

## Session One: Introduction to the Bible

### I. How does God communicate to us?

- A. Through nature (Psalm 104:24; Psalm 19:1-7; Romans 1:20).
  - B. Through events (the “mighty acts of God,” the exodus from Egypt)
  - C. Through prophets (2 Peter 1:21)
  - D. Through history (real life events of people)
  - E. Through words (stone tablets, Exodus 24:12))
- When God speaks, things happen! Isaiah 55:11

### II. What is the Bible?

#### A. It is a collection of written documents.

The word “Bible” comes from the port of Byblos in Lebanon. Byblos was known to be an important place for the shipment of papyrus. *Byblos* in the old Greek language originally meant the inner bark of the papyrus plant. Papyrus bark was striped into long pieces, pressed to get the water out, dried in a crisscross pattern, and used for paper in the ancient world. So *byblos* came to be associated with books and then became a specific book, the Bible. The very earliest copies of the New Testament were written on this kind of material.

#### B. It is a word from God.

#### C. It points to the Living Word (John 1:14)

- 1. Jesus is the final and complete revelation of God.
  - a. God is like Jesus
  - b. Jesus is like God
- 2. Jesus is the interpretive lens by which all Scripture is judged (Hebrews 1:1-3a).
- 3. The Bible records this ultimate Word to us from God.
- 4. The primary purpose of the Bible is to speak about Christ (John 5:39).
- 5. The Bible points the way to human salvation through Christ.
- 6. The Bible shows the way how to become Christ-like, how to be restored to the image of God.
- 7. The Bible gives the way to live as new creations in Christ.

#### D. The story of the Bible outlined:

- 1. God chose to disclose Himself through history/story.
- 2. The Bible is the only complete story of Gods redeeming love.
- 3. Jesus stands at the middle of this story. Jesus is in the Old Testament hidden, and in the New Testament revealed.
- 4. It is important to know the basic story of the Bible:
  - a. The God who creates
  - b. Human sinfulness and its consequences
  - c. The God who chooses in covenant
  - d. Human unfaithfulness to covenant
  - e. Gods final remedy in Christ
  - f. The new covenant community of the Church
  - g. Final consummation and the end of the story

### III. Why study the Bible?

#### A. Motives

There are many reasons for interpreting the Bible: study it as literature, history, examine the language, ethics, or socio-economic reasons. As a faith community, the church accepts the Bible as Scripture and authoritative. It takes faith to call the Bible “Scripture.” There are two sides to calling the Bible “Scripture”: 1) the community (the church) has gathered and preserved the stories, commands, and teachings of the Bible and accepted their authority, and 2) the Bible has shaped the formation, behavior, and theology of the community.

#### B. The Bible is God’s message to the world.

1. The Bible is the primary way of knowing God.
2. We are messengers of God's grace to the world.

IV. How is the Bible inspired by God?

2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is God-breathed."

The Bible is both divine and human: "A religion of a God who speaks and of whose words were written."

It can be difficult to balance the human side of the Bible and the divine side. Note these passages:

Deuteronomy 4:2; Joshua 1:8; Psalm 19; 119; Isaiah 40:8; Jeremiah 23:29; Matthew 5:18; Luke 8:11; John 17:17; Romans 15:4.

V. What is the purpose of the Bible?

Nazarene *Manual* Article IV:

We believe in the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, by which we understand the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, given by divine inspiration, inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation, so that whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith. (Luke 24:44-47; John 10:35; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

VI. What is our goal in studying the Bible?

Transformation into Christ's likeness. Philippians 3:10-11; 2 Timothy 3:17

Our worldviews change:

- We begin to think biblically.
- We begin to think theologically.
- We begin to think holistically.
- We begin to think contextually.

VII. How is this accomplished?

The Holy Spirit:

- Speaks to our hearts and minds.
- We respond in faith and obedience.
- We develop the "mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

VIII. How did we get the Bible?

This is the typical sequence:

- A. Event: the events happened in history.
- B. Oral period: the stories were passed down by word of mouth, sometimes for many centuries.
- C. Writing: the stories were written. There is a lot of debate about authorship of some Bible books.
- D. Editing: in some cases editors added comments or changed the stories.
- E. Standardization: the texts no longer were changed.
- F. Copying and transmitting of the texts to other locations.
- G. Translation into new languages.
- H. Invention of printing press made it possible for many people to own the Bible.
- I. The computer age has made it possible to have many translations available instantly.

IX. The Bible as Canon

The word "canon" comes from the Greek word *kanon* which means a line or rule and came to mean a list of books considered sacred as Scripture. The word was first used in reference to the Bible by Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, in AD 367. The Bible came to be the "rule of faith" of the church, the measuring line that determines orthodoxy (true doctrine). Several passages imply the formation of a canon: Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Jeremiah 26:2; Proverbs 30:6; and Ecclesiastes 3:14. The prophets recognized that their messages came directly from God and therefore carried his authority.

A. Old Testament as Canon

The first written proof that there was a collection of sacred books is found in the Book of Sirach where he refers to the law, the prophets and the writers who had followed them. He called them all “Scripture.” This text was written around 132 years before Christ. It is unknown when the process of creating a collection started. Most scholars think that many books of the Bible took on their final forms during and after exile. The loss of the Holy Land and the destruction of the temple had so deeply upset the soul of the nation of Judah that the spiritual leaders who were transported to Babylon had collected and studied texts to see a message from God for the new situation. Most of what we know as the Old Testament was prepared therefore during this period. Finally, with the death of Malachi, the Jews believed that the voice of God stopped. Nothing was added to the collection after. Therefore the essential element of what is our Old Testament was formed around 300 years before Christ.

In AD 90, at the Jewish Council of Jamnia, which took over the powers of the Sanhedrin after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, some rabbis convened to reconstruct the Jewish religious life. They debated the importance and place of the canonization of certain Old Testament books (for example, Esther) but came to an agreement with the books we have today. As the Hebrew Scripture, the Old Testament is divided into three parts, known as the *TaNak* (abbreviations for each section):

1. *Torah* or Law: the five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
2. *Nebiim* or Prophets:
  - a. Former: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings.
  - b. Latter: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Book of the Twelve (“Minor Prophets”)
3. *Ketubim* or Writings: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, the five called the *Megilloth* or scrolls: Song of Solomon, Ruth, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Lamentations; Daniel; Ezra-Nehemiah as one book.

#### B. New Testament as Canon

1. The New Testament was written by at least nine different people over the course of several decades. Deciding which books to accept as canon or as authoritative for the church was a long process of several centuries. The letters of the NT were exchanged among churches and began to be collected into groups by the second century.
2. There were several criteria that determined whether a book was accepted by the early church:
  - a. Apostolic origins: It was written by an apostle or a close associate of an apostle.
  - b. Earliness or antiquity: It was early and close to the time of Jesus and the apostles.
  - c. Importance and relevance: It was useful to the church.
  - d. Conformity to “orthodoxy” and rule of faith: Books considered heretical or written by heretics were rejected, for example, the “Gospel of Peter” which was used by Gnostics.
3. Evidence
  - a. The earliest document to quote any of the books of the New Testament was 1 Clement, written from Rome to the church in Corinth and is usually dated about AD 95. It contains allusions to Hebrews, 1 Corinthians, Romans, and the Gospel of Matthew.
  - b. Ignatius of Antioch in Syria (AD 116) knew all of Paul’s letters, quoted Matthew and possibly John.
  - c. Polycarp of Smyrna (AD 150) knew Paul’s letters, Matthew, and quotes from 1 Peter and 1 John and alludes possibly to Acts.
  - d. The *Didache* (AD 100-150) used Matthew, Luke, and many other New Testament books in its attempt at a catechism or discipleship course.
  - e. By Irenaeus’ time (AD 170), there was no question that the books of the New Testament were authoritative. The growth of Gnosticism and other heresies forced a flood of apologetic literature that continued until the time of Origen (AD 250). This literature carefully outlined which books were orthodox and which were not.
4. Formal Lists: These are the official lists of New Testament books accepted by groups of Christian or Church Councils. Examples include:
  - a. Canon of Marcion (AD 140). This canon was developed by Marcion, an early church heretic, who was “anti-Jewish” and selected books that would be free from Jewish influences. His New Testament canon consisted of Luke and 10 letters of Paul, all except the Pastoral Epistles.

- b. Muratorian Canon (fragment copy from about AD 170). This early orthodox canon included: the four Gospels, Acts, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Romans, Philemon, Titus, 1 and 2 Timothy, Jude, 1, 2, and 3 John, Revelation. It did not mention James, Hebrews, or Peter's letters.
5. The Councils: An "official council" was a formal discussion by delegates of the church. The earliest council we know of which dealt with the issue of canon is the Council of Laodicea (AD 363). This council decreed only canonical books of the New Testament should be read in the church. The extant document contains a definitive list, but most scholars do not think it is genuine. They think it was revised based on later council decisions. The earliest council listing the present 27 books of the New Testament was the Third Council of Carthage in AD 397, which is usually cited as the date for the closing of the New Testament canon. The Council of Hippo in AD 419 gave the same list.
6. Rejected Documents: There were many other early writings known as the New Testament Apocrypha. These are non-canonical writings about or falsely attributed to New Testament figures, written before the fourth century. They were never generally considered canonical. Many of them contain heretical teachings of certain sects, many of them are Gnostic. They include:
- Gospels (nativity / infancy, sayings, passion, post-resurrection)
  - Acts
  - Letters ("epistle")
  - Apocalypses

One collection of such writings from the fourth century written in Coptic and generally Gnostic in teaching was discovered in 1945 at Nag Hammadi in upper Egypt.

Note: Gnosticism was a heresy that emerged in the second century that taught that the world is evil and created by a lesser god, the god of the Old Testament called "demi-urge." The good and true God was revealed in Jesus and through secret knowledge. It was a combination of Platonism, Judaism, and Christianity.

## Session Two: Introduction to the Old Testament

- I. The Name “Old Testament”
  - A. The Meaning of “Testament”
    1. A “will,” a legal document which tells how one’s property is to be disposed of after death.
    2. From the Latin *testamentum*, which translates the Greek *diatheke*, most often translated as “covenant.”
    3. Denotes an agreement between two parties with certain obligations.
  - B. The “Old” versus the “New”
 

Is the Old Testament obsolete? Some people interpret this to mean that it is no longer relevant. See Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 9:15-19.
  
- II. The Languages of the Old Testament
  - A. Hebrew: It is considered part of the Northwest Semitic language family. Most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew. Biblical Hebrew was spoken from 1300-200 B.C. By the time of Jesus, Hebrew was no longer a spoken language but had been replaced by Aramaic.
    1. Script
      - a. Paleo-Hebrew was the earliest form.
      - b. Later, it adopted a square script like Aramaic.
      - c. Vowel points were added by Masoretes around A.D. 500.
    2. The basic characteristics of the language:
      - a. Hebrew is based on roots of usually three consonants. Vowel points, suffixes and prefixes give different meanings.
      - b. The verb is timeless. There are two basic tenses which denote kind of action rather than time:
        - Perfect - signifying completed action; the point of view of subject (past).
        - Imperfect - showing action not completed (future).
      - c. The normal word order is verb, subject, object. The verb is significant.
  - B. Aramaic
    1. It is similar to Hebrew but there are notable differences.
    2. It became the international language after the 8th century B.C. and the rise of Assyrian power.
    3. It was later replaced by Greek as official language of diplomacy and commerce.
    4. It was Jesus’ mother tongue.
    5. The Aramaic portions of the Old Testament consists of two words in Genesis 31:47; one verse in Jeremiah 10:11; Ezra 4:8-6:18 and 7:12-26; and Daniel 2:4b-7:28. At least five Aramaic words appear in the New Testament: *Cephas*, *Tabitha*, *Maranatha*, *ephphatha*, and *talitha cumi*.
  
- III. The Land of the Old Testament
  - A. The Ancient Near East and the Fertile Crescent
    1. Description and location: It stretched along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and down into Israel, bypassing the Arabian desert. It is called the Fertile Crescent because of the rivers which cross this territory and the more or less regular rains. This crescent encircles the Arabian Desert.
    2. Palestine was poorest part of the Fertile Crescent but an essential hub for trade and military conquests.
  - B. Important Geographical Locations
    1. All the events in the Old Testament, beginning with the sailing of the Noah’s ark took place in a territory that now includes the countries of Iraq, Syria, Libya, Jordan, Israel, and northern Egypt.
    2. Palestine is named after the Philistines. Most of the people who live in this area were the descendents of Shem, the Noah’s second son. The Canaanites and the Egyptians, both inhabitants of the extreme southwest descended from Ham. In contrast the Philistines are the people who came from southern Europe and the islands that are situated between Greece and Turkey.
    3. Five major divisions :
      - a. Coastal Plain: Plain stretching north to south through Palestine. Includes the plain of Asher, the plain of Sharon, and the Philistine Plain. This region is narrow in the North and wider in the

South. This region includes a major “north-south” highway from Egypt through Damascus and on to Mesopotamia. This highway is referred to as the “Via Maris” (“the way of the sea”).

- b. Central Mountains: The central mountains form the north to south backbone of Palestine. This region is interrupted only by the plain of Esdraelon (“the valley of Jezreel”).
  - c. Jordan Rift: The Jordan Valley includes: the tributaries of the upper Jordan, the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, the Dead Sea, and the Arabah (an arid valley stretching to the Gulf of Aqaba).
  - d. Transjordan Plateau: A high plateau that rises suddenly above the Jordan Rift to the east, and then slopes down to the Syrian and Arabian deserts.
  - e. The Negev: Literally “South.” The southern portion of Palestine which constitutes a dry high steppe, predominately recognized as wilderness area.
4. This was not an easy place to build an empire because of the geography.
  5. Climate
    - a. Two seasons: rain (December-March) and dry (May-September).
    - b. Temperatures range from the mild mountains to intense desert heat.
- C. The Land throughout History:
1. It served as a land bridge between major empires.
  2. It was along major trade routes.
  3. It was a melting pot of ideas.
  4. It was a place of war.
- D. Archeology
1. People are the focus.
  2. Limitations of Archeology
    - a. It cannot prove the Bible as accurate.
    - b. The evidence is limited; no written records exist from ancient Palestine.
    - c. Sites have not been completely excavated.
    - d. New discoveries are still being made all the time.
  3. Brief Description of the Process
    - a. Ancient cities now exist as mounds of earth called tels or tells.
    - b. The most important indicator is the dirt: deeper levels are older than upper levels.
    - c. Careful documentation is essential.
    - d. Ways to date:
      - 1) Writings, but few exist.
      - 2) Pottery, consider accurate to within 25 years.
      - 3) Carbon 14 dating (before 6000 B.C.).

#### IV. The People of Israel

- A. They were not isolated.
- B. They were familiar with foreign religious practices and adopted many of them:
  1. The worship of idols.
  2. There were common features between Solomon’s temple with other ancient temples.
- C. Home was the center of domestic life.
- D. Mostly agricultural with a few craftsmen.
- E. Crops were mostly grains, grapes, olives, figs.
- F. Most people were poor and lived from day to day off of what they could grow.

#### V. Major Historical Periods of the Old Testament

(some dates are approximate)

- A. Primeval History: “The first or earliest ages”; includes creation, flood, tower of Babel. Location in modern Iraq and Turkey.
- B. Patriarchal Period: 1900-1800 B.C. Period of the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is when history began for the Jews as a people. A patriarch is a tribal chief, the tribe consisted of his living descendants and slaves or servants who depended on them.
- A. Exodus: 1280 B.C. Traditional dating of the exodus from Egypt. This is roughly 400 years after the Patriarchs (Exodus 1:8). This began 40 years of desert wandering. It was characterized by revelation and

rebellion.

- B. Conquest: 1250-1200 B.C. Period of the conquest of Canaan.
- C. Judges: 1200-1020 B.C. Period of the judges who governed over the various tribes of the Hebrew people.
- D. United Monarchy: 1020-922 B.C. Reign of Saul, first king of Israel (1020-1000 B.C.). Reign of David, second king of Israel (1000-961 B.C.). Reign of Solomon (961-922).
- E. Divided Monarchy: 922-722/721 B.C. The split of the Kingdom into North (Israel) and South (Judah) after 922 B.C.
- F. Fall of Israel (Samaria): 722/721 B.C. Fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians.
- G. Fall of Judah (Jerusalem): 587 B.C. Fall of Jerusalem, with the southern Kingdom of Judah taken into exile in Babylon.
- H. Exilic Period: 587-538 B.C. Period of the exile of Judah in Babylon.
- I. Postexilic Period: 538 B.C. - Jesus. In 538 B.C., the edict of Cyrus released the Jews to return to Palestine.

## VI. The Septuagint

After the conquests of Alexander the Great around 330 BC, the Jews of the Diaspora (the “scattering” after the Babylonian exile in 586 BC) began speaking Greek and no longer knew Hebrew. They needed a new translation of their holy writings in their new language. By the second century BC, a Greek translation was circulating in Alexandria, Egypt, which was a center for diaspora Jews.

Later, a legend became attached to this translation, that it was the work of 70 elders of Israel brought to Alexandria to translate the Scriptures. They completed the translation in 70 days. This legend is how we get the word *septuaginta*, which is Latin for 70, thus the abbreviation LXX (Roman number for 70). It was the Old Testament most early Christians used.

The order of books is like the Christian Bible:

- Pentateuch
- Former Prophets divided into 12, Ruth, an expanded Esther, plus Judith and Tobit
- Poetic and Wisdom Books, plus Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, and Ps 151
- Prophetic Books, plus Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, expanded Daniel, plus Maccabees

The LXX has added books that have been called the “Apocrypha” (since Jerome), from the Greek *apokryphos* meaning hidden and concealed. The early church debated on the use and authority of the Apocrypha.

## VII. Various Interpretations of the Old Testament canon.

- A. Deuterocanonical: Literally, “second canon.” Refers to the seven extra books in the Catholic canon which are not recognized in the Jewish or Protestant canon. These books include Judith, Tobit, Baruch, I and II Maccabees, Sirach, and Wisdom of Solomon.
- B. Apocrypha: Meaning, “hidden” books. Protestants often use this designation to refer to the seven deuterocanonical books, as well as some additional material that does not appear in any traditionally accepted canon.
- C. Pseudepigrapha: Literally, “false writings.” Given this title because many of these books claim the author to be some great religious hero of ancient times, such as Enoch or Moses. Protestants apply the term Pseudepigrapha to still other noncanonical books. Catholics, however, apply the term “apocrypha” to the deuterocanonical books and to pseudepigraphal works.

## VIII. Divisions of the Old Testament

PENTATEUCH	HISTORICAL	WRITINGS	PROPHETS	
5 Origins & Law	12 People & Kings	5 Poetry & Wisdom	5 Major Prophets	12 Minor Prophets
Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther	Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Songs of Songs (also known as Songs of Solomon)	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel	Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi



## Canons of the Old Testament

### HEBREW BIBLE (TaNaK)

#### TORAH (Law, Teaching)

Genesis  
Exodus  
Leviticus  
Numbers  
Deuteronomy

#### NEBIIM (Prophets)

##### Former prophets:

Joshua  
Judges  
Samuel  
Kings

##### Latter Prophets:

Isaiah  
Jeremiah  
Ezekiel  
The Twelve:  
    (Hosea  
    Joel  
    Amos  
    Obadiah  
    Jonah  
    Micah  
    Nahum  
    Habakkuk  
    Zephaniah  
    Haggai  
    Zechariah  
    Malachi)

#### KETHUBIM (Writings)

Psalms  
Proverbs  
Job  
Song of Songs  
Ruth  
Kohelet (Ecclesiastes)  
Esther  
Daniel  
Ezra-Nehemiah  
Chronicles

### GREEK BIBLE (Septuagint)

#### PENTATEUCH

Genesis  
Exodus  
Leviticus  
Numbers  
Deuteronomy

#### HISTORICAL BOOKS

Joshua  
Judges  
Ruth  
1 Kingdoms (1-2 Samuel)  
2 Kingdoms  
3 Kingdoms (1-2 Kings)  
4 Kingdom  
1 Chronicles  
2 Chronicles  
**1 Esdras**  
2 Esdras (Ezra-Nehemiah)  
Esther  
**Judith**  
**Tobit**  
**1 Maccabees**  
**2 Maccabees**  
**3 Maccabees**  
**4 Maccabees**

#### WRITINGS

Psalms  
Proverbs  
Ecclesiastes  
Song of Solomon  
Job  
**Wisdom of Solomon**  
**Wisdom of Sirach**  
(Ecclesiasticus)

#### PROPHETS

Hosea  
Joel  
Amos  
Obadiah  
Jonah  
Micah  
Nahum  
Habakkuk  
Zephaniah  
Haggai  
Zechariah  
Malachi  
Isaiah  
Jeremiah (shorter)  
Lamentations  
**Baruch**  
**Letter of Jeremiah**  
Ezekiel  
Daniel

### PROTESTANT CANON

#### PENTATEUCH

Genesis  
Exodus  
Leviticus  
Numbers  
Deuteronomy

#### HISTORICAL BOOKS

Joshua  
Judges  
Ruth  
1 Samuel  
2 Samuel  
1 Kings  
2 Kings  
1 Chronicles  
2 Chronicles  
Ezra  
Nehemiah  
Esther

#### WRITINGS

Job  
Psalms  
Proverbs  
Ecclesiastes  
Song of Solomon

#### PROPHETS

Major Prophets  
Isaiah  
Jeremiah  
Lamentations  
Ezekiel  
Daniel  
Minor Prophets  
Hosea  
Joel  
Amos  
Obadiah  
Jonah  
Micah  
Nahum  
Habakkuk  
Zephaniah  
Haggai  
Zechariah

## Session Three: The Pentateuch: Creation and Fall

### I. Background of the Pentateuch

#### A. Name

1. The Hebrew *Torah* means “instruction.”
2. “Pentateuch” means “5 scrolls” in Greek: Genesis-Deuteronomy.
3. Sometimes the word “Hexateuch” (“6 books”) is used for Genesis-Joshua.
4. Dates: These books cover 600 years, from 1900-1250 BC, from Abraham to Moses.

#### B. Literary Style

1. Diverse material (epic, narrative, poetry, law) united in a story format.
2. Focus: the origins and birth of the nation Israel.

#### C. Major Themes

1. A summary can be found in Deuteronomy 26:5-10.
2. These are major themes:
  - a. promise
  - b. election
  - c. deliverance
  - d. covenant
  - e. law
  - f. land
3. These books are history with a purpose.

Two Part Theological Division to the Pentateuch:

1. Genesis 1-11: Prologue, gives the problem.
2. Genesis 12-Deuteronomy 34: The birth of a nation, gives the solution (though incomplete).

#### D. Authorship

1. Anonymous, but traditionally attributed to Moses.
2. Form Critics of the 19<sup>th</sup> century developed what is called the Documentary Hypothesis. This raised doubts about traditional authorship and noticed various layers in the text related to the names used for God:
  - a. J (*Yahwist*, German for *Jahweh*) Genesis 2 - Numbers 22 or 24; put together in Judah around 950-850 B.C. It emphasizes God’s purpose and nearness.
  - b. E (*Elohist*) Northern source in Israel around 750-700 B.C.; it notes God’s transcendence, fear of God; covenant is at the center of the theology of history; emphasizes the prophetic role; begins in Genesis and is fragmented.
  - c. D (*Deuteronomist*) Book of Deuteronomy; style is wordy, stereotyped phrases; the “D” source also influenced Joshua - 2 Kings; emphasizes preaching on the law and purity in worship.
  - d. P (*Priestly*) historical; concern is with institutions, genealogies, cultic laws, feasts, cultic buildings, sacrificial system. Themes: Gods holiness and sovereignty, true worship of God; written from the exile 550 B.C. until the 4th century.

### II. Creation and Flood

#### A. Primeval Period and Prehistory

1. Ages used by scientists:
    - a. Paleolithic 600,000 - 10,000 B.C.
    - b. Mesolithic 10,000 - 7,000 B.C.
    - c. Neolithic 7,000-4,000 B.C.
    - d. Chalcolithic (copper stone) 4,000 - 3,200
    - e. Early Bronze 3,200 - 2,200 and the Beginning of History
- Stages of development in writing:
- 1) Simple pictures called pictograms, usually of animals, for economic purposes.
  - 2) Word signs called logograms. Pictures evolved to mean words, and could have several meanings. Certain signs meant certain words (city, deity).

- 3) Syllable signs called phonetization then arose out of a need for names. These were rather complex and only a few could master the language (scribes). Sumerian was the first language and Akkadian soon followed.
  - 4) Alphabetic signs then followed where each sign represents a vowel or consonant. All words could be made with only 30 syllables. A big advantage which made it possible for the average person to learn the language. The Phoenicians invented this first around 1500 B.C. The Greeks in the 8th century B.C. also developed an alphabet.
  - f. Middle Bronze 2,200 - 1,500
  - g. Late Bronze 1,500 - 1,200
  - h. Iron 1,200-
  2. Early people were not as primitive as some presume.
- B. Introduction to Genesis
1. Name: Comes from the Septuagint Greek for “source” or “beginning” and comes from first words of Genesis 1:1.
  2. Divisions
    - a. Two major Sections:
      - 1) Primeval History 1-11
      - 2) Patriarchal history 12-50
    - b. Thematic Divisions:
      - 1) Creation 1:1-2:4a
      - 2) Eden and the Fall 2:4b-4:26
      - 3) Patriarchs before the Flood 5:1-32
      - 4) Flood 6:1-11:9
      - 5) Patriarchs after the Flood 11:10-26
      - 6) Abraham 11:27-25:18
      - 7) Jacob 25:19-37:1
      - 8) Joseph 37:2-50:26
    - b. Spiritual Division:
      - 1) Generation
      - 2) Degeneration
        - a) Individual (Adam)
        - b) Family (Cain)
        - c) Society (Noah)
        - d) Nations of the Earth (Babel)
      - 3) Regeneration

Another way to look at it:

      - 1) Construction
      - 2) Deconstruction
      - 3) Reconstruction
  3. Major Themes of Genesis
    - a. Genesis is a great epic of God’s grace.
    - b. The human problem and the need for a solution.
    - c. Genesis gives the origins of Israel.
  4. Purpose
    - a. The people needed to be reminded of their roots.
    - b. The people needed to be reminded that God would redeem them (Genesis 15:16; 46:4).
    - c. It shows Israel’s place among the other people of the world.
- C. Creation Accounts
1. Genesis 1-2:4a
    - a. Literary Features
    - b. Names Used
      - 1) Elohim
      - 2) Adam

- 3) Eve
  - c. Notes on Contents
    - 1) Ancient cosmology: water above and below the earth.
    - 2) God is revealed in Genesis 1:1
    - 3) God is the main actor in the creation account.
    - 4) Five components to creation:
      - a) Divine word: God said
      - b) Announcement: let it be
      - c) Report: and it was so
      - d) Evaluation: and it was good. The world is valued as good because God made it.
      - e) Temporal framework: morning and evening, day
    - 5) Time Frame of six days.
    - 6) The Image of God
      - a) Natural Image: Personality or selfhood. Ability to reflect, respond, conscience, capacity to choose, etc. Theologians argue that this part of the image was not lost at the fall.
      - b) Theological: Ability to respond in love to God. The powers God has given humanity freedom to respond in love to Him. We are responsible for choice of loving God or not.
      - c) Moral: Ability to understand and do good; ethical character, ability to be holy. It is how we use the powers given to us for good or bad. Mankind was created holy, but chose to depart to sin. Thus, the moral image was lost. Adam and Eve were holy, in close fellowship with God through the Holy Spirit. Their nature was corrupted, fallen. They lost holiness and the positive influences of the Holy Spirit.
      - d) Spiritual: Ability to speak with God
      - e) Functional: God's representatives or administrators in creation
  - d. Major Themes
    - 1) Life is not an accident but planned.
    - 2) God is personal and interested in the human condition.
    - 3) God made everything good.
    - 4) Unique position of the human in the image of God
    - 5) Stewardship of creation
    - 6) Sabbath
      - a) God rested at creation
      - b) You were brought out of Egypt (redemption)
      - c) So that you may rest
2. Genesis 2:b-3:24: The Great Test and the Rise of Sin
- a. Notes on Contents
  - b. Theological Implications
3. Ancient Near Eastern Myths of Creation
- a. Importance of Creation Accounts
    - 1) They tell what people believe about God.
    - 2) For Israel, creation was historical and not mythical.
    - 3) Creation is beginning of the exodus.
    - 4) For Ancient Near East: creation came from chaos and disorder.
  - b. Babylonian Creation Myth as an Example
    - 1) Called "Enuma Elish" for its opening words, "When on high."
    - 2) Discovered in library of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh (669-633 B.C.).
    - 3) Creation comes out of conflict within nature.
    - 4) Closely related to the agricultural festival.
  - c. Similarities with Genesis Account
    - 1) Primeval state described as watery chaos
    - 2) Basic order of creation
    - 3) Divine rest at the end of creation
    - 4) Similar symbols and imagery
  - d. Differences

- 1) Theology and world views
  - 2) Concept of the Divine
  - 3) Chaos versus control and intent
  - 4) Polemic nature of Genesis
4. Theological Implications of the Genesis Creation Accounts
    - a. God as Creator
    - b. Humans as Creatures
    - c. The Fall and Its Implications
- D. Sin Becomes Real and Increases
1. Cain and Abel (Genesis 4)
    - a. The possibility of death now becomes reality.
    - b. Two brothers compared: Abel the shepherd, Cain the farmer.
  2. Pre-Flood Genealogy (Genesis 5)
    - a. Two Brothers Compared
    - b. Rapid population growth, diversification of skills, increase in human sinfulness.
    - c. Common formula is used.
- E. Flood Account and Pre-Patriarchal Period
1. Social Corruption Erupts (6:1-8)
  2. Noah and the Flood
    - a. Description of Noah (6:8-10)
    - b. Reason for the Flood (6:11-13)
    - c. God's Answer: Judgment and Salvation
  3. Ancient Near East accounts compared with the Flood Account  
 Babylonian Epic is called the "Epic of Gilgamesh."
    - a. Similarities:
      - 1) Hero instructed by divine to build boat and coat it with pitch
      - 2) Take animals to preserve
      - 3) Entire population is destroyed
      - 4) Waters dry after the flood
      - 5) Hero releases bird to look for dry land
      - 6) Ship finally rests on a mountain
      - 7) Hero offers sacrifice
      - 8) Gods pleased with odor of sacrifice.
    - b. Main difference is in theology.
  4. Noah's descendants (Gen 10-11)
    - a. Origin of the Nations (9:20-29)
    - b. Rebellion of the Nations (chs. 10-11)
    - c. Distribution of the Nations (ch. 10)
  5. The Tower of Babel (Gen. 11)
- F. Summary of Key Theological Truths
1. God is creator
  2. Human sinfulness
  3. Gods judgment of Sin
  4. Gods sustaining grace

## Session Four: The Pentateuch: The Patriarchs

- I. Ancient Near Eastern History
  - A. Mesopotamia
    - 1. Akkadian Empire (2300-2100)
    - 2. Ur III Period (2060-1950)
    - 3. First Babylonian Empire (1728-1686).
    - 4. Assyrian Empire (1400-612)
  - B. Egypt
    - 1. Old Kingdom 3rd Millennium B.C.
    - 2. Middle Kingdom first half of the 2nd millennium B.C.
      - 12th Dynasty 1991-1786
      - 13th Dynasty and the Hyksos
    - 3. New Kingdom 1st half of the 2nd millennium B.C.
      - Amohotep (14<sup>th</sup> cent.)
      - Ramses
      - Invasion of Sea Peoples from Greece (a coalition of peoples)
      - Philistines end Egyptian power in 1200-1000 B.C.
      - Egyptian history gives 2 geographical kingdoms:
        - 1) Upper (south)
        - 2) Lower (north, centered around the delta)
  - C. Palestine
    - Nomadic movement during time of the patriarchs (roughly 2000-1550)
  - D. History of the Patriarchs
    - 1. Problems with Dating
      - a. Early Literary Criticism
      - b. The Help of Archeology
      - c. A Selective History
      - d. Suggested Dates for the Patriarchs
        - 1) Hard to determine scientifically
        - 2) Archbishop Ussher in 1650 set dates based on biblical evidence: Abraham was born in 1996 B.C. Joseph went to Egypt in 1728 B.C.
        - 3) This corresponds roughly with what we know of the period.
        - 4) Bible was not written from a scientific mindset.
        - 5) Evidence suggests Middle Bronze II period (early 2<sup>nd</sup> mill B.C.)
          - Characteristics confirmed by archeology:
            - destruction of cities
            - nomadic life
            - invasions of Amorites
            - no great empires.
    - 2. Culture
      - a. Great migrations in Mesopotamia and Palestine of semi-nomads
      - b. They settled by towns for a time.
      - c. Bred sheep, small cattle
      - d. Units of society were tribe, clan, family
      - e. Patriarchs were chiefs of large clans
- II. The Call of Abram (Gen 12)
  - A. Abram's Background
    - a. Name: "Exalted Father"
    - b. From Ur, Chaldea, to Haran (11:28-29)

- c. Historical facts of the period show
  - a. evidence of population like Hebrews in area
  - b. common customs have been found
  - c. similar codes of law (Eshnunna and Hammurabi) not seen elsewhere
  - d. similar creation and flood stories
  - d. The *'Apiru* or *Habiru*
- B. Abram's Change of Religion
  - 1. From the Polytheism (many gods) of his ancestors to Monotheism (one God)
  - 2. The Patriarchs worshiped God by choice
  - 3. God was not a local deity of a place but a clan deity, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- C. God's Command and Promise to Abram (Genesis 12-19)
  - 1. First Encounter with God (12:1-3; cf. 15; 17; 18; 20; 22)
  - 2. Two-fold promise sealed by covenant (12:2)
    - a. Land
    - b. Children
 Sometimes a third promise is noted:
    - c. All people will be blessed through Abraham
  - 3. Seeking the Promises (12-14)
  - 4. Covenant (15)
  - 5. Marks of covenant
    - a. Promise of heirs
    - b. Promise of land
    - c. Change of names
    - d. Circumcision
  - 6. Impatience with God: Hagar and birth of Ishmael (16)
  - 7. Sodom and Gomorrah (18-19)
    - a. Isaac (21-24)
      - 1) Fulfillment of Promise (21)
      - 2) The Testing of Faith at Mt. Moriah (22)
      - 3) Finding a Wife (24; cf. 26:1-16)
    - b. Jacob (Gen 25-36)
      - 1) Troubles between Brothers (25-26)
      - 2) Running Away (28-30)
      - 3) Returning and Transformation (31-36)
    - c. Joseph (Gen 37-50)
      - Four major periods to his life:
        - 1) Youth of Dreams (37:1-20)
        - 2) Betrayed by Others (Brothers, Potiphar's wife, fellow prisoners (37:21-40:23))
        - 3) Ruler of Egypt (41)
          - Famine was common in Egypt which relied on the annual flooding of the Nile. Three seasons in Egypt based on the flow of the Nile:
            - Inundation: flood July-Nov
            - Coming forth: flood receded, seeds planted November-March
            - Drought: rest of the year
        - 4) Restoration of Family and Prophecies of the Future (42-50)
    - d. Theology of Covenant
      - 1) The Hebrew word for "Covenant" is *berith*. It involves obligation and commitment. Loyalty to covenant is shown by *hesed*, love.
      - 2) Covenant in the Ancient Near East: A covenant binds two parties together. There were many forms of "covenant" in the Ancient Near East: between individuals, between equal nations, and between unequal powers. Such covenants were used long before Moses. Making a covenant was usually marked by a ceremonial and eating. An oath was usually given at the end binding the two parties. Usually the weaker

party took the oath. There was a ceremony with the sacrifice of an animal, essentially saying, “May the same thing happen to me as with this animal if I break this covenant.” This was followed by a covenant meal on some ceremony such as exchanging clothing (David and Jonathan).

- 3) Structure of Treaties (following the ancient Hittites)
  - a) Preamble or Introduction: List of attributes, shows power of the king
  - b) Historical Prologue: What the king has done for his vassals
  - c) Stipulations: obligations of weaker are laid out
  - d) Depositing of treaty in temple. To be read periodically
  - e) Gods or elements of nature as witnesses
  - f) Curses and Blessings specifically stated
- 4) Two types of covenants in the Old Testament:
  - Promissory: no formal obligation (Noah, Abraham, David)
  - Obligatory: emphasis on stipulations, blessings, dependent on obedience (Sinai, Adam-Eve)
- 5) Biblical Covenant Concepts
  - a) God used common elements to show profound relationship
  - b) God demands exclusive loyalty
  - c) God is King, Israel is His vassal (shows obligation)
  - d) God is husband, Israel is His wife (mutual love)
  - e) Morality is connected with covenant
  - f) Shows God's love and grace.
  - g) Covenant creates *shalom*, peace
- 6) The Hittite form served as a pattern for the Sinai covenant:
 

1. Preamble	Exodus 20:2a
2. Historical Prologue	Exodus 20:2b
3. Stipulations General	Exodus 20:3-17
Stipulations Detailed	Exodus 21-23:19
4. Blessings and Curses	Exodus 23:20-33
5. Divine Witnesses	Exodus 20:18-26
1. Preamble	Deuteronomy 1:1-4
2. Historical Prologue	Deuteronomy 1:5-4:44
3. Stipulations General	Deuteronomy 6:1-11:32
Stipulations Detailed	Deuteronomy 12-26
4. Blessings and Curses	Deuteronomy 27-28
5. Divine Witnesses	Deuteronomy 29-30; Deuteronomy 30:19
- 7) Covenant Affirmation Rituals
  - Exodus 24
  - Deuteronomy 30
  - Joshua 24

### III. Names for God in the Old Testament and What they Tell Us

#### A. The Basic Theology of Israel

1. Monotheism
2. The Nature of God
  - a. Ancient Near East: nature gods are identified with forces, fate, nature; no moral character. Myth based on natural cycles; localized had not sense of divine guidance or plan. Gods were subject to fate, not in complete control.
  - b. Israel: God is wholly other and not identified with any created; not localized but everywhere. All powerful over creation; personal God; faith in Him based on historical events not cycles of history. He had a plan and purpose for the future. God is not



identified with a place in the OT but with persons and events. God had no help or consort in creation, no pantheon. God did have a heavenly court (Deuteronomy 33:2; Psalm 29:1; Genesis 3:22; 11:7, etc.) but these were never to be worshiped. God is without sexuality. Israel approached theology experientially and not philosophically. See the Shema in Deuteronomy 6:4-6.

- c. God is transcendent (Deuteronomy 26:15; 1 Kings 8:27).
  - d. God is immanent (Exodus 20:24; Deuteronomy 12:11; 14:23; 1 Kings 8:20, 29).
- B. The Divine Names
1. Based on God's relationship and involvement with His people.
  2. One should trust in God's name (Psalms 20:1)
  3. To know name is to know the Lord (Micah 5:3; 4:5)
  4. The name of God was holy and powerful, must be used properly (Exodus 20:7)
  5. God discloses Himself through His names.
- C. Names for God
1. *Yahweh*
    - a. Known as the tetragrammaton *YHWH*
    - b. Other forms include *Yahweh, Yah, Yahu, Yo*.
    - c. Uncertain of vowels and pronunciation
    - d. Too holy for Jews to pronounce (Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 24:11)
    - e. Israel's distinctive name for God beginning with Moses in Exodus 6:2.
    - f. Possibly causative form of the 1st person verb "to be" *hayah*
    - g. "I will be present with you to be whatever you need me to be."
    - h. God without qualifications.
    - i. W. F. Albright: "He who causes to be."
    - j. Vriezen: "I am here for you."
    - k. Brevard Childs: "The name of Jahweh functions as a guarantee that the reality of God stands behind the promise and will execute its fulfillment."
  2. *El*
    - a. Basic meaning in the Ancient Near East of "god" or deity
    - b. Signifies God in His divine nature
    - c. Stresses distance between God and people
    - d. Possibly the oldest name for God
    - e. Denotes power, strength, and authority.
    - f. Genesis 31:53; Exodus 3:6; Genesis 28:13
    - g. Often found in compound names.
- El* in Compounds:
3. *Elohim*
    - a. Most common word for God in the OT.
    - b. Plural of *El*; God is totality of deity; God is all there is. God possesses all divine attributes.
    - c. In Hebrew there are two kinds of plural:
      - 1) plural of number
      - 2) plural of majesty or intensity
    - d. When *Elohim* is used for *Yahweh*, it shows intensity or majesty (Genesis 1:1)
    - e. Eichrodt: it sums up "the whole divine power in a personal unity."
    - f. The verbs that follow this noun are always in the singular.
  4. *El Shaddai*
    - a. Comes from Akkadian for "mountain", meaning "changelessness," enduring strength
    - b. God's exalted and mighty character.
    - c. First used in Genesis 17:1, and occurs most often in the Patriarchs.
    - d. Exodus 6:3; Genesis 17:1; 43:14; 48:3; 49:25; 40 times in Job
  5. *El Elyom*

- a. *Elyom* is a superlative showing the highest or exalted.
  - b. First used in Gen 14:18-24; Often used in Psalms (Psalm 50:14).
  - c. “God most high”
  - d. Shows God’s distance
6. *El Olam*
- a. Found only in Gen 21:33; but the idea is seen in Isaiah 40:28
  - b. “Everlasting God”; “God of ancient days”
  - c. Shows God’s permAncient Near Eastnce
  - d. Similar is the idea that Yahweh is the Living God (Jonah 3:10; Psalm 42:2; Hosea 1:10).
7. *El Ro’i*
- a. Found only in Genesis 16:13.
  - b. “God of seeing”
8. *El Bethel*
- a. Genesis 31:13; 35:7
  - b. God of Bethel (“house of God”)
9. *El Hay*
- a. “God of life,” “the living God,” the source of all life.
  - b. Deuteronomy 5:26; 1 Samuel 17:26, 36; Jericho 10:10; 23:36
10. *Adon/Adonai*
- a. Title of honor; sometimes used for humans.
  - b. By the time of the prophets, it was used only of God.
  - c. “Sovereign master”; “Lord”
11. Lord *Sabaoth*
- a. “Lord of Hosts” (Jericho 32:18b-23)
  - b. “Hosts” means an army, heavens, or stars
  - c. God as a mighty warrior (1 Samuel 17:45)
  - d. Designate God’s exaltedness and omnipotence (Isaiah 23:9; 24:23; Zechariah 3:10)
  - e. Eichrodt: "Lord of all that exists in heaven and earth."
  - f. Not found in the Pentateuch
- D. Titles and Metaphors
1. Holy One *Qadosh*
- a. Joshua 24:19; Isaiah 5:16; 10:17; Habakkuk 1:12; 1 Samuel 6:1; Ps 99:9
  - b. Important theme in Isaiah 1:4; 12:6; 40:25; 60:9
  - c. Shows God’s otherness and sacredness
2. God “Whose name is Jealous” (Exodus 34:14)
3. King *Melek*
- a. Psalms 24:7-10; Jeremiah 10:7; Exodus 15:18;
  - b. Implicit in covenant understanding
  - c. God’s throne is the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant.
  - d. 8th century prophets avoid except Isaiah 6:5; 41:21; 44:6; 52:7
  - e. Messianic in Zechariah 14:16; God as king in the last days
4. Others (not an exhaustive list)
- Judge (Genesis 18:25)
  - Rock (Deuteronomy 32; Psalm 18:2, 31, 46)
  - Shepherd (Psalm 23:1)
  - Shield Stronghold (Psalm 18:2)
  - Light (Psalm 27:1)
  - Strength (Psalm 28:7)
  - Refuge (Psalm 37:39)
  - Sun (Psalm 84:11)
  - Father (Psalm 89:26; Isaiah 63:16)
  - Mother-bird (Psalm 91:4)
  - Help (Psalm 115:9)

Shade (Psalm 121:5)  
Portion (Psalm 142:5)  
Song (Isaiah 12:2)  
Redeemer (Isaiah 41:14)  
Warrior (Isaiah 42:13)  
Potter (Isaiah 45:9)  
Husband (Isaiah 54:5)  
Fountain (Jeremiah 2:13)  
Dew (Hosea 14:5)  
Lion, Leopard, Bear (Hosea 13:7-8)

## Session Five: Exodus and Desert Wandering

- I. Exodus from Egypt and Wilderness Wanderings
  - A. History of the Period
    1. Problems with the Exodus
      - a. There are dating problems because there are no clear links between the exodus and known Egyptian history.
      - b. There is indirect evidence of the known life and customs at the time.
      - c. The Pharaoh is not named in Exodus.
      - d. The route of the exodus and the location of Mt. Sinai is uncertain.
      - e. The Bible gives two different times for the Exodus:
        - 1) 480 years before Solomon's temple (around 958), about 1445 (1 Kings 6:1; a round number for 12 generations each of 40 years
        - 2) Most-likely mid 13th century during the reign of Ramses II, about 1280 (Exodus 1:11)
    2. The Political Scene
      - a. Characteristics of the Period
        - 1) Internationalization
        - 2) Spread of Literature
        - 3) No great empires
      - b. Egypt
        - 1) Egypt was a dominant power in the region
        - 2) 18th Dynasty ejected the Hyksos in 1552
        - 3) Weakness under Amenophis IV (1364-1347) who changed his name to Akhenaten
        - 4) Rise of Hittite Empire arose with Shuppiluliuma (1375-1335).
        - 5) 19th Dynasty with Ramses I (1306-05)
        - 6) Ramses II (1290-1224) fought Hittites
        - 7) Made peace, began major building program
        - 8) Egyptian texts describe a *'Apiru* as state slaves on royal projects
        - 9) Son of Ramses II named Marniptah (1224-1211) in a campaign in Palestine in 1220 mentioned a people called Israel. This is the first known outside inscription mentioning Israel.
      - c. Israel
        - 1) Was in Egypt for 370 years.
        - 2) Time of labor and numerical growth (Exodus 1)
    - B. Moses as Leader

Two parts to the story of Exodus:

      - Escape from Egyptian Slavery (chapters 1-19)
      - Covenant, Law and Tabernacle (chapters 20-40)
      1. Moses is the key person of the book of Exodus.
        - a. Founder of Israel's religion
        - b. Giver of the Law
        - c. Organizer of the tribes
        - d. Charismatic leader
      2. Early childhood (chapter 2)
      3. Early Adulthood
      4. Call of Moses (3-4)
      5. Plagues and Freedom (5-10)

Moses vs. Pharaoh, God vs. god

God brought 9 similar plagues from natural events:

        - a. Nile to Blood
        - b. Frogs

- c. Gnats
- d. Flies
- e. Cattle
- f. Skin
- g. Hail
- h. Locust
- i. Darkness

Literary form is given in three sets of three.

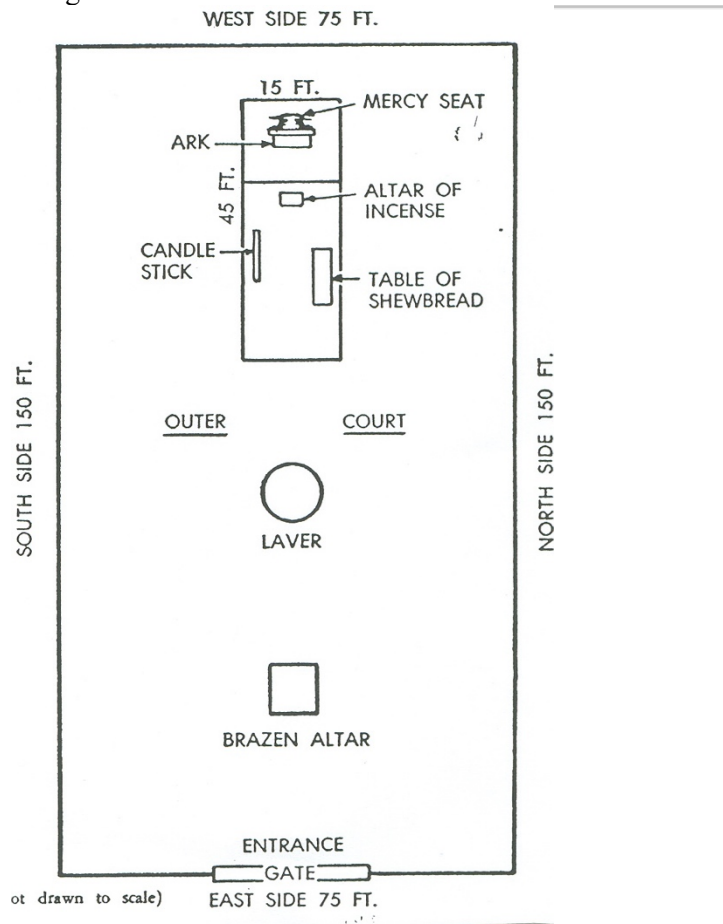
- a. Moses appears before Pharaoh at the river
- b. Moses comes before Pharaoh
- c. Moses and Aaron appear before Pharaoh using symbolic gestures.

The 10<sup>th</sup> plague is unnatural--death of the first born.

- 6. Escape from Egypt
  - a. Passover (11-13)
    - 1) God's protection of people
    - 2) Symbolism: bread of haste, the unleavened bread
    - 3) Description
  - b. Crossing of Sea of Reeds (4)
    - More than Israel's descendants (12:38; Numbers 11:4)
    - God is the Rescuer
  - c. Moses' response: Song of Moses in 15:1-8
    - God is hero, savior and deliverer, not Moses.
- 7. Exodus as Salvation
  - The Exodus stands at center of Israel's faith and self-identity.
  - a. Shows Power of God at work
  - b. Victory over gods of Egypt
  - c. Response to prayer/cries of people
- C. Sinai and Covenant
  - 1. Place of election and covenant
    - a. Undeserved, a people in great need
    - b. Covenant made Israel God's people and confirmed election
    - c. Divine Protection (15-19)
  - 2. Preparations of the people
  - 3. Giving of 10 commandments (20:1-17)
    - 19:3-8 Israel's special relationship with God is described:
      - a. Special possession of God
      - b. Kingdom of Priests
      - c. Holy nation
  - 4. Form of a suzerainty treaty
    - a. Preamble (19:21)
    - b. Historical Prologue (20:2b)
    - c. Stipulations (20:4-17)
      - Divided into relationship with God (vv. 1-4) and relationship with others (vv. 5-10) (see Matthew 22:37-40)
    - d. Depositing of treaty (25:16)
    - e. Curses and Blessings are found in Deuteronomy 28:1-14
    - f. Ratification through sacrifice, meal, and sprinkling of blood (Exodus 24)
- D. God's *Shekinah* and the Tabernacle
  - Chs. 25-31 Plan described
  - Chs. 35-40 Plan carried out

1. Description
  2. Purpose: Place of God's presence among His people
  3. The Ark in History
- E. Disobedience and Discipline
1. Tabernacle building is interrupted by golden calf (32-34)
  2. Moses' Intercession
  3. God's self-disclosure

### Design of the Tabernacle



### F. Leviticus

1. Purpose of the Book
  - a. Name: from Aaron and the Levites who administered the laws
  - b. Context: part of a larger narrative from Exodus 25:1 to Numbers 10:10
  - c. Central Purpose: for instruction of congregation in cultic matters
2. Law in Ancient Israel
  - a. The Giving of Torah
  - b. Two forms of laws
    - 1) Apodictic: in the form of "thou shall/not"; 2<sup>nd</sup> person
    - 2) Casuistic: case by case, situation centered, in the form of "when a man ... he shall..."; 3<sup>rd</sup> person
  - c. Distinctive features of Israel's law code:
    - 1) Monotheism; God and not king is authority
    - 2) Civil and religious law are one

- 3) Everyone is included; a concern for the underprivileged
- 4) High view of people with limited penalties
- 5) Concern for community
- d. Purpose of law: to show a people how to be holy in order to worship a holy God.
3. Six major divisions in Leviticus
  - a. Regulations for making sacrifices 1:1-7:38  
Types of offerings (chs. 4-5):
    - 1) Burnt Offering: whole animal burnt, sign of dedication
    - 2) Cereal or Grain Offering
    - 3) Peace or Fellowship Offering: reestablishes fellowship
    - 4) Sin offering or purification
    - 5) Reparation or guilt offering
 Purpose: to atone for accidental or ignorant sins
  - b. Ordination of Aaron and the first sacrifices at the Tabernacle (8:1-10:20)
  - c. Laws of Ritual Purity (11:1-15:32)
  - d. Liturgy and Calendar for the Day of Atonement (16:1-34)
  - e. Laws for Holy Living known as the “Holiness Code” (chs. 17-26)
  - f. Laws on Tithes and Offerings (27:1-34)
4. The Main Messages of Leviticus
  - a. The Holiness of God
  - b. The Justice of God
  - c. Sin and the need for Atonement
  - d. Important background for Christ's sacrifice on the cross (see the Epistle to the Hebrews)

### Sacrificial System (The 5 Sacrifices in Leviticus)

NAME	REFERENCE	ELEMENTS	SIGNIFICANCE
Burnt Offering	Lev 1; 6:8–13	Bull, ram, male goat, male dove, or young pigeon without blemish. (Always male animals, but species of animal varied according to individual’s economic status.)	Voluntary. Signifies propitiation for sin and complete surrender, devotion, and commitment to God.
Grain Offering also called Meal or Tribute Offering	Lev 2; 6:14–23	Flour, bread, or grain made with olive oil and salt (always unleavened); or incense.	Voluntary. Signifies thanksgiving for firstfruits.
Sin Offering	Lev 4:1–5:13; 6:24–30; 12:6–8	Male or female animal without blemish—as follows: bull for high priest and congregation; male goat for king; female goat or lamb for common person; dove or pigeon for slightly poor; tenth of an ephah of flour for the very poor.	Mandatory. Made by one who had sinned unintentionally or was unclean in order to attain purification.
Guilt Offering	Lev 5:14–6:7; 7:1–6; 14:12–18	Ram or lamb without blemish	Mandatory. Made by a person who had either deprived another of his rights or had desecrated something holy
Peace Offering also called Fellowship Offering: includes: (1) Thank Offering, (2) Vow Offering, & (3) Freewill Offering	Lev 3; 7:11–36	Any animal without blemish. (Species of animal varied according to individual’s economic status.)	Voluntary. Symbolizes fellowship with God. (1) Signifies thankfulness for a specific blessing; (2) offers a ritual expression of a vow; and (3) symbolizes general

			thankfulness (to be brought to one of three required religious services).
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### Feasts of the Old Testament:

Passover (Begins The Liturgical Year) (Pesach) -Signified The Redemption Of Israel	Ex 12:1-4; Lev 23:5; Num 9:1-14; 28:16 Dt 16:1-3, 4-7; Mt 26:17; Mk 14:12-26; Jn 2:13; 11:55; 1 Cor 5:7; Heb 11:28
*Unleavened Bread ( <i>Hag Hamatzot</i> ) -Signified The Sanctification Of The Israel	Ex 12:15-20; 39; Ex 13:3-10; Ex 23:15; Ex 34:18; Lev 23:6-8; Num 28:17-25; Dt 16:3, 4, 8; Mk 14:1,12; Act 12:3; 1 Cor 5:6-8
Firstfruits ( <i>Yom Habikkurim</i> ) This Feast Is No Longer Observed In Rabbinic Judaism (Only The "Firstfruits" Of The Wheat Harvest At The Feast Of Weeks Is Observed Today) -Signified Resurrection Of Israel As A Free People	Ex 23:19; 34:26; Lev 23:9-14; Deut. 26:5,9-10; Matt 28:1; Mk 16:1-2; Lk 24:1; Jn 1:20; Ro 8:23; 1 Cor 15:20-23
*Weeks (Pentecost=50 <sup>th</sup> day In Greek) ( <i>Shavuot</i> Or <i>Hag Hashavuot</i> ) Also Known As Feast Of The Harvest ( <i>Hag Hakatzir</i> ) -Signified The Origination Of Israel As The Covenant People of Yahweh	Ex 23:16; 34:22a; Lev 23:15-21; Num 28:26-31; Dt 16:9-12; Act 2:1-4; 20:16; 1 Cor 16:8
Trumpets ( <i>Rosh Hashana</i> ) Beginning Of The Civil Year. -Signified The Calling Israel To Judgment	Lev 23:23-25; Num 29:1-6; 2sam 6:15; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thes. 4-16
Day Of Atonement ( <i>Yom Kipur</i> ) -Signified The Atonement Of The Covenant People	Lev 16:1-34; 23:26-32; Num 29:7-11; Ro 3:24-26; Heb 9:7; 10:3, 30-31; 10:19-22; Act 27:9; 2ptr 3:7; Rev 17:4 & 20:12
*Tabernacles Also Called Feast Of Shelters Or Booths ( <i>Sukkoth</i> ) -Signified God's Presence With His Covenant People; Looked Forward To The Coming Of The Messiah	Ex 23:16b; 34:22b; Lev 23:33-38; 39-43; Num 29:12-34; Dt 16:13-15; 1 Kings 8:3 & 65; 2 Chr 7:1; Zec 14:16-19; Jn 7:2; Mt24:35; 2 Pt 3:7, 10 & 13; Rev 21:1

### G. Numbers

1. Purpose: a record of 40 years of wilderness wanderings because of sin
2. Three main sections centered on geographical locations:



- a. Sinai and preparations for departure (1:1-10:10)
    - 1) Mustering of the Tribes and care of the Tabernacle (chs. 1-4)
    - 2) Purity in the camp (chs. 5-6)
    - 3) Offerings for proper worship (chs. 7-8)
    - 4) Second Passover (ch. 9)
    - 5) Signals of Service (ch. 10)
  - b. Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran (10:11-22:1)
    - 1) To Canaan (10:11-ch. 13)
    - 2) Compare 10:35-36 with 11:1
      - a) Pattern
        - i) The people complain (11:1)
        - ii) God responds with judgment by fire (11:1)
        - iii) Moses intercedes (11:2)
        - iv) God lessens the punishment (11:2)
        - v) A symbolic name is given to the place (11:2)
      - b) Complaints focused on food (v. 5). Irony with the words “no cost.”
      - c) The people were actually rejecting God (v. 20)
      - d) Decision to Follow or Reject God’s offer (ch. 13)
    - 3) Curse for lack of trust (chs. 14-21)
      - a) Consequences:
        - i) Missed out on the opportunity to go to the Promised land
        - ii) The whole desert generation dies except Joshua and Caleb.
        - iii) God offers again to destroy the people but Moses intercedes (14:12)
        - iv) The ten spies die immediately by plague (14:36-38)
        - v) The people are defeated by the Amalekites and Canaanites (14:39-45).
      - b) Further complains (chs. 16, 20, 21)
      - c) Defeat of Arad a Canaanite king, Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan (ch. 21)
      - d) The desert experience was intended to be a test of the faith and obedience of the people (see Exodus 15:25-26; 16:4), but it was the people who tested God (Exodus 17:2, 7; Numbers 14:22).
  - c. Moab (22:1-36:13)
    - 1) Balaam’s effort to destroy Israel (chs. 22-25)
      - a) Balak, a Moabite, tries to get Balaam, a prophet, to curse Israel. Balaam ends up blessing them 4 times (chs. 22-24).
      - b) Apostasy and Seduction (ch. 25).
    - 2) Second census (ch. 26)
    - 3) Joshua named as successor of Moses (chs. 27-30)
    - 4) Victory over the Midianites and division of Transjordan territory (chs. 31-33)
    - 5) Directions for settlement in Canaan (chs. 34-36)
3. Problems with Numbers
- Four Approaches
- a. Take numbers literally
    - Problem with this: Israel is small and insignificant (Deuteronomy 7:1:, 7, 9). Evidence does not support this. Cities were small then.
  - b. Numbers in the census from the monarchy and mistakenly added here.
    - Presupposes Numbers written during the monarchy.
  - c. Translate “thousands” as “tribes” or “chiefs” but words do not fit in the context.
  - d. The numbers show the majesty of the exodus and are more figurative.
4. Messages
- a. The Presence of God (9:15ff)
  - b. God's Protection of His people
  - c. God was patience even with the grumbling of the people (ch. 11)

- d. Need for intercession between holy God and sinful people (ch. 14)
- e. God is powerful and sovereign over all nations (ch. 22)
- f. A new generation did not follow in the mistakes of the former generation, but was able to enter the Promised Land.

## H. Deuteronomy

### 1. Basic Structure

- a. Three farewell speeches of Moses
  - 1) 1:6-4:43
  - 2) 4:44-26:19
  - 3) 29:1-30:20
 Conclusion 31:1-34:12
- b. General flow of Deuteronomy follows the form of ancient suzerainty covenants but much longer than any known treaties.
  - 1) Preamble (1:1-5)
  - 2) Historical prologue (1:6-4:43)
  - 3) General Stipulations (5:1-11:32)
  - 4) Specific stipulations (12:1-26:14)
  - 5) Divine witness invoked (26:15-19)
  - 6) Blessings and curses (chs. 27-28)
- c. Deuteronomy describes God's covenant with Israel.

### 2. Composition

- a. Complex history of writing and editing.
- b. Diverse theories as to its composition.
- c. It is based on ancient materials.

### 3. Importance of Deuteronomy: it had a significant impact on the life of Israel in 3 ways:

- a. Original setting in the desert
- b. Late monarchy and Josiah's reforms in 621 B.C.  
Samuel, Kings, Joshua, Judges contain traces of the theology of Deut.  
This is called Deuteronomistic. Deuteronomy influenced the prophets.
- c. Return from Exile  
Deuteronomy served as the guidebook for restoration.

### 4. Theological Teachings

- a. Israel's statement of Faith  
Deuteronomy 6:4-10 is known as the *Shema*
  - 1) Uniqueness of God
  - 2) One, monotheism
  - 3) God demands total love
  - 4) Highest allegiance belongs to God  
Israel's faith was not philosophically derived but experiential.
- b. God who is Active in History
  - 1) God acts on His promises
  - 2) God is interested in Israel (4:7)
  - 3) Note verbs with God as actor in chapter 4.
- c. Election of Israel
  - 1) Israel held a special place in God's plan.
  - 2) Key term: Verb "to choose"
  - 3) Purpose of election: Israel's election was to be an instrument to reach the rest of the world (Genesis 12:3).
- d. Concept of Covenant.
  - 1) Begins with love and grace, not power or exchange of equals
  - 2) Israel failed, God never did because of His *hesed* (Deuteronomy 4:31)
  - 3) Covenant gave future hope to prophets for restoration
  - 4) Obedience was the sign of covenantal love of people (8:6; 11:1, 13)

- e. Concept of Sin
  - 1) Obedience brought blessing (11:8-12)
  - 2) Disobedience brought curses
  - 3) Covenant ceremony on Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim (Chs. 27-28)
  - 4) God serves 2 roles: Savior with blessing, and Judge with curses.
  - 5) Worst sin was apostasy or idolatry (29:18-20)
  - 6) Punishment was severe (13:8-10)
- f. What do we learn about God?
  - 1) Love
  - 2) Holiness
  - 3) His plan prevails despite human sin
  - 4) He can turn curses into blessing
  - 5) He is both redeemer, savior, and judge
  - 6) He does not override free will but invites Israel to respond in love.

## Session Six: The Historical Books

### I. Introduction

- A. Called the “Former Prophets” in the Hebrew Bible
  - 1. Focus is on 4 prophets: Samuel: Nathan, Elijah, and Elisha.
  - 2. It criticizes Israel's faulty leaders like the later prophets
  - 3. The prophetic idea is common that God has a plan for history
- B. Sacred history with the purpose of exhortation
- C. Not simply chronology but theology
- D. Complex history of composition with the use of various sources (e.g. Annals of the Kings, units on Elijah, Elisha, etc.) and traditions
- E. Possibly written by the “Deuteronomist historian” in the 7th century.
- F. These books try to explain the question, Why the Exile? (see Joshua 1 with 2 Kings 25:26)

### II. Joshua and the Conquest of Canaan

- A. The Setting of the Conquest
  - 1. The Scene (Joshua 1:1-5)
    - a. Death of Moses and new leadership in Joshua (Deuteronomy 34:9)
    - b. Israelites camped on plains of Moab.
    - c. Fulfillment of promise to Abraham
    - d. Date about 1250 B.C.
  - 2. Main Character: Joshua
    - a. Meaning: “Yahweh is salvation”
    - b. Moses' assistant (Exodus 24:13ff).
    - c. He brought back the good report with Caleb (Numbers 13:8).
    - d. He had a close relationship with God.
    - e. A second Moses and prototype for the kings.
  - 3. The Land of Canaan
    - a. Description
      - 1) Meaning:
        - a) geographical, from the Aramaic word *kn* ' describing the lowlands along the coast
        - b) the chief product of the area, purple dye.
      - 2) A meeting spot of the great powers
      - 3) 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C., Semitic people lived in fortified cities, often associated with Amorites.
      - 4) Around 1900 B.C. a great westward migration began
      - 5) *Conquest was first major cultural shift for Israelites*
        - a) from semi-nomadic to farmers
        - b) adoption of Canaanite ways
        - c) appeal of Canaanite agricultural cult
        - d) breakdown of clan units
        - e) development of industry
    - b. Religion
      - 1) Two of the greatest influences of the Canaanites on the Israelites were their language and religion.
      - 2) Israel did not develop within a vacuum but put its own stamp on anything it borrowed.
      - 3) Characteristics of Canaanite religion:
        - a) “High Places”
        - b) Worship was based on agrarian and seasonal cycles
        - c) Fertility cult
      - 4) Influences upon Israel

- a) agrarian
  - b) sexuality and fertility which governed the natural world
  - c) temple location (1 Sam 9) and architecture (Judges 9:27; 21:21)
- c. Canaan Before the Conquest
  - 1) Political scene
  - 2) Cross-roads for trade
  - 3) Loose configuration of city-states
  - 4) Society centered around a few wealthy and large lower class
- B. Process of Victory
  - 1. Two pictures are given of the conquest in the Bible:
    - a. A sudden and complete conquest in Joshua 1-12; note 10:40; 11:11, 16, 19
    - b. Slowly penetration constant warfare with neighbors during the Judges.
  - 2. External Evidence: Archeological evidence shows that around 1200's (13th cent) a great destruction of many cities took place.
  - 3. Questions remain on
    - a. How many conquests into Canaan
    - b. How much editing has been done to Joshua
    - c. How much of the land was really conquered
  - 4. Concept of Holy War
    - a. Hebrew word for war, *milhamah*
    - b. OT is full of war
    - c. All able-bodied men fought
    - d. Each family and tribe defended itself
    - e. Saul brought together all tribes for first time
    - f. The Conquest was "The Holy War"
    - g. Basic concept: God as King fought for Israel
    - h. Later, human king replaced divine King (See Exodus 15:3; Deuteronomy 1:30; 9:5).
    - i. "Holy war"; Hebrew *herem* meaning "devotion" (Joshua 6:17).
      - 1) Divine command to destroy everything
      - 2) The theological problem: how could a loving God command this? In the culture: religious devotion of people or items was common. God took the Israelites from where they were to where He wanted them.
    - j. Judgment on sins of Canaanites. God commanded destruction of Canaanites only.
    - k. Complete holiness of the people. This was a temporary solution to a long-standing problem.
- C. Main Divisions of Joshua
  - 1. Enter the Land (1:1-5:12)
  - 2. Conquering the Land (5:13-12:24)
  - 4. Dividing the Land (13:1-22:34)
  - 5. Covenant Renewal (23:1-24:33)
- E. Theological Messages of Joshua
  - 1. God's Power is sufficient.
  - 2. God's promises in Abrahamic covenant were fulfilled (21:45).
  - 3. Keeping of Covenant was an ongoing choice (ch. 24).
  - 4. Land of Promise was a basis of hope and judgment (1:13; 11:23).
  - 5. God's redemptive purpose for Israel: the sanctifying of a rebellious people (see Hebrews 3:7-4:11). The call to holy living through obedience of faith.
- F. Theology of the Land
  - 1. The Stewardship of the Land
    - a. God is the owner of the land and the people His servants and only sojourners on it (Leviticus 25:23).
    - b. The giving of a tithe symbolizes God's ownership and Israel's stewardship.
    - c. The land stood at the center of Israelite society.

2. The Concept of Exile
  - a. Jews have lived in the land only 800 out of the last 4000 years.
  - b. Living in the land is a central theme in the OT.
  - c. Exile was also a central theme. Three periods of exile:
    - 1) patriarchs
    - 2) desert wanderers
    - 3) Babylonian exile
3. Theological Concepts concerning the Land
  - a. Land is Promise
  - b. Land is Grace
  - c. Land is Responsibility
  - d. Land is Holiness

### III. The Period of the Judges

#### A. Israel's Basic Problem: Judges 2:3

1. They disobeyed God's commandment to destroy the people of the land.
2. This led to idolatry.
3. The land became a snare to holiness.
4. Judges 2:6-12: Israel forgot God's grace and was unfaithful.
6. God does not give up but refines Israel through the fires of defeat.

#### B. Nature of the Tribal system

1. Politics
  - a. No organized government, only a loose association of tribes centered around covenant with God.
  - b. The Twelve Tribes:
    - 1) named after Jacob's sons
    - 2) Ephraim and Manasseh were created because Levi was priestly.
    - 3) Simeon was merged.
  - c. Elders in each town served as arbitrators in disputes.
  - e. Reoccurring theme: "In those days there was no king and each one did what was right in his own eyes."
  - f. Frequent exploitation by neighbors
  - g. No standing army
  - h. Period of Judges was a movement from semi-nomadic to a settled way of life.
2. Worship: Unified in worship centered around the ark, which was placed at Shiloh, Shechem and other places.
3. Israel and Its Neighbors
  - a. The land was not completely conquered during the conquest.
  - b. Philistines, the biggest threat
    - 1) May have come from Crete in 1200 B.C.
    - 2) Palestine named after them.
    - 3) Coastal people
    - 4) Brought use of iron
4. Problems of the Period
  - a. Most wars were defensive
  - b. A rather weak government
  - c. Inter-tribal conflicts could erupt into civil war (Judges 12:1-6)
  - d. No pure worship of God

#### B. The Role of the Judges

1. Meaning of Judge: Hebrew *mishpat*; Judge was not one to decide a court case; this was the job of the heads of families or priests. A judge was a military leader or deliverer temporarily empowered by the Spirit of God. He or she was a special person raised up and empowered or

anointed by God's Spirit. Not a king, many times just common people, many with flawed characters. Judge not a king: no absolute authority, no hereditary line.

2. Common pattern (3:1-11):
  - a. Inter-marriage, worship of pagan gods
  - b. God brings judgment on them most often in the form of foreign oppression
  - c. The people cry out
  - e. God answers by raising up a military leader to defeat enemies
  - f. People are given rest
- C. The Book of Judges Analyzed
  1. Author
    - a. Anonymous; obvious redaction of ancient traditions
    - b. Song of Deborah (ch. 5), one of the oldest literary pieces of the OT
    - c. Jewish tradition names Samuel as the author
    - d. Process: oral stories, separate written stories (some with different styles), final editing.
  2. Surface problems and Questions on Judges
    - a. The Judges' morality
    - b. Historical Discrepancies
      - 1) Total years possible: 410 years, which is impossible
      - 2) Possible overlap of events and people since Judges were regional
  3. Divisions
    - a. Conquest Summarized (1:1-2:5)
    - b. The Judges:

Othniel	Major	3:7-11
Ehud	Major	3:12-30
Shamgar	Minor	3:31
Barak (Deborah)	Major	4:1-5:31
Gideon	Major	6:1-8:35
Abimelech	usurper	9:1-57
Tola and Jair	Minor	10:1-16
Tola and Jair	Minor	10:1-16
Jephthah	Major	11:1-12:7
Ibzan, Elon, Abdon	Minor	12:8-15
Samson	Major	13:1-16:31
    - c. Inward Disintegration (17:1-21:25)
- D. Key Theological Themes of the Book
  1. God is Savior.
  2. God can use dedicated yet imperfect people.
  3. Salvation Pattern: sin brings punishment, repentance brings restoration and salvation.
  4. God's sovereignty.
  5. Subtle, quiet defense of the need for the monarchy (see 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25).

Two views:

    - a. Theme: absence of authority where kingship is looked upon as a bad alternative. Possible caricature of monarchy in Judges 9:8-15.
    - b. Pro-kingship. The problem with kingship was with the king's disobedience to God and not in there being a king.

#### IV. The Monarchy and the United Kingdom Period

##### A. Transitions

1. A period of significant change  
*This was the second major shift in Israelite culture*
  - a. Shift from a minor tribal mixture to a mighty empire
  - b. Families and clans were replaced by king and people
  - c. New order of centralization and taxation.

- d. David and Solomon modeled their kingdoms after Egypt (1 Kings 4:1-7)
- e. Class consciousness develops; oppression of the poor (Amos 8:4).
- f. Rise of individualism (see Deuteronomy 24:16).
- 2. The Figure of Samuel (1 Samuel 1-7)
  - a. Early Childhood (1:1-3:21)
  - b. Call to Service
- 3. Rise of Philistine power and capture of the Ark (4:1-7:17)
- 4. Quest for Kingship (8:1-12:25)
  - a. Central debate in Israel: monarchy vs. theocracy
  - b. Advantages and disadvantages to Kings
  - c. Pure theocracy did not work, pure monarchy did not work, but theocracy through monarchy worked.
- 5. Basic concept of king
  - a. Hebrew *melek*
  - b. King was not above the law
  - c. He was to be the covenant keeper
- 6. Cultural changes
  - a. Use of a standing army kept enemies away
  - b. Passing power to reign to one's son
  - c. Centralization of the cult around the ark and temple in Jerusalem
  - d. Administrative centralization and lose of tribal identity
  - e. Covenant with Yahweh replaced by loyalty to the king
  - f. Increased urbanization lead to specialization in labor and gap between rich and poor
  - g. Rise in literature and music
  - h. Rise in slave labor, especially by Solomon
  - i. Under David and Solomon Israel reached economic prosperity
  - j. Creation of 12 taxation districts to support the royal court
  - k. Rise in messianic expectations.
    - 1) "Royal Theology": belief that there would always be a descendent of David on the throne.
    - 2) Messiah from *Mashiah*: "to anoint" or "to rub oil on."
      - a) separation to God's use
      - b) God is the authorizing agent
      - c) the accompaniment of divine enablement
      - d) the coming promised Deliverer
- E. Saul: First King or Last Judge? Multi-stage ascension of Saul to the throne (chs. 9-13)
  - 1. Anointed ch. 9
  - 2. Singled out by lot ch. 9
  - 3. Gain popular support ch. 10
  - 4. Rose to fight Ammonites ch. 11
  - 5. Samuel proclaims him king again
- F. Saul's Reign
  - 1. Anointing of Saul by the Holy Spirit: Saul as one of the prophets (10:9-13)
  - 2. Saul the Military Leader (13:1-14:52)
  - 3. Saul's fall (15:1-35)
- G. The Reign of David
  - 1. Ascent to Kingship (1 Samuel 16:1- 2 Samuel 5:10)
    - a. David means "beloved"
    - b. Least in the family, a common pattern in the OT.
    - c. A brave shepherd boy, musician (see 16:18 for description).
    - d. David vs. Goliath (17:1-18:5).
    - e. David vs. Saul (18:6-20:42)
    - f. David as Bandit (21:1-27:12)



- g. Death of Saul and Jonathan (28:1-2 Samuel 1)
- h. David proclaimed king of Judah (2 Samuel 2:1-4)
- i. Civil war and Consolidation of the kingdom (2:5-4:12)
- j. Proclaimed king of all Israel (5:1-5)
- 2. Exercise of Kingship (5:11-24:25)
  - a. Consolidation of Power (5:11-8:18)
    - 1) Got rid of Philistines (5:11-25)
    - 2) Set up a king's court
    - 3) Promoted religious heritage (6:1-7:29)
    - 4) Military success (8:1-14)
    - 5) Administrative and political centralization (8:15-18; 20:23-26)
  - b. David's Leadership (9:1-12:31)
  - c. Compassion to the House of Saul: Mephibosheth (9:1-13; 1 Samuel 20:14-17)
  - d. Abused Power: Sin with Bathsheba and Uriah (11:1-12:31; Psalm 51)
  - e. Tension in David's Court: Rebellion of Absalom (13:1-18:33)
  - f. David Restores Power (19:1-24:21)
- 3. Tension continues on three fronts:
  - 1) Between 10 tribes and Judah, David as pawn
  - 2) Revolt by Benjaminites and Saul's household
  - 3) David's sons were losing control and others taking their places
- 4. Closing of David's reign
  - Chiastic structure
    - A Saul's sin and forgiveness (21:1-14)
    - B List of Heroes and Deeds (21:15-22)
    - C Song of Thanksgiving (22:1-51)
    - C' Oracle of trust: Yahweh through David (23:11-7)
    - B' List of heroes and deeds (23:8-39)
    - A' David's sin and forgiveness (24:1-25)
  - David becomes the paradigm for all other kings.
- 5. Transfer of Kingship (1 Kings 1:1-2:46)
- H. Solomon and the Splitting of the Kingdom
  - 1. Rise to the throne (1:1-2:26)
  - 2. Reign for 40 years (971-931)
    - 1) Wisdom (How wise was Solomon towards the end of his life?)
    - 2) Expanded and consolidated the Empire (see Deuteronomy 17:14-20)
    - 3) Tensions increased in the Empire
  - Interpreted as divine judgment against Solomon's breach of covenant
  - 3. Evaluation of Solomon (1 Kings 11:1-6)
    - Basic problem: compromise and religious syncretism
  - 4. Place of the Temple (1 Kings 5-7)
    - a. Place of contact between God and humanity.
    - b. The center of holiness and blessing for all of Israel.
    - c. Located in Jerusalem or Mt. Zion.
    - d. Designed by Canaanite architects.
    - e. The fulfillment of David's dream (2 Samuel 7:1-2).
    - f. It established Jerusalem as central religious site
    - g. Created national pride and hope.
    - h. Liturgy develops around the temple such as the Psalms.
    - i. The earthly tabernacle is a copy of heavenly tabernacle (Exodus 25:9)
    - j. Yet, there was a common pattern to ancient temples.
    - k. The temple stood for 4 centuries 927 - 587 B.C.
    - l. It was seen as the center of the world (Isaiah 2:1-5).
  - 5. Theology of the Temple:

- a. It is the seat of the divine presence, the house of the Lord.
- b. God's presence there was a matter of grace and could be withdrawn.
- c. God is both immanent and transcendent, immanent in the temple (2 Kings 8:23).
- d. The destruction of temple devastated Israel's religion.
- e. The temple was a sign of Israel's election by God (2 Samuel 24; Psalm 132:13; 68:15; 76:1).
- f. When Sennacherib invaded in 701 and did not destroy temple, it gave a false sense of security (2 Kings 19; Isaiah 37).

V. The Divided Kingdom (1 Kings 12:1-2 Kings 18:12)

A. Kingdom Split with Rehoboam and Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:1-14:31)

1. Rehoboam's mistake in public policy (12:16; cf. 2 Samuel 20:1)
2. Jeroboam's Apostasy (12:25-14:20)

An Ephraimite, northerner, one of Solomon's taskmaster, fled to Egypt. He set up rival shrines of bulls in Dan (north) and Bethel (south), two places of ancient religious pilgrimage. He was likely influenced by Egyptian religion since he had spent time there. People began to merge Yahweh worship with Baal. He was rebuked by a man of God and Ahijah. This marks the turning point in the Monarchy. Jeroboam becomes the paradigm of the evil king. All future kings are compared to David or Jeroboam. The two kingdoms fight each other. The Egyptians raid Judah. This was a period of instability and weakness, a big contrast between Solomon and Rehoboam.

B. Common pattern of evaluation

Two models: David and Jeroboam.

Test is obedience to terms of covenant.

Only 2 southern kings received good evaluation: Hezekiah and Josiah

C. Difficult Days for Israel and Judah (<http://www.biblestudy.org/prophecy/israel-kings.html>)

Date	Kings of Israel	Years Ruled	Rating
930 - 909	Jeroboam I	22	Bad
909 - 908	Nadab	2	Bad
908 - 886	Baasha	24	Bad
886 - 885	Elah	2	Bad
885	Zimri	7 days	Bad
885 - 880	Tibni *	5	?
885 - 874	Omri *	12	Extra Bad
874 - 853	Ahab	22	Worst
853 - 852	Ahaziah	2	Bad
852 - 841	Joram	12	Bad mostly
841 - 814	Jehu	28	Bad mostly
814 - 798	Jehoahaz	17	Bad
798 - 782	Jehoash	16	Bad
793 - 753	Jeroboam II (c.r. 793 - 782)	41	Bad
753	Zechariah	6 months	Bad
752	Shallum	1 month	Bad
752 - 742	Menahem *	10	Bad
752 - 732	Pekah *	20	Bad
742 - 740	Pekahiah *	2	Bad
732 - 723	Hoshea	9	Bad

Date	Kings of Judah	Years Ruled	Rating
930 - 913	Rehoboam	17	Bad mostly

913 - 910	Abijah	3	Bad mostly
910 - 869	Asa	41	Good
872 - 848	Jehoshaphat (c.r. 872 - 869)	25	Good
853 - 841	Jehoram (c.r. 853 - 848)	8	Bad
841	Ahaziah	1	Bad
841 - 835	QUEEN Athaliah	7	Devilish
835 - 796	Joash	40	Good mostly
796 - 767	Amaziah	29	Good mostly
792 - 740	Azariah (Uzziah) (c.r. 792 - 767)	52	Good
750 - 732	Jotham (c.r. 750 - 740)	16	Good
735 - 715	Ahaz (c.r. 735 - 732)	16	Wicked
715 - 686	Hezekiah	29	Best
696 - 642	Manasseh (c.r. 696 - 686)	55	Worst
642 - 640	Amon	2	Worst
640 - 609	Josiah	31	Best
609	Jehoahaz	3 months	Bad
609 - 598	Jehoiakim	11	Wicked
598 - 597	Jehoiachin	3 months	Bad
597 - 586	Zedekiah	11	Bad

c.r. = coregency between father and son

#### D. The Ministry of Elijah

1. Elijah and Yahweh vs. Baal (17-19)
  - a. Elijah issues challenge of no rain (17)
  - b. Battle at Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18)

#### E. Elijah still struggles on against Ahab and Jezebel; the faithful remnant (19:18) Ministry of Elisha (2 Kings 1:1-8:29)

Elisha asks for a double portion of Elijah's prophetic spirit. God confirms by 2 miracles (2:19-25). Elisha serves both as king's adviser and adversary both to Israel and Syria. His ministry was also through miracles. He kept Israel's faith alive during a very dark period. Ministered in the southern Kingdom.

#### F. Fall of Israel (17:1-18:12)

Internal disintegration of the nation; there was a series of quick reigns of kings. Assyria captured northern Israel, king Manetham was forced to pay tribute. External pressure increased. Tiglath-pileser III (745-727) put pressure on Hoshea (732-722) who rebelled against Sargon II and Israel falls. Judah kept its power by paying tribute to Assyria. Under Ahaz Judah becomes a vassal of Assyria. Ahaz exchanged Solomon's altar for a Syrian model. Author of Kings interprets this as the beginning of the end. Assyrians were viewed as God's instruments of judgment (2 Kings 17:7-23). Most of Israel was deported.

#### G. Last Years of Judah (2 Kings 18-25)

Key verse 2 Kings 24:20

1. Hezekiah's Reforms (18:1-20:21) (716-687)
  - The time of the prophecy of Isaiah
  - Two outstanding features of Hezekiah's reign
    - a. He tried to break Assyria's control and rebelled against Sennacherib

- b. He purified Israel's faith and purged it of Canaanite and Assyrian gods. These two events were related. Isaiah prophesied against alliance with neighbors (Isaiah 30:1-3). Hezekiah did go in with Egypt and Babylon which would later backfire. Sennacherib then conquered these and captures 46 towns and took 200,150 prisoners but failed to conquer Jerusalem. Isaiah encouraged Hezekiah not to give in. Hezekiah stands out in Kings as one of the few kings who trusted in God and saw God's deliverance. This created a false sense of security in Jerusalem and the temple with which Jeremiah had problems.
- 2. Manasseh's Rebellion (696-642) (2 Kings 21:1-26)
  - He reversed Hezekiah's policies toward Assyria and turned back to pagan idols. He set up Canaanite Asherah in Solomon's temple. Assessment in 2 Kings 21:9, 16. He came in conflict with the prophets. Prophets began to speak of destruction of Jerusalem. Judgment was inevitable. Judah would join Israel in Exile because of apostasy.
- 3. Josiah's Revival (639-609) (22:1-23:30)
  - a. Ashurbanipal, Assyria's last great leader, died in 626
  - b. Babylon's Nabopolassar leads a revolt against Assyria.
  - c. 621 the law is found in the temple after major renovations, leading to revival. Josiah cleansed land of idolatry and presided over the first Passover in 400 years. Despite Josiah's reforms, judgment was impending. Josiah was killed in battle against Egyptians.
- 4. Fall of Jerusalem (23:31-25:30)
  - a. After Josiah's death, Egypt took control of Judah. Jehoahaz reigns 3 months then Eliakim, named Jehoiakim by Egyptians, was put on the throne by the Egyptians.
  - b. Babylon gains control
    - Nebuchadnezzar defeated Egypt in Palestine and took Jehoiachin and others captive to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar put puppet king Mattaniah on the throne and gave him throne name Zedekiah (597-586). Judah wanted to rebel against Babylon and eventually did so by withholding tribute (taxes). In 588 Babylonian laid siege to Jerusalem for 2 years. Eventually they destroyed Jerusalem temple and the Davidic dynasty ended. Judah's epitaph is found in 2 Kings 25:21. Jeremiah and others fled to Egypt. Jehoiachin was eventually allowed freedom in Babylon by Evil-merodach in 562.

The Fall of Jerusalem was seen as divine judgment. Exile was the fate of both Israel and Judah. The land given as a promise was now taken away. Jehoiachin's brief reinstatement offered hope to the exiles of a better day.

During this whole period we see God's long-suffering. He provides many warnings to the people.

## H. The Book of Chronicles

- 1. Introduction
  - One half of the material can be found in the rest of the OT. It is different than Samuel and Kings. It is a selective and spiritual history with a purpose. It follows the books of Samuel and Kings closely, but has other sources. Sometimes numbers are inflated for rhetorical purposes. David and Solomon are the focus. It presents an idealized view of David. Samuel and Kings present a more real to life view of him. We do not hear about David's sin with Bathsheba but about his sin of numbering the people.
- 2. Structure
  - a. Genealogies from Adam to Post-exilic Judah (1 Chronicles 1-9)
  - b. Reigns of David and Solomon (1 Chronicles 10-2 Chronicles 9)
  - c. Judean Reigns during Divided Kingdom (2 Chronicles 10-28)
  - d. Reigns during Judah alone (2 Chronicles 29-36)
- 3. Historical Perspective
  - Written at least by 400 B.C. and possibly has the same author as Ezra-Nehemiah. He is concerned with events that impact the present situation. Two important themes: grace and

- judgment. He wants people to learn from the past. Now back in land after exile, hard times urges faithfulness to God.
4. Theology
 

Two key verses: 1 Chronicles 17:12 and 2 Chronicles 7:14  
 God had a divine plan with David that incorporated and took over the Mosaic covenant. Word "forever" in 17:12 gave hope that Davidic dynasty would be restored. Faithful temple worship was encouraged. Four model kings are given:

    - a. David (1 Chronicles 15:1-16:36)
    - b. Solomon (2 Chronicles 5-7)
    - c. Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29-31)
    - d. Josiah (2 Chronicles 35)
  5. The Place of the Temple
 

The basis of worship can be seen in 2 Chronicles 7:14: temple was for prayer and confession. Emphasis on the temple as the place to experience the grace of God. We can see a theology of grace in this verse (also in 30:6-9, 18-20; 32:25-26; 33:12-13, 18-19, 23; 34:27). Judgment comes because of disobedience to the law. Individual responsibility before God is emphasized, just as in Ezek. 18. Each generation is responsible to God.

The author emphasizes all Israel, including Samaria and all 12 tribes. He tries to reconcile the differences between the north and south focusing on the centrality of the temple.

## I. Ruth

1. Basic Features of the Book
 

The book is named after its central character, Ruth the Moabitess. It is a beautiful story of dedication, love, faithfulness. No author is stated or assumed. Most likely it came after David's rule, but there is no way to know.
2. Literary Structure
 

Genre of a short story with a simple plot. Story lasts about 6 weeks. 3 main characters: Ruth, Naomi, Boaz. The readers are invited to share in the experiences of these characters. It is organized as a chiasm:

A	1:1-5 Introduction to the family of Elimelech
	1:6-18 Naomi's concern for her daughters-in-law
	1:19-22 Naomi's grief
	2:1-2 Dialogue between Naomi and Ruth
B	2:3-17 Ruth Boaz
	2:18-23 Ruth Naomi
	3:1-5 Naomi Ruth
B'	3:6-15 Ruth Boaz
	3:16-18 Ruth Naomi
A'	4:1-2 Legal process of land, marriage, heir
	4:18-22 Genealogy of David

This is a masterful literary piece. Dialogues not narration move the plot along. Information is disclosed through flashbacks. Repetition of key words.

3. Social Customs that stand behind the text:
  - a. Kinsman Redeemer
 

This person married the widow of a relative so that relative's genealogy could continue. Hebrew word is *go'el* (2:20). This is similar to Levirate marriage described in Dt.25:5-10. The right of marriage goes to the closest relative. Boaz must make sure this relative does not want to marry Ruth.
  - b. Redemption of Land

Ownership of land always had to stay in a family (Lev. 25:25ff). The relative does not want Elimelech's land because to buy it would mean he has to marry Ruth. The sons of Boaz would continue 2 family lines: Boaz and Elimelech.

4. Theological Messages
  - a. God's intervention in crisis situations.
  - b. God's guidance and plan working through natural means in everyday life.
  - c. God welcoming non-Israelites into the covenant since Ruth was a Moabite.
  - d. Example of love and devotion to kinship.

## Session Seven: The Ministry of the Prophets

### I. Eighth Century Prophets

#### A. The Prophet and His Ministry

Prophets were the height of religious and moral development in Israel. They were the end of the old covenant and beginning of the new.

##### 1. Definitions

- a. The English word comes from Greek *prophetes*, “one who speaks for another” (people, God).
- b. Hebrew terms:
  - 1) *nabi*, one who communicates for God
  - 2) *ro'eh*, “seer”
  - 3) *hozeh*, a similar meaning
- c. Prophets were common in the Ancient Near East, but Israel's were unique in many respects.

##### 2. Person of the Prophet

- a. Prophets were called and sent by God for a special purpose.
- b. Used “messenger style” or “messenger formula”: Characteristic phrase: “Thus says the Lord” or “an oracle of Yahweh” (Amos 1:3-5; Jeremiah 2:1-3; Isaiah 45:11-13)
- c. Authority for a messenger was in the one who sent.
- d. Hebrew prophets were independent of any human authority.
- e. They were possessed by the Spirit of the Lord.
- f. There were both male and female prophets in the OT.

##### 3. Message

- a. Concerned primarily with the present or near future.
- b. Proclaimed the *sod* of God, His secret council, advice, direction (Amos 3:7).
- c. Forthteller: preachers to their time, not innovators but traditionalists
- d. Foreteller: messages about the future messages of both doom and hope
  - 1) Doom: Judgment for breaking of terms of the covenant
  - 2) Hope in four ways:
    - a) Return to the land
    - b) Uniting of the People
    - c) King in Davidic line
    - d) New Glory on Mt. Zion
- e. True prophet distinguished from a false prophet by whether his words came true (Jeremiah 23:9-22).

##### 4. Israel's Prophets

Oral prophets and writing prophets called classical prophets. The classical prophets arose during the monarchy with Elijah and Elisha. They were God's counter-balance to the evils of monarchy. There were both royal and cultic prophets. They were independent from the monarchy and depend only on God. Pre- exilic prophets were God's final message of grace and opportunity for repentance. Post-exilic prophets spoke of future salvation and hope, provided transition into apocalyptic.

#### B. Hosea

##### 1. Person of the Prophet

A baker from the north with a message for the north. Prophesied during last part of Jeroboam II reigns and for as long as 40 more years until the fall of Samaria in 721 B.C. Israel had 6 kings in 20 years, half of them assassinated (Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, Hoshea the last king died in exile). People completely rejected God and turned to pagan ways. This was the last generation before destruction.

Hosea learned of God's love and patience to Israel through his personal experience. He lived his message.

2. Structure

The Central theme is the covenant between God and Israel.

- a. Israel's Relationship to God is seen through the marriage of Hosea and Gomer (chapters 1-3).

The key to interpretation is Hosea's marriage. Gomer, a prostitute who leaves her husband to go after others.

Birth of three children:

- Jezreel: God would punish Jehu for the sins against Jezreel.
- Lo-ruhamah: "Not-pitied" showing God's patience had run out; God would no longer show compassion.
- Lo-ammi: "Not my people" God had rejected His people. They were no longer His special possession.

Gomer's unfaithfulness (ch. 3) is compared to Israel's unfaithfulness of Israel seen in worship of Baal.

- b. Denunciation of Pride, Idolatry, Corruption (chs. 4-8).

Hosea's family is no longer mentioned.

Key verse Hosea 6:6-8

- c. Certainty of approaching judgment on Israel (chs. 9-10)  
d. Triumph of Divine Love and Mercy (11:1-11)  
e. Destruction because of Israel's unfaithfulness (11:12-13:16)  
f. Future mercies for the repentant (ch. 14).

3. Messages

- g. Offer of repentance.  
h. Optimism of Grace  
i. Broken relationship.  
j. Divine love  
k. Knowledge of God.

C. Amos

1. Prophet

Shepherd and vine dresser from Tekoa, a short distance south of Jerusalem. Sent to northern kingdom at Bethel (see 1:1; 7:14-15). He was not a professional prophet who got paid for his oracles, just called for a special purpose. Prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah of Judah (767-739) and Jeroboam II of Israel (793-753), time of material wealth for Israel, most likely around 750 B.C.

Assyria and Tiglath-pileser III were minor threats at the moment. People denied that destruction was coming. They had forgotten the conditional part of God's covenant (see Exodus 19:5).

2. Structure

- a. Condemnation of the Nations from their crimes against people (ch. 1-2).  
b. Crimes of Israel and punishment (ch. 3-6). Israel is guilty of the same crimes as the rest of the nations.  
c. Five visions of Judgment (ch. 7:1-9:10). Visions of the plumb line: Israel does not measure up.  
d. Promise of Restoration and Blessing (ch. 9:11-15).

Amos is important because it tells us the internal conditions of the northern kingdom during this time. Jeroboam II had led Israel to great heights militarily and economically, the highest point since David and Solomon. Preoccupation with material goods allowed some in the society to be overlooked. Corruption was everywhere. Wide gap between rich and poor. Temples full of worshipers glorying in their wealth and erotic pleasures,



unaware that destruction was coming. Amos the poor shepherd gives a unique perspective on the prosperity of the people.

3. Messages
  - a. Moral and social decline of the nation.
  - b. Divine election and sovereignty (9:7). God is in control.
  - c. Message of doom and impending judgment.
  - d. Divine Righteousness. God would not tolerate violations of the moral law. The answer was to turn to God and live by His justice in the law. This meant that the people must leave their affluent lives which they were unwilling to do. Hope is the final word in Amos.

#### C. Micah

##### 1. Prophet

From Judah, the town of Moresheth, south of Jerusalem, close to the hometown of Amos. Micah probably knew of Amos and his prophecy. Prophesied during reigns of Jotham (740-732), Ahaz (732-716), and Hezekiah (716-687), 10 years before destruction of Samaria. He preached in both Jerusalem and Samaria. Micah's message was effective and remembered 100 years later by Jeremiah in Jer 26:18f. He lived at the same time as Isaiah.

Micah was concerned about everyday life of the average person. He condemned injustice by those who were supposed to uphold righteousness.

##### 2. Structure of the Book

"Hear" divides book into 3 sections

- a. 1:2
  - b. 3:1
  - c. 6:1
3. Good news mixed with bad news.
    - a. Coming Judgment on Israel (ch. 1)
    - c. Punishment and Restoration of Israel (ch. 2)
    - d. Condemnation of Princes and Prophets (ch. 3)
    - e. Future Glory of the Kingdom (ch. 4-5)
    - f. Prophetic and Popular Religion compared (ch. 6)
    - g. Social corruption condemned, promise of future blessing (ch. 7)
  4. Literary Features  
Stylized alternation between doom and hope.
    - a. 1st warning of Doom (1:2-2:11); woe oracle, both North and South will be destroyed
    - b. Hope of salvation (2:12ff)
    - c. 2nd warning of Doom (ch. 3)
    - d. 2nd message of Hope (4:1-5)
    - e. Oracles of Distress (4:6-5:9)
    - f. 3rd message of Doom (6:1-7:7)Israel had missed true religion (6:8)
  5. Messages
    - a. Modeling the Character of God. Righteousness, justice, morality, ethics.
    - b. Concern for the average person on the street, the landowners, farmers, and peasants
    - c. God would bring judgment. He would use foreign nations to do it. Micah knew the days were numbered.

#### D. Isaiah

##### 1. The Prophet Isaiah

Likely from Jerusalem. He had a long period of prophecy, Uzziah through Manasseh, 40-50 years.

- Isaiah had access to king and priest. His wife was a prophetess. In the apocryphal book, "Assumption of Isaiah," Isaiah died by being sawn in two. He knew world affairs.
2. Vision
 

Ch. 6: the year 740 when Uzziah died. Not a call to be a prophet but a call to a specific task. He had a vision of God and himself.
  3. Mission
 

Two-part message: judgment and forgiveness. People's hearts are hardened, but a seed or remnant remains (6:13), 2 Chronicles 26:22. He saw the fall of Israel and deportation. Assyria had reached the borders of Judah. Note: the events of the time are important for interpreting Isaiah. There were many revolts in empire after Sargon's death in 705. Hezekiah joined revolts and ended up becoming a vassal of Assyria. Judah lost territory, forced to pay tribute.
  4. Authorship of the Book
 

Traditionally Isaiah wrote all.  
 Many modern scholars see two or more authors (chapters 1-39; 40-66), some see three authors (1-39; 40-55; 56-66). The first half is seen as pre-exilic and the last half as post-exilic. This is probably one of the most discussed issues in OT scholarship.

    - a. Arguments for several authors
      - 1) Shift in historical perspective including mention of Cyrus king of Persia (559-530) in 45:1. Chs. 40-66 seem to point to Babylonian captivity. Jerusalem lies in ruins, it is addressed to exiles in Babylon. Critical scholars say that it was impossible for Isaiah to speak to this historical situation.
      - 2) Stylistic changes: change in literary style.
      - 3) Change in theological themes. First half speaks of God's majesty, later speak of his uniqueness and eternity. Messianic king is replaced by messianic servant.
    - b. Arguments for One Author
 

Differences are more perceived than real.

      - 1) Post-exilic standpoint. Israel and Judah had been experiencing exiles for many years with the various deportations.
      - 2) Style is not a sure argument for authorship.
      - 3) Historical situation: Prophecy always addresses present situation but cannot exclude prophecy's ability to tell the future.
      - 4) Theological: the argument by critical scholars is circular and presupposes the thesis. Isaiah shows some progression of thought. There is significant unity to the whole book.
    - c. Authority
 

Modern fragmenting of Isaiah harms its message and relevancy for today. No ancient evidence that Isaiah was ever circulated in two parts. Canonical Isaiah has always contained the same material. The Holy Spirit guided the process no matter what happened.
  5. Structure
    - a. Judgment with Promise (1-35)
 

Focus is on Jerusalem. Isaiah shows Judah's sins and the kings' attitudes toward Assyria. God would cleanse and protect. He would use the nations to purify Judah. In Isaiah we see Yahweh as the universal God of all nations who judges all nations, not just Judah. Judah should learn from Israel's experience and show covenantal faithfulness.
    - b. Historical Interlude (36-39)
    - c. Judgment with Comfort (40-66)
 

The judgment of 1-39 has taken place. Exile in Babylon has come true. Cyrus of Persia enters the scene and becomes God's instrument against Babylon. Central theme of this section is the end of judgment (40:1-5).
  6. Themes
    - a. Character of God
 

The greatest theology of the Old Testament can be found in Isaiah.

- 1) God is holy (6:9; chs. 40-55)
- 2) Yahweh is Savior (chs. 1-39; 17:10)
- 3) God is redeemer (chs. 40-55; 69:9, 16)
- 4) God is the Supreme and only Ruler (37:19; chs. 40-49; 66:22)
- 5) The Spirit of God (11:2; 32:15; 42:1; 44:3; 61:1)
- b. Requirements of God
  - 1) Righteousness (45:8; 1:27; 16:5; 28:17; 11:3-5; 41:2, 10; 51:1, 5, 7; 54:17)
  - 2) Justice (1:21, 27; 5:7, 5:15; 30:18; 28:17; 42:1-4; 56:1)
- c. Servant of the Lord  
Key passages 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12 known as the “Servant Songs”

## II. Seventh Century Prophets

Setting: Israel has been destroyed, Judah is surrounded by enemies; Assyrians are the dominate power; Babylon is soon to rise.

### A. Zephaniah

1. Person of the Prophet
  - a. Hezekiah’s 4<sup>th</sup> generation descendant (1:1).
  - b. Prophesied during Josiah's reign 640-609.
  - c. Contemporary with Jeremiah.
  - d. The first prophet after 50 years of prophetic silence
  - e. Focus is on Jerusalem
  - f. Familiar with the king's court.
- B. Historical situation
  1. Manasseh's evil rule.
  2. Amon no better (2 Chronicles 33:12-19)
  3. Probably prophesied before the reforms of Josiah in 621 B.C.
- C. Message
  1. One Division:
    - a. The Day of the Lord (1:1-2:3)
    - b. Judgment against Foreign Nations: Philistia, Moab and Ammon, Egypt, Assyria (2:4-15)
    - c. Woe and Blessing (ch. 3)
  2. Two-part Division:
    - a. Imminent doom and judgment (1:2-3:7)
    - b. Hope of final deliverance (3:8-20)

### B. Nahum

1. Person of the Prophet
  - a. Name means “Acomforted” or “compassion.”
  - b. Prophecies between fall of Thebes 663 in upper Egypt by the Assyrians (3:8-10) and fall of Nineveh in 612 (1:1; 2:8) by the Babylonians.
2. Literary Features
  - a. Dramatic court scene in ch.1.
  - b. Chapter 2 describes the fall of Nineveh.
  - c. Chapter 3 tells of the evil character of Nineveh.
  - d. Imagery, metaphor, similes (2:7; 3:12), extended figures of speech (2:11f; 3:4-7).
3. Theological Themes
  - a. Silence on Israel's sins and need for repentance
  - b. Focus upon the enemies
  - c. Military tyranny will backfire and cause destruction
  - d. God is controller of all history.

### C. Habakkuk

1. Person of the Prophet
  - a. Little known about him
  - b. Possibly around 625-598 when Nebuchadnezzar attacked Judah
  - c. Prophesied in Judah.
2. Message (1:1, he “saw” the “oracle”)
  - a. Habakkuk’s complaint: God has failed to judge Judah when He should have a long time before (1:2-4).
  - b. God's response is that the Babylonians will judge Judah (1:5-11)
  - c. Why does a righteous God use a wicked nation to judge a more righteous nation (1:12-17)?
  - d. God's answer: a remnant will survive because of their faith; Babylonians will reap what they sow (ch. 2).
  - e. Habakkuk’s response: unwavering confidence in God (ch. 3)
3. Theology
  - a. The life of faith and the rescue of the remnant is based on their faith and dependence on God (2:4; see Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38).
  - b. Honest doubt in faith is okay.
  - c. Wealth and power do not bring real security; only trust in God’s power.

#### D. Jeremiah

1. Person of the Prophet
  - a. Last Prophet before the exile
  - b. Young when called
  - c. Period of Prophecy: from 627 until after the fall of Jerusalem in 587; after that he may have ministered to exiles in Egypt.
2. Composition
  - a. Similar to Deuteronomic school
  - b. Emphasis on covenant and consequences for breaking covenant
  - c. Baruch, Jeremiah’s assistant, may have preserved and collected Jeremiah’s prophecies (see ch. 36).
  - d. Many types of literature (poetry, judgment, promise, symbolic acts, etc).
  - e. Thematic rather than chronological organization
3. Major Divisions
  - a. Part One
    - 1) Jeremiah’s call, Judah's idolatry, Invasion from the North (ch. 1)
    - 2) Oracles against Judah and Jerusalem (early period; chs. 2-6)
    - 3) Oracles against Judah and Jerusalem (middle period, chs. 7-20).  
Jeremiah’s laments in four parts:
      - a) cry of distress
      - b) confession
      - c) petition/request
      - d) praise
    - 4) Oracles against Judah and Jerusalem (latter period, chs. 21-25)
  - b. Part Two
    - 1) Jeremiah and the false prophets (chs. 26-27)
    - 2) Book of Comfort (chs. 30-33)
    - 3) Contrasting Examples of covenant (chs. 34-36)
    - 4) Judah’s last years (chs. 37-39)
    - 5) Gedaliah’s Reign (chs. 40-44)
    - 6) Appendixes 36, 45
    - 7) Oracles against the Nations (chs. 46-51)
    - 8) Historical Appendix ch. 52
4. Jeremiah’s Call (1:9)

- Five characteristics of Jeremiah:
  - a. Personal integrity (15:17f)
  - b. Deep trust and relationship with God
  - c. Courage to stand by convictions
  - d. Passionate hatred for unrighteousness (chs. 1-5)
  - e. suffered with his people out of deep love (14:17)
  - f. Preached doom but also hope in the future (New Covenant and restoration)
- 5. Key Themes in Jeremiah
  - a. Restoration
  - b. Israel condemned and judged itself
  - c. God's Sovereignty
  - d. The power and tenacity of human sin.
- E. Lamentations
  - 1. Use of the Book
    - a. A picture of God's people in time of suffering.
    - b. It shows the emotions after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.
    - c. Read in remembrance of destruction
    - d. Date after destruction while in exile (587-530)
  - 2. Authorship
    - a. Anonymous
    - b. Traditionally Jeremiah based on 2 Chronicles 35:25
    - c. Facts about author:
      - 1) An eyewitness of the events
      - 2) A theologian who knew the causes of judgment
      - 3) A skilled poet
      - 4) A patriot who mourned for his country.
  - 3. Poetic Style
    - a. Acrostics
      - chs. 1-2: 22 verses, 3 lines each, each verse begins with letter from Hebrew alphabet.
      - ch. 4: 22 verses 2 lines each alphabet
      - ch. 3: 66 verses, 22 groups of 3 verses each, each begins with a letter
      - ch. 5: 22 verses no acrostic
      - Using Acrostics:
        - 1) aid in memory
        - 2) show completeness
        - 3) keeps lament focused
    - b. Funeral song over Jerusalem ch. 1
    - c. Complaints of individual (ch. 3) and group (ch. 5)
    - d. Metaphorical descriptions of suffering
  - 4. Theological Meanings
    - a. Addresses the question, why the destruction?
    - b. Comes to terms with false security in the monarchy.
    - c. Crisis of faith that God would allow His holy Zion to fall.

### III. Sixth Century Prophets

#### A. Ezekiel

- 1. Person of the Prophet
  - a. Prophesied during the exile 593-571.
  - b. From priestly family (1:3).
  - c. Taken into exile in 597 with a group of people (33:21).
  - d. Called to be a prophet at age 30 (1).

- e. Married but his wife died which he took as a sign to warn Israel (24:16).
  - f. Lived in his own house in exile and was a counselor to people (8:1).
  - g. Had strange visions and acted out prophecies
2. Life in Exile
    - a. It was not too bad in Babylon
    - b. This was a time when difficult questions were asked
  3. Authorship
  4. Contents
 

Thirteen different dates given (1:2, 8:1; 20:1; 24:1; 26:1; 29:1; 29:17; 30:20; 31:1; 32:1; 32:17; 33:21; 40:1).

Three parts to the book:

    - a. Judgment on Israel chs. 1-24
    - b. Judgment on the Nations chs. 25-32
    - c. Restoration of Israel chs. 33-48
  5. Features of the text
    - a. Allegories
      - 1) Jerusalem as a vine ch. 15
      - 2) Jerusalem as Yahweh's wife 16:1-43
      - 3) Imperial Eagles 17:1-21
      - 4) Davidic Dynasty as a lioness 14:1-9
      - 5) Davidic Dynasty as a vineyard 19:10-14
      - 6) Sword of judgment 21:1-17
      - 7) Two Corrupt Cities 23:1-35
      - 8) Caldron of Destruction 24:1-14
    - b. Symbolic or dramatic actions
      - 1) Sketches Jerusalem on a brick 4:1-3
      - 2) Lies on left side 390 days, right side 40 days 4:4-8
      - 3) Eating exiles rations 4:9-17
      - 4) Shaves hair, weighs and burns it 5:1-12
      - 5) Digs way through a wall takes exiles baggage with him 12:1-12
      - 6) Sets up crossroads for Babylonian army 21:18-23
      - 7) Loses wife in death 25:15-24
  6. Major Themes
    - a. Son of Man
    - b. Characteristic phrase "I am Yahweh" (6:7, 14; 7:4, 27; 11:10, etc.).
    - c. Visions of God called theophanies
    - d. Attention called to disobedience of covenant terms and the consequences chs. 4-6
    - e. One cannot blame past generations; each is held accountable for its own sins (18:4-9). It is not too late to repent, even in exile (18:21-23).
    - f. Essential themes given in summary form in 28:25-26; 37:25-28; 39:23-29.

## B. Obadiah

1. Person of the Prophet
 

Prophecies against the abuses of Edomites who abused Judah when Jerusalem fell. Shortest book in the Bible. Not much is known about author, date, or historical situation. Name means "Yahweh's servant or worshiper", common name used 12x in the OT. Came possibly from Judah but no way to know for sure.
2. Divisions of the Text
  - a. Vision concerning Edom and its destruction (vv. 1-14)
  - b. Description of the Day of the Lord (vv. 15-21)
3. Historical Situation
 

Various dates have been argued from 889 to 312 B.C. Tension with Edom can be traced back to Esau and Jacob (Gen 25:23; 27:39). Edom quickly surrendered when Babylon invaded and

helped in the capture of Jerusalem (see Lamentations 4:21; Ezekiel 25:12; 35:10). Edomites later became known as Idumeans in Greek. Herod the Great was an Idumean. Geographical note: Edom was Southeast of the Dead Sea.

#### 4. Theological Messages

Edom symbolized self-sufficiency, pride, greed, and cruelty, lack of compassion, national arrogance. These were Israel's problems too.

God demands righteousness, God's sovereign rule.

Evil will reap evil (v. 15).

Obadiah is similar to Jeremiah 49:7-22 and the prophecies of Joel.

We see a strong nationalistic spirit in this book.

### IV. Prophets of Unknown Dates

#### A. Joel

##### 1. Person of the Prophet

Nothing about him is known except the name of his father, Pethuel. Joel knows about the temple and its ceremonies. First two chapters may have been used for liturgical services.

##### 2. Date

Traditional dated during reign of Joash (835-796) or after exile (5th century or later).

##### 3. Messages

Two parts

##### a. Locust Plague and Day of the Lord (1:1-2:17)

There is much debate on what the Locust plague actually was:

Literally: Locusts were common in that area.

Symbolically: locusts are invading human armies.

Apocalyptic: future invasion during the last days.

##### b. Coming Victory and Outpouring of the Spirit (2:18-3:21)

##### 4. Theological Importance

a. God is in complete control of nature

b. Human plight is tied up with nature. Human sin can destroy nature.

c. God's compassion but also reality of God's judgment.

d. Joel's prophecy is the fulfillment of Numbers 11:29 and is fulfilled in Acts 2:17-21.

#### B. Jonah

Unique because it tells of the prophet's experience and not a message. The story of Jonah is his message.

##### 1. Story of Jonah

a. First command: Jonah was commanded to prophecy against Nineveh. He flees to Tarshish, the opposite way from Assyria and the Lord (1:3). God brings a storm; sailors pray to their gods but nothing happens. Finally they threw Jonah into the sea where he is swallowed by a fish, spending 3 days and nights in fish, he is spit up on beach. Ch. 2 is Jonah's prayer.

b. Second command: God gives Jonah a second chance and Jonah obeys. Nineveh responds, to Jonah's surprise and dismay. Jonah complains to God (4:2). God brings a plant to protect him from the sun, but it withers the next day. Jonah's selfishness is contrasted with the need of Nineveh.

##### 2. Problems of Interpretation

a. Debate on whether this is history or a story. Should we take it literally or figuratively? How we answer this does not impact on its value as scripture.

b. Date of Book: After the exile but may contain older material. Similar thoughts to 6th and 7th cent works such as Nahum, Jeremiah, Joel, some late Psalms.

##### 3. Structure

Two parts

Jonah's Disobedience 1:1-2:10, Jonah's response to God

Nineveh's Obedience 3:1-4:11, Nineveh's response to God

Themes in first part are tested and prefigure responses in the second part.

4. Messages
  - a. God's love/mercy to all people (John 3:16)
  - b. Narrow views shown by Jonah/Israel are not good.
  - c. God's call to the lost.



## Session Nine: Exile and Restoration

### I. Destruction and Exile

#### A. The Changing World Scene

1. Effects of Exile
  - a. Questions of Faith
  - b. Scattering known as the Diaspora (Deuteronomy 28:64)
  - c. Loss of National Identity
  - d. Loss of Leadership
  - e. Shattering of Davidic Dynasty
  - f. The loss of the land promised by Yahweh to Abraham.
  - g. Loss of the priesthood and sacrificial system
  - h. Two things happened during this period:
    - 1) Some fell away never to return
    - 2) Some strengthened their faith.

#### B. The Political Situation

##### 1. Fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire

- a. Crumbling began after Nebuchadnezzar because the empire was built around the power of one man. There were a number of short-lived reigns, marked with internal strife and religious rebellion.
- b. The Babylonians did not like their last king, Nabonidus, and were ready for a change of leadership.
- c. The prophets foretold of Babylon's fall and a future hope for the Jewish people (see Jer. 50-51).

##### 2. Rise of the Persian Empire

The Persian Empire was centered in what is now modern Iran.

- a. Cyrus II (559-530) revolted against the Medes and created an empire. He conquered all of Mesopotamia, Western Asia, all the way to the border of Egypt. With only Babylon left, hope was renewed among the exiles. Cyrus then conquered Babylon in 539 without a fight and called himself the Liberator of the Babylonians. The Persian Empire lasted until the conquests of Alexander the Great in 331.
- b. Cyrus was known as the Liberator of conquered peoples. The famous Cyrus Cylinder tells of Cyrus' victory over Babylon with the blessings of the Babylonian god Marduk, and also his political policy. A Jewish interpretation of this policy can be found in Ezra 1:2-4 in Hebrew and in 6:3-5 in Aramaic. He was one of the greatest and most respected leaders of history.
- c. Change in Political Policy under Cyrus  
The Babylonians deported all their captured people and subjected them to their form of worship. Cyrus, however, provided . . .
  - 1) Great degree of self-rule.
  - 2) Respected customs and beliefs of conquered peoples.
  - 3) Allowed native princes to reign.
  - 4) Allowed people to worship their own gods.

#### C. The Book of Ezra-Nehemiah

##### 1. Composition of the Book

It is named after the principle characters; it was one book in the Hebrew canon and was divided into two books around the 5th cent. A.D.

It covers two periods:

- a. return from Exile and rebuilding of the temple (538-516; Ezra 1-6).
- b. Establishment of Community (Ezra) and physical surroundings (Nehemiah) (Ezra 7-Nehemiah 13; 458-ca 420).

Nehemiah's memoirs in ch. 3-7 are resumed in chs. 11-13.

2. Literary Nature

Two narrative blocks

- a. Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel (Ezra 1-6)
- b. Ezra narrative (Ezra 7:1-10:44; Nehemiah 7:73-10:39)
- c. Nehemiah narrative (Nehemiah 1:1-7:71; 11:1-13:31)

Sources used:

- 1) Memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah
- 2) Documents and letters (edict of Cyrus, Artaxerxes, Aramaic letters)
- 3) Lists inventories, families, returnees

3. Authorship

Some have argued this was the same author as Chroniclers, but there is a different style and vocabulary, and theology. Book itself ends around 400, which seems a likely date.

4. Significance of Ezra-Nehemiah

- a. Law and Temple replaced trust in Zion and Davidic Dynasty
- b. Ezra was the primary architect of the new Israel, a second Moses who knew the law.
- c. Nehemiah was a man of prayer.

5. Theology

- a. The post-exilic community continued ancient Israel as one people of God.
- b. Re-establishment of the Passover and Feast of Booths.
- c. New Israel focused on religion and not nation, the way God intended it. Spirit-identity.
- d. New identity centered in temple and Torah.
- e. Divine guidance of foreigners such as in the Cyrus decree. God intervened in history to help His people.
- f. Hope in the future restoration of Israel as a nation, expectation that the story was not done yet.

D. Restoration

1. Rebuilding the Temple: A New Beginning

a. Obstacles to Getting Started

- 1) Short-lived effort of Shesh-bazzar who was commissioned by Cyrus to rebuild the temple.
- 2) Palestine now a strange land, only the oldest people could remember the old kingdom.
- 3) Difficult and long journey took 4 months and a distance of 900 miles.
- 4) Leaving a settled life in Babylon. Many of the Jews had respectable jobs, made good livings, and had families. Why pick up and move now? Only a fraction returned in 538. A significant portion remained in Babylon to become a center of Jewish scholarship produced Babylonian Talmud.
- 5) Going to ruins. Not much was left of Jerusalem after the Babylonians had finished with it.
- 6) Poor economic conditions. There were few resources in Judah and those who did return experienced years of poor crops (see Haggai 1:9-11; 2:15-17).
- 7) Hostility from Neighbors. The Samaritans to the north and others around Judah felt threatened and did not want the Jews to return and build a new kingdom.

b. Rebuilding Under Zerubbabel and Jeshua beginning in 537.

Zerubbabel was grandson of King Johoiachin, thus a descendant of David. Hopes were placed in him to be the Messianic king and begin again the dynasty of David. He was the civil leader, whereas, Jeshua the High Priest was the religious leader.

2. Rebuilding of the Second Temple

- a. Altar was built first and then the sacrificial system reinstated (Ezra 3).
- b. Efforts were made at returning to the requirements of the Law found in Leviticus 1-7.

- c. The temple had been destroyed in 587 by the Babylonians. Work had begun in about 534 but not finished until 515. Zerubbabel and Jeshua got only as far as the foundation when there arose. . .
  - d. Opposition from Samaritans for political and religious reasons. The Samaritans later built their own temple on Mt. Gerizim. To the Jews, Samaritans were corrupted half-breeds. The enemies convinced King Artaxerxes to order rebuilding to stop (Ezra 4).
3. Inspiration of the Prophets to finish the Temple
- a. Haggai (520)
    - 1) Person of the Prophet  
Hebrew *Hag* meaning "festival". Some have suggested he was a priest, but there is nothing to prove it.
    - 2) Messages/Oracles
      - a) 1:1-11 to Zerubbabel and Jeshua and remnant. People care for themselves not God. Put God first by building His house the temple.
      - b) 2:1-9 People disappointed in this temple compared to the previous one. Haggai tells people that God's presence was there.
      - c) 2:10-19 Call to repentance for sins and not building altar. Uncleanness is more contagious than holiness.
      - d) 2:20-23 to Zerubbabel; Messianic, looking for Davidic dynasty through Zerubbabel.
    - d. View of Life through Haggai:
      - a) Central Theme of the book is Priorities. God deserves first place in our life.
      - b) God is distant because of a lack of commitment by the people.
      - c) God is willing to bless the people if the people would just seek Him.
      - d) People have houses to live in but God does not. The people had put themselves first and God last.
      - e) The rebuilding of the Temple was the condition for the return of God among His people.
  - b. Zechariah (520-518)
    - 1) Person of the Prophet  
Contemporary with Haggai. Name means "Yahweh remembers"; likely both priest and prophet, from the family of Iddo. He played an important role in the rebuilding. He is known for his visions.
    - 2) Two-part division to the Book
      - a) chs. 1-8 Dated prophecies of visions and oracles. Topic: rebuilding the temple. Three parts: 1:1-6; 1:7-6:15; 7:1-8:23; all introduced by date formula.
      - b) chs. 9-14 Temple not mentioned, different style
    - 3) Messages
      - a) The temple is the seat of God's rule.
      - b) He longs for a new day under Messiah and High Priest
      - c) Power to complete the temple comes by God's Spirit
  - c. Malachi
    - 1) Composition  
Addressed to Jews of 2nd temple period. Originally possibly anonymous and became attached to Zechariah because of common themes, it makes minor prophets 12 in number. Malachi means "my messenger" in Hebrew; it may not be a personal name (1:1; 3:1).
    - 2) Date: Later or contemporary with Ezra (458 or later).
    - 3) Situation: The return from exile had not brought the hoped for changes. Ezra was exclusive, no intermingling with outsiders. Malachi is inclusive to foreigners and God's concern for all nations. Both views need to be balanced.
    - 4) Style of Writing: "Disputation" or question-answer format:
    - 5) Outline:

Superscript 1:1	God loves Israel
1st dispute 1:2-5	God deserves honor
2nd dispute 1:6-2:9	God hates divorce
3rd dispute 2:10-16	God is just
4th dispute 2:17-3:5	Tithing shows repentance
5th dispute 3:6-12	God is just
6th dispute 3:13-4:3	
1st Epilogue 4:4	
2nd Epilogue 4:5-6	
Characters in the disputes: Yahweh, people, priests, prophets	

- 6) Theological Messages
  - a) Name for God is *Yahweh Sabaoth*, God of the army of heavenly hosts
  - b) Covenants: Levi (2:4,5,8); Fathers (2:10); marriage(2:14); messiah (3:1)
  - c) God's Love to Israel, but also to all nations
  - d) Apocalyptic themes begin to emerge for 2 reasons:
    - 1) outcasts, powerless looked for a new day and for vindication known as ...
    - 2) Day of Yahweh, which included punishing of wicked (3:1-2), reward for righteous (3:17-18; 4:2).
  - e) Expectation of a forerunner like Elijah (4:5) before messianic king. Fulfilled in John the Baptist.
  - f) Give our best and first to God (tithes).

#### E. Esther's Salvation

1. Persian Rulers:
  - a. Rebellion in East and Suicide of Cambyses (530-522)
  - b. Darius claims throne (522-486)
  - c. Xerxes also called Ahaseurus in Hebrew (486-465)
  - d. Artaxerxes (465-424)

This book takes place during the reign of Xerxes.  
The book covers the time from 483-473.  
It fits between Ezra 6-7.
2. Esther's Salvation

Chief characters: Esther, Xerxes, Mordecai, Haman  
God's name is not mentioned in this book.  
Esther risks her life to stop the evil plot of Haman to kill all Jews.
3. Condition of Jews

Prosperity in Babylon, poverty in Palestine
4. Outline:
  - a. Ahasuerus' Court: Esther becomes Queen (1:1-2:23)
  - b. Haman's Plot to Kill the Jews (3:1-4:17)
  - c. Mordecai and Esther Work to Save Their People (5:1-7:10)
  - d. The Jews Delivered 8:1-10:3

## Session Ten: The Wisdom Literature

Wisdom describes both a type of literature as well as a way of thinking. Wisdom is not a matter of intelligence or cleverness or skill, but a matter of one's orientation to God. It looks at the way God works in the world. It has common themes with wisdom from the Ancient Near East. Jerusalem became the intellectual center of its day. Wisdom shows God is measure of all things, not humanity, as the Greeks thought.

### I. Types of Wisdom Literature in the Ancient Near East

- A. Proverbial wisdom. Can be found in two forms: Commands (Proverbs 8:33) or short "sayings" (Proverbs 14:31)
- B. Contemplative or speculative wisdom: stories, dialogues that deal with problems of human life: divine rejection, illness, suffering of righteous
- C. Characteristics of Biblical Wisdom
  1. a universality of all wisdom
  2. emphasizes individuals and families and not nation like in prophecy
  3. no reference to Old Testament themes such as election, covenant, history

### II. Job

The book deals with the dilemma: Why does God let good people suffer? Job is about as good as they come. Job and his friends try to solve the problems on the human level, unaware of deeper forces at play. The answer to Job's problem has to wait until the New Testament and the cross. Uz was east of Palestine in Edom or possibly in the Haran S. of Damascus.

#### A. Composition

Job was a wealthy sheikh of the patriarchal period. This is a very old story and shares common features with the Patriarchs. It was possibly handed down orally and written down possibly around 700 to 600, probably pre-exilic.

#### B. Authorship

Unknown, author possibly experienced what Job did, found release from suffering in God, knew the wisdom tradition, an Israelite.

#### C. Structure

1. Prologue (prose) (ch. 1-2)
2. Speeches (poetry) (3-42:6)
  - a. Dialogue (3-28)
  - b. Speeches of Individuals (29-42:6)
3. Epilogue (prose) (42:7-17)

#### Six scenes

1. Two-part drama: Job's prosperity and God's test (1-2)
2. Job's Despair God's silence (ch. 3)
3. Three accusers, one defender, three speeches each (chs. 4-27)
4. Interlude on the mystery of wisdom (ch. 28)
5. Job's protest against Heaven (ch. 29-31).
6. Elihu's four speeches to correct Job and His friends (chs. 32-37).
7. God silences debate by questions no one can answer (chs. 38-41).
8. Job is vindicated and restored (health, wealth) (42:7-17)

#### D. Theological Messages

1. God is free to do as He wishes.
2. God's creation is under God's power. Satan is against human good/well-being.

3. Good is not always repaid by blessings.
4. God's purposes are beyond our comprehension. God can work through suffering for our good.

### III. Proverbs

- A. Proverbs does not state everything about a truth but points to it. They are brief and concise for easy memorizing. It uses figurative language and suggestion rather than detail. We must understand the basic intent of the proverb and not take it as universal truth (example, Proverbs 16:3). Proverbs is a guidebook for successful living. Obedience is called "fear of the Lord (1:7). The final editing was likely around 5th cent. B.C. but most of the contents are much older.
- B. Contents
  1. 1:1-6 General introduction and setting of Book
  2. 1:7-9:18 Importance of Wisdom
  3. 10:1-22:16 Proverbs of Solomon
  4. 22:17-24:22 Words of the Wise
  5. 24:23-34 Additional Sayings
  6. 25:1-29:27 Proverbs of Solomon copied by Hezekiah's wise men, see 25:1.
  7. 30:1-33 Words of Agur, possibly Arabian, descendent of Ishmael
  8. 31:1-9 Words of Lemuel
  9. 31:10-31 Description of Excellent Woman

### IV. Ecclesiastes

#### A. Characteristics

Philosophy of cynicism, much like modern existentialism: enjoy life as much as you can while you are alive because that is all that God has provided for you.

It serves as a reminder in the Bible of the emptiness of human wisdom. The comparison is seen in 12:13-14. All except these last two verses show a life lived without God or fear of God. It shows a life with no thought of eternity. Reading Eccl leaves one unsatisfied, leaves one hungry for God. It serves the purpose of leaving the reader wondering if there is more to life.

Name: English is Greek translation of the Hebrew *qohelet* "one who convenes a congregation." presumably to preach to it, hence a preacher.

Sometime around Jesus' birth, its place as canon was questioned by some but eventually those in favor won out.

Date: Rabbis viewed Solomon as the author based on 1:1, but the vocabulary and grammar are post-exilic. This past century has argued for 400-200 B.C.

Author: A wise man who wanted to challenge common perceptions. An Israelite who stood in tradition of wisdom. Solomon as the wisest of all is appealed to as an authority. Solomon's situation is only used in the first two chapters then no more.

#### B. Purpose and Theme

It uses the themes of tradition wisdom and revises them. It is against simple generalizations.

Traditional predictions for the wise and foolish are in error. Like in Job, God's ways are beyond human comprehension (6:12). Humans have over-valued their accomplishments (1:2). The preacher begins with the conclusions and spends the rest of the time showing how he came to those conclusions. We need to enjoy the simple things in life (2:24; 12:13).

#### C. Literary Features

1. Reflections of the author (e.g. 1:13, 17, 14, 16; 2:1; 3:16; 4:1, 7, 9:11)
2. Proverbs: statements of truth (5:10), commands (11:1), comparison of two types of conduct.
3. Rhetorical questions force readers to agree with 1:2.
4. Descriptive language, especially in 12:2-7

#### D. Theological Messages

1. Limits of human wisdom compared to God's sovereignty: We cannot alter the course of history (1:15). We are bound to this world. We cannot know God's ways (ch. 7-11). We can plan the future, but it is God who makes it happen (3:11).
2. A Realistic view of life: God is the source of life. Death is a reality that cannot be avoided. This should cause us to think carefully about how we live. There is nothing wrong with enjoying the simple things of life because they are God's gifts.

#### V. Song of Solomon

The name comes from 1:1. It was accepted into the canon because of its association with Solomon, but some Jews did not want it included.

##### A. Authorship

Text claims Solomon, but the love and loyalty expressed do not fit Solomon's marriage pattern. Grammar, vocabulary, Aramaic influence suggests late composition or at least editing. Descriptions in the text match the splendor of Solomon's reign. There is a lack of historical references in the text. It may have been handed down orally from Solomon's time and later written down.

##### B. Literary Features

A love poem, conversation between loved and beloved, rich and graphic imagery for love and body parts. Absence of religious connotation.

##### C. Ways to Interpret

1. Allegorical
  - Early Jews saw it as a picture of God's love for Israel.
  - Early Christians saw it as a picture of Christ's love for the church.
2. Dramatic: A beautiful play
3. A Wedding Song
4. Liturgical use in worship
5. Funeral Rites
6. Love Song
7. Parable of the Human Love

##### D. Organization

1. Longing and discovery 1:2-2:7
2. Invitation, suspense, response 2:8-3:5
3. Ceremony and satisfaction 3:6-5:1
4. Frustration and delight 5:2-6:3
5. Pomp and ceremony 6:4-8:4
6. Passion and commitment 8:5-14

## Session Eleven: Poetry

### I. The Psalms

#### A. Hebrew Poetry

The chief characteristic is repetitions of various types called parallelism. Parallelism is a balance in thought, sound, or logical rhythm. Main Types of Parallelism:

1. Synonymous Parallelism: second line expresses an identical or similar thought to the first line; grammatical units match. Example Psalm 103:3, 3:3 meter
2. Antithetic Parallelism: second line expresses thought in sharp contrast to the first line. Proverbs 15:1.
3. Synthetic Parallelism: not a true parallelism; thought is extended but the balance or parallelism is lost. Psalm 27:6a
4. Stair parallelism: new elements are added in the following lines building to a climax. Psalm 29:1-2a

Other features of Hebrew Poetry include images, similes, figures of speech, personification

#### B. Details of the Book

1. Name: Psalms comes from the Septuagint meaning "to pluck" as in instruments, hence "song". The Hebrew name *tehillim* means "praise" "songs of praise". The Septuagint includes Ps. 151, combines Ps. 9-10, divides 147 into 146 and 147. In between Psalms 10-147, the numbers are one less than the Hebrew text.
2. Structure is organized into 5 books: 1-41, 42-72, 73-89, 90-106, 107-150
  - a. Each book ends with a doxology which praises God for His revelations in these books.
  - b. The first half is characterized by Laments, the second half is characterized by Praises.
  - c. God is the focus of the whole collection.
  - d. There are different authors or sources for the psalms: David, various choirs, some are anonymous.
  - e. Various literary types: complaint, praise, thanksgiving, instruction.
  - f. Alphabetic acrostics: Psalms 9-10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145

#### C. Types of Psalms

##### 1. Laments

- a. Help a person express struggles, suffering or disappoint to God.
- b. Types
  - Individual, such as illness, persecution. (3, 22, 31, 39, 42, 57, 71, 120, 139, 142)
  - Corporate, during national crisis (74) (12, 44, 60, 74, 79-80, 83, 85, 90, 94, 137)
- c. Basic Elements
  - 1) Address to God and a cry for help
  - 2) Reference to God's past work of salvation
  - 3) Description of suffering or crisis
  - 4) Trust based on God's past care
  - 5) Petitions
  - 6) Confession, statement of innocence
  - 7) Promise of praise and testimony
  - 8) Confidence in God's answer

##### 2. Thanksgiving

- a. Expressions of joy to the Lord because something had gone well. Recognizes God's faithfulness, protection, and benefits.
  - Six corporate (65, 67, 75, 107, 124, 136)
  - Ten individual (18, 30, 32, 34, 40, 66, 92, 116, 138)
- b. Elements
  - 1) Resolve to give thanks



- 2) Introductory summary
  - 3) Poetic collection of the time of need
  - 4) Report of the Petition and rescue
  - 5) Generalized teaching
  - 6) Renewed thanksgiving
5. Hymns of Praise  
They contain 3 elements:
- a. Call to worship and praise
  - b. Description of God's acts which are motivation for praise
  - c. Conclusion calling for praise or obedience
- Types of Hymns:  
Praise for who God is and God's greatness and goodness to all creation (8, 19, 104, 148);  
protector of Israel (66, 100, 111, 114, 149), as Lord of History (33, 103, 113, 117, 145-157)  
Victory songs (68)  
Procession songs (84, 122, 15, 24, 132, 87)  
Hymns of Zion (46, 48, 76)  
Enthronement hymns (47, 93, 96-99)
6. Salvation History Psalms  
Review the history of God's saving acts among Israel (78, 105, 106, 135, 136)
7. Psalms of Celebration and Affirmation  
renewal of covenant (50, 81), Davidic covenant psalms (89, 132),  
kingship or royal psalms (2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 144),  
enthronement psalms (24, 29, 47, 93, 95-99). Psalms of Zion (46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122)
8. Royal Psalms  
Centered on Israel's king and his role in pre-exilic worship and expectations of covenant.  
Types:
- a. Weddings (45)
  - b. Coronations (2, 21, 72, 110)
  - c. Prayers before or after battle (20)
  - d. Others included in above categories (89, 18)
9. Wisdom Psalms  
Style and language of wisdom literature
- a. Sentence wisdom psalms (127, 128, 133)
  - b. Acrostic wisdom psalms (32, 37, 112)
  - c. Integrative wisdom psalms, center on wisdom. Themes especially relationship between wisdom and Torah (1, 32, 49, 36, 37, 49, 73, 112, 127, 128, 133)  
Wisdom and wise life are praised
10. Psalms of Trust  
God can be trusted (11, 16, 23, 27, 62, 63, 91, 121, 125, 131)
- D. Deciphering of Titles and Technical Terms  
Five categories
1. Collections, compilers, authors
  2. Psalm Type
  3. Liturgical purposes and usages
  4. Technical music terms
  5. Historical notes

## **Session Twelve: The Intertestamental Period and Introduction to the New Testament**

### **I. Daniel and Apocalyptic**

## A. Genre: Apocalyptic

1. Description of Apocalyptic
  - a. Greek *apocalypso* means “to reveal”
  - b. It is a type of literature (Daniel, Zech 12-14, Revelation, 1 Enoch, 2 Baruch, 4 Ezra, Assumption of Moses, Apocalypse of Baruch, Sibylline Oracles, Jubilees, etc.).
  - c. There are common ideas and concepts in this literature.
2. Characteristics of Apocalyptic
  - a. Revelation: of something hidden
  - b. Symbolism: difficult to interpret
  - c. Pessimism: the world is evil
  - d. Optimism that God wins
  - e. Dualism: between good and bad. Evil age and age to come.  
Daniel also shows history, real names and people described.
3. There are two problems with interpreting apocalyptic:
  - a. Understanding the meaning in the original context
  - b. Application in modern context

## B. Purpose

1. To show that God directs the course of history so that His promises are fulfilled.
2. God is sovereign and rules the universe.
3. God's people will someday inherit an eternal kingdom.

## C. Person

1. Daniel the Prophet: He was taken as youth from Jerusalem to Babylon trained to serve in Nebuchadnezzar's court in 605 (1:6). He ministered until 536, the third year of Cyrus 10:1.
2. Authorship: The first six chapters use third person (he). The last half is first person (I). Daniel might have told his visions to someone else. These visions were put in canonical form in the 4th or 3rd century B.C.
3. Date: This has been much debated. The traditional dating is the end of 6th century B.C. because of the events described. Some interpreters propose even as late as 164 B.C., which seems unlikely. Dating has a lot to do with how one views prophecy.
4. Contents
  - Two topical divisions:
    - a. ch. 1-6 stories of Daniel and the kings of Babylon and Persia.
      - 1) ch. 1 Court life: convictions about eating clean food.
      - 2) ch. 2 Nebuchadnezzar's dream: wisdom of Daniel described in ch. 1 is put to the test.
      - 3) ch. 3 Fiery Furnace Test
      - 4) ch. 4 The mental breakdown of Nebuchadnezzar
      - 5) ch. 5 The feast of Belshazzar and writing on the wall
      - 6) ch. 6 Daniel in the Lion's Den. Old man but still faithful to God, would not compromise.
    - b. Dreams and visions of Daniel chs. 7-12
      - 1) ch. 7 Four empires described, like ch. 2
      - 2) ch. 8 Ram and He-goat
      - 3) ch. 9 70 weeks, Daniel's Prayer
      - 4) ch. 10 Visions of Spiritual Battles
      - 5) ch. 11 Predictions which came true; full of historical figures.
      - 6) ch. 12 Daniel is the first to speak explicitly of resurrection in Bible. Good triumphs, evil done away with forever. Only God knows the times.

Three language divisions:

2:4b-7:28 is in Aramaic

1:1-2:4a, 8:1 to the end is in Hebrew.

5. Interpreting Daniel's Visions

- a. The symbols in Daniel are obscure and unclear. We run into problems trying to write a calendar of end times based on these symbols.
- b. God's kingdom is victorious over all ages.
- c. Hope and assurance for "the holy ones of the Most High."
- d. Daniel's prayer is a model for repentance and renewal 9:19-27

II. Second Temple Judaism

The Judaism of the intertestamental period was a religion of separation to the law. The Jews were under the rule of pagan foreigners. The Jews were influenced by their foreign rulers in their culture, language and thought, and especially by their Greek rulers. This challenged many things about the Jewish faith.

The rule of the Hellenistic Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes provoked the successful Maccabean revolt. The Hasidaeans, or 'Pious', then took up arms against the Hellenizers (1 Macc. 2:42; 7:12-17; 2 Macc. 14:6).

Jewish sects arose such as the Pharisees and Essenes in effort to separate from the foreign influence. Different interpretations of the law arose with the different groups. By the time of the third Maccabean leader, Jonathan (high priest 152-142 BC), the three contending parties of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes had emerged.

The characteristic religious institution of the intertestamental period was the synagogue. Most places where Jews lived in the Dispersion, both Palestine and beyond, had a synagogue which became the center of religious and community life. Worship was focused on the Sabbath day, reading and explaining the Scriptures, and prayer. There were not sacrifices made in synagogues. Teachers of the synagogue were usually lay scribes or elders of the Pharisaic school

The period from Nehemiah to Christ falls into four epochs:

1. Persian rule, until about 331 BC
2. Greek rule, under the Hellenistic successors of Alexander (first the Ptolemies of Egypt, then the Seleucids of Syria), until 143 BC.
3. The period of independence, under the Maccabean or Hasmonean dynasty, until 63 BC.
4. Roman rule thereafter.

## The Kings and Reigns of Daniel Chapter 11

### Achaemenid Kings:

Cyrus, 560/59-530 (v. 1)

Cambyses, 530-522 (v. 2)

Smerdis, 522 (v. 2)

Darius I, 522-486 (v. 2)

Xerxes I 486-465 (v. 2)

Most likely  
not referred to:

Artaxerxes I, 465-424 (Esther; made Torah law)

Xerxes II, 424

Sogdianos, 424-423

Darius II, 423-405/4

Artaxerxes II, 405/4-359/58

Artaxerxes III, 359/58-338/37

Artaxerxes IV, 338/37-336

Darius III, 336-330

### Macedonian King:

Alexander the Great, 336-323 (vv. 3-4)

### Divided Macedonian Empire:

Ptolemy I Soter, son of Lagus, 322-285 (v. 5a)

Ptolemy II Philadelphus, 285-246 (v. 6)

Ptolemy III Euergets, 246-221 (vv. 7-9)

Ptolemy IV Philopator, 221-203 (vv. 10-12)

Ptolemy V Epiphanes, 203-181 (vv. 14-17)

Ptolemy VI Philometor, 181-146 (vv. 25-28)

Seleucus I Nicator, 312-280 (v. 5b)

Antiochus I Soter, 280-261

Antiochus II Theos, 261-246 (v. 6)

Seleucus II Callinicus, 246-226 (vv. 7-9)

Seleucus III Soter Ceraunus 226-223 (v. 10)

Antiochus III Magnus, 223-187 (vv. 10-19)

Seleucus IV Philopator, 187-175 (v. 20)

Antiochus IV Epiphanes, 175-163 (vv. 21-45)

Antiochus V Eupator, 163-162

Demetirus I Soter, 162-150

### III. The Rise of the Roman Empire

Due to a series of military campaigns during the second and first centuries BC, Roman territory expanded to encompass most of the Mediterranean region as well as several territories in southern Europe. Most of the Mediterranean region was controlled by Rome from 27 BC–AD 476. The Roman Empire was founded by Octavian, also known as Caesar Augustus, after civil war and a long rise to power. He was recognized officially as “demigod”; temples were dedicated to him. The first two centuries of the empire's existence were a period of political stability and prosperity known as the Pax Romana, or "Roman Peace". This peace came at a high cost to the conquered people groups, like the Jews of Palestine. The Romans often made the conquered people slaves. Up to 20-30% of the population in some areas were slaves. Roman culture was stratified, with an elite class at the top. The Roman military were a major force in keeping the peace and spreading culture. The Romans merged religion (Greek Pantheon) and culture with the Greeks and this is known as “Greco-Roman.” The Roman Empire had significant influence upon the development of early Christianity.

## Session Thirteen: The Gospels

### I. The Goal of the New Testament

The New Testament was written to show people about how they can put their trust in Jesus Christ and receive the promised eternal life. It is the story of Jesus and his followers, the church. Each of the books was written for a specific reason, to a specific audience, with a message to help this audience live out its faith in Jesus. As Christians today, we join in with the early Christians and discover relationship with Jesus for ourselves.

### II. The Link of the New Testament with the Old Testament

The Old Testament ends with the problem of sin unresolved. It looks forward to a new covenant relationship. The “New Covenant” (i.e. “New Testament”) focuses upon the hope that Jesus Christ brings to deal with the problems created and evidenced by the “Old Covenant.” The prophets looked forward to a day when God would change the human heart and bring a new opportunity for relationship with God (Jeremiah 31:31-33; Ezekiel 36:22-38; Joel 2:1-32). This was fulfilled with Jesus (Hebrews 10:15-17). Jesus made keeping the relationship with God possible (Luke 22:17-20) and reversed the curse of Adam (Romans 5:12-21).

### III. Studying the Gospels

A. The Gospels are the primary source of information about Jesus. They offer many challenges to interpreters. The Gospels give us only a brief look at the overall life of Jesus. Each of the Gospels comes from a different perspective:

- Matthew is primarily Jewish and presents Christ as the King.
- Mark is primarily Roman and presents Christ as the Servant.
- Luke is primarily for the Greeks and presents Christ as the perfect Son of Man.
- John is universal in appeal and presents Christ as the eternal Son of God.

The Gospels are writings that describe the actions and words of Jesus, yet are concerned with only a small period of the total span of the life of Jesus. All four of the Gospels devote considerable attention to the last week of Jesus’ life. The passion (arrest, trial, crucifixion) of Jesus dominated their purpose. The accounts of Jesus’ good deeds, miracles and teaching must be viewed from this perspective. Everything pointed ahead to the climax of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The word “gospel” means “good news.” The coming of Jesus is the focus of this good news. The gospel is rooted in Old Testament prophecy. The verb “to preach the good news” describes Jesus as proclaimer of the kingdom. The noun “gospel” describes Jesus as the contents and fulfillment of the kingdom of God. Each of the Gospels has a different beginning point with the life of Jesus (birth, baptism, etc.). The four Gospels basically follow a linear chronology of Jesus’ life and ministry.

Why were the Gospels written? Primarily to address needs of the early church. This included winning new people to Christ, training new converts, and reminding the church of its roots.

### B. Jesus as Teacher

Jesus was an outstanding teacher and able to capture the attention of his audience. He attracted large crowds. He sometimes had to sit on a boat along the shore so he could speak to the large crowds. People liked to hear what he said because of his message and how he spoke. He was a master at communication.

The disciples were able to remember large portions of his teaching. Jesus has been called the greatest teacher of all times. Over 40 titles are used for Jesus in the NT. In the Gospels, one of the most common is *rabbi*, “teacher.” Matthew 10:24-25; 23:8; John 13:13-14). Jesus was also viewed as a prophet (Mark 6:15; 8:28; 14:65; Luke 7:16; Matthew 21:11, 46). He worked miracles and signs, and so people saw God at work in his life. Jesus also spoke the word of the Lord with authority, like the ancient prophets of Israel. Jesus’ native language was a dialect of Aramaic. Aramaic was the native tongue in Palestine in the first century. People listened to Jesus’ teaching because he had authority. Jesus used many forms in his teaching: overstatements, hyperboles, puns, similes and metaphors, proverbs, riddles, irony, and others.

The major theme of Jesus’ preaching was the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14-15; Matthew 4:17, 23; Luke 4:42-43). There are two aspects of the Kingdom seen in his preaching: future (Mark 14:25) and the promise of final salvation, and present (Luke 17:20-21) with the kingdom inside of us now.

Another big theme is the Fatherhood of God. Jesus used the intimate Aramaic word *abba* to address God. This is the word a small child would use for a father. Jesus showed an intimacy with God and taught his disciples to have this relationship also.

Another big theme is the ethics of the Kingdom. His followers should act in certain ways. Jesus’ teaching always demanded the response of commitment, and this commitment should be seen in how his followers live. At the heart of these ethics is a change of heart and attitude evidenced in love (Mark 12:29-31).

People came to Jesus because of what he taught, how he taught it, and who he was.

#### IV. The Book of Matthew

##### A. Introduction to Matthew

1. Authorship: Matthew was one of the 12 apostles. He is only called Matthew once in the New Testament in Matthew 9:9; elsewhere he is called Levi. Only in Matthew 10:3 is he called a tax collector. This was likely a minor customs official collecting tariff on goods in transit. We do not know a lot about Matthew as a person. He gave a great banquet for Jesus after his conversion. He was probably wealthy as a tax collector (see Matthew 9:9-13; Luke 5:27-32; Mark 2:13-17).
2. Audience: Written primarily to Jews but Gentiles could also be included. It is the bridge between the Old and New Testament. The early Christians saw the Old Testament predictions as being fulfilled in Christ, and Matthew’s Gospel significantly shows this.
3. The View of Jesus  
The book shows that Jesus truly is the messianic King of Old Testament prophecy. It is written to help the believing Jew understand what has happened to the kingdom and links the Old Testament prophets to Jesus.

There are several unique features of Matthew. Of 1,068 verses in this Gospel, 644 contain words of Jesus. More than 3/5 of the Gospel is a report of Jesus’ sayings. Among them are 35 parables. Matthew also emphasizes both Jesus’ ethical teachings and his eschatological teaching (teaching about the future). Matthew’s Gospel records 20 of Jesus’ miracles, 3 of which are found only in this Gospel (Matthew 9:27-31, 32-33; 7:24-27).

While it affirms Jesus as Israel’s promised King, it also presents Him as a Servant. In Jesus, and in Jesus only, glory and humility, power and gentleness, are perfectly combined.

##### B. Major Themes of Matthew

## 1. Jesus as Messiah

Matthew has selected material from Jesus' life and arranged it to show one specific truth: Jesus is the King of the Jews, rejected by his people, crucified for the whole world, and now alive in heaven.

- In chapters 1-10, Jesus reveals himself as the long-awaited King of the Jews.
  - In chapters 11-13, the Jewish leaders rebel against him and claim Jesus' works are of the devil.
  - In chapters 14-20, Jesus spends time with his disciples to prepare them for the events of the Cross.
  - In 21-27, the King is openly rejected.
  - The final chapter gives his resurrection and ascension as a King with all authority over all things.
2. The Jews' failure to recognize Jesus as the messiah.
  3. Dawning of the eschatological kingdom, the reign of God now. Matthew uses kingdom of heaven instead of kingdom of God possibly because he was writing to Jews. The Jews rejected the kingdom when they rejected the King.
  4. The kingdom is present now to those who recognize Jesus.
  5. The messianic reign was prophesied in the Old Testament and will be completed when Jesus comes again.
  6. The Church serves as the new Israel.

## C. Structure

The Structure of Matthew's Gospel gives a clue to its meaning and purpose. The most obvious feature of Matthew's structure is the alternation of large blocks of teaching material with narrative sections (see outline). These teaching sections are all concluded with a similar formula ("when Jesus had finished these sayings"). These occur at 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1.

The formula marks the close of the preceding discourse and makes way for the narrative. The Five Discourses are:

- a. The Sermon on the Mount (5-7)
- b. Missionary Discourse (10)
- c. Parable Discourse (13)
- d. Church Discourse (18)
- e. Eschatological Discourse (24-25)

## D. Outline

1. Preamble: The Coming of the Kingdom (chs. 1-2)
  - a. Lineage from Abraham to David (1:1-17)
  - b. Nativity given from Joseph's perspective (1:18-25)
  - c. The Visit of the Wise Magi; unique to Matthew (2:1-12)
  - d. The Plot of the Foolish Herod and the Flight to Egypt (2:13-23)
2. Discipleship of the Kingdom (chs. 3-7; narrative 3-4, discourse 5-7)
  - a. John's Voice in the Wilderness (3:1-12)
  - b. God's Voice from Heaven (3:13-23)
  - c. Jesus' Temptation in the Desert; the First Test of Jesus' Power (4:1-17)
  - d. Calling of the First Disciples (4:18-22)
  - e. Healing Ministry Begins in Galilee (4:23-25)
  - f. Sermon on the Mount: the New Standard of Discipleship; the First Discourse (chs. 5-7)
    - 1) Beatitudes (5:1-12)
    - 2) Salt and Light (5:13-16)
    - 3) Fulfilling the Law (5:17-20)
    - 4) Applying the Law (5:21-48)

- 5) Holy Living (6:1-34)
- 6) Judging (7:1-6)
- 7) Prayer (7:7-12)
- 8) True Discipleship (7:13-29)
3. Authority of the Kingdom (chs. 8-10; narrative 8-9, discourse 10)
  - a. Jesus' Healing Ministry (ch. 8-9)
    - 1) Authority over Illness (8:1-17)
    - 2) Authority over Nature and the Cost of Discipleship (8:18-27)
    - 3) Authority over Demons (8:28-34)
    - 4) Power over Paralysis (9:1-8)
    - 5) Calling of Matthew and Discipleship (9:9-17)
    - 6) Power of Healing (9:18-34)
  - b. A Charge to the Twelve (9:35-10:42; Second Discourse: "The Discipleship Discourse")
    - 1) The Harvest and need for workers (9:35-38)
    - 2) Mission (10:1-15)
    - 3) Sheep among Wolves (10:16-33)
    - 4) The Great Divider (10:34-11:1)
4. Revelation and opposition to the Kingdom (11:1-13:52; narrative 11-12, discourse 13)
  - a. Disclosure of who Jesus is (chs. 11-12)
    - 1) John the Baptist Questions and is Praised (11:1-19)
    - 2) Woe to Unrepentant Cities (11:20-24)
    - 3) Rest for the Weary (11:25-30)
    - 4) Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath (12:1-14)
    - 5) Summary Statement (12:15-21)
    - 6) Proof by Jesus' Works (12:22-37)
    - 7) Sign of Jonah; Questioned by Family (12:38-50)
  - b. Parables of the Kingdom (chs. 13; Third Discourse: "Parables")
 

Sower, Weeds, Mustard Seed, Yeast, Hidden Treasure and Pearl, Net
5. Administration and Rejection of the Kingdom (chs. 14-18; narrative 14-17, discourse 18)
  - a. Miracles, Healings, and Feedings (ch. 14-15)
    - 1) Death of John (14:1-12)
    - 2) Feeding of 5000 (14:13-21)
    - 3) Walking on Water (14:22-36)
    - 4) Controversy over Clean and Unclean (15:1-20)
    - 5) Faith of a Canaanite Woman (15:21-28)
    - 6) Feeding of 4000 (15:29-39)
  - b. Disclosure of the Christ (ch. 16)
    - 1) Pursuit of Signs and Warnings about Bad Yeast (16:1-12)
    - 2) Peter's Confession of Christ (16:13-20)
    - 3) Jesus Predicts His death (16:21-28)
  - c. Transfiguration; the Mountain (17:1-13) and the Valley (17:14-27)
  - d. Life in the Kingdom (ch. 18; Fourth Discourse: "Church Discourse")
    - 1) The Greatest in the Kingdom (18:1-9)
    - 2) Parable of Lost Sheep (18:10-14)
    - 3) The Brother who sins (18:15-20)
    - 4) Parable of the Unmerciful Servant and Forgiveness (18:21-35)
6. Judgment and Triumph of the Kingdom (chs. 19-25; narrative 19-22; discourse 23-25)
  - a. Jesus' new way versus the old way of the Jewish leaders (ch. 19-20)
    - 1) Teaching about Divorce (19:1-12)
    - 2) Jesus and Children (19:13-15)
    - 3) Teaching and Traveling to Jerusalem (19:16-20:34)
  - b. The King Comes (ch. 21)
    - 1) Triumphal Entry (21:1-11)



- 2) Jesus Clears the Temple (21:12-17)
- 3) Cursing of the Fig Tree (21:18-22)
- 4) Jesus' Authority Questioned (21:23-27)
- c. Parables (21:28-22:14)
  - Two Sons; Tenants; Wedding Banquet
- d. Pharisees and Sadducees (22:15-23:39)
  - 1) Question about Paying Taxes and Marriage at the Resurrection (22:15-33)
  - 2) The Greatest Commandment (22:34-40)
  - 3) Woes to the Pharisees (22:41-23:39)
- e. The King Comes Again (24:1-25:46; Fifth Discourse: "Eschatological Discourse" or "Olivet Discourse")
7. The Power of the King of the Kingdom; Passion and Resurrection (chs. 26-28)
  - a. The King is Tried (ch. 26)
    - 1) Jesus Anointed at Bethany and Judas' Plot (26:1-16)
    - 2) The Last Supper (26:17-35)
    - 3) Agony in Gethsemane (26:36-46)
    - 4) Jesus Arrested taken before the Sanhedrin (26:47-68)
    - 5) Peter betrays Jesus (26:69-75)
  - b. The King is Crucified (ch. 27)
    - 1) Judas hangs himself (27:1-11)
    - 2) Jesus goes before Pilate (27:11-31)
    - 3) Jesus is crucified at Golgotha (27:32-44)
    - 4) Jesus dies and is buried (27:45-66)
  - c. The King is Resurrected (28:1-15)
  - d. The King Sends Forth: The Great Commission (28:16-20)

E. The Purpose of Matthew: Jesus is the Messiah through whom the kingdom of God will come.

## V. The Gospel of Mark

Three essential choices are shown in Mark:

- 1) Those who reject Jesus (the Jewish leaders)
- 2) Those who accept Jesus (those who are healed)
- 3) Those a little confused and not sure what to think about Jesus (the disciples).

The author wants his readers to choose #2.

### A. Authorship and the Person of Mark

1. John Mark is mentioned in Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13; 15:37; Col 4:10; Philemon 24; 2 Timothy 4:11; 1 Peter 5:13. Mark was the son of a wealthy lady of Jerusalem named Mary whose house was a gathering place for Christians (Acts 12:12). He was likely raised as a Christian. He was the nephew of Barnabas. He was the secretary and attendant of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 12:25). Paul and Barnabas parted company over a dispute about whether to take Mark again on a missionary trip (Acts 15:37-40) around AD 46-50. Mark left Paul and Barnabas and went home (Acts 13:13). He vanishes from history for some time. Tradition has him founding the church of Alexandria, Egypt. Later, Mark is with Paul who is in prison (Colossians 4:10). He is called a fellow laborer with Paul in Philemon 24. Mark is called a useful helper to Paul near the end of his life (2 Timothy 4:11). Peter calls him his son (1 Peter 5:13). In early church history, Mark was known as Peter's scribe.
2. Mark as Author

The story moves along quickly (the repeated word "immediately"). Mark writes to Gentiles with a Jewish-Christian flavor.

### B. Place of Writing and Recipients

1. Ultimately not known
2. Early Tradition assigns it to Rome.

3. Internal evidence: Mark uses many Latinisms and Latin words that appear to be transliterated into Greek. The audience seems to be largely non-Jewish. There is a lack of knowledge about the geography of Galilee, but there are many Aramaic or Hebrew words and formulae.

#### C. Dating

1. Problems with Dating
  - a. Early Tradition: According to Irenaeus, Mark wrote after Peter's death in Rome. Clement of Alexandria said Mark wrote during Peter's life.
  - b. Most scholars today opt for this being written after Peter's death.
2. The key indicator is the Fall of Jerusalem in AD 70.

#### D. Reception

Until the period of modern criticism, this gospel was the most neglected of all. Ancient commentaries on it are very scarce, and it clearly made little appeal. It was regarded as no more than an abstract of Matthew. This opinion was probably not the earliest view, since tradition closely linked it with Peter's preaching. It has come into its own through the modern opinion that it is the keystone of the "Synoptic Problem."

#### E. The Synoptic Problem

1. The Problem
  - a. How do we account for the similarities and differences between the Gospels?
  - b. The Synoptic Problem attempts to account for them.
  - c. Did any of the Gospel writers know or use the other Gospels as they wrote? 97 % of Mark is parallel to Matt; 88% of Mark is in Luke. Matthew and Luke share much material not found in Mark.
2. Answering this question led to "Source Criticism."  
Definition: Source criticism traces the possible sources authors used, oral or written. It seeks to find the written sources if any that the gospel writers used. Different gospel writers use the exact same phrases and words. Sometimes there are puzzling differences.
3. Implications of the Problem  
How reliable are the Gospels in giving the actual situation of Jesus?  
Three basic answers:
  - a. The narratives are products of early Christian faith and are not historically reliable.
  - b. The Gospel narratives present accurately the life of Jesus.
  - c. A combination of the two.
4. Rise of Form Criticism  
Form criticism led to questions about the historical reliability of the Gospels and that Mark was not concerned with historical accuracy.
5. Most Common Solutions
  - a. Common dependence on one original Gospel, which was lost. The major objection to this view is that no trace of such a writing has ever been discovered. This also does not explain the differences in the Gospels of the same events.
  - b. Common dependence on oral sources: The Oral Tradition Theory. This involved four steps:
    - 1) The event occurred.
    - 2) The event was told and repeated often enough so that it became widely known.
    - 3) The event became fixed so that it was then told exactly the same way.
    - 4) The event was written down in an account.Objections to this view: it fails to account for the differences.
  - c. Common dependence on gradually developing written fragments or sources; popular today.
  - d. The document theory. Another document, known as "Q" ("source" from *Quelle* in German). There are approximately 250 verses common to Matthew and Luke that are not found in Mark.
  - e. Theories of Interdependence: The writers used each other's written texts, borrowing at the final stage of writing. There are many theories about how this borrowing took place.

6. Evaluation
  - a. The Nature of Oral Cultures: stories were accurately passed down by oral retelling.
  - b. The Availability of Writing: although there were many illiterate people, many people could read and write.
  - c. The Reliability of Tradition: the early church preserved accurately what Jesus said and did.
  - d. The complexity of the early Christian movement: we need to consider the complexities of culture, geography, the growth of the church and other factors.
  - e. Often presuppositions determine answers found: always be aware of where a scholar is coming from.
  - f. Inspiration of the Holy Spirit: ultimately, we need to believe that God was part of the whole process. What we have today is what God wanted.

## B. Outline of Mark

1. Prologue: The Beginning of the Gospel (1:1-15)
  - a. Title (1:1)
  - b. Ministry of John the Baptist (1:2-8)
  - c. Baptism of Jesus (1:9-11)
  - d. Temptation of Jesus (1:12-13)
  - e. Beginning of Jesus' Ministry (1:14-15)
2. Part One: Jesus' Authority Established (1:16-3:12)
  - a. Call of the First Disciples (1:16-20)
  - b. Exorcism at Capernaum (1:21-28)
  - c. Healing and Preaching in Galilee (1:29-34)
  - d. Praying Alone (1:35-39)
  - e. Healing of Leper (1:40-45)
  - f. Healing of a Paralytic (2:1-12)
  - g. Call of Levi (2:13-22)
  - h. Question on Fasting (2:18-22)
  - i. Question on Sabbath and Man with Withered Hand (2:23-3:6)
    - 1) Part One: Lord of the Sabbath (2:23-27)
    - 2) Part Two: Healing on the Sabbath (3:1-6)

Transition: Healing by the Sea (3:7-12)

1. Part Two: Jesus' Teaching (3:13-6:6)
  - a. Naming of Twelve (3:13-19)
  - b. Jesus' Kingship (3:20-35)
  - c. Parables (4:1-34)
    - 1) Soils/Sower (4:1-20)
    - 2) Purpose of the Parables (4:10-12)
    - 3) Light under a Bushel (4:21-23)
    - 4) Measure for Measure (4:24-25)
    - 5) Seed Growing Secretly (4:26-29)
    - 6) Mustard Seed (4:30-32)
  - d. Stilling of the Storm (4:35-41)
  - e. Gerasene Demoniac (5:1-20)
  - f. Jairus' Daughter and Woman with a Hemorrhage (5:21-43)
  - g. Rejection by His Own People (6:1-6)
2. Part Three: Jesus' Mission (6:7-8:21)
  - a. Sending of Twelve (6:7-13)
  - b. Death of John the Baptist (6:14-29)
  - c. Feeding of 5000 (6:30-44)

- d. Walking on Water and Healings at Gennesaret (6:45-56)
- e. Controversy over Tradition (7:1-23)
- f. Syrophenician Woman and Deaf-mute of Decapolis (7:24-37)
- g. Feeding of 4000 (8:1-21)
- h. Healing of Blind Man of Bethsaida (8:22-26)
- 3. Part Four: Instruction to the Disciples (8:27-10:52)
  - a. Caesarea Philippi (8:27-9:1) (First Passion Prediction)
  - b. Transfiguration (9:2-13)
  - c. Failure by Disciples to heal boy (9:14-29)
  - d. Capernaum (9:30-50) (Second Passion Prediction)
  - e. Teaching on Marriage and Children (10:1-16)
  - f. Teaching on Riches (10:17-31)
  - g. On the Road (10:32-45) (Third Passion Prediction)
  - h. Healing of Blind Bartimeus (10:46-52)
- 4. Jerusalem Ministry and Confrontation (11:1-13:37)
  - a. Day One: Jesus enters Jerusalem (11:1-11)
  - b. Day Two: Jesus curses fig tree (11:12)
  - c. Day Three: Cleansing of the temple (11:12-25)
  - d. Attempts to trap Jesus (11:27-12:44)
    - 1) Challenge to Jesus' authority (11:27-33)
    - 2) Taxes by Pharisees and Herodians (12:13-17)
    - 3) Resurrection by Sadducees (12:18-27)
    - 4) Positive question: Two greatest commandments (12:28-34)
      - Two types of responses:
      - a) Denunciation of public display (12:38-40)
      - b) Compared with widow's mite (12:41-44)
  - e. Eschatological Discourse (13:1-37)
- 5. Passion Narrative (14:1-15:47)
  - a. Preparations for Jesus' Death: Betrayal and anointing (14:1-11)
  - b. Last Supper (14:12-26)
  - c. Beginning of Suffering: Gethsemane and the Arrest (14:27-52)
  - d. Trial and Denial (14:53-72)
  - e. Confession and Denial: Jesus on Trial before Pilate (15:1-20)
  - f. Crucifixion and Death (15:21-41)
  - g. Burial (15:42-47)
- 6. Resurrection (16:1-8)
- 7. Longer Ending (16:9-20)
- C. The Messages of Mark
  - 1. Jesus the Miracle Worker: Jesus has power over sin, nature, and evil.
  - 2. The Growing Kingdom: God's kingdom starts small but will grow.
  - 3. The Growing Revelation of Jesus as the Son of God.
  - 4. Failure and doubt of the Disciples (see 6:52; 14:32-42; 8:14-21).
  - 5. Faith compared to lack of faith in Jesus (6:5-6).
- D. Mark as a Narrative
 

Mark is written with dramatic language and features:

  - 1. Plot: Centers on 1:1: the gospel. It is an explanation of the person of Jesus.
  - 2. Adversaries: those who do not put their faith in Jesus.
  - 3. Focus: the disciples' response to Jesus.
  - 4. No time frame claimed, although it seems like one year.
  - 5. Main theme: Centers around Jesus' proclamation of the gospel: God's promised, redemptive rule is near; the response needed is one of faith. Conflict arises with unbelief. One should respond with faith that leads to repentance and discipleship. A lack of response shows that one has not seen Jesus for who he is.

## VI. Luke

### A. Luke as Author

1. The Gospel of Luke is part of a two-volume work. The second volume is Acts. Together, these two books make up 1/4 of the New Testament.
2. Stated Purpose: Luke 1:1-4. This is one long sentence in Greek. It is the only example of a formal introduction in the New Testament.
3. The person of Luke
  - a. Luke is mentioned several times in the New Testament: Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24; 2 Timothy 4:11.
  - b. He was not an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry or much of the story in Acts.
  - c. He was a travel companion of Paul (see the "we sections" of Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1; 28:16).
  - d. He was the best Greek writer of any of the evangelists
  - e. He probably was a Gentile God-fearer who may have been converted to Judaism and then to Christianity.
4. Date of Writing  
The dating of the Gospel is linked to the dating of Acts and depends on how one interprets the ending of Acts, before or after 70.

### B. Luke as Theologian

1. Luke interprets history theologically with a specific purpose.
2. Luke gives a comprehensive picture of Christ and the Church. The Gospel prepares for what happens in Acts.
3. The Universal Outreach of the Gospel: The gospel is for all people and includes all types of people.

### C. Contents

1. Preface (1:1-4)
2. Birth Narratives (1:5-2:52)
  - a. Announcement to Zechariah (1:5-25)
  - b. Announcement to Mary (1:26-38)
  - c. Mary visits Elizabeth (1:39-56)
  - d. The Birth of John the Baptist (1:57-80)
  - e. The Birth of Jesus (2:1-20)
  - f. The Infancy and Boyhood of Jesus (2:21-52)
3. Preparation for Ministry (3:1-4:13)
  - a. The Preaching of John the Baptist (3:1-20)
  - b. The Baptism of Jesus (3:21-22)
  - c. The Lineage of Jesus (3:23-28)
  - d. The Temptation of Jesus (4:1-13)
4. Ministry in Galilee (4:14-9:50)
  - a. Rejection and Acceptance (4:14-44)
  - b. Call of the Disciples (5:1-6:16)
  - c. Sermon on the Plain (6:17-49)
  - d. Capernaum Ministry (7:1-8:56)
  - e. Incidents with the Twelve (9:1-50)
5. Revealing of Jesus' Power and Identity (7:1-9:6)
  - a. Healing of a Centurion (7:1-10)
  - b. Jesus the Son of the Widow from Nain (7:11-17)
  - c. Jesus and John the Baptist (7:18-35)
  - d. Jesus anointed by a Sinful Woman (7:36-50)

- e. Parables of the Sower and Lamp (8:1-18)
- f. Jesus' Family and Calming the Storm (8:19-25)
- g. Healing of the Gerasene Demoniac (9:26-39)
- h. Healing a Dead Girl and Sick Woman (9:40-56)
- i. Sending out the Twelve (9:1-6)
- 6. Questions about Jesus
  - a. Herod's Question (9:7-9)
  - b. Support to the Question: Feeding of the 5000 (9:10-17)
  - c. Peter's answer to the Question (9:18-27)
- 7. The qualification of following Jesus is given in 9:23-27

#### Part 2: Journey to Jerusalem

- 1. Journey section One (9:51-13:21)
  - a. Rejection by the Samaritans (9:51-56)
  - b. Demands of the Kingdom 9:57-62)
  - c. Sending of the 72 and their ability to do the miracles (10:1-24)
  - d. Parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37)
  - e. Meditation and Prayer (10:38-11:13)
  - f. Jesus and the Pharisees (11:14-54)
  - g. Jesus' Advice to Disciples (12:1-53)
  - h. Various Teachings and Events (12:54-19:27)
- 2. Ministry in Jerusalem (19:28-21:38)
  - a. Triumphal Entry and Cleansing of the Temple (19:28-48)
  - b. Teaching Daily in the Temple (20:1-21:4)
  - c. Instruction about the Future (21:5-38)
- 3. Suffering and Crucifixion (22:1-23:56)
  - a. Preparations (22:1-13)
  - b. The Last Supper (22:14-38)
  - c. Gethsemane (22:39-53)
  - d. The Jewish Trial (22:54-71)
  - e. The Roman Trial (23:1-25)
  - f. Crucifixion and Burial (23:26-56)
- 4. Resurrection and Ascension (24:1-53)

#### D. Theological Themes in Luke

- 1. Fulfillment of the Plan of God.
- 2. Christology: Jesus has a special place in the divine plan.
- 3. Emphasis on Prayer (3:21; 5:15-16; 6:12; 9:18-22; 9:29; 10:17-21; 11:1; 22:39-46; 23:34, 46)
- 4. Emphasis on the Holy Spirit
- 5. Interest in Eschatology: The kingdom is coming in Jesus' ministry (see 12:35-36).
- 6. Interest in Community: Hospitality, women, children, poor and rich, Jesus's social relationships with sinners, the Pharisees, tax collectors; life in new community marked by love (6:20-48) and prayer (11:1-13; 18:1-14).
- 7. Joy and Song

## Session Fourteen: The Johannine Literature

(The Gospel of John and the Epistles of John)

The writings traditionally attributed to the Apostle John are called the “Johannine Literature.” These books share common themes and writing styles.

### I. The Gospel of John

A. The purpose of John’s Gospel is given in John 20:30-31.

B. The Word (John 1:1-18)

1. The Word is described in four relations, 1:1-5
  - a. Related to God, vv. 1, 2
  - b. Related to the World, v. 3
  - c. Related to Humanity, v. 4
  - d. Related to Sin, v. 5
2. The Word Revealed, vv. 6-13
3. The Benefits brought by the Word, vv. 14-18

C. The “I Am Sayings” of John

1. Old Testament Background: The Hebrew for “I am” is *ani hu*. This was often used to describe the essential qualities of God (see Exodus 3:14; Deuteronomy 5:6).
2. “I am” Non-predicate Sayings (nothing follows): 4:26; 6:20; 8:24; 8:28; 8:58; 13:19
3. Predicate Sayings
  - a. Bread of Life (6:35, 48, 51)
  - b. Light of the World (8:12)
  - c. Gate for the Sheep (10:7, 9)
  - d. Good Shepherd (10:11, 14)
  - e. Resurrection and Life (11:25-26)
  - f. Way, Truth, and Life (14:6)
  - g. The Vine (15:1, 5)

All of these sayings offer a choice to the reader of whether or not to believe in Jesus (see 20:30-31 mentioned above).

D. Contents

1. Prologue: The Word Revealed (John 1:1-18)

This is in the form of a hymn that shows John’s view of Christ and shows what Christ brings to those who believe in him: life and light.

- a. The Word is described in four relations, 1:1-5
    - Related to God, vv. 1, 2
    - Related to the Word, v. 3
    - Related to Humanity, v. 4
    - Related to Sin, v. 5
  - b. The Word Revealed, vv. 6-13
  - c. The Benefits brought by the Word, vv. 14-18
2. John’s Testimony (1:19-51)
    - a. John’s witness about himself (1:19-34)
    - b. John’s witness about Christ (1:29-31)
    - c. The witness of the Disciples (1:35-51)
  3. New Wine (2:1-11)
  4. Jesus as the New Temple (2:13-22)
  5. Transition (2:23-25)
  6. New Birth (3:1-36)
  7. New Birth Illustrated (4:1-38)
  8. Conflict and Controversy (5:1-12:50)

- a. Sabbath: Healing of Paralytic and Controversy (5:1-47)
- b. Passover: Feeding of 5000, the Bread of Life, and Response to Jesus (6:1-71)
- c. Tabernacles: Jesus as the New Source of Life (7:1-52)
- d. Problematic Passage of 7:53-8:11 Woman Caught in Adultery. This story is not found in manuscripts earlier than the 5<sup>th</sup> century.
- e. Claims of Authority (8:12-59)
- f. Healing of man born blind and Controversy (9:1-49)
- g. Dedication or Hanukkah: The Good Shepherd (10:1-42)
- h. The Resurrection of Lazarus and Controversy (11:1-57)
- i. Preparations for Calvary (12:1-50)
- 9. The Call to Love (13:1-16:33)
  - a. Example of Love, Washing of the Feet (13:1-35)
  - b. Uncertainties of the Disciples (13:36-14:8)
  - c. The Ability to Love, the coming of the Holy Spirit (14:9-31)
  - d. The Source of Love, being connected to the Vine (15:1-17)
  - e. The Challenge to Love, the Word (15:18-16:4)
  - f. The Power to Love through the Counselor (16:5-33)
- 10. The Lord's Prayer (17:1-26)
- 11. Jesus' Arrest and Trail (18:1-19:16)
- 12. Crucifixion and Burial (19:17-42)
- 13. Resurrection (20:1-31)
- 14. Miraculous Catch of Fish (21:1-14)
- 15. Peter is Reinstated (21:15-25)

#### E. New Testament Christology

Studying the Gospel of John raised the important question of the person of Jesus Christ.

1. Christology
  - a. Defined: The study of Christ; the science of whose object is Christ.
  - b. The Christian faith is built upon a historical person.
  - c. The New Testament is not so concerned with describing Christ's nature in relationship to God's nature as it is in describing the person and work of Christ.
  - d. The emphasis in the NT is what Christ has done, does, or will do, and not in a concise description of the Trinity.
  - e. The first Christians attempted to show how Jesus was the fulfillment of Jewish expectations. As the church became more Hellenistic, it began to incorporate Hellenistic ideas. Thus, philosophical questions began to be asked.
  - f. The same question Jesus asked his disciples is the same for us today: Mark 8:27-29: "Who do you say that I am?"
2. Essential to New Testament Christology is that Jesus is involved with the total history of revelation and salvation.
3. Significant Titles for Jesus in the New Testament: Prophet, High Priest, Mediator, Servant of God, Lamb of God, Messiah, Son of David, Son of Man, Judge, Holy One of God, Lord, Savior, King, Logos, Son of God, God
4. The ultimate power of Jesus is not in what he said or even his miracles, but in his life, death, and resurrection. See Mark 8:31.
5. Some early heresies about the person of Jesus included the following:
  - a. Ebionites: believed that Jesus became the Christ at baptism and ceased to be the Christ at the crucifixion.
  - b. Gnostics: Platonic, salvation comes from secret knowledge, Jesus was God's
  - c. Docetism: Jesus only "appeared" to be human but was actually only a spirit.
6. Dealing with Heresies
 

There are many different ideas floating around about who Jesus was and is. Many of these are not orthodox and are contrary to traditional biblical Christianity. Here are simple suggestions about how to deal with these:



- a. Know your Bible!
- b. Know your Theology!
- c. Know your History!
- d. Know the heresies and religions of your area.
- e. Develop answers for difficult questions
- f. Have a servant attitude.
- g. Do not compromise your faith or theology.

## II. 1 John

### A. Introduction

1. Authorship: anonymous, the author knew the Gospel of John.
2. Style of Writing:
  - a. Not a letter because it lacks typical epistolary forms of a letter
  - b. Possible solutions:
    - 1) Universal religious tractate
    - 2) A traveling letter
    - 3) A homily (sermon)
    - 4) A commentary on the Gospel, to make Gospel more understandable.
3. Purpose
  - a. Stated (1:1-4)
    - 1) A report about eternal life
    - 2) An Encouragement to fellowship
    - 3) To give fullness of joy
    - 4) That the readers may not sin
    - 5) To know eternal life
  - b. Implied
    - 1) Issues: Christology, ethics, discipline, false teaching, wealth
    - 2) To combat heresies having to do with person of Christ

### B. Structure

1. There are three major statements of who God is in 1 John:
  - a. God is Light (1:5)
  - b. God is Love (4:7-8)
  - c. God is Spirit (4:24)
2. Prologue (1:1-4)
3. God is Light (1:5-2:27/28)
  - a. The Word Explained (1:5-2:2)
  - b. Walking in the Light (2:3-11)
4. God is Righteousness (2:28/29 - 4:6)
  - a. Contrasts 2:28-3:10
  - b. Loving and Hating (3:11-24)
  - c. Denying that Jesus came in the Flesh (4:1-6)
5. God is Love (4:7-5:21)
6. Faith statements about Jesus (5:1-5)
7. Keeping the Faith (5:6-13)
8. Confidence as Christians (5:14-21)

### C. Summary

Three tests: righteousness, love, faith

Key Theological Themes

1. Centrality of Community
  - a. Mutual Responsibility
  - b. To be committed to God means being committed to one another
  - c. Definition of Community
2. Centrality of Ethics

- a. Based on God's Character
- b. Balanced with Love, rooted in fellowship
- c. Commitment to Holiness
- 3. Centrality of Christology
  - a. We define orthodoxy together
  - b. Keeping to basics of gospel
  - c. Define who Jesus is for today
- 4. Centrality of God
  - a. Holiness
  - b. Love

### III. Second and Third John

- A. Epistles in Form
- B. Author calls himself "elder" or "presbyter"
- C. Addressed to different people
  - 1. 2 John: elect lady and children
  - 2. 3 John: Gaius
- D. Second John
  - 1. Purpose: An exhortation to love and beware of deceivers
  - 2. Themes
    - a. love (4-6)
    - b. deceivers/Antichrists who deny Jesus in Flesh (7, 10-11)
    - c. affirmation of tradition (8-9)
- E. Third John
  - 1. Purpose: Endurance of love and hospitality
  - 2. Themes
    - a. News of faithful living in love (2-4)
    - b. Christian hospitality (5-8)
    - c. Problem of Diotrephes who loves to be first (9-10)
    - d. Call to imitate good and Demetrius' example (11-12)

## Session Fifteen: The Acts of the Apostles

### I. Introduction

#### A. Authorship

1. The document itself is anonymous.
2. Traditionally, since the AD 100s authorship has been attributed to Luke, the Greek physician and travel companion of Paul.
3. Authorship is tied up with the Gospel of Luke. This is volume 2 of Luke-Acts. It is a continuation of the Gospel of Luke. A great deal of the discussion of authorship of both documents hinges on the “we” sections of Acts, beginning in 16:10 and continuing through 20:4-6, whether the author was with Paul on these occasions. All scholars agree that the same author wrote both documents. There is good reason to trust the tradition that both documents were written by Dr. Luke.

#### B. Audience

1. Individual: Theophilus (Acts 1:1; see Luke 1:3); possibly a high ranking Roman. This part of the audience is explicit.
2. Group: the church that met in Theophilus’ home, most likely Gentile Christians. This part of the audience is implied.

#### C. Date:

There are three positions on this:

1. AD 95-100 or later
2. AD 62-70
3. AD 80-85

#### D. Purpose

1. Similar to Luke 1:1-4: Acts 1:1: This is sacred History recounting selected events. Luke provides an orderly account of the origins of the Church.
2. Salvation History: It recounts how God was active in the formation of the Church and the spread of the Gospel. It shows how the Holy Spirit inspired and led the church to live out the gospel that Jesus brought.
3. Apology and Defense of early Christianity.
  - a. Luke shows that Christianity has the power to change the world.
  - b. Christianity can have a good relationship with the Roman government
  - c. Defense of Paul and his ministry
  - d. Didactic and Confirming of the Christian Faith
4. Acts as Sacred History
  - a. Key Person: The Holy Spirit
  - b. Key Topic: Jesus Christ
  - c. Key Purpose: Spread of the Good News to all the World
5. Acts gives the vision of typical church life, but lacking in many details.
6. Acts gives evidence of the earliest Christian theology and mission  
Two key points:
  - a. Evangelism: the spread of the Good News to the center of the Empire.
  - b. Nurture: the development of the believers into communities of fellowship and worship.

#### E. Key Characters:

1. Peter (chapters 1-12); witnesses to the nearby
2. Paul (chapters 13-28); witnesses to the faraway

#### F. Scholarly Issues in Interpretation

1. Historical accuracy
2. Possible conflicts with events and details of Paul’s Epistles
3. Accuracy of the four main speeches (Peter, Stephen, Paul)
4. Source Criticism and the “we” Sections (16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16)
5. Problems with textual criticism: The “Western text” is much different than others.

## II. Contents

- A. The Mission and Task of the Church (ch. 1)
  - 1. Brief prologue 1:1-2, related to Luke 1:1-4
  - 2. Luke's version of the Great Commission, 1:8.
  - 3. Jesus' Ascension (1:9-11)
    - a. Takes place 40 days after the resurrection.
    - b. Angelic Promise: Jesus will come back the way he went. See Zechariah 14:4-21.
  - 4. Preparation for the Spirit (1:12-26)
    - a. About 120 gathered believers gathered for prayer
    - b. The group casts lots for a replacement for Judas and the lot falls on Matthias.
- B. Mission in Jerusalem (2:1-7)
  - 1. Empowerment for the Task (2:1-13)

At least three significant events took place as the disciples gathered in the "upper room":

    - a. Prayer
    - b. Cleansing
    - c. Empowerment
  - 2. Results of Empowerment (2:14-47)
    - a. Peter preached an "evangelistic" sermon because of the direct result of empowerment.
    - b. The main topics of Peter's sermon include:
      - 1) Repent: turn away from sin.
      - 2) Baptism: visible profession of faith in Jesus.
      - 3) Into the name of Jesus Christ: a new confession, "Jesus is Lord."
      - 4) Gift of the Spirit (2:38-39): All believers are given the Spirit.
      - 5) Early Christian preaching was not centered on the words of Jesus but upon the person of Jesus.
    - c. Results of sermon: 3000 new believers; new lifestyle
    - d. Four features of early church life (2:42-47):
      - 1) *Koinonia* "fellowship"
      - 2) Prayer
      - 3) Breaking Bread (2:46)
      - 4) Teaching of the Apostles
  - 3. The Power of the Name (3:1-26)
  - 4. The Cost of the Following the Name (4:1-37)
  - 5. The Cost of Deceit (5:1-42)
  - 6. Growing Pains, Jewish and Hellenistic Disputes (6:1-7)
  - 7. The Ministry and Death of Stephen (6:8-8:1)
- C. Mission in Samaria and Judea (8:1-15:35)
  - 1. Persecution and Dispersion of Christians (8:1-3)
  - 2. Philip takes gospel to Samaria; preaching with signs (8:4-25)
  - 3. Philip takes gospel to Ethiopian between Jerusalem and Gaza (8:26-40)
  - 4. Transformation of Saul (9:1-31)
    - a. Vision on the way to Damascus (9:1-19)
    - b. Restoration of sight in Jerusalem (9:20-31)
  - 5. Mission of Peter
    - a. Healing of Aeneas and Dorcas (9:32-43)
    - b. Cornelius' Vision (10:1-8)
    - c. Peter's vision of the Sheet from heaven (10:9-23)
    - d. Dinner and Conversion of Cornelius (10:23-48)
    - e. Rebuke of Peter and Peter's Defense (11:1-18)
  - 6. Antioch and Beyond (11:19-12:25)
    - a. The Church in Antioch (11:19-30)
    - b. Peter's Miraculous Escape from Prison (12:1-19)
    - c. Death of Herod (12:19-25)

7. Sending of Paul and Barnabas; Paul's First Missionary Journey (13:1-14:28)
  - a. On the Island of Cyprus (13:4-12)
  - b. To Pisidian Antioch (13:13-52)
  - c. To Iconium (14:1-7)
  - d. To Lystra and Derbe (14:8-20)
  - e. Return to Antioch (14:21-28)
8. Jerusalem Council (15:1-35). Meeting what to do with Gentile converts.
- D. Mission of Paul to the Ends of the Earth (15:36-28:31)
  1. Paul's Second Missionary Trip (15:36-18:22)
    - a. Paul quarrels with Barnabas about Mark, on to Syria and Cilicia (15:36-39)
    - b. Timothy joins Paul, on to Lystra and Derbe (16:1-5)
    - c. To Phrygia, Galatia, Troas (16:6-10)
    - d. The "we" passage begins. Paul's vision of a man from Macedonia.
    - e. To Philippi (16:11-40)
    - f. To Thessalonica (17:1-9)
    - g. To Berea (17:10-14)
    - h. To Athens (17:15-34)
    - i. To Corinth (18:1-18)
    - j. Return to Antioch (18:19-22)
  2. Paul's Third Missionary Journey (18:23-21:14)
    - a. Through Galatia, Phrygia (18:23)
    - b. Ephesus (19:1-40), there 3 years
    - c. Through Macedonia to Greece and Corinth (20:1-3a)
    - d. Back through Macedonia and Philippi (20:3b-6)
    - e. To Troas (20:7-12)
    - f. Sailing along Asia Minor to Miletus (20:13-16)
    - g. To Tyre (21:1-6)
    - h. Back to Caesarea (21:7-14)
  3. Jerusalem Arrest, Prison, Trial in Caesarea (21:15-26:32)
    - a. "we" passages ends (21:18)
    - a. Paul is received by James and the Elders (21:18-25)
    - b. Riot (21:26-30)
    - c. Arrest of Paul (21:31-36)
    - d. Paul's Defense (21:37-22:21)
    - e. Paul appeal of Roman Citizenship (22:22-29)
    - f. Paul before the Sanhedrin (22:20-23:11)
    - g. The Plot to Kill Paul (23:12-22)
    - h. Paul transferred to Caesarea (23:23-35)
    - i. Paul's Trial before Felix (24:1-27)
    - j. Paul's Trial before Festus (25:1-22)
    - k. Paul's Trial before Agrippa (25:23-26:32)
    - l. Paul sails to Rome and the Shipwreck on Malta (27:1-28:10)
    - m. Paul in Rome, Preaching and Imprisonment (28:11-31)

#### Cultural Note:

The first believers were Jews. Many Jews had been significantly influenced by Hellenism by the time of the first century. Most early churches were in cities. Christianity emerged especially among urbanized people of the Roman Empire. Most Jews remained separated from their social environments and preserved elements of their faith and lifestyle. Julius Caesar granted protection to Jews to worship as they wished. Early Christians were also protected as long as they affiliated with synagogues. There were significant social distinctions between the wealthy few and the poor majority. There were a significant number of slaves throughout the Roman Empire. Slaves were an important part of the economy. As far as education, Jewish children were taught the Torah

(law) and how to read it. Greeks had well-established patterns of education focusing on reading, writing, music, and athletics.

## Session Sixteen: The Letters of Paul

The thirteen letters attribute to Paul the Apostle form a key part of the New Testament witness. These letters were written to various churches to deal with actual or potential problems. They are not theological treatises but contain a lot of theology. Paul uses his theology to deal with actual situations.

### I. Paul the Letter Writer

#### A. The Person of Paul

1. Sources for reconstructing Paul's life:
  - a. His letters, especially Paul's testimony in Galatians 1-2 and Philippians 3
  - b. Acts
    - a. The Apocrypha book "Acts of Paul and Thecla" (legendary in nature)
    - b. Second century reflections by church fathers
    - c. Letters between Paul and Seneca (third century document)
    - d. Archaeology: Gallio inscription which indicates that Paul in Corinth in AD 51. Outer limits of 30 (Jesus' death) and 64 (Paul's death under the Emperor Nero).
2. Pre-conversion
  - a. Tarsus: birth place
  - b. Education: knew Aramaic, Biblical Hebrew, Greek; schooled in ancient rhetoric
  - c. Citizenship: Roman
  - d. Occupation: Tent makerFrom Philippians 3:
  - e. Pharisee, proud, loyal, and zealous Jew
  - f. He was looking forward to the Messiah
  - g. Persecuted the church

#### B. Paul the Letter Writer

Paul wrote the first accounts we have about Jesus, as early as the late 40's or early 50's.

1. Paul's letters are very similar to other letters
  - a. Salutation
  - b. Thanksgiving:
  - c. Body

This part of the letter follows Greco-Roman Rhetoric and the parts of a speech:

    - a. *Exordium*: introduction of a speech, focuses attention of audience, gains good will.
    - b. *Narratio*: displays facts of the case, background, brief and clear
    - c. *Digressio*: gains favor of audience by giving them a breather
    - d. *Propositio*: the thesis of the speech
    - e. *Confirmatio*: main body of the discourse or argument. This may contain
      - a) *Paraenesis*: moral exhortation
      - b) *Refutatio*: the alternative course is presented in the worst possible way
    - f. *Peroratio*: conclusion to the speech when speaker summarizes and gives alternatives to his argument.
  - d. Closing

### II. Paul the Theologian

#### A. The Place of Paul's Conversion

1. Old Life in Judaism (see Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-7)
  - a. Paul was a proud and devout Jew (Phil. 3:4-7)
  - b. Paul was a persecutor of the Church/Christ (Gal. 1:13-14; Acts 7:58; 8:1).
2. Damascus Road Experience: A Personal Encounter with the Risen Jesus-- Acts 9:1-19 (22:3-16; 26:1-20).
3. New life in Christ, new understanding of God's work, and a new mission to the world

#### B. Essence of Paul: "A Man in Christ"

Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:21

1. Christ is the Lens of Life for Paul.
2. Jesus Christ was that source of life for Paul.

### III. Romans

#### A. Introduction

1. This letter has had a historic impact on
  - a. St. Augustine (354-430): freedom from sin and desires
  - b. Martin Luther (1483-1546): salvation by faith and not works of penance
  - c. John Wesley: May 24, 1738 Wesley's heart-warming experience Preface
  - d. Karl Barth (1886-1968) 1918 Commentary on Romans, neo-orthodoxy and broke the hold of liberalism
2. Written by Paul, from Corinth, on his third missionary journey, AD 55
3. Audience: Christians in Rome, both Jews and Gentiles.
4. Rome: the capital of the Roman Empire. When did Christianity arrive? Christianity came there early, possible through Jews who heard Peter's Pentecost sermon. Suetonius wrote that the Emperor Claudius expelled Jews from Rome in AD 49 because of "disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus." Chrestus probably refers to Christ.
5. Purpose
  - a. Concern over the health of the church
  - b. Preparation for Paul's journey
  - c. A summary of Paul's theology
6. Overriding theme in found in 1:17: justification by faith.

#### B. Scholarly Issues

1. Unsure who founded the church in Rome.
2. Not sure of the religious mix of the church: Jewish, Gentile, mixture
3. Biggest question is on the integrity of the letter, whether ch. 16 was added later and not part of the original.

#### C. Contents

1. The Gospel of God (1:1-17)
2. Paul's Analysis of Sin (1:18-3:20)
  - a. The Universal Human Problem: "The Sin" (1:18-32)
  - b. The Jewish Problem (2:1-3:8)
  - c. Universal Guilt (3:9-20)
3. Justification through Faith (3:21-5:21)
  - a. Christ brought a new day in human relationship with God and the problem of sin.
  - b. God's action: Justification: being made right with God
  - c. Humanity's response is the "Obedience of Faith"; Abraham as the model of faith (ch. 4)
  - d. God's Grace in Christ (5:1-21)
4. Freedom from Sin and Life in the Spirit (ch. 6-8)
  - a. Freedom from sin as an act of God
  - b. Freedom from sin as a growth Process
  - c. The Law cannot Sanctify (ch. 7)
  - d. Sanctification by the Spirit (ch. 8)
5. Rejection of Righteousness by Faith (9:1-11:36)
  - a. Israel's rejection not complete (9:1-29)
  - b. Israel Rejected because of unbelief (9:30-10:21)
  - c. The Future of Israel (11:1-36)
6. Living the Holy Life (12:1-15:13)
  - a. Love as the Way the Christian should Live (ch. 12)
  - b. Submission as the Way the Christian should Live (ch. 13)
  - c. Rules for Holy Living in Community (14:1-15:13)
7. Paul's Future Plans (15:14-33)



## 8. Greetings and Closing (16:1-27)

### IV. The Corinthian Correspondence

#### A. The City of Corinth

Located on the Isthmus of Corinth, with the mountain called Acrocorinth (1800 ft.) in the middle; a strategic port city. City had syncretistic religious scene with many religions, with a famous temple to Aphrodite; had developed a bad reputation for immorality over the centuries.

The church had a mixture of Jews and Gentiles.

#### A. Paul's Correspondence with the Corinthians

1. Founding Visit described in Acts 18
2. Paul communicated with this church through a series of letters of which we only have a few.
3. Basic Theory of Letters and Contact between Paul and Corinth
  - a. Founding visit on 2nd missionary journey (Acts 18)
  - b. The Lost Letter (1 Corinthians 5:9), possibly a fragment in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1
  - c. The Long Letter, 1 Corinthians (about AD 57)
  - d. Intermediate visit called the "painful visit"
  - e. Lost letter (2 Corinthians 2:3)
  - f. 2 Corinthians is sometimes divided into two separate letters:
    - a. The Stern Letter (10-13)
    - b. The Thankful Letter (1-9).

#### B. Background to 1 Corinthians

1. Occasion and Purpose
  - a. Thanksgiving section in 1:4-9
  - b. Reports Received
    - 1) From Chloe's people (1:10-12)
    - 2) Questions about a previous letter Paul wrote (1 Corinthians 5:9).
    - 3) Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus brought a letter to Paul (1 Corinthians 16:15-17).
  - c. Paul's Assessment that they were living fleshly like the world in 3:1-3
  - d. The Corinthians' failure to live by Paul's preaching (2:1-5)
  - e. Paul's Goal: Being fit for fellowship with Christ through the Holy Spirit (1:2; 3:16; 6:19)
  - f. The Corinthians' Problem:
    - a. Conformity to the World and not to Christ; no holiness
    - b. A lack of love and fellowship in the community
  - g. The deepest issues and problems are spiritual but manifest themselves in improper morality. Paul always deals with the practical by referring in some way back to the theological
2. Date and Place of Writing
  - a. Precise dating is difficult to determine
  - b. Dates vary from 53-57, but 57 is most widely held.
  - c. More important is the time span between the two letters: "a year ago" (8:10 and 9:2)
  - d. Possibly written during Paul's stay in Ephesus or Macedonia (Acts 19:1-20:6)

#### C. Content of 1 Corinthians

1. Salutation (1:1-3)
  - a. Paul's Qualifications:
  - b. References to Corinth: Paul's most extensive description of a church in a salutation.
2. Thanksgiving (*Exordium*) (1:4-9)
  - a. Paul begins with grace of God then moves to the problems of the community
  - b. The problems with the Corinthians:
    - 1) Speech and knowledge (chapters 1-4 )
    - 2) Confirmation of being in Christ through ethical purity (chapters 5-11:1)
    - 3) Appropriate use of spiritual gifts (chapters 11:2-14)
    - 4) A balanced view of Christ's second coming and resurrection (chapter 15)
3. Thesis (*Propositio*) (1:10)

4. Facts of the Case (*Narratio*) (1:11-17)
    - a. Surface problem: disunity
    - b. Deeper problem: spiritual immaturity
    - c. Contrast in 1:17
  5. The Paradox of the Cross (1:18-4:20)
    - a. Argument One: The Paul's message of the cross (1:18-2:16)
      - 1) An Illogical Paradox
      - 2) Clarification of the Paradox (1:21-25)
      - 3) Application of the Paradox (1:26-31)
      - 4) Paul's Apology of Proclamation (2:1-5)
      - 5) The Divine Wisdom of God Explained (2:6-16)
    - b. Argument Two: Paul's Assessment of the Corinthians (3:1-3)
    - c. Argument Three: Divisions prove Paul's point (3:4-17)
    - d. Argument Four: Summary (3:18-23)
  6. Paul's Position of Authority (ch. 4)
  7. Problems with Holiness (chs. 5-7)
  8. Issues of Sexual Immorality (5:1-7:40)
    - a. The Immoral "Brother" (5:1-13)
    - b. Lawsuits among Believers (6:1-11)
    - c. Immorality (6:12-20)
    - d. Interim Ethics (7:1-40)
    - e. Paul's Goal: Provide Group Boundaries
    - f. The Basis for Paul's Call to Holy Living: what God has done for us in Christ.
  9. Problems with Love (8:1-14:40)
    - a. Food Sacrificed to Idols (8:1-11:1)
    - b. Paul's Own Example (ch. 9)
    - c. The Problem of Idolatry (ch. 10)
    - d. Propriety in Worship (11:2-16)
    - e. Fellowship in Worship (11:17- 34)
    - f. Spiritual Gifts and Worship (12:1- 31a)
    - g. In praise of Love (12:31b-14:1a)
    - h. Speaking in Tongues (14:1-40)
  10. Problems with Eschatology (ch. 15)
  11. Concluding Remarks (16:1-24)
    - a. Collection for the Jerusalem Church (16:1-4)
    - b. Paul's Travel Plans
    - c. Exhortation to Stand Strong (v. 13)
    - d. Call to submit to those devoted to the mission (v. 15-18)
    - e. Greetings (vv. 19-21)
    - f. Final Exhortation (vv. 22-24)
- D. Contributions of 1 Corinthians to New Testament Thought
1. Resurrection themes
  2. Freedom and Responsibility
  3. Primacy of Love
  4. Consistency of Faith and Practice
  5. Earliest written record of the Lord's Supper
  6. Principle of Edification
  7. Centrality of Cross and Resurrection of Jesus Christ
  8. Spiritual Gifts (worship)
  9. The Body of Christ
  10. Mind of Christ—Philosophy of Leadership
  11. Workings of the Holy Spirit
  12. Eschatology and resurrection

13. Marriage and Sexuality
14. Wisdom and the cross
15. Church discipline
16. Theology of Unity of the church

## V. Second Corinthians

### A. Debated Background Issues

1. Is this document several letter fragments that have been combined?
  - a. There were several letters to the Corinthians
  - b. The Lost Letter, possibly a fragment in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1
  - c. The Long Letter (1 Corinthians)
  - d. The Stern Letter (2 Corinthians 10-13)
  - e. The Thankful Letter (2 Corinthians 1-9)
2. Structural Issues and Abrupt Transitions
  - a. 2:13-14; 7:4-5
  - b. 6:13-14 to 7:2
  - c. 7:16-8:1
  - d. 9:15-10:1
3. Paul's Opposition in Corinth
  - a. Accusations against Paul  
1:12, 17, 24; 2:16; 4:1; 3:12; 4:6; 5:6-7; 3:13; 4:4, 14; 11:7, 16, etc.
  - b. Names Given to Enemies  
3; 5:12; 6:13-14; 11:3-5, 20, 13, 12:21; 13:2
4. The "Super Apostles"
  - a. Likely Jewish Christians of unknown origins
  - b. Questioned Paul's Gospel and Authority
  - c. This letter is Paul's Defense and Attack
  - d. They were false apostles but Paul does not explicitly say they are not Christian
5. Paul's Position as the True Apostle
  - a. A reconciler of sinners ch. 5
  - b. Sent from God ch. 10
  - c. Right motives ch. 2
  - d. Has the war scars ch. 11
  - e. Has seen Christ ch. 12
  - f. Recognizes Weakness 12:7-10
  - g. Pastor concerned for flock ch. 12

### B. Contents

1. Typical Greeting (1:1-2)
2. Thanksgiving (1:3-11)
3. Paul Defends himself (1:12-3:6)
  - a. Paul's behavior is his defense (1:12-14)
  - b. Change of Travel Plans (1:15-17)
  - c. Theological Basis (1:18-22)
  - d. Defense for Paul's trip and this letter (1:23-2:4)
  - e. Theology and philosophy of discipline (2:5-11)
  - f. Transition: Evangelism in Troas (2:12-13)
  - g. Thanksgiving (2:14-17)
  - h. The evidence of Paul's apostleship: transformed lives (3:1-6)
4. New Covenant and Transformation into image of Christ (3:7-18)
5. Life of suffering as Earthen Vessels in need of grace (4:1-5:10)
6. The Ministry of Reconciliation: God through Christ, God through Us (5:11-6:2)
7. Paul's Vulnerability (6:3-13)

8. Holy Digression (6:14-7:1)
9. Paul's Confidence in the Corinthians (7:2-16)
10. Christian Giving (8:1-9:15)
11. Paul Defends his ministry (10:1-18)
12. Paul Attacks the False Apostles (11:1-15)
13. Catalogue of Paul's Sufferings (11:16-33)
14. A Heavenly Vision (12:1-10)
15. Final Visit and Warnings (12:19-13:10)
16. Concluding Remarks (13:11-14)

## VI. Galatians

Key Verse: 5:1

### A. Introduction

1. History: Paul went through Galatia on his first missionary journey (Acts 14).
2. Purpose: Churches being subverted by Judaizers who preached a gospel of works and circumcision
3. The Galatians faced two traps:
  - a. Ethical obligation to obey the law as the means of justification
  - b. Ethical freedom to do as one wishes)
4. Location of audience: theories on "Galatia"
  - a. Northern Galatia, area of the Gauls, later dating of 53-57
  - b. Written to people in southern Galatia, early dating of 51-53
5. Paul wrote probably from Ephesus during his third missionary journey. The authorship of this letter is undisputed.

### B. Contents

1. Salutation (1:1-5)
  - a. Sender. The basis of Paul's authority:
  - b. Recipients: Unique with plural churches with no further description.
  - c. Greetings. Standard Pauline greeting.
2. *Exordium* (Introduction) sets out the character of the speaker (1:6-11): shock that the Galatians had turned away from Paul's gospel
3. *Narratio* (Narration) states the facts in the case (1:12-2:14): Paul gives his autobiographical defense of his ministry and message (1:11-2:14)
4. *Propositio* (Proposition) points of disagreement/agreement to resolve it (2:15-21). Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and not by works of the law.
5. *Probatio* (Confirmation) develops central argument which will win the case (3:1-4:31)  
The law does not work as the way to be saved. Exhortations against the Threat of Judaizers (4:8-21)
6. *Refutatio* (Refutation) rebuttal of opponents' argument (5:1-6:10) by showing the Life of Freedom in Christ (5:1-15; The Life of Responsibility in Christ (5:13-26); How to live out this life in Christ (6:1-10)
7. *Peroratio* (Conclusion) summarizes the case with sympathetic response (6:11-18)

## VII. Prison Epistles

Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Philemon are called the "Prison Epistles" because Paul wrote them as a prisoner. Question: During which imprisonment? Two usual choices: Caesarea and Rome. Sometimes Ephesus is suggested. Acts does not mention every imprisonment of Paul (see 2 Corinthians 1:8, 23; 1 Corinthians 15:32). Clement of Rome mentions seven imprisonments of Paul (*Ad Cor.* v. 6).

### A. Ephesians and Colossians: "Paul's Highest Christology"

1. Similarities: "Twin Letters"; Likely written around AD 63-65 in Rome; similar issues
2. Some scholars have questioned the authorship of Ephesians

3. Content of Ephesians
  - a. Greeting (1:1-2)
  - b. Doxology (1:3-14)
  - c. Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Readers (1:15-23)
  - d. Salvation in Christ (2:1-22)
  - a. The Ministry of the Church (3:1-21)
  - b. Practical Applications (4:1-6:17)
    - 1) Unity (4:1-6)
    - 2) Diverse Gifts (4:7-13)
    - 3) Maintaining unity (4:14-16)
    - 4) Old and New Life (4:17-32)
    - 5) Warning of works of darkness (5:1-14)
    - 6) Wise use of time (5:15-21)
    - 7) Christian Home Life (5:22-6:9)
  - e. Conclusion (6:10-24)
4. Content of Colossians
  - a. Greetings (1:1-2)
  - b. Thanksgiving (1:3-8)
  - c. Prayer (1:9-12)
  - d. Who is Christ (1:13-2:23)
  - e. Practical Applications (3:1-4:6)
    - 1) Basis for Christian Living (3:1-4)
    - 2) Old and New Life (3:5-17)
    - 3) Christian Home Life (3:18-4:1)
  - f. Conclusion (4:7-18)
5. Christological Outline
  - a. Cosmic Claims
    - 1) Pre-existence of Jesus (Ephesians 1:3-6; Colossians 1:16-17a)
    - 2) Active and purposive agent in creation (Colossians 1:16)
    - 3) Power that keeps the universe together (Colossians 1:17b)
  - b. Revealing Work (Incarnation) (Colossians 1:15, 19; 2:9)
  - c. Redemptive work--in his life and through his death
    - 1) Jesus redeems us (Ephesians 1:7)
    - 2) Jesus adopts us (Ephesians 1:5)
    - 3) Jesus reconciles us (Ephesians 2:11-22; Colossians 1:21-22)
    - 4) Jesus forgives us (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:13-14)
    - 5) Jesus delivers us (Colossians 1:12, Ephesians 2:4-9)
  - d. Christ's Exaltation
    - 1) God raised Jesus up (Ephesians 1:20; 2:6; Colossians 1:18; 3:12)
    - 2) God exalts him as Lord (Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 1:18)
    - 3) Jesus has triumphed over his enemies (Colossians 2:15)
    - 4) Everything is moving to a final consummation in Christ (Ephesians 1:9-10; Colossians 1:20)
  - e. Our Exaltation--The purpose of Christ's Work
    - 1) To Raise us up (Ephesians 2:4-6)
    - 2) To present us to the Father (Ephesians 2:7; Colossians 1:21-23)
    - 3) We are join heirs of all things with Christ (Ephesians 1:11)
6. Ethical Imperative
  - a. "Since you have been raised with Christ . . .
    - 1) Seek things above (Colossians 3:1-3)
    - 2) Set your minds above (Colossians 3:2)
    - 3) Put off the old self (Ephesians 4:22-24)

- 4) Put on the new self (Colossians 3:5-11)
- 5) Put on love (Colossians 3:12-14)
- 6) Put on peace (Colossians 3:15)
- 7) Put on Christ (Colossians 3:16-17)
- b. Therefore, as those called, walk in a manner worthy of your calling (Ephesians 4:1-16)
- c. "Be imitators of God" (Ephesians 5:1)
7. Heresies in Colossae
  - a. The Nature of the Heresy
    - 1) Explicit teaching of the opponents
      - a) Emphasized abstinence from certain foods and drinks
      - b) The requirement of the observance of Jewish feasts
      - c) Emphasized self-abasement and visions.
      - d) Involved angelic worship, either as the object or subject of worship
      - e) Taught the need for some kind of worship which was human in origin.
      - f) Praised the value of treating the body severely.
      - g) Depicted by Paul as philosophy and empty deceit (2:8)
    - 2) Implicit references in the book
      - a) Demoted Christ from his supreme place (1:13-20)
      - b) Time "Fullness" a later favorite word of Gnostics
      - c) Claimed to promote higher spirituality
      - d) Probably required circumcision of the adherents
      - e) May have misunderstood the death-burial-resurrection motif.
      - f) Cast doubt on the completeness of forgiveness in Christ.
  - b. What are the possible sources of the heresy?
    - 1) Essenes/ Qumran community (because they were ascetics)
    - 2) Greek pagan cults
    - 3) Gnosticism
    - 4) Syncretistic religion
    - 5) Jewish Mysticism

There is no definitive conclusion about the source of the heresy.
8. Purposes of Colossians
  - a. To provide advice about the dangerous heresy which had arisen in Colosse and was threatening the church.
  - b. To answer the heretical issues by asserting the absolute, direct, and continuous supremacy of Christ over all of creation.
  - c. To encourage Paul's readers to live life in view of Christ as supreme over all of creation.
  - d. To encourage the churches to be orderly in their Christian lives and to be stable in the face of the threat of false teachers.

## B. Philippians

1. Introduction
  - a. Paul's most personal and intimate letter
  - b. Written from Rome (some scholars question this) during Paul's imprisonment, 63-64.
  - c. Written to the church born in an earthquake, Acts 16. The church could have still been in jailor's house.
  - a. Purpose?
    - 1) Thanksgiving for gifts
    - 2) News about Epaphroditus
    - 3) The need to share the secret of inner joy
    - 4) Possible problems with Judaizers, as ch 3 suggests
2. Greeting (1:1-2)
3. Thanksgiving (1:3-8)
4. Prayer (1:9-11)

5. Paul's Present Circumstances (1:12-26)
6. Exhortation (1:27-2:18)
  - a. Steadfastness (1:27-30)
  - b. The Secret of Self-giving Love, contains the "Christ Hymn" (2:1-11)
7. Obedience and Purity (2:12-18)
8. Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-30)
9. Warnings against False Teachers
  - a. Paul's Personal Journey (3:1-10)
    - 1) Pre-conversion Existence, vv. 4-6
    - 2) Self Emptying, vv. 7-8
    - 3) New Life in Christ, vv. 9-10
  - b. New Hope in Christ, vv. 11-21
10. The Secret of Contentment (ch. 4)
  - a. Live in Harmony
  - b. Rejoice
  - c. Forbearing Spirit v. 5
  - d. Peace of God rule hearts vv. 6-7
  - e. Power of positive thinking vv. 8-9
  - f. Be content with what you have vv. 11-12
  - g. Great Confidence in God v. 13
  - h. Great Promise v. 19
  - i. Great Benediction v. 20, 23

### C. Philemon

1. A friendship letter to Philemon, a wealthy, home and slave owner who hosted a house church
2. Circumstances of Writing
  - a. Paul was in prison in Rome.
  - b. Onesimus a Gentile convert in Colossae (Colossians 4:9)
  - c. Date: 60-64.
  - d. Written to Philemon in Laodicea. Onesimus stole money. Philemon could have him beaten. Paul led and disciplined Onesimus. Paul was confident that Onesimus and Philemon would be reconciled and possibly that Philemon would set Onesimus free.
3. Purpose: to ask Philemon to accept Onesimus as a brother in Christ.
  - a. Paul knows what society would demand, but he urges a new Christian relationship (15-16). Paul could command Philemon to accept Onesimus, but he chooses not to (8-9).
  - b. Onesimus, a runaway slave, was converted under Paul. Paul felt that the right thing for Onesimus to do was to return to his master and straighten things out. Most likely Onesimus was a slave because he or his family owed money to Philemon.
  - c. Paul writes to urge Philemon to treat his slave with mercy, as he was now a fellow believer.
  - d. A humble personal letter like many
  - e. No great doctrines, no lofty revelation
  - f. It was nearly excluded in the canon
4. Greetings (vv. 1-3). Paul demonstrates the "power of positive persuasion"
5. Commendation of Philemon (vv. 4-7)
6. Defense of Onesimus with special request (vv. 8-22)
7. Closing (vv. 23-25)
8. What happened to Onesimus? Ignatius wrote a letter to the Bishop of Ephesus who was Onesimus around AD 110.
9. Contributions of Philemon
  - a. Confirms Pauline authorship of Colossians & Ephesians
  - b. In principle, Philemon destroys the basis of slavery, vv. 15-16
  - c. Gives most intimate portrait of Paul the man

## VIII. 1 Thessalonians

### A. Introduction

1. City of Thessalonica
  - a. Capital of Macedonia
  - b. Key city on *Via Egnatia* (Roman Highway)
  - c. Had a Jewish Colony
  - d. A free, prosperous city
2. Church
  - a. Founded about AD 50 after Paul, Silas and Timothy left Philippi on Paul's 2nd missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9).
  - b. Made up of both Jews (Acts 17:4) and Gentiles (1 Thessalonians 1:9)
  - c. Many were converts from pagan idolatry and were Jewish proselytes
  - d. This church represents Paul's most successful mission project.
3. Letter
  - a. Possibly the earliest of Paul's letters (AD 50)
  - b. Written when Paul was in Corinth, early 51. Paul went to Beorea, then to Athens. There he sent Timothy back to Thessalonica for news (3:1-2). Paul was in Corinth when he got the news and then wrote 1 Thessalonians full of relief at the good report. The second letter was written a short time later.
  - c. Undisputed authenticity

### B. Contents

1. Purpose
  - a. Full of Praise for the progress the Thessalonians had made and that they were holding up under persecution (ch. 1).
  - b. Paul gives some self-defense against false charges
  - c. Encouragement to the Thessalonians to endure under persecution
  - d. Praise of Christian Holiness over against pagan immorality
  - e. Correction of incorrect ideas about Jesus' parousia.
2. Outline
  - a. Greeting (1:1)
  - b. Thanksgiving (1:2-10)
  - c. Paul's work and motive in Thessalonica (2:1-16)
  - d. Paul's relationship to the Thessalonians (2:17-3:13)
  - e. Exhortations to Holy Living (4:1-12)
  - f. Instructions on Jesus' Second Coming (4:13-5:11)
  - g. Exhortations on Holy and Spiritual living (5:12-22)
  - h. Concluding prayer (5:23-28)

## IX. 2 Thessalonians

### A. Introduction

1. Disputes over Authorship and Authenticity
2. Strong internal and external evidence suggest authenticity and Pauline authorship
3. Questions on the order of the letters, which came first?
4. Probably written soon after the first letter

### B. Content

1. Purpose
  - a. Possibly to clarify matters of the first letter
  - b. To correct new misunderstandings about Jesus' second coming
2. Concepts of the Second Coming: general pictures to deal with immediate problems
3. Outline
  - a. Greetings (1:1-2)
  - b. Prayer and Thanksgiving (1:3-4)



- c. God's judgment upon the trouble makers (1:5-10)
- d. Prayer for Thessalonians (1:11-12)
- e. Jesus' Second Coming (2:1-12)
- f. Prayer and Encouragement to stand firm (2:13-17)
- g. Moral Exhortations (3:1-15)
- h. Conclusion in Paul's own hand writing (3:16-18)

## X. Pastoral Epistles

### A. Debate on Authorship of Pastoral Epistles

- 1. These are letters written to individuals.
- 2. The letters are similar to one another but different from other Pauline letters.
- 3. Internal Evidence: many unique words found only here; some of the themes are different than other letters; missing is Paul's "in Christ" terminology
- 4. External Evidence: manuscript copies of these letters are late
- 5. The Challenges
  - a. Paul's Journeys: The letters do not fit well into the travel sequence in Acts
  - b. Church structure: Organization is more developed and represents later stage

### B. Purpose:

To give his close associates written instructions about methods of procedure; these instructions were likely given orally earlier.

### C. 1 Timothy

- 1. Introduction
  - a. Timothy in Ephesus (1:3ff)
  - b. Paul expects to visit Timothy again (4:13)
- 2. Paul's challenges to Timothy
  - a. Church organization
  - b. Encouragement
  - c. Moral challenge
  - d. Be unashamed of the Gospel
- 3. Outline
  - a. Greetings
  - b. Paul and Timothy (1:3-20)
  - c. Order in Worship and the Church (2:1-4:16)
  - d. Discipline in the Church (5:1-25)
  - e. Various Instructions (6:1-19)
  - f. Concluding admonition (6:20-21)

### D. 2 Timothy

- 1. Introduction
  - a. Paul in Prison at close of his life; urges Timothy to come quickly
  - b. Timothy and his task is the focus
  - c. Warning about false teachers
- 2. Contents
  - a. Greetings and Thanksgiving (1:1-5)
  - b. Encouragement from Experience (1:6-18)
  - c. Examples of Faithful preaching (2:1-13)
  - d. Examples of True teaching vs. False Teaching (2:14-3:9)
  - e. Final Encouragement to Timothy; Paul about to die (3:10-4:8)
  - f. Practical Charges to come quickly (4:9-18)
  - g. Concluding Greetings and Benediction (4:19-22)

### E. Titus

1. Introduction
  - a. Titus
    - 1) Greek Believer (Gal 2:3)
    - 2) Converted by Paul (Titus 1:4)
    - 3) Helped in the Jerusalem Offering (2 Cor 2:1–9; 7:8–12; 12:18)
    - 4) Met Paul in Troas (see 2 Corinthians 2:12–13; 7:5–16)
    - 5) Titus carried 2 Corinthians back for Paul (2 Corinthians 8:16–24)
    - 6) Paul left Titus in Crete to organize the church (Titus 1:5)
    - 7) Titus was at Rome during Paul’s second imprisonment, and then went to Dalmatia on a mission for the apostle (2 Timothy 4:10).
    - 8) Paul thought highly of him (2 Corinthians 8:23)
  - b. Paul’s Letter
    - 1) Paul left Crete in a hurry
    - 2) People of Crete were not easy to work with and needed pastoral care (1:12-13)
    - 3) The church may have faced legalistic Judaizers and libertarian ignorant Christians
  - c. Purpose
    - 1) to remind Titus of his work of organizing the church and appointing elders
    - 2) to warn him about false teachers
    - 3) to encourage him in pastoring the different kinds of people in the church
    - 4) to emphasize the true meaning of grace in the life of the Christian
    - 5) to explain how to deal with troublemakers in the church.
2. Contents
  - a. Address and Greetings to Titus (1:1-4)
  - b. Church structure and appointment of presbyters (1:5-9)
  - c. False teaching that threatens the community (1:10-16)
  - d. Community behavior and belief (2:1-3:11)
    - 1) Aged saints (2:1–3)
    - 2) Young men and women (2:4–8)
    - 3) Servants (2:9–15)
    - 4) Citizens (3:1–11)
    - 5) Concluding Greetings and Blessings (3:12-15)
3. Messages
  - a. Good works (1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:1, 5, 8, 14)
  - b. Sound doctrine (1:9, 13; 2:1–2, 8)
  - c. Godly Living by God’s grace (1:1; 2:11-12; 3:7, 15)
  - d. Avoiding Worldliness
  - e. Key verse: 3:8: “those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works.”

## Session Seventeen: The General Epistles

These are called “general” or “catholic” because they were not written to any specific church or individual but are letters for a wider audience. They may have been written to certain types of Christians (for example, Jewish Christians).

### I. Hebrews

- A. Genre: This letter models a sermon or speech to a community with possibly sagging faith. Traditionally it was included with Paul’s epistles in manuscript collections. The style of argumentation has three parts or sequence:
  - 1. Authoritative Example
  - 2. Conclusion based on example
  - 3. Final exhortation
- B. Authorship: There are many ideas and theories about this.
  - 1. Paul is the traditional author, but Paul’s name is not mentioned in any of the oldest manuscripts. Few modern scholars accept Pauline authorship.
  - 2. Other names:
    - a. Barnabas, a companion of Paul
    - b. Luke, because of the good style of Greek
    - c. Clement of Rom (suggested by Origen)
    - d. Apollos (suggested by Martin Luther)
    - e. Silvanus (Silas), companion of Paul
    - f. Philip
    - g. Priscilla and Aquilla
  - 3. Anonymous; Origen said, “Only God knows.”
  - 4. What can be known about the author:
    - a. A second generation Christian and not an eye witness (2:3)
    - b. Not an early leader (13:7)
    - c. Uses Platonic thought, so likely came from a Hellenistic area of the Roman Empire.
      - 1) Material world is imperfect and changing, a copy of the true world (7:18-19; 8:5; 9:23; 10:1)
      - 2) Humans have access to the divine through mind and reason (5:12; 13:15-16)
      - 3) Education of the soul-milk (elementary teaching) is for the immature. The soul seeks to be mature or perfect (5:12-6:3)
    - d. The author was a creative theologian
    - e. The style of writing: a rich vocabulary, high level of rhetorical skill; well educated; knows well the Greek Old Testament called the Septuagint; lengthy sentence structure; use of various metaphors and rhetorical features
    - f. A gifted preacher. We have a sermon manuscript intended to be spoken to a community.
- C. Addressees
  - 1. Written to a specific community (10:32-34).
  - 2. Jewish Christians or Gentile Christians who had grown weary from persecution.
    - a. Possible Pharisaic because of belief of angels (1:1; 2:9, 16).
    - b. Familiar with OT, evidenced by many OT quotations and knowledge of covenant concept
  - 3. Two pressures on the group:
    - a. external (persecution)
    - b. internal (lack of commitment; 2:1-4)
  - 4. Author does not want community to fail (3:12, 13; 4:1, 11; 6:11; 12:15)
  - 5. Second generation Christians (2:3) who had some of the following characteristics:
    - a. defections (10:25)
    - b. loss of convictions (2:1-4)
    - c. no longer listening to scripture (2:1; 3:7b-4:13; 5:11; 12:25)

- d. no longer firmly committed (10:32-34)
  - e. lethargic and disheartened (5:11; 6:12; 12:3, 12-13)
  - f. faltering hope (3:6; 6:18-20; 10:23-25)
  - g. in danger of apostasy (3:12; 6:4-6; 10:26-31)
- D. Date
- Two perspectives:
1. Early Date AD 40-60
  2. Later Date AD 80-100
- E. Purpose
1. Exhortation and encouragement to be faithful; following Jesus is worth it.
  2. Exposition of Scripture to show the superiority of Christ. Four main Old Testament texts used: Psalm 110:1-4; Psalm 8:4-6; Psalm 95:7-11; Jeremiah 31:31-34.
  3. Christology 1:1-4, 5-13
  4. Soteriology and Eschatology, salvation for those who persevere (2:5; 6:2, 5; 9:9-10; 10:25)
  5. Central Confession: Jesus is the Christ
- F. Contents
1. The Greatness of the Son (1:1-2:18)
    - a. The Majesty of the Son (1:1-14)
      - 1) The Son as the Ultimate word (1:1-4)
      - 2) The Transcendent Son (1:5-14)
    - b. The Humanity and Humiliation of the Son (2:1-18)
      - 1) Warning: Don't ignore the Word of the Son (2:1-4)
      - 2) Humiliation and Glorification of the Son (2:5-9)
      - 3) Identification and Solidarity of Son with Humanity (2:10-18)
  2. The Son as the Great High Priest (3:1-5:10)
    - a. Jesus as Apostle and Great High Priest (3:1-19)
      - 1) Jesus is worthy of our Faith because He was Faithful as Son of God (3:1-6)
      - 2) Warning: Danger of Refusing to Believe God's Word (3:7-19)
    - b. The Rest of Faith (4:1-5:11)
      - 1) Sabbath Rest for People of God (4:1-14)
      - 2) Jesus as High Priest is Worthy of our faith (4:14-5:11)
  3. The Office of the Son as Great High Priest (5:11-10:39)
    - a. Warning: Danger of Apostasy and Immaturity (5:11-6:12)
    - b. Basis of Confidence and Steadfastness (6:13-20)
    - c. The Surety of a Better Covenant (7:1-28)
      - 1) Melchizedek, the Royal Priest (7:1-10)
      - 2) Jesus, Eternal Priest like Melchizedek (7:11-28)
    - d. The Better New Covenant (8:1-13)
    - e. The Atonement (9:1-28)
      - 1) The Need for a Newness (9:1-10)
      - 2) The Adequateness of Christ's Blood (9:11-28)
    - f. The New Covenant and the Living Way (10:1-39)
      - 1) The Character of Christ's Sacrifice Once for All (10:1-18)
      - 2) Warning: Danger of Disloyalty to Christ (10:19-39)
  4. Loyalty to God through the Perseverance of Faith (11:1-12:13)
    - a. Heroes of Faith (11:1-40)
      - 1) Antediluvian Era (11:1-7)
      - 2) Patriarchal Era (11:8-22)
      - 3) Mosaic Era (11:23-31)
      - 4) Subsequent Eras (11:32-40)
    - b. Running the Race (12:1-13)
  5. Living in a Hostile World (12:14-13:25)
    - a. Warning: Danger of Refusing God's Word (12:14-29)

- b. Community Life (13:1-25)
  - 1) Pastoral Precepts (13:1-6)
  - 2) Communal Directives (13:7-19)
  - 3) Closing Doxology (13:20-21)
  - 4) Personal Note (13:22-25)

## II. James

### A. Introduction

1. Authorship: “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus.” Which James is this? Three choices:
  - 1) the son of Zebedee and brother of John (Mark 1:19)
  - 2) the son of Alphaeus, one of the apostles (Matthew 10:3)
  - 3) the (half) brother of our Lord (Matthew 13:55)
  - a. Most likely James, Jesus’ (half) brother
    - 1) He was an unbeliever during Jesus’ lifetime (Mark 3:21 and John 7:1-10)
    - 2) The resurrected Jesus appeared to him (1 Corinthians 15:7)
    - 3) He became leader of Jerusalem church (Acts 12:17; ch. 15; Galatians 2:9-10)
    - 4) He leaned towards the law (Acts 21:17-26; Galatians 2:11-14)
  - c. Eusebius (c. AD 263 – 339; *History of the Church*) depicts James as a model of righteousness and devotion to God. His knees are calloused like those of a camel from praying for the sins of the people. James was taken to the pinnacle of the Temple on Passover where he was to deny Jesus. Instead, he confesses Jesus as Son of man and is cast down from there. Since he had not died but was praying for his enemies, James was stoned and clubbed to death. Immediately after, Emperor Vespasian laid siege to Jerusalem (AD 69).
  - d. Internal evidence: author was a Greek speaking Jewish Christian who understood the significance of religion to be a worshipper of God and to have a commitment to superior moral conduct.
  - e. Written from Jerusalem
2. Audience
  - a. Jewish Christians of the Dispersion, the “twelve tribes of the Diaspora” (1:1-2; cf. 1 Peter 1:1; John 7:35)
  - b. Jewish Christians were scattered from Palestine because of persecution (Acts 11:19).
  - c. Date around the AD 50's, at least before James’ martyrdom in AD 69.
3. Strong Jewish Emphasis to the letter

### B. Purpose

1. Provide encouragement under persecution and trials.
2. Provide strength for sagging fellowship and commitment
3. Goal: spiritual perfection and maturity through obedience

### C. Contents

1. Greetings (1:1)
2. Enduring Trials (1:2-19)
  - a. Facing Trials (1:2-4)
  - b. Obtaining Wisdom (1:5-8)
  - c. Dealing with Wealth (1:9-11)
  - d. Trials and Temptations (1:12-15)
  - e. Source of Good Gifts (1:16-18)
3. Applying the Word (1:19-3:18)
  - a. Hearing and Doing (1:19-27)
  - b. Against Partiality (2:1-13)
  - c. Against Faith without Deed (2:14-26)
  - d. Qualities of Good Teachers and Warning about the Tongue (3:1-12)
  - e. Two Types of Wisdom (3:13-18)

4. God's Divine Care and Providence
  - a. Danger of Human Passions and Hopes (4:1-10)
  - b. Evil Speaking and Godless Attitudes (4:11-17)
  - c. Warning to Wealthy Oppressors (5:1-6)
  - d. Encouragement to Oppressed (5:7-11)
  - e. Against Oaths (5:12)
  - f. Power of Prayer (5:13-18)
  - g. Help for Backsliders (5:19-20)
- D. James and Paul
  1. James emphasizes works (2:14-15); Paul emphasizes grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
  2. There is no contradiction between the two.
  3. We are not saved by works, but the faith that saves us leads to good works.
  4. Paul wrote about our standing before God; James wrote about our witness before the world.
- E. Scholarly Issues
  1. Manuscript traditions
    - a. James was relatively unknown in first few centuries.
    - b. No western text of James.
    - c. The history of the book is better attested in the East with papyrus 20 from 3rd century, written by an Egyptian, the earliest testimony of this letter.
    - d. Earliest complete copy is manuscript B called Codex Vaticanus from 4th century which is also Egyptian.
    - e. No citation earlier than 400s.
  2. Luther and James
    - a. He called this letter "an epistle of straw."
    - b. The context of Luther is important to consider. Luther was fighting against the rules and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church.
  3. Canonization
    - a. One of the last documents to be canonized.
    - b. This suggests the early church's struggled with Jewish ideas and the Early Church's emphasis on salvation by faith.

### III. 1 Peter

- A. Introduction
  1. Author
    - a. Peter, the Apostle. 1 & 2 Peter are the only writings directly from Peter.
      - 1) Peter grew up in Capernaum and Bethsaida, along the Sea of Galilee.
      - 2) A fisherman by trade
      - 3) Became the leading disciple in the early church
      - 4) Recognized that Gentiles did not need to become Jews to be Christians
    - b. Peter was a pastor (see John 21:15-17)
    - c. According to tradition, Peter was martyred in Rome (1 Peter 5:13; 2 Peter 1:12-15)
  2. Audience: 1 Peter 1:1: believers in cities in Northern Asia Minor.
  3. Place of Writing: "Babylon" (1 Pet 5:3), another name for Rome. Probably the same for 2 Peter.
  4. Date: AD 64-66. It was a time of suffering and growing persecution
  5. Purpose
    - a. To encourage believers being persecuted under Nero in 64 C.E.
    - b. Encouragement to scattered believers in Asia Minor who might also face persecution (1:1, 6-7; 3:13-17; 4:12; 5:9-10)
    - c. To encourage believers to keep their eyes on eternal salvation and not temporal persecutions
- B. Contents
  1. Greetings (1:1-2)

2. Christian Salvation (1:3-2:10)
    - a. Hope through the Gospel (1:3-9)
    - b. Witness of Salvation (1:10-12)
    - c. Hope and Holiness (1:13-21)
    - d. Eternal Love (1:22-25)
    - e. Responsibility of Growth (2:1-3)
    - f. New Building of Believers (2:4-10)
  3. Christian Conduct (2:11-3:12)
    - a. Among Pagans/Unbelievers (2:11-12)
    - b. With the State (2:13-17)
    - c. In the Household (2:18-3:7)
      - Slaves, Wives, Husbands
    - c. Loving Enemies (3:8-12)
  4. Christian Suffering (3:13-4:19)
    - a. Suffering Wrongfully (3:13-17)
    - b. Example of Christ (3:18-22)
    - c. Freedom from Sin (4:1-6)
    - d. Need for Holy Living (4:7-11)
    - e. Encouragement in Fiery Trials (4:12-19)
  5. Christian Discipline (5:1-11)
    - a. Corporate Discipline, to the Elders (5:1-5)
    - b. Personal Discipline, Humility and Exaltation (5:6-11)
  6. Conclusion and Final Greetings (5:12-14)
- C. Messages
1. Grace (1:2, 10, 13; 2:19-20; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5, 10, 12)
  2. Endurance under hardship
  3. The model of the Sacrifice of Christ

#### IV. 2 Peter

- A. Introduction
  1. Disputed authorship because of style difference, but Silas helped with 1 Peter (5:12)
  2. Audience: 2 Peter 1:1: Difficult to determine specifically
  3. Date: After 1 Peter, probably around AD 68 or before Peter was martyred
  4. Purpose
    - a. Christians should grow in grace. Peter lists virtues to help this (1 Peter 1:5-8).
    - b. Believers can have confidence in the OT and apostolic teachings (2 Peter 1:12-21)
    - c. Believers need to be aware of false teachers and doctrines (2 Peter 2:1-22)
    - d. Peter gives an explanation why Jesus has not returned (2 Peter 3:8-13).
  5. This book had a difficult time in being accepted into the canon
  6. Corrupted text in some manuscripts, but this was not a major factor in its canonization.
  7. Catholic (universal) in nature
  8. Similar to Jude in contents
- B. Contents
  1. Greetings (1:1-2)
  2. True Knowledge
    - a. Quest for a Higher Nature (1:3-4)
    - b. Progressive Character of Christian Virtues (1:5-11)
    - c. Apostolic Attestation of Christian Knowledge (1:12-21)
  3. False Knowledge (2:1-22)
    - a. Prediction of False Teachers (2:1-3a)
    - b. Certainty of Judgement (2:3b-10)
    - c. False Teachers Denounced (2:11-22)
  4. Challenge of the Present (3:1-28)

- a. Prediction of Scoffers (3:1-4)
- b. Sovereignty of God's Word (3:5-7)
- c. God's Patience (3:8-10)
- d. Exhortations (3:11-16)
- e. Conclusion (3:17-28)

D. Messages

- 1. Key word: "knowledge"
- 2. Danger of false teaching and Satan
- 3. Knowing the word of God

V. Jude

A. Authorship

- 1. Accepted from Early on, but also some early questions about authenticity
- 2. Identification of the Author
  - a. "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James" (v. 1)
  - b. Common name in New Testament times
  - c. Possibly a half-brother of Jesus, like James
  - d. Late date of the letter, based on certain criteria, questions this.
  - e. Other possible interpretations of "brother" in v. 1.
  - f. Other Jude's:
    - 1) Jude the Apostle, son of James (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13).
    - 2) Jude the second century bishop of Jerusalem, according to Grotius

B. Other Questions

- 1. Dating
- 2. Identification of False Teachers
- 3. Destination

C. Use of Apocryphal Works

- 1. 1 Enoch 1:9 in v. 14 almost word for word
- 2. Possible allusion to the *Assumption of Moses* in v. 9.
- 3. Does Jude have a broader concept of "Scripture"?

D. Relationship to 2 Peter

- 1. Many similarities
- 2. Which came first?
- 3. Did one rely on the other, or are they independent and based on a common tradition?

E. Purpose: Condemnation of sin and godlessness-a relevant message for today!

F. Famous Doxology: vv. 24-25



## Session Eighteen: Revelation

### I. Introduction

#### A. Authorship

1. Evidence of the Text: The author is simply stated as “John” in 1:1, 4, 9; 22:8
2. Options based on external evidence:
  - a. John Mark, the companion of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:5)
  - b. Pseudonymous, someone claiming the name of John.
  - c. The author of the 4th Gospel, the “Beloved Disciple”
  - d. John the Elder as distinct from the Apostle John (Eusebius)
  - e. A composite work from the circle and followers of John the Baptist; not necessarily Christian
  - f. John the Apostle (see “c” above); the Palestinian Jew, disciple of Jesus.
3. Modern Scholarship questions authorship because of the lack of clear evidence.

#### B. Date

This is a letter sent to seven churches in Roman province of Asia. The range of dates are Claudius (AD 41-54) to Trajan (AD 98-117). The majority position dates this to the reign of Domitian (AD 81-96) or Nero (AD 54-68).

#### C. Reception of the Book by the Early Church

1. It was written to the seven churches.
2. Opposition also arose, from Marcion and the Eastern church; it was used by heretical groups like the Montanists.
3. The church in the West accepted it by second century on; after the 4th century, the East also accepted it, officially at the Third Council of Constantinople in 680.

#### D. Four basic ways to read the Book of Revelation:

1. Contemporary-Historical: Revelation has already been fulfilled in history:
  - a. with fall of Jerusalem AD 70,  
or
  - b. with the fall of Rome in AD 476.  
*Problem with this view:* the victory of the book was never completed.
2. Historicist: All of history is covered, from time of author to today.  
*Problem:* No agreement among interpreters.
3. Eschatological or futurist: emphasis is on the end of time, held by Dispensationalism  
*Problem:* This does not speak to original time and audience of the seven churches.
4. Timeless: the symbols are timeless and not related to any specific historical period  
*Problem:* no completion or end to the story; it is pessimistic and circular.  
*Evaluation:* There is a bit of truth in each of these.

#### E. Structure of the Book

There are two major ways to approach the text:

1. Straight chronology: events take place in the order stated
2. Recapitulation: a more topical approach, the book builds to a climax by repeating points.

#### F. Revelation contains more OT references and allusions than any other NT book.

### II. Contents

#### A. Chapter 1

1. Prologue or Introduction (1:1-3)
2. Letter Opening (1:4-8)
3. John’s Vision and Commission, 1:9-20

#### B. Letters to the Seven Churches (chapters 2-3)

1. Outline of each letter:
  - a. Common preface: charge to write to angel of each church.
  - b. Author identified: some description of Christ.

- c. Body of letter: positive and/or negative warnings, words of encouragement, censure, counsel, or warning
  - d. Conclusion
- 2. Letter to Ephesus (2:1-7)
- 3. Smyrna (2:8-11)
- 4. Pergamum (2:12-17)
- 5. Thyatira (2:18-29)
- 6. Sardis (3:1-6)
- 7. Philadelphia (3:7-13)
- 8. Laodicea (3:14-22)
- C. Worship of God (chapter 4)
  - 1. John's Ascent to Heaven (vv. 1-2)
  - 2. Vision of the Throne
- D. Worship of Lamb (ch. 5)
  - 1. The Problem of the Scroll (vv. 1-4)
  - 2. The Worthiness of the Lamb (vv. 5-10)
  - 3. Response of Angels (vv. 11-12)
  - 4. Response of All Creation (v. 13)
- E. The Seven Seals (chapters 6-7)
  - 1. Four Horseman and Six Seals
  - 2. Chapter 7: Pause and Answer to 6:17
    - a. 144,000, 7:1-8
    - b. Great Multitude in White Robes, 7:9-17
- F. Chapters 8:1-11:14
  - 1. First 4 Trumpets Sounded (8:7-12)
  - 2. Three Woes (v. 13)
  - 3. Trumpet 5 (9:1-12)
  - 4. Second Woe (9:13-11:14)
  - 5. Trumpet 6 (vv. 13-21)
  - 6. Interlude and Time for Reflection (10:1-11:14)
- G. Third Woe and the Blowing of the Seventh Trumpet (11:15-19)
- H. Woman, the Dragon, and the Child (12:1-6)
- I. War in Heaven and on Earth (12:7-17)
  - 1. Defeat of Dragon (vv. 7-12)
  - 2. Dragon wars on Earth (vv. 13-17)
- J. Chapter 13: The Vision of the Two Beasts
  - 1. The Beast from the Sea (13:1-10)
  - 2. The Beast from the Earth (13:11-18)
- K. The Lamb and the 144,000 (14:1-13)
- L. Seven Bowls (15:1-8)
- M. Seven Plagues (16:1-21)
- N. Chapters 17-19:10 Fall of Babylon
  - 1. Vision of Babylon
  - 2. Fall of Babylon (18:1-24)
  - 3. Scene Change and Transition (ch. 19)
- O. Final Defeat of Evil
  - 1. Rider on White Horse (19:11-21)
  - 2. 1000 Year Reign (ch. 20)
    - Two critical questions we need to ask:
      - a. What is the relation between the millennium and the second coming of Christ?
      - b. How does one interpret apocalyptic literature in general and the reference to 1000 years in Rev. 20:1-7?
    - There are three common views:

- 1) Amillennialism: the 1000 year reign is symbolic
  - 2) Premillennialism: Jesus will return before the 1000 year reign which is literal
  - 3) Postmillennialism: Jesus will return after 1000 years of Christian influence
- a. Temporary Imprisonment (vv. 1-3)
  - b. Christ's 1000 year Reign (vv. 4-6)
  - c. Doom of Satan (vv. 7-10)
  - d. Judgment of the Dead (vv. 11-15)
3. New Heaven and New Earth (21:1-8)
    - a. New Heaven and Earth (vv. 1-2)
    - b. New Jerusalem (v. 2)
    - c. Statement of God's Presence (vv. 3-4)
    - d. Seven Statements from God (vv. 5-8)
  4. The New Jerusalem (21:9-22:9)
    - a. Vision Introduced (vv. 9-10)
    - b. External Description of the City (vv. 11-21)
    - c. Internal Description of the City (21:22-22:5)
  5. Closure of the Book, 22:6-21
    - a. Jesus is Coming Again, vv. 7, 12
      - 1) Testimony of Jesus, v. 7
      - 2) John's reaction and testimony, v. 8
      - 3) Caution of Angel, v. 9
      - 4) Instruction of Angel, vv. 10-12
    - b. Promise (vv. 12-13)
    - c. Beatitude (vv. 14-15)
    - d. Authority (vv. 16)
    - e. Invitation (vv. 17)
    - f. Warning (vv. 18-19)
    - g. Assurance (vv. 20-21)

## Session Nineteen: Using the Bible in Today's Church

### I. The Bible is central to the life of the church.

#### A. Public Worship and Liturgy

1. Scripture's use has primarily been in the context of common worship. It has only been 200 years since Bibles were accessible for personal ownership. Many parts of the world today do not have access to a printed Bible in their own language.
2. The Geneva Bible (1539) was the first time a Bible was available for almost every congregation.

B. The Lectionary was developed to coordinate Bible readings across genres and between both Testaments throughout the church year (December (beginning of Advent) through November). There were readings every Sunday from the Psalms and a passage from the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the Epistles. Readings were assigned on a daily and weekly basis. This method assured that the majority of the Bible would be heard by the congregation during every three year cycle.

C. Some Protestant groups used the method of *Lecta continua* in which they started in Genesis and read and/or preached through the entire Bible.

D. The idea is for the Bible as the Word of God should be read when the people of God gather for worship.

### II. Biblical Preaching

#### I. Theological Presuppositions to Sermon Building

##### A. Our Goal: To be Made into Christ' Likeness

What it means to have the mind of Christ: 1 Cor 2:16; Phil 2:5; Rom 12:1-2

Theological foundations: it is important to know our goal.

This is something God does *in* us.

Discipleship is not what the church does but who the church is. It is not a program or event but a way of life. It is the essence of who we are.

##### B. Allowing the Bible to be God's Word to us today

1. The purpose of the Bible is salvation. We must accept the fact that the Bible's purpose is not to be the answer book to every question that comes to our minds. Its purpose is to tell us how to participate in the kingdom of God, how to be saved. See Article IV in the *Manual*.
2. Search for an overall belief system (biblical theology; the "grand story").
3. God is working in all of history.
4. Each text contributes to total understanding.

#### II. From Word Received to Word Given: *How to Prepare Biblical Sermons*

##### A. Be Shaped by the Word

1. **Pray.** Come to the Bible expecting to hear from God.

It is essential to prepare spiritually for interpreting the Bible. "If any of you lacks wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and without hesitation, and it will be given to you" (James 1:5). We pray as part of our affirmation that the Bible is God's word, and we need God's help to understand it.

Take a few moments each time before you begin your study to ask the Lord to speak to you through what you study. Be prepared to act upon the truth that is revealed to you through the

passage. Be open in attitude, mind, and heart. Be aware of any presuppositions that might hinder the Holy Spirit from speaking to you. Exegesis must result in worship. It must also begin with worship. Exegesis should result in deeper devotion to God. Spirituality → Exegesis → Spirituality. Prayer prepares us with the right attitude towards approaching the text. Each step of the exegetical process must be done with a prayerful attitude in order that God may use the biblical text as a powerful tool for transformation. Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the inspirer and interpreter of God's word. The Spirit both explains scripture to us and enables us to recall it (John 14:26).

## 2. Read

- a. Choosing a Passage
    - 1) The Revised Common Lectionary and Church calendar (see <https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu> )
    - 2) Expository Preaching through a Book
    - 3) Topical Preaching
  - b. Choosing a Translation
 

Different translations will have different purposes and audiences. Use the translation best understood by the people in your church. See <http://www.biblegateway.com> for different translations.
  - c. Use of an interlinear: see <http://www.biblehub.com/interlinear>
  - d. Ways to Read
 

There are two major ways to read the Bible. One is to read quickly to get a first impression. This would be like reading a novel quickly. The other way is to read slowly in order to understand the content, details, and flow of thought. This would be like reading a contract.
  - e. What to read
    - 1) Passage
    - 2) Entire Book
    - 3) Chapter
    - 4) Passage again slowly
3. Give the passage a short title that describes the key idea.
  4. Outline the passage in 2-4 major points.
  5. Begin to ask questions of the passage: Who, what, when, where, how, and why?
 

Precise and probing questions lead to good interpretation. Good questions force us to sharpen our observations and lead us into interpretation. There are three basic types of questions:

    - a. Questions of Definition ask "what?" They seek the denotation, meaning, or substance of the elements that you observe in the text. For example, in Luke 5:31-37, one might ask, "What is an 'unclean spirit' (v. 33)?" in order to grasp what this thing is.
    - b. Rational Questions ask "why?" They seek the reason or purpose for a thing or action. For example, in Luke 5:31-37, one might ask, "Why does Jesus 'rebuke' (not condemn or command or order) the unclean spirit (v. 35)?" in order to understand the function of this action.
    - c. Implicational Questions ask about logical extensions of what is there, "what if?" These questions come in two forms. First, they can probe behind a thing/action for its presuppositions, or second, they can probe ahead of a thing/action to ask what naturally emerges from it. For example, in Luke 5:31-37, one might ask, "What are the implications about demonic knowledge based on the 'unclean spirit's' correct identification of Jesus in v. 34?" or "What are the implications about demonic possession based on the actions of the possessed man in vv. 33-35?" These questions serve to open your mind to other possibilities in the text.
    - d. Other types of questions:

- Who (identification)? How (mode/manner)? When (time)? Where (place)? These are all extensions of "definitional" questions. The "how" and "where" questions are especially helpful and interesting.
  - Questions can be directed at various elements in the text: things, people, terms, actions, structures, context, background, setting, etc.
6. Answer the questions based on the evidence from
    - a. Brainstorm possible answers to your question. Be honest about your initial "gut feeling" for the answer.
    - b. Begin to look for evidence from the passage or context to answer your questions. Begin with the immediate context. If you don't see anything relevant there, then look again, you may be missing something. Look at any commentaries or other secondary sources last after you have done all of your own work.
    - c. Organize your evidence, re-examine your question, and see if there is anything you have missed.
    - d. Draw inferences from your evidence.
      - 1) Be careful to explain how your inference flows from your evidence.
      - 2) Some evidence may have a variety of possible inferences (perhaps even some that are in tension with one another). Be sure to note all possible inferences.
      - 3) Characterize your inferences as "certain," "probable," or "possible."
      - 4) Pause throughout the process to summarize your inferences thus far.

Choose an answer that is supported by the closest evidence (from the immediate context), the most significant evidence (the weightiest, most certain, or most decisive), and the amount of evidence. Use this order of resources to answer your questions:

    - 1) the passage and context
    - 2) the Bible
    - 3) outside resources such as commentaries, Bible encyclopedias, dictionaries, etc.
  7. Study the Context
    - a. Historical
    - b. Cultural
    - c. Literary; note the literary genre (type of literature) and any special questions you will need to ask.  
If you are studying through a passage sequentially, you can build on your previous work (a big benefit to both you and the congregation).
  8. Study the Key Words. A great resource: <https://www.blueletterbible.org>
  9. Determine the Message
    - a. What does this passage say about God or salvation?
    - b. What does it say about the human situation?
    - c. What is the main message in one sentence?
  10. What does the Bible say about the themes of this passage? You can use a concordance to look up key ideas, such as <http://www.biblegateway.com>.

## B. Model the Word

1. What change is God asking me to make based on this passage?
2. Primary question to ask: "What is the text doing *to me*?" You cannot answer this question if you rush to prepare a sermon on Saturday night. Work ahead and live with the passage.
3. Knowledge must become obedience for it to be wisdom.
4. Your preaching will have more authority if it comes from conviction and what God is doing in your own life.

## C. Connect the Word

1. Live with People. Know your audience. Be a pastor before a preacher.
2. Key question: What need of your people does this sermon answer? "What can the text do to my audience?" What difference in the lives of your people could this passage make?

3. Decide what is most important to communicate. Give the main point of your sermon in one sentence. This should relate to the main message of your passage.
4. Use the passage outline to form the outline of the sermon.
5. Prepare an introduction that grabs people's attention and a conclusion that calls people to decision.
6. What stories, quotes, or insights illustrate this message? Personal stories and testimonies are significant sources to illustrate the Bible.
7. Remember that words have power. Choose them carefully.
8. Develop effective communication and delivery skills.
9. Be creative in the use of technology and symbols.

## Session Twenty: The Bible in Ministry

### I. How to Prepare a Bible Study

This is a simple method for pastors or lay leaders to prepare a Bible study. The primary tool is the Bible. Secondary resources can be useful but are not necessary.

There is a difference between a sermon and a Bible study:

#### **Sermon**

- One direction: speaker to audience
- Delivery: Exhortation
- Preacher is the expert
- Answers are given

#### **Bible Study**

- Participatory: interaction between teacher & students
- Delivery: Question and interaction
- People self-discover the truth
- Answers are discovered

1. **Pray:** The first step in studying the Bible is to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you as you study the Bible.
2. **Choose a passage:** This may be a chapter or section. Most modern Bibles are divided into sections and paragraphs. If you choose too much, you will not be able to focus the study well.
3. **Read the passage:** Read the passage five to ten times. Read the chapter in which the passage is found. If you have not read the entire book of the Bible, do so as well.
4. **Identify the key theme(s):** Most passages will have 1-3 key themes. Look for themes related to salvation, our relationship to God, or our relationship to other people (the two greatest commandments). There may also be other themes since the Bible is complex and speaks to every need we have. Identify the key theme for each paragraph or set of verses. Summarize the passage by give your study a title which becomes the focus of your study.
5. **Develop an outline** of the passage based on the key themes.
6. **Determine the Objective of your lesson.** This should be based on the key message of your passage.
7. **Ask Questions:** Base these questions on the contents of the passage. The questions may be: who, what, when, where, how, or why. Choose the questions that help reveal the key themes and are answered by the passage.
8. **Connect to the needs of your group.** Ask questions that highlight and explain the theme and also help apply this theme to your group. Why and how is this passage important to your group? Prepare stories and locate other Bible passages that help illustration the themes of your passage. Use a concordance to find other verses.
9. **Prepare:** If you want to create a handout (optional), provide the outline and key questions you have already identified. Limit questions to no more than 5-10, depending on your time limit.
10. **Pray:** Ask God to work through the study to speak to your group. Pray for each person of your group by name and for visitors.



## II. Making Application

The starting point for application or contextualization is the meaning of the text derived from the work of exegesis.

The first step in application is to distinguish between material that seems directly or easily applicable from material that is clearly culturally conditioned: the timebound truth and the timeless truth; what is descriptive and what is prescriptive.

Sometimes the biblical principle is not stated in the text or context and one must ask the question, "What theological or spiritual principle is at work in the culturally conditioned teachings given in this passage?" Usually this biblical principle will be related to maintaining a proper view of God or right relationships within the church or between people.

When biblical principles are discovered in the text or developed from the text, they must be applied with humility and love. The Bible is the primary source always, but it is interpreted within the framework of tradition, reason, and experience to enable us to determine right beliefs and right ways of living.

A helpful schematic in seeking to apply the Bible can be found in *Preaching Biblically* by William D. Thompson. He identifies three things that an interpreter should discover from her or his exegetical work in preparation for making application of the text. These three items are:

- 1) The sin or failure in the text
- 2) The nature and activity of God in the text
- 3) The human response desired by God in the text

Thompson then argues that these three items should be reflected in our contemporary situation.

- 4) The sin or failure in our situation that corresponds to 1).
- 5) The nature and activity of God in our situation that corresponds to 2).
- 6) The human response desired by God in our situation that corresponds to 3).

## III. Reflecting Upon the Living Word

A. The Bible brings together a Divine-Human Encounter (John 6:63, 68; 20:31; Hebrews 4:12-13)

B. The Bible is all about Relationships:

1. God to humanity (Genesis 12:1-4; Exodus 20:1ff)
2. Humanity to God (Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Matthew 22:36-37)
3. Human to Human (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:38-40)
4. Human to the Environment (Genesis 1:26ff)
5. Human to Him or Herself (Leviticus 11:44; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 1 Thessalonians 5:23)

C. The Bible Mediates a Divine-Human Encounter

1. It is God's initiative
2. God reaches out to us in many ways
3. The catalyst most often is the word: spoken and written
4. God comes down to our level
5. The divine initiative leads to opportunity for people to choose relationship

The result is . . .

- a. Regeneration, justification, and sanctification (salvation)
- b. Reflection (theology)
- c. Obedience (moral imperative)
- d. Action (mission)

## IV. Results of the Bible

- A. Life
  - 1. Spiritual (Ephesians 2:1-10)
  - 2. Eternal ( John 3:16, 36; 5:24)
  - 3. Temporal (John 10:10; 2 Corinthians 4:7-11)
  
- B. Light
  - The Holy Spirit brings
  - 1. Understanding (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-16)
  - 2. Power (Acts 2; Pentecost)
  - 3. Presence (1 Corinthians 2:6-16)
  
- C. Love
  - 1. Goal of the Law (Matthew 22:37-40; Galatians 5:14)
  - 2. The Result of the Spirit-filled Life (Galatians 5:22-23)
  - 3. Modeling the love of God in Christ (Ephesians 5:1-2)
  
- D. Living Relationship
  - 1. Obedience of Faith (Romans 1:5; Hebrews 11)
  - 2. Commitment (Luke 9:57-62)
  - 3. Discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20)

***What will be your response to studying the Bible?***