

AN INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE

BAB001

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:16)

A study guide on Scripture for MINTS students



Course Manual

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COURSE DETAILS

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the Scriptures. It aims to provide a basic knowledge of the Scriptures, including their trustworthiness, the main story of the Bible, as well as an introduction to the basic theological study. It is a foundational course for those doing the MINTS certificate.

Course Content Summary

The course is divided into eight lessons. It begins by explaining that God has revealed Himself in the Scriptures. It then deals with the trustworthiness of the Scriptures, including their inspiration, inerrancy, perspective, and the sufficiency of the Scriptures for life and godliness. In the next sections the main themes of the Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation are traced.

Course Materials

The lecture notes are a full exposition for this course. The students are required to read them thoroughly along with the Scriptures. Students are also required to read *A Survey of the Bible* by William Hendriksen or they are to read through a selected range of the Scriptures listed in Appendix 1.

Course Objectives

1. To study the Scriptures with other students;
2. To acquire a detailed knowledge of the history of God's revelation to man;
3. To develop a deeper understanding of God's work in this world;
4. To grow in knowledge of how God deals with His children;
5. To lay a foundation for further study in the MINTS curriculum

Structure of the Course

This course has been organized into eight consecutive lessons. The early lessons introduce the Bible. The middle lessons trace the lessons of the Scriptures, and the final lesson introduces a number of theological topics that will be studied in the MINTS curriculum.

Requirements

Course Requirements

1. Participate in fifteen hours of common teaching time.
2. Complete the Bible study questions as contained in the eight lessons.
3. Read the book by Hendriksen and/or read the Scriptures as indicated in Appendix and write a reading report.
4. Write a sermon or study lesson plan on one theme from one of the lessons. The paper is to be no more than seven pages at the Bachelor's level.
5. Complete the exams for this course.

I have also included five assignments. These are group assignments that are to be done in class and are to be included as part of the class participation. They do not get an independent grade.

Course Evaluation

Activity	Percent of Grade
Student class participation	15%

Student homework (Q&A) assignments	30%
Student reading/book report	15%
Student essay/project	20%
Student exam(s)	20%
	100%

Benefits of the Course

The course will give students an overview of the Scriptures. It will show them the history of the triumph of the gospel in and through opposition and suffering. Students will be shown the way that God works in this world.

INTRODUCTION

This course is an introduction to the Scriptures. It is an introductory course on the MINTS syllabus. The aim of this course is to increase the student's understanding of the Scriptures. The work begins with explaining the special nature of the Bible and then shows how the Bible is a trustworthy guide to understanding God's will. It will then consider the message of the Bible, God's revelation to mankind. The Scriptures are called God's revelation because in them God has fully revealed Himself in both His word and particularly in His Son Jesus Christ our Lord (Heb. 1:1,2). This is a short overview of the Old and New Testament.

At the end of each chapter there are assignments and questions. The assignments are to be done in class and the lesson questions are homework. Students must complete the lesson questions and submit them as part of the final grade. The exam is taken from the class assignments and the lesson questions.

Lesson One: THE BIBLE - GOD'S REVELATION TO MAN

The Bible is a book, but it is a book unlike any other. As a book, it was written by men over a span of thousands of years. At the same time, the Bible is unique, because in the Bible the Lord speaks to us. The Bible is a book written by God through men. Many of the authors of the Bible are known: Peter, James, John, Paul, and Matthew to name just a few. At the same time, it is also a book written by God. God used these men's ability, and the Holy Spirit guided them into all truth, so that when they wrote the Scriptures they clearly and fully expressed God's will to men without error. In this sense the Bible can be fully trusted. It is God's word to men.

The Bible teaches about God through a story. It begins by telling the story of how God created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1). It then tells of the creation of Adam, the first father of men. It explains that Adam sinned against God, breaking His commands in the garden. Due to this, sin and death entered and now rule in the creation. Now, all men sin and die because Adam sinned (Rom. 5:12ff). Sin and death rule everywhere, so Paul can truly say that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:22). The reason for war, fights, sin and guilt, trouble at home, trouble in government, personal illness, and sickness flows from the fact that Adam sinned. The Bible helps us to understand the world in which man lives. It is a beautiful world that is also full of sin.

Praise God, the story does not end there. In God's mercy, He promised a Savior, a Redeemer, one who would come into the world to defeat the powers of Satan against men. If sin entered due to one man, to fix sin, God sent a second man, the last Adam to correct the problem.

Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. (46) (47) The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven (1 Cor. 15:45-47).

Christ is also called the last man to show that 1) the only two people who matter in the history of the world are Adam and Christ. None who came in between them have any authority. He is called the last Adam, because there is no one, no prophet or messiah who will come after Him. In the last man, God's work for men is complete. In these two men the whole history of the world is decided.

Man often tries to fix the problem of sin by himself, but he cannot. He needs another man, a greater man to help him. In order to assist His people, God sent His own Son, the very Son of God, who was born as a man, to become flesh and dwell amongst men as their representative. He defeated the devil, and on the cross, He died to pay for sin. He alone earned our salvation. There is no salvation in any other.

After Christ died, He returned to the Father. Now He rules as God the great King. He rules over all men and the whole world is now His Kingdom. He is now in heaven, adding those whom the Father has given Him into His Kingdom and preparing for the time when He will return to raise the dead and put all things right.

The period between Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension and His second coming is called the New Testament age. Christ calls men to believe and trust in Him and to take His salvation. All those who follow Him, trusting and obeying Him, will find salvation. In Christ, God's Kingdom has come and He is already working in them to prepare them for His return. When Jesus returns, the earth will be renewed, and God's kingdom, mercy, and grace will be fully manifest.

The above is a very short summary of the story of the Bible. Although there are parts of the Bible that give just commands, the Ten Commandments, Jesus commands that His people love one another as He loved them. These commands come in the context of a bigger story.

There are a number of implications:

First, the Scriptures tell the story about God's work in the world. They are first about God, not us. The Scriptures tell of His plans and His purposes and that He is the most important one in the story. Jesus overthrows Satan and brings in the Kingdom of God. Man is saved when God brings him into that Kingdom (John 3:3,5). Too often people make the story of God and salvation about themselves. It is not. It is about God. He is the center of the story.

A Point for discussion: How do men make Christianity about themselves and not about God? Does man sometimes put his needs and hopes in the center of the story, rather than God?

Second, when the Scriptures are read, the reader must not just pick verses at random and in isolation and then wonder how they apply to his life. There is a funny story about a man who just used to open his Bible and read from anywhere in the book. One day he opened and read about the story of Judas who went away and hung himself after he had betrayed the Lord. He then turned to another place and read; you go do the same. Was the Bible really telling him to just go and hang himself like Judas? He might have thought that because he was reading the Bible in the wrong way. When a story is heard, the whole story needs to be heard or its interpretation will not be correctly known.

Because the Bible is a book written over a long period of time, not all the parts of Scripture can and should be understood in the same way. Generally the Old Testament passages are examples that point us forward to something that comes later in the story, the great climax, the high point, which is the coming of Jesus in the New Testament. Whenever the Old Testament is read, it should be understood that it points forward to later in the story. There are a number of illustrations that demonstrate this point.

What is there to learn from the story of David and Goliath? Is the story saying that God's people are to have courage? Is the story showing that if one trusts in the Lord, he/she will always have victory over his/her enemies? Is the story about the fact that slings are better than heavy armour? The main point, in fact, of the story is that God will save His people by sending a ruler, a leader, a king who will defeat their enemies for them. David is a king, who points forward toward the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Gospels it is read the Jesus overcame the devil by defeating him. In Christ's victory, He freed His people from the strong man who holds all men captive. His people, like Israel in the David and Goliath story, are freed because Jesus defeated their enemies. It is only as the whole story is read, including that found in the New Testament, that it can be seen that Jesus is David's greater son, the King who would rule the nations and defeat all His people's enemies.

When reading about the laws in the temple, do they still apply to today and if not, why? The temple laws pointed forward to the Lord Jesus Christ and the church. Now Jesus has come, the laws of the temple have been replaced in the New Testament, and are therefore not applicable today.

God used Moses to deliver Israel. He spoke to him in from the burning bush. Does God still speak to men in this way? What does the fact that Jesus has come in the flesh mean in reference to how God speaks to us (John 1:14,18; see Heb. 1:1,2; 2: 2-4). Although God spoke to the prophets

in dreams and visions in the Old Testament, now that Jesus has come and spoken to us face to face, we have His words, and this is a better way to understand God.

Each of the illustrations above shows us how important it is to see where we are in the story, and understanding where we are aids in understanding the whole story.

Third, when we apply the Bible, we are NOT to first ask, “What is this saying to us?” The story is NOT first written for you, it is written to explain what God is doing in the world. A great deal of it happened many years ago, and if our first priority is to apply it to ourselves in the present, then we will not fully understand it. Let me illustrate what I mean. Earlier this year, I was speaking to a group of men about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. I asked what we were to learn from this event. One man said that God sent the Spirit to make men holy. In the same way we must pray that God would do another Pentecost in our lives. He said that before the outpouring, the disciples were just normal Christians but then God gave them the Spirit and they became super Christians who are all given heavenly spiritual languages. The man had made the story all about himself. He wanted the Spirit to come so he could speak in tongues. While we do need God’s Spirit in our lives, we are told to live and walk in the Spirit. What my student supposed was not the correct way to understand the story of Pentecost.

In reality, by speaking in tongues, God was showing that the curse of the tower of Babel was reversed. Today many think that speaking in tongues means using a mystical heavenly language that no one can understand, but when we read the history of the Scriptures, we see that at Pentecost they were speaking known human languages. In the Old Testament, God confused men’s languages, because the world was so sinful (Gen. 11). He needed to separate men. In the coming of the gospel, now Jesus is King, not just to the Jews but to the gentiles. God shows this by speaking to all men through tongues. When Peter spoke on the day of Pentecost, he preached the gospel in Hebrew, but men from every part of the world heard his words in their own language (Acts 2:7-12). The Spirit, in giving Peter the gift of tongues, showed that, in the gospel, God was undoing the curse of Babel. Jesus is now the King over all nations, and so the gospel is no longer for just one nation, the Jews, but it is for all men, from every tribe and language. God is saving men from all the nations and tribes for heaven.

The gift of the Spirit and the ability to speak in tongues show that, in the New Testament, God is dwelling inside the church. To understand what that means, we need to understand the story of the Bible. In the Old Testament, God dwelt with His people by dwelling in the temple. The temple, in the middle of Israel, was the place where God and man met. God showed this by descending in a fiery cloud into their midst. These events looked forward to the New Testament. In the New Testament, God gave the Spirit to Jesus as a reward for His work. He, once for all, poured out the Spirit on the church at Pentecost. Pentecost was a unique event; it showed the beginning of a new time. From now on God did not dwell in the temple, but rather God’s glory now falls on His people. At Pentecost, the church becomes God’s temple. In and by the Spirit, God now dwells with men. The man to whom I was speaking did not understand any of these things. He just understood the Bible to say that God gave the Holy Spirit and men spoke in strange tongues, and since he now had the Spirit, he must speak in tongues. We will understand the Scripture so differently when we read it as God means for us to.

The story of the Bible is written in its historical context. This means that the dates, times, and places mentioned matter. For example, when Paul wrote a letter, he wrote to a particular group of people for a particular reason. In Galatians, there was a specific threat to the church, which led

Paul to write to them. Generally a book has one main message in it. In order to properly understand the main message, we need to know when it was written and what difficulties the people at that time were facing.

Class Discussion

The following questions are for the students to discuss in class.

1. How do most Christians read the Bible, as God's story or as just God's word to them? How will this affect their understanding of Christianity?
2. God speaks to us in many ways. Describe how people say God has spoken to them. From Hebrews 1:1, 2 John 1:14,18, and 14:6, what is the best way for men to hear and listen to God?
3. Explain why we should not read and study the Scriptures by choosing random verses.
4. If we are studying a book of the Bible, what things are important for us to note in order to find the main message?
5. How do many churches understand the role of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2?

Lesson One Questions

1. What do we mean when we say the Bible is history?
2. What age do we live in today?
3. What do we mean by the statement: The Old Testament looks forward?
4. Who are the only two people who matter?
5. Explain why Christ is called the second man, the last Adam.

Lesson Two: THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE SCRIPTURE

The Bible is God's Word, so it can be trusted. Christian theologians use three words when describing the trustworthiness of the Bible: inspiration, infallibility, and perspicuity. We will also consider the phrase the sufficiency of the Scriptures.

The Bible is a unique book: men wrote it but it is God's Word. We say God inspired men to write the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit, so they are without error. To be infallible means to be without error. The Scriptures are never false. The Scriptures are designed to be easily read. The word perspicuous means easily read, see-through, or transparent. God speaks to us and He wants us to understand His Word, so He designed the Scriptures to be able to be read that way. The sufficiency of the Scriptures means that although the Scriptures do not tell us everything, they do tell us everything we need to know to love God and all that is necessary for our salvation.

1. Inspiration

How did we get the Bible? Who wrote it? The Bible we read now did not just drop down as one finished book from heaven. To some of its authors, God spoke directly, telling them what to write. In a number of cases, God told the prophets, Thus said the Lord (Exod. 5:1). In other places, God clearly had to tell men what happened. When God created the heavens and the earth there was no one there, so in Genesis God told Moses what to write as there were no witnesses. In still other cases men thought, planned, and researched before writing. A good example of this is the Gospel of Luke or Acts. In both Luke and Acts Luke says:

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, (2) just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, (3) it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, (4) that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4)

When Luke wrote Luke and Acts he did his research before he wrote.

Since these books are clearly written by men, how can we trust that they are also the word of God? The answer to this is that when these men wrote, the Holy Spirit aided them. He assisted them so that the words they wrote would have His authority, they would be true and without error. In 2 Timothy 3:15,16 Paul says:

and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus. (16) All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, (literally god breathed) and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. (2 Tim. 3:15)

Paul says the Scriptures were inspired, literally breathed out, or God-breathed. In the same way that God made the heavens and the earth, by His word, By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth (Ps. 33:6). God, by His breath or word, breathed out the Scriptures. The Bible is a creation by the Spirit.

2 Timothy 3:15,16

Paul speaks of the Holy Scriptures. These, the sacred writings, are a technical term a *hapexlogomina* (a word only used once in the Bible) referring to a body of authoritative books. At that period in time the Holy Scriptures would just have been the Old Testament writings. Although Timothy had had many faithful teachers from his mother's womb, the most faithful instruction was that of the sacred writings.

These writings are of divine origin. Even though Paul knows men like Moses wrote them, Paul says that in the end they came not from men, but from God Himself. Paul also says this applied to all the books in the Old Testament. Sacred Scriptures are valuable due to their divine origin.¹

2 Peter 1:16-21

In these verses Peter wants to remind the church that the message that he spoke to them was the truth.

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. (17) For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," (18) we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. (19) And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (20) knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. (21) For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet. 1:16-21)

Peter begins by saying that he had not deceived anyone. The church can be sure that what he said is the truth because he was an eyewitness. He had actually seen these things. It is important to see that Peter goes on to stress that even greater than his own eyewitness accounts are the Scriptures themselves. Peter says that you can believe what I saw, or even greater, you can believe what the Scriptures teach.

Peter then explains why the Scriptures are trustworthy.

1. Every prophecy of Scripture: In this Peter is not just meaning the prophets; he is speaking of the whole of Scripture. All Scripture points the reader forward to Jesus (Luke 24). All writings speak about and look forward to the coming of Christ. This is the same as Paul saying all scriptures in 2 Timothy 3:16.

2. It is not of any private interpretation: Men did not guess what God wanted them to do, nor did they make it up. God really did speak to them. Peter teaches this in both a positive and a negative way.

Negatively, when the prophets spoke, they did not speak by the will of man. The prophetic word does not own its origin to human nature. Positively, it has its source from God. They spoke as the Holy Spirit moved them.

3. Moved: Peter tells us that the prophets were moved by the Spirit. In the Greek text this is brought forward in the sentence to stress it. To be moved means to be brought along by. The Holy Spirit came upon men, bore them, and they wrote. The word means more than even guiding, directing, controlling, or leading them. It goes further than that. The Holy Spirit is the agent that produces the writing. Peter is saying that the Holy Spirit acted upon the writer in such a way that he wrote, and in writing, he was doing exactly God's will. The things that they wrote were God's things not theirs. Due to this, the prophetic word is sure. It is trustworthy. It is without error. In

¹ Note that Paul does not tell us which of the Scriptures are in the canon. It is not his focus here.

fact, the Scriptures are so trustworthy that they are even more trustworthy than Peter's and others' eyewitness accounts. These Scriptures are the written word of God to men.

Peter concludes that the prophets spoke under the influence of the Holy Spirit and the things that they spoke were not from men, but from God.

3. The human side of divine revelation: Although God created the Scriptures, He used men in the process. This means that even though the Scriptures are without error, they have a human side. Therefore we can say that Moses, David, or the prophets wrote the Scriptures. In Mark 12:26 Jesus quotes Psalm 110. Christ says that David said, by the Spirit.

For David himself said by the Holy Spirit: "The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" (Mark 12:36)

Jesus could have just said, God said, but He did not. He said David said in and by the Holy Spirit.

In the same way, Peter says God spoke by the mouth of David in the book of Acts. Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus (Acts 1:16).

In the New Testament, Moses, Isaiah, and David are all quoted as Old Testament authors. God used these men to write the Scriptures. When they spoke, they spoke God's word. The New Testament recognizes human authorship.

Scripture itself rejects mechanical inspiration, the idea that God used men but they were in a trance. This is the idea that God spoke directly through men but they did not think and at all for themselves in the process. Many false spiritualist religions think this way. They say men go into a trance and then in the trace they speak what the Spirit tells them to and this is the pure word of God. This is very different from the way the Scripture speaks about how God has spoken to us in the world.

To return to the book of Acts (as an example), we can now say that Holy Spirit worked upon Luke leading, guiding, and motivating him. God uses his medical, organizational, and historical skills in the producing of part of the Scriptures. Luke was not passive in the process. At the same time, since it was the Spirit's work, the Spirit worked through Luke, meaning we can be sure that the Scriptures are sure and trustworthy. In fact they are God-breathed, God's own creation.

1.1. Inspiration in Islam

In this section we will contrast the position of how the Muslim understands the way the Qur'an was written. In Islam, the holy Qur'an comes only through the intermediary of the Angel Gabriel (alleged) who came down from God through the seven levels of heaven to that interface between the unseen world and the earth (at one place in HQ called the lote tree [HQ 53:14]) to deliver the message to Muhammad.

Muslims say that there is no blend of human and divine authorship in the Qur'an; God is the sole author of the Qur'an and that it contains no human composition at all. The message Qur'an speaks was delivered by God (Allah) as "from behind a veil or by sending a messenger (that is, the Angel Gabriel, alleged) and by revealing by His permission what He pleases" (HQ 42:51). The message is a copy of an eternal (not material) book in heaven, called the "mother of the book" (HQ 43:4). It came by communication (that is, recital) of the divine message directly to the heart of

Muhammad. During the times Muhammad received revelation, he was told not to move his tongue until the message had been fully deposited in his heart (Tor Andrae in his book, Muhammad, the Man and his Faith, describes the dictation that Muhammad received by what we may summarily call recitational revelation) and only then dictated to his amanuensis so that it could be written down on available material (camel bones, skin, rocks etc). It was later collected into a book and then came into its final form during the time of Uthman, the third Caliph after the death of Muhammad.

This has important implications for how the Muslims understand the Bible. Generally, Muslims only accept those parts of the Bible which are traceable to mechanical dictation and so reduce the revealed word to those parts in the Old Testament, prefaced by the words “Thus says the Lord” and such like sayings, and then in the Gospels to those places where it is written, “Jesus said.” They believe that God sent down a book to Jesus that is now lost and only fragments of His message appear in the four Gospels. In doing this they reject the biographical content of the Scriptures as of little consequence and try to make the Bible revelation to be the same as that of the Qur'an. They deny that the books contained in the Torah are the first five books of the Bible, but believe that the first five books contain fragments of the Torah, some of which are writings such as Ten Commandments and other laws directly given by God. They believe that the Pentateuch is a later rendition composed by Ezra and people of similar standing in his community.

1.2. Inspiration, Illumination, and Revelation

These three words are important. Each is a work of the Spirit. They are often confused and this confusion causes a great deal of trouble.

Inspiration: This refers to the work of the Holy Spirit as He came upon the prophets and apostles when they wrote the Scriptures. In this the Spirit creates an infallible and inerrant word (the Bible) that we can trust. God specifically inspired men, by the Spirit, to write the Scriptures.

Revelation: This is the objective word we are given by God. It is the story of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. It tells us of God's grand plan for men. In Jesus the revelation of God is complete. In Jesus, and the writing of the last book of the New Testament, God has fully revealed all we need for life and godliness (2 Tim. 3:16).

Illumination: This refers to the ongoing work of the Spirit in the heart of believers. The Spirit illumines our minds, enabling us to properly read and understand the Scriptures. The Spirit does not bring new revelation, as that is complete, but He helps us to understand and apply God's revelation to ourselves. When we read the Scriptures, we should always be praying for more illumination by the Spirit.

2. Infallibility/Inerrancy

Since the Scriptures are God-breathed, because He created the Scriptures, they are also infallible and inerrant or in other words, without error. The two concepts are closely related. The Scriptures tell us that the Scriptures are without fault, and they have no possibility of error.

2.1. Scriptures Claim

The Scriptures claim that they themselves are inerrant. It teaches this concept using the following logic:

(1) God does not lie (Heb.6:18; Titus 1:2; II Tim.2:13; Num.23:19). (2) God is not ignorant, so He can't make mistakes (Heb. 4:13; Ps. 33:13-15). (3) Scripture is His word (II Tim. 3:16). (4) Therefore, Scripture is inerrant.

2.2. Challenges to Inerrancy

Within the church there are a number of challenges to inerrancy. In most cases people believe the Bible is partly true and partly not true.

2.2.1. Liberalism

This is a big temptation in the west. Liberalism teaches that because we are scientific, we cannot accept the miracles in the Scriptures. In many cases it says that we can learn many good lessons from Jesus' life, but we must reject the ideas that He did miracles and that He was the Son of God. In being selective, they reject that God has spoken and they choose what they want to believe. By rejecting the works of Jesus when He brought in the Kingdom, they destroy the very heart of Christianity. If Jesus did not raise Lazarus from the dead, and if Jesus was not raised from the dead, then we have no gospel. (Either God is and He has spoken or we (or our traditions) are God.

2.2.2. Neo-Orthodoxy (Barth, Brunner, Hordern, etc.)

This is a variation of liberalism. It says that God speaks through the Scriptures, not in the Scriptures. The Scriptures only become the word of God when God's Spirit speaks through them. We cannot just trust the words; we must trust God to speak to us through the word.

Our belief is that the Scriptures were written once and God speaks in them. They do tell us about God, and as we study them, they are adequate for us to know Him. The Spirit may help us understand the truths contained in Scripture.

2.2.3. Syncretism

In syncretism, the reader reads and decides what he wants to accept, as long as it fits his own culture. If he does not like something, he says, well, that is what it says, but that is not my culture. In Uganda, the argument might be that what I read in the Scripture is fine, but this is not how we do it in Africa. All Biblical ideas are only accepted if they fit an African view. They say, well that is how they did it in the Bible but this is how we do it in Africa.

The problem with this is that the Bible is actual history, and it reflects Jewish culture as well as Biblical culture rooted in the creation. The relationship between the Bible and culture is complex, but we can give some clear illustrations where the Bible teaches things that are not cultural. One example is the role of men and women. Paul uses the creation account, not culture, to explain the leadership role of men in the church and in society.

*Do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.
(13) For Adam was formed first, then Eve; (14) and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. (1 Tim. 2:12-14)*

Paul gives two historic reasons, reason flowing from the very creation, to show that men are called to lead. First, man was created initially, then woman. Second, in the garden, Adam was not deceived, the woman was. Since women are more easily deceived than men, they are not to lead. Paul explains the role of Adam in the first sin in Romans 5:12ff. Here, he says that sin and death entered, not because Eve sinned, but because Adam as the representative sinned. Although

the woman was deceived, Adam may not have been deceived. This makes his sin far greater. He knew what he was doing and went ahead and did it anyway.

Since Paul links these two things to creation, they are above culture. They speak to each and every culture in the world. We cannot just say, well that is not how we do things here in this place.

3. Sufficiency

Does Scripture tell us everything? The Scriptures tell us everything we need to know for salvation, they do not tell us everything. Some people claim the Bible tells us everything we need to know, so we don't need any other books. This is incorrect.

A good example is the creation account. In Genesis we are told very clearly that God spoke and He created the heaven and the earth in six days. We are also told he made man from the dust of the earth. These few words contain the vitally important things we are to know about God, creation, and man. At the same time, Genesis does not tell us all there is to know about the stars, the creation, or human medicine. Men have spent a lifetime explaining how man is made, the heart, the lungs, and how the body works. The Bible tells us what we need to know; it does not tell us everything there is to know about God.

4. Perspicuity

When God speaks He wants us to know what His will is for us. In this respect, the Bible is clear. Although there are some things that are hard to understand, most of the Scriptures can be understood, and if we are honest, the main problem is not that we do not know what to do; it is that we chose not to obey Him.

Not all Scripture is equally clear, even to the regenerate (Westminster Confession, I, vii), but the Scriptural way of salvation is plain even to the unlearned (Ps. 119: 105, 130).

All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; (1) yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them. (Westminster Confession of Faith 1:7)

Even regarding those teachings of Scripture that are less clear, we may not use that obscurity as an excuse for our ignorance. God has provided teachers, and has promised wisdom to those who ask (Jas. 1:5). No Scripture is unclear to the one who asks for wisdom. As a general principle: Scripture is always sufficiently clear to make us aware of our present responsibility to God. Its less clear portions will never lead us into sin.

The greatest teaching of all is the illumination of the Holy Spirit. This means that each individual Christian can understand the teachings of Scripture. We do not need expert teachers to help us to understand. At the same time, it is true that God has given some men great insights by the Holy Spirit. That is why we use books and commentaries. In God's wisdom, many of these men were aided by the Holy Spirit to understand the Scriptures. While they cannot stand between God and us, they are a great blessing to the church.

When it comes to understanding, the real problem, in fact, is often with us. When we have a difficulty, the teacher ought to explain or interpret Scripture only to resolve our obscurity which is often best resolved through pastoral care rather than through scholarly ingenuity.

Lesson Two Questions

1. Explain the concept of the inspiration of the Scriptures.
2. Name two key texts that show that the Scriptures were inspired by the Holy Spirit.
3. What witness about Jesus does Peter say is greater than His own eyewitness testimony?
4. What role do men play in inspiration? Illustrate your answer from Luke 1:1-4.
5. Define the Spirit's work in revelation, inspiration, and illumination.
6. What do we mean by infallibility?
7. What do we mean by the sufficiency of Scripture?
8. What do we mean by perspicuity of Scripture?
9. Are all the teachings of Scripture understandable by all?
10. If the Scriptures are clear, and if the Holy Spirit helps us to understand them, why do we read commentaries and books to aide us in our understanding of them?

Lesson Three: THE PENTATEUCH, THE LAW OF MOSES

In this section we will consider the first five books of the Bible.

1. Creation (Genesis 1, Isaiah 40)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1).

The Bible opens with a simple statement. Genesis 1 tells us that this world had a beginning, and that God created it. First, there was nothing and then He made the earth formless and void. Over the next six days, God shaped it into the world that we now know. On the sixth day He created man. On the seventh day, God ceased from His labors; He rested.

The Bible stresses God's power and glory in creation. It does not explain what God was doing before the creation. It does not explain how He created; it just says God spoke. God was in heaven before the creation. He made it. He was independent from it. When He created the world, He also created time. The creation is a statement of the glory of God. Through His creation He shows us His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature (Rom. 1:20).

1.1. The Creation of Man

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness" (Gen. 1:26).

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (Gen. 1:28)

On the sixth day, God created man. Taking him from the dust of the earth, He breathed life into him. God placed man in the Garden of Eden to watch over it for Him. God created Adam's job, and then He created Eve, a woman, from Adam. Man's job was (and is) to subdue the creation (in the way that God took the first creation and made things from it). Woman's job was (and is) to assist man in doing that. Both men and women are unique in the creation; they alone are made in the image of God and given authority and the job of ruling the creation for God.

1.2. The Lordship of God - The Test of the Tree

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Gen. 2:17)

God gave man dominion. He was to rule the world for God. Man was able to eat from every tree in the garden, except that he could not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If he did so, he would die. It was not the tree or the fruit that was poisoned or magical (we do not even know what type of tree it was); rather, this was a simple test by God to see if man would obey Him. If man obeyed God, by not eating from the tree, he was showing that he was ruling for God. If man took the fruit, he was trying to rule for himself. The tree was a test of submission and obedience.

The garden was a place where God and man met. God would come in the cool of the day and walk and talk with man. God and man had perfect fellowship. Man fulfilled the function of both a priest and king in the garden.

1.3. The Tempting by Satan

The devil was a created being, the first and greatest of the angels (Isa. 14:12-13; Job 1:6ff; John 8:44). He tried to overthrow God and was defeated, being thrown out of heaven with a third of the angels who had rebelled with him. At some point the devil, in the form of a serpent (John

8) entered the creation. He told Eve that the fruit was good, that it would make her wise and, if she ate it, she would be like God. This was the very thing that had tempted the devil to rebel against God (Isa. 14:12-14). Eve listened to the devil's lies; she trusted her own judgment (the fruit looked good to eat and could make her wise if she ate it). She then gave it to Adam and he ate it. By eating the fruit, they rejected the word of God and trusted in the lies of the devil.

1.4. The Fall - Man Corrupted as a Sinner

As soon as Adam and Eve had eaten the fruit, they realized their sin, and sought to hide from God. Man's sin affected all his relationships. His relationship with God was broken (he was afraid of God whom he had rebelled against), his relationship to Eve was broken (he blamed her), and his relationship to himself was broken (he was now self-deceived). He knew he was under God's judgment, and he sought to hide from God. (In Romans 1:21ff, Paul says man knows he is under judgment and he suppresses the truth, even from himself.) Adam was the head (over creation) and so the effects of the fall applied not only to him, but to all the creation. Due to Adam's sin, sin and death entered into the whole of creation (Rom. 5:12, Gen. 4,5). Due to sin, Adam's first two children fought and one died. The creation was marred by sin.

1.5. The Judgment and Hope of God

God came down to the garden and judged man. God spoke to the devil, the woman, and the man. God could have imposed the sentence of death upon them, but He was merciful. God cursed the ground, thus alienating man from the creation, making work hard. He spoke to the woman, saying that childbearing would be hard, and He spoke to the serpent. The words to the serpent set the course for the rest of Biblical history.

"And I will put enmity, between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." (Gen. 3:15)

This promise has three parts:

- 1) Enmity (hostility, friction, bitterness) between you (the serpent) and the woman;
- 2) Enmity between your seed and her seed;
- 3) Her Seed (singular: Jesus) will bruise (crush) your head, your seed will bruise (hurt) the heel of her Seed.

When Adam and Eve listened to the devil, they joined the devil's side. God promised that by His sovereign power He would change the woman (and her seed) back to His own side, and He would break the first relationship (between mankind and the Devil) by placing enmity between the woman and the Devil. This same sovereign power would split the world in two; the seed of the woman (those who listen to God), and the seed of the Devil (those who do not listen to God). The two sides, God's and the Devil's, would be at war with one another. This war would come to a climax with two individuals. God says the singular seed of the woman (He) would defeat the serpent. While the Devil would hurt the seed of the woman (he will bruise His heel), the seed of the woman would crush the serpent. The rest of the Bible is the outworking of this great promise and the climax occurs when Jesus, the seed of the woman, comes. In that final great battle the Devil sought to destroy Jesus (bruise, hurt), but instead was defeated by Christ's death upon the cross (crushed). In that great victory, the Devil was thrown out of heaven (Rev. 12). He continues his fight upon the earth against the church; a fight that will end in the final judgment when Jesus,

the seed of the woman, and the church, also her seed, will judge the world (Rom. 16:12), and God will provide a new heaven and a new earth.

The book of Genesis outlines the early history of the two seeds, starting with Cain, the seed of the serpent, killing Abel, the seed of woman.

Adam believed God's word. He called his wife "Eve," a word of hope because she was now the mother of all things living. By responding to God's word by faith, Adam became a model to all, because all are now called to respond to God's promises of mercy by faith. This faith distinguishes the seed of the woman from the seed of the serpent.

Although God also made a huge spiritual realm, the focus of the scripture is between God, who is spirit and man, made in the flesh. Further, God deals with living men, not dead ancestors. In the Bible, once one is dead, their eternal state is fixed and so they are no longer the main theme. As Jesus says, God is a god of the living, not of the dead.

Also notice that God dealt directly with man. He spoke to him. In many African contexts humans can only speak to the spirit world through mediators. These mediators include *sangoma*, *inyanga*, so-called 'witch doctors' who have special 'powers' to communicate with the spirit realm. In the Bible, we see that both in the creation of the first man and with Jesus who came in the flesh, God speaks directly to men.

2. The Flood and the Tower of Babel (Gen. 6-9)

The line of the two seeds continued. The earth was soon full of wickedness and violence. Genesis 6:5 states that, The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The seed of the serpent began to corrupt the seed of the woman by violence and intermarriage.

In order to stop this corruption, God intervened. He spoke to Noah, the tenth in the seed line from Adam, and told him to make an ark. By faith Noah believed God's word, and he built an ark. God sent a flood, and the whole of the old creation was destroyed. Only Noah and his family were saved. While the seed of the woman was protected, sin was still at work in the world. No sooner had godly Noah left the ark than he and his sons fell into sin. The judgment of the flood had not dealt with the sin of man's heart.

It would not take long for mankind to become corrupted again by sin. Man, desiring to make his own name great, began to build a tower to heaven. This time God judged mankind by giving them different languages. The confusion brought on by the various languages meant that the building of the tower stopped and men, instead of being concentrated in one place, spread out throughout the world. Because God confused their speech, man's wickedness was slowed down.

3. The Call of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (About 2094 B.C.)²

Following God's promise in Genesis 3:15, God called Abraham out of the nations to worship Him. While Adam had faith, Abraham was the model of a man living by faith. In Genesis 12:1-3, God made a covenant with Abraham in which He made three promises. He said, "*I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.*"

² All dates are from Hendrickson, *Survey of the Bible*, pgs. 69-75.

(3) I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

- 1) I will make you a great nation, bless, you and make your name great.
- 2) I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you.
- 3) In you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

God called Abraham and made him separate (holy). He made Abraham into a great nation, and He made him a blessing to all the nations. Abraham’s call was the work of God’s sovereignty. Abraham responded to God’s mercy to him by faith (Heb. 11:8-10). By faith he left his home and traveled to another nation and, since Sarah his wife was barren, Abraham trusted God for both a son (Heb. 11:11) and the land that God would give to him. After Abraham waited twenty-five years, God showed him His power and faithfulness by giving him a son. Because of Abraham’s faith, God declared him to be righteous (Gen. 15:6). Since the fall, faith in God’s promises continues to be the way that men are blessed. To further strengthen Abraham’s faith, God gave Abraham the sign of circumcision, a sign of the covenant between Abraham and God. Abraham and his entire household were circumcised. Other nations began to call Abraham and his family Hebrews. The language they spoke was also called Hebrew.

True faith is always tested. God soon called Abraham to sacrifice his most precious possession, his son Isaac, at Mount Moriah (Gen. 22). Abraham obeyed and, by faith, believed that since Isaac was the chosen seed through whom the blessing would come, even if Isaac died, God would raise him from the dead (Heb. 11:17-19). God, however, provided a lamb, a type of Christ, to be sacrificed in place of Isaac.

The world was now blessed through Isaac. Isaac had two children, Jacob and Esau. God showed His sovereign power to choose who would be the seed of the woman by choosing Jacob over the firstborn Esau. “Is not Esau Jacob’s brother?” declares the LORD. “Yet I have loved Jacob but Esau I have hated” (Mal. 1:2-3). The name Jacob also tells us about who we are. Jacob was a deceiver and trickster, not a good man, and yet God’s great love was upon him.

Jacob’s name means supplanter or twister. His sinful character came out powerfully in his life, and yet by grace, God still chose to love Jacob. God called him “Israel.” Jacob’s twelve sons became the twelve tribes of Israel. In Jacob’s last days, he called his sons together and promised that the chosen one, the Messiah (Jesus Christ), would come from Judah (one of his twelve sons). Jacob said in Genesis 49:1, The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor a lawgiver from between His feet, until Shiloh comes: And to Him shall be the obedience of the people. The promised Seed, who would fulfill all things, would come through Judah. The twelve tribes went down into Egypt and prospered there until Joseph died. (Joseph was one of Jacob’s sons, used by God to preserve the children of Israel.)

4. Egypt, Moses, Israel, and the Exodus (1879 B.C.)³

The children of Abraham lived in Egypt for 430 years (Gal. 3:17). When it was time, God raised up Moses, a Levite to deliver the nation. He called him at the burning bush (it was burning but never consumed), and He revealed His name to him, “Yahweh,” “I AM that I AM,” showing His permanent existence as the covenant faithful God who would deliver Israel in fulfillment of

³ All dates are from Hendrickson, *Survey of the Bible*, pgs. 69-75.

the covenantal promises He had made to Abraham. God sent Moses as the mediator (one who stood between two people) between Himself and Israel. Moses was also to mediate between Israel and Pharaoh. God sent Moses to Pharaoh to tell him that the people of Israel were His chosen people and that God wanted them to go to the wilderness to worship Him.

Egypt held Israel captive. God sent warnings to Pharaoh, but Pharaoh hardened his heart and resisted God. Over a six-to-nine-month period, God sent ten plagues as judgments upon the Egyptians. At that time Egypt was the symbol of the power of this world and Pharaoh represented Satan, the ruler of this world, who held God's people captive. If God was going to deliver His people, He must deliver them by His powerful hand. God sent Moses, the mediator to deliver them, judging Egypt with mighty plagues. Before the last plague, the death of the firstborn, Israel was to kill a lamb and put the blood on the doorpost. When God sent an angel of death to kill all the firstborn, the angel passed over the houses with the blood. The Passover taught that the death of an animal, the shedding of blood, would protect the firstborn. Moses led the Exodus of the people of God through the Red Sea on dry land. As he did so, the waters gathered on either side. In this action, Israel was baptized into Moses, Moses being the great Old Testament mediator who delivered His people (1Cor.10:1-4). God troubled the Egyptians as they tried to pass through and then, as they were fleeing, the seas closed over them. The Red Sea was a repeat of the Flood, and, like the Old World in the flood, the Egyptians drowned. God then led Israel, which He called His "Son" (Exod. 4:22) through the wilderness because they were not yet ready for battle.

This salvation in the Old Testament becomes a pattern of salvation in the New Testament. Christ, God's greater mediator, delivered His church from this fallen world. We are delivered through His death and are baptized into Him. Christ leads all His people so that they might worship and serve God.

4.1. Mount Sinai - God's Covenant with Israel

God had covenanted with Abraham to bless him and his descendants. At Mount Sinai He renewed that covenant with Abraham's heirs, the nation of Israel. At Sinai God came with power, lightning, and thunder to show His majesty and holiness and Israel was not allowed to approach Him. The mountain was restricted and anyone who touched it was to be put to death (Exod.19). God then gave them the Law--the Ten Commandments written on stone--and the book of the Law in which God wrote all the other duties and regulations (Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers) that taught them how they were to live. God ratified this covenant with them by sprinkling the books and the people with blood. This symbolized that a breach of the covenant would lead to death.

The order of events in the Exodus is also important. First, God delivered Israel and only then did He give them the Law. This meant that they were never to obey the Law to merit salvation, but rather they were first saved in order that they might obey Him. Like Jacob before, salvation is not based upon obedience, rather obedience flows from salvation.

4.2. The Tabernacle

God gave Israel exact instructions for a tabernacle. The tabernacle was a remaking of the Garden of Eden. The tabernacle was the place that God (heaven) would meet with man (the earth). It was to be at the center of the camp showing that God was their center and that they could come to Him. The tabernacle also showed that Israel was unworthy to come to Him because of her sin. Israel could only come to God through a priest and a sacrifice; the priest could only go a short way into the temple. Only the high priest could come into the Holy Place once a year with blood. If

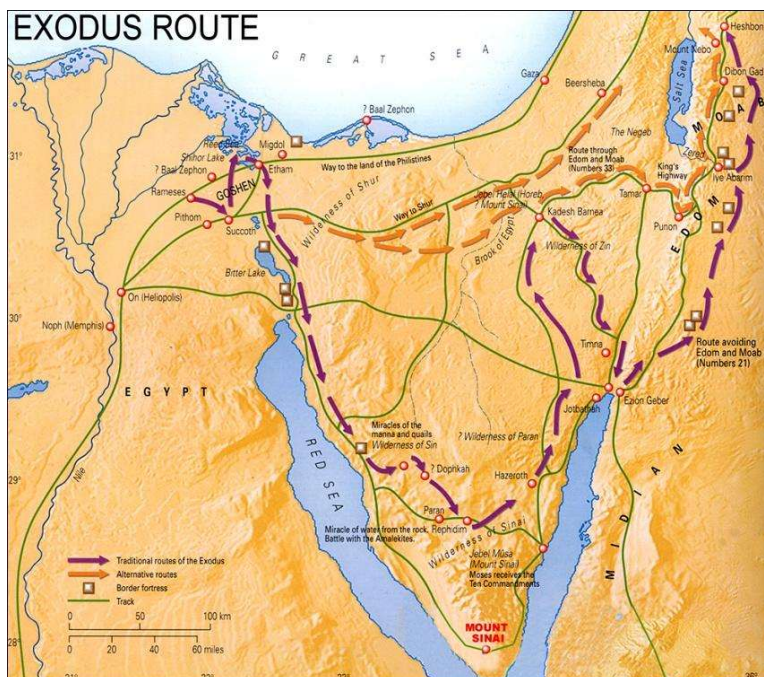
they did not act exactly as God told them, they would be judged. The temple said to the people, “God is in the midst of Israel, but Israelites can only come to Him through a sacrifice.” God came closer, but true fellowship with God had not been restored.

5. The Wilderness - Exodus, Numbers Deuteronomy

God led Israel through the wilderness with a pillar of cloud (by day) and a pillar of fire (by night) for forty years. This was a period of testing, as Israel was daily called to live by faith in God’s Word. During the forty years, Israel constantly failed to trust in God and so an entire generation died in the wilderness, even though God fed them with manna (Exod. 16) and gave them water from the smitten rock (Exod. 16:17).

Both the water and the manna pointed to Christ, showing how God would provide for them in their need. John refers to the manna in John 6, where he shows that Jesus is the true bread (manna) from heaven. Jesus is also the living waters (John 7:37), and Paul says the rock in the wilderness is Christ (1 Cor. 10:4).

Before they crossed into the Promised Land (Canaan), Moses repeated the Law to them. Deuteronomy means second Law. In chapters 27-30, at the end of Deuteronomy, God outlined Israel’s history, re-affirming the need for obedience. God laid down a simple rule, if they obeyed, they would be blessed, but if they disobeyed they would be cursed. It is important to see that in the last few verses Moses goes on to say that Israel will disobey God, and so they will be cast out of the land and then later, God will bring them back from amongst the nations and restore them into the land. This was God’s work as He cleansed their hearts in and through the Holy Spirit.



⁴ The following map is found at <http://jtf.org/israel/.exodus.map>

6. The Conquest of the Land of Canaan

God promised Abraham that his descendants would possess the land (Canaan), a promise He fulfilled 430 years later when Israel entered the land and defeated the very wicked Canaanites. Just as Abraham's descendants waited for Canaan, we, by faith, are to wait for the new heavens and the new earth.

Moses died (indicating that Moses was not able to bring the men into the Promised Land), and God replaced him with Joshua (whose name means God saves). Joshua was commanded to follow God's Law and was promised that he would be successful (Josh. 1:8). Joshua obeyed and God blessed him. At Jericho, Joshua was told by God to circle the walls for seven days and blow the trumpets. When Joshua did this, the walls of Jericho fell and the Israelites took the city. The story stresses the need for obedience and the blessing of God. Under Joshua, Israel captured the land, an act that both brought God's people into the Promised Land while at the same time, brought judgment upon God's enemies.

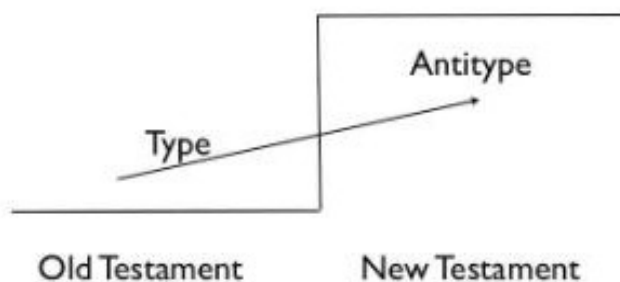
Although Joshua captured much of the land, there were still some areas that were not fully captured. Because of disobedience, large areas were not cleared. The people left in these areas of the land eventually led Israel away into sin. As long as Joshua held to God's law by faith, he was victorious.⁵



⁵ See www.biblestudy.org/maps/location-of-old-testament-events.html

7. "Types" Pointing to the Future

Moses, Israel, the wilderness, and the temple are all types. A type is a present reality that points forward to something greater in the future, the antitype. For example, Israel was God's chosen people. As a type they pointed forward to God's church in the future. Joshua (meaning God saves) pointed to Christ, the One who would lead His people into the Promised Land. The wilderness pointed to the harsh hostile environment in which the church finds herself in this present evil world, while the land of Canaan points to the new heavens and the new earth, the place where God's people live. The tabernacle/priests pointed forward to Christ and His work. Moses was the Old Testament mediator between God and man, and He pointed forward to the greater mediator who was to come (Deut. 18:15).⁶



8. The Bible and the African View of God and Creation

Please read the following and discuss in class.

In the African worldview, God is seen as being a long way away from men, and each person has a particular place in the structure of the world. The world is like the rungs of a ladder, with each party having a specific place in the creation. God is found at the very top, far away, distant from men. Underneath him is the next realm. This is the realm of the spirits. Under that is another spiritual realm, the ancestors, and under that is the realm of men, the elders. Finally under men is the realm of animals and plants.

We can diagram the realms or steps as follows:

God,
Spirit Realm
Human Ancestors
Human Elders
Men
Animals and plants

Each has a realm and each keeps to his realm. To get to another realm, he must go to the man above him. One can only go up or down one realm at a time. For example if a man wants to go to

⁶ See Hebrews chapters 8-10 for examples of Old Testament types and fulfillment.

God, he needs to go through the elders. If the elders want to speak to God they must go through the Spirit realm, the ancestors. Because each realm is fixed, God is far from men. He is a distant unconcerned God.

The Scriptures show a very different picture between God, creation, and men. God is completely different from the creation. He is Spirit, not material, and He brought creation into being just by speaking.

At the same time, God is also very close to the creation and particularly to man. In Genesis, we see that God was very active when he made the creation. First, He made it out of nothing, and then He added to it day by day. When He made the creation He cared for it. He made it good and fruitful.

In Acts 17, Paul teaches that God is not far from men; that He made all men. It was God who formed man from the dust, and then He breathed into him (Gen. 2:7). He gave man life and breath.

After He made all things He continues to work in the creation. He is active in managing the creation, where people live and what they do (Acts 17:26). We learn of the closeness of God to the creation in Romans 1. Paul says that the creation reflects God. As we look at the creation, we see God's attributes reflected in it. The creation reflects Him; it does not reflect higher power or things far away.

We see how close God is to men by the fact that Jesus came in the flesh. He came to men and took upon Himself flesh. He did not come as an angel or spirit; He came directly to men. As a man the disciples walked and talked with Him. In Jesus' humanity, we can see who God is. As a man He died for sin, He paid the price to free sinners, and as a man, He rose again from the dead. In Jesus, we see that God is close to us. We can know Him, who He is, and in Jesus, He paid for sin.

We show the relationship as:

God

Man

And now Jesus has come in the flesh,

God --- Jesus the God-man came to save us. In Jesus, we are now God's children.

9. The Goodness of God in Creation, Providence, and Redemption

In African culture there is an idea of limited goodness. If one person is experiencing great blessings, then that means that another person will not have blessings. Both people cannot be having blessings simultaneously.

The Bible does not teach this. When God made the earth, He made it full of goodness. There was enough goodness to bless all people. He did not make a world with sickness, sorrow, and death or full of want. So why do some men have good and others do not?

Sickness, sorrow, death, and all the pains and evil in this life flow from the sin of the first man. Man rebelled against God, he broke God's law and due to that sin, sorrow and sickness entered. Adam, the first man sinned and sin and death entered the creation. If Adam had not sinned,

there would be no evil and death in the world. Since that time, all men are under God's wrath and curse. All men suffer the pains of this life. All men suffer under sin, and all men die.

In this respect, life is not about one person having more life force than another; we have all lost the blessings of God and are under His curse. We are all under the rule and reign of sin and death.

The only cure for this was for God to send His Son. God sent His Son to die for sinners. It was only in the coming of the second man, the last Adam that the sin of the first man is dealt with. The terrible effects of Adam's first sin must be dealt with before any man can have life.

It is not that Jesus buys the Father's love. John tells us that God sent His own Son because He loved us. God is good and He has the fullness of grace and mercy. The fact that He sent His own Son to die for the wicked showed His goodness and love. At this stage, we see God's goodness in the sending of His Son, and we are to wait until the time when Jesus returns where we will have the fullness of love.

Assignment One

Put the Events in their Proper Chronological Order

1. Jacob blessed his sons (the twelve tribes of Israel) and prophesied the Messiah to come in the family line of Judah
2. Jacob's name changed to Israel
4. Moses led Israel out of Egypt (the Exodus) and through the Red Sea
5. People are dispersed due to a confusion in languages -- Tower of Babel
6. The Fall: Man sinned, all of creation cursed
7. The first command to man to rule and subdue creation
8. The first promise of a redeemer (to come from the seed of a woman) given

Lesson Three Questions

1. What does the creation account teach us about God?
2. Name two ways that show that man is unique among all of God's creation.
3. How was Adam's obedience to God tested in the Garden?
4. In what verse does God promise Satan that his head would be bruised (crushed) by the Seed of the woman?
5. What did God ask Noah to do? Why?
6. What did God do to make people spread out and fill the earth?
7. List the three Covenant promises made to Abraham.

8. The Exodus of God's children from Egypt is God's great Old Testament picture of _____.

9. Which of the following happened first? (Circle One)

God gave the Law OR God delivered Israel from bondage.

10. What does the order above in #9 teach us?

Lesson Four: JUDGES, KINGS, AND WISDOM LITERATURE

1. The Period of the Judges (Judges/Ruth/1 Samuel 1388-1052BC)⁷

These books are often called the historical books, because they continue to trace God's work in the history of Israel.

To combat sin, God raised up judges (Othniel, Ehud, Shamugar, Deborah, Barak Gideon, etc.). The judges were temporary leaders who were to deliver God's people from their enemies. Each operated in a local area. The period of the judges is a period of probation (Hendriksen 96).

There is a common theme to the book of Judges. In each case:

1. Israel relapses (sins, forsakes God).
2. God judges her (brings enemies to attack her).
3. Israel repents, and
4. God sends a judge to deliver her.

This cycle repeats itself throughout the book. The period ended in failure, and the book ends with the following words, in those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes (Judg. 21:25).

The last great judge, Samuel, led Israel for many years. The people rejected him, and demanded a king, so they could be like the nations around them. This was motivated by a lack of trust in God to rule and deliver them. The people not only rejected Samuel, God's prophet, but they rejected God Himself. In response, God gave them a king, but warned them that the king of Israel, as a man, would exact a high price (1 Sam. 8:10-18). At the same time, the coming of the king, also pointed to God's desire to rule the nations and the world through His King, Jesus Christ. He would be the high point of the kings in the line of David.

2. The First Three Kings of Israel (1052-932 B.C.)⁸

2.1. Saul

The first king was Saul. He began by being obedient to God but later he sinned, relying upon himself to deliver Israel, rather than waiting for God. After his great sin, Saul said he repented (1 Sam. 15:30), but his repentance was not real because it did not lead to a change in his life. Instead of humbling himself before God, Saul began to fight against God and His anointed, David. Due to Saul's sin, God rejected him. His spiritual condition grew worse, and finally he fell upon his own sword in suicide. He and his sons died. God raised up David to be the next king.

2.2. David

David was a shepherd, the youngest in his house. As a shepherd, he looked after the sheep, something the greater Son Jesus would do. Following God's direction, Samuel selected David as the new king. We are told that God chose David because God does not look as man looks, rather God looks upon the heart (1 Sam. 16:7), and we are told that David was a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14). David showed his love and faith in God early. He went out alone to fight the giant Goliath, not in his own strength, but in the strength of the army of the Lord of hosts (1 Sam.

⁷ All dates are from Hendrickson, *Survey of the Bible*, pgs. 69-75.

⁸ All dates are from Hendrickson, *Survey of the Bible*, pgs. 69-75.

16). David's victory over Goliath is a picture of Jesus' later victory over Satan, one that Jesus achieved by faith and trust, rather than by might and power.

David's life followed that of many of God's servants. Like Joseph and Moses, God promised him that he would be blessed, but before he was blessed, he had to go through a period of trial to humble and test him. Joseph was about eighteen and went through twelve years of trials before being delivered. Moses was forty and spent forty years in the wilderness before beginning his work for God. David was about eighteen when Samuel anointed him, but was thirty before he became king. God used Saul to humble, test, and prove David as Saul sought to kill him. Although David had many opportunities to kill Saul, he refused, saying he would not lift his hand against Saul as he was still the Lord's anointed. After this period of testing Saul died and David became king (2 Sam. 5:4,5).

David had two gifts. He was a mighty fighter and he was a gifted musician. God used David to write many of the Psalms and he led the nation to great military blessing. King David was a prototype, a forerunner of the greater King Jesus. David's kingdom, along with his son Solomon's, was the high point in Israel's history. Under King David the land was secure; David captured Jerusalem, and made it his city. David brought the Ark of the Lord to Jerusalem. God and God's king now dwelt in the land. The land, the king, and the worship of God were fixed in Israel. This was a picture of going back to the garden; Israel was the new garden, where God had His name and where men could meet with God.

God also entered into a covenant with David. Moses' covenant was with all the people but now the covenant was made with David and his house (family). David became the head, the representative of Israel. If David did well, he and the nation would be blessed. If David did badly, he and the nation would suffer. Israel's hopes were now based upon one representative, the king. This covenant also promised that one of David's sons would sit upon the throne forever.

"Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. (12) When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. (13) He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (14) I will be to him a father, and he shall be to Me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, (15) but My steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. (16) And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before Me. Your throne shall be established forever." (2 Sam. 7:11b-16)

David was promised that God would be David's son's father, that God would establish his kingdom, and that should he go astray, God would discipline him. The covenant was initially fulfilled in David's son Solomon, but finds its final fulfillment in David's greater son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Even though David was a man after God's heart, he was still a sinner. David committed adultery with Bathsheba, a married woman. She became pregnant and David, to cover the adultery, arranged for her husband to be killed. David sunk deeper into sin. God, however, according to His promise, did not abandon David; rather, He sent Nathan the prophet to confront him. Nathan pointed out David's sin and David, unlike Saul before him, truly repented. Nathan told him that his sin was forgiven, but he would come under God's chastening hand and lose four children. This is a principle of sonship (1 Sam. 13:14). God promised to be David's father--if he sinned He would not take His love from him--but He would chasten him in order to restore him.

The kingship of David caused tension. Before Israel had a king, the Lord was their king, but now God ruled indirectly through David. A human king sat upon God's royal throne. In the book of Kings, we see what happened in the line of the kings as they ruled upon the earth. At the end of the book of Kings (1 Kings 22), we are shown God sitting upon His throne in heaven. He is the true King who rules over all the kings of the earth, including Israel's earthly king. This tension between God as heavenly king and earthly kings is resolved in the coming of Jesus. Jesus is God's true Son. He is both of David's line and God Himself, so in Christ the two lines, earthly kingships and heavenly thrones, are joined together and are now one throne.

2.3. Solomon

God promised Adam that the deliverer would come from the seed of the woman. The line of the seed as manifested in Abraham, runs through Isaac to King David. Solomon was the second son of David's sinful union with Bathsheba. In grace, God gave David a son, Solomon, who succeeded him. Hendriksen divides Solomon's reign into three parts: rising, shining, and declining.

Solomon's reign began well. God asked Solomon what he wished, Solomon responded by asking for wisdom to be able to rule this people. God granted him wisdom and, as a reward for not asking for personal blessing, God blessed him personally. Solomon centralized the government and was a strong administrator.

The middle of Solomon's reign was marked by success, expansion, and great glory. The Queen of Sheba came to see the glory and splendor of his reign. Solomon was David's son, and pointed to the success that David's greater son, Christ would have. Following our earlier point of Solomon as a type, Solomon was given the task of building the temple in Jerusalem. (God did not allow David to build the temple, because he was a man of war.) This was the high point of the Old Testament. After this, things began to decline as sin took hold.

Solomon, being a man, fell into sin. Solomon had many wives, including foreign wives who led him into idolatry and sin (1 Kings 11). He began to build pagan altars on the mountains. God chastened Solomon by raising up enemies and by warning him that He would break the nation in two. The actual splitting of the twelve tribes occurred under the hand of his son, Rehoboam (1 Kings 12). The nation of Israel was divided between the Northern Kingdom (ten tribes) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah and Benjamin).⁹

⁹ From www.biblestudy.org/maps/large-map-kingdoms-of-judah-and-israel



The history of Solomon and the kings can be found in the books of Kings and Chronicles. The period of the divided kingdom runs from 1 Kings 12 to 2 Kings 17 and ends when the Northern Kingdom was defeated and taken into exile. First, only the Northern Kingdom fell, but later, the Southern Kingdom fell as well. At that point, Israel went into what is called the “Babylonian” exile.

2.4. The Bible and African View of History

Please read the following and discuss in class:

The history books show us that God is in control of all things. God’s nearness and His love mean that He runs the history of the world for His Kingdom and His glory and for our good.

The real ruler of the world is God. He is in control of all things. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks of being in control over each bird of the air, and even that God knows how

many hairs we have on our heads. He controls the greatest things to the very least. Paul makes the same point in Acts 17. It is always God who is in control.

The Bible also teaches that Satan has great power. Since he tricked man in the garden into sin, he now rules over sinful men. He is the ruler of the world fallen in sin (John 12: Eph. 2:1).

The power of Satan is limited in two very powerful ways. First, even though Satan is powerful God still rules over Him. He controls Satan, taking his evil works and actions and turning them into good. The clearest example of this is when Jesus went to the cross. Satan worked to get Jesus crucified, Christ seemed to be defeated and yet the cross was the very way that Jesus defeated the devil and brought salvation to men. Second, in Jesus Christ, the church can and does defeat Satan. When John writes to the church, he says that Jesus in you is greater than the work of the devil in the world (1 John 4:4). Although the devil is powerful, the devil is not more powerful God's work in His children.

In Africa, the focus is on the present and the past. This is natural, as the present soon becomes the past, and this type of thinking also fits in well with ancestor worship. The ancestors are those who are now dead but even though they are in the past, they still mediate between men and the spirit world.

In contrast, the Bible sees the past as important but over. When men die, they immediately stand before God in the judgment. Their time on earth is over, and they can no longer be any help to the living.

God is very forward looking. The Scriptures tell us that God is working out His plan in history, and the great end of history is that Jesus will come again and bring in the fullness of His Kingdom. The Bible begins with a garden and moves forward toward a city. Throughout the Bible God is working out His plans.

Magic and Witchcraft: If God is completely in control, what about magic and witchcraft? If God is in control, God Himself cares for us; there is no place for witchcraft or magic in the church. The Bible tells believers not to turn to these things as 1) they are evil and 2) we must not fear them. In 1 Samuel 28:14, Saul tries to raise dead Samuel to ask him for Help. Although the story is difficult, we do see that 1) what Saul did was breaking God's word, and 2) it did not help Saul in any way.

The Old Testament forbids attempting speaking to the dead (Deut. 18:9-11). The prophets also say that trying to speak to the dead is dangerous and futile. In Isaiah 8:19 it states: And when they say to you, "Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter," should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living? To the teaching and to the testimony! It will only bring ruin; instead, they are to turn to the true and living God. He will give life and wisdom to those who seek Him.

God tells us that He is greater than all, and in Him we have all the blessings. Because we are God's, now all things are working together for good to those who love God and are called by Him.

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose. (Rom. 8:28)

A believer knows that his Father is in heaven, and on earth, nothing is greater than the Father. His Father is working all things for good.

3. Wisdom Literature

Wisdom Literature is built upon the commandments. It takes the commands of God and applies them to our lives.

The Psalms: David and Solomon wrote many of the Psalms. In Psalm 1 the psalmist links God's Law with walking wisely. He states, Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; (2) but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night (Ps. 1:1,2) Psalm 1 ends with the promise of judgment, and Psalm 2 speaks of the coming reign of the judge, the Messiah, who will rule all of the nations and exhorts all to kiss the son (Ps. 2:12) in humility, submission, and love. The Psalms are given to us to be sung and to be used in prayer. They show us how to worship, repent, give thanks, call upon God for deliverance, and live through trials and temptations. The Psalms meet every circumstance and condition of life. There are 150 psalms, written by a David, Asaph, the sons of Korah, Moses, and others. They are divided into five books, each book concluding with a doxology (Ps 1-41, 42-72, 73-89, 90-106, 107-150). The Psalms speak to every human emotion, repentance, worship, faith, trust, despair, and hope. They are to be sung, memorized, and prayed in order to aid our spiritual life. Many Psalms move from trouble to hope in God. The Psalter ends with hymns of praise.

Proverbs: The Proverbs are short sayings giving practical wisdom on how to walk wisely and in the fear of God. Proverbs teaches that the greatest wisdom is the fear of the Lord. The proverbs include commendations for wisdom, exhortations to wisdom, and descriptions of wise people. The people of God are to read them, consider the examples that they give, and apply them to their lives (see Proverbs 31 for a description of the virtuous woman).

The Song of Solomon: This book is also called the Song of Songs. It seems to have been written by the wise king Solomon. It is difficult to know how to read the Song of Solomon. Two main interpretations are that it is a love song between a man and a woman, and that it is an allegorical picture where the love song points us to the relationship between Christ and the Church. It is clear that the central theme is that of love between the bridegroom and the bride. The song teaches us about the nature of true biblical love between a man and a woman, as well as being a picture of the love between Christ and His church.

Job: It is unclear when Job was written. It might have been written at the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Job teaches us about suffering. The main theme of Job is that God is in heaven, and He as God, has the right to deal with men as He wills. This does not mean that He does not show love to Job, because at the end of Job, he is blessed more than at the beginning. The book opens with God and Satan talking about Job's faithfulness. The devil is allowed to test Job. Neither Job nor his comforters know this is the real reason. In Job's suffering, his comforters argue for cause and effect. God is afflicting Job because he must have sinned. Job rejects that argument saying that he has not sinned. In his great suffering, Job claims he is righteous, and that God needs to explain Himself to Job. The book ends with God's return. God shows Job how great His ways are. He shows Job that he cannot understand God and that Job has to humble himself before God. God also accuses the counselors of false counsel (they had sinned), and Job has to pray for them. The book ends with God's blessing and restoring Job.

Ecclesiastes: Ecclesiastes points to the folly of life without God. Without God all life is folly and vanity, with God all life has meaning. We are to live this life enjoying the labor that God has given us and trusting in Him.

Assignment Two

Place the following in Chronological Order

1. Years of silence end and John the Baptist born.
2. God used judges to deliver His people after they repented.
3. Israel is split into two kingdoms.
4. Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem.
5. Saul ruled as Israel's first king.
6. The Southern Kingdom captured and taken into exile by the Babylonians.
7. The Northern Kingdom captured and taken into exile by the Assyrians.

Lesson Four Questions

1. Why was it a problem that Israel disobeyed God and did not completely capture (conquer) all areas of the Promised Land?

2. Put the cycle of Israel (below) found in the book of Judges in the correct order (Write number order on blank line):

- ___ God judges Israel
- ___ Israel relapses into sin/idolatry
- ___ God sends a judge/deliverer
- ___ Israel repents

3. Give two examples of a type and the future event or person pointed to (antitype).

Type	Antitype
Ex: Israel	God's Church

Lesson Five: THE PROPHETS, EXILE, AND ISRAEL'S FUTURE HOPE

In order to bring the people to repentance, God sent His prophets. They were to spread God's word and to bring Israel back to God. Elijah was the first in this new prophetic movement (1 Kings 17). Jezebel, a foreign wife, led King Ahab of Israel into idolatry and the country worshiped Baal, her false God. God raised up Elijah to stand and call the people to repentance. He prophesied a famine and then, at Mount Carmel, he challenged the Baal worshipers to a contest. They prepared a sacrifice and asked their god to come down to consume it. Baal did not answer. Elijah poured water over his sacrifice to the true and living God, and then God came with power, consuming the sacrifice with fire. This showed Israel that their God is the true God. At this time Elijah himself was taught a valuable lesson. Elijah expected things to change, for Israel to be restored through God's powerful revelation, but instead of changing, Jezebel threatened to kill him and Israel did not turn from idolatry. The story shows the powerful grip of sin upon Israel. Later, Elijah passed on his ministry to Elisha.

We divide the prophets into two groups, the Major Prophets and the Minor Prophets, depending upon the length of the books.

The early prophets are:

Amos (minor): God warns Israel that He will judge the nations for their sins, this includes Israel (2 Kings 14,15).

Jonah (minor): God tells Israel that they are to witness of His goodness to the nations (2 Kings 14:25).

Hosea (minor): God speaks of His love for Israel as He judges them for their sin of adulterously breaking His covenant with them. Hosea makes the parallel with a wife being unfaithful to her husband. Hence, God will punish Israel, but once she has been punished, He will again go to unfaithful Israel and restore her to Himself (2 Kings 14ff).

Isaiah (major): He was one of the greatest prophets. He called Israel to see the great majesty of God. Isaiah was called to be a prophet in the year of King Uzziah's death (Isa. 6:1, 2 Chron. 26:3). Isaiah saw that, while the kings were dead, the true King is in heaven. Isaiah's prophecy is divided into two parts. Chapters 1-39 speak mainly of events in his time. In chapters 40-66 Isaiah speaks of events that will occur later. He speaks of the end of the Babylonian exile, of the coming of Jesus Christ, the new covenant, and the end of all things.

Micah (minor): The prophet spoke at the same time as Isaiah. He denounced idolatry and mere ritualism, as well as the exploitation of the poor by the rich.

1. The Babylonian Exile (586 -536 B.C.)¹⁰

Back in Moses' time, in Deuteronomy 28-30, God had warned Israel that if she sinned, she would be cast out of the land. Israel's sin at the time of the kings brought this to pass. In judgment, God raised up the Assyrians and the Babylonians, two great nations to chasten Israel.

The Assyrians came in first and took captive the Northern Kingdom of ten tribes (720 B.C.). Jerusalem and the temple still stood; there was false hope. God then sent the prophet Ezekiel

¹⁰ All dates are from Hendrickson, *Survey of the Bible*, pgs. 69-75.

(major) to tell the people that God's glory/presence had left the temple due to Israel's sin and that the nation was now under judgment. Jerusalem and the temple would fall. Ezekiel, like the other prophets, also prophesied that after the exile the people would be restored to Israel. The prophet Jeremiah (major) also warned the people that there would be seventy years spent in exile.

The Babylonians came second and took the Southern Kingdom (Judah and Benjamin) into captivity (586 B.C.). Jerusalem, the temple, and the people were removed from the land and they remained in exile for seventy years (as prophesied). The seventy years was a period to give the land rest, and it represented a reversal of all the promises given to Abraham, Moses and David. Hendriksen (119) identifies three aspects to the exile:

1. It was a punishment for sin (2 Chron. 36: 14-17).
2. It was a means of sanctification for the people (see Lamentations and the fact that after the chastening of the exile Israel did not fall back into idolatry).
3. Israel was a blessing to those nations into which Israel went as she spread the work of God (Mic. 5:7).

During the period of exile, God continued to speak to His people. Jeremiah told the people that they should wait patiently for the time when God would judge their sins and would restore them to the land. God raised up Daniel (major prophet) to witness as a faithful Israelite outside the land. Daniel continues to be an example to us now of how to live faithfully while the church lives in exile before Christ comes again.

2. The First Return from Exile (536 B.C.)¹¹

The first return from exile ended in 536 B.C. A decree was made by Cyrus (Ezra 1) and a remnant, 42,360 Israelites returned (Hendriksen 119). These were mainly from the tribe of Judah, but all the twelve tribes were represented. Israel and Judah were reunited. The story of the return from exile is told in Ezra and Nehemiah. The Israelites (now called Jews, a name based on the tribe of Judah, the main returning tribe) returned, offered sacrifices, and laid the foundation of the temple (Ezra 4). God sent the prophet Haggai (minor prophet) to encourage them to finish the work. The temple was rebuilt in 516 B.C. Zechariah (minor prophet) encouraged them, prophesying about the future glory of Zion (another name for the Promised Land) and the coming, suffering, and exaltation of the branch (a prophecy relating to Jesus). Zechariah also joined into one the offices of prophet, priest, and king. These three offices had been kept separate until this time in Zion (the king could not be the priest and the priest could not be a king in Zion). Uzziah, the king, tried to join them (2 Chron. 26). Zechariah prophesied that in the coming branch (Jesus), all three offices would be joined (Zech. 6:9-11). These last prophets, writing around 430 B.C., set the stage for the coming of Christ.

After 2 Chronicles the Scriptures are silent. There was no prophet in Israel for 430 years until the coming of John the Baptist. At that time Israel was subject to the rule of the Greeks (333-200 B.C.) and the Syrian Maccabeans (200-63 B.C.). The period ended with the Roman conquest. At the time of Christ, Israel was under Roman control.

Not all of the Jews returned to the Promised Land. Many lived throughout the Greek-speaking world. In 230 B.C. the Scriptures were translated from Hebrew into Greek. During that

¹¹ All dates are from Hendrickson, *Survey of the Bible*, pgs. 69-75.

time synagogues (places of worship) were established in many parts of the known world. The founding of synagogues and the translation of the Scriptures into Greek¹² set the stage for the spreading of the gospel of Christ years later.

3. The Deeper Meaning of Returning from Exile

Just as the Exodus from Egypt looked forward to the greater deliverance of Jesus Christ, so the exile and Israel's return from exile also looked forward to the greater return in Jesus Christ. Even after the original return from the exile, Israel was still under foreign rule and not ruled by her own king. When Jesus comes He brings the true end of the exile for God's people. Jesus brings them out, not just from foreign rule, freeing the land of Israel, but Jesus brings salvation, the Spirit, and the new creation. He will finally release His people from the exile and the bondage of this world and bring them into true and full freedom through His salvation.

4. The New Testament Use of Salvation from Egypt and the Exile

The themes of the return from exile, being delivered from Egypt, the wilderness, and the Babylonian exile occur throughout the New Testament. In each case the picture is that of Israel in bondage, needing a savior, and Jesus as the full and ultimate fulfillment of her needs. The reason the Bible can do this is that Israel is a picture of all men.

John the Baptist came as one preparing the way for the returning King. He is the voice crying in the wilderness, the place of exile, of trial and temptation.

1. John comes to Israel in the wilderness. His clothes and his message stress repentance. This is a picture showing that Israel needs to repent and that she needs a savior.
2. Just as Israel was tempted in the wilderness for forty years, so Jesus the true Israel is tempted in the wilderness for forty days.
3. The church is seen as being in the wilderness. The world is still the place of trial and difficulty as God's people continue toward their heavenly home. This world is seen as the wilderness, and heaven is seen as the Promised Land.

5. The Fulfillment of the Promises of Deuteronomy

In Deuteronomy 28-30 God told Israel what would happen. Israel covenanted with God at Sinai. They promised to obey. In that covenant, God promised if they obeyed Him, they would be blessed, but if they disobeyed Him, they would be cursed. The blessing and cursing are laid out in those chapters.

God goes further. Although there are both blessings and cursings, God states that Israel will not obey Him and that they will suffer the curses. They will be cast out of the land. Israel sins and God sends them the prophets. The prophets have the same message: unless Israel repents, they will be cast out. The prophets also say that after they have been cast out, God will come to them and will restore them. This will occur through a mighty Savior and a great outpouring of the Spirit.

This occurs at the time of the exile. Israel sinned, and she is cast out and judged. She waited for God to come to her, so He sent the Savior and poured out His Spirit. All of these promises are fulfilled in Jesus' coming and in the bringing in of the New Covenant.

¹² Called the *Septuagint*.

Assignment Three

Matching. Write the capital letter of the word below next to the matching statement.

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
| A. 516 B.C. | B. 536 B.C. | C. Assyrians | D. Babylonians |
| E. Daniel | F. Elijah | G. Jew | H. prophets |
| I. Proverbs | J. Psalms | K. Nehemiah | L. Saul |
| M. Solomon | N. Song of Solomon | O. synagogues | |

	1. Prophet, challenged Baal worshippers to contest at Mount Carmel
	2. Teaches about true Biblical love between a man and a woman. Points to the love between Christ and His church.
	3. Prophet, example to us of how to live faithfully in exile (waiting for Christ's return)
	4. First group of Israelites returned to the Promised Land
	5. Took the Northern Kingdom into captivity
	6. Group of men God sent to warn Israel and call her to repentance
	7. Book of songs which show us how to worship, repent, give thanks, call upon God, and live through trials and temptations.
	8. Took the Southern Kingdom into captivity
	9. Book of short sayings that give practical wisdom on how to walk wisely in the fear of God.
	10. Name given to the Israelites after the exile (based on the tribe of Judah)
	11. Jewish places of worship and prayer in cities outside of Jerusalem
	12. The first king of Israel
	13. Israel's wise king, David's son, built the temple
	14. The temple was rebuilt in Jerusalem after the remnant returned from exile

Lesson Five Questions

- David's victory over Goliath is a picture of what New Testament event?
- God promised David that his offspring would sit upon the throne forever. How has that promise been fulfilled?
- After King Solomon, the nation of Israel was divided between: the _____ Kingdom, made up of (#) _____ tribes, carried into exile FIRST, and the _____ Kingdom, made up of (#) _____ of tribes, carried into exile SECOND.
- Name one of the Old Testament books that tells the beautiful story of Israel's return from exile.
- Wisdom literature takes the _____ of God and applies them to our lives.

6. Name three Old Testament prophets.
7. Why was there a need to translate the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek in 230 B.C.?

Lesson Six: THE GOSPELS OF JESUS CHRIST

1. The Pre-Existence of Jesus

How are we to read the Old Testament? The whole of the Old Testament looks forward to the coming of Christ. Everything we read in it points us to His coming, His work, and His mission (Luke 24). The Gospels record the coming of Christ, and God has provided four Gospels, four witnesses, to Christ's coming. In the Gospels, the Word became flesh. John states that Jesus existed before He came. The One who made the heavens and the earth came to the earth to be its light and to redeem it.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) He was in the beginning with God. (3) All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. (4) In Him was life, and the life was the light of men... (14) And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-4, 14)

The verses also show that the Word, Jesus, before He was born, created the heavens and the earth. All things were made through Him and without Him nothing was made. Paul makes the same point in Colossians 1 and 1 Corinthians 8. In both cases, the Father acts as the source, the planner, and the Son is the agent, the One who brings the Father's plans into effect.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. (16) For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. (Col. 1:15,16)

The eternal Son of God became man. As a man, Jesus has a genealogy. The Gospels tell us from where Jesus came. In Matthew 1:1-17, we see that Jesus comes from the line of David and Abraham. In Luke 3:23-38, Luke traces Jesus' genealogy to Adam, showing that He comes not just from the Jews, but that He is the Savior of all men. Luke also links the two Adams, the first Adam and Jesus. Jesus is called the second or last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45-47). Luke shows us that the history of the world is all about these two men (1 Cor. 15:21,44ff; Rom. 5:12-19).

Together the genealogies show that Christ is from Adam, and they indicate that Jesus is God's son (a second Adam), Abraham's seed, and King David's descendant. The genealogy also includes women--Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth--showing that He is the representative of both men and women, and very importantly, the genealogies contain sinners. It expressly mentions Bathsheba, she who was the wife of Uriah, reinforcing that the genealogies are not of the righteous, but are genealogies of sinners, and the sinless Jesus came to save sinners.

2. The Birth of Jesus

Jesus was born at the time of the Roman Empire. At that time the empire surrounded the Mediterranean Sea and extended north into modern Europe and South into Africa. At this time, Israel was a conquered nation and so part of the Empire.¹³

¹³ www.the-tribulation-network.com



John the Baptist, the last great Old Testament prophet, came as Jesus' herald. Through an angel, God announced to Zachariah and Elizabeth, a godly but barren couple, that they would have a son. He was to be called John, a name that means Jehovah is Gracious. To the Israelites, who thought they were righteous, John was to preach sin and judgment. His preaching was to drive them in repentance to Christ who would come after him (Isa. 40:3-5; Mal. 3:1;4,5). The way for Israel to receive God's grace was to recognize her sin.

Six months later, the angel Gabriel was sent to Mary. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. (31) And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus. (32) He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, (33) and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:30-33).

Mary was faithful. With great faith she trusted God that she would be the mother of the Savior. She was told that she would have the child as a virgin, by the power of the Holy Spirit. This means that, although Jesus was human, because His human body was made through the power of the Holy Spirit, He was not tainted with the sin and death brought in by Adam. Jesus stands as the representative and head of a new humanity.

It was prophesied that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2), and so God ordered that the Emperor Augustus issue a decree that everyone in the empire should be registered. Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem, their family being from there. Mary gave birth to Jesus in Bethlehem. The great King came in humility and poverty, identifying Himself with the lowly, poor, and humble. The greatness of His birth was revealed to shepherds. The angels announced His coming to them with the following words: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!" (Luke 2:14). The family then returned to Nazareth and Jesus grew up. Luke shows us Jesus' human nature when he states, and Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man (Luke 2:52). Jesus waited until He was thirty years old before entering into His ministry.

3. The Beginning of His Ministry

In this period Jesus was baptized, tempted in the wilderness and chose His first disciples. The key texts include: Matt. 3:1-4:11, Mark 1:1-13, Luke 3:1-22, 4:1-13, and John 1:15-2:12.

3.1. The Baptism

At thirty years old, Jesus left to begin His public ministry. Jesus went to the Jordan where John was baptizing. Jesus, who had no sin, submitted to being baptized to fulfill all righteousness (Matt. 3:15). It was not that Jesus was baptized to show He needed to repent; rather, by His baptism Jesus identified Himself as His people's Messiah and Savior. At the beginning of God's great work of salvation, God revealed Himself as the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. [A]nd when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, 'You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased' (Luke 3:21,22). The Father showed His plan and His love for His Son's obedience. The Son is the Mediator, the one who stands between God and man, and the Son does His work by and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

3.2. The Temptation

Jesus' baptism, the revelation of the Father's love, and the gift of the Spirit were immediately tested by temptation. The Spirit led Jesus out into the wilderness where He was without food and water for forty days in order to be tempted by the devil. (This was a parallel test of Adam being tested in the Garden of Eden, which was a far easier test. It was also a fulfillment of Israel being tested forty years in the wilderness.) The test was would Jesus submit to His Father, trusting that God would deliver Him at the right time, or would He use His own divine power to save His life? Jesus, as a faithful Son, waited for His Father to save Him, and at the end of the temptation an angel was sent to feed Him. Jesus emerged as our representative (through our being joined to Him and baptized with Him), but also as a man who understands our sorrows and our temptations. Hebrews 5 tells us that He is a sympathetic high priest and that even Jesus learned obedience by the things that He suffered. As the second, last Adam, as God's true Son (Luke 3:38; 4:1), He succeeded where Adam and Israel failed. Now that Jesus' initial work was completed, He called His disciples to Himself.

3.3. The First Disciples

Jesus' first disciples were disciples of John the Baptist, who left John to follow Jesus. Jesus then called the brothers, Andrew and Peter, and James and John, and they left their fishing boats and followed Him. Next, He called Philip, who in turn called Nathanael. The twelve disciples who followed Jesus, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, became the new Israel, the new followers of God. The disciples knew that He was the Messiah, the Prophet, the Son of God, and the King of Israel, even though they did not completely understand who He was or what He was doing.

4. Jesus' Ministry

Jesus' central message was, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (see also Luke 11:2). In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7), Jesus explained the righteousness demanded in His new Kingdom, a Kingdom righteousness that is nothing less than to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect (Matt. 5:48).

Jesus taught that the Kingdom was spiritual (Luke 17:20,21). After being asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God would come, He answered them, *The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, (21) nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.* The coming of Jesus' Kingdom overthrew the power of the devil's kingdom. Jesus called the devil the strong man, but Jesus was stronger than the devil

and He came to bind him and to plunder his goods (Luke 11:18-23.) The coming of Jesus' Kingdom destroyed the kingdom of the devil.

Jesus' ministry was one of teaching (the Sermon on the Mount, the Sermon on the Plain), healing, and casting out of demons. The healing ministry showed that the Kingdom had come, a foretaste of the healing from sin that the new Kingdom brings.

Jesus' ministry to Israel can be summarized as follows: His teaching and works amazed the multitude, and great crowds began to follow Him. This led to the Jewish religious rulers, the Pharisees and Sadducees, being filled with jealousy (Matt. 12:18). They became increasingly upset when Jesus did not follow their interpretation of the Law, especially when He healed on the Sabbath (day of rest) and when He called God His Father, making Himself equal with God. From the beginning of Jesus' ministry, the Sermon on the Mount, until the end, Jesus was constantly challenging their corrupted understanding of the Law. As He continued, the opposition of the Jewish leaders intensified, so much so that they accused Him of following the devil (Luke 11:15-18). At the end of Jesus' life He was put on trial for blasphemy.

The people, when they saw His signs, wanted to come and make Him a king. In John 6, Jesus performed a mighty miracle in the feeding of 5,000 people. Due to this demonstration of power, the crowds sought to make Him their present earthly king. Jesus realized this and so He began to press the spiritual nature of the Kingdom upon them. He challenged them by saying that unless they eat His flesh and drink His blood, they cannot enter the Kingdom. The crowd interpreted this literally, not spiritually and so they rejected Him, leaving Him. The fact that He was not going to create an immediate physical kingdom challenged even His own disciples, yet they did not desert Him but remained with Him. Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

The faith of the disciples developed and matured as Jesus continued His ministry to them. In the early parts of the Gospels, Jesus showed His might and His power. This stage of Jesus' ministry reached a climax when He asked the disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" Peter, the leader responded, "You are the Christ, the son of the living God" (Matt. 16:13-17). Jesus told him that this was right, and then Christ began to stress another vital part of His ministry, the fact that in order to be the Messiah, He must go to Jerusalem to die, be buried, and rise again on the third day. The disciples could not understand this since they did not yet fully comprehend His ministry, so they tried to stop Him. Jesus rebuked His own disciples because they had focused upon Jesus' happiness, not Jesus' commitment to doing His Father's will. Throughout the Gospels, we always see Jesus doing His Father's will.

After Peter's confession, Jesus began to teach His disciples about His death. From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day (Matt. 16:21). Jesus explained that His death was to be a sacrifice, a ransom for their sins, a payment made to free them from the captivity their sin had brought upon them. He said to them, "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Jesus' death would ransom them from the fallen world of sin and death in Adam, but to do so, He must give His own life.

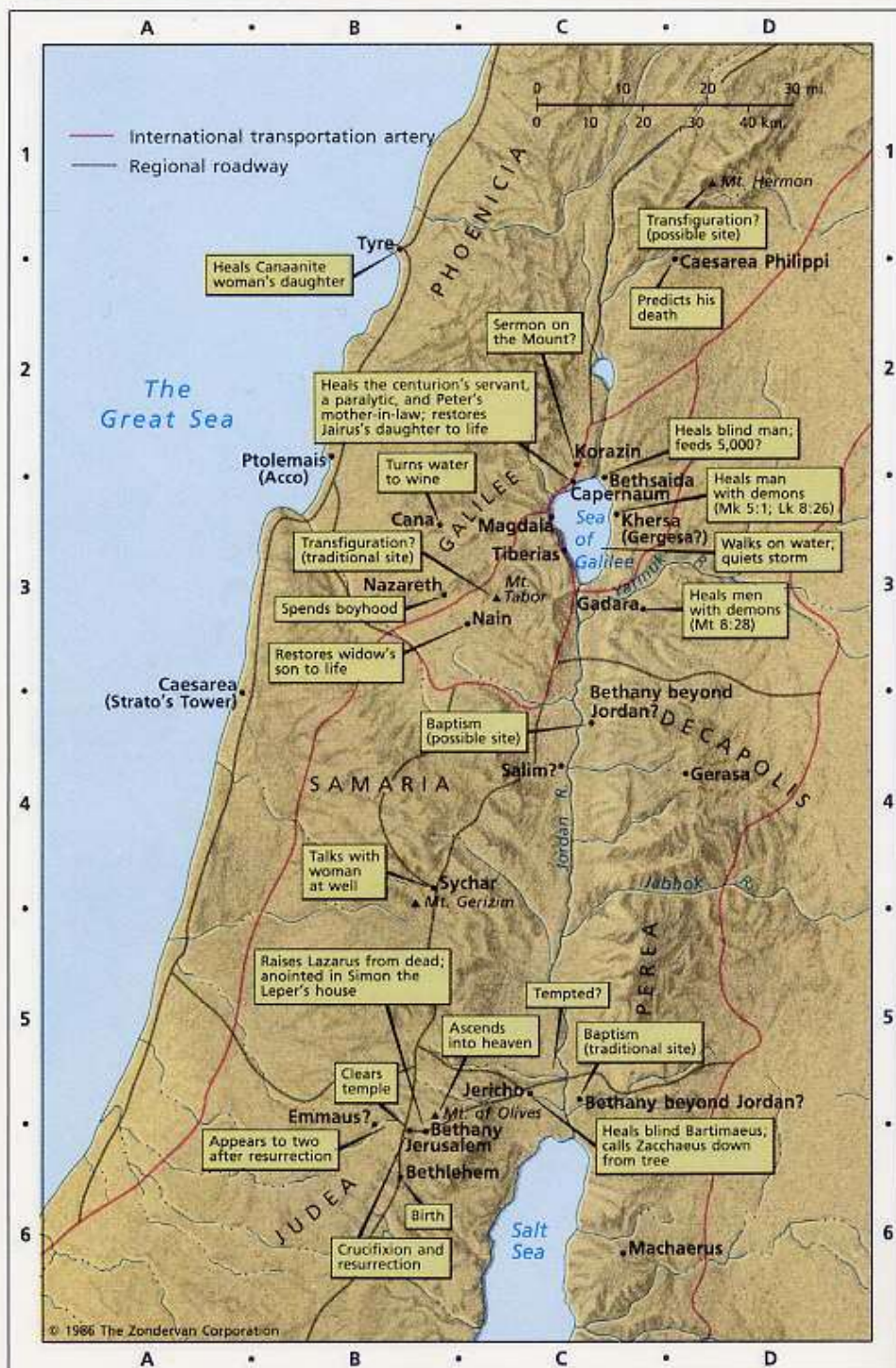
Six days after Peter's confession, Jesus was transfigured on the mountain (Matt. 17:1-13). Jesus appeared in His glory with Moses and Elijah, representing the great lawgiver and the great prophet. He shone in glory, and the Father spoke saying, "This is My son, with whom I am well

pleased, listen to Him” (Matt. 17:5). In the last phase of Jesus’ ministry He removed Himself from the public eye to teach His disciples and to prepare them for what was to come. Jesus also raised Lazarus from the dead, the climax of His ministry. His actions showed that He is the resurrection and the life, and all who believe in Him will not die, but have eternal life (John 11).

The map below indicates the ministry of Jesus.¹⁴

¹⁴http://christrescuemission.org/yahoo_site_admin/assets/images/1225_map_ministry_of_Jesus_clipart.218205943_std.jpg

Map 9: JESUS' MINISTRY



5. The Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus

5.1. Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem

Jesus entered Jerusalem in triumph, riding on a colt, a young donkey, according to prophecy. He was welcomed by the crowds who called out praise to the Son of David. He was welcomed as the King of the Jews. Jesus knew this praise would be short lived. He knew that the crowds were expecting an earthly savior and that they did not really know who He was. Jesus knew this and wept for them saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes" (Luke 19:42).

Later, Jesus saw a fig tree that had many leaves but it did not bear any fruit. This was a symbol of Israel. Jesus cursed the tree for not bearing fruit, even as Israel was to be cursed for not bearing fruit to God. The next day the rulers of the synagogue formally challenged Jesus as to His authority. Jesus challenged them back, and they could not answer Him. Jesus spoke a number of parables to them, each one showing Israel she was under God's wrath. In the parable of the wicked tenants, He showed that they were like those who rejected the rightful owner of the vineyard and would kill his son so they could own it. In the story of the marriage feast He warned them of the judgment that would fall upon those who were not worthy. Jesus then pronounced a series of woes upon the Pharisees (the religious rulers who held to a strict interpretation of the law) (Matt. 23), and finally He warned all of Jerusalem of the final judgment to come (Matt. 25).

Jesus taught His disciples about the destruction of the temple and the coming of the final judgment (Matt. 24,25; Luke 21; Mark 13). He warned Jerusalem that it would be judged and destroyed, and He warned His disciples that, although there would be many troubles and tribulations, the end would not come yet. Finally, Jesus told them that His second coming would not be in secret; rather the whole world would know of His coming.

5.2. The Preparation for Jesus' Death

Jesus used the Passover meal, the great sign of the Old Covenant, to teach His disciples. Jesus replaced the Old Covenant Passover, with the great New Testament sacrifice and covenant, His own death. He taught His disciples that His broken body and His shed blood would be their life (Luke 22:10ff).

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." (27) And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, (28) for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (Matt. 26:26-28)

Jesus told His disciples that His body and blood are the New Covenant. By His body and blood there is the forgiveness of sin. The word shed points back to Old Covenant sacrifices in which the animal's blood was shed.

Even at this important moment, the disciples were still arguing about who was the greatest. Jesus taught them that they should not be thinking about their own greatness, rather they should be thinking about loving one another. He showed what He meant as He took the position of a slave and with great humility He washed His disciples' feet (John 13).

Jesus warned them that one of them would betray Him. Jesus not only pointed out that Judas would be the traitor, but also that all the disciples would deny Him. The disciples refused to accept this. Peter, even more self-confident than the others, stated, Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble. (Matt. 26:33). The disciples did not know the

wickedness of their own hearts, and before the night was over, all ran away, and Peter denied Jesus three times.

Jesus continued to teach them, and told them that after He left, He would send them another comforter, the Holy Spirit, who would lead them and guide them into all truth (John 16). Jesus also gave them these important words, These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world (John 16:33).

5.3. Jesus' Arrest and Trial

Jesus went out to the garden to pray. The pressure upon Him, was severe because He knew His death was coming. It was so great that He sweat blood. He asked His Father if it was possible for Him to avoid death. He prayed this three times as He wrestled with His Father's will. As Jesus prayed, He accepted the Father's will and went to the cross.

Lacking understanding and in the weakness of the flesh, the disciples fell asleep in the garden. Jesus woke them up, and then Judas came and betrayed Jesus with a kiss. Jesus was arrested by the temple guards and taken to the house of the High Priest Annas. Peter followed Jesus from a distance, but when he was challenged, he denied Christ three times, just as Jesus had said he would. Before Caiaphas, Jesus declared that He was the Christ, the Son of God. The High Priest condemned Him as a blasphemer; soldiers spat upon Him and mocked Him.

The Sanhedrin (Jewish court) also judged Him, but since the Jews were under Roman rule and so lacked the power to put a man to death, they took Him to the Roman governor, Pilate. Jesus told Pilate who He was, but Pilate refused to hear. Pilate did not want to put Jesus to death, believing Him to be innocent of the Jewish charges. He tried to have Him set free but when the crowd shouted, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" and the Jewish rulers threatened to report to Caesar that Pilate was not Caesar's friend, weakly Pilate ordered for Him to be crucified. Although Jesus was innocent, the High Priest condemned Him, the Jewish crowd rejected Him, and Roman justice failed Him. The crucifixion can be seen as the rejection of God's Son by the Jewish and Roman world.

At the same time, the crucifixion was no accident. Peter stated on the day of Pentecost, that Jesus was delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death (Acts 2:23). God foreordained His death, and Jesus was slain for our sin and transgression (Isa. 53:3). God punished Christ for the sins of His people. As Jesus was crucified Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. The writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS (John 19:19).

Every aspect of Jesus' death fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah. Two examples being that 1) Jesus was crucified between two thieves on the hill Golgotha (Isa. 53:12) and 2) in death His legs were not broken, symbolizing He was the unblemished Lamb of God (Exod. 12:5).

Jesus was upon the cross from 9 am to 3 pm. During this time, He not only suffered human suffering but also the very wrath of God. God's righteous judgment for the sins of His people was poured out upon Jesus. Between 12 noon and 3 pm the sun went dark as the judgment of God fell upon His Son.

Jesus said seven important statements upon the cross. We will consider them, as each reveals something of His mission.

1. *Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do* (Luke 23:34). Even while suffering an unjust death, Jesus cried out for mercy upon those who killed Him.
2. To the thief on the cross He says, *Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise* (Luke 23:43). Jesus pronounced forgiveness and assurance of salvation upon the thief who believed and repented, even though he could not do anything for his salvation.
3. *He said to the disciple, Behold your mother! And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home* (John 19:27). Jesus took care of His mother.
4. *At the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"* (Mark 15:34). Jesus cried out to God about His suffering on the cross. The wrath of God was poured out upon Him and the Father removed His presence from Jesus. Although He talks of being forsaken, His words were still ones of faith as they were directed to God.
5. *After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst"* (John 19:28).
6. *He said, 'It is finished!'* And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit (John 19:30). On the cross, Jesus fully bore the wrath of God. This act finished His great work of being the savior of sinners. This also shows us that it was Jesus who chose the moment of His own death.
7. *Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last* (Luke 23:46). Jesus' last words on the cross are words of faith as He returned to His Father.

After Jesus died, to make sure He was dead, a soldier pierced His side, and blood and water left His body, both a proof of His death and the fulfillment of prophecy (Exod. 12:46; Num. 9:12; Ps. 34:20). Jesus' body was taken down by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. Because it was late and the Sabbath was approaching, they took the body to a new tomb and buried Him.

5.4. Jesus' Resurrection

...who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification (Rom. 4:25).

On the third day Jesus rose from the dead! This showed the world that He was God, the Messiah and proved that the sins of His people had been dealt with. The disciples did not yet understand Jesus' words.

On Sunday, the first day of the week, the women went to the tomb to prepare Jesus' body. When they reached the tomb, the stone was rolled back and two angels spoke to them. "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. (6) He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. (7) Then go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you" (Matt. 28:5-7).

Later, Jesus met them and told them to rejoice, and commanded that they go tell the disciples. Peter and John ran to the tomb and finding it empty, believed in the resurrection. The Jews bribed the guards and told the story that Jesus' disciples had taken the body. The disciples then met Jesus, and came and worshiped Him. Jesus particularly manifested Himself to Peter, who had denied Him (John 21:15-19). By this, Jesus showed His love to Peter and restored him.

Jesus met His disciples in Galilee, and instructed them concerning their work. He said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28: 18-20). Amen. The disciples were the beginning of a new movement, a movement that would spread throughout the world as the church and the Kingdom of God were proclaimed.

6. What Does the Bible Teach and Why Do We Believe it?

In Luke 24:13-35, Jesus teaches us how to read the Bible. Luke tells us of two disciples who were walking away from Jerusalem. They were discouraged because Jesus their master, the one who they thought would deliver Israel, was dead. On the way they met a man, who asked them why they were so sad. They replied that they had been talking about “..... Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, (20) and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. (21) But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel” (Luke 24:19-21). The man they were talking to was Jesus Himself. He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! (26) Was it not necessary that the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” (27) And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. (Luke 24: 25-27). Jesus taught His disciples two great lessons. First, they could trust the Scriptures because Jesus, the Son of God, the only One who has risen from the dead, believed them. Second, Jesus showed them that the Old Testament Scriptures pointed to Him. When we read the Old Testament, we are to read it as a book that points us to Jesus Christ.

The resurrection of Jesus changed everything. Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would not only be the king of the Jews but, as a reward for His salvation, He would be given the nations as well. The remainder of the New Testament both interprets the Gospels and charts the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

7. The Three Synoptic Gospels

The word *synoptic* means together. We say that there are three synoptic gospels as the three accounts are so similar; both in the material they contain and the way they present the material. Since they are so similar, they are often studied together.

7.1. The Gospel of Matthew

been since the days of the early church, that the Apostle Matthew, also called Levi (Matt. 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17), was the human author. This Gospel was probably written before A.D. 70. Matthew is a Jew and he writes a Gospel for the Jews. The aim of his Gospel is to show that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Son of David, the Son of God, the Son of Man, Immanuel, the One to whom the Old Testament points - Jesus the King, and that the promised Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of heaven, has already dawned, brought in by the life, death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus.

We can divide the Gospel simply into three parts:

- 1) Its beginning or inauguration (Matt. 1:1- 4:11): this section includes Jesus’ genealogy, birth, baptism and temptation in the wilderness.

2) Its progress or culmination (Matt. 4:12-20:34): Here we find the commencement of Jesus' ministry, the Sermon on the Mount, the works of the Kingdom, and teachings on the nature and authority of the Kingdom.

3) Its climax and fulfilment (Matt. 21:1-28:20). This section contains the entry into Jerusalem, Jesus' betrayal, trial, death, and resurrection.

7.2. The Gospel of Luke

The writer of Luke's Gospel is almost certainly the writer of Acts due to the fact that they were both written to the same person, Theophilus. Also, the beginning of Acts starts by saying, 'In the first ... book I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach' (Acts 1:1). It is generally accepted that the author is the same Luke who was a companion of Paul (Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11, and Philem. 24), that he was a doctor, and a gentile. He was not a Jew, and he explains the importance of the gospel for the gentiles as well as the Jews. In the first four verses, Luke explains that he is providing provide an accurate, well ordered account of the basic Christian message so that his Greek friend would know the certainty of those things in which [he was] instructed (Luke 1:4). From his name, Theophilus (meaning one who loves God), we know he was a Greek and Luke probably had other Greek Christians, other lovers of God, in mind when he wrote. The Gospel and Acts were probably written about A.D.63.

This is the largest book in the New Testament. Its themes focus more on Christ as the great High Priest and Saviour, rather than on Jesus, the Son of David, Israel's true King. Accordingly, it abounds in stories in which our Lord's mercies towards the less privileged, the sick, the needy, social outcasts, sinners, women, children, people of all nations, are clearly shown. Jesus is constantly seen interacting with those on the margins of Jewish society. It also has those wonderful references to Jesus' birth, the angel's announcement to Mary, Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth, the mother-to-be of John the Baptist, Mary's beautiful and joyous song (Luke 1:46-55), the prophesy of Zacharias, John's father (Luke 1:67-79), and the meeting with old Simeon in the Temple and his prophetic words (Luke 2:29-32).

Another facet of Luke's interest in socio-economic issues is his strong teaching about the need for disciples to show their sincerity in following Jesus by the way they handle their money. Several of his unique passages (not found in the other Gospel accounts) focus on the matter of stewardship, e.g. John's exhortation (Luke 3:10-14), the parable of the 'rich fool' (Luke 12:13-21), that of the shrewd manager (Luke 16:1-13), the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), and Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). We do not know what factors in Luke's experience led him to say so much on this matter, but the state of the church today in more affluent areas speaks to the continuing need for such teaching.

Luke highlights the sovereignty of God in Jesus' ministry and death as Christ moves towards the city where He must die for sinners. The importance of prayer is also stressed; Luke records that Jesus prayed before crucial occasions of His ministry. Nine of Jesus' prayers are included in this Gospel (seven of which are found only in Luke) along with parables on prayer found only in this Gospel account.

7.3. Gospel of Mark

The Gospel of Mark is written in narrative or story form. It stresses the story of Jesus along with the story of His disciples as they followed Him. Unlike Matthew, it does not have five large teaching blocks and it omits the Sermon on the Mount. In contrast to Luke, who particularly

stresses that the gospel is for both the Jew and gentile, Mark focuses on (1) the fact that God in Christ has entered the creation, (2) the surprising nature of His coming, and (3) the nature and radical demands of discipleship. Mark wants us to know that Jesus came and turned the world upside down and for those who followed Him, everything changed.

Assignment Four

True or False. Circle correct answer

- T or F 1. Because Jesus' human body was made through the power of the Holy Spirit, he was not tainted with the sin and death brought in by Adam.
- T or F 2. As the second Adam, representative Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tested.
- T or F 3. The crowd wanted Jesus to create an immediate physical kingdom on earth.
- T or F 4. Jesus' disciples were surprised at his death since he had not told them his plan.
- T or F 5. Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss.
- T or F 6. Jesus never claimed to be the Christ, the Son of God.
- T or F 7. As the judgment of God fell upon Jesus on the cross, darkness came over the earth.
- T or F 8. Jesus rose from the dead, proving that our sins have been dealt with.
- T or F 9. Paul preached that the full extent of Christ's new creation has already come.
- T or F 10. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper after His resurrection.

Lesson Six Questions

1. Did Jesus exist before He was born? Give a verse to defend your answer.
2. What are two things do we learn about Jesus by reading His genealogy in the Gospels?
3. Which three persons do we see at Jesus' baptism?
4. Jesus' central message was _____
5. What was one sign that the Kingdom of God had come to earth?
6. Name one of the parables that Jesus used to show Israel that she was under God's wrath.
7. Why did Jesus die?
8. Name two of the seven statements made by Jesus upon the cross.
9. After Jesus' resurrection, Jesus was given power over all the nations. Prove this from Scripture.
10. What do we learn from Luke 24:27 (*...beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*)?

Lesson Seven: ACTS, PAUL, AND THE GENERAL EPISTLES

1. The Book of Acts

The Book of Acts charts the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome. For forty days, Jesus continued to teach His disciples about the Kingdom of God. He commanded them to wait until they had received the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit would enable them to be His witnesses in the world. According to His Father's divine plan, they would witness in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and unto the ends of the earth. He did not command them to do this He promised them that they would do it through His aid.

The disciples waited in Jerusalem until Pentecost. At Pentecost (the Feast of First Fruits), God poured down the first fruits of the Holy Spirit upon them (Acts 2). The Spirit landed upon them with tongues of fire, baptizing them and enabling them to speak in tongues, or other languages, so that all those gathered for the feast from all over the Roman Empire could understand them in their own language (Acts 20).

Peter preached to the multitude. Peter's sermon stressed that the Holy Spirit being poured out was a sign that the last days, the day of the Lord, of which the prophets had spoken, had come. He then argued that Jesus was the Christ because He had been raised from the dead. He pointed to Israel's sin that they had, by wicked hands, crucified their own Messiah, and then told them that if they repented and believed in Christ, they would be saved. As a fulfillment of the Covenant of Abraham, the promise was to them and to their children, and to all who believe.

Many repented and believed, and a new community, built around Jesus as the Messiah was born. This community, the church, was built upon the apostles' doctrine, prayer, fellowship, communion, and the breaking of bread (Acts 2:40-44). Over the next few months, the church grew powerfully in Jerusalem.

After a while, the rulers became jealous and persecution broke out. Initially the persecution occurred in Jerusalem but Saul, who would later become the apostle Paul, began to persecute the church more fiercely and more widely. He began by assenting to Stephen's death (the first martyr in Acts 7) and then expanded his efforts throughout Judea and on towards Damascus. Because of the bitter persecution, the church was forced to scatter. As Saul traveled to Damascus, he met Christ upon the road. Luke tells us what happened in Acts 9: 3-5,

Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him.(4) And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"(5) And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

Saul was converted and God began to prepare him to be His great apostle to the gentiles (non-Jews). God used the activities of Peter, John, and Philip to spread the gospel to the Jews throughout Judea and Samaria, the so-called lost tribes of Israel.

During this time, a church was founded in Antioch, one which would become the spearhead of missions into Asia. In Acts 13, the church set apart Paul and Barnabas for their great missionary labors. The first missionary journey (Acts 13-15) was through Galatia, and although the mission was hard (Paul is stoned and left for dead at Lystra; Acts 14:19), many Jews and gentiles were converted. Over the next few years, Paul went on a second missionary journey in order to revisit

the churches and to extend the gospel. This second missionary journey took the gospel to Europe, as Paul went through Athens and Corinth.¹⁵



Paul's third big missionary journey centered around Asia, particularly Ephesus, where he spent three years. He was concerned about Jewish/Gentile relationships and so he suggested that the gentile churches make a collection for the poor in Jerusalem. He instructed all the churches to set aside money each week (1Cor. 16) and to send the money, along with representatives from each church to Jerusalem. At the end of the third missionary journey, Paul and these representatives returned to Jerusalem.

The missionary journeys are full of instruction as to how to do missions. We see that Paul believed in teaching and preaching in each place he went. Paul also believed in founding churches. He wanted individual converts to be organized into a church. These churches were to be ruled, not by Paul, but through elders. Paul did not remain long in any area, but under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Paul appointed elders to rule and guide the church. Paul expected the church to be self-supporting in finances and administration. The church would receive the power to fulfill its function in the world through the power of the Spirit.

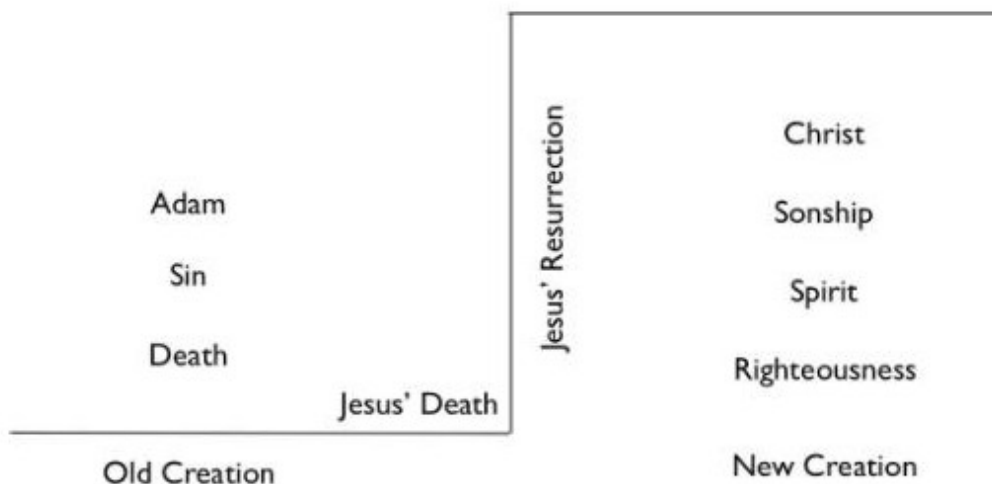
Paul returned to Jerusalem after the third missionary journey, but he was not well received. Many unconverted Jews believed that he had denied the faith. Many Christian Jews remembered his persecution of the church and were suspicious of the implications of the gentile Christians. James, the leader of the church suggested that Paul shave his head and attend the temple. Paul agreed, but hostile Jews, who falsely accused him of defiling the temple, spotted him. He was arrested. Luke records a series of defenses and places where Paul gives his testimony. In each case,

¹⁵ See www.whiteprint.co.uk

Paul was standing legal trial for himself and the Christian faith. In these defense speeches (fifty percent of all of Paul's recorded speeches in Acts), Paul showed clearly that he was an orthodox Jew, and so like the Pharisees, he believed in the Law. He also demonstrated that he had broken no Roman law and so he, like all Christians, was not a threat to the Roman emperor. Since the Jews sought to kill him, he was forced to appeal to Caesar, thus putting himself under Caesar's care. Paul was then taken to Rome as a prisoner. Paul spent two years in Rome, and, although he was confined, he could teach and write freely. Paul was released from prison around AD 60, and he continued his labors and then was later imprisoned a second time. Paul was executed by the Romans in approximately AD 64. We do not know the exact date.

2. Paul's Letters and Theology

Paul wrote thirteen letters. These letters are full of instruction and deal with individual issues in the churches. Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and 1 and 2 Corinthians were written during Paul's first three missionary journeys. Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon were written during his first Roman imprisonment. 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, the Pastoral Epistles, written to ministers of the gospel rather than to churches, were written during Paul's second imprisonment, shortly before his death. As we cannot look at each of the letters, we will just focus on Paul's worldview. I have diagrammed this worldview below.



Paul believed that the world was divided in two. First he held that Adam was head and representative of the old creation. Adam sinned, and so sin and death entered the creation. All men born from Adam are born sinners and under death. God promised Abraham a Seed who would bring salvation. This Seed would come through Israel and would be her Messiah, Jesus. Paul taught that Jesus was the second and the last Adam. Just as Adam represents the old creation under sin and death, even so Christ represents the new creation filled with Christ's righteousness, Sonship, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus brought in the new creation with His resurrection, although His creation has not yet fully come. The full extent of Christ's new creation will come when Christ returns. One who is saved by being united in faith to Jesus Christ, who trusts in His righteousness alone, with no reliance on self-righteous deeds, is already a part of God's new creation by his union with Christ's resurrection.

3. The General Epistles

All the books after the Pauline letters are called the General Epistles. They include 1 and 2 Peter, James, Jude, and 1,2,3 John whose author wrote Revelation as well. These books focus on the need for holy living and warn the church about false prophets and falling away.

4. The Conclusion: The Book of Revelation

The last book of the Bible is the book of Revelation. This is an apocalyptic book which uses the then present language of the first century to explain future mysteries. It is highly symbolic, using pictures and images to develop its message. It was written by the Apostle John while he was in exile. It is the last book of the Bible given by God to man. In it God's revelation to man is complete.

Although the book is complicated to understand, the main thrust is clear: Jesus, the triumphant King, is ruling upon His throne. Although the church will pass through many hardships, and there will be great tribulation, the church will endure to the end and be saved.

Revelation draws together a number of themes from the Old Testament. The Bible began with a garden, with Adam as its center, in Genesis 1, and ends with a new heaven and a new earth, with the New Jerusalem, a city with God and Christ firmly in its center. The story of the Bible is the story of the movement from Adam to Christ.

We end this introduction to the Bible with the last word in the book of Revelation. John ends the book by saying, He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming quickly.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! (Rev. 22:20).

Assignment Five

Matching. Write the Capital letter of the word below next to the matching statement.

A. Acts	B. Antioch	C. Bethlehem	D. General Epistles
E. Gentile	F. Gospels	G. John the Baptist	H. Mary
I. Mediator	J. Nazareth	K. Pentecost	L. Peter
M. Pharisees	N. Pilate	O. Revelation	P. Saul

	1. Feast of First Fruits when the Holy Spirit was poured out on Jesus' followers
	2. Denied Jesus three times. Later, preached at Pentecost. Many repented
	3. Town where Jesus was born
	4. Jewish religious rulers who were jealous of Jesus
	5. Town where Jesus grew up
	6. Roman Governor who under pressure ordered Jesus be crucified
	7. Persecuted church, then was converted and became the apostle Paul
	8. City with mission sending church; sent Paul and Barnabas on mission trips
	9. Book which presents Jesus the Triumphant King ruling upon His throne!
	10. Books which focus on the need for holy living
	11. Four records (witnesses) of the coming of Christ to earth
	12. Book which records the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome
	13. Last great Old Testament prophet. Baptized Jesus. Preached repentance.
	14. Non-Jewish people
	15. Virgin who gave birth to Jesus
I	16. One who stands between two people

Lesson Seven Questions

1. Jesus promised His disciples (and us) that He would send a comforter to lead them and guide them into all truth. Who is that comforter?
2. Jesus came to Saul on the road to Damascus and converted him. Saul was not seeking Jesus. He was seeking to kill those who followed Jesus. What can we learn about God and about our own salvation from Saul's story?
3. On how many missionary journeys did Paul go?
4. In every town where Paul preached he founded a _____.
5. Name three books written by Paul.

6. What are the General Epistles and why are they called such?
7. Name the General Epistles.
8. How does the Bible end? What should we learn from that?

Lesson Eight: THE AUTHORITY AND THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE

This lesson considers two related ideas: the authority of the Scriptures and the Canon of Scripture.

We say that the Bible is God's word to us today, but how did the Bible come into being. Today our Bibles have sixty-six books in them. We say that these sixty-six books are the word of God to His church. But there have not always been sixty-six books. In the early days of Israel, there was a time when all that the people of God possessed were the five books of Moses. Other books were then added over time until the Old Testament was complete. In the beginning of the New Testament age, the Bible of the early church was the Word of God in the Old Testament. Over time the Gospels and letters of the apostles were added to the Scriptures. Later, men would challenge if a book should or should not be included as God's Word.

In this lesson we will consider the authority of the Scriptures and the canon of Scripture: how the list of books that were accepted as God's Word came into being. As we will see ultimately, the authority of the Scriptures rests on Christ Himself. Jesus validated the Old Testament and He gave His authority to the apostles to speak in His name. On the death of the apostles, their authority and teachings were found in their writings. From these writings the New Testament developed.

1. Authority and Canon

Why do we trust the Scriptures? Why do we say God speaks to us in the Word? Why do we say that there are certain books that God Himself wrote? How did we chose these books and reject other books? The answer to these questions rests on the authority of Scripture. On what basis can a series of books, a list, or canon claim to be God's Word to us?

The word canon comes from a Hebrew word for reed or measuring reed which was used as a standard of measure. In the early church the idea of a canon first applied to a list of doctrine, or a doctrinal standard, but in the fourth century it was used to list the books in the Bible. That is how we use the word today. The canon of Scripture today refers to the list of books that we say are God's true and authoritative Word to us. God speaks to us in and through that Word but not in and through other words.

The doctrine of the canon of Scriptures raises the following issues. First, what were the historical processes that led to the church recognizing a certain section of books as God's Word? Second, is there a theology of the canon? Due to the way the Scriptures were written, it is also important to divide the forming of the canon between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

2. The History of the Canon

The history of the canon is complicated. Today we are so used to seeing the Bible in one book that we forget that it came to us in sections and over time. We also forget that there have been disputes as to what is and is not in the canon.¹⁶

3. The Theology of the Canon

The authority of the Scriptures is based on the Son of God. The writer to the Hebrews tells us that God spoke to men in stages, the final stage being the revelation in his Son. He says,

¹⁶ For an extended look at the history of the canon see *The Canon of the New Testament* by Metzger.

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, (2) but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. (Heb. 1:1,2)

The verses tell us that God was speaking in the Old Testament. He did so 1) on many occasions, 2) in a number of ways, and 3) He spoke through the prophets. Although God spoke in the Old Testament the great final revelation of God occurred when He sent His Son. This was the final and complete revelation of God.

We will use these verses to consider the authority and canon of the Old and New Testaments. We will begin studying how God spoke through the prophets in the Old Testament, and then we will consider how God spoke to us in and through His Son in the New Testament.

3.1. The Old Testament

The formation of the Old Testament occurred in stages. The Jews divided the Scriptures into the Law, the prophets, and the writings. We will use the same division to explain how the Old Testament came into being.

The foundation of the Old Testament is the Law, the first five books of Moses. The other two sections, the prophets and the writings, both build on the Law. If the Law laid the foundation, then the other aspects are like the walls of the house, they flow and build upon the foundation. The Scripture has one great message, one great theme, and since God is the ultimate author, the Scriptures are one book, and each part builds on the other and develops the same themes and truths.

3.1.1. The Law, the Pentateuch

The first stage in the development of the Scriptures was the Pentateuch, the first five books of Moses. God spoke to Israel through Moses. God confirmed that Moses was His prophet by many signs and wonders (Deut. 4:1-9).

The Law acted as the anchor, the foundation for the rest of the Old Testament. The Law of Moses was always the focus of Israel's life. Later, when Israel sinned and left the Law, the prophets called Israel back to the Law (Lesson Five). It was a call to repentance and to return. In the same way, the wisdom literature was a practical application of the Law (Lesson Four). The coming of the wisdom literature was not something new; it was a practical application of the Law. The Law is the foundation of all the Old Testament Scriptures

At the end of this period, God's revelation to Moses was complete. At this point God, warned Israel not to add to or take away from God's Word. In Deuteronomy chapters 1-3, Moses reiterates the history of Israel and then he reminds them that he gave them the Law. After this Moses clearly states to them that they must not add anything to God's word. It is complete (Deut. 4:2).

You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you. (Deut. 4:2)

In Deuteronomy 12:32, Moses again warns them that at the close of the giving of the Law, the canon is closed. Nothing must be added to it. This verse is particularly significant because in Deuteronomy 13:1ff, Moses goes on to warn against false prophets, those who claim to speak for God to Israel, so any claim to more revelation at this stage is false and so must be rejected.

"Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it. (13:1)

“If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder. (Deut. 12:32-13:1)

The giving of the Mosaic Legislation lays a foundation for the Old Testament and the rest of Scriptures. The Jews have always considered the first five books of the Bible as the Word of God. At this stage the revelation of God is complete and could not be added to. The only way new revelation could be added was if a new stage in redemptive history occurred. This new stage occurred in the coming of the prophets.

3.1.2. The Prophetic Period

The next major stage in redemptive history is the coming of the prophets. In the prophets God spoke to His people again. They had gone astray. They had left the covenant that God made with Israel through Moses, and so God calls them back to covenant faithfulness in accordance with the Law. The prophets did not bring completely new revelation; rather they built on to the Law given to Moses, either directly or indirectly. The prophets were rooted in the Law and called men back to the covenant that occurred when Israel was brought out of Egypt.

Although the prophetic message flowed out of the Law, they were also in a new period in redemptive history. Like Moses, the first prophets, Elijah and Elisha, are accompanied by many mighty signs to authenticate their message. The period of the prophets is the next stage of redemptive history.

The period of prophecy came to an end. In God’s wisdom there were no new prophets for four hundred years, from the time of Malachi to John the Baptist. In this gap there was no new prophecy. The coming of John the Baptist was the signal that a new period of revelation was coming in the New Testament.

3.1.3. Wisdom Literature

Wisdom Literature is also based on the Law of Moses (Ps. 1). The situation with Wisdom Literature is more complex. Even so, what the Jews called Wisdom Literature was a closed book by the time of the coming of Christ.

3.1.4. The End of the Old Testament Period

As we saw, Hebrews 1:1,2 indicates that the period of Old Testament revelation ended in the coming of Christ. It also states that it was a lesser revelation compared with Jesus’ coming. The coming of the Son is the great and final revelation of God.

Jesus also gives us an idea that the canon is closed. Jesus’ words in Matthew 23:34,35 comprise an important passage.

“Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, (35) that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.”

In these verses Jesus is speaking of how Israel always persecuted God’s people in the Old Testament. Jesus begins with Abel as the first martyr, and He ends with Zechariah as the last. This Zechariah is the Zechariah of 2 Chronicles 24:20,22. Chronologically, Zechariah was not the last martyr in the Scriptures, but he is last martyr mentioned in Chronicles. The Jews recognized Chronicles as the last book of the Old Testament. Jesus is referencing the first and last martyrs in the Old Testament canon. He refers to Chronicles last as this was the last of the Old Testament

books to be completed. Like the Jews, Jesus saw that the Old Testament canon was complete at this point.

Jesus, Matthew, and Luke all treated the canon as given in the Law, wisdom, and prophets, and that it was closed at the time of Jesus

In summary, the Old Testament Scriptures get their authority from:

1. The whole canon and the independent books are established on the authority of Christ.
2. The other New Testament writers cite the Old Testament as the Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1).
3. Judaism itself also held that the canon was contained in the Hebrew Scriptures.

3.2. The Process of New Testament Canon

3.2.1. Jesus the Cornerstone

As we have seen, the canon of the New Testament Scripture is based on Jesus' word. In the last days God spoke to us by His Son. Jesus' word is our final authority.

3.2.2. The Continuing Witness of the Apostles

The message of Jesus was repeated and witnessed by the Apostles.

An apostle was a messenger, one being sent out by God with the truth. He was God's agent, one speaking for God and for Christ. The apostles had to have been a witness of Jesus' resurrection and ministry (Acts 1:14-23). John also says that he was an eyewitness of Jesus' ministry (1 John 1:1-4). Even Paul says he saw the risen Lord (1 Cor. 15:7).

The apostles were a special group, called by Jesus, to witness Jesus and His life.

In Ephesians 2:20, Paul explains the relationship between Jesus, the apostles, and the church. He states Jesus is the cornerstone, the very basis of the building. The apostles are the foundation. They witness to the life and message of Jesus. Once you have laid a foundation no other foundation can be laid (1 Cor. 3:1). The message of the apostles is the foundation of the church.

In the same way, Jesus says to Peter that he is the rock upon which the church is built: And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18).

The promise is made to Peter as an apostle, and it is linked to his confession. Peter has confessed that Jesus is the Christ, God's final representative to men and that confession is the basis upon which the apostles witnessed and the church is built.

If we read the Scriptures we see that the apostles witness as the uniquely authorized witnesses to Christ.

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. (1Thess. 2:13)

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread. (1Cor. 11:23)

For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. (Gal. 1:12)

Over time, the apostles died. The remaining apostles saw this and called for the church to maintain the faithful apostolic witness. In Paul's letters he often speaks of them maintaining the traditions that he had taught them. In this case, the witness of Jesus, the truth about Jesus, is the tradition. As with Peter's confession the authority of the apostles is now found in their teaching. As Jesus had taught Paul, so Paul taught them and they were to teach others.

Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you. (1Cor. 11:2)

Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. (2Thess. 2:15)

Timothy is to guard the deposit (1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:14) with the stress being that it is an authority's deposit of the truth.

O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge. (1Tim. 6:20)

That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. (2 Tim. 1:14).

Paul saw that he would soon die and he wanted the church to hold fast to the truth. Once Paul had died, the church could not ask Paul any longer, but the truth was now found in his letters and in the faithful keeping of the story of Jesus.

3.2.3. John and the Close of the Canon

At the close of Moses' ministry, Moses warned that nothing should be added to God's Word and nothing should be taken away from it. In the same way, John is called to close the canon of Scripture.

The book of Revelation is the last book of the Bible. In it John speaks of what will happen, from the time of Jesus' first coming to the time that Jesus returns. John's words cover the entire New Testament period. It is the final revelation of God until the Lord Jesus comes again. Since John's revelation covers the whole period, John makes the same claim as Moses. John's words end the revelation of God in the New Testament.

For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; (19) and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. (Rev. 22:18,19)

4. Alternative Ways of Developing the Canon

In the section above, we have considered a theological understanding of the canon of Scripture. In the early church there were a number of ways and criteria that the church used to decide which books carried the authority of the Scriptures. The central idea was apostolic authority: was the work understood to be the writing of the true apostles. F.F. Bruce, in *The Canon of Scripture* (255ff), lists the following criteria that the early church used in deciding the canon:

1. Apostolic Authority
2. Antiquity
3. Orthodoxy
4. Catholicity
5. Traditional Use
6. Inspiration.

4.1. Apostolicity

Since Jesus Himself left nothing in writing, the most authoritative accounts of His life and ministry were those that came from His apostles. Paul's position as an apostle was clear and so his letters were accepted into the canon first. The letters of the other apostles were added later.

The simple test of apostolic authorship is not enough. There were clear problems with Luke/Acts as well as Hebrews, the gospels, and other books. In the case of the Gospels, by the second century two of the four gospels were ascribed to the apostles, Matthew and John. It was generally believed that Peter was said to have been behind the authorship of Mark. Luke was accepted as it was written by one of Paul's close associates so Paul's apostolic authority rubbed off on him. Hebrews remained a problem. Many said Paul wrote it, so it was accepted. I John was linked to John, but John's authorship of 2,3 John and Revelation were doubted so these books struggled to be accepted.

4.2. Antiquity

This is linked to apostolic authority. Since the basis of authority was the apostles, only those books written by the apostles and those which could have been written at the time of the apostles were accepted. Anything written later was not accepted. The work, the Shepherd of Hermas, was rejected as canon as it was written at a later date.

4.3. Orthodoxy

The early church (particularly Irenaeus) judged the books of the canon by the apostolic faith, their doctrine. If the writings reflected the truth of the gospel as taught and maintained in the church it would be accepted. If a new book was claimed, the test was, was its doctrine the same as that of the early church?

4.4. Catholicity

The word means universal nature. According to this teaching the more widely the work was circulated, the higher the chance it would gain recognition. In many cases the work would be sent to local church (c.f. Paul to Galatia), but then it would be seen increasing in circulation and so gaining a broader acceptance.

4.5. Tradition of the Church

Over time a corpus of authoritative New Testament literature was built up. If anyone tried to add to that list, they would have had to overcome the tradition of the church. This was a powerful break in the bringing in of new revelation.

4.6. Inspiration

This is linked to apostolic authority. As we have seen, inspiration was the Holy Spirit speaking upon the writer. While many of the early church fathers claimed to be writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they made a clear distinction between themselves and the apostles. Real inspiration came through the apostles.

5. Current Implications

The Bible we have is a complete book. Nothing can be added, nothing can be taken away. It will stay this way until Jesus comes again. At that point God will make all things new and we will have a lot more revelation as we see God face to face.

1. Anyone who adds to the Scripture or takes away from them is under God's judgment. Those who claim to have extra revelation from the Lord need to watch out.
2. The Scriptures are the sixty-six books God has given us, beginning at Genesis and ending in Revelation
3. The authority of the Bible rests on the word of Jesus.
4. The words of Jesus are clearer and more reliable than the any other form or claim to know God. We can read His word, or the words of His apostles and we can know with certainty what God wants.

Lesson Eight Questions

1. Where does the word canon come from? What does it mean?
2. On what does the authority of the Bible rest?
3. In what sense is the Law foundational to the rest of the Old Testament?
4. Can anything be added to the Law of Moses?
5. How do we know the prophetic period ended?
6. What was the function of the apostles?
7. Explain Ephesians 2:20. What part does Jesus play; what part do the apostles play and to what is the church compared?
8. Summarize John's writing in Revelation 22:18,19.
9. What six criteria did the early church use to establish if a book was to be part of the canon?
10. According to Bruce, why do we include Luke and Acts if they were not written by the Apostles?

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- Sahih Bukhari. http://sahih-bukhari.com/Pages/Bukhari_1_01.php
- Shepherd of Hermes, www.earlychristianwritings.com/shepherd
- Westminster Confession of Faith, www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_with_proofs

MAPS:

The maps to aid students have been downloaded from a number of websites. The fact that I have used a map does NOT endorse the theological position of the site.

www.biblestudy.org/maps/location-of-old-testament-events.html

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http://christrescuemission.org/yahoo_site_admin/assets/images/1225_map_ministry_of_Jesus_clipart.218205943_std.jpg

<http://jtf.org/israel/.exodus.map>

www.the-tribulation-network.com

Appendix 1: 90 DAY READING SCHEDULE

Day 1 Genesis 1 – Genesis 13:18	Day 45 Psalm 119:81 – Psalm 150:6
Day 2 Genesis 14 – Genesis 26:35	Day 46 Proverbs 1 – Proverbs 15:16
Day 3 Genesis 27 – Genesis 38:14	Day 47 Proverbs 15:17 – 28:28
Day 4 Genesis 38:15 – Genesis 49:33	Day 48 Proverbs 29 – Song of Songs 3:11
Day 5 Genesis 50 – Exodus 12:51	Day 49 Song of Songs 4 – Isaiah 10:13
Day 6 Exodus 13 – Exodus 25:40	Day 50 Isaiah 10:14 – Isaiah 25:12
Day 7 Exodus 26 – Exodus 36:38	Day 51 Isaiah 26 – Isaiah 37:38
Day 8 Exodus 37 – Leviticus 10:11	Day 52 Isaiah 38 – Isaiah 49:16
Day 9 Leviticus 10:12 – Leviticus 21:12	Day 53 Isaiah 49:17 – Isaiah 63:19
Day 10 Leviticus 21:13 – Numbers 4:28	Day 54 Isaiah 64 – Jeremiah 6:30
Day 11 Numbers 4:29 – Numbers 15:21	Day 55 Jeremiah 7 – Jeremiah 17:27
Day 12 Numbers 15:22 – Numbers 26:27	Day 56 Jeremiah 18 – Jeremiah 30:24
Day 13 Numbers 26:28 – Deuteronomy 1:25	Day 57 Jeremiah 31 – Jeremiah 44:18
Day 14 Deuteronomy 1:26 – Deuteronomy 13:18	Day 58 Jeremiah 44:19 – Jeremiah 52:64
Day 15 Deuteronomy 14 – Deuteronomy 28:52	Day 59 Jeremiah 53 – Ezekiel 7:27
Day 16 Deuteronomy 28:53 – Joshua 6:19	Day 60 Ezekiel 8 – Ezekiel 21:32
Day 17 Joshua 6:20 – Joshua 18: 28	Day 61 Ezekiel 22 – Ezekiel 33:20
Day 18 Joshua 19 – Judges 6:21	Day 62 Ezekiel 33:21 – Ezekiel 45:12
Day 19 Judges 6:22 – Judges 18:19	Day 63 Ezekiel 45:13 – Daniel 7:14
Day 20 Judges 18:20 – 1 Samuel 6:21	Day 64 Daniel 7:15 – Hosea 9:17
Day 21 1 Samuel 7 – 1 Samuel 18:30	Day 65 Hosea 10 – Amos 5:17
Day 22 1 Samuel 19 – 2 Samuel 1:27	Day 66 Amos 5:18 – Micah 5:15
Day 23 2 Samuel 2 – 2 Samuel 14:33	Day 67 Micah 6 – Haggai 2:23
Day 24 2 Samuel 15 – 2 Samuel 24:25	Day 68 Zechariah 1 – Zechariah 14:21
Day 25 1 Kings 1 – 1 Kings 9:14	Day 69 Malachi 1 – Matthew 9:8
Day 26 1 Kings 9:15 – 1 Kings 20:12	Day 70 Matthew 9:9 – Matthew 19:30
Day 27 1 Kings 20:13 – 2 Kings 8:15	Day 71 Matthew 20 – Matthew 28:29
Day 28 2 Kings 8:16 – 2 Kings 18: 37	Day 72 Mark 1 – Mark 10:34
Day 29 2 Kings 19 – 1 Chronicles 4:12	Day 73 Mark 10:35 – Luke 3:20
Day 30 1 Chronicles 4:13 – 1 Chronicles 15:29	Day 74 Luke 3:21 – Luke 11:13
Day 31 1 Chronicles 16 – 1 Chronicles 28:21	Day 75 Luke 11:14 – Luke 20:47
Day 32 1 Chronicles 29 – 2 Chronicles 14: 15	Day 76 Luke 21 – John 6:15
Day 33 2 Chronicles 15 – 2 Chronicles 28:27	Day 77 John 6:16 – John 16:4
Day 34 2 Chronicles 29 – Ezra 4:16	Day 78 John 16:5 – Acts 6:15
Day 35 Ezra 4:17 – Nehemiah 7:3	Day 79 Acts 7 – Acts 16:40
Day 36 Nehemiah 7:4 – Esther 4:17	Day 80 Acts 17 – Acts 28:31
Day 37 Esther 5 – Job 12:25	Day 81 Romans 1 – Romans 12:21
Day 38 Job 13 – Job 31:16	Day 82 Romans 13 – 1 Corinthians 12:31
Day 39 Job 31:17 – Psalm 8:9	Day 83 1 Corinthians 13 – 2 Corinthians 13:14
Day 40 Psalm 9 – Psalm 33:22	Day 84 Galatians 1 – Philippians 4:23
Day 41 Psalm 34 – Psalm 56:13	Day 85 Colossians 1 - 1 Timothy 6:21
Day 42 Psalm 57 – Psalm 77:20	Day 86 2 Timothy 1 - Hebrews 8:13
Day 43 Psalm 78 – Psalm 101:8	Day 87 Hebrews 9 - 1 Peter 2:25
Day 44 Psalm 102 – Psalm 119:80	Day 88 1 Peter 3 - Jude vs. 25
	Day 89 Revelation 1 - Revelation 17:18
	Day 90 Revelation 18 - Revelation 22:21

BIOGRAPHY

Julian Zugg was born in England and raised in South Africa. In 1986, he moved back to England. He read Law and qualified as a Barrister (US trial lawyer). He taught Law at Buckingham University for eight years and was involved in two Reformed Churches and a mission work to Eastern Europe.

In 2001, he graduated from Reformed Theological Seminary (MDiv. Jackson) and worked as an assistant/associate minister involved in all areas of pastoral ministry in the Presbyterian Church in America from 2002-2008. In 2008, he was called as the Director of Theology at Belize Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Belize, preparing candidates for pastoral ministry in the Presbyterian Church and other denominations. He is currently the International English Director for Miami International Seminary, where his duties include teaching, writing, developing, and supporting MINTS centers in eleven countries.

He has written the following courses for MINTS, available at <http://courses.mints.edu/>

Acts, Apologetics, Introduction to the Scripture, the Doctrine of the Church, Covenant Theology, Eschatology, Jonah, Mission, the Synoptic Gospels, Reformed Worship, The Book of Revelation.