kingdom.
 - A remnant left for David in Judah.
 - The majority goes the way of false worship in a rival kingdom to the north.
- II Kings 18:13-25:7; II Chron. 29:1-36:21, Judah alone.
 - The Davidic remnant is given a final chance.
 - Failure leads to captivity.
- II Kings 24:1-25:30; II Chron. 36:6-23, Babylonian Captivity.
 - A nation is taken away because of her sins.
 - Only a remnant would return.
- Ezra 1-6; Esther 1-10; Ezra 7-10; Nehemiah 1-12, a return for a remnant, an ever growing dispersion for the many.
 - Three stages of return become possible as Persia conquers Babylon.
 - Most elect to remain in foreign locations.
 - The religion of Moses enters a period of alteration that will lead to a distinctly different entity – Judaism, the religion of the rabbis.

The Place of Poetry and Wisdom Literature (Job – Song of Solomon)

- With Job this literature probably goes back to the times of Abraham and with certain of the Psalms reaches to the return from captivity.
- The majority of the literature of this section is from the time of David and Solomon.

- Certain themes are stressed: Faith, Reverence, Praise and Practical applications of truth to everyday life are the most commonly encountered.
 - Job seems to date from the time of the patriarchs and stresses the need to trust God even when we cannot understand why certain things happen.
 - Psalms – Most of the Psalms fit into the period of David’s life, and should be read in relation to the events of that dynamic era. Seventy Psalms in all are ascribed to David, with fourteen entitled so as to identify certain specific occurrences; the remaining eighty are from a variety of authors.
 - Psalm 90 is the oldest, having Moses as its author.
 - Asaph, the Levite choir leader in the time of David, wrote Psalms 50 and 73–83.
 - Psalms 42-49, 84-85 and 87-88 were composed by the sons of Korah, the Levite choir director, and range from the time of David to the Babylonian captivity. Information concerning these choirs supplied by I Chronicles 6:31-44, 16:5, and 2 Chronicles 29:30.
 - Ethan, probably the Jeduthan who founded the remaining Levite choir, composed psalm 89.
 - The wise Solomon composed Psalms 72 and 127.
 - The remainder of the Psalms are untitled, though some fit certain stages of Old Testament history.
 - Psalm 137 is from the Babylonian exile period.
 - Psalms 107 and 126 are from the time of the return from Babylonian captivity.
 - Psalm 147 is from the time of Nehemiah.
 - The other untitled Psalms could perhaps best be read as independent devotional material.
 - Song of Solomon. - This is from Solomon’s early life, prior to the corrupting influences of sin. A picture is seen of his once unspoiled view of love before political ambition took hold and women became mere objects in his life.
 - Proverbs – These wise sayings represent the great ability Solomon had been given by God. They stand as a stark testimony to what might have been. It can best be read in connection with the early and middle portions of his reign to show a contrast with his later mood.
 - Ecclesiastes – Here, Solomon reflects on a life that became vain. As an old man, he finally realizes that greatness is found in service and reverence toward God.

The Writing Prophets (Isaiah – Malachi)

- Obadiah (844) – A burden against Edom for joining with “strangers: in looting the holy city of Jerusalem, Obadiah wrote in the reign of Jehoram (848-842), recorded in 2 Kings 8:20-24 and 2 Chronicles 21:16-20.
- Joel (830) – Joel spoke of Israel’s future punishment and Messianic renewal. He spoke during the time of the minority of king Joash when Jehoida the high priest was the true power behind the throne (835-828), as found in 2 Kings 11,12 and 2 Chronicles 23,24.
- Jonah (762) – Jonah was a reluctant prophet with a successful preaching mission in Nineveh that the prophet deeply resented. His mission was in the reign of Jereboam II (793-753), when Israel enjoyed material peace and prosperity, as is indicated by 2 Kings 14:23-29.

- Amos (760) – An unschooled herdsman and farmer from Judah who spoke out against the sins of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Amos spoke during the reign of Jeroboam II (793-753), as recorded in 2 Kings 14:23-15:7 and 2 Chronicles 26.
- Hosea (760-722) – Hosea’s ministry also began in the reign of Jeroboam II. However, his work extended until just before the fall of Israel in 722. Read Hosea in connection with 2 Kings 15 – 18:12 and 2 Chronicles 26-30.
- Isaiah (740-686) – The decline and fall of Israel, as well as the near fall of Judah, dominate the historical material of this prophet to Judah’s kings. In addition, Isaiah stands out as the “Messianic Prophet” for his frequent visions of the spiritual King and His Kingdom. Read Isaiah along with 2 Kings 15-20 and 2 Chronicles 26-32.
- Micah (735-715) – This contemporary of Isaiah prophesied of the injustices the rich enacted on the poor during the period found in I Kings 15:32-18:12 and 2 Chronicles 27-31.
- Nahum (660) – Nahum wrote of the coming fall of Nineveh, as Assyria’s sins were soon to find her out. Read Nahum along with 2 Kings 21:1-18 and 2 Chronicles 33:1-20.
- Zephaniah (632-627) – This prophet, who was related to the royal family of Judah, spoke out against the wickedness of his people, as found in 2 Kings 22:1-23:30 and 2 Chronicles 34-35. Perhaps Josiah’s reformation of 621 was influenced by Zephaniah’s preaching.
- Jeremiah (627-582) – Jeremiah records the decline and fall of Judah to Babylon. Much is learned of the personal struggles this great prophet faced in his difficult ministry. His great sorrow over Jerusalem’s fall is recorded in Lamentations. Read in connection with 2 Kings 22-25 and 2 Chronicles 34:1-36:21.
- Habakkuk (605) – Habakkuk questioned the judgment of God in using Babylon to punish Judah. God, much as He had done with Job, showed the prophet his mistake. Read along with 2 Kings 23:36-24:7 and 2 Chronicles 34-36:21.
- Daniel (605-536) – Daniel spoke as a captive in Babylon from the court of Babylonian, and later Persian, royalty. His personal encounters and detailed visions of distant historical events give Daniel a unique place among the prophets. Read along with 2 Kings 23:36-25:30 and 2 Chronicles 34-36:21.
- Ezekiel (597-570) – Ezekiel also spoke from captivity. However, he worked among the people and far from a regal setting. The fall and future hope of Jerusalem dominate his writings. Read with 2 Kings 24:8-25:30 and 2 Chronicles 34-36:21.
- Haggai (520) – The rebuilding of the temple by the returned captives is the major emphasis of Haggai. See Ezra 5-6.
- Zechariah (520-475) – Working with Haggai, Zechariah ministered in the era recorded in Ezra 5-6 and beyond. Zechariah is noted for the Messianic revelations of his majestic book.
- Malachi (432) – The last of the Writing Prophets spoke between the governorships of Nehemiah, recorded in Nehemiah 12:27-13:31. He closes with a prediction of the coming of John the Baptist as the man who would renew the office of “prophet” after a silence of over 400 years.

The New Testament Pattern

- The gospels (**Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John**)
 - A transition between the Old and New Testaments is presented as Jesus comes to fulfill the Old (Matt. 5:17) and establish a new kingdom (Lk. 4:32)
 - The identity of God is most clearly revealed in the person of Jesus (John 1:1,14,18; 14:8,9)

- The gospels are the center of the Bible, the place from which all things receive their clearest meaning
- Unless Jesus is understood clearly, the Old Testament and the remainder of the New Testament cannot be properly appreciated
- **Matthew** stresses how Jesus fulfilled the Old Covenant expectations for a Messiah to a Jewish audience
- **Mark** draws attention to the work ethic of the Christ and is addressed to a Roman audience
- **Luke** shows the Jesus' interest in all people, and is addressed to a Greek audience
- **John** deals more with an interpretation of the spiritual nature of Jesus ministry
- **Acts**
 - Acts is the book of transition from the darkness to light, covering selected church history from A.D. 30-62
 - It shows that, when the Christ of the gospels is preached and His atoning death is appreciated (1 Cor. 2:2), good and honest hearts will respond
- **The Letters (Romans – Jude)**
 - Those who have been saved through the Jesus of the gospels are now to be transformed into Christ's image (Rom. 8:29)
 - Christ-likeness is the major emphasis of the epistles (Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:24-29)
 - **Romans** systematically develops the theme of justification through faith, explains why most Jews rejected the gospel, and makes ethical applications from "the faith"
 - **I Corinthians** addresses a number of divisions in the church at Corinth
 - **II Corinthians** deals more with the spiritual growth and Paul's deep love for the church – yet a warning to those who do not repent
 - **Galatians** combats Jewish legalism that threatened to overcome the congregations of Galatia
 - **Ephesians**, written from prison, develops themes that define the spiritual, relationship oriented nature of the church
 - **Philippians**, written from prison, has Paul expressing his boundless joy at being a Christian to a church to which he was particularly close. Philippians contains more personal reflection than in most of the other letters of Paul.
 - **Colossians**, also written from prison, fights ascetic heresies
 - **I Thessalonians** contains Paul's reminders to his readers about his work with them, emphasizing his love-characterized ministry to them, and speaks of his continuing interest in them
 - **II Thessalonians** answers pointed concerns about Christ's Second Coming and issues that have developed in the congregation
 - **I, II Timothy and Titus** are letters to young preachers, giving them very valuable, practical advice
 - **Philemon**, written from prison, is a letter from Paul to Philemon about his runaway slave, Onesimus
 - **Hebrews** warns Jewish Christians not to go back to Judaism
 - **James** is a practical admonition to put faith to work – called the "Proverbs of the New Testament"
 - **I Peter** is a message of encouragement for Christians to stand firm against coming oppression
 - **II Peter** encourages the churches to stand against false teaching and speaks of the coming Judgment Day

- **I, II, III John** encourages walking in the light of Christ and warns Christians not to accept any teaching that does not affirm Jesus came in the flesh
- **Jude** warns against false teachers
- **Revelation**
 - Because Jesus defeated Satan (Gen. 3:15; Rev. 12:9), those faithful to Christ will prevail (Rom. 16:20; Rev. 2:10)
 - The faithful cannot lose!
- **Conclusion**
 - From the first sin to the cross, the Bible develops a plan for man's restoration
 - The cross brings forgiveness in Jesus' blood
 - From the cross to the close of the New Testament, the challenge is given to obey the gospel and to be transformed into Jesus' image

A Chronology of the Old and New Testaments

The Old Testament

Event	Date
Terah born (Gen. 11:32; 12:4; Acts 7:4)	2291
Abraham born (Gen. 21:5)	2166
Abraham enters Canaan (Gen. 12:4)	2091
Ishmael born (Gen. 16:16)	2080
Isaac born (Gen. 25:26)	2066
Sarah dies (Gen. 23:1)	2029
Isaac marries Gen. 25:20)	2026
Jacob and Esau born (Gen. 47:9)	2006
Abraham dies (Gen. 25:7)	1991
Jacob to Haran (Gen. 30:24-26; 31:41)	1929
Joseph born (Gen. 50:22)	1915
Jacob returns to Canaan (Gen. 31:41)	1909
Joseph to Egypt (Gen. 37:2)	1898
Isaac dies (Gen. 35:28)	1886
Joseph elevated (Gen. 41:54; 45:11)	1885
Jacob to Egypt (Ex. 12:40)	1876
Jacob dies (Gen. 47:28)	1859
Joseph dies (Gen. 50:20)	1805
Hyksos enter Delta (Hammurabi in Babylon 1792-1750)	1780
Hyksos dynasty	1710 – 1570
Moses born (Ex. 2:2)	1527
Thutmose III	1590 - 1450
Moses to Midian (Acts 7:23)	1487
Amenhotep II	1450– 1425
Moses return to Egypt (Ex. 7:7; Acts 7:30)	1447
Exodus	April 1446

Wilderness

Arrival at Sinai	1446
Tabernacle (Ex. 40:17)	March/April 1445
First numbering (Num. 1:2)	April / May 1445
Departure from Sinai (Num. 10:12)	May 1445
Arrival at Kadesh (Num. 13:26)	August 1445
Final departure from Kadesh and death of Aaron (Num. 33:37)	July / August 1407
Moses' address (Deut. 1:3)	February/March 1406

Conquest

Jordan crossed (Josh. 4:19; 5:6, 10)	April 1406
Division of Canaan (Josh. 14:7, 10)	
1400	
Death of Joshua (Josh. 24:29)	c. 1390
Death of surviving elders (Josh. 24:31)	c. 1375

Judges (Exact dating impossible)

Mesopotamian Oppression (Jud. 3:8)	1375 – 1367
Othniel (Akhenaten, Egypt 1367 – 1350)	1367 – 1327
Eglon	1327 – 1309
Ehud (Raamses II 1290 – 1224)	1309 – 1229
Jabin (Merenptah 1224 – 1214 c. 1220 "Israel Stele")	1229 – 1209
Deborah	1209 – 1169
Midian	1169 – 1162
Gideon	1162 – 1122
Abimelech	1122 – 1119
Tola & Jair	1119 – 1096
Eli	1116 – 1076
Ammonites	1096 – 1078
Jephthah	1078 – 1072
Ibzan, Elon, Abdon	1072 – 1062
Philistines	1091 – 1051

United Kingdom

Saul (Israel and Judah)	1051 – 1011
David's first anointing	c. 1025
Goliath killed	c. 1020
Ish-Bosheth (Israel)	1005 – 1003
David (Judah)	1010 – 1003
David (Israel and Judah)	1003 – 971
Absalom revolts	c. 979
Solomon	971 – 931
Temple completed	960
Rezon of Syria	955 – 925
Shishak of Egypt	950 – 929

Judah

Rehoboam
931 – 913
Abijam
913 – 910
Asa
910 – 869
Jehoshaphat
872 – 842
Joram
848 – 841
Ahaziah
841
Ataliah
841 – 835
Joash
835 – 796
Amaziah
796 – 767
Uzziah
791 – 740
Jotham
750 – 732
Ahaz
742 – 726
Hezekiah
726 – 696

Manasseh
696 – 642
Amon
642 – 640
Josiah
640 – 609

Israel

Jeroboam
931 – 910
Nadab
910 – 909
Baasha
909 – 886
Elah
886 – 885
Zimri
885
Omri
885 – 881
Ahab
874 – 853
Ahaziah
853 – 852
Joram
852 – 841
Jehu
841 – 814
Jehoahaz
814 – 798
Jehoash
798 – 782
Jeroboam II
793 – 753
Zechariah
753
Shallum
752
Menahem
752 – 741
Pekahiah
741 – 739
Pekah
739 – 731
Hoshea
731 – 722
Israel falls
722

Prophets

Elijah
874 – 841
Obadiah
844

Jonah
782 – 753
Amos
765
Hosea
760 – 725

Isaiah
740 – 690
Micah
730 – 700
Nahum
660

Zephaniah
640 – 621

Surrounding Nations

Osorkon I of Egypt
929 – 893

Benhadad of Syria
860 – 843
Hazael of Syria
843 – 791

Benhadad III of Syria
796 – 770

Tilgath-Pileser of Assyria
745 - 727
Rezin of Syria
750 – 732
Shalmaneser V of Assyria
727 – 722
Nubians Conquer Egypt
725
Sargon II of Assyria
722 – 705
Sennacherib of Assyria
704 – 681
Esarhaddon of Assyria
681 – 668
Psamtic of Egypt
633 – 609

Jehoahaz
609
Jehoiakim
609 – 598
1st captivity of Judah
605 (Daniel taken)
Jehoiachin
598 – 597
2nd captivity of Judah
597 (Ezekiel taken)
Zedekiah
597 – 586
3rd captivity of Judah
(Jerusalem and temple fall)
586

First return from Babylonian captivity
538 (Zerubbabel and Jeshua leaders)

Temple rebuilt
515

Esther chosen
476

Ezra leads second return
457

Jeremiah
626 – 585
Habakkuk
612 – 606
Daniel
605 – 534
Ezekiel
593 – 571

Zechariah
520
Haggai
520

Malachi
c. 460

Assyria falls to Babylon
626 – 609
Necho of Egypt
609 – 593
Nebuchadnezzar
605 – 562
Psamtic of Egypt
593 – 588
Hophra of Egypt
588 – 569
Awel-Marduk of Babylon
562 – 560
Cyrus of Persia
559 – 530
Neriglissar of Babylon
560 – 556
Labosarchad of Babylon
556
Nabonidus of Babylon
556 – 539
Belshazzar of Babylon
549 – 539
Babylon falls to Persia
539
Cambyses of Persia
530 – 522
Egypt falls to Persia
525
Smerdia of Persia
522
Darius I of Persia
522 – 486

Artaxerxes
494 – 425
Battle of Marathon
490
Xerxes I
486 – 465
Socrates
470 – 399

Nehemiah leads third return
444

Darius
424 – 404
Plato
428 – 348
Artaxerxes II
404 – 359
Aristotle
384 – 322
Philip of Macedon
359 – 336
Alexander the Great
336 – 323
Persia falls to Greece
332
Greek empire divides into 4 parts
I Punic War
264 – 242 (Rome and Carthage)
II Punic War
218 – 202

Septuagint written
c. 250
Maccabaen Revolt
167 (Temple desecrated 171)
Judas
166 – 161 (Temple cleansed 164)
Jonathan
160 – 143 (III Punic War)
Simon
143 – 135
John
135 – 104

Antiochus IV
175 - 163

Aristobulus I
104 – 103
Alexander
104 – 76

Division
76 – 63
Pompey conquers Judah
63

Herod the Great
40 – 4

Birth of Christ
6 – 4

The New Testament

Conversion of Paul	36
Death of James son of Zebedee	41
Death of Herod Agrippa I	44
Famine under Claudius	44 – 48
Epistle of James	before 50
First missionary journey	47 – 48
Apostolic Council	49
Edict of Claudius	49
Proconsulship of Sergius Paulus	before 51
Second missionary journey	49 – 51
1 and 2 Thessalonians from Corinth	50
Proconsulship of Gallio	51 / 52
Third missionary journey	51 – 54
Paul in Ephesus	52 – 53
I Corinthians and Galatians from Ephesus	52 – 53
II Corinthians from Macedonia	early 54
Romans from Corinth	early 54
Arrest of Paul in Jerusalem	54
Accession of Festus	56
First Roman imprisonment of Paul	57 – 59
Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon from Rome	58
Philippians from Rome	59
Release of Paul and journeys in East and West	59 – 67
Death of James the Just	62
I Timothy and Titus from Macedonia	62 – 63
1 and 2 Peter from Rome	before 64
Death of Peter in Rome	65
2 Timothy from Rome	67
Death of Paul in Rome	67
Synoptic Gospels, Acts, Jude, and Hebrews	before 70
Fourth Gospel, Revelation, Epistles of John from Ephesus	before 70
Death of John	98 – 100

A Chronology of the Holy Land (171 BC-AD 135)

171 BC	Temple Desecrated (Antiochus IV)
167-168	Offerings Forbidden
167-161	Maccabean Revolt
165	Dedication of Temple
163/62	Peace Treaty with Syria
162/61	Peace Treaty with Rome
160-142	Development of an Independent Jewish State
142	Beginning of the Independent State
63	Rome gains control of Judea (Pompey)
60-53	First Triumvirate (Pompey, Crassus, Julius)
51	Crassus Killed

48	Pompey Defeated
45-44	Julius as Dictator
43-36	Second Triumvirate (Antony, Lepidus, Octavian)
37-4	Herod the Great is King of Judea
27 BC-AD 14	Octavian (Augustus) becomes first Emperor
20/19 BC	Herod begins to refurbish the Temple
AD 66-74	First Jewish Revolt
70	Jerusalem Falls
74	Massada Falls
132-135	Second Jewish Revolt (Bar Kochba)

An Overview of the Bible

The Torah Genesis through Deuteronomy

THE TORAH PRINCIPLE

There is a principle we might call the “Torah Principle” that makes a major contribution toward a full understanding of the Bible. The basic law for the Jews is found in the Torah of Moses. In these first five books of the Jewish scriptures the children of Israel found their law code. However, the word “law” in English translations is deceptive.

The word in Hebrew is torah. Torah means, “instruction” or “teaching.” Therefore, while case law is certainly included in the definition, the whole of the Torah of Moses is torah. The many stories of Genesis and the other books of the torah are all instruction. They show us the prevailing law in action as well as reveal the dynamic of God working with people who are under a particular teaching. In these things we learn much about how to deal with rules as we see them lived out by real people. In other words, we get a feel for implementation as we observe God taking all the applicable factors into consideration and then acting. God is in this method both showing and telling. Later, Jesus would be the greatest example of this principle by coming as one of us (Jn. 1:14) to model the behavior that brought to life the rules that God had given for human conduct (Jn. 14:8-9; Acts 1:1).

UNIVERSAL BEGINNINGS

Genesis 1-11

1. The Creation: Preparing A place For Man (1-2).
 - a. Man in God’s image (1:1-2:4).
 - b. Man made from the earth (2:4-25).
2. Sin: Separation And Death (3).
 - a. An appeal to pride (3:1-7).
 - b. Consequences—alienation from: God, self, others, and the environment (3:8-24).
 - c. Hope—the *Seed Promise* (3:15; cf. 22:18; 49:10; II Sam. 7:12-16; Acts 2:30).
3. Early Life Outside The Garden—Sin Continues (4:1-6:9).

4. Noah And The Great Flood—Further Consequences (6:10-9:17).
5. Continued Sinning—Additional Consequences (9:18-11:32).

JEWISH BEGINNINGS

Genesis 12-Deuteronomy 34

1. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—The Promise (12:1-3; 15:1-21; 22:1-19; 26:1-5; 28:10-14; Ex. 3:13-15; 6:1-8).
2. The Egyptian Sojourn—Growth Of A Nation (Gen. 37-Ex. 13).
3. The Exodus And Wilderness Wandering—Molding Of A Nation (Ex. 14-Num. 36).
 - a. Deliverance (Ex. 14-15).
 - b. Disappointments—Failures Of Faith (16:1-3; 17:1-3; Num. 13:1-14:45; 16; 20:1-13; 25).
 - c. Law/Instruction (Ex. 20-Lev. 27; Num. 3-10; 15; 18-19; 28-30; 34-36).
4. Interpretation And Application Of The Law (Deut. 1-34).
 - a. Reminders of Wilderness failures and admonitions (1-4; esp. 1:5).
 - b. The nature of covenant faith and loyalty (5-28; esp. 4:7-10; 6:4-9; 10:12).
 - c. Reemphasis of the demands of covenant (29-30; esp. 29:22-29; 30:6, 11-20).
 - d. Moses' last acts and his death (31-34; esp. 31:6; 32:46-47).

The Torah covers a considerable amount of extremely valuable, foundational material. The main themes cover:

1. Creation And Its Purpose.
2. Man's Nature—Eternal And Spiritual; Temporal And Of The Earth.
3. Sin And Its Consequences.
4. God's Plan For Redemption—The Seed Promise.
5. Abraham, Isaac, And Jacob—The Promise.
6. The Development Of The Jewish Nation Prior To The Promised Land.

In these Universal and Jewish beginnings we have reference points that are indispensable for making sense out of the rest of the Scriptures. Additionally, the Torah acquaints us with many insights into the nature of God and how He works with mankind.

Conquest and Judges

Joshua 1:1-I Samuel 12:25

DIFFICULT TIMES

The Conquest of the Promised Land was not one success after another. Jericho was followed by Ai (Josh. 7). The taking of the biggest part of Canaan stood as a failure, not a victory (Josh. 13:1-6; 23:8-13). But at least there were mostly high points in the time of conquest—the time of the Judges was by far mostly negative. Indeed, the time before the establishment of the monarchy was difficult.

The Conquest and division of Canaan

Joshua 1:1-Judges 3:6

1. A Charge From God (1).
2. Spies Sent To Jericho (2).
3. A Beachhead In West Jordan (3-6).
 - a. Jordan crossed and a memorial erected (3-4).
 - b. Israel circumcised (5).
 - c. Jericho (6).
4. Conquests In Central Palestine (7-9).
 - a. Ai (7-8).
 - b. A Foolish Covenant With Gibeon (9).
5. Conquests In Southern Palestine (10).
 - a. The sun stands still.
 - b. Five kings captured.
6. Northern Conquests At Hazor (11:1-15).
7. Summary Of Conquests (11:16-12:24).
8. The Unconquered Territory (13:1-6).
9. East Jordan Lands Divided (13:7-33).
10. West Jordan Lands Divided (14-19).
11. Cities Of Refuge (20).
12. Levitical Cities (21:1-42).
13. A Summary Of God's Faithfulness (21:43-45).
14. East Jordan Tribes Released From Their Commitment (22:1-34).
15. Joshua's Farewell Statements (23:1-24:28).
16. The Burial Of Joshua, Joseph, And Eleazar (24:29-33).
17. A Reflection On The Conquest—Successes And Failures (Jud. 1:1-3:6).

The period of Judges Judges 3:7-I Samuel 12:25

1. Othniel (3:7-11).
2. Ehud (3:12-30).
3. Shamgar (3:31).
4. Deborah and Barak (4-5).
5. Gideon (6-8).
6. Abimelech (9).
7. Tola (10:1-2).
8. Jair (10:3-5).
9. Jephthah (10:6-12:7).
10. Ibzan (12:8-10).
11. Elon (12:11-12).
12. Abdon (12:13-15).
13. Samson (13-16).
14. Micah's Household And The Migration Of The Danites (17-18).
15. The Sin Of The Benjamites And Their Punishment (19-21).
16. Samuel (I Samuel 1:1-12:25).

The Conquest of Canaan showed a disappointing glimpse of what might have been true if only the people had followed through with their God-given opportunity. Israel let comfort overrule faith and suffered for it the remainder of their existence. In the time of the Judges,

removed from Joshua's influence, things went down hill fast. Joshua and the elders that served with him kept things from unraveling. When they died, "every man did what was right in his own eyes." Needless to say, disaster followed. It was not until another strong and godly man arose, Samuel, that the nation began to pull together and make some positive strides. Even Samuel, however, could accomplish but so much. As is always the case, so it was in Samuel's day, ultimate success is only possible when people turn to God with a full heart.

The United Kingdom, Part I

I Samuel 13:1-I Kings 11:43; I Chronicles 1:1-II Chronicles 9:31

The time of the United Kingdom went from very humble beginnings under Saul to the Golden Age of David and Solomon. As a united kingdom Israel grew in power, wealth, and prestige. The religious institutions envisioned in the Law of Moses also reached their full implementation in this era. And yet, prosperity proved to be the undoing of the nation. The high cost of "prosperity" caught up with God's people.

The reign of Saul

I Samuel 13:1-31:13

1. Victories For The Nation, But Personal Failures For Saul (13:1-15:35).
 - a. Saul fails to wait for Samuel (13:1-15a).
 - b. Philistines defeated at Michmash (13:15b-14:46).
 - c. Surrounding nations defeated (14:47-52).
 - d. The failure of the victory over the Amalekites (15:1-35).
2. Saul And David (16:1-26:25).
 - a. The rise of David (16:1-17:58).
 - b. Saul seeks to trap David (18:1-19:24).
 - c. David and Jonathan's friendship (20:1-42).
 - d. David flees Saul (21:1-22:23).
 - e. Saul pursues David (23:1-26:25).
3. The Conflict Between Israel And The Philistines (27:1-31:13).
 - a. David finds refuge among the Philistines (27:1-28:2).
 - b. Saul and the witch of Endor (28:3-25).
 - c. David recovers his possessions (29:1-30:31).
 - d. The death of Saul (31:1-13).

The reign of David

II Samuel 1:1-24:25-I Kings 2:12; I Chronicles 1:1-29:30

1. David As King Of Judah And Genealogical Backgrounds (II Sam. 1:1-4:12; I Chron. 1:1-10:14).
2. David Develops A Strong Military And Jerusalem Becomes The National Capital And Center Of Religion (II Sam. 5:1-7:29; I Chron. 11:1-17:27).
3. Israel Prospers Under David (II Sam. 8:1-10:18; 21:1-22:51; I Chron. 18:1-20:8).
4. The Sins Of David And His Family (II Sam. 11:1-20:26).
 - a. David's sins and repentance (11:1-12:31).
 - b. Amnon's sin and the results (13:1-36).
 - c. Absalom's rebellion and defeat (13:37-18:33).
 - d. David recovers his throne (19:1-20:26).

5. David's Preparations For The Future And His Death (II Sam. 23:1-I Kings 2:12; I Chron. 21:1-29:30).
 - a. The sin of numbering the people (II Sam. 24:1-25; I Chron. 21:1-27).
 - b. Solomon charged to build the temple (I Chron. 21:28-22:19).
 - c. Duties of Levites and civil servants (I Chron. 23:1-27:34).
 - d. Charge to the people and officials (I Chron. 28:1-29:22).
 - e. Last words and death of David, and the tumultuous transition to Solomon (II Sam. 23:1-7; I Kings 1:1-2:12; I Chron. 29:22-30).

The reign of Solomon

I Kings 1:1-11:43; II Chronicles 1:1-9:31

1. Solomon Established As King (I Kings 1:1-4:34; II Chron. 1:1-17).
 - a. Solomon emerges from struggle to be the king (I Kings 1:1-2:46).
 - b. Solomon's prays for wisdom (3:1-4:34).
 - c. Prosperity (II Chron. 1:14-17).
2. Solomon Builds The Temple (I Kings 5:1-9:25; II Chron. 2:1-8:16).
3. International Relations (I Kings 9:26-10:29; II Chron. 8:17-9:31).
4. Apostasy And Death (I Kings 11:1-43).

Truly the period of the United Kingdom was in many ways the best of times in the history of Israel. Prosperity, however, was not handled well. The seeds of division were sowed through giving attention to things "under the sun" rather than to God.

The United Kingdom, Part II

Various Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and The Song of Solomon

VARIOUS PSALMS

1. Seventy Psalms in all are ascribed to David, with fourteen entitled so as to identify certain specific occurrences: Psalm 59 and I Samuel 19:11; Psalm 56 and I Samuel 21:10; Psalm 34 and I Samuel 21:13; Psalm 142 and I Samuel 22:1; Psalm 52 and I Samuel 22:9; Psalm 54 and I Samuel 23:13; Psalm 57 and I Samuel 24:1; Psalm 7 and I Samuel 24:11,12; Psalm 60 and II Samuel 3:13,14; Psalm 18 and II Samuel 7:1; Psalm 51 and II Samuel 12:13,14; Psalm 3 and II Samuel 15:16; Psalm 63 and II Samuel 16:2; Psalm 30 and II Samuel 24:1-17; I Chronicles 21:11-22:1.
2. The remaining 56 Psalms from David's pen can be read to gain insight into the nature of the godly king, and often to better understand the coming of the Messiah.
3. Psalms 50 and 73-83 were written by Asaph, the Levite choir leader in the time of David.
4. Psalms 42-49, 84-85 and 87-88 were composed by the sons of Korah, the Levite choir director, and may range from the time of David to the Babylonian captivity. Information concerning these choirs supplied by I Chronicles 6:31-44, 16:5, and 2 Chronicles 29:30.

5. Psalm 89 was composed by Ethan, probably the Jeduthan who founded the remaining Levite choir.
6. Psalms 72 and 127 were composed by the wise Solomon.

WISDOM LITERATURE

1. Song Of Solomon is from the earlier days of Solomon's reign before he had come to see women as mere objects to display his great power. The book is a very beautiful story depicting the engaging story of love between a man and a woman.
2. Proverbs is a collection of wise sayings that represent the great ability Solomon had been given by God. They stand as a stark testimony to what might have been. They can best be read in connection with the early and middle portions of his reign to show a contrast with his later mood.
3. Ecclesiastes finds Solomon reflecting on a life that became vain. As an old man, he finally realizes that greatness is found in service and reverence toward God and not in the things "under the sun."
4. Job though most likely written in time closer to Abraham is also thought to come from the era of the United Kingdom. The book shows how we are to trust God even when we cannot understand our circumstances.

The Time of the United Kingdom was a time when some of the most powerful literature in the entire world's history was composed. The wide range of human thought finds representation in these enduring works.

The Divided Kingdom

I Kings 12:1-II Kings 18:12; II Chronicles 10:1-28:27

Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah

At the death of Solomon in 931 B.C. the nation of Israel divided into two kingdoms until 722 B.C.—Israel to the north with ten tribes, Judah to the south with two tribes. The dynasty of David ruled over Judah while in Israel there were nine different ruling families. During this period of history there were many problems. Paradoxically, however, when the nations prospered materially they grew further away from God.

It is in the period of the divided kingdom that the activity of the Writing Prophets begins. These prophets addressed the failures of the people and called them to repentance. In their writings we get a great insight into God's view of the various activities of humankind.

The division under Rehoboam and Jereboam

I Kings 12:1-14:31; II Chronicles 10:1-13:3-21

1. The Division Of The Kingdom (I Kg. 12:1-24; II Chron. 10:1-11:4).
2. Jereboam Changes The Worship Of Israel And Suffers Consequences (I Kg. 12:25-14:20).
3. The Activities of Rehoboam (II Chron. 11:1-12:16; I Kg. 14:21-31).
4. Jeroboam falls (II Chron. 13:3-21).

VARIOUS KINGS

I Kings 15:1-II Kings 18:12; II Chronicles 13:1-2; 22-28:27

1. Significant Events Of The Period.
 - a. Asa's reforms (II Chron. 15:1-19).
 - b. Omri's evil reign sets Israel on a deadly course (I Kgs 16:21-28).
 - c. Ahab Builds on his father Omri's evil deeds and struggles with Elijah and other prophets of God (I Kg. 16:29-22:39; II Chron. 18:1-34).
 - d. Jehoshaphat's good reign over Judah (II Kg. 22:1-50; II Chron. 17:1-22:50).
 - e. Elijah is taken up and Elisha takes over his ministry (II Kg. 2:1-8:15).
 - f. Jehu's bloody discharge of God's judgment against the house of Ahab (II Kg. 9:1-10:36; II Chron. 22:7, 9).
 - g. The prosperity of Uzziah of Judah and Jereboam II of Israel (II Kg. 14:1-15:7; II Chron. 26:1-23).
 - h. The fall of Israel (II Kg. 17:1-18:12).
2. During the time of the Divided Kingdom there were no positive developments in Israel, only in Judah. Additionally, we see God's hand in preserving the dynasty of David in the Southern Kingdom, while the apostate Northern Kingdom suffered through nine different royal families.

Writing prophets of the divided kingdom

Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah1.

1. Obadiah (844) – A burden against Edom for joining with “strangers: in looting the holy city of Jerusalem, Obadiah wrote in the reign of Jehoram (848-842), recorded in 2 Kings 8:20-24 and 2 Chronicles 21:16-20.
2. Joel (830) – Joel spoke of Israel's future punishment and Messianic renewal. He spoke during the time of the minority king Joash when Jehoida the high priest was the true power behind the throne (835-828), as found in 2 Kings 11,12 and 2 Chronicles 23,24:3.
3. Jonah (762) – Jonah was a reluctant prophet with a successful preaching mission in Nineveh that the prophet deeply resented. His mission was in the reign of Jereboam II (793-753), when Israel enjoyed material peace and prosperity, as is indicated by 2 Kings 14:23-29:4.
4. Amos (760) – An unschooled herdsman and farmer from Judah who spoke out against the sins of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Amos spoke during the reign of Jeroboam II (793-753), as recorded in 2 Kings 14:23-15:7 and 2 Chronicles 26:5.
5. Hosea (760-722) – Hosea's ministry also began in the reign of Jeroboam II. However, his work extended until just before the fall of Israel in 722. Read Hosea in connection with 2 Kings 15 – 18:12 and 2 Chronicles 26-30.

6. Isaiah (740-686) – The decline and fall of Israel, as well as the near fall of Judah, dominate the historical material of this prophet to Judah's kings. In addition, Isaiah stands out as the "Messianic Prophet" for his frequent visions of the spiritual King and His Kingdom. Read Isaiah along with 2 Kings 15-20 and 2 Chronicles 26-32.
7. Micah (735-715) – This contemporary of Isaiah prophesied of the injustices the rich enacted on the poor during the period found in I Kings 15:32-18:12 and 2 Chronicles 27-31.

To say the least, the period of the Divided Kingdom was one encompassing many important events and notable people. In all the ups and downs of the time we do nevertheless see God's hand preserving a remnant of His people.

The Kingdom Of Judah And Captivity, Part I

II Kings 18:13-25:30; II Chronicles 29:1-36:21

Isaiah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Daniel, Ezekiel

At the beginning of this era Judah was barely able to survive the Assyrian threat that took Israel captive. As a small kingdom Judah managed to survive some 150 years before falling to Babylonian captivity. The fall of Jerusalem to Babylon was a terrible event both in terms of human suffering and in its theological importance. The prophetic activity associated with this time is of greatest significance, each of the Major Prophets making an important contribution.

JUDAH ALONE

II Kings 18:13-23:33; II Chronicles 29:1-36:3

1. Hezekiah's Reign And Reformation (II Kg. 18:13-20:21; II Chron. 29-32).
 - a. Folly that would later lead to destruction.
 - b. A sincere repentance.
2. Manasseh—Idolatry And Reform (II Kg. 21:1-18; II Chron. 33:1-20).
 - a. Too little too late.
 - b. An influence on his son that could not be erased.
3. Amon—Apostasy (II Kg. 21:18-26; II Chron. 33:20-25).
4. Josiah—Judah's Most Godly King (II Kg. 22:1-23:30; II Chron. 34:1-35:27).
 - a. A restoration movement.
 - b. A last opportunity for Judah to turn from sin.
5. Jehoahaz—A Brief Time Of Independence (II Kg. 23:31-33; II Chron. 36:1-3).

The Babylonian captivity, part I

II Kings 23:33-25:30; II Chron. 36:4-21

1. Jehoiakim—Removed To Babylon Along With Members Of The Royal Family (II Kg. 23:33-24:6; II Chron. 36:4-8).
2. Jehoiachin—He And Many Jews Removed To Babylon (II Kg. 24:6-17; II Chron. 36:8-10).
3. Zedekiah—The Last Earthly King For Judah (II Kg. 24:17-25:7; II Chron. 36:10-17).
4. The Fall Of Jerusalem And Final Stage Of Captivity (II Kg. 25:7-30; II Chron. 36:17-23).

The history of the decline and fall of Judah leading to the Babylonian Captivity was a time of missed opportunity and eventual destruction. Warning upon warning that Judah would fall

seemed to fall on deaf ears. Neither gallant prophets nor courageous kings could prevent the judgment due an unfaithful people. Even the Holy City, Jerusalem, could not stand if the people would not themselves be holy.

The Kingdom Of Judah and Captivity, Part II

II Kings 18:13-25:30; II Chronicles 29:1-36:21

Isaiah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Daniel, Ezekiel

ISAIAH

1. Isaiah served as a prophet in the Divided Kingdom era as well as that of Judah Alone.
2. Isaiah chapters 36-39 point to a future Babylonian threat (39:1-8).
3. The remainder of Isaiah deals with the coming Babylonian destruction of Judah, a return from captivity, and the coming Messiah.
4. Babylon would conquer Judah, but God would raise up Cyrus to free her from bondage (44:28).
5. Jesus would come to bring true freedom—freedom from sin (52:13-53:12).

NAHUM

1. Judah's old enemy, Assyria, would fall as to a flood (1:7-8).
2. In 612 Nineveh fell to Babylon.
3. What repentance had prevented in the days of Jonah, sin allowed later (3:18-19).

ZEPHANIAH

1. Writing before the captivity of Judah, Zephaniah writes of Judah's coming destruction (1:1-4, 12; 2:1-3; 3:1-2).
2. But a remnant would be saved (3:12-13, 20; cf. Rom. 2:28-29; 9:27).

JEREMIAH

1. Jeremiah shared in the reforms of Josiah as well as the fall of Judah (1:1-2; cf. II Kg. 22-23; Jer. 39:1-14).
2. Jeremiah details the reasons for the fall of Judah (6:9-17; 7:1-11).
3. Jeremiah also gives attention to the coming Messiah and the New Covenant He would bring (30:1-11; 31:29-34).
4. Babylon would be punished for their destructive ways (50:1-3; 51:41-43).
5. Prophets giving the people what they wanted to hear rather than what they needed to hear was a great problem faced by Jeremiah (5:30-31; 6:14; 8:11; cf. Jn. 5:43-44).

HABAKKUK

1. Habakkuk pled for God to judge his sinful people (1:1-4).
2. When God reveals that the Chaldeans (Babylon) will be the instrument of His wrath, Habakkuk protests (1:12-13).
3. After God has a talk with Habakkuk, the prophet puts his trust in God (chs. 2-3).
4. Rather than trusting in might as Babylon did, God's people must trust in Him (2:4; 3:16-19).

DANIEL

1. Daniel was carried into captivity in the first of three phases of Babylonian captivity in 605 BC (1:1; II Kg. 24:1; Jer. 25:1).

2. Daniel chapters one through six deal primarily with Daniel's life in captivity under Babylon and later Persia.
3. Chapters seven through twelve address visions of the future.
4. Jesus would set up the ultimate kingdom (7:13-14).

EZEKIEL

1. Ezekiel was taken captive in the second phase of Babylonian Captivity in AD 597 (1:1-2).
2. Ezekiel spoke of Judah's sins that had led to captivity (chs. 13-15).
3. However, individuals were judged on their own faithfulness (ch. 18).
4. Ezekiel directed the attention of the people to a future day when the Messiah would come (Ezek. 21:25-27; 37:24-28).
5. A vision of a restored Israel pictures the Messianic reign in terms relating to the Mosaic dispensation (chs. 40-48).

Return From Captivity

**Ezra 1-6; Esther; Ezra 7-10; Nehemiah
Daniel; Haggai; Zechariah; Malachi**

The return from captivity and reestablishment of God's people in the Promised Land was of great importance in God's plan of bringing the Christ. God would preserve His people in keeping with His promise to send a Savior. There would, however, be a 400-year gap in the Old Testament period of God's revelation before prophecy would be revived. It would not be until the time of Christ that John the Baptist would briefly revive and then bring to an end the period of Old Covenant revelation (Matt. 11:12-13). This then is the conclusion of the written contents of the Old Testament age.

THE RETURN LED BY ZERUBBABEL

539 BC

(Ezra 1-6; Daniel; Haggai; Zechariah)

1. Cyrus the Persian conquered Babylon and allowed the Jews to return home (Dan. 5:1-31; 9:19; Ezra 1:1-2:2).
2. The main objective of this return was the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 1:1-4).
3. The project, although getting underway quickly, soon ran into opposition and was brought to a halt (Ezra 3-4).
4. God used the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to successfully challenge the people to complete the temple building project—**520-515 BC** (Ezra 5-6; Hag. 1-2; Zech. 1-14).

LIFE IN PERSIA

483-471 BC

(Esther)

1. The book of Esther is set in the Persian court and relates a critical episode of Jewish history.
2. Esther was providentially raised to the position of a queen in the Persian Empire (Esth. 1-2).
3. In that position God uses her to thwart an attempt to annihilate the Jews who did not return to Judah under Zerubbabel (Esth. 3-10).

THE RETURN UNDER EZRA

457 BC

(Ezra 7-10)

1. The Persian king Artaxerxes I sent Ezra to Judah to reestablish the Law of Moses as a means of restoring order to the people (Ezra 7).
2. Ezra thus took the second major group back to Judah from captivity (Ezra 8).
3. He dealt with the sins of the people and preached to bring them back to a loyalty for Jehovah (Ezra 9-10).

THE RETURN UNDER NEHEMIAH

444 BC

(Nehemiah; Malachi)

1. The Persian king Artaxerxes I allowed Nehemiah to lead a third major group back to Judah to rebuild a wall around Jerusalem (Neh. 1:1-2:8).
2. Nehemiah met opposition, but did not allow it to hinder him in completing his mission (Neh. 2:9-6:19).
3. Ezra joined with Nehemiah and ministered from the Law of Moses to the people of Judah (Neh. 7-13:3).
4. Nehemiah had returned to Persia during part of this time.
5. When he returned to Judah he zealously pursued insisting that the people follow the teachings Ezra had been proclaiming (Neh. 13:4-31).
6. The prophet Malachi most likely prophesied somewhere in this period as he sought to call the people of God back to faithfulness.

We now await the most exciting of all biblical eras, the great age brought in by Jesus. The 400-year wait would be well worth the time!

The New Testament teaches through establishing a relationship between all of its parts to the work of Christ. This relationship is tied to the *Gospels* as they relate to the **example**, **atonement**, and **victory** of Jesus. After the *Gospels*, the remaining three divisions of the New Covenant: *Acts* (history of the early church), *Epistles* (letters to churches and individual Christians), and *Revelation* (Prophecy), each take one of the three themes of the Gospels as their special emphasis.

A. **The Gospels**—The **Example**, **Atonement**, And **Victory** of Christ.

1. A transition between the Old and New Testaments is presented as Jesus comes to fulfill the Old (Matt. 5:17) and establish the New (Matt. 16:14-19; 26:26-29).
2. The person of God is most clearly revealed in the portrayal of Christ we encounter in the Gospels (John 1:1, 14, 18; 14:8-9).
3. The Gospels are the center of the Bible from which all things receive their clearest meaning.
 - a. Everything God did before Jesus came pointed forward to Him (Isa. 11:1-10; Lk. 24:44).
 - b. Everything God did after the coming of Christ pointed backward to Him (Rom. 3:21-26).
4. Unless Jesus is understood clearly, the Old Testament and the remainder of the New Testament cannot be seen in a mature light (Col. 2:16-17; II Cor. 1:20).

5. The Gospels center on Jesus' **example**, **atonement**, and **victory** (Matt. 28:16-20).
 - a. We are to follow the **example** of Christ we see revealed in the Gospels (Lk. 9:23-24).
 - b. We are saved by the **atonement** of the Lord (Jn. 1:29; Matt. 1:21; 26:26-28).
 - c. We are given assurance and courage through the **victory** of Jesus (Jn. 16:33; Lk. 24:1-7; Jn. 11:25-26; 12:32).

B. Acts—The Atonement of Christ Emphasized.

1. A responsive faith to the preaching of the Gospel message that allows salvation from past sins is the primary focus of this book (Acts 2:36-38).
2. Salvation or **atonement** is the means to the end of fellowship and relationship between God and man (Acts 26:15-18).
3. A vital step is thus given in Acts, but not the ultimate purpose of God's plan—we are saved for something, fellowship with God here and in heaven (Rom. 5:9; 8:31-39; II Cor. 5:14-15).
4. Acts is, therefore, a book of transition from darkness of being lost in sin to being found in the light of God's grace.
5. It shows that when the Christ of the Gospels is preached and His **atoning death** is appreciated (I Cor. 2: 2) good and honest hearts will respond.

C. The Letters (Romans – Jude)—The Example of Christ Emphasized.

1. The behavior of the saved is here stressed as Christians are expected to follow the **example** of Christ (I Pet. 2:21; Phil. 2:5; Rom. 8:29; II Cor. 3:18).
2. Those who have been saved through Christ's atonement are now to live by the **example** of Jesus revealed in the mind of Christ and walk in fellowship with God (I Cor. 2:16; I Jn. 1:7; Eph. 4:1-3).
3. The indwelling of Christ is the chief emphasis of the Epistles (Eph. 3:16-17; Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Col. 1:27).

D. Revelation—The Victory of Christ Emphasized.

1. Because Jesus won the **victory** over Satan (Gen. 3:15; Rev.12:9-12), those faithful to Christ will also prevail (Rom.16:20 Rev.1:18; 2:10).
2. Even death cannot defeat the faithful Christian (Rev. 6:9-11; 7:13-17; 20:4).
3. The faithful cannot lose; they will share in the **victory** of Christ (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:7)!

The Gospels, in portraying the **Example**, **Atonement**, and **Victory** of Jesus, set the stage for the further development of these great themes in the remainder of the New Testament. In this way the New Testament teaches its message with all the parts working toward a common purpose and with Jesus as the focus, purpose, and goal of all God has revealed.

A study outline of Revelation

Introduction

1. The book of Revelation is considered to be one of the most difficult books of the Bible.
2. While it has many features that are certainly problematic, it nevertheless has one of the simplest messages of Scripture.
3. Its central message simply teaches us that if we are faithful to Jesus we cannot be defeated, even by death (1:18; 2:10).

4. A simple message, but a truth that is most profound!
- I. The Introduction (1:1-20).
 - A. A message for seven churches (though symbolically representing the whole church) in the Roman province of Asia.
 - B. In a symbolic form Jesus appears to John to symbolically reveal much needed information to the churches.
 - C. Note how 1:1, 3 show that the main emphasis of the book was about to happen.
- II. The Letters To The Seven Churches (2:1-3:22).
 - A. The churches are being reviewed to determine both their strength and the amount of preparation needed for the upcoming battle.
 - B. While this battle will in some ways be fought on the earth, there are heavenly perspectives to consider.
 - C. Ultimately the battle will be spiritual and it will be waged in the hearts of men and women.
 - D. Strengths and weaknesses are therefore evaluated in a spiritual context.
- III. The Throne Room Of God (4:1-11).
 - A. The earthly perspective gained from a review of the seven churches is far from encouraging.
 - B. How could these churches stand in the face of mighty foe?
 - C. John is taken up into heaven to see that the churches do not go to war alone.
 - D. The Holy God of heaven is there seen in His awesome might.
- IV. The Sealed Book And The Worthy Lamb (5:1-14).
 - A. A book is presented that contains information vital to the churches—but it is sealed!
 - B. No mere creature is found worthy to open the book and reveal its contents to the churches.
 - C. But the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the one who turns out to be the Lamb, He is worthy to open the book.
- V. The Seven Seals—The First Cycle Of Visions (6:1-8:1).
 - A. The first four seals reveal the calamities God will use in 1/4 measure against a rebellious foe (6:1-8).
 - B. The fifth seal reveals that there are martyrs who seek vindication, but are told to wait until martyrdom has reached its end (6:9-11).
 - C. The sixth seal shows that powers standing in opposition to God will be shaken (6:12-17).
 - D. 144, 000 are sealed for a special service to God—the remainder of the martyrs (7:1-8).
 - E. A larger multitude will also be victorious—the faithful church (7:9-17).
 - F. The seventh seal opens to silence, an ominous portent of things to come (8:1).
- VI. The Seven Trumpets—The Second Cycle Of Visions (8:2-11:19).
 - A. The first four trumpets introduce the calamities God sends in 1/3 measure against the opposition (8:2-13).
 - B. The fifth trumpet brings woe on all, save those sealed for martyrdom—they have a special fate (9:1-11).
 - C. The sixth trumpet brings death to 1/3 of mankind—God is not opposed without cost—but there is still no repentance.
 - D. A Little Book now appears to reveal what will happen since the forces of evil did not cease their rebellion (10:1-11).
 - E. Two witnesses are the center of attention in a brief review of the story of the Little Book (11:1-14).

- F. The seventh trumpet reveals the ultimate defeat of those who oppose God and the victory of those who are on His side (11:15-19).
 - VII. The Message Of The Little Book Is Revealed In Greater Detail As The Cast Of Characters For The Coming Decisive Conflict Are Revealed—The Second Major Division Of The Book, Where The Same Message Repeats Itself In Many Different Cycles (12:1-14:20).
 - A. The reason for the war is seen in Satan’s conflict with Christ and His followers (12:1-17).
 - 1. The woman here represents the concept of God’s people.
 - 2. First, the Jews, from whom came Jesus, and then the church, in which are found all who follow Christ.
 - B. Satan’s forces—the emperor and those who carry out his policies (13:1-18).
 - C. The Lamb and His martyr army (14:1-20).
 - VIII. The Seven Bowls Of Plagues That Are Poured Out Against The Enemies Of God (15:1-16:21).
 - A. The first four bowls reveal an even greater judgment on all the opposition—this is to destroy the opposition, not to bring repentance (15:1-16:9).
 - B. The fifth bowl deals with the shaking of earthly powers (16:10-11).
 - C. The sixth bowl reveals the Battle of Harmagedon where God’s forces defeat the forces of Satan (16:12-16).
 - D. Judgment comes on Babylon the Great—Rome (16:17-21).
 - IX. The Judgment Of The Great Harlot—The Mystique And Power Of Rome (17:1-19:10).
 - A. The identity of the harlot (17:1-18).
 - B. Babylon—Rome—judged (18:1-24).
 - C. Victory for the Lamb (19:1-10).
 - X. The Great Battle (19:11-20:6).
 - A. The Lamb and His army (19:11-18).
 - B. Satan’s army (19:19).
 - C. The battle (19:20-21).
 - D. Satan bound (20:1-3).
 - E. Martyrs’ cause vindicated (20:4-6).
 - XI. The Last Great Battle, Judgment, And Eternal Consequences (20:7-22:5).
 - A. The Last War (20:7-10).
 - B. Judgment (20:11-15).
 - C. Victory for the faithful (21:1-22:5).
 - XII. Final Encouragement, Invitation, And Warning (22:6-21)—note 22:6, 7, 10, 12 show immediacy.
- Conclusion
- 1. The book of Revelation shows the certain victory for all who die in the Lord.
 - 2. Christ has won the battle; we need only align with Him to win!