

SURVEY OF THE BIBLE



**Teacher Handbook
Leadership Institute of West Africa
Church of the Nazarene**

Session 1 – One Story, Many Books

I. What is the “Bible”? (Harris, p. 1)

The word “bible” means **LITTLE BOOKS**. (from the plural Greek word “biblia”)

In the Greek language, *biblion* is a form of the word *s*” which means

“**WRITTEN**” or “**BOOK**.” In the city of Byblos in Phoenicia. They used to cut papyrus leaves in long stripes in order to dry. These dry leaves served as the first type of paper for writing.

La Nouvelle Bible Déchiffrée (p. 18) describes the Bible in these words:

“The Bible is a magnificent book of stories, full of passionate, well-written accounts. But, they are more than a bunch of stories. Altogether, they tell one large

STORY.” (translation)

II. How is the Bible organized?

The Bible consists of two parts called “testaments” meaning “alliance” or “agreements.”

The Old Testament has **39** books that communicate: “The Savior is coming”

The New Testament has **27** books that communicate: “The Savior has come”

N.B. – The Roman Catholics include “deutero-canonical” books (those with secondary inspiration). The books known as the Apocrypha (“hidden books”) were written during the period between the Old Testament and the New Testament, except for 2 Esdras (written around A.D. 90).

There is nothing of theological value in these books that cannot also be found in the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. At the same time, the Apocrypha contains some material of dubious origins and meaning that is not always consistent with the biblical revelation.

Books of the Apocrypha include Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Enoch, 1 Esdras, 2 Esdras, Letter of Jeremiah, Song of the Three, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, 3 Maccabees, 4 Maccabees, and the Prayer of Manasseh.

The Books of the Old Testament (OT)

What Christians call the "Old Testament" (OT) the Jews considered to be the extent of the Bible. For this reason, many Bible scholars usually refer to the OT as the **HEBREW BIBLE**.

The Hebrew Bible divides the 39 books into three sections:

1. **LAW** (In Hebrew it is called the Torah, or "the Way" or "the Path")
2. **WRITINGS** (consisting of the historical books, poetry, and wisdom literature)
3. **PROPHETS** (the seventeen prophets of Judah and Israel)

In the Christian Bible, however, the order of the books respects the Septuagint (written as LXX), a Greek translation made in Egypte between 300 and 200 years before the birth of Christ.

The Old Testamenet can be separated into four categories. Consult the table of books found in your Bible, and then write the names of the OT books under the appropriate category.

PENTETEUCH	HISTORICAL BOOKS	WRITINGS	PROPHETS	
5 <i>Origins & Law</i>	12 <i>People & Kings</i>	5 <i>Poetry & Wisdom</i>	5 <i>Major Prophets</i>	12 <i>Minor Prophets</i>
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 Habbakuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi

Activity for Action: Memorization of OT Books (10 minutes)

Students will memorize and orally present all the Old Testament book titles and/or authors. (course outcomes 1, 3, 5, 18).

Directions: Once you have filled in the table, find a partner. During the next five minutes, study the names of the OT books in their correct order. Take turns reciting the OT Books aloud.

NOTE: During the course, students will be expected to take notes on the class lectures to create an introduction to each Biblical book (course outcomes 1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 15, 16) NOTE-TAKING IS OPTIONAL FOR CERTIFICATE STUDENTS. Students will also be expected to memorize key verses found in the Bible (course outcomes 5 and 18).

The Books of the New Testament (NT)

The 27 books of the NT are grouped into four categories. As before, look at the table of NT books in your Bible, classify the books in the table under the correct heading.

GOSPELS	HISTORY	LETTERS	APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE (PROPHECY)
Matthew Mark Luke John	Acts of the Apostles	Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians 1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Philemon Hebrews James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude	Revelation

Activity for Action: Memorization of NT Books (10 minutes)

Students will memorize and orally present all the New Testament books and/or authors. (course outcomes 1,2,13,18).

Directions: Once you have filled in the table, find a partner. During the next five minutes, study the names of the NT books in their correct order. Take turns reciting the NT Books aloud.

NOTE: During the course, students will be expected to take notes on the class lectures to create an introduction to each Biblical book (course outcomes 1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 15, 16) NOTE-TAKING IS OPTIONAL FOR CERTIFICATE STUDENTS. Students will also be expected to memorize key verses found in the Bible (course outcomes 5 and 18).

How did the Canon of the Holy Bible develop?

SOURCES: *NBD*, pp. 70-73; *Discovering the Bible*, 23-33

In Greek, the word "canon" means a "measuring stick." It is an **APPROVED** list of books that Christians consider to be inspired by God and authoritative for life and ministry.

There was not a single person that decided which books would be included in the Bible and which ones would be omitted.

Rather, it was a complex **PROCESS** with many steps that had to take place over time.

Old Testament Canon

For Christians the major reason for holding to the Old Testament as a spiritual guide is that Jesus himself and his apostles considered the OT as the Word of God.

Since the time of Ezra, 400 years before Christ, the Jews believed the Torah (Genesis to Deuteronomy) was inspired by God. Since 200 years before Christ, Judaism held to the Prophets and the Writings as inspired scriptures.

Rabbis attending Council of Jamnia in A.D. 95 settled on the 39 books found in the present-day Hebrew Bible as inspired scripture for guiding one's life and ministry.

New Testament Canon

The Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church, and Protestant churches are in agreement on the 27 books of the New Testament.

Very early in the first century A.D., the letters of Paul were held to be authoritative for life and ministry.

The four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) are mentioned by **JUSTIN** in A.D. 150 for scriptures to be read in worship services.

The general epistles (James through Jude), Acts of the Apostles, Epistle to the Hebrews, and Revelations were accepted a little later.

By A.D. **367**, Athanasius in his Easter letter offered the present list of books that corresponds to the books found in the New Testament.

Here are books among other that were not accepted as **CANONICAL**, or authoritative for life and ministry for the Church:

The Gospel of Thomas / The Didaché (The Teachings) /
The Shepherd of Hermas / The Letter of Barnabus

Criteria for Canonical Books

There were four criteria to determine which books were included in the New Testament:

1. Is the book apostolic?

They wanted to know if the author of the book was among or closely related to the first twelve apostles. Paul was an exception to this rule. They hesitated for a long while with regard to the Epistle to the Hebrews because the author was not verified.

2. Is the book catholic (meaning universal)?

The message of the book should concern all Christians not just an isolated audience. The message of the book should be universally applicable to all people everywhere.

3. Is the book orthodox?

It was necessary that the book's doctrine conformed to the teachings of the received teachings of the Church since the time of Jesus. Two books, the Gospel of Thomas and the Acts of John, were not chosen because they failed this criteria.

4. Is the book from its origin continues to nourish the life of the Church even today?

A book must be capable of guiding, renewing, and maintaining the Church. Christians everywhere could agree in the spiritual and practical effectiveness of the book.

In what sense is Bible considered the Word of God?

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. How should the Scriptures be used? (Look for five verbs.)

- 1) **TEACHING**
- 2) **REBUKING**
- 3) **CORRECTING**
- 4) **TRAINING**
- 5) **EQUIPPING**

N.B. – Paul affirms the value of the Old Testament since the New Testament did not yet exist in its totality at the time of he wrote this letter.

Read 2 Peter 1:20-21. The "men" spoke for God when they were pressed upon by the Holy Spirit.

There exist two major theories about the **INSPIRATION** of Scripture.

A. **Dictation theory** – The person's personality was excluded from the process. The biblical writers wrote word-for-word only what God communicated directly to them.

B. **Dynamic theory** – As the incarnation of Jesus Christ holds in place his full humanity , this theory leaves intact the humanity of the biblical writer. The Holy Spirit is the Agent of inspiration, and he permits the writer to use the full range of human emotions (i.e. Job), personal research (i.e. Luke 1:1-4), or the point of view of their traditions (i.e. John’s writings).

Christological Analogy

Just like Jesus Christ, the Bible is fully human and fully divine.

C.S. Cowles, Nazarene theologian

How to Write Bible References

Source: Ted Hughes, First Steps Discipleship Series, Lesson 4

How to locate a specific passage in the Bible: To locate a specific point in the Bible one must know the name of the book, the number of the chapter, and the number of the verse.

Abbreviations: In a Bible reference, the books are often abbreviated. Here are a few examples: Mt. = Matthew; Mk. = Mark; Lk. = Luke; Jn. = John; Gen. = Genesis; Psa. = Psalm; Isa. = Isaiah; etc. There is not room to list all 66 here, but you will soon become accustomed to identifying them. There is usually a list of the books of the Bible on the first page, where you can find an abbreviation.

Chapter and Verse: In a Bible reference, the first number following the name of the book indicates the chapter, which is followed by a colon (:) and then the number of the verse, such as John 3:16. If more than one verse is indicated, the beginning and ending verses are separated by a dash (Jn. 3:16-20). Separate verses are listed they are separated by commas (Jn. 3:16, 19, 21). If more than one book is used, they are separated by semi-colons (Ps. 23:1; Is. 40:11).

Dual Books: In some cases there are two books sharing the same name. They are distinguished by a “1” or a “2” preceding the name of the book, such as 1 Kings, Second Kings, 2 Corinthians, II Corinthians, or Second Corinthians.

Cross-references: Tiny little letters or numbers that appear in the text of a verse refer to footnotes (sometimes in a center column, sometimes at the foot of the page, or in a margin). In these notes you will find additional information or other references dealing with the same subject or verse.

Concordance: A concordance is an alphabetical listing of key words that list different places in the Bible where the same word may be found. It is helpful when you want to locate a given word or to follow a theme through the Bible. If you have a concordance available, take time to look through it. Some Bibles include a concordance at the end.

Practice Writing Biblical References

Using the directions above, write in the spaces below the references indicated (you may use abbreviations if you wish):

Hebrews, chapter 11: _____

The gospel of John, chapter 6, verses 35 to 40: _____

The first epistle of John, chapter 3, verse 18: _____

The epistle to the Ephesians, chapter 1, verse 4 and verse 7: _____

Philippians, chapter 4, verses 4 to 7, and Psalm, chapter 9, verse 2:

See if you can find the following references in your Bible (New Testament only). Mark the box by the reference when you find it.

Mt. 5:3-12. Mk. 10:27 Phil. 4:13 1 Cor. 10:13

Session 2—Principles for Understanding the Bible

This entire course is dedicated to the important subject of rightly interpreting the Bible. Nevertheless, we will identify some useful principles in Biblical interpretation.

How to Understand the Bible

Source: Roger Hahn, lecture notes, cf. *Biblical Interpretation*, Klein, and Walter Kaiser

- 1) Scripture is clear enough for the simplest person to live by it.
- 2) Scripture is deep enough to hold new insights for the most intellectual person to find.
- 3) Scripture is understandable because God intended to reveal Himself through it.

Illustration:

Famous evangelist D. L. Moody was once challenged by a young seeker.

The young man said, "There are some things in the Bible I don't understand yet. How can I believe if I do not understand it?"

Moody responded with a question of his own, asking, "Do you ever eat chicken?"

"Why, yes, of course," replied the young seeker.

Moody asked again, "What do you do with the bones?"

The man said without hesitation, "I lay them on the side of the plate."

Moody added, "Well, that's how you should read the Bible. There's enough I the Bible for you to chew on, and you can just lay the hard stuff to the side."

How to Avoid Misunderstanding the Bible

Source: Roger Hahn

There is a temptation to make the Bible relevant. Sometimes that means we try to make the Bible say something that it does not. Here are a few dangers to avoid misunderstanding the Bible.

•Allegorizing Scripture

An allegory assigns meaning to a story, object, or person in a way that reveals a "hidden," "higher," or "deeper" significance. The story of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac signifies a father's willingness to obey God. The real meaning was to illustrate Abraham's absolute trust in God. (Hebrews 11:17-19) A secondary meaning is that it points ahead to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, on our behalf.

The problem arises when preachers impose meaning on the text that is not intended. One common example is the Gideon's fleece (Judges 6:36-37).

People misinterpret this passage to test God by asking Him to do something to prove His will. This is not correct theology and bad practice based on a poor understanding of the Bible.

Spiritualizing Scripture

A preacher discards the physical, earthly, historical sense of a biblical passage to emphasize a spiritual point. For instance, Joseph's brothers threw him into a well. (Genesis 37:19-24). A preacher could interpret this spiritually by saying that like Joseph we have all been thrown into the pit of sin. But, in reality, this passage does not have that meaning. Instead, it is a story about how God is faithful to His promises and chooses the rejected Joseph to glorify God.

Psychologizing Scripture

A preacher can make the mistake of replacing the biblical truth with popular beliefs. One example is the "hint" of homosexual love between David and his friend Jonathan in 1 Samuel 20. In verse 17, it reads "[Jonathan] loved him as he loved himself," and in verse 41, "they kissed each other." This is a misunderstanding of the context of the passage. Their love is compared to God's covenantal love for His people (vv. 14 and 42). And, that the ancient Hebrew culture and some contemporary cultures, it is entirely appropriate for men to greet one another with a kiss on the cheek.

•Imitating Biblical Characters

Many preachers will encourage the people to imitate Nehemiah who rebuilt the wall, so then contemporary church members should build a new church building. It is more important to understand how Nehemiah's work fulfilled God's promise to restore His people after exile.

Moralizing Scripture

Many times preachers reduce a biblical narrative to a short moral teaching, as in the story of David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11-12): "Don't commit adultery." The story is more complex than a simple morality tale. It shows the destructive nature of sin and its consequences for the future.

Using the Bible in Today's Church

•Public Worship and Liturgy

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

The *Geneva Bible* (1539) was the first time a Bible was available for almost every congregation.

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.

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

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

• **Biblical Preaching**

The preacher can encourage the Bible to be read by preaching from the lectionary readings. Or preach a series on the lectionary readings. Or to create readings from the passage being preached during the service.

• **Christian Education**

Bible study is the primary focus of the Sunday School hour for children, youth, and adults.

Believers need to be made into disciples of Christian living through intergenerational and age-appropriate teaching (John Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith?*)
Westerhoff noted how different ages are brought into the Christian faith as disciples.

The Experienced Faith of Young Children

Young children learn the faith through the experience of the older generation. If they see the Bible being read and adults referring to the Scriptures as a guide for living, then they will learn that the Bible is important.

The Affiliative Faith of Older Children and Young Adolescents

This age group learns from their peers. If their friends use the Bible, then they will too. They are most open to learn the faith through church-sponsored programs like discipleship groups and catechisms.

The Searching Faith of Older Adolescence and Young Adults

Every person goes through a time of questioning and searching for answers. This is a stressful time for parents and mature members of a congregation. They can offer times where young adults can ask their questions, listen to the reasonable answers from their elders, and come to understand the faith of their church.

The Owned Faith of Older Adults

Mature members of a church community will be responsible for making the community faith into a personal faith and then encouraging and guiding the next generation into faith in Christ.

Evangelism

The Bible is used as the main authority and text for evangelizing others.

Family Devotions

Families read and hear Scripture together.

Moral Decisions

Church decisions are best made by having a thorough understanding of the Bible. Individual decisions should also be informed by God's Word.

Formulating Theology

The Bible is the basic text for understanding God and His work in the world.

• Personal Study

Individuals are to seek an understanding of the Bible (information)

Personal Devotion

Individual are also to use the Bible for formation (transformation)

Informational Reading and Formational Reading

Informational Reading of the Bible

1. Seeks to cover as much content as possible
2. It moves in one forward direction (such as reading chapter one, then two, then three)
3. Seeks to master the text, to have power over it.
4. Makes the biblical passage into an object, we are the ones that shape and control understanding.
5. Emphasizes the analysis and critical nature of study
6. Is characterized by a problem-solving approach. The Bible is the problem, we have the solution.

Formational Reading of the Bible

1. Has no concerns about the speed with which the Bible is being read.
2. Focuses on the depth of the passage, and the search for truth and understanding.
3. Desires for the biblical text to master us.
4. Makes the reader into the object, and the text is the shaper and controller of understanding
5. Focuses on the ability of the read to submit humbly, willingly, and lovingly to the Bible
6. Is characterized by openness to mystery, awe, and worship

Informational reading is not bad, but it is incomplete unless we are willing to be formed by the Holy Spirit through our reading of the Scripture.

The more one does informational reading, the harder it is to do formational reading.

Both are necessary ways of reading the Bible, but we need to practice how to allow the Scripture to penetrate our hearts and lives to help in transforming us into Christlikeness.

Based on M. Robert Mulholland, Shaped by the Word (2001)

Getting Started in Spiritual Reading

1. Find a quiet place for uninterrupted reading (Where? How?)
2. Read the text in an unhurried manner
3. Wait for a word, phrase, or passage to capture you.
4. Let that word, phrase, or passage sink into your heart.
5. Meditate on it.
6. Apply it in your life.

Bible Reading Plan

The following plan is only a suggestion. It is possible to advance slowly through this plan by reading only the Old Testament or only the New Testament.

The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of chapters to be read per day.

Psalms are not represented in the reading plan. It is possible to read one Psalm every two days to finish in less one year.

To finish the Bible in one year, it is necessary to read at least 20 minutes each day. You may begin reading during any time of the year starting with the month number 1. This method will help you see the full span of the Holy Bible over the course of one year.

OT	Month/No.	NT	OT	Month/No.	NT
Job (1+)	Jan – 1	Mark (0.5)	Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel (3)	Jul – 7	James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, Jude, Philemon (0.5)
Genesis, Exodus (3)	Feb – 2	Acts (1)	2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings (2.5)	Aug – 8	Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians (1)
Isaiah, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs (3)	Mar – 3	Matthew (1)	1 & 2 Chronicles (2.5)	Sept – 9	1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy & 2 Timothy, Titus (1)
Ezekeil (1.6)	Apr – 4	1 & 2 Corinthians (1)	Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Proverbs (2)	Oct – 10	Luke (1)
Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy (3+)	May – 5	Hebrews (0.5)	Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos (1.5)	Nov – 11	Jean, 1, 2, 3 John (1)
Jeremiah, Lamentations (2)	Jun – 6	Romans (0.5)	Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habbakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi (1.5)	Dec – 12	Revelation (1)

Sources for Data on Biblical Books:

Anderson, Bernard W. *Out of the Depths: The Psalms Speak for Us Today*. Third ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000.

La Bible Déchiffrée. Troisième édition. LLB France, 1998.

Mears, Henrietta. *Panorama de l'Ancien Testament*. Deerfield, IL: VIDA, 1982.

Mears, Henrietta. *What the Bible Is All About: NIV Edition*. Regal Books, 1998

Mears Henrietta. *What the Bible Is All about for Young Explorers*. Edited by Frances Blankenbaker. Regal Books, 1986.

Note for Teacher for presenting the material on the Bible books: Highlight briefly the author/date, themes, people, outline, and take time to allow several students read aloud key passages from each book. Take time before class to choose the key passages to emphasize in class. The students should read all key passages even though they are not read in class. Make sure students focus on the memory verses for each book. The goal of this material is to familiarize the student with the writing of each biblical book and the whole Bible in one course.

ACTIVITY FOR ACTION

Activity A. Students will write an outline for a sermon or Sunday school lesson presentation that is biblically sound. Students should identify a passage for a Sunday School lesson from their reading of the key passages for each Bible book. They only need to write a lesson outline for one of the passages. The outline should include introduction, questions about the passage, and a summary/conclusion that emphasizes how to apply the passage to one's life. (course outcomes 1, 6, 14, 8, 17). OPTIONAL FOR CERTIFICATE STUDENTS.

Activity B. As students read the key passages for each book, they should keep notes in a separate notebook. They should note their thoughts, prayers, and encouragement they receive during their Bible reading. They should note properly any significant verses that help them grow spiritually. Students will keep a daily journal on how the covered material is helping in their spiritual formation (course outcome 18) WRITTEN NOTES ARE OPTIONAL FOR CERTIFICATE. Teacher should make arrangements to hear the thoughts and responses of students who cannot write.

Session 3— Pentateuch—The Origins and the Torah

Genesis "Beginnings"	AUTHOR/DATE	Moses is the writer by tradition (Lk 24:27; Jn 5:46; Acts 15:1). Scholarship suggests that earlier stories are incorporated into Genesis as well as later editing.
	THEMES	Creation, Origins of Sin, Family, Covenant, Sacrifice, Failure, Redemption, Faith
	PEOPLE	Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph (Half of the people mentioned in Hebrews 11 are from Genesis)
	OUTLINE	Creation of the World (Gen 1,2) Sin in the world (Gen 3,4) Noah and the flood (Gen 5-11) Beginnings of nations and languages (Gen 10,11) Abraham's family: God's people in the land (Gen 12-38) Joseph: God's people in Egypt (Gen 39-50)
	KEY PASSAGES	Genesis 1:1-31; Genesis 2:7-22; Genesis 6:1-22; Genesis 9:1-17 ; Genesis 11:1-9; Genesis 12:1-9; Genesis 15:1-21; Genesis 17:1-8; Genesis 22:1-19; Genesis 26:1-6; Genesis 28:10-22; Genesis 37:1-36; Genesis 42; Genesis 49
	MEMORY VERSE	Genesis 12:1-4a

Exodus "The Way Out"	AUTHOR/DATE	Moses is the writer by tradition (Lk 24:27; Jn 5:46; Acts 15:1).
	THEMES	God's Name, Covenant, Law, Slavery, Freedom, Redemption, Deliverance, God's Glory
	PEOPLE	Moses, Aaron, nation of Israel
	OUTLINE	Slavery of God's people (Ex 1) Call of Moses to be leader of God's people (Ex 2-4) Pharaoh challenged to free God's people (Ex 5-11) Passover (Ex 12, 13) Exodus from Egypt (Ex 14-19) Giving of the Law (Ex 20-24) Building of the Tabernacle (Ex 25-40)
	KEY PASSAGES	Exodus 1:1-22; Exodus 3-4; Exodus 7:8-11:10; Exodus 12:1-51; Exodus 20:1-26; Exodus 25:1-9; 28:1-14, 30-43; Exodus 33:12-34:17
	MEMORY VERSE	Exodus 3:12,14

Leviticus "relating to the Levites" Hebrew title: "And He called"	AUTHOR/DATE	Moses is the writer by tradition (Lk 24:27; Jn 5:46).
	THEMES	Holiness, Worship, Holy Days, Guidance for Living
	PEOPLE	God's people who offer worship, Levites (descendents of Levi responsible for Israel's worship of the one true God) who sacrifice the offerings in worship
	OUTLINE	Sacrifice and Separation (Lev 1:1-6:7) Priests (Lev. 8-10) Rules about Daily Living (Lev 11-22) Day of Atonement (Lev 16) Feasts (Lev 23-25)
	KEY PASSAGES	Leviticus 1 ; Leviticus 8, Leviticus 11 ; Leviticus 16 ; Leviticus 19 ; Leviticus 23 ; Leviticus 26 ; Leviticus 27
	MEMORY VERSE	Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26 (cf. Mt 5:48; 1 Pe 1:15-16)

Numbers "census lists" Hebrew title: "In the desert"	AUTHOR/DATE	Moses is the writer by tradition (Lk 24:27; Jn 5:46).
	THEMES	Journey, Disobedience,, Wrath, Curses and Blessings
	PEOPLE	Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Caleb, Miriam, Priests
	OUTLINE	Preparation for the Journey (Nu 1-10) Wilderness Wanderings (Nu 10-20) Journey to Canaan (Nu 21-36)
	KEY PASSAGES	Numbers 10:11-36 ; Numbers 11-14 ; Numbers 19-20:13 ; Numbers 21:4-9; Numbers 22-24 ; Numbers 27 :1-11; Numbers 35:6-34
	MEMORY VERSE	Numbers 6:24-26

Deuteronomy "second law" Hebrew title: "In the desert"	AUTHOR/DATE	Moses is the writer by tradition (Lk 24:27; Jn 5:46).
	THEMES	Remember, Covenant Love, Obedience, Curses, Blessings
	PEOPLE	Moses, Joshua
	OUTLINE	Moses's First Speech: Remember (Dt 1-4) Moses' Second Speech: Obey (Dt 5-26) Moses' Third Speech: Advance (Dt 27-33) Moses' Death (Dt 34)
	KEY PASSAGES	Deut 6; Deut 11; Deut 28-29; Deut 30:11-20; Deut 31:9-13
	MEMORY VERSE	Deuteronomy 6:4-7

Session 4—Salvation History: The Mighty Acts of God

This section covers major theological themes of the Old Testament that continue into the New Testament. These theological themes include Creation, Covenant, Exodus, Exile, Salvation

Read Psalm 118 together in the New International Version.

- 1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.
- 2 Let Israel say:
"His love endures forever."
- 3 Let the house of Aaron say:
"His love endures forever."
- 4 Let those who fear the LORD say:
"His love endures forever."
- 5 In my anguish I cried to the LORD,
and he answered by setting me free.
- 6 The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?
- 7 The LORD is with me; he is my helper.
I will look in triumph on my enemies.
- 8 It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in man.
- 9 It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in princes.
- 10 All the nations surrounded me,
but in the name of the LORD I cut them off.
- 11 They surrounded me on every side,
but in the name of the LORD I cut them off.
- 12 They swarmed around me like bees,
but they died out as quickly as burning
thorns;
in the name of the LORD I cut them off.
- 13 I was pushed back and about to fall,
but the LORD helped me.
- 14 The LORD is my strength and my song;
he has become my salvation.
- 15 Shouts of joy and victory
resound in the tents of the righteous:
"The LORD's right hand has done mighty
things!
- 16 The LORD's right hand is lifted high;
the LORD's right hand has done mighty
things!"
- 17 I will not die but live,
and will proclaim what the LORD has done.
- 18 The LORD has chastened me severely,
but he has not given me over to death.
- 19 Open for me the gates of righteousness;
I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.
- 20 This is the gate of the LORD
through which the righteous may enter.
- 21 I will give you thanks, for you answered me;
you have become my salvation.
- 22 The stone the builders rejected
has become the capstone;
- 23 the LORD has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes.
- 24 This is the day the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.
- 25 O LORD, save us;
O LORD, grant us success.
- 26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the
LORD.
From the house of the LORD we bless you.
- 27 The LORD is God,
and he has made his light shine upon us.
With boughs in hand, join in the festal
procession
up to the horns of the altar.
- 28 You are my God, and I will give you thanks;
you are my God, and I will exalt you.
- 29 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

It is true that God has done mighty acts on our behalf (verses 15-16). Let's take a look at these mighty acts of God in **SALVATION** history (German, Heilsgeschichte)

Creation

Adapted from March, *The Mighty Acts of God*

Preamble (Gen 1:1-2)

Day 1: Light (Gen 1:3-5)

Day 2: Firmament (Gen 1:6-8)

Day 3: Dry land and vegetation (Gen 1:9-13)

Day 4: Luminaries (Gen 1:14-19)

Day 5: Fish and Birds (Gen 1:20-23)

Day 6: Land Animals and Humans (Gen 1:24-31)

Day 7: Rest (Gen 2:1-4a)

Man and Woman in the Garden (Gen 2:4b-25)

God's Dust Creature (Gen 2:4b-7)

Garden of Eden (Gen 2:8-17)

Creation of Animals and Woman (Gen 2:18-25)

The Fall

Adapted from March, *The Mighty Acts of God*

Adam and Eve

Temptation (Gen 3:1-6a)

Fall (Gen 3:6b-8)

Interrogation (Gen 3:9-13)

Sentence (Gen 3:14-19)

Grace of God (Gen 3:20-21)

Expulsion (Gen 3:22-24)

Growth of Sin

Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1-16)

Flood (Gen 6-9)

Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9)

God's act of creation sets a pattern for his relationship to humanity—the pinnacle of his creative acts. God offers freedom to love Him and care for the world in the context of obedience. The sinful act of disobedience damages a person's relationships with God, others, and the world.

Theological Concepts: SIN AND GRACE

God's Covenant Acts of Redemption

Noah—Genesis 9:8-17. God made this covenant with "righteous" Noah (included all his descendants and all living creatures). God gives Noah an unconditional divine promise to not destroy the earth through a natural catastrophe. The "sign" of the covenant is the rainbow in the storm clouds.

Abraham—Genesis 15:9-21. God made a promise to a "righteous" Abram and his descendants. The unconditional divine promise granted land to them.

Abraham—Genesis 17. There was also a second conditional divine pledge offered to Abraham. God wanted to be Abraham's God and the God of his descendants enacted through the total consecration to the Lord and through the symbolic act of circumcision.

Moses—Exodus 19-24. There was a conditional divine pledge to be Israel's God as long as they obeyed God's rule and served His purposes in history. God's covenant law was given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. Also known as the Sinaitic covenant.

Theological Concepts: LAW AND FAITH

David—2 Samuel 7:5-16. There was an unconditional divine promise to establish a lineage of godly kings for Israel to bring them rest in the land promised to Abraham.

The people were driven to exile by their disobedience and given a promise to return through repentance.

Theological Concepts: DISOBEDIENCE & REPENTANCE

New Covenant—Jeremiah 31:31-34. An unconditional divine promise to unfaithful Israel to forgive her sins and create a new basis for relationship with God through a law written “upon their hearts”—a covenant of grace. This covenant was made on the eve of the most severe covenant curse—to be taken from the promised land (Leviticus 26:27-39; Deut 28:36-37, 45-68)

The New Covenant Fulfilled through Salvation in Jesus Christ

Mark 14:23-24: “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.” The new covenant brings salvation to all people through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Theological Concept: HESED (COVENANT LOVE)

“His love (hesed) endures forever.” Psalm 118:1

A comparison of contract and covenant

Category	<i>Contract</i>	<i>Covenant</i>
Form	1 List of parties 2 Description of transaction 3 List of witnesses 4 Date	1 Preamble 2 Historical prologue 3 Stipulations 4 Provisions for deposit and/or public reading 5 Witnesses 6 Blessings and curses
Occasion	Expected benefits	Desire for relationship
Initiative	Mutual agreement	Usually the stronger partner
Orientation	Negotiation Thing-oriented	Gift Person-oriented
Obligation	Performance	Loyalty
Termination	Specified	Indeterminate
Covenant breaking	Yes	Yes

Example of a Covenant Formula in Deuteronomy

- Preamble (Deuteronomy 1:1-6a)
- Historical Prologue Dt 1:6b-4:49)
- Stipulations (Dt 5-26)
- Public Reading (Dt 31:9-13)
- List of Witnesses (Dt 31:19-22; 31:28-32:45)
- Blessings and Curses (Dt 27:15-28:68)

Source: Elmer A. Martens, *God's Design: A focus on Old Testament Theology*, Baker Books, 1994, pp. 79-80

ACTIVITY FOR ACTION

Students will present a small group drama depicting an account taken from the book of Exodus, such as Moses' encounter with Yahweh in the burning bush or the Ten Plagues and what hardened Pharaoh's heart in response to the plagues. The dramatic depiction needs to illustrate one of the theological concepts from salvation history. Take 10 minutes for groups to prepare and 5 minutes for each group presentation. (Course outcomes 1, 4, 14).

Session 5—Historical Books: God's People & their Kings

Joshua	AUTHOR/DATE	No one knows for sure. It was probably written by a participant. (Use of "we" and "us" in 5:1,6)
	THEMES	Victory, Obedience/Disobedience, Promise, Trust
	PEOPLE	Joshua, Rahab
	OUTLINE	Mobilization of the Army (Josh 1, 2) Forward March (Josh 3-5) Fall of Jericho (Josh 6) Near Defeat at Ai (Josh 7, 8) Southern Campaign (Josh 9) Central Campaign (Josh 10) Northern Campaign (Josh 11) Defeated Kings (Josh 12) Division of the Land (Josh 13-22)
	KEY PASSAGES	Joshua 1:1-9; Joshua 2:1-24; Joshua 3; Joshua 6; Joshua 7; Joshua 10:1-15; Joshua 14:6-15; Joshua 24
	MEMORY VERSE	Joshua 1:6-9
Judges	AUTHOR/DATE	Author uncertain, thought to be Samuel. Setting is between the conquest of Canaan and the rise of the kings of Israel.
	THEMES	the repeated cycle of retribution : disobedience (Judges 3:7), oppression (3:8), repentance (3:9), deliverance (3:10-11)
	PEOPLE	Deborah, Gideon, Samson
	OUTLINE	Israelites did not possess all the land (Judges 1,2) God sent judges (saviors, leaders) Othniel and Ehud (Judges 3) Deborah (Judges 4,5) Gideon (Judges 6-8) Wickedness of Abimelech (Judges 9) Jephthah (Judges 10-12) Samson (Judges 13-16) Israelites did not keep God's laws (Judges 17-21)
	KEY PASSAGES	Judges 2; Judges 3:7-11; Judges 3:12-30; Judges 4:4-

		5:31; Judges 6-7; Judges 11:12-40; Judges 13-16; Judges 17
	MEMORY VERSE	Judges 2:10-11
Ruth	AUTHOR/DATE	Author uncertain, thought to be Samuel. Setting is between the conquest of Canaan and the rise of the kings of Israel.
"kinsmen-redeemer"	THEMES	Redemption, Hope, Promise-Fulfillment
	PEOPLE	Ruth, Naomi, Boaz
	OUTLINE	Ruth's husband, an Israelite, dies in Moab (Ruth 1) Ruth goes to Israel with Mahlon's mother, Naomi (Ruth 1:1-18) Ruth cares for Naomi (Ruth 1:19-2:23) Ruth wants to be with Boaz (Ruth 3:1-18) Ruth marries Boaz (Ruth 4:1-12) Ruth and Boaz have son (Ruth 4:13-22)
	KEY PASSAGES	Ruth 1:1-5; Ruth 1:16-18, Ruth 3-4:12, Ruth 4:13-17
	MEMORY VERSE	Ruth 4:14
1 Samuel	AUTHOR/DATE	Unknown writer covering birth of Samuel to the early career of David (1105 BC to 1010 BC)
"Asked of God"	THEMES	Calling, Kingship
	PEOPLE	Hannah, Samuel, Saul, David, Jonathan
	OUTLINE	Samuel—the last of the judges (1 Samuel 1-7) Calling of Samuel (1-3) Ark Narratives (4-6) Samuel as judge and deliverer (7) Saul—People's choice for king (1 Samuel 8-15) Saul, the first king (8-12) Saul, the Unwilling (13-15) David—God's chosen King (1 Samuel 16-31) David serves Saul and then flees for his life (16-26) David seeks refuge until Saul's death (27-31)
	KEY PASSAGES	1 Samuel 3:1-4:1; 1 Samuel 12; 1 Samuel 14; 1 Samuel 16 ; 1 Samuel 17; 1 Samuel 20; 1 Samuel 23-24,26; 1 Samuel 28, 31; 1 Samuel 27, 29
	MEMORY VERSE	1 Samuel 3:10; 1 Samuel 15:22
2 Samuel	AUTHOR/DATE	Unknown writer covering reign of David king of Israel (1010 BC to 970 BC)
Story of David	THEMES	Calling, Covenant, Kingship
	PEOPLE	David, Abner, Mephibosheth, Uria, Bathsheba, Nathan, Joab, Amnon, Absalom
	OUTLINE	David's Rise as King of Israel (2 Samuel 1-10) Battle between David and Saul's men (1-4) David rules over all Israel (5) David brings ark to Jerusalem (6) God makes a covenant with David (7) David defeats Philistines (8) David honors promise to care for Mephiboseth (9) David is victorious in battle (10)

		<p>David's Fall into sin and its consequences (2 Samuel 11-20) David and Bathsheba sin (11) Nathan rebukes David (12) David loses sons Amnon and Absalom (13-18) Judah and Israel unite under David (20)</p> <p>David's last days and future troubles for Israel (2 Samuel 21-24)</p>
	KEY PASSAGES	2 Samuel 1:1-27; 2:1-32; 3:1; 2 Samuel 5:1-25; 2 Samuel 6:16-23; 2 Samuel 7:1-29; 2 Samuel 11:1-27; 2 Samuel 12:1-25 (Psalm 51); 2 Samuel 24:1-25
	MEMORY VERSE	2 Samuel 18:1
1 Kings	AUTHOR/DATE	Unknown writer covering reign of Solomon, the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah and the prophetic ministries of Eijjah and Elisha
"days of Elijah"	THEMES	Calling, Kingship
	PEOPLE	David, Solomon, Rehoboam, Nathan, Jeroboam, Ahab, Jezebel, Elijah, Elisha
	OUTLINE	Reign of Solomon (1 Ki 1-10) Death of Solomon & Divided Kingdom (1 Ki 11-16) King Ahab and Jezebel introduce Baal worship (1 Ki 16) Prophet Elijah defeats prophets of Baal (1 Ki 17-18) Ahab does evil (1 Ki 19-22)
	KEY PASSAGES	1 Ki 6:1-14; 1 Kings 8:22-53; 1 Kings 10:1-29; 1 Kings 12:1-33; 1 Kings 17:1-18:46, 1 Kings 19:11-21
	MEMORY VERSE	1 Kings 19: 11-14
2 Kings	AUTHOR/DATE	Unknown writer covers the ministries of Elijah and Elisha and the kings of Israel and Judah until the exile to Babylon.
	THEMES	Mentorship, Leadership, Consequences for Sin
	PEOPLE	In Israel—Elisha, Jehu, Jeroboam II In Judah—Joash, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Isaiah, Manasseh, Josiah
	OUTLINE	Ministry of Elijah (1 Ki 17-22; 2 Ki 1,2) Ministry of Elisha (2 Ki 1-9:13) Last Days of Israel (2 Ki 10-17) Last Days of Judah (2 Ki 18-25)
	KEY PASSAGES	2 Kings 2:1-22; 2 Kings 17:7-23; 2 Kings 25:1-21
	MEMORY VERSE	2 Kings 2:11-13
1 Chronicles	AUTHOR/DATE	Attributed to Ezra. Covers same time period as 1 Kings for the restored community returning from exile.
"words of the days"	THEMES	Restoration, Temple, Election, Law, Immediate Judgment
	PEOPLE	Adam, Abraham, Jacob, Saul, David
	OUTLINE	Lists of Families and Leaders (1 Ch 1-9) Reign of David (1 Ch 10-29) Death of Saul (1 Ch 10) David's rise to power (1 Ch 11-12) Ark of the Covenant (1 Ch 13-16)

	God's promise and David's Prayer (1 Ch 17) Victories of David (1 Ch 18-20) David's Census (1 Ch 21) Preparations for the Temple (1 Ch 22-27) David's Last Days and Death (1 Ch 28-29)
KEY PASSAGES	1 Chronicles 12; 1 Chronicles 13; 1 Chronicles 16:7-37; 1 Chronicles 17; 1 Chronicles 22:1-19
MEMORY VERSE	1 Chronicles 13:2-4

2 Chronicles	AUTHOR/DATE	Attributed to Ezra. Covers same time period as 1 Kings for the restored community returning from exile.
	THEMES	Restoration, Temple, Election, Law, Immediate Judgment
	PEOPLE	Solomon and rulers of Judah
	OUTLINE	Reign of Solomon (2 Ch 1-9) Solomon's request (1) Solomon's Temple (2-7) Solomon's success (8-9) Rulers of Judah (10-36) Rehoboam (10-12) Amaziah (25) Abijah (13) Uzziah (26) Asa (14-16) Jotham (27) Jehoshaphat (17-20) Ahaz (28) Jehoram (21) Hezekiah (29-32) Ahaziah, Manasseh, Aman (33) Athaliah, Joash (22-24) Fall of Jerusalem (36)
	KEY PASSAGES	2 Chronicles 19-20; 2 Chronicles 26; 2 Chronicles 36:14-23
	MEMORY VERSE	2 Chronicles 36:23

Ezra	AUTHOR/DATE	Written around 440 BC
	THEMES	Hope after Defeat, Faith, Prayer, Obedience, Victory
	PEOPLE	Sheshbazzar, Ezra
	OUTLINE	Return under Sheshbazzar (Ezra 1-6) Decree of the Persian king (1) Census of people (2) Rebuilding of the Temple (3-6) Return under Ezra (Ezra 7-10) Return to Jerusalem (7,8) Dealing with the people's sins (9,10) Note: Intermarriage concerned keeping God's people apart from others. This dividing wall was broken down by the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
	KEY PASSAGES	Ezra 1:1-8 ; Ezra 3:1-4:5 ; Ezra 7:1-10 ; Ezra 8:21-23
	MEMORY VERSE	Ezra 7:27-28

Nehemiah	AUTHOR/DATE	Written around 430 BC
	THEMES	Hope after Defeat, Faith, Prayer, Obedience, Victory
	PEOPLE	Nehemiah
	OUTLINE	Rebuilding of Jerusalem's Walls (Neh 1-7) Repairing of Covenant with God (Neh 8-10) Reforming of the Nation (Neh 11-13)
	KEY PASSAGES	Nehemiah 1 ; Neh 2 ; Neh 4 ; Neh 5 ; Neh 6-7:3 ; Neh 8 ; Neh 9 ; Neh 10:28-11:4 ; Neh 12:27-31a
	MEMORY VERSE	Neh 8:8

Esther	AUTHOR/DATE	Written by an unknown author sometime after 460 BC
	THEMES	Conflict, God's protection, Remnant, Feasting,
	PEOPLE	Vashti, Esther, Mordecai, Haman, Xerxes
	OUTLINE	<p>The Feasts of Xerxes (1-2) Rejection of Vashti (1) Crowning of Esther (2)</p> <p>The Feasts of Esther (2:19-c. 7) Mordecai Uncovers a Plot Haman's Plot Mordecai persuades Esther to Help Esther's Request to the King: The first banquet A Sleepless Night Haman Hanged: Second banquet</p> <p>The Feast of Purim (8-10) King's Edict in behalf of the Jews Institution of Purim Promotion of Mordecai</p>
	KEY PASSAGES	Esther 1:13-22 ; 2:7-8 ; 2:10-11 ; 2:15-18; 2:21-23 ; 3:5-6, 8-15 ;
	MEMORY VERSE	Esther 9:28

Session 6—Call and Character: Abraham, David, and Jeremiah

Activity for Action

Create groups of three to four students. As a group, find and read the biblical references to the lives of Abraham the great patriarch of Israel, David the great king of Israel, and Jeremiah the great prophet. Respond to each of the questions by filling in the boxes in the chart below. These principal personalities of the OT will show us how God's call gave them the motivation to develop the character necessary to fulfill His promises for their lives through times of faithfulness and doubting.

Discuss these questions together. Have the students record their responses in the boxes below.

- **Describe how God called or chose this person for His plan. How did this person respond to God?**
- **In what ways did this person's words or actions (their character) reflect faithfulness to God's call? How did they also show unfaithfulness to God's plan?**
- **What messages of encouragement or warning do their lives communicate to the church today?**

	Abraham	David	Jeremiah
God's call and their response			
Words & actions of faith and uncertainty			
Message of encouragement or warning for today's church			

Session 7—The Writings: Psalms, Poetry, and Wisdom

Job	AUTHOR/DATE	Written by an unknown author of remarkable skill and knowledge of the theology found in other OT books.
	THEMES	Human suffering, Righteous Sufferers, Maintaining Faith, God, Theodicy (God's rule),
	PEOPLE	Job, Job's family, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, Elihu
	OUTLINE	Job's Happiness and Testing (1-2) Job's dialogue and dispute with friends (3-27) Interlude on Wisdom (28) Monologues on Job's Vindication (29-31) Elihu's Speeches (32-37) Divine Discourses (28-41) Job's repentance, God's Verdict, and Job's restoration (42)
	KEY PASSAGES	Job 1-3 ; Job 18-21; Job 28 ; Job 32-37 ; Job 38-41 ; Job 42
	MEMORY VERSE	Job 19:25 ; Job 28:28
Psalms	AUTHOR/DATE	Collection of songs and hymns from Israelite worship. Probably written by David and others
	THEMES	Praise, worship, lament, celebration, confession
	PEOPLE	David, Sons of Korah (family of musicians), Asaph (David's choir leader)
	OUTLINE	Narrative psalms (78, 105, 106, 135, 136) Laments (community: 12, 44, 58, 60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 85, 89:38-51, 90, 94, 123, 126, 129, 137, Lamentations 5 / Individual: 3, 4, 5, 7, 9-10, 13, 14, 17, 22, 25, 26, 27:7-14, 28, 31, 35, 36, 39, 40:11-17, 41, 42-43, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 63, 64, 69, 70, 71, 77, 86, 88, 109, 120, 139, 140, 141, 142, Lamentations 3) Penitential Psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 139, 143) Songs of Thanksgiving (65, 67, 75, 107, 124, 136, 1 Samuel 2:1-10 / Individual: 18(=2 Sam. 22), 21 (royal thanksgiving), 30, 32, 34, 40:1-11, 66:13-30, 92, 103, 108, 116, 118 (royal thanksgiving), 138, Is 38:9-20, Jonah 2:2-9) Hymns of Praise: (to God who redeemed Israel: 66:1-12, 100, 111, 114, 149, Ex 15:1-18, Dt 32:1-43, Hab 3:2-19); Is 52:7-10) / (to God who created the world: 8, 19:1-6, 95:1-7a, 104, 148, 74:12-17, 89:5-18) / (to the Creator and Ruler of History: 33, 103, 113, 117, 145, 146, 147, 150) Festival Songs and Liturgies (Covenant Renewal Liturgies: 50, 81) / (Enthronement Psalms: 24, 29, 47, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99) / (Davidic Covenant: 78, 89, 132) / (Royal Psalms: 2, 18, 20, 21, 144:1-11, 45, 72, 101, 110) / (Songs of Zion: 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 121,
	KEY PASSAGES	
MEMORY VERSE		

	122) Songs of Trust and Meditation (Songs of Trust: 11, 16, 23, 27:1-6, 62, 63, 91, 121, 125, 131) / (Wisdom Psalms: 36, 37, 49, 73, 78, 112, 127, 128, 133, Proverbs 8) / (Torah Psalms: 1, 19:7-14, 119) / (Liturgies: 15 (24), 68, 82, 115, 134)
KEY PASSAGES	Ps 1 ; Ps 19 ; Ps 23 ; Ps 37 ; Ps 40 ; Ps 46 ; Ps 51 ; Ps 103 ; Ps 139
MEMORY VERSE	Psalm 23

Proverbs	AUTHOR/DATE	Many of the proverbs are ascribed to Solomon. 1 Kings4:32 tells us he wrote 3,000 proverbs and 1,500 songs. Most come from 10 century BC and later editions
	THEMES	Wisdom, Instructing the Young, Avoid Folly, Fearing the Lord, Avoiding Sexual Immorality, Guarding Relationships, Denouncing Pride, Working Hard
	PEOPLE	Solomon, Hezekiah's Men (25:1), Person of Wisdom
	OUTLINE	Finding Wisdom (1-4) Warning against Folly and Adultery (5-7) For Youth (8-9) Collection of Proverbs (10-22:16) Thirty Sayings of the Wise (22:17-24:22) Additional Sayings of the Wise (24:23-34) Hezekiah's Collection of Solomon's Proverbs (25-29) Words of Agur (30) Words of King Lemuel The Ideal Wife (31:10-31)
	KEY PASSAGES	Proverbs 8 ; Prov 11 ; Prov 15 ; Prov 16 ; Prov 19 ; Prov 20 ; Prov 22:17-24:34 ; Prov 25 ; Prov 31
MEMORY VERSE	Proverbs 1:8; Proverbs 2:6; Proverbs 3:5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 27; Proverbs 6:16-19; Proverbs 10:12, Proverbs 11:2, 13, 17, 25, 28; Proverbs 12:22, 25; Proverbs 13:10; Proverbs 14:21-23, 29; Proverbs 15:1, 16, 18, 22; Proverbs 16:7, 8, 16, 18, 20, 32; Proverbs 17:17, 22; Proverbs 18:9,10; Proverbs 19:17, 20, 21; Proverbs 20:3, 11, 19, 22, 24; Proverbs 22:1,2,9; Proverbs 23:12; 24:17,19; Proverbs 25:21,22; Proverbs 27:1,2; Proverbs 28:13	

Ecclesiastes	AUTHOR/DATE	Written by unknown author possibly an elder reflecting on wasted life lived apart from the purpose of God. The title of the writer is "Teacher" or Qoheleth.
	THEMES	Life is meaningless without God, Wisdom and experience are limited, Human enterprise is limited, Enjoy life as God gives it
	PEOPLE	Teacher
	OUTLINE	Meaningless life apart from God (1:2) Working to Gain Things is Meaningless (1:3-11) Part 1: Life has meaningless features, but life is still a gift from God (1:12-11:6) Part 2: Since death soon arrives, youth should enjoy life and remember that God will judge (11:7-12:7) Theme Repeated (12:8) Trust and Obey God (12:9-14)
	KEY PASSAGES	Ecclesiastes 1:12-18 ; Ecc 2:10-16 ; Ecc 2:17-26 ; Ecc 3:1-8 ; Ecc 3:7-16 ; Ecc 5:4-7 ; Ecc 5:18-20 ; Ecc 7:-8:1 ; Ecc 9:13-18 ; Ecc 12
	MEMORY VERSE	Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 ; Ecclesiastes 12:13

Song of Songs	AUTHOR/DATE	Greatest of songs attributed to Solomon during the 10 century BC
	THEMES	Exclusive Love, Spontaneity, Wisdom, Power and Preciousness of Love,
	PEOPLE	Lover, Beloved
	OUTLINE	First Meeting (1:2-2:7) Second Meeting (2:8-3:5) Third Meeting (3:6-5:1) Fourth Meeting (5:2-6:3) Fifth Meeting (6:4-8:4) Literary Climax (8:5-7) Conclusion (8:8-14)
	KEY PASSAGES	1:1-4 ; 2:2-3 ; 5:9-16 ; 6:3 ; 6:6-9 ; 7 ; 8:5-14
	MEMORY VERSE	Song of Songs 8:6-7

Session 8—Sacrifices and Feasts of Israel

From the *Reflecting God NIV Study Bible*, p. 149

Old Testament Sacrifices

SACRIFICE	OT REFERENCES	ELEMENTS	PURPOSE
Sin Offering	Lev 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30; 8:14-17; 16:3-22	--Young bull (high priest and congregation) --Male goat (leader) --Female goat or lamb (common person) --Dove or pigeon (poor) --Tenth of an ephah of fine flour (very poor)	Mandatory atonement for specific unintentional sin; confession of sin; forgiveness of sin; cleansing from atonement
Guilt Offering	Lev 5:14-6:7; 7:1-6	Ram or lamb	Mandatory atonement for unintentional sin requiring restitution;; cleansing from defilement; make restitution; pay 20% fine
Burnt Offering	Lev 1; 6:8-13; 8:18-21; 16:24	Bull, ram or male bird (dove or young pigeon for poor); wholly consumed, no defect	Voluntary act of worship; atonement for unintentional sin; expression of devotion, commitment or consecration (surrender) to God
Grain Offering	Lev 2; 6:14-23	Grain, fine flour, olive oil, incense, baked bread (cakes or wafers), salt; no yeast or honey, accompanied burnt offering and fellowship offering (along with drink offering)	Voluntary act of worship; recognition of God's goodness and provisions; devotion to God
Fellowship Offering	Lev 3; 7:11-34	Any animal without defect from heard or flock; variety of breads	Voluntary act of worship; thanksgiving and fellowship (it included a communal meal)

There was a **PROCEDURE** when more than one offering was given (see Numbers 7:16, 17).

- (1) Sin or guilt offering—sin had to be dealt with
- (2) Burnt offering and grain offering—worshiper needed to commit themselves completely to God.
- (3) Fellowship offering—fellowship or communion between Lord, priest, and worshiper was established.

In other words, there were sacrifices of **EXPIATION** (sin offerings and guilt offerings), **CONSECRATION** (burnt offerings and grain offerings), and **COMMUNION** (fellowship offerings including vow offerings, thank offerings, and freewill offerings.)

- **What similarities are there between Old Testament sacrifices and the sacrifices of other religions in today's world?**

- **Where do you see similarities or differences between Old Testament sacrifices and Christian worship and theology?**

- **How does an understanding of Old Testament sacrifices help you appreciate the significance of Christian worship?**

Old Testament Feasts and Other Sacred Days

From the *Reflecting God NIV Study Bible*, p. 174-175

Name	OT ref	OT time	Today	About	Purpose	NT ref
Sabbath	Ex 20:8-11; 31:12-17; Lev 23:3; Dt 5:12-15	7 th day	Same	Day of rest; no work	Rest for people and animals	Mt 12:1- 14; 28:1; Lk 4:16; Jn 5:9; Ac 13:42; Col 2:16; Heb 4:1- 11
Sabbath year	Ex 23:10-11; Lev 25:1-7	7 th year	Same	Year of rest; fallow fields	Rest for land	
Year of Jubilee	Lev 25:8-55; 27:17-24; Nu 36:4	50 th year	Same	Canceled debts, liberation of slaves and indentured servants, land returned to original family owners	Help for poor; stabilize society	
Passover	Ex 12:1-4; Lev 23:5; Nu 9:1-14; 28:16; Dt 16:1- 3a, 4b-7	1 st month (Abib) 14	Mar-Apr	Slaying and eating a lamb, together with bitter herbs and bread made without yeast, in every household	Remembrance Israel's from Egypt	Mt. 26:17; Mk 14:12-26; Jn 2:13; 11:55; 1 Co 5:7; Heb 11:28
Unleavened Bread	Ex 12:15-20; 13:3-10; 23:15; 34:18; Lev 23:6- 8; Nu 28:17-25; Dt 16:3b, 4a, 8	1 st month (Abib) 15- 21	Mar-Apr	Eating bread made without yeast, holding several assemblies, making designated offerings	Remember how the Lord brought the Israelites out of Egypt in haste	Mk 14:1; Ac 12:3; 1 Co 5:6- 8
Firstfruits	Lev 23:9-14	1 st month (Abib) 15	Mar-Apr	Presenting a sheaf of fruit of the barley harvest as a wave offering; making a burnt offering and a grain offering	Recognize the Lord's bounty in the land	Ro 8:23; 1 Co 15:20-23
Weeks (Pentecost/ Harvest)	Ex 23:16a; 34:22a; Lev 23:15-21; Nu 28:26-31; Dt 16:9-12	3 rd month (Sivan) 6	May- June	A festival of joy; mandatory and voluntary offerings, including the firstfruits of the wheat harvest	Show joy and thankfulness for the Lord's blessing of harvest	Ac 2:1-4; 20:16; 1 Co 16:8

Trumpets (Later: Rosh Hashanah—New Year's Day)	Lev 23:23-25; Nu 29:1-6	7 th month (Tishri) 10	Sept-Oct	As assembly on a day of rest commemorated with trumpet blasts and sacrifices	Present Israel before the Lord for his favor	
Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)	Lev 16; 23:26-32; Nu 29:7-11	7 th month (Tishri) 10	Sept-Oct	A day of rest, fasting and sacrifices of atonement for priests and people and atonement for the tabernacle and altar	Cleanse priests and people from their sins and purify the Holy Place	Ro 3:24-26; Heb 9:7; 10:3, 19-22
Tabernacles (Booths-Ingathering)	Ex 23:16b; 34:22b; Lev 23:33-36a; 39-43; Nu 29:12-34; Dt 16:13-15; Zec 14:16-19	7 th month (Tishri) 15-21	Sept-Oct	A week of celebration for the harvest; living in booths and offering sacrifices	Memorialize the journey from Egypt to Canaan; give thanks for the productivity of Canaan	Jn 7:2, 37
Sacred Assembly	Lev 23:36b; Nu 29:35-38	7 th month (Tishri) 22	Sept-Oct	A day of convocation, rest and offering sacrifices	Commemorate the closing of the cycle of feasts	
Purim	Est 9:18-32	12 th month (Adar) 14, 15	Feb-Mar	A day of joy and feasting and giving presents	Remind the Israelites of their national deliverance in the time of Esther	

Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication or festival of lights, is not found in the Old Testament but appeared in the Maccabean period (165 B.C.). It is mentioned in John 10:22.

New moons were also considered feast days (Nu 10:10; 1 Ch 23:31; Ezr 3:5; Ne 10:33; Ps 81:3; Isa 1:13-14; 66:23; Hos 5:7; Am 8:5; Col 2:16).

<p>Group Discussion</p> <p>Take a few minutes and compare the Old Testament feasts to the Christian and/or local holidays in your nation or region. What are the similarities or differences? What aspects of these feasts are still celebrated today? What part of these feasts could improve your regular gatherings as a church? Why were the prophets so critical of the sacrifices and feasts?</p>
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Challenge

As the students read through the prophet of the Old Testaments, have them take how the prophets portray the feasts and sacrifices? Is their portrayal more positive or negative?

Session 9—The Major Prophets

Isaiah	AUTHOR/DATE	Isaiah from Jerusalem in Judah in the 8 th century B.C. Prophet to the people of Judah and a contemporary with Amos and Hosea (Israel) and Micah (Judah)
	THEMES	The Holy One of Israel, Redemption, Holiness, the Day of the Lord, Sovereignty of God, Suffering, Compassion, Returning Reign of the Servant King as Light to the Gentiles
	PEOPLE	People and Kings of Judah
	OUTLINE	<p>God’s messages of judgment (1-39) Rebuke and Promise to kings Uzziah and Jotham (1-6) Threat of Invasion and Promise To Judah (7-12) Judgment against the Nations (13-23) Judgment and Promise (24-27) Six Woes (28-33) Destruction and Future Blessings (34-35) Assyrian Threat and Babylonian Exile (36-39)</p> <p>God’s messages of Comfort (40-66) God’s promise to free His people and return them to the land (40-52) Coming of the Suffering Servant and Messiah-King (52,53)</p> <p>Future glory of God’s people (54-66)</p>
	KEY PASSAGES	Isaiah 7:14 ; Is 9:6 ; Is 11:1-16 ; Is 12; Is 25:1-9 ; Is.32:1-8 ; Is 40 ; Is 42 ; Is 52-66
	MEMORY VERSE	Isaiah 9:6
Jeremiah	AUTHOR/DATE	Prophet to the people of Judah in the 6 th century leading to the exilic period; contemporary with Habakkuk and Zephaniah (Judah), Ezekiel and Daniel (Babylon); and possibly Nahum (Ninevah)
	THEMES	Condemnation of Sin and Idolatry, God’s Judgment, God’s Presence, Individual Responsibility, New Covenant
	PEOPLE	Jeremiah, Baruch, People and kings of Judah
	OUTLINE	<p>Before Jerusalem’s Fall (1-38) The Call of Jeremiah (1) Warning to Judah (2-6) Temple Message (7-10) Covenant and Conspiracy (11-13) The Drought (14-15) Disaster and Comfort (16-17) The Sabbath (17) The Potter (18-20) Condemnation, Exile, and Restoration (21-35) Sufferings and Persecution of the Prophet (36-39)</p> <p>After Jerusalem’s Fall (39-52) Fall of Jerusalem and Its Aftermath (39-41) Flight to Egypt (41-44) Promise to Baruch (45)</p>
“Yahweh is salvation”		
“Yahweh sends”		

		Judgment Against the Nations (46-51) Overview of the Fall of Jerusalem and Exile (52)
	KEY PASSAGES	Jeremiah 1:1-10 ; 2:1-13 ; 3:12, 22-4:2 ; 4:14-26 ; 6:1-30 ; Jer7:1-15 ; Jer 9:1-26 ; Jer 17:1-18 ; Jer 18:1-17 ; Jer 23:1-40 ; Jer 24-25 ; Jer 30:18-31:40 ; Jer 32-33 ; Jer 36-40:6 ; Jer 41:16-45 ; Jer 52:1-34
	MEMORY VERSE	Jeremiah 31:31-34
Lamentations	AUTHOR/DATE	Jeremiah in Judah then Egypt during the late 6 th century leading to and during the Exile, probably written between 586-587 BC. The laments are five poems with 22 verses, each beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, except for chapter 3 with 66 verses (3 times 22). The passion of these laments were written with care and precision.
	THEMES	Judgment, Destruction, Sorrow, Contrition, Hope
	PEOPLE	Jeremiah, assistant named Baruch
	OUTLINE	Jerusalem's Misery and Desolation (1) Lord's Anger Against the Rebellious People (2) Judah's Complaint—and Basis for Consolation (3) Contrast Between Zion's Past and Present (4) Judah's Appeal for God's Forgiveness (5)
	KEY PASSAGES	Lamentations 3
	MEMORY VERSE	Lamentations 3:22-23
Ezekiel "God strengthens"	AUTHOR/DATE	5 th century B.C. in exile in Babylon
	THEMES	God's sovereignty, Holiness,
	PEOPLE	God's people in Babylon
	OUTLINE	Ezekiel's Call (1-3) Ezekiel's Prophecies Symbolic Acts about the Siege against Jerusalem (4-5) Oracles about Divine Judgment (6-7) Vision of Corrupted Temple (8-11) Symbolic Acts about Jerusalem's Exile (13-24) Oracles against the Nations (25-32) Oracles of Consolation for Israel (33-48) Watchman (33) Lord as Good Shepherd (34) Oracle against Edom (35) Consolation for Israel (36) Valley of Dry Bones and Restoration (37) Final Battle (38-39) Vision for Renewed Worship (40-48)
	KEY PASSAGES	Ezekiel 2-3:15 ; Ez 10 ; Ez 14 ; Ez 18 ; Ez 22 ; Ez 24 ; Ez 34 ; Ez 37
	MEMORY VERSE	Ezekiel 34:11-12
Daniel	AUTHOR/DATE	5 th century B.C. in exile in Babylon
	THEMES	Only One God, Mercy, Obedience, Prevenient Grace, God's Sovereignty over present and future, Hope in midst of Judgment, Life of Effective Prayer

"God is my judge"	PEOPLE	God's people in Babylon
	OUTLINE	Daniel's Life in Babylon (1-5) Daniel as a young man (1) Nebuchadnezzar's dream: a great image (2) Fiery Furnace (3) Nebuchadnezzar's dream: a great tree (4) Belshazzar: the handwriting on the wall (5) Daniel in the lion's den (6) Daniel's Visions (7-12)
	KEY PASSAGES	Daniel 1-6 ; Daniel 9 ; Daniel 11-12
	MEMORY VERSE	Daniel 3:16-18

Session 10—The Minor Prophets

Hosea "Salvation"	AUTHOR/DATE	late 700 BC followed Amos to Israel
	THEMES	Unfaithfulness, Mercy, Covenant Love
	PEOPLE	Hosea, Gomer
	OUTLINE	Hosea's wife (1-3) Hosea's people (4-14) The message of judgment (4-10) The message of love (11-14)
	KEY PASSAGES	Hosea 3 ; Hosea 4 ; Hosea 11 ; Hosea 14
	MEMORY VERSE	Hosea 11:3-4

Joel "Yahweh is God"	AUTHOR/DATE	no date, late 500 BC mid-6 th century
	THEMES	Judgment, Repentance, Deliverance
	PEOPLE	Joel, People of Israel
	OUTLINE	Looking Back on God's Judgment (1) Looking toward the Day of the Lord (2,3)
	KEY PASSAGES	Joel 2 ; Joel 3
	MEMORY VERSE	Joel 2:28

Amos "Carry a burden"	AUTHOR/DATE	early 700 BC to people of Israel
	THEMES	Social Justice, Fate of the Rich, Covenant
	PEOPLE	Amos, People of Israel
	OUTLINE	Prophecies: warning the nations (1-2) Sermons: speaking about Israel (3-6) Visions: future of Israel (7-9)
	KEY PASSAGES	Amos 6 ; Amos 7:1-17 ; Amos 8:1-7 ; Amos 9:1-15
	MEMORY VERSE	Amos 5:23-24

Obadiah "worshipper of God"	AUTHOR/DATE	late 500 BC to people of Edom contemporary with Jeremiah (Judah), Daniel and Ezekiel (Babylon)
	THEMES	Human pride, Ethnic hostility, Judgment, Deliverance
	PEOPLE	Edomites, Obadiah
	OUTLINE	Judgment on Edom (1-14)

		Day of the Lord (15-21)
	KEY PASSAGES	Obadiah 1-21
	MEMORY VERSE	Obadiah 12, 15
Jonah	AUTHOR/DATE	Possibly mid-8 th century Prophet to Ninevah
	THEMES	Universality of Judgment and Mercy, Obedience
	PEOPLE	Jonah, People of Ninevah
	OUTLINE	Jonah tried to run away (1) Jonah prayed to God (2) Jonah preached to people of Nineveh (3) Jonah learned God loves all people (4)
	KEY PASSAGES	Jonah 1-2 ; Jonah 3,4
	MEMORY VERSE	Jonah 3:10
Micah	AUTHOR/DATE	750 BC mid-8 th century contemporary of Isaiah
	THEMES	Judgment, Hope, Oppression, Repentance
"Who is like Yahweh"	PEOPLE	Micah, People of Israel
	OUTLINE	Micah warned nations and rulers who do not obey God will be defeated (1-3) Micah promised that God will provide a new king (4,5) Micah gave the people God's promises that He will forgive them (6,7)
	KEY PASSAGES	Micah 1-2 ; Micah 3-4 ; Micah 5 ; Micah 6-7
	MEMORY VERSE	Micah 6:8
Nahum	AUTHOR/DATE	early 650 BC early 7 th century in Judah against to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria.
	THEMES	God's Sovereignty, Judgment, Evils of Corruption
"comfort of Yahweh"	PEOPLE	People of Ninevah, Nahum
	OUTLINE	Ninevah's Judge (1:2-15) Nineveh's Judgment (2) Ninevah's Destruction (3)
	KEY PASSAGES	Nahum 1, 2, 3
	MEMORY VERSE	Nahum 1:7
Habakkuk	AUTHOR/DATE	early 650 BC early 7 th century in Judah. A contemporary of Jeremiah
	THEMES	Unpunished Wickedness, Wrath, Mercy
	PEOPLE	Habakkuk, people of Judah
"One who embraces"	OUTLINE	First question: Why is Judah not punished? God's answer: Babylonians will punish Judah Second question: How can just God use the wicked to punish the righteous? God's answer: Babylon will also be punished in God's time Habakkuk's Prayer
	KEY PASSAGES	Habakkuk 1, 2, 3
	MEMORY VERSE	Habakkuk 3:18

Zephaniah	AUTHOR/DATE	early 650 BC 6 th century in Judah. Contemporary of Jeremiah, maybe also aware of Isaiah and Amos
	THEMES	Day of the Lord, Accountability, Judgment, Restoration
	PEOPLE	Zephaniah, people of Judah
	OUTLINE	Day of the Lord Coming (1:1-18) God's Judgment Against the Nations (2:1-3:8) Redemption for the Repentant Few (3:9-20)
	KEY PASSAGES	Zephaniah 1-2 ; Zephaniah 3
	MEMORY VERSE	Zephaniah 3:17
Haggai	AUTHOR/DATE	early 500 BC to encourage the reconstruction of the Temple in Jerusalem after the exile
	THEMES	Disobedience, Obedience, Following God's guidance
	PEOPLE	Haggai, Zerubbabel the ruler, Joshua the high priest
	OUTLINE	Temple must be rebuilt (1) A new temple will be greater than rebuilt one (2:1-9) God's blessings will come as the temple is rebuilt (2:10-19) The Lord God will overthrow the nations and bless Zerubbabel (2:20-23)
	KEY PASSAGES	Haggai 1-2
	MEMORY VERSE	Haggai 2:7
Zechariah	AUTHOR/DATE	early 500 BC; a contemporary of Haggai after the remnant returned to Jerusalem
	THEMES	Apocalyptic Visions, Last Days, Coming Messiah
	PEOPLE	Zechariah, the Coming Messiah
	OUTLINE	The call to turn back to God (1:1-6) The eight visions of Zechariah (1:7-6:8) The crowing of Joshua, the high priest (6:9-15) The question of fasting (7:1-3) The four messages of Zechariah (7:4-8:23) The two burdens of Zechariah (9-14)
	KEY PASSAGES	Zechariah 7-8, Zech 9-11 ; Zech 12-14
	MEMORY VERSE	Zechariah 4:6
Malachi	AUTHOR/DATE	450 BC, the prophet is possibly a contemporary or concerned by the same sins that occurred during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.
	THEMES	Covenant love, True worship, Faithfulness, Lord's coming
	PEOPLE	Malachi, people of Israel
	OUTLINE	God's love for the people of Israel (1:1-5) God's complaint against the people of Israel (1:6-2:15) The Lord's coming announced (3:1-4:6)
	KEY PASSAGES	Malachi 1-2 ; 3-4
	MEMORY VERSE	Malachi 3:1

Session 11—The Relationship Between the Hebrew and Greek Worlds

Biblical Worldviews

Hebrew	Greek
Earthly	Rationalistic
Observable	Orderly
Simple language	Complex language (three words for love: agape, phileo, eros)
Examples: 1 Samuel 16:4-13 (description of David compared to brothers) Earthly descriptions of Song of Songs and Psalm 8	Examples: Rational argumentation of Paul's letters (such as Romans 3:27-31; 5:1-11)

Old Testament Influence on the New Testament

- The stories of Genesis foreshadow the content of the New Testament and tell of the twelve tribes of Israel (12 apostles), the scourge of sin in the Garden, Cain and Abel, and the Tower of Babel (and need for a Savior, Romans); the key importance of sacrifice (Gen. 19); and the necessity of forgiveness and redemption (Joseph, Gen. 37-50).
- Paul refers to the Old Testament books as **HOLY SCRIPTURES** (2 Timothy 3:15-16)

Early Church Fathers affirmed the importance of both the Old and Testaments when they rejected the heresy of Marcion. He believed there were two gods—one vindictive in the OT—and one merciful in the NT. Others saw the evil of the material world in the OT and wanted to guard moral knowledge found in the NT for the spiritual elite. This was a heresy known as Gnosticism. The early Church discredited these heresies and gave authority to the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments.

- There are 1100 allusions and 257 quotations of OT in Greek NT.
(Every NT theological word has OT history).
- Over 36,000 references to NT by early Church Fathers in developing

DOCTRINE.

Use of Scriptures in **WORSHIP**

- Justin Martyr (AD 150), **earliest reference to use of NT in Sunday worship:**
"And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the *memoirs of the apostles* or the *writings of the prophets* are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things." (italics added)

(Justin Martyr, "First Apology", Chapter 67)

“memoirs of the apostles” presumably the Gospels,
“writings of the prophets” presumably the Old Testament

Session 12—The World of the First Advent

Different voices and audiences: Middle East was a political and religious hot spot!

Religious World: Sadducees (**TEMPLE PRIESTHOOD**), Pharisees (**TEACHERS OF LAW**), Essenes (**ASCETIC**, similar to John the Baptist, Dead Sea Scrolls), Iscarii (literally meaning daggers, but slang for **TERRORISTS**) also known as Zealots)

Political World: Romans (**GOVERNMENT**), Jews (**RELIGION**), Greeks (**CULTURE**)

The Perspectives of the Gospels

The first chapter of each Gospel gives a clue to its perspective.

- Matthew One (The generations of Insiders; “generations” from Genesis) purpose in transitions
- Luke 1 (fact-finding report for Outsiders) purpose at beginning (Luke 1:1-4)
- The Incarnation (John 1—the scandal of God in the flesh) purpose at end (John 20:30-31)
- The “Good News” (Mark 1—brisk, to-the-point, begins at Jordan & ends in Jerusalem; half of it tells last week in Jesus’ life.) purpose in pattern (Mark 8)

The Synoptic Problem and “Q” (Sources of the Good News)

- **THREE** of the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) are synoptic
- Synoptic means “seeing together”
- The three gospels are similar in content and arrangement
- **95**% of Mark is found in Matthew and Luke (in Luke it is in same order)
- Matthew has stories that are **UNIQUE** (i.e. Sermon on Mount)
- More than half of Luke is not found in either Matthew or Mark
- Problems of how to explain the similarities and differences in Matthew, Mark, Luke is called the **SYNOPTIC PROBLEM**

Possible Solutions:

• **Oral Tradition Theory**

--Gospel stories were popular; passed through oral communication; writers used stories to accomplish objective of telling the Good News of Salvation through Christ to their respective audiences.

Matthew: writing for Hebrew audience

Mark: retelling Peter's experience—essence of Good News

Luke: Gentile-born writer explaining Good News for whole world.

• **Mutual Interdependence Theory**

--Mutual borrowing of stories from each other.

• **Two Document Theory**

--Two original sources are **MARK's** Gospel & unknown source (Q)

QUELLE, German for "source"

--Matthew and Luke writers gleaned from Mark and Q

The emphasis of all of these possible solutions is that the Story of salvation through Jesus Christ be told to the world.

Overview of the Rest of the New Testament

There are a variety of forms, authors, audiences

- **HISTORY**: Gospels and Acts (narrative, biographical, evangelistic; salvation history not historical archives)
- **LETTERS**: epistles (Paul), contextualized issues (Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians), cosmological issues (Romans, Ephesians)
- **HEBREWS**: New covenant rooted in Old covenant (Hebrews 11)
- **APOLOGIES**: John's letters, Jude (Love and unity are best defense against heresy)
- **ENCOURAGEMENT TO PERSECUTED**: 1 and 2 Peter, Revelations

ACTIVITY FOR ACTION

In a two-paged paper, students will write on one of the two subjects listed below

Option #1. List and explain five similarities and differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament (course outcomes 1, 8, 9, 11, 16) OPTIONAL FOR CERTIFICATE

Option #2. Explain the differences in perspective that the four Gospel writers use in telling the story of Jesus. Cite examples from the four Gospels in supporting your points. (course outcome 11)

Journey with Jesus (Group project)

Directions:

- Arrange the room to depict Palestine as it was in Jesus' time.
- Trace Jesus' footsteps during His ministry according to Mark's Gospel.
- Note interesting facts about where Jesus went, who he met, and what he did.

Steps:

- 1) Locate Cities and Sites
- 2) Trace Jesus' Journey
- 3) Cite a Fact about Each Location from Scripture or Notes

Time Limit: 45 minutes

Items needed:

Map from a Study Bible

Cities (paper cups or chairs)

Place names: Paper/Index Cards/Toothpicks/Markers

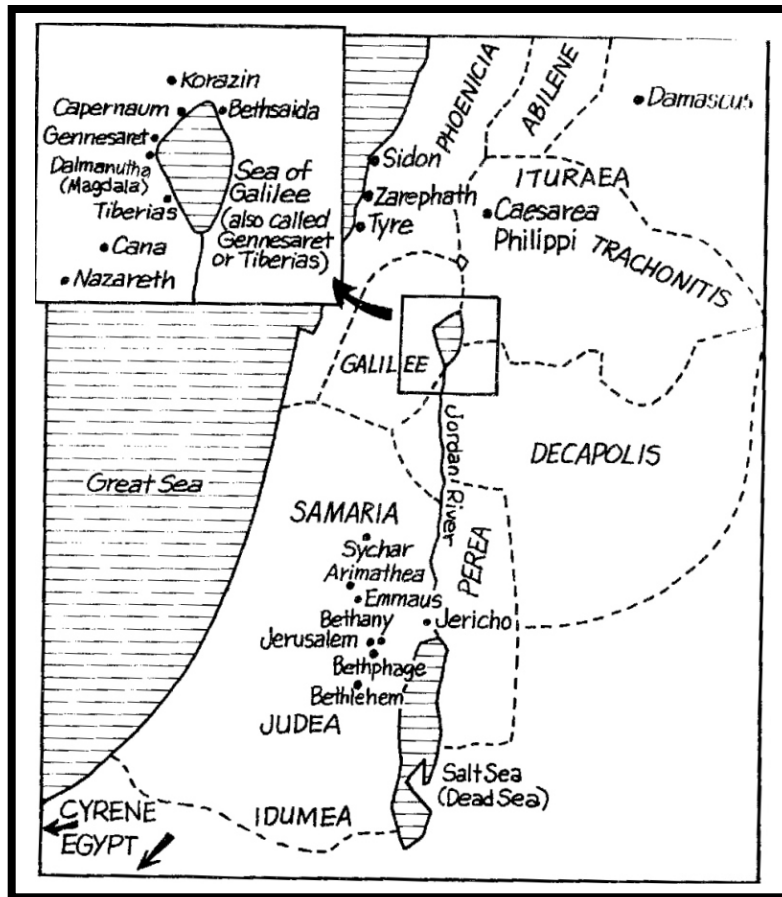
Bodies of Water (blue paper or blankets)

Mountains and hills (plastic bags, crumpled paper, sand/dirt)

Trace Jesus' journey (red string)

Tape (to hold things together)

Cities and Towns	Other Sites	Biblical References
Bethany	Decapolis (general area of the ten cities)	(Mark 1:5)
Bethphage		(Mark 1:16)
Bethsaida	Jordan River	(Mark 1:21)
Caesarea Philippi	Judea	(Mark 5:1)
Capernaum	Mount of Olives	(Mark 6:1)
Gennersart	Sea of Galilee	(Mark 6:45)
Jericho	Territory of the Gerasenes (Gergesa? Khersa?)	(Mark 6:53)
Jerusalem		(Mark 7:31)
Nazareth		(Mark 7:31)
		(Mark 8:22)
		(Mark 8:27)
		(Mark 9:33)
		(Mark 10:1)
		(Mark 10:46)
		(Mark 11:1)



Source: *What the Bible Is All About* (GLINT, 1986), p. 235

Teacher Helps	Questions for follow-up discussion:
<p>Jordan River (Mark 1:5) Baptism Sea of Galilee (Mark 1:16) Calling Disciples Capernaum (Mark 1:21) Teaching, Healing Major Cities of Galilee Territory of the Gerasenes (Gergesa?) (Mk 5:1) Nazareth (Mark 6:1) Bethsaida (Mark 6:45) Gennersart (Mark 6:53) Tyre (Mark 7:31) Decapolis (general area of ten cities) (Mk 7:31) Bethsaida (Mark 8:22) Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:27) Capernaum (Mark 9:33) Judea and across the Jordan (Mark 10:1) Jericho (Mark 10:46) Bethany (Mark 11:1) Bethphage (Mark 11:1) Mount of Olives (Mark 11:1) Jerusalem (Mark 11:11)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where did Jesus spend most of his ministry? • Who would Jesus have had the most interaction? • What modes of travel did He use? • What about the places He didn't go? (Mediterranean Coast, Sepphoris, etc.) • What does this activity tell you about Jesus? • What did you learn most from this activity?

Session 13—The Gospels

Matthew	AUTHOR/DATE	Matthew ("gift of God") was a tax collector who left his work to follow Jesus (Matthew 9:9-13). Probably written in Palestine or Syrian Antioch between AD 50-70. Matthew may have modeled his book on the structure of the Pentateuch.
	THEMES	Jesus is the long-awaited Jewish Messiah
	PEOPLE	Jesus, disciples
	OUTLINE	<p>Jesus' birth and boyhood (1-2)</p> <p>Beginnings of Ministry (3-4)</p> <p>Ministry in Galilee (4)</p> <p>Discourse 1: Sermon on the Mount (5-7)</p> <p>Miracles working (8-9)</p> <p>Discourse 2: Commissioning the 12 Apostles (10)</p> <p>Ministry in Galilee (11-12)</p> <p>Discourse 3: Parables about the Kingdom (13)</p> <p>Herod's Opposition and Jesus Leaves Galilee (14-17)</p> <p>Discourse 4: Life in the Kingdom (18)</p> <p>Ministry and Teachings in Judea and Perea (19-20)</p> <p>Triumphal Entry and Controversy in Jerusalem (21-23)</p> <p>Discourse 5: End of the Age (24-25)</p> <p>Anointing of Jesus (26:1-13)</p> <p>Arrest, Trials, and Death of Jesus (26:14-27:66)</p> <p>Resurrection (28)</p>
	KEY PASSAGES	Matthew 1:18-2:23 ; Mt 4:1-25 ; Mt 5:1-20, 5:38-48 ; 6:19-34 ; Mt 10:1-42 ; Mt 13:1-52 ; Mt 21:1-11 ; Mt 25:1-46 ; Mt 28:16-20
	MEMORY VERSE	Matthew 22:35-40
Mark	AUTHOR/DATE	John Mark is the author of the Gospel which was traditionally held to be the message of Peter. The earliest Gospel written in the 50s-60s A.D.
	THEMES	The Cross, Discipleship, Teachings
	PEOPLE	Jesus, disciples
	OUTLINE	<p>Jesus the Servant—serving people (1-10)</p> <p>His Forerunner (1:1-8)</p> <p>His Baptism (1:9-11)</p> <p>His Temptation (1:12-13)</p> <p>Ministry in Galilee</p> <p>Call of the first disciples (1:14-20)</p> <p>Miracles of Capernaum (1:21-34)</p> <p>Tour of Galilee (1:35-45)</p> <p>Ministry in Capernaum (2:1-22)</p> <p>Sabbath controversy (2:23-3:12)</p> <p>Selectin of the 12 apostles (3:13-19)</p> <p>Teachings in Capernaum (3:20-35)</p> <p>Trip across the Sea of Galilee (4:35-5:20)</p> <p>More Galilean miracles (5:21-43)</p> <p>Unbelief in Jesus' hometown (6:1-6)</p>

	<p>Six apostolic teams tour Galilee (6:7-13) King Herod's reaction to Jesus' ministry (6:14-29) Ministry outside Galilee (6:30-9:32) Final Ministry in Galilee (9:33-50) Jesus goes to Judea and Perea (10) Teaching on Divorce (10:1-12) Teaching on Children (10:13-16) Rich Young Man (10:17-31) Prediction of Jesus' Death (10:32-34) Request of Two Brothers (10:35-45) Restoration of Bartimaeus's Sight (10:46-52) Jesus the Servant—giving his life to save others (11-16) Passion of Jesus (11-15) Triumphal Entry (11:1-11) Cleansing of the Temple (11:12-19) Controversies with Religious Leaders (11:20-12:44) Olivet Discourse on End of the Age (13) Anointing of Jesus (14:1-11) Arrest, Trial, Death of Jesus (14:12-15:47) Resurrection of Jesus (16)</p>
KEY PASSAGES	Mark 1:1-20 ; Mk 2:1-3:25 ; Mk 4:1-6:13 ; Mk 6:32-8:26 ; Mk 8:27-10:34 ; Mk 11:1-12:44 ; Mk 14:1-16:20
MEMORY VERSE	Mark 10:45

Luke	AUTHOR/DATE	Although Luke's name does not appear in the book, evidence points to him as the author of this Gospel and the companion called Acts. It was probably written as earlier as AD 49 or as late as the AD 80s.
	THEMES	Historicity of the Gospel, Universal Scope of Gospel, Prayer, Joy, Women, Relationship in Society, Family, Messiah, Work of Holy Spirit
	PEOPLE	Jesus, disciples
	OUTLINE	<p>Jesus the Son of Man grows up (1:1-4:13) Coming of Jesus and John the Baptist (1-2) John the Baptist (3:1-20) His Baptism (3:21-22) His Genealogy (3:23-38) His Temptation (4:1-13) His Ministry Begins—Jesus the Son of Man has power over everything (4:14-9:50) First Tour of Galilee (4:14-5:39) Sabbath Controversy (6:1-11) Choice of 12 Apostles (6:12-16) Sermon on the Plain (6:17-49) Miracles in Capernaum and Nain (7:1-18) Inquiry of John the Baptist (7:19-29) Jesus and the Pharisees (7:30-50) Second Tour of Galilee (8:1-3) Parables of the Kingdom (8:4-21) Trip across the Sea of Galilee (8:22-39) Third Tour of Galilee (8:40-9:9) Withdrawal from Galilee (9:10-50)</p>

	<p>Jesus the Son of Man teaches his disciples (9:51-19:17) Ministry through Samaria to Judea (9:51-62) Mission of the 72 (10:1-24) Parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37) Jesus at Bethany with Mary and Martha (10:38-42) Teachings in Judea (11:1-13:21) Ministry in Perea (13:22-19:27) The Narrow Door (13:22-30) Warning about Herod (13:31-35) At Pharisee's House (14:1-23) Cost of Discipleship (14:24-35) Parables of the Lost (15) Parable of Shrewd Manager (16:1-18) Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31) Miscellaneous Teachings (17:1-10) Ten Healed of Leprosy (17:11-19) Coming of the Kingdom (17:20-37) Persistant Widow (18:1-8) Pharisee and the Tax Collector (18:9-14) Jesus and the Children (18:15-17) Rich Young Ruler (18:18-30) Christ Foretells His Death (18:31-34) Blind Beggar Given Sight (18:35-43) Jesus and Zacchaeus (19:1-10) Parable of the Ten Minas (19:11-27) The Son of Man suffers and dies (19:28-23:56) Triumphal Entry (19:28-44) Cleansing of the Temple (19:45-48) Controversies with Religious Leaders (20) Olivet Discourse (21) Last Supper (22:1-38) Praying at Gethsemane (22:39-46) Jesus' Arrest (22:47-65) Jesus on Trial (22:66-23:25) Crucifixion (23:26-56) Jesus the Son of Man lives again forever (24) The Resurrection (24:1-12) Post-Resurrection Ministry (24:13-49) Ascension (24:50-53)</p>
KEY PASSAGES	Luke 1:1-3:38 ; Lk 4:1-8:3 ; Lk 8:4-12:48 ; Lk 12:49-16:31 ; Lk 17:1-19:27 ; Lk 19:28-23:56 ; Lk24:1-53
MEMORY VERSE	Luke 14:27; 18:16-17

John	AUTHOR/DATE	Written in the AD 70s or 80s by John the Beloved disciple (13:23) as an eyewitness account.
	THEMES	Believe, To correct false teaching, Jesus is God
	PEOPLE	Jesus, disciples
	OUTLINE	Prologue (1:1-18) Early witnesses to Jesus (1:19-51) Jesus turns water to wine (2:1-11) Cleansing Temple (2:12-25) Nicodemus (3) Ministry of John the Baptist (3:22-4:3) Woman at the well (4:4-42) Healing of Official's Son (4:43-54) Trip to Jerusalem (5) Feeding of 5000 (6) At Feast of Tabernacles (7-8) Healing of Man Born Blind (9) Parable of Good Shepherd (10:1-21) Debating at Feast of Dedication (10:22-42) Raising of Lazarus (11) Passion Week (12-19) Farewell Discourses (12-17) Resurrection of Jesus (20:1-29) Statement of Purposes (20:30-31) Epilogue (21)
	KEY PASSAGES	John 1:1-51 ; John 3:1-36 ; John 4:1-54 ; John 6:1-59 ; John 9:1-41 ; John 10:1-39 ; John 14:1-31
	MEMORY VERSE	John 11:25-26

Session 14—The Life and Ministry of Jesus

Who Was Jesus?

Discussion: Was Jesus more human or more divine?

- Baptism and Temptation in the Desert revealed His **IDENTITY** and Commitments of His life, ministry, and death
- Jesus identified as the **MESSIAH** through
Baptism (Matthew 4:13-17)
Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8)
Gethsemane (Matthew 26:18-46)
Peter's Confession/Denial:
 Confession (Matthew 16:13-19, see 16) Denial (Matthew 26:69-75)
Doubting Thomas (John 20:24-29)
Finger in Wounds and "My Lord and my God" (vv. 27-28)

Human and Divine (Apostle's Creed)

(read together)

I believe in God the Father, Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord:

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary:

Suffered under Pontius Pilate;
was crucified, dead and buried:

He descended into hell:

The third day he rose again from the dead:

He ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty:

From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:

I believe in the Holy Ghost:

I believe in the holy catholic church: the communion of saints:

The forgiveness of sins:

The resurrection of the body:

And the life everlasting. Amen.

How Jesus Taught Us about God's Reign

- **INCARNATION** (John 1) Good News in flesh
- **DISCIPLES** (revealed to common folk: fisherman, tax collectors, farmers)
- **PARABLES** (heavenly secrets through simple stories)

**Jesus the God-man proves that Personal, Social, and Cosmic
Restoration is Possible**

Parables of Jesus: "Windows to Heaven"

- Greek "parabole" means: "**TO CAST ALONGSIDE**."
- It's a **simple story** that conveys a **Big Idea**.
- **THREE**-step storytelling (characters, images, questions)
- *Nimshal*, a Jewish phrase, for the **PRACTICAL** and spiritual point of the parable.
- *Parables open up windows to heaven, and display the meaning of God's reign through Jesus Christ.*

Parable Study.

Study a parable together using the questions below. The example is taken from a study of the parable of Seeds and Soils (Mark 4:1-9; 13-20). Afterwards, if there is time, divide the class into groups and have them conduct a study with the same questions using the following parables: Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37); Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32); Pharisee & Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14).

1) **Setting and Context:** Where is Jesus? To whom is he speaking? What is going on in the verses immediately preceding and following the parable?

Mark 4, Jesus is along sea with a gathering crowd. Definitions of true disciples doing God's will

2) **Structure:** How do the sentences progress? Look for 3-movement structure. What are the characters? What do they say? What questions does it ask? What answers does it give?

Sower, putting seed on four types of soil: Path where it is eaten, rocky where it withers, thorns where it choked, and good soil where seeds thrived

3) **Word Meanings:** Are there any key words that strike you as you read? Any special terms that need to be defined?

*Who is the sower?
What is the symbolism of the seeds, the birds, the thorns, the rocks?
Thorns remind me of the curse upon Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:18*

4) **Tone:** Do you find evidence of irony in the parable? Where is the unexpected twist in the story?

*Some seed grows but soon withers away, other seed doesn't have much of a chance.
The seed in good soil can yield fruit by varying degrees.*

5) **Parallels:** Does the parable appear in more than one Gospel? Note any differences.

*Matthew 13, more explanation (Lack of roots, evil in world, anxiety causes some to fail, etc.)
Luke 8, seed trampled, lack of moisture for failure, produced only 100 fold)*

6) **Purpose:** Why is Jesus telling the parable? What did it mean at the time? What does it mean to you now? How can this parable improve your ministry?

Jesus message is consistent but there would be a variety of responses—same then as now.

Session 15—The Acts of the Apostles

Acts	AUTHOR/DATE	Evidence points to Luke as the author of the Gospel and the companion volume called Acts. It was probably written as early as AD 63 or as late as the AD 70s.
	THEMES	Historicity of the early Church, Defense of the Gospel message, Guide for Growth, Triumph over Persecution, Work of the Holy Spirit
	PEOPLE	1-12: Peter, Stephan, Philip, Barnabus, James, Holy Spirit 13-28: Paul, Barnabus, Silas, Holy Spirit
	OUTLINE	<p>The Gospel is preached <i>"Throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria" (1:1-9:31)</i> Christ's post-resurrection ministry (1:1-11) Waiting for Holy Spirit (1:12-26) Filling with the Spirit (2) Healing of lame and arrest of Peter and John (3:1-4:31) Community of Goods (4:32-5:11) Arrest of the 12 apostles (5:12-42) Choice of Seven deacons (6:1-7) Stephen's arrest and martyrdom (6:8-7:60) Scattering of Jerusalem believers (8:1-4) Philip's ministry in Samaria & to Ethiopian eunuch (8:5-40) Saul's Conversion (9:1-31) <i>"As far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, Antioch" (9:32-12:25)</i> Peter's ministry to Aeneas, Dorcas, and Cornelius (9:32-11:18) New Gentile Church in Antioch (11:19-30) Herod's persecution of church (12)</p> <p>Paul and the Expansion of the Church (13-28) <i>"Throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia" (13:1-15:35)</i> Paul's first missionary journey (13-14) Jerusalem conference (15:1-35) <i>"Over to Macedonia" (15:36-21:16)</i> Paul's second missionary journey (15:36-18:22) Paul's third missionary journey (18:23-21:16) <i>"To Rome" (21:17-28:31)</i> Paul's imprisonment in Jerusalem (21:17-23:35) Arrest (21:17-22:29) Trial before Sanhedrin (22:30-23:11) Transfer to Caesarea (23:12-35) Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea (24-26) Trial before Felix (24) Trial before Festus (25:1-12) Hearing before Festus and Agrippa (25:13-26:32) Voyage to Rome (27:1-28:15) Two years under house arrest in Rome (28:16-31)</p>
	KEY PASSAGES	Acts 2 ; Acts 4 ; Acts 6:8-8:1 ; Acts 8:4-40 ; Acts 9:1-31 ; Acts 10:1-11:18 ; Acts 11:25-26 ; Acts 13-15 ; Acts 16:11-18:28 ; Acts 19 ; Acts 21:17-23:35 ; Acts 24:1-26:32 ; Acts 27-28
MEMORY VERSE	Acts 1:8 ; Acts 14:15 ; Acts 28:28	

Session 16—The Expansion of the Church

Divide students into groups of four and assign each group one of the four assignments below. After working for 20 minutes, have each of the four students in each group find three others from different groups. For instance, the students studying assignment #1 go their separate ways and find three students studying respective assignments #2, #3, and #4. Each new group should have four participants who studied a different assignment. Each student should explain to their new group about the results of their assignment. This whole activity should take one hour.

- (1) Read the passages and then make two lists to compare and contrast Genesis 11:1-9 with Acts 2:1-13.
- (2) Make an outline Peter's sermon in Acts 2:14-41, one of the earliest examples of the Christian gospel (*kerygma*).
- (3) Identify the following personalities along with major occurrences in their lives and the roles they played in the early Church: Stephen (Acts 6:8-8:1), Philip (Acts 8:2-40), Ananias (Acts 9:10-25), Dorcas (Acts 9:32-43), Lydia (Acts 16:11-15), King Agrippa (Acts 25:13-26:1; 26:22-32)
- (4) To where did Paul travel on his missionary journeys? (Acts 13-14; Acts 15:36-18:22, 19:1-21:14)? Give one highlight or important incident per journey.

The World of Paul's Missionary Travels

Source: *What the Bible Is All About* (GLINT, 1986), p. 273.



Session 17—The Letters of Paul

Romans	AUTHOR/DATE	Written by Paul more as a theological essay than a letter. Probably in the area of Corinth during his third journey (Ac 20:2-3) in AD 57.
	THEMES	Sin's reach and power, Gospel of Salvation, Justification by Faith, Righteousness from God, Holy Living
	PEOPLE	
	OUTLINE	Everyone is a sinner and needs God's salvation through Jesus Christ (1-3) Righteousness through Justification (3-5) Righteousness through Sanctification (6-8) Israel turned away from Jesus, God will be faithful and restore them to Him (9-11) Righteousness in Practice in the Church (Body), in the world, and among the weak and strong (13-15)
	KEY PASSAGES	1:16 ; 3:23-24 ; 5:1-5 ; 6:23 ; 8 :1-2 ; 8:28 ; 8:38-39 ; 10:13 ; 12:1-2 ; 12 :4-6 ; 12:9-20
	MEMORY VERSE	Romans 1:16 ; Rom 5:8 ; Rom 8:1-2 ; Rom 8:28 ; Rom 12:21
1 Corinthians	AUTHOR/DATE	Written by Paul around AD 55 during his three-year stay in Ephesus (Ac 20:31).
	THEMES	Christian conduct, Holiness, Lord's Supper, Spiritual Gifts, Unity, Resurrection
	PEOPLE	
	OUTLINE	The believers were dividing into groups to follow Paul or others. Paul said to focus on Jesus Christ and not the teacher (1-4) Paul taught the importance of marriage (5-6) Paul told the people to consider where their actions might hurt others (7-10) Paul taught about public worship and spiritual gifts (11,14) Paul taught that new believers receive the Holy Spirit and one or more gifts but the important thing is to do everything in love (12-13) Jesus Christ rose from the dead; it is important to believe in the resurrection. There is no reason to be afraid of death since believers have the gift of eternal life. (15) Closes letter with personal matters (16)
	KEY PASSAGES	1 Cor 1:26-31 ; 1 Cor 6:18-20 ; 1 Cor 10:13 ; 1 Cor 10: 23-24 ; 1 Cor 11:23-26; 1 Cor 12:12-27 ; 1 Cor 13:1-13 ; 15:3-11 ; 1 Cor 15:58 ; 1 Cor 16:13-14
	MEMORY VERSE	1 Corinthians 13
2 Corinthians	AUTHOR/DATE	Written by Paul a short time after the first letter to Corinth around AD 55 during his three-year stay in Ephesus (Ac 20:31).

THEMES	Christian Ministry, Reconciliation, Giving to the Needy, Authority
PEOPLE	
OUTLINE	Paul assured the Corinthian church that God had called him to bring the Gospel. Paul did everything for God's glory not to bring attention to himself (1-7) Paul encouraged them to help others in need. Those who give generously would be rewarded generously (8-9) Paul warned the church about false teachers and how to discern Paul's true apostolic authority (10-13)
KEY PASSAGES	2 Cor 2:1-4 ; 2 Cor 3:18 ; 2 Cor 4:1-18; 2 Cor 5:7, 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Cor 5:16-21 ; 2 Cor 9:6-10 ; 2 Cor 9:15 ; 2 Cor 11:1-33 ; 2 Cor 12:8-10 ; 2 Cor 13:5-11
MEMORY VERSE	2 Cor 4:7-9 ; 2 Cor 5:17

Galatians	AUTHOR/DATE	Written by Paul for the churches in Galatia (Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe) in the AD 50s.
	THEMES	Law, Liberty, Justification by Faith, Life in the Spirit, Carry burdens for others
	PEOPLE	
	OUTLINE	Paul defends his apostolic authority to bring the Gospel of liberty (1-2) The Gospel of Liberty and Faith in Christ (3-4) How to Walk in the Spirit and Practice the Life of Liberty (5-6)
	KEY PASSAGES	Gal 2:20 ; 3:26 ; 4:4-7 ; 5:1; 5:13 ; 5:16-26 ; 6:2,9,10
	MEMORY VERSE	Galatians 5:1

Ephesians	AUTHOR/DATE	Written by Paul as a circular letter around AD 60 (shares same these as Colossians). Probably written during his first imprisonment in Rome spending two years under house arrest (Ac 28:16-31)
	THEMES	God's purpose ; Christ's Lordship ; Grace ; Ethnic Reconciliation ; Unity; Christian Growth ; Spiritual Warfare
	PEOPLE	
	OUTLINE	God's Divine Purpose: Christ's Glory and Lordship (1) Salvation of Individuals (2) Reconciliation of Jew and Greek (2) Revelation of God's Wisdom in Christ (3) Practice Ways to Fulfill God's Purpose Unity (4:1-6) Maturity (4:7-16) Renewal of Personal and Family Living (4:17-5:20) Submission to Others (5:21-6:9) Strength in Spiritual Conflict (6:10-20) Final Greetings and Benediction (6:21-24)
	KEY PASSAGES	Eph 1:20,22,23; 2:8-10; 3:20-21; 4:2; 4:16; 4:25; 4:29-32, 5:15,19,20; 6:1,7,10-17
	MEMORY VERSE	Ephesians 2:8-10 ; Eph 4:3-6 ; Eph 4:32 ; Eph 5:8

Philippians	AUTHOR/DATE	Written by Paul around AD 60. Probably written during his first imprisonment in Rome spending two years under house arrest (Ac 28:16-31)
	THEMES	Joy in the Faith, Stand in face of persecution, Christ the Servant, Warnings, Prayer
	PEOPLE	
	OUTLINE	Paul thanks God and teaches on prayer (1) Paul teaches about Christ the Servant and depth of God's love (2) Paul tells of his colleagues in the work (2) Paul warns against legalists and libertines (3) Paul rejoices in his faithful family in the Gospel (4)
	KEY PASSAGES	Phil 1:6,20-21, 27 ; 2:1-17 ; 3:7-11, 16 ; 4:4-7, 8-9,13,19
	MEMORY VERSE	Philippians 3:10 ; Philippians 4:4-7; Philippians 4:8-9

Colossians	AUTHOR/DATE	Written by Paul around AD 60 as an antidote to Gnostic heresies. Probably written during his first imprisonment in Rome spending two years under house arrest (Ac 28:16-31)
	THEMES	Emptiness of human philosophies, the Fullness of Christ, Holy Living
	PEOPLE	
	OUTLINE	Supremacy and Fullness of Christ (1) Ministry and Spiritual Warfare (1-2) Freedom from Human Regulations and False Teachers (2) Spiritual Help for Holy Living (3-4)
	KEY PASSAGES	Col 1:16-20; 2:6,7,9,10, 3:12-14, 16-17, 20, 23-24, 4:2
	MEMORY VERSE	Colossians 3:12-14

1 Thessalonians	AUTHOR/DATE	Possibly the earliest of Paul's letters, it was written in AD 51 by Paul the apostle to the Gentiles.
	THEMES	Apostolic Ministry, Second Coming of Christ, Holy Living
	PEOPLE	Written to the Christians living in the largest city (pop. 200,000) of Macedonia located on a crossroads of communication and trade.
	OUTLINE	Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians (1) Defense of the Apostolic Ministry (2) Prayer for Holiness (3:11-13) Teachings on Personal life (4:1-12) Teachings on the Second Coming (4:13-5:11) Teaching on Church life (5:12-22) Prayer for Entire Sanctification (5:23-28)
	KEY PASSAGES	1 Thessalonians 1 ; 1 Thess 2 ; 1 Thess 3:1-4:12 ; 1 Thess 4:13-18 ; 1 Thess 5
	MEMORY VERSE	1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

2 Thessalonians	AUTHOR/DATE	Possibly the earliest of Paul's letters, it was written in AD 51 or 52 (six months after the first letter) by Paul the apostle to the Gentiles.
	THEMES	Second Coming

PEOPLE	
OUTLINE	Thanksgiving for their Faith (1:1-10) Intercession on their Behalf (1:11-12) Prophecy on the Day of the Lord (2:1-12) Thanks for their Calling as Christians (2:13-15) Prayer for their Practice as Believers (2:16-17) Call to Prayer (3:1-3) Change to Discipline the Disorderly and Lazy (3:4-15) Benediction (3:16-18)
KEY PASSAGES	2 Thessalonians 1:5-12 ; 2 Thess 2:1-12 ; 2 Thess 2:13-17 ; 2 Thess 3:1-18
MEMORY VERSE	2 Thessalonians 2:13-15

1 Timothy	AUTHOR/DATE	Written by Paul possibly during his two-year imprisonment in Rome around AD 63-65.
	THEMES	God as Savior ; Sound Teaching ; Godliness ; Dealing with Controversies ; Trustworthy Sayings
	PEOPLE	Paul, Timothy
	OUTLINE	Warning against false teachers (1:1-11) Lord's Grace to Paul (1:12-17) Purpose of Paul's Instructions to Timothy (1:18-20) Instructions for Public Worship (2:1-15) Qualifications for Church Leaders (3:1-16) Dealing with False Teachings (4:1-16) Dealing with Young and Old (5:1-2) Dealing with widows (5:3-16) Dealing with elders (5:17-25) Dealing with slaves (6:1-2) Matters on false teachers (6:3-5) Love of Money (6:6-10) Charge to Timothy (6:11-16) The Rich (6:17-19) Conclusion (6:20-21)
	KEY PASSAGES	1 Timothy 1:1-20 ; 1 Tim 2:1-15 ; 1 Tim 3:1-16 ; 1 Tim 4:1-16 ; 1 Tim 5:1-25 ; 1 Tim 6:1-21
MEMORY VERSE	1 Timothy 4:8 ; 1 Timothy 4:12 ; 1 Timothy 4:16	

2 Timothy	AUTHOR/DATE	Written by Paul around AD 60. Probably written during his first imprisonment in Rome spending two years under house arrest (Ac 28:16-31)
	THEMES	God as Savior ; Sound Teaching ; Godliness ; Dealing with Controversies ; Trustworthy Sayings
	PEOPLE	Paul, Timothy
	OUTLINE	Concern for Timothy (1:1-14) Paul's Situation (1:15-18) Call for Endurance (2:1-13) Warning about Controversies (2:14-26) Warning about Last Days (3:1-9) Dealing with Godlessness (3:10-17) Charge to Preach the Word (4:1-5) Fighting the Good Fight (4:6-8) Greetings and Concluding Remarks (4:9-22)

	KEY PASSAGES	2 Timothy 1:1-9 ; 2 Timothy 1:10-18 ; 2 Timothy 2:1-15 ; 2 Timothy 2:16-26 ; 2 Timothy 3:1-17 ; 2 Timothy 4:1-22
	MEMORY VERSE	2 Timothy 3:14-17
Titus	AUTHOR/DATE	Written by Paul around AD 63-65. Probably written after his first imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:16-31)
	THEMES	God as Savior ; Sound Teaching ; Godliness ; Dealing with Controversies ; Trustworthy Sayings
	PEOPLE	Paul, Titus
	OUTLINE	Salutations (1:1-4) Qualifications for Elders (1:5-9) About False Teachers (1:10-16) About instructing different groups (2:1-10) Foundation for Christian Living (2:11-15) Obligations as Citizens (3:1-2) Godly Conduct (3:3-8) Response to Spiritual Error (3:9-11) Conclusion (3:12-15)
	KEY PASSAGES	Titus 1:1-9 ; Titus 1:10-16 ; Titus 2:1-8 ; Titus 2:9-15 ; Titus 3:1-15
	MEMORY VERSE	Titus 3:1-2
Philemon	AUTHOR/DATE	Written by Paul as a personal letter on the specific issue of slavery around AD 60. Probably written during his first imprisonment in Rome spending two years under house arrest (Ac 28:16-31)
	THEMES	Intercession for Another
	PEOPLE	Paul, Onesimus, Philemon
	OUTLINE	Greetings (1-3) Thansgiving and Prayer (4-7) Building Rapport with Philemon (8-10) Persuading His Mind (11-19) Moving His Emotions (20-21) Final Request, Greetings, Blessing (22-25)
	KEY PASSAGES	Philemon 8-9a, 14, 17, 20-21
	MEMORY VERSE	Philemon 6

Session 18—The Qualifications for being an Elder or Deacon According to Paul

Review the list of qualifications Paul gives for those seeking to be a minister of the Gospel. Discuss in groups how each one can practically develop these character traits in one's own life, family, community, and ministry (course outcomes 1,6, 13). Note: in the column entitled Role, E is Elder and D is Deacon.

TRAIT	ROLE	REFERENCE	TRAIT	ROLE	REFERENCE
Self-controlled	E	1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8	Disciplined	E	Titus 1:8
Hospitable	E	1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8	Above reproach (blameless)	E-D	1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6; 1 Tim 3:9
Able to teach	E	1 Tim 3:2; 1 Tim 5:17; Titus 1:9	Husband of one wife	E-D	1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6; 1 Tim 3:12
Not violent but gentle	E	1 Tim 3:3 ; Titus 1:7	Temperate	E-D	1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:7; 1 Tim 3:8
Not quarrelsome	E	1 Tim 3:3	Respectable	E-D	1 Tim 3:2; 1 Tim 3:8
Not a lover of money	E	1 Tim 3:3	Not given to drunkenness	E-D	1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7; 1 Tim 3:8
Not a recent convert	E	1 Tim 3:6	Manages his own family well	E-D	1 Tim 3:4; 1 Tim 3:12
Has a good reputation with outsiders	E	1 Tim 3:7	Sees that his children obey him	E-D	1 Tim 3:4-5; Titus 1:6; 1 Tim 3:12
Not overbearing	E	Titus 1:7	Does not pursue dishonest gain	E-D	Titus 1:7; 1 Tim 3:8
Not quick-tempered	E	Titus 1:7	Holds to the truth	E-D	Titus 1:9; 1 Tim 3:9
Loves what is good	E	Titus 1:8	Sincere	E-D	1 Tim 3:8
Upright, holy	E	Titus 1:8	Tested	E-D	1 Tim 3:10

Ways to develop these character traits in one's own . . .

Life

Family

Community

Ministry

Session 19—The General Letters

Hebrews	AUTHOR/DATE	Written prior to the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in AD 70. The author knew well the Jewish origins of Christian beliefs. Possible authors include Paul, Barnabus, or Apollos.
	THEMES	Superiority of Christ, Sacrifice, New Covenant, Christian Perfection
	PEOPLE	
	OUTLINE	God's New Revelation (1:1-4) Superiority of Christ to the Angels (1:5-2:18) Superiority of Christ to Moses (3:1-4:13) Superiority of Christ to the Priesthood (4:14-7:28) A Better Covenant (8) A Better Sanctuary (9:1-12) A Better Sacrifice (9:13-10:18) Exhortations (10:19-39) Past Heroes of the Faith (11) Persevering Faith (12) Practical Christian Living (13:1-17) Request for Prayer (13:18-19) Remarks, Greetings, Benediction (13:20-25)
	KEY PASSAGES	Hebrews 3:1-19; Heb 5:1-14 ; Heb 8:1-13 ; Heb 10:1-25 ; Heb 11:1-40 ; Heb 12:1-13:25
	MEMORY VERSE	Heb 11:1
James	AUTHOR/DATE	Probably written by James in the early AD 60s before his martyrdom in AD 62.
	THEMES	Practical Faith, Endurance, Social Justice, Ethical Living, Wisdom
	PEOPLE	
	OUTLINE	Trials and Temptations (1:2-18) Listening and Doing (1:19-27) No Favoritism (2:1-13) Practical Faith (2:14-26) Taming the Tongue (3:1-12) Wisdom (3:13-18) Against worldliness of quarreling, unfaithfulness, pride, slander, and boasting (4:1-17) Warning to Rich Oppressors (5:1-6) Teaching on Suffering (5:7-11) Teaching on Oaths (5:12) Teaching on Prayer (5:13-18) Teaching on Those who Stray (5:19-20)
	KEY PASSAGES	James 1:1-21 ; James 1:22-27 ; James 2:1-13 ; James 3:1-18 ; James 4:1-17 ; James 5:1-20
	MEMORY VERSE	James 1:4 ; James 1:12

1 Peter	AUTHOR/DATE	The author Peter may have had help from Silas in writing this letter in the AD 60s.
	THEMES	Suffering, Persecution, Glory, Hope, Pilgrimage, Courage, Grace
	PEOPLE	Peter, Silas
	OUTLINE	Praise to God for His Grace (1:3-12) Holiness (1:13-2:3) Believers as spiritual house (2:4-8) Believers as chosen people (2:9-10) Believers as aliens and strangers (2:11-12) Submission to authority (2:13-3:7) Duties of all believers (3:8-17) Christ's Example (3:18-4:6) Living in the End Times (4:7-11) Living under Suffering (4:12-19) Conduct of Young and Old (5:1-11) Purpose and Greetings (5:12-14)
	KEY PASSAGES	1 Peter 1:1-12 ; 1 Peter 1:13-25 ; 1 Peter 2:1-10 ; 1 Peter 2:11-25 ; 1 Peter 4:1-19 ; 1 Peter 5:1-14
	MEMORY VERSE	1 Peter 2:9

2 Peter	AUTHOR/DATE	The apostle Peter probably wrote this letter between AD 65-68.
	THEMES	Christ Our Hope, Persecution, Sound Teaching, Second Coming
	PEOPLE	
	OUTLINE	Growing in Christ (1:1-11) Peter's Message and his Authority (1:12-21) Warning against false teaching (2:1-22) Christ's Return (3:1-16) Conclusion (3:17-18)
	KEY PASSAGES	2 Peter 1:1-14 ; 1:15-21 ; 2:1-14 ; 2:15-22 ; 3:1-9 ; 3:10-18
	MEMORY VERSE	2 Peter 1:5-8 ; 2 Peter 1:16

1 John	AUTHOR/DATE	Many parallels suggest John the Gospel writer as the writer of this letter probably around AD 85-95.
	THEMES	Sound Teaching, Fellowship, Perfect Love, Sonship
	PEOPLE	
	OUTLINE	Incarnation (1:1-4) Christian Living as Fellowship (1:5-2:11) Love God not the World (2:12-17) Christological Test of Fellowship (2:18-28) Christian Living as Divine Sonship (2:29-4:6) Christian Living as Obedience in Love (4:7-5:12) What Christian Really Know (5:13-21)
	KEY PASSAGES	1 John 1:1-2:14 ; 1 John 2:15-3:25 ; 1 John 4:1-21
	MEMORY VERSE	1 John 1:7 ; 1 John 2:16-17 ; 1 John 3:2

2 John	AUTHOR/DATE	Many parallels suggest John the Gospel writer as the writer of this letter probably around AD 85-95.
	THEMES	Warning against false teachers
	PEOPLE	
	OUTLINE	Salutation (1-3) Great Joy (4) Continue in the Teaching and Avoid False Teaching (5-11) Desire for Face-to-Face Greetings (12-13)
	KEY PASSAGES	2 John 1-13
	MEMORY VERSE	2 John 6

3 John	AUTHOR/DATE	Many parallels suggest John the Gospel writer as the writer of this letter probably around AD 85-95.
	THEMES	Warning about false teachers, Discernment
	PEOPLE	John, Gaius, Diotrephes
	OUTLINE	Greetings (1-2) Encouragement to Gaius (3-8) Warning to Diotrephes (9-10) Exhortation to Gaius (11) Example of Demetrius (12) Desire for Face-to-Face Meeting (13-14)
	KEY PASSAGES	3 John 1-14
	MEMORY VERSE	3 John 5

Jude	AUTHOR/DATE	Written by Jude, brother of James, between AD 65-80.
	THEMES	Warnings about false teachers
	PEOPLE	Jude
	OUTLINE	Reasons for Writing (1-4) Warnings against false teachers from Israel's history (5-7) Descriptions of False Teachers at that time (8-16) Encouragement to Believers (17-23) Doxology (24-25)
	KEY PASSAGES	Jude 1-25
	MEMORY VERSE	Jude 24-25

Session 20—Revelations

Revelations	AUTHOR/DATE	Written by John in AD 95.
	THEMES	Apocalyptic visions, Future Hope in Present Suffering, Glory of the Coming Messiah, Reign of Christ, Number Seven
	PEOPLE	
	OUTLINE	<p>Introduction (1:1-8) John's Call (1:9-11) Christ at the Center of the Church (1:12-20) Letters to the Seven Churches (2:1-3:22) Adoration of God the Creator and the Lamb the Conqueror (4:1-5:14) Seven Seals and Seven Trumpets (6:1-11:19) Conflict in Heaven and on Earth (12:1-15:4) Seven Bowls and Judgment (15:5-19:10) Hallelujah Chorus and Invitation to the Marriage Supper (19:1-10) Coming of True Conqueror (19:11-16) Capture of the Beast and False Prophet (19:17-21) Binding of Satan (20:1-10) Judgment (20:11-15) I am doing a new thing (21:1-8) New Jerusalem (21:9-22:5) Epilogue (22:6-21)</p>
	KEY PASSAGES	Revelations 1:1-3:22 ; Rev. 4:1-6:17 ; Rev 7:1-9:21 ; Rev 10:1-12:17 ; Rev 13:1-15:8 ; Rev 16:1-18:24 ; Rev 19:1-22:21
	MEMORY VERSE	Revelations 1:8 ; Revelations 3:20 ; Revelations 22:12-14

Session 21—Interpreting the Various Genres of Biblical Literature

Much of the following content is adapted from *Interpreting Scripture*, RIIIE Module, Nazarene Publishing House, 2004. It might be helpful for students to read the suggestions for interpretation before reading the key passages for Biblical book of each genre.

The Old Testament and New Testament is a collection of writings with a variety of forms (genres), authors, settings, and contexts.

Draw a line between the Biblical book and the genre

Book	Genre
Deuteronomy	prophetic speech (Jeremiah)
Jeremiah	Hymn (Psalms)
Psalms	historical narrative (Numbers)
Matthew	Gospel (Matthew)
Numbers	Letter (Philippians)
Ecclesiastes	Law (Deuteronomy)
Philippians	wisdom (Ecclesiastes)

The genres help us interpret the book. The following overview is a guide for interpreting the various genres found in the Bible.

Law (Deuteronomy, for example)

Other books in this genre: Exodus 20-40, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy.

There are three types of laws: case laws (“if...then”) followed by a consequence or penalty; commandments which require absolute unconditional obedience; and, priestly instructions for spiritual or ritual purposes.

Laws were meant to penalize criminals, settle disputes, protect rights, deal humanely with the needy, and regulate spiritual practices. The Old Testament law has no legal bearing on modern Christians, but it is a guide for our moral and spiritual responsibility. The Ten Commandments, however, are an example of the highest moral expectations of all people everywhere.

There are many other OT laws that might seem to contradict Christian practice, such as food restrictions or animal sacrifices. In these instances, consider first the supreme law of love in the Sermon on the Mount, God’s grace, justification by faith, and the righteousness found in the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Historical Narratives (Numbers, for example)

Other books in this genre: Genesis, Exodus 1-19, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. Also applies to narrative sections of the prophets, wisdom writings (i.e. Job 1), Gospels, and Acts.

Find the historical context of the narrative. When did it occur and how does it fit the larger historical context. Ask, what was God doing in the life of His people at that time?

Look for details. The Hebrews were very simple in their writing using few adjectives. When details are given, such as a personal description, it shows the importance of that person to the narrative. For example, 1 Samuel 16:12, who is described as "ruddy, with fine appearances, and handsome features"?

Follow the plot (beginning, middle, end) of the narrative. Identify the crisis. How did it come to be? How is it resolved/not resolved by the end?

What theological concepts drive the narrative? For example,

- Narratives in Genesis 1-11 attempt to portray God as the sovereign creator working in the midst of human sin to bring His creation into harmony with His will.
- The theme of God's covenant promises underlie the patriarchal stories of Genesis 12-50.
- Israel as a covenant community redeemed by the Lord is the underlying theme of Exodus.
- God's holiness and His call to Israel to be a holy people dominate the Book of Leviticus.
- God's guidance in the wilderness in the midst of Israel's sin and rebellion is the focus of Numbers.
- Deuteronomy sets up the pattern for Israel's life in the Promised Land.
- The theology of blessings and curses of Deuteronomy is central to the historical narratives in Joshua-2 Kings.
- The Chroniclers see history from the perspective of the positive impact of the Davidic kingdom." (*Interpreting Scripture*, RIIIE module, Nazarene Publishing House, 2004, p. 10-5)

Narratives do not teach doctrine, but they allow us to illustrate doctrinal issues.

Not every narrative has a good ending. Not every person is a good example. The overall interpretation of Scripture shows us whether to decide if the actions in each narrative are acceptable or unacceptable conduct for Christians.

To apply the meaning of the biblical narrative, look for points of contact between the narrative and the present-day. Sin, doubt, anxiety, hopelessness, words of grace are all relevant to today's world, and they are all present in the biblical narrative.

Wisdom writings (Ecclesiastes, for example)

Wisdom writings include Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs.

When reading **Job**, remember that it is a dialogue and each participant offers a different perspective about God. God even represents Himself in chapters 38-41. Verses and ideas need to be viewed within the context of the whole book. There is much irony ("apparent meaning is not the intended meaning"). There are colorful images throughout the book to illustrate God's sovereignty. The figures of Satan and Leviathan are not meant to convey all we know about them. In fact, after the first chapter, Satan is not mentioned again. The emphasis in the book is God's sovereignty and human being's relationship to God.

Ecclesiastes asks difficult questions about everyday human existence. Instead of ignoring these questions, the author acknowledges God as a mystery but desires to know Him and fear Him.

The **Proverbs** are moral instructions noting personal responsibility. They are not promises from God. Avoid literal interpretations of the proverbs, they may need to be contextualized without losing their originally intended meaning.

Psalms are not commands or instructions for our benefit, but language for worship of God. They are directed to God not us. Each Psalm is a unit, do not take one verse and interpret it outside of the context of the psalm. Psalms are poetry and use symbolic language. They speak of human emotions, such as praise, confidence, distress, doubt, and despair, to God who is listening. One type of psalm speaks against enemies. These should be viewed in the context of God who will be the ultimate Judge. Christians should view these psalms in light of Christian love that overcomes evil and relies on God judging the hearts of everyone.

Prophets (Jeremiah, for example)

Here are some principles for understanding the prophets.

Prophets spoke in specific historical and social contexts.

We must identify the crisis of the situation before interpreting the text for today's world. What disobedience created the crisis? What is God's judgment? What is the word of hope given by the prophet? What is the response of the community

at the time—positive or negative? What were the consequences of their response?

Check to see if the passage is quoted in the New Testament. What does this text mean in light of the new covenant? If a prophet speaks about a messianic king, seek what the text says to its original audience before applying it to Jesus Christ and His ministry.

Check to see if the Identify symbolic language and resist the attempt to give it a new, unbiblical meaning. For instance, Daniel uses highly symbolic language of apocalyptic literature (as does Isaiah 24-27, Ezekiel 38-39, 40-48, Zechariah 9-14, and Revelations). It is beyond the scope of this course, but be aware to approach these texts with caution so not to misinterpret the meaning of these texts. The overall message of the Bible needs to be applied to these texts as well as a consideration of how God responds to a hostile world through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit.

Seek the universal theological principles and how they relate to our contemporary situation.

Gospels and Acts (Matthew, for example)

The Gospels are not just biographies. They are full of several genres, including conflict stories, paradigm narratives surrounding a certain pronouncement, miracle narratives, discourses on a theme, parables, and the passion narratives. Each passage—pericope—needs to be studied as a unit in relation to the rest of the Gospel, New Testament, and Bible as a whole. In fact, there are whole volumes dedicated to interpreting the variety and depth of the parables.

In interpreting the Gospels, remember to compare the periscope to parallel texts found in other Gospels. The synoptic problem—similarities and differences between the Gospels—needs to be considered. Similar episodes in Jesus' life are sometimes treated differently in the four Gospels. Most scholars believe Mark and a source called Q provide much of the materials for Matthew and Luke. In addition, Matthew and Luke provide independent source material found only in their respective Gospel accounts. John, on the other hand, uses a large amount of independent material, as well as the fact that he focuses more on theological discourses rather than biographical narratives.

Also, think about what Jesus was saying to those present as well as to Christians today. Contemporary interpreters need to be aware of:

- The Jewish attitude toward Rome
- The Roman attitude toward the Jews
- the influence of Greek culture on the Jews

- The religious convictions, influences, practices of Sadducees, Pharisees, Zealots, and other religious sects of the time.
- Social conditions
- The role of the Temple, the Law, the synagogue, and the Sanhedrin in Jewish life

The book of Acts is an account by Luke to demonstrate how the early Christian gospel (*kerygma*), found in speeches by Peter, Stephen, and Paul, spread from Jewish roots in Jerusalem into the Gentile world of the Roman Empire. It does not provide a model of Christian experience or how the Church should be organized, but rather how the Church is to move forward in the power of the Spirit to change hearts and lives with the Good News. When studying Acts, use the same principles as when studying historical narratives: Ask who is involved? What crisis is happening? How is it resolved or not? How does it communicate the Good News? It is helpful to find themes in Luke and Acts to help us understand both books, including the work of the Holy Spirit, the themes of joy, prayer, concern for the poor, as well as Jesus' journey to Jerusalem compared to Paul's journey to Rome.

The Epistles or Letters (Philippians, for example)

The letters of the New Testament have various purposes. Philemon was a personal letter. Hebrews is a general letter to all Christians, especially those with a Jewish background. All of them tend to follow a six-part structure similar to letters from the Greco-Roman world, as follows:

- Name of the writer
- Name of the recipients
- Greeting, prayer/thanksgiving
- Main body of the letter
- Final greeting
- Farewell

Many of Paul's letters are "occasional" written for a specific occasion in a particular city or setting. Other letters are called "catholic" or letters written for a general audience or larger geographic area.

When interpreting Paul's letters to churches in particular cities, we should ask:

- What was going on in these cities during Paul's days?
- What were the religious movements and influences of this period in these cities?
- What were the social conditions in these cities?

It is important to read the whole letter before interpreting one passage in order to find themes particular to that letter or occasion. Outline the letter to find how the passages relate to the whole. It might be that some parts of the letter are important to the general themes, while others seem to be added on. It is

important to keep the Greco-Roman culture and Paul's Hebrew background in mind. Some passages will be difficult to understand because we cannot tell what the writer meant as well as his original audience. See 1 Corinthians 11:10 and 15:29; 1 Peter 3:19; 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 5-6. Therefore, if the interpretation is unclear, one should not force an unlikely interpretation unsupported by the whole tenor of Scripture.

Many letters deal with cultural issues and not moral ones. For instances, there are references to food, drink, and observance of days. These are cultural matters and are not related to Paul's teaching against sinful behavior that must be avoided, such as those found in Romans 1:29-30; 1 Corinthians 5:11, 1 Cor 6:9-10, 2 Timothy 3:2-4.

There are also issues Paul spoke about that were found in specific contexts that need to be honestly evaluated as cultural matters, such as 1 Timothy 5:11-15, 2 Timothy 3:6-9. We must read some passages about women and ministries, such as 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12, in light of Paul's teaching and theology as a whole.

Paul's central theological concerns are:

- Justification by faith
- Freedom of a Christian from the Law
- The power of the Gospel
- Grace
- Union with Christ
- Unity of believers
- Life in the Spirit
- Equality of all before the Gospel
- The sharing of God's glory by all believers
- Faith and Hope tied together by Love

A Brief Commentary on Interpreting the Revelation of John

New Testament apocalyptic writing has its root in Old Testament apocalyptic writings such as Isaiah 24-27, Ezekiel 38-39, Zechariah 7-14, and the book of Daniel. Persecution and oppression of God's people gave rise to apocalyptic visions about the coming of God and the deliverance of God's people.

Cataclysmic events and a catastrophic end to the present history and the universe, the end of evil, the triumph of God's people, and the final Judgment are all part of this mode of thinking.

Although Revelation belongs to the apocalyptic genre, it also contains elements of prophecy and letters. The visionary author introduces the content of this book in the form of a letter regarding his visions and prophecy (ch. 1). The book also

contains seven letters written to specific churches in order to answer specific problems and needs that existed in these churches.

It is important to understand the historical context: who is being addressed, by whom, in what setting, for what reason.

Generally speaking, apocalyptic books address three groups:
the oppressed, the oppressor, and the wavering/unbelieving

It is important to discover what the author—John the visionary—intended to convey as his message from God to his readers. Their understanding of what was written in those times is still important for us to recognize today.

We must refrain from the attempt to unlock the mysteries of the Revelation by reading significance into this book from other texts found in Ezekiel, Daniel, Matthew, or 1 Thessalonians, as if these books hold the hermeneutical key to our understanding of Revelation. We may find parallel imageries or phrases, but unless the texts specifically interpret a previous biblical text for us, we must look for meaning from within the text of the Revelation itself.

Some imagery in the Revelation may be easily identified; some are difficult to identify because they represent general human conditions or other matters. Look for John's own interpretation of the images as key to our understanding. In our attempt to understand the imagery, we must consider the visions as a whole, and not in parts. Avoid the temptation to find allegorical meaning. The allegorical method suggests meaning neither intended by the author nor understood by the original readers.

The Revelation does not give a systematic, detailed, and chronological sequence of the end time events. The concern of the author *is* for the Church and God's sovereign control over human history. The sequence of events in general moves from suffering and persecution to the coming of the triumphant Christ, judgment of the enemy, and the establishment of His heavenly kingdom for His people.

To understand apocalyptic literature including Revelation, it is important to consider the overall theological concerns of the Scriptures and attempt to place the text in the setting of the concerns of biblical theology.

- God's care for and authority over His creation
- God's will to exercise His Lordship over history, kingdoms, and rulers of this universe
- God's will to establish justice and righteousness in the world
- God's desire to bring healing to the broken world