





# THE BOOK OF GENESIS

## Name

The first book of the Bible is called "Genesis." The Jews designated the book according to its first words "B'reshith" (in the beginning). The word "Genesis" itself means origin, source, and/or generation. It is the first book of the "Pentateuch" (Pente – five, teuchos – volumes) of Moses.

## Purpose

The Purpose of the first book of the Pentateuch is to give a brief survey of the history of divine revelation from the beginning until the Israelites are brought into Egypt, ready to be formed into a God-fearing nation. It relates the creation of the world, of man, God's covenant with man, the fall into sin, the covenant of grace, and the lives of the patriarchs.

The book itself comprises two parts. The first deals with the period from the Creation to the call of Abraham (Gen. 1–12), and the second with the call or the preparation of the patriarchs. The first section is somewhat negative, showing the need for the segregation from the world of peculiar people, and the remaining section serves the positive end of relating the segregation of that people. The approximate historical years that the book of Genesis covers is about 1600.

## Analysis

Genesis 1:1–2:3 The Creation of Heaven and Earth. 4004 B. C.

All things had their beginning through the creative hand of God. Genesis 1 places stress on God's absolute monarchism by having the word God (Elohim) appear 32 times in the first chapter. God wasn't complacent about what he made, for 7 times it was repeated, "and He saw that it was good." The creation took place in 6 normal days; no matter how often contested, science has never discovered any facts that are in conflict with the statements of chapter 1.

Genesis 2:4–4:26 The Generations of the Heavens and the Earth.

Along with the generations from Adam to Noah, this part of scripture has often been criticized for its inaccurate account of creation. This section is not a duplicate but serves, a) to point out that creation has already taken place; b) to prepare the way for the planting of the Garden of Eden 2:8 – 9, c) to add certain details about man's original condition which would have been out of place in chapter one.

Genesis 5:1–6:8 The Book of the Generations of Adam.

The genealogy of chapter 5 is not intended to furnish a chronology. Rather, Moses selected 10 representative names in order to show the unrestrained, universal reign of death over man. There is one exception, that is Enoch.

Genesis 6:9–9:17 The Generations of Noah.

Note in this section the contrast between the upright character of Noah 6:9 and the general wickedness of mankind 6:11–13. That was why the destruction of the world and its civilization occurred by the flood. (Book: The Flood by Rehwinkel)

Genesis 10:1–11:9 The generations of the Sons of Noah. 2348 B. C.

This brief section records the dispersion of mankind over the face of the earth.

Genesis 11:10–26 The generations of Shem.

Genesis 11:27–25:11 The generations of Terah. 1996 B. C.

The principal theme of this section is the life of Abraham, the patriarch. Abraham was called from his land to answer to a three-fold promise and, with respect to each element of this promise, was severely tested. Promise of a land; promise of a numerous seed; promise of a universal blessing.

Genesis 25:12–18 The generations of Ishmael (son of Abraham and Hagar).

Genesis 25:19–35:29 The generations of Isaac (son of Abraham and Sarah).

Genesis 36:1–37:1 The generations of Esau (twin son of Isaac and Rebecca).

Jacob stole the birthright and fled to Laban, his uncle.

Genesis 37:2–50:26 The generations of Jacob (twin son of Isaac and Rebecca).

Jacob had 12 sons. Joseph sold to the Ishmaelites for 30 pieces of silver. After years in Egypt, becomes second in command to Pharaoh during the seven year famine. His brothers come from Canaan for food; Joseph recognized them. Father moves to Egypt with sons. Before his death he pronounces curses and blessings. To Judah is given the blessing of nations.

## Questions on Genesis

1. Where did the light come from in 1:2, since God did not create “sun, moon and stars” until the 4<sup>th</sup> day, vv. 14–19?
2. What significance is the “us” in 1:26?
3. Could Adam and Eve really understand what God told them about “death” in 2:17?
4. What need did Adam have in his perfect condition according to 2:18?
5. What is the fundamental difference with all non-Christian religions according to 3:4?
6. What curses on creation are revealed in Chapter 3? Blessings?
7. Where did Cain get his wife 4:16–17? Where did she come from?
8. How come Methuselah lived 962 years and God in 6:3 limited future people not to live beyond 120 years?

Genesis

9. How large was the ark? Chapter 6. How could two animals of every kind be on the ark? Dinosaurs?
10. What was the covenant sign God made with Noah? 9:3
11. From where do all generations emanate? 9:18
12. How did God confound the “tower to heaven?” Chapter 11
13. What was Abram’s problem? 12:10–20
14. How was Lot related to Abram? Chapter 13
15. What was wrong with Abram’s activity in 16:1–2
16. Who were Abraham’s three visitors in 18:1–2?
17. Why did Abraham want to preserve Sodom and Gomorrah? 18:16–33
18. Is such a test of Abraham biblically explainable? 22:1–19
19. What does 24:9 mean?
20. What ages had people attained in Chapters 24–25? Explain.
21. How did Jacob describe his dream? 28:10–22
22. What’s your favorite thought in the story of Jacob and Esau? Chapters 29–31
23. How can 32:22–32 happen?
24. Who would care if Joseph committed adultery? 39:2, 9
25. How long was Joseph in prison? Chapter 41
26. How did Joseph understand difficulties? 50:19–20

**Paragraph Summaries**

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# THE BOOK OF EXODUS

## Name

The Book of Exodus was named by the Jews after its opening words, "we'elloh shemoth" (and these are the names) or simply "shemoth" (names). The word "Exodus" comes from the two Greek words, "ex-hodos" (from, or out of, the place).

## Purpose

The second Book of the Pentateuch serves as a connecting link between the preparatory history contained in Genesis and the remaining books of the Law. 430 years passed between Jacob's migration to Egypt till Exodus 12:40 – 41. In this time the Israelites increased exceedingly, 1:7. At the time of the Exodus there were 600,000 men above 20, besides women and children, Numbers 1:46. This would total about 3,000,000 people. In order for 70 people to have reached this number in 430 years, it would be necessary to double about every 25 years. (Compare population of the U.S. in 400 years.) Following the rapid growth of the Israelites in Egypt, comes the exodus from Egypt. They were now to be relieved from their terrible bondage under the Egyptians and to be led on to the promised land in Canaan, prepared to do so by the mighty hand of God intervening for them through His miraculous ways—proving to them over and over that He was their God and covenant-redeemer. Ch. 1-19.

This marked the first great division in the Pentateuch. Up to this point the Law was distinguished primarily by narrative; from here on it is characterized by legislation. From now on the people are to be ready to be organized into a theocratic nation, and hence must receive the legislation necessary for such organization. The legislation consists of three parts: that given at Mt. Sinai (Exodus, Leviticus); that given in the wilderness wanderings (Numbers); and that delivered in the plains of Moab (Deuteronomy). The remainder of Exodus (20 – 40) concerns the legislation given by God at Mt. Sinai. First the basic moral law is proclaimed, and this is followed by certain ordinances of the covenant that is ratified. Then come the directions of the Tabernacle, the dwelling place of the Holy God. These directions at first were not carried out (golden calf, etc.), but later on were carried out as God had commanded.

## King of Egypt

Amenhotep II, 1450 B. C.?

He maintained the empire founded by Thotmes III. His mummy is in his tomb at Thebes. Why do we choose him? The Amarna Letters, written to Amenhotep III, urging help from Pharaoh, indicate that at that time Palestine was being lost to the "Habiri" Hebrews. (For quotes of those letters check Halley's Bible Handbook page 112).

## Analysis

Exodus 1:1 – 7 Introduction.

List of Jacob's sons and immense increase of the Israelites.

## Exodus

Exodus 1:8 – 7:7 The bondage of Israel in Egypt.

Because of their increase in population in Egypt, the Egyptians sought four measures to oppress them: 1) taskmasters were appointed – verse 11; 2) this was not successful so the bondage was increased – verse 13 – 14; 3) command to the midwives was issued to destroy the male children; 4) the entire people were commanded to destroy the male children.

Chapter 2 Narrates the birth and preparation of Moses.

Chapter 3 Continues Moses' preparation and his complaints to the Lord. (Inadequate, not eloquent. How often has this not been our complaint when asked to serve the Lord?)

Chapters 4 – 7 Moses sets out for Egypt.

Exodus 7:8 – 13:16 The Lord's Wonders in Egypt.

This section has as its purpose to demonstrate the power of the true God over the false religions in Egypt. The plagues were:

1. Blood
2. Frogs
3. Lice
4. Flies
5. Murrain
6. Boils
7. Hail
8. Locusts
9. Darkness
10. Death of the Firstborn

Passover, chapter 13, instituted in Egypt.

Exodus 13:17 – 18:27 The Exodus from Egypt

The route to Canaan by way of the Wilderness of Sin and Mount Sinai was a very difficult one (check the map). Would it not have been easier to go by way of the coast of the Mediterranean? Explain. God gives the directive as to the detailed line of march, 14:1 – 14. Pharaoh's reaction to their leaving can be summarized in the story of the Red Sea incident. Did the waters really part? Did God really harden Pharaoh's heart?

In Chapter 16 we read about the incident of Manna and Quail...can this be proved physically? Chapter 17 – water from the rock. Chapter 18 – Jethro's advice to Moses and the children of Israel.

Exodus 19:1 – 24:18 The Covenant at Mt. Sinai.

Chapter 19 – 20, the giving of the Law.

Chapter 20:22 – 23:33 is of Mosaic origin and it refers to the general form of worship in Israel; to the rights of the Israelites in civil and ceremonial matters; and to the Lord's attitude toward his people. (General form of worship 20:22 – 26, Civil legislation 21:1 – 23:13...compare

Hammurabi's Code of Laws, 2000 B. C. ...Ceremonial Legislation, 23:14 – 19...and God's attitude toward His people).

Exodus 25:1 – 31:18 Directions for the Tabernacle.

Exodus 32 – 33 The Golden Calf (Bull was principal god of Egypt)

Exodus 34 Moses again on the Mount; 40 days and nights; tablets remade.

Exodus 35 – 40 The Tabernacle built: 45' long, 15' high, 15' wide.

The gold and silver alone in the Tabernacle is estimated at about one million dollars. This was supplied out of the treasures given by the Egyptians, 12:35.

### Questions on Exodus

1. How were the women helped in childbirth in Chapter 1? What happened to the boys?
2. How did Pharaoh's daughter come into the picture in Chapter 2 relative to the Hebrew babies?
3. What was the significance of the burning bush in Chapter 3?
4. What was Moses' complaint in Chapter 4 relative to God's divine call?
5. How did Pharaoh make the Israelites working conditions more difficult in Chapter 5?
6. What were the various plagues in Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10 supposed to accomplish?
7. Is God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart an activity of love and mercy on God's part, 10:27-29?
8. What was the Passover of Chapter 12 supposed to signify?
9. What was the purpose of the "redeeming of the first-born" in Chapter 13?
10. What purpose did the pillar of fire and pillar of cloud serve in Chapter 14?
11. How did Moses explain the miracle of the "parting of the sea" in Chapter 15?
12. What was the purpose of the grumbling in Chapter 16? How many times is the word "grumbling" used?
13. How did Joshua in Chapter 17 overcome the Amalekites?
14. According to Chapter 18, what major change took place as a result of a father-in-law's counsel?
15. How does Chapter 19:18-20 compare to the lesson in II Thessalonians 1:7-12?



16. Where else besides in Exodus 20 are the Ten Commandments recorded?
17. There are three kinds of Old Testament Laws—moral, civil and ceremonial. What are the Laws in Chapters 21, 22 and 23?
18. What conditions and help are described to Israel as they traveled to the Promised Land in Chapter 23?
19. How did the glory of the Lord look to the Israelites as they looked to the mountain? Chapter 24
20. How was the Tabernacle to be constructed and supported according to Chapter 25
21. What is the Ark? Chapter 25
22. What was the significance of the ornateness of the priests garments in Chapter 28?
23. Why was there such an elaborate consecration of the priests in Chapter 29?
24. What kind of Laws do we find in Chapters 30 and 31?
25. How do you explain the double giving of the Law in Chapters 33 and 34?
26. What catches your eye in Chapters 36-40 about the Tabernacle and furnishings?

### Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

## Name

The word "Leviticus" means "pertaining to the Levites;" that is, the book contains the System of the Laws, administered by the Levitical Priesthood, under which the Hebrew nation lived. These laws were given mostly at Mount Sinai, with additions, repetitions and explanations, throughout the wilderness wanderings. The Levites, one tribe out of the twelve, were set apart for the work of God. God took them in lieu of the First-Born sons of Israel. God claimed both the first-born of men and flocks. They were supported by Tithes; and had 48 cities. Numbers 35:7; Joshua 21:19. One family of Levites, Aaron and sons were set apart to be the priests. The rest of the Levites were to be assistants to the Priests.

## Purpose

The book of Leviticus contains the laws, which are to govern the organized people of God in their religious and civil life. At Mt. Sinai the Israelites had formally organized into a theocratic nation. The Basic law had been given, the covenant had been ratified, and the Tabernacle erected. Thus the Lord had taken up His abode in the midst of His people. Before the people could continue their journey to the Promised Land, however, it was necessary that they should know the Laws that would guide them in their worship of the Lord at the Tabernacle. These laws were contained in the book of Leviticus . . . the approximate date, 1491 B.C.? In order to understand the book of Leviticus, one must first of all understand the narratives in the book of Exodus.

## Analysis

There is in the book a deep, underlying unity of plan and thought which expresses itself in a two-fold way. First, Leviticus deals with the removal of the defilement which separates man from God, and secondly, with the restoration of lost fellowship between man and God.

A. The removal of that defilement which separates man from God.

I. Leviticus 1:1 – 7:38 The Law of Sacrifice.

From the Tabernacle, God's dwelling place, the Lord spake unto Moses, even as He had promised in Exodus 25:22 revealing His holy will concerning the sacrifices whereby the defilement of the sinful people might be removed and they might draw near to Him in humble faith.

(a) Burnt Offering Chapter 1 - Bulls, rams, goats, doves and pigeons were holy burned signifying entire self-dedication to God.

- (b) The Meal Offering Chapter 2 - Grain flour or cakes were without leaven; a handful was burned, the rest was for the priests.
  - (c) The Peace Offering Chapter 3 - They were cattle, sheep, and goats, the fat of which was burned. The rest was eaten by priests and offerers.
  - (d) The Sin Offering, Chapter 4:1 - 5:13; Trespass Offering, Chapter 5, 14-26. Different offerings for different sins; fat was burned; the rest in some cases was burned without the camp, and in some cases even by the priests.
  - (e) Besides the burnt offerings, Chapter 6, and the meal and sin offerings, there were also drink-offerings, wave-offerings, and heave offerings. The manner of sacrifice: the animal was presented at the tabernacle. The offerer laid his hands on it, making this representative. Then it was slain. The blood was then smeared or sprinkled on the altar and poured out at its base. The specified part was then burned. Frequency of Offerings: daily; morning and evening; doubled on the Sabbath. Doubled (or more) also for special days.
- II. Leviticus 8:1-10:20 The consecration of the priests. According to the instructions in Exodus 29:1-36 and 40:12-25, Moses now proceeds to anoint Aaron and his sons. The Levitical priesthood was divinely ordained as mediator between God and the Hebrew nation in the ministry of animal sacrifices. Those sacrifices were fulfilled in Christ. Animal sacrifices are no longer necessary; neither are the priests. (Roman Catholic priests). Warning against high-handed treatment of God's ordinances in story of Nadab and Abihu.
- III. Leviticus 11:15-33 The Clean and the Unclean. Purification. Very simply, what was clean and unclean for eating purposes. Does that distinction still apply today? (Acts 10:12-15) Chapter 12: Purification of a woman after childbirth; 40 days for the boys; 80 days for the girls. Leviticus 13-14: Laws of Leprosy. Leviticus 15: Purification after certain secretions: vv. 1-15, a running issue from man; vv. 16-18, the issue of seed; vv. 19-24, the issues of woman; vv. 25-33, diseased issue of woman. These laws of purification were designed to promote personal, physical cleanness and the continual recognition of God in all the ways of life. Penalty was separation from the sanctuary and the congregation.
- IV. Leviticus 16: Annual Day of Atonement. 10<sup>th</sup> day of 7<sup>th</sup> month. On this day the High Priest entered the most holy place. The restoration of the lost fellowship between man and God, Chapters 16-26.
- V. Leviticus 17:1-16 Manner of Sacrifice. The law required the presentation of the animals at the door of the Tabernacle. The eating of blood was strictly forbidden, 3:17. Leviticus 18-Canaanite

Abominations. If we wonder about these things, incest, sodomy, cohabitation with animals, they are mentioned because they were in common practice among Israel's neighbors. Leviticus 19:18 – Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. This was the highest light of the Mosaic Law. 19:20, concubinage, polygamy, divorce and slavery were allowed but greatly restricted. Leviticus 20 – Capital punishment from murder to incestuous marriages. (Compare laws of Moses to those of Hammurabi.)

- VI. The holiness of the priests. Leviticus 21:22-33. They must be without physical blemish, and may marry only a virgin. Sacrificial animals must be without blemish and at least eight days old.
- VII. The consecrations of seasons. Leviticus 23:1-24:23. Chapter 23: A list of times at which holy convocations were to be held: a) vv. 1-3, the Sabbath; b) vv. 4, the annual feasts; vv. 5-8 the Passover; vv. 9-14, the First-fruits; vv. 15-22, the feast of harvest; c) vv. 23-35, Pentecost; d) vv. 26-32, the day of atonement; e) vv. 33-43 the feast of tabernacles. Chapter 24: Blasphemy to be punished with death. The "eye for an eye" legislation, 24:19-21, was part of the civil law, perfectly just. See Matthew 5:38 and Luke 6:27.
- VIII. The Sabbatical and Levitical Years. Chapter 25 – Sabbatical year was every seven, and the year of jubilee was over 50. It began on the Day of Atonement. All debts were cancelled; slaves were set free, lands that had been sold, returned.
- IX. Leviticus 25 – Promises and Threats. This chapter, like Deuteronomy 28, of the magnificent promises and frightful warnings, is one of the great chapters of the Bible. Read it often.
- X. Leviticus 27:1-34 – Vows and Tithes. This chapter falls into seven parts, verse 1-8, the vows of persons; verse 9-13, animals; verse 14-15, a house; verse 16-25, firstlings; verse 28-29, devoted things; verse 30-34, the 10<sup>th</sup> of the land.

The summary of this book and its depth of understanding of laws can be given as God so often spoke to Moses, "YE SHALL BE HOLY FOR I THE LORD YOUR GOD AM HOLY."

### Questions on Leviticus

1. What does "an aroma pleasing to the Lord" mean in 1:9, 13?
2. Why was the grain offering in 2:11 to be made without yeast?

Leviticus

3. What does 3:17 mean?
4. How does unintentional sin and sin awareness differ in 4:13-17?
5. Could 5:1 be wisely applied into today's culture and environment?
6. Explain 6:26-29!
7. What is one of the ways a priest gets fed, 7:5-7?
8. What was the Urim and Thummim Moses placed in the breast plate of Aaron, 8:7-9?
9. How did the glory of the Lord appear to Moses and Aaron in 9:23 and 24?
10. Why were Aaron and his sons not supposed to drink any fermented beverage, 10:8-11?
11. How were animals, birds and fish to be identified for human consumption defined in 11:1-23?
12. What does 13:40 and 41 mean about baldness?
13. How would the Israelites know "an infectious disease," 14:7?
14. What does 16:20-22 signify?
15. On the Day of Atonement, of what was the Israelite to be assured, 16:29-32?
16. What is the significance of 17:10-11?
17. How does God want us to see sexual sins in 18:28-30?
18. What was the purpose of this exercise in 19:9-10?
19. In 20:5-6 it speaks about "Setting your face against a man and his family." What does that mean?
20. When you read Chapter 21 about the rule for Priests, what point stands out above the rest?
21. What is constant with the idea of "worship" in Chapter 23?
22. Why is so much made in Chapter 24:10-16 about the blasphemy of God? Is it forgivable?
23. In Chapter 25, what is the difference between houses in walled and open cities as it relates to the year of Jubilee?

Leviticus

24. In Chapter 26, what is the spiritual antidote for disobedience and hostility against God, 26:40-45?
25. Who does 27:34 suggest is the author of Leviticus?

### Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

## Name

By the Jews, this book was called "In the Wilderness" (Bemidhbar). However, in the Septuagint, it was given the name "Numbers" for the numbering and the arrangement of the people.

## Purpose

The book of Numbers follows naturally the legislation of Leviticus. The priestly laws have been revealed and the nation is now on its march to the land of promise. Hence, Numbers first relates the preparations that were made for the departure from Sinai. It then narrates the departure of the Israelites from Sinai until they finally come to the plains of Moab, and then closes with their recital of certain events which occurred there, together with instructions for the conquest and division of the land.

## Analysis

The book falls into three principal divisions: 1) Preparation for the departure from Sinai, 1:1-10:10; 2) The journey from Sinai to the plains of Moab, 10:11-21:35; 3) The events in the plains of Moab 22:1-36:13.

### I. Numbers 1:1-10:10 - Preparations for the departure from Sinai

The period herein described occupied nineteen days, from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month of the second year after the Exodus from Egypt. Chapter 1: The census taken at Mt. Sinai showed 603,550 males above the age of 20, exclusive of Leviticus 25-27. Another census, 38 years later on the banks of the Jordan, showed 601,730. (See chapter 26.) Three objections have been made concerning these chapters: 1) How was it possible for 70 families to have produced almost three million people in 430 years? 2) How could the wilderness have supplied food for all these people? 3) The order of march in chapter 2 and 10:14-20 is said to have been impossible.

#### Chapters 2-4 - Organization of the Camp

When camp was finally broken, Judah and the eastern tribes led the march. In the center, the Tabernacle was bulwarked with the southern tribes and western tribes; the northern tribes bringing up the rear.

#### Chapters 5-6 - Cleansing and Blessing of the Congregation

About lepers, restitution, women suspected of adultery and vows. The beautiful Benediction, 6:24-26.

**Chapters 7-9 - Preparation for the Journey**

Offerings of the princes. Dedication to the Tabernacle. Levites consecrated. The Passover observed. The Cloud 9:15-25. (See Exodus 13:21.)

**II. Numbers 10:11-21:35 - The Journey from Sinai to the Plains of Moab.**

**Chapters 10-11 - They set forward to the Promised Land**

They had been at Mt. Sinai one year. The Cloud lifted. The silver trumpets sounded. Judah led the march. But within three days, they began their murmuring. 10:3, 11:1-3. That was their specialty. God sent them quails.

**Chapter 12 - An account of the presumptuous conduct of Miriam and Aaron against Moses.**

When it was all over, Miriam wished she never started the whole thing. (Does this sound close to home?)

**Chapters 13 and 14 - Twelve spies sent to Canaan**

Discouraging reports brought back by ten of the spies. Joshua and Caleb brought back glowing reports. These two men were the only males over twenty of the 600,000 who entered Canaan.

**Numbers 15, 18-19 - Regulations about Offerings, Priests and Levites.**

An expansion of Leviticus 1-9, interspersed with wilderness story.

**Numbers 16 and 17 - The Rebellion of Korah**

Korah, jealous of Moses, sought to usurp his leadership. Moses went straight to God, as he did in every crisis. And God settled the matter in no time. The earth opened and the rebels went down.

**Numbers 20 - Final start for Canaan**

There seems to be a gap of thirty-eight years between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> chapters, covering the interval between the first arrival at Kadesh 13:26 and the final departure from Kadesh for Canaan, of which we are told nothing. In chapter 33 there is a list of forty encampments from Egypt to Moab. Therefore, we judge that the "many days at Kadesh" (Deuteronomy 1:46) could possibly refer to this lapse of time that is not accounted for, Kadesh always being the central headquarters during many of those encampments. The death and burial of Aaron and Miriam are recorded in this chapter. Both chapters 20 and 21 record the problems of Moses with the Edomites, Amalekites, and the Canaanites just north of Kadesh. Was not the hand of God at work through these heathen nations to keep



the children of Israel out of Canaan until the forty years were accomplished? The story of the Brazen Serpent. (700 years later Hezekiah destroyed it, II Kings 18:4.)

**III. Numbers 22:1-36:15 - Events in the Plains of Moab and Numbers 22-25 - Balaam**

His prophecies were a remarkable prediction of Israel's influential place in history, through a "Star" (brilliant ruler) to arise out of Jacob, 24:17. Even though God used him for this prophesy, he was the instigator of Israel's shameful sin with the Moabitish and Midianite women, for which Balaam and 24,000 Israelites lost their lives.

**Chapter 26 - The Second Census**

The wilderness must have been terribly hard on the Israelites for in the process of thirty-eight years, there were 2,000 less people (males above twenty). Of the 600,000 in the first census, only two beyond sixty survived. The younger generation, hardened by the desert, were in courage and fibre a different class of men from what their fathers had been as slaves freshly freed from the flesh-pots of Egypt.

**Chapters 27 through 36 - Various Regulations and Events**

**The Jewish Calendar**

<u>Month</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Approximate Date</u>	<u>Feast</u>
1st	Abib or Nisan	April	Passover
2nd	Ziv or Lyar	May	
3rd	Sivan	June	Pentecost
4th	Tammuz	July	
5th	Ab	August	
6th	Elul	September	
7th	Ethanim or T shri	October	Tabernacles
8th	Bul or Marcheshvan	November	
9th	Chislev	December	Dedication
10th	Tebeth	January	
11th	Shebat	February	
12th	Adar	March	Purim

## Questions on Numbers

1. How were men conscripted into the “army of the children of Israel?” Chapter 1
2. What tribe according to 1:49-54 were exempted from military duty and why?
3. According to Chapter 3, why did the sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu “fall dead before the Lord?”
4. What do you think of the judgment of God toward adultery, 5:12-22? Too severe?
5. What according to Chapter 6 must a Nazirite do as his “vow of separation to the Lord?”
6. Where do you hear the words in 6:24-26 used?
7. According to Chapter 8, when was a priest of the Levites to retire and why?
8. How did the children of Israel know when to leave their encampment, 9:15-23?
9. According to 11:26-28, what was the issue with Eldad and Medad?
10. What was the quality of leadership that enabled Moses to lead the Israelites, 12:1-3?
11. How according to 12:5-8 would Moses be different than the prophets of his day?
12. What does “punishing to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generations” mean in 14:17-19?
13. What happened to the Sabbath breaker, 15:32-36?
14. According to 16:28-34, how was Korah’s rebellion stopped?
15. What was the significance of the “rod of Aaron blossoming and producing almonds,” 17:6-12?
16. What were Aaron’s new responsibilities according to 18:2-5?
17. What was the use to which the red heifer’s burned ashes should be used, 19:9-10?
18. Why was Moses forbidden by God to bring the community into the promised land, 20:9-13?
19. What was the real reason the Edomites refused to let the Israelites pass through their land, 20:20? Deuteronomy 2:4-6
20. What was the “snake on a pole” in 21:8-9 supposed to fore-picture? John 3:14-15
21. How was Balaam convinced finally to say what he did in 22:38?

22. What do you think is prophetically intended with Balaam's 4<sup>th</sup> oracle in 24:17-19?

23. Why did the Lord God demand sexual abstinence with the Moabite women in 25:1-4?

24. What was special about Joshua that he would take the leadership of Moses by God, 27:15-21?

25. What were the cities of refuge and for what were they intended, 35:6-33?

### Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

## Name

The word "Deuteronomy" means the "second law" or the "repetition of the law." In Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, law had been given at intervals. Now, their wanderings over, on the eve of their entrance into Canaan, these laws were rehearsed and expounded, in anticipation of, and with applications to, settled life.

## Purpose

Deuteronomy contains the last addresses of Moses to the People, delivered in the plains of Moab. It is not to be regarded merely as a repetition of the three previous books, but rather an explanation, and enforcement of the most essential contents of the covenant revelation and the covenant laws which were intended as a permanent foundation for the life and well-being of the people in the Land of Canaan.

## Analysis

### Deuteronomy 1:1-4:13 – Moses' First Discourse

Review, in retrospect of Numbers 1-33. After one of the noblest and most heroic accomplishments of the ages, Moses' final appeal to God to let him go over the Jordan was denied (3:23-28), because God had something better for him in a better world. This section closes with an earnest exhortation to observe God's commandments, to teach them diligently to their children and to shun idolatry, with the everlasting reminder that their safety and protection would depend on their loyalty and obedience to God.

### Deuteronomy 4:44-26:19 – The Second Address of Moses

An extended exposition of the Ten Commandments, the foundation law of the theocracy. These commandments were repeated from Exodus 20 with slight variations. Moses ends chapter 5 explaining more fully the nature of the events which had occurred at Sinai after the giving of the Decalogue (ten laws).

### Chapter 6 – The Great Command

"Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God with all Thy heart, with all Thy soul and with all Thy might," (5). This is repeated over and over, 10:12, 11:1, and 13:22. And it was re-emphasized by Jesus, (Matthew 22:37), and given first place in his teaching. Home instruction was required, (6-9). They were to imprint special laws on the door-posts, their arms or foreheads, to impress God's Word on them so that it would become part of their mental nature. (How about our confirmation class?)

### Chapter 7 – Canaanites and Idolatry to be Destroyed

Deuteronomy

**Chapter 8** – A reminder of God’s dealings with his people in order to warn them against forgetting about Him as their God.

**Chapters 9-10** – God warns them against self righteousness

**Chapter 11** – Blessings of Obedience

**Chapter 12** – Various Ordinances

**Chapters 12-15** - The Sanctuary

It should be noted that nowhere in Deuteronomy is Jerusalem specified as the only legitimate sanctuary. There were others. Shiloh, Mt. Ebal (27:5ff). About some of the other laws regarding tithing, slavery and first fruits, there is no conflict with the laws of Leviticus. Whereas, the Levitical law applied to the wilderness journey, the law of Deuteronomy applied to settled life in Palestine.

**Chapter 16** – The Set Feasts

Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles

**Chapter 17** – The Choice of the King

The law is optional, but the requirements for a king are quite strict. The king must be an Israelite; he must not multiply horses (verse 16), seek to become opulent, lest the people by his action be led back to Egypt where the horses came from (I Kings, 10:28); he must not take many wives, lest his heart be turned from God; he must not be a money maker. Rather, he must have for himself a copy of the Law, that will be his guide.

**Chapter 18** – A Prophet Like Unto Moses

The language of this section unmistakably points to one illustrious individual, the Messiah, (verses 15 - 19).

**Chapter 19** – Certain Criminal Laws

With regard to the cities of refuge, to which a man could flee and be protected if he had killed some one accidentally.

**Chapter 20** – Rules of Warfare

Those who had built a new house, or planted a new vineyard, or were newly married, or faint-hearted, were to be excused from military service. Food-bearing trees to be saved in capture of a town.

**Chapter 21-26** – Various laws such as slave wives, death by hanging, etc. (Deuteronomy 27:1-30:29)

Deuteronomy

### Chapter 27 – Ratification of the Law

Verses 1-8 teach that the Israelites, when they have crossed the Jordan, are to set up on Mt. Ebal great stones, covered with lime (plaster) and to write the law upon these stones. They are also to build an altar for offering their burnt and slain offerings. This section in reality supports the claim of Mosaic authorship. It should be noted that the occupation of Palestine is clearly represented as future (e.g., verse 3). Furthermore, the method of writing also points to ancient times. Evidently the writing was to be with a stylus upon a prepared surface, as was the custom in Egypt. The practice of engraving laws upon stones was in itself a rather widespread one. (cf., the famous Code of Hammurabi).

### Chapter 28 – Blessings and Curse

Is the future of the Hebrew nation outlined in prophesy? “Eagle,” verse 49, is an ensign of the Roman army. Verses 53-57, eating of their own kind; did it ever happen? Would this chapter refer to the Babylonian Captivity?

### Chapter 29 through 30 – Conclusion of the Covenant

Deuteronomy 31:1-34:12, Moses’ last words and his death.

### Chapter 31 – Moses, forty years before, had written God’s Words in a book, Exodus 17:14-24:4, 7

He had written a diary of his journeys, Numbers 33:2. Now, his book completed, he handed it over to the priests and levites, with instruction that it be read periodically to the people. The constant teaching of God’s Word to the people is the safest and most effective way to guard against the corruption of their religion. Verses 1-8, the appointment of Joshua; verses 14-23, the commission of Joshua and the command to write the song; verses 24-30, the Law to be placed beside the ark of the covenant.

### Chapter 32 – The Song of Moses

If you have read it, what more can be said?

### Chapter 33 – Blessing of Moses

Although the blessing was pronounced by Moses himself, it was possibly not written down by him as may be seen from 33:1, in which Moses seems to be distinguished from the writer. The words, however, are to be regarded as Moses’ own.

### Chapter 34 – Death of Moses

With the death of Moses at 120 years on Mt. Nebo, eight miles to the east of the Jordan River, closes the first fourth of the Old Testament. It was all written by Moses himself. Forty years in the court of Pharaoh, forty years a refugee of Midian, and forty years in the wilderness with the Israelites. It is possible that Joshua wrote the last few verses of Deuteronomy, 34....

## Questions on Deuteronomy

1. What was the conclusion that the Israelites had come to about God and the Exodus, 1:26-29?
2. Why were the Israelites specifically told not to harass the Ammonites, 2:16-19?
3. According to Chapter 3:26-29, how was Moses able to witness the lush Israelite country?
4. How could the children of Israel be assured that "all things would go well with them," 4:39-40?
5. What does Chapter 5, verses 22 and 32 have to do with their adherence to the keeping of the Law?
6. Why the external witness of the Law of God as suggested by Moses in 6:4-8?
7. How do we reconcile 5:17 with 7:2-3 and 7:16?
8. What warning were the Israelites to know about the wealth they would assemble, 8:17-18?
9. What prevented God from destroying Aaron, 9:20-21?
10. What does 10:16 mean?
11. In 11:2 and 4:10, there was strong encouragement from Moses to "remember!" Why?
12. What is the reason given for "God testing" his people, 13:1-4?
13. What does 14:21c mean as it relates to cooking a young goat?
14. How was a servant marked for life, 15:16-17?
15. How was the gift to be given to the Lord according to 16:16-17? 2 Corinthians 8:12 – What does this mean?
16. How many witnesses does it take to put someone to death, 17:6-7? Why?
17. What are the four "let him go home" comments meant to say, 20:2-8?
18. How was this Law in 21:22-23 carried out in the New Testament?
19. How practical is 24:5? What does it accomplish?
20. How does 24:16 reconcile with the thought that many believe today that "until a child reaches the age of accountability, he is covered by his parents' righteousness?"
21. What do you seem to feel about Chapter 28 as it relates to Jewish prophesy?

Deuteronomy

22. So often in Chapter 30 we hear of the word "life." What is Moses attempting to convey?
23. What encouragement did Moses twice give Joshua and the people in 31:1-7? Why?
24. What did Moses prophesy about Israel in 31:28-29? Why the warning?
25. Why do you suppose God did not let anyone know where Moses was buried, 34:5-6? Jude vv. 8-9

### Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

## Name

The first book of the former prophets is named after its principal character, Joshua. The Grecianized form of his name was "Jesus." In that he had led his people into the promised land, he may in that respect have been a prototype of his great Successor, who is leading his own into the promised land of Eternal Glory. In the Syriac version of the Bible, the Book of Job usually comes between the Pentateuch and Joshua. This is due to the belief that Moses was the author of Job. But in the Hebrew Canon, Joshua follows the Pentateuch and introduces the second division of the Old Testament Canon, and this is its proper place.

## Purpose

The purpose of the book is to show how God brought the theocratic nation from the wilderness to the promised land. It serves thus to continue the history contained in the Pentateuch and to trace the history of theocracy under Joshua. It also serves to show how Joshua faithfully performed the work which had been entrusted to him by God, and how God, in fulfillment of His promises, gave the promised land to His people.

## Analysis

### I. Joshua 1:1-12:24 – *The Conquest of Canaan.*

#### 1. Joshua 1:1-9 Introduction To The Entire Book

Joshua receives directions to proceed with the people across the Jordan and is assured that, if he is faithful to the Law, he will be successful. The language of this section closely approximates Deuteronomy, verses 11:22-25... Would you say that his in any way conflicts with the authorship of the book?

#### 2. Joshua 1:10-2:24 The Preparation For The Crossing Of The Jordan

In preparation for the trip, two spies are sent to Jericho and then return. The description of Rahab's house as being on a wall of the town (2:15) seems to be an evidence of antiquity. Excavation has shown that houses were built on the walls. Rahab is described as a "harlot." She may not have been as bad as the word "harlot" would project because the priestesses of the Canaanite religion were public prostitutes. Historical notes reveal that later, after this incident with the spies, Rahab married an Israelite named Salmon; Caleb had a son named Salmon, I Chron. 2:51. It may have been the same Salmon. If so, then she married into one of the leading families of Israel, and thus became an ancestress of Boaz, David, and of Christ. She is named among the heroes of faith. Heb. 11:31.

#### 3. Joshua 3:1-4:25 The Crossing Of The Jordan

Was it possible to make the waters of the Jordan about forty feet deep at this time of the year, to back up and allow the river bed to dry up so the children of Israel could pass? In 1927 an earthquake caused these banks to collapse, so that no water flowed past them for twenty-one hours. God may have used some such means to make the "waters" stand for Joshua. 1400 years later Jesus was baptized in the Jordan at the place where Joshua crossed.

4. Joshua 5:1-12 The Incidents of Gilgal

Memorial stones were placed where the ark stood on the east bank of the river, and at Gilgal. At long last, within the promised land on the fourth day after they had crossed the Jordan, they celebrated the Passover. The next day the manna ceased, 5:12.

5. Joshua 5:13-6:27 The Capture of Jericho

The angel of the Lord encourages Joshua. The city is encompassed for six days; then taken. Rahab is saved. The historicity of the event is proved by Hebrews 11:30-31.

6. Joshua 7:1-26 Achan's Theft

As at Jericho, God had show himself merciful to Israel; so now at Ai, because of Achan's sin, He manifests His justice. They are chased home by their enemies. Joshua knew that it was something more than defeat. When Achan had returned that which he had stolen, he was stoned to death.

7. Joshua 8:1-35 The Destruction of Ai

The destruction of Ai, vv. 1-29; erection of the altar on Mt. Ebal, vv. 30-35. (Moses had commanded this to be done – Deut. 27.) Here Abraham, 600 years before, had erected his first altar in the land.

8. Joshua 9:1-27 The Deceit Of The Gibeonites

The Gibeonites, obtained by craft a league with Israel, and are condemned to perpetual servitude.

9. The Conquest of Southern Canaan

Joshua first defeats the five kings at Bethhoron, and then gains possession of the southern cities. Some authors would consider verse 12 as containing a mere poetic statement...but what happened there is more than poetic. THE SUN STOOD STILL! It was a miracle of God to help Joshua win the battle. What the precise nature of the miracle was, is difficult to say.

10. Joshua 11:1-15 The Conquest of Northern Canaan

11. Joshua 11:16-12:24 Completion of the Conquests and a List of the Defeated Kings.

II. Joshua 13:1-24:33 – *The Distribution of the Territory*

1. Joshua 13:1-7 The Cities Not Yet Taken, and the Command to Divide the Land Among the Nine and One-Half Tribes.

2. Joshua 13:8, 21 The Territories of the Eastern Tribes

3. Joshua 14:1-19:51 The Territories of the Western Tribes

The territories to be distributed by lot, 14:1-5; the approach of Caleb, vv. 6-12; Joshua gives Hebron to Caleb, vv. 13-15; inheritance, 16:15.

4. Joshua 20:1-9 The Cities of Refuge

Joshua

5. Joshua 21:1-45 The Cities of Priests and Levites.

6. Joshua 22:1-34 The Two and a Half Tribes.

These return to their land and erect an altar by the Jordan.

### III. Joshua 23-24 – *Joshua's Farewell Address*

Joshua had received the law of God from Moses, 1:8. He now added to it his own book, 24:26. Joshua made good use of “books” as Moses had done, Deut. 31. He had the land surveyed with a book (18:9); he read to the people the “book” of Moses, 8:34. At Mt. Ebal he “wrote on stones” a copy of the law, 8:32. However, the main urge of Joshua’s final address was against idolatry. Canaanite idolatry was such an esthetic combination of religion and free indulgence of fleshy desires that only persons of exceptional strength could withstand its allurements. Joshua dies. He was 110 years old. He was buried at Timnathserah, in Ephraim. He was a great warrior; disciplined his forces; sent spies; but prayed, and trusted in God.

### Questions on Joshua

1. What was God’s command to Joshua after he took upon himself the responsibility of the Children of Israel? 1:6-7
2. What was the promise God gave to the Israelites for their faithfulness to the Word? 1:8-9
3. What does the message of Rahab’s life as a prostitute suggest when found in the “family tree” of the life of Christ (Matt. 1:5) in 2:3-5?
4. What was it according to 3:15-16 that permitted the 12 men from the 12 tribes to cross the Jordan River?
5. What would future generations of fathers be able to say when the children asked, “what are these stones for?” 4:6-7.
6. According to chapter 6:10, 17, how was Joshua’s approach to the Lord different than that of Moses?
7. What was the “sin” of the Israelites as it related to the battle they waged in 7:10-12?
8. What was different about the “Lord’s command” as it related to the battle against Ai? 8:1-2.
9. According to 9:3-4, what does it mean when it says that they “resorted to a ruse?”
10. Because of the Gibeonites’ lie to Joshua, what would be their punishment? 9:22-23
11. Why, according to chapter 10:12-23, did the “sun stand still?”
12. How do we explain 11:20?
13. According to 14:1-3, how was the inherited land to be divided? What does it mean?

Joshua

14. Why according to 19:8-9 was a share of Judah's inheritance given to the Simeonites?
15. What happened at the "conclusion" of the dividing of the land, 19:49-51?
16. According to 22:1-5, what was the "key" to obedience?
17. Why was the question of intermarriage such an issue with God through Joshua in 23:10-13?
18. What does 24:15 say of Joshua?
19. What are your thoughts about Joshua, 24:19-27?

### Paragraph Summaries

# THE BOOK OF JUDGES

## Name

The book receives its name from the rulers "Judges;" (Shophetim) who ruled over Israel during the period from Joshua to Samuel.

## Author

Divisive criticism does not regard the Book of Judges as a literary unit, but considers it a compilation of different sources. Some say that it was written at the time of Samuel, possibly by Samuel. Others say that it is a Deuteronomistic book. After the destruction of Jerusalem, a Deuteronomic edition of the book is supposed to have been written to convince the exiles that punishment had come because of their violation of the laws in Deuteronomy. According to the Talmud (Baba Bathra, 14b), "Samuel wrote the book which bears his name and the book of Judges and Ruth." Some thought has even been given to David as being the author.

## Purpose

The Book of Judges serves to show that the theocratic people need a righteous king. Without the king who reigns under the special authority of God, confusion follows. "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." This thought might even summarize the book itself. Because of this negative thinking, God had to raise Judges from among them so that they would see the need for a God-fearing king. Under the guidance of the Judges, the children of Israel were to take possession of the land which had been allotted to them, by driving out and exterminating the remaining Canaanites and to build up and establish a theocratic nation. They would follow God's will for them for a while, and then would fall prey to the idolatry of the Canaanites. The work of each Judge then was to bring them back to sober thinking. And you know from reading the book, and from observing history being recorded around us every day, that this was not an easy task. The exact duration of the period of Judges is uncertain. The years assigned to the oppressions were 111, and to the Judges with the period of rest, 299, total 410. But some of these figures may overlap. Jephthah, who lived near the end of the period, spoke of it as 300 years, 11:26. Roughly then, the period of the Judges was from 1400-1100 B.C.

## Analysis

### I. Judges 1:1-2:5 – The Introduction

1. 1:1 Introduction To The Entire Book
2. 1:2-36 Summary of the Existing Political Conditions

The summary has a nationalistic emphasis. It does not in any way conflict with the representation of Joshua. That book presents Joshua as a great leader; this section places its emphasis on the work of the tribes.

## Judges

3. 2:1-5      The Angel of the Lord  
The people are reprimanded again for breaking the covenant with their Lord.

## II. Judges 2:6-16:31 – The Judges of Israel

1. 2:6-3:6      Israel's Relationship with the Lord  
Very simply, a new generation had arisen which knew not the Lord, and even forsook Him to serve other gods. As a result, the Lord delivered the people into the hands of the spoilers (shosim "plunderers"). The grace of God, however, prevailed, and He sent them Judges to deliver them from their spoilers.
2. 3:7-11      The Judgeship of Othniel  
Othniel, the son of Kenaz, delivers Israel from the King of Mesopotamia. He secured rest for Israel for 40 years.
3. 3:12-30      The Victory of Ehud Over the Moabites  
This oppression under Eglon lasted for 18 years. After Israel's deliverance, it lived in peace for 80 years.
4. 3:21          Shamgar Slew 600 Philistines with an Ox-goad.  
His work is not that which is reckoned as one of the Judges, nor is his short tenure recognized in the chronology.
5. Ch. 4-5      Deborah and Barak - 40 Years  
Israel is saved from the Canaanites (Jabin and his general Sisera who, according to 4:21, is killed by having a nail put through his temples, but in chapter 5 he is hit on the head "while drinking sour milk outside his tent.") (Pfeifer, p. 329)
6. 6:1-8:35      The Work of Gideon - 40 Years  
The oppressing Midianites are defeated by Gideon with 300 men. (Midianites were descendants of Abraham...later they joined with the Arabians who were descendants of Ishmael).
7. 9:1-57      The Episode of Abimelech  
Son of a wonderful father, but himself a brutal man. A typical story of the eternal struggle of gangsters for power.
8. 10:1-5      Tola and Jair serve as Judges  
Ruling 23 and 22 years respectively.

## Judges

### 9. 10:6-12:7 Deliverance by Jephthah - 6 Years

God gave Jephthah a great victory over the Ammonites and delivered Israel. The pitiful thing in the story of Jephthah is the sacrifice of his daughter.

### 10. 12:8-15 Three Judges -- Ibzan, Elon and Abdon

Ruled for 7, 8 & 10 years respectively.

### 11. 13:1-16:31 The History of Samson - 20 Years

For the historicity of Samson, read Hebrews 11:32. The divine power displayed in the Judges was culminated in Samson, who possessed this power by virtue of being a Nazarite. (Nazarenes today?) In his natural culture, however, he was an extremely weak man.

## III. Judges 17:1-21:25 - Two Appendices

1. 17:1-18:31 The Episode of Micah the Ephramite and the Levite, Who is a Consecrated Priest in His House.
2. 19:1-21:25 The Crime of Gibeah in Benjamin and the Punishment.

## WHY SUCH A BOOK?

Halley, page 163: "Well, it is simply history. God had founded a nation, for the purpose of paving the way for the coming of a Redeemer for the human race. God was determined to maintain that nation. And in spite of its idolatry, its weakness, and its wickedness, God did maintain it. Except for such leaders as the Judges, and except for God's miraculous aid in times of crisis, Israel would have been exterminated."

## Questions on Judges

1. According to Judges 1:4-6, why were Adoni-Bezek's thumbs and big toes cut off?
2. What oftentimes happens to God's people who live in "Apostasy?" 2:14-15, 22
3. According to 3:15-17, what advantage did Ehud have as a left-handed man?
4. According to 4:4, Deborah was not only a Judge but a prophetess. Who else served as prophetess in Exodus 15:20, II Kings 22:14, Nehemiah 6:14, Luke 2:36?
5. How did the friendly relations between Jabin king of Hazor and the clan of Heber the Kenite end for Jael? 4:18-21

## Judges

6. How was Deborah (bee) good for the children of Israel according to 5:7-9?
7. Gideon's question in 6:13-14 is one we all ponder in times of trouble as God's children. What comfort does God offer, 6:16?
8. How do we explain the victory of Gideon over the Midianites? 7:20-22
9. How did God repay Abimelech's wickedness to his father in the death of his 70 brothers according to 9:52-57?
10. How did Jephthah respond to the false allegation of the king of the Ammonites in 11:21-24, 29?
11. What was Jephthah's mistake in 11:37-38?
12. In 14:13-14, Sampson gives a riddle for the people to solve. What meaning does v.18 have in relationship to the riddle?
13. What was the convincing question Delilah used to have Sampson reveal his secret? 16:15-16
14. What was Sampson's final prayer before dying according to 16:28?
15. What does 17:6 suggest about "Leadership?"
16. In 18:1-3, why were the Danites looking for a place to settle?
17. What do you think was the reason or reasons for the rash action taken in 19:29-30 by the owner of the house?
18. How accurate were the soldiers of Benjamin with sling shots? 20:16-17
19. How was the tribe of Benjamin to be restored according to Chapter 21?
20. What would happen to any tribe of the 12 that would not assemble before the Lord? 21:5-6

## Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF RUTH

## Name

The Book receives its name from its principal character.

## Date and Authorship

With regard to the date of authorship, some have suggested that the book was written directly after the Exile into the Promised Land. The reason for this, however weak, is that such mixed marriages as that of Boaz and Ruth were tolerated, although forbidden, as the children of Israel entered Canaan, as compared to the stern measures Ezra and Nehemiah took against those who involved themselves in mixed marriages. In the Talmud (a collection of various Jewish traditions and oral explanations of the Old Testament which were committed to writing in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D.), it tells us that "Samuel wrote this book...." We must note that the name of David is mentioned. This does not mean that the book was written long afterward, when David's fame had become a legend, for then we should have heard about Solomon, and we don't. Hence, the absence of Solomon's name seems to support the view that the book was written some time during the reign of David. In 4:7 is mentioned the custom of taking off the shoe to symbolize the renunciation of one's claims. This custom was pre-exilic (Deuteronomy 25:9-10) and did not seem to be applied to the generation of David, when the book was supposed to have been written.

## Historicity of the Narrative

Certain critics of the Old Testament seem to regard the Book of Ruth as fiction, and point to the following arguments:

1. The significant names of some of the characters, e.g. Mahlon (sickness), Chilion (wasting), Orpha (stiff-necked), Naomi ('my sweetness).
2. The noble character and conduct of Ruth, Naomi and Boaz.
3. The picturesque details of life with no unpleasantness.
4. The strong religious faith.

Whether or not this carries any weight, I am not in any position to discuss. What is of decisive significance, however, is the fact that in the genealogy of David, given in Matthew 1:5, the name of Ruth is included. AND the genealogy in Luke 3:32 agrees with that of Ruth. This is conclusive evidence. When the infallible Word of God speaks of Ruth as a person, I will accept that as fact.

## Purpose

This little book endeavors to trace the ancestry of David to the Moabitess, Ruth. It thus has a historical aim. However, it seeks also to inculcate the lesson of filial piety and devotion. There is a wealth of devotion and unselfishness in Ruth's words, "Entreat me not to leave thee or to

return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go ...etc.” (1:6-17). This Book also serves to show that the true religion is supranational and not confined to the bounds of any people.

## **Analysis**

### **I. Ruth Comes to Bethlehem**

- a. 1:17 Introduction
- b. 8-18 Ruth’s Determination to Remain with Naomi
- c. 19-22 The Arrival in Bethlehem

### **II. Ruth Meets Boaz**

- a. 2:1-7 Ruth Gleans in the Field
- b. 2:8-16 The Kindness of Boaz
- c. 2:17-23 Ruth Returns to Naomi

### **III. Ruth’s Appeal to Boaz**

- a. 3:1-5 Naomi’s Advice
- b. 3:6-13 Ruth Speaks to Boaz
- c. 3:14-18 Ruth Returns to Naomi

### **IV. Ruth – The Marriage of Ruth and Boaz**

- a. 4:1-8 The Kinsman
- b. 4:9-12 Boaz takes Ruth
- c. 4:13-17 Ruth bears a son
- d. 4:18-22 Ancestry of David

The genealogy 4:18-22 showing Ruth’s son to be Obed, Obed’s son to be Jesse, and Jesse’s son to be David, is the thing for which the Book of Ruth was written. From here on, Old Testament thought centers around the coming of the King of Kings, to be born of David’s line. And Ruth started it.

**Questions on Ruth**

1. What is Naomi referring to as it relates to “marriage” in 1:11-12?
2. Ruth’s loyalty to Naomi is complete even though it holds no prospect for her but to share in Naomi’s desolation. What characteristic does this display? 1:16-17
3. What did Naomi mean when in 2:20 she calls Boaz a “kinsman-redeemer?”
4. What does 3:4 mean?
5. How did Boaz secure Ruth for his wife? 4:5-10

**Paragraph Summaries**

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# THE BOOK OF I SAMUEL

## I Samuel

This and the Second Book of Samuel are named after Samuel, not only because he was the principal character in the first part, but because he anointed the other two principal characters – Saul and David. According to ancient historians, these books were one. It wasn't until the Septuagint and then later the Vulgate, that the books were separated. It wasn't until about 1517 that Daniel Bomberg's printed Hebrew Bible divided these books as we know them today.

### Author

According to Baba Bathra 14b, "Samuel wrote the book which bears his name and the Book of Judges and Ruth." However, if in I Samuel 25:1, 28:3 we read of Samuel's death, how could he have written II Samuel? Whoever was the author of the second book made use of previously existing written documents and these most likely were "in the chronicles of Samuel the seer, and in the chronicles of Nathan the prophet, and in the chronicles of Gad the seer" (I Chronicles 29:29). We may conclude then that the books of Samuel were composed under divine inspiration by a prophet, probably of Judea, who lived shortly after the schism and who incorporated into his work, earlier written material.

### Purpose

The purpose of the Books of Samuel is to relate the account of the establishment of the monarchy, and of Samuel's part in it. Samuel was both a Judge (I Samuel 7:6, 15:17) and a Prophet (I Samuel 3:20). He serves, therefore, to connect the period of the Judges with the early monarchy. There was a two-fold preparation for the kingdom. During the period of the Judges, confusion prevailed; thus, the Israelites came to see their need of a centralized government. In the second place, the king must be a good king; not a selfish dictator but a man who was after God's heart, who in his faithful and just reign would point forward to the great King to come. Under the reign of Saul, a self-willed dictator, the lesson was taught that the king must be one who would reign in righteousness. Not only do the books of Samuel recount the establishment of the monarchy, but they serve to point out that this great institution was of divine origin.

### Analysis

#### I. I Samuel 1:1-7:17

##### a. 1:1-2:10 The Birth of Samuel and the Song of Hannah

While Eli was a high priest, a devout Israelite woman prayed for a son. Her prayer was answered and she bore a son, Samuel, and dedicated him to a life-long service to the Lord. She then praised the Lord (2:1-10) in a beautiful song of prophetic character. This song of Hannah is a prototype of the

Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) and of Zacharias' prophesy (Luke 1:68-79) which shows how the song was understood by the devout in Israel.

b. 2:11-3:21 Samuel's Childhood and Vision

c. 4:1-22 The Death of Eli

Different than chapters 1-3, which provide the necessary background with respect to Samuel, is chapter 4. Here we see the low condition of the country and the priesthood, and the announcement that the house of Eli will fall. The writer portrays the low condition of the country by portraying how the ark is taken and the glory of God departed. The stage is set for Samuel's work.

d. 5:1-6:21 The Ark in Philistine Territory

The ark was never to be returned to Shiloh. Shiloh ceased to be a place of importance. It remained among the Philistines for 7 months, and after plenteous plagues, they decided to return it to Israel.

e. The Ark Returned

It was first taken to Bethshemesh – then to Kirjath-jearim, where it remained for 20 years. Later it was taken to Jerusalem by David, who built a tabernacle for it (II Samuel 6:12) which it occupied until Solomon built the temple. After the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar, nothing more is known about it.

## II. I Samuel 8:1-31:13 – The Reign of Saul

a. 8:1-22 Israel Expresses Desire for a King

Since Samuel's sons had perverted justice, the elders of Israel entreated Samuel to appoint a king. God commanded Samuel to carry out their desires. Samuel then promised a king.

b. Saul Anointed King

The Lord brings Saul before Samuel—Samuel reveals to Saul God's purposes, anoints him and dismisses him, declaring that three signs will confirm his choice by God. Having anointed him secretly, Samuel calls the people together at Mizpeh to choose a king by lot. Saul's election is confirmed.

c. 11:1-15 Saul's Victory over the Ammonites

d. 12:1-25 Samuel's Address

He solemnly warns the people NOT to forget about God. Thunderstorm

e. 13:1-15:35 The Early Reign and Rejection of Saul

First mistakes: Chapter 13, success goes to his head. Humility gave way to pride. He offered sacrifices, a duty of only the priests. Second mistake: Chapter 14, silly order for army to abstain from food, and senseless sentence for Jonathan. Third mistake: Chapter 15, disobedience to God in issue of Amalek.

f. David Chosen to be King

He was secretly anointed by Samuel. Did the Lord command Samuel to tell a lie (16:2) as to the purpose of the trip to Bethlehem?

g. 17:1-31:13 The Last Days and Downfall of Saul / David and Goliath

By the way, who was it that killed Goliath? 17:47; 19:5; 21:9; 22:10; II Samuel 21:19, I Chronicle 20:5

1. Chapters 18-20 Saul's jealousy of David; Jonathan's friendship.
2. Chapters 21-24 David a fugitive from Saul. Spares Saul's life.
3. Chapter 27 Priest of Nob gave David holy bread to eat. (Matt. 12:4)
4. Chapters 28-31 Incident of the witch of Endor, fact or fiction? Continued war with the Philistines. In the battle, Saul fell on his own sword. Acts 13:21 says he ruled 40 years.

## Questions on I Samuel

1. Why was there such a "feeling of aloneness" for Hannah according to I Samuel 1:6-8?
2. What does it mean in 1:27-28 that "Hannah gave Samuel to the Lord?"
3. What does it mean according to 2:12 that Eli's sons "had no regard for the Lord?" How did they treat Eli? v.25
4. What according to 3:19-21 was God preparing Samuel to do and why?
5. Explain why, according to Chapter 5, the presence of the ark among the Philistines brought misery and sickness?
6. Why did God put 70 men from Beth Shemesh to death? 6:19-20
7. Why according to 8:5 did the elders of Israel want a king?

8. In the midst of troublemakers, who were sent to ridicule Saul “as he kept silent?” Why? 10:27
9. How did Saul according to 13:13 “act foolishly?”
10. Why did the soldiers of Saul’s army not have swords or spears to fight according to 13:19-22?
11. What had Jonathan done to deserve death according to 14:43? What was the outcome? vv.44-45
12. After Saul was rejected (15:23) by God as king, how did the Lord God describe how they should look for the next king in 16:6-8?
13. Can one who has been a believer just turn indifferent toward God and still remain spiritually neutral, 16:14 and Matthew 12:43-45?
14. What was David’s battle cry against Goliath? 17:46-47
15. Why Saul’s paranoia about David in Chapter 19?
16. What was the purpose of the pretense of David at Gath according to 21:12-15?
17. In 24:4-7, it talks about David cutting off a corner of Saul’s robe. What does this mean?
18. What was the reason David gave Abishai for not letting him kill Saul in 26:9-11.
19. According to Chapter 28, Saul sought a medium to bring the spirit of Samuel back to life so that Saul might question him. Why does Saul do this? v.15
20. How according to 31:4-6 did Saul die? Who died with him? v.2

### Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF II SAMUEL

## Name

Refer to information given in the outline of I Samuel.

## Purpose

Refer to information given in the outline of I Samuel.

## Analysis

### I. II Samuel - Introduction

#### A. Permanent Exile

David now seeks permanent security by becoming a vassal of Achish of Gath, who assigns Ziklag to him at his request. David raids the neighboring heathen tribes, destroying them utterly to prevent the news from reaching Achish, and himself representing his operations to Achish as raids against Judah, thus confirming the Philistines' faith in him, Chapter 27. When he returns to Ziklag, the people are so angry with him that they could stone him; but he gets the Lord's encouragement. 200 of the 600 men become faint-hearted and drop away, but he still captures the Amalekites. He divides the spoil with those who criticized him.

#### B. David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan

David kills the Amalekite who boasts to have killed Saul.

### II. II Samuel 2-5 – Father of the King of Kings

#### A. King of Judah at Hebron.

David goes to Hebron and is anointed king by the men of Judah, 2:1-4. He pleads with the men of Jabesh-gilead not to follow Ish-Bosheth, but to no avail. He is set up as king by Abner. And David's men, under Joab (David's nephew), defeat Abner. Joab's brother, Asahel, is killed under the 5<sup>th</sup> rib, and the battle is called. (David's six sons by six wives, note Absalom and Adonijah, 3:1-5). A quarrel between Ish-Bosheth and Abner over Saul's concubine results in Abner's revolt to David, his return of Michal to her first husband. Abner killed, David mourns. Chapter 4, Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth.

#### B. King of all Israel 5:1-5

David, 30 years old, 7½ years, king of Hebron

#### C. The New Capitol, Jerusalem, vv. 6-12

David's palace built by the craftsmen of Hiram of Tyre. (Psalm 30) More concubines, more wives..



### III. The Announcement of the Eternity of David's Kingdom

#### A. The Ark of the Covenant, Chapter 6

Uzzah, David's son, smitten for steadying the cart on which the ark was placed. The Levites finally bring it to the city, at which time there is much celebration and dancing. Michal sees David dancing to the Lord and is repulsed by it. She remains without children.

#### B. The Promise, Chapter 7

David's plan to build the temple, not content with a house built of cedar and the ark of God within curtains. God, however, through the prophet Nathan, decides otherwise. Why was that? His son, Solomon, will build it. David realized why, and sings a song of humbleness and thanksgiving, vv. 18-29.

#### C. Conquests of David, Chapter 8 – Joab is General

#### D. The Royal Benefactor, Chapter 9 – David's Care for Mephibosheth

#### E. Further Conquests, Chapter 10

By his conquests David extended Israel's domain to the Euphrates and to the Red Sea, enlarging its area from 6,000 to 60,000 square miles.

### IV. II Samuel 11-18 – Blessed is He Whose Transgression is Forgiven

#### A. The Royal Malefactor, Chapter 11

David, resting on his laurels while Joab and his army are at war, commits adultery with Bathsheba, wife of Uriah. How was it that David gets rid of Uriah after Bathsheba is found to be with child?

#### B. Remorse and Remission, Chapter 12

Nathan convicts David of his sin, and speaks words of prophesy: "The sword shall never depart from thy house." David confesses his sin and is pardoned. However, Bathsheba's child dies; her second child is Solomon, who is tutored by Nathan.

#### C. Out of His Own House, Chapters 13-14

Amnon, David's son, defiles Tamar, Absalom's sister, and is in turn slain by Absalom. He flees to Talmi, his grandfather, who is king of Geshur. Joab instructs Tekoah how to get Absalom back. He returns to Jerusalem, Chapter 14.

1. Absalom steals the hearts of the people of Jerusalem, and proclaims himself king of Hebron. David flees from the city with all that he had, save ten concubines. David patiently suffers the curses and the stones of Shimei. Why?

2. Joab, Abishai and Ittai command David's army, Chapter 18. The great slaughter of Absalom's army in the wood of Ephraim. Absalom caught by the hair in an oak, is thrust through with three darts by Joab, even though David had asked them to deal gently with him if they found him. David's mourning.

V. II Samuel 19-24 - The Height of a Great Career.

A. The Restoration of the King

Urged to cease his mourning by Joab, and with all Israel debating his return, David induces Judah to take the lead in bringing him back, promising amnesty to Amasa; he exercises clemency to Shimei, and deals kindly with Mephibosheth, Chapter 19.

The quarrel between Israel and Judah over leadership in bringing the king back, vv. 41-43, paves the way for the rebellion of Sheba. David delegates Amasa and then Abishai to pursue Sheba, 20:1-7. The tardy Amasa is slain by Joab. (Who said, "pat him on the back with one hand, put a knife into him with the other," is new?). Sheba is captured and killed.

B. Once More the House of Saul

A famine of three years, because of the plot of Saul against the Gibeonites, is stayed by hanging of seven of Saul's sons. He spares Mephibosheth.

C. David at the Height of his Career.

His song in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of the enemies, Chapter 22. (Psalm 18) Messianic covenant recalled, 23:5, "Although my house be not so with God, yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure."

D. The Mighty Men of God.

Catalogue of his 37 champions, vv. 8-39. Some of their exploits, such as the slaying of the relatives of Goliath.

E. Pride and Pestilence. Chapter 24

David's pride leads him to number Israel. Joab reports a million and a half fighting men, excluding Benjamin and Levi. I Chronicles 21:6, or a total population of about 5 million. For this sin David has choice of 3 plagues. Chooses 3-day pestilence and 70,000 die. In the place where the angel's hand was stayed, David built an altar. Where David built the altar, Solomon built the temple, II Chronicles 3:1.

## Questions on the Book of II Samuel

1. How does the story of the “reporter” of Saul’s death conflict with I Samuel 31:3-6? Why is this so?
2. Do you know how this passage in 1:26-27 might be translated?
3. How would you describe the political climate between Saul’s house and David’s in Chapter 2?
4. What was the purpose of David disclaiming any personal involvement in the death of Abner? 3:28-29
5. Who is Mephibosheth and how did he get into the predicament he was in? 4:4
6. Where and for how many years did David reign as king? 5:4-5
7. Why was Michal so upset at David’s dance of joy before the Lord? 6:16, 20, 22
8. What promise did the Lord God give to David through Nathan in 7:15-16?
9. What according to Chapter 9:7, 8, 10, 13 did David do to remember his friendship with Jonathan?
10. When Bathsheba informs David that she is pregnant, what is his natural human reaction? 11:6-15
11. According to 12:4-6, what message was Nathan the prophet trying to impress upon David?
12. What was the judgment that God placed on David’s house for the sins that he had committed? 12:10-11
13. What did this reprimand in love drive David to do? 12:13-14
14. How did David finally deal with the time of mourning for the dead baby? 12:20
15. How was 13:14, 30-31 a fulfillment of 12:10?
16. How in 15:3-4 did Absalom present himself as a solution to the people’s grievances?
17. How according to 18:8-10, 15 was the house of David still under the judgment of God in 12:10-12?
18. According to 21:15-17, what did Abashai and David’s men do so that “...the lamp of Israel would not be extinguished?”

19. Isn't what David says in 22:21-25 a little "self-righteous" considering what he really did in his life?
20. In 24:1 it states that the "Lord incited David to take a census, but in I Chronicles 21:1, it says differently. Explain.
21. Because David had sinned once more in the "census," God gave three options for punishment in 24:11-16. What were they and what happened?

### Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF I KINGS

## Name

Like the Books of Samuel, the Books of Kings could very well have been one. In the Septuagint, they are called the Third and Fourth Book of Kingdoms.

## Authorship

In Baba Bathra 15a we read, "Jeremiah wrote his own book, the Book of Kings and Lamentations." This ancient Jewish theory of authorship is very attractive, for there is much in Kings which is identical with Jeremiah, and II Kings 24:18 - 25:30 is identical with Jeremiah. Jeremiah 52 and II Kings 24-25 seem to be abstracts (they contain minor verbal differences from each other) from a larger source of which Jeremiah was not the author. In all probability the author was a contemporary of Jeremiah, one who was a prophet and deeply concerned because his people did not obey the voice of Jehovah. This unknown author, since he was writing concerning events which had occurred long before his birth, made use of written records, and these he mentioned by name. In I Kings 11:41, after completing the description of Solomon's reign, the author mentions the Book of the Words of Solomon (shelomo). The information for the accounts concerning the kings of Judah was obtained from the Book of Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. (I Kings 14:29; 15:7, 23, etc.). Mention is also made of the Book of Chronicles of the Kings of Israel (I Kings 14:19; 15:31).

## Purpose

The Book of Kings aims to carry the history of the theocracy until its end in the Babylonian exile. The kings of Judah are judged in accordance with the promise given to David in II Samuel, 7:12-16, whereas those of the northern kingdom, all of whom are condemned because they have continued in the sin of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

Much stress is placed upon the prophetic ministry of Elijah and Elisha, who served as the link between the early period and prophetism. With respect to the southern kingdom the writer lays particular emphasis upon those kings who were true to the Davidic standards. Yet he condemns where condemnation is necessary, and he makes it clear that the exile is a divine chastisement.

## Analysis

### I. I Kings 1:1-11 – The Reign of Solomon

#### a. 1:1-2:11 The Last Days of Adonijah

Adonijah usurps the throne; Solomon is anointed king; Adonijah flees, and then upon condition of peaceful behavior, obtains Solomon's forgiveness. David dies.

## 1 Kings

- b. 2:12-46 Introduction to the History of Solomon's Reign.  
Some of church fathers and one of two codices begin I Kings with 2:12.
- c. 3:1-28 Solomon's Marriage, His Prayer and His Wise Decision.  
700 wives and 300 concubines; my, what a mess that must have been! Solomon's prayer occurred at Gibeon. When God saw that he was responding well to his work, the Lord told him to ask for anything that he would like. Instead of asking for dollar bills or a raise, as most of us would do, Solomon asked for wisdom to rule his people. That, of course, pleased God and so Solomon was richly rewarded. vv. 10-12
- d. The Administration of Solomon's Kingdom  
Solomon had inherited from his father, David, one of the most powerful and wealthy kingdoms that ever existed. It was a time of peace and prosperity. Along with Solomon's multi-million dollar business, he wrote 3,000 proverbs, 1,005 songs and did work in science and botany.
- e. 5:1-7:51 The Building of the Temple  
Hiram of Tyre provides all the material. With the erection of the Temple, the people obtain a central place of worship, and Israel's early stage of dwelling in the promised land has come to an end.
- f. 8:1-66 The Dedication of the Temple
- 1-21 The removal of furniture of the old tabernacle into the new temple.
  - 22-61 Solomon's prayer. This prayer seems to be based on Moses' words in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28.
- g. 9:1-28 God Makes a Covenant with Solomon  
God makes it again explicit that if Solomon and Israel follow His ways and precepts, he will be their God and will be with them, but if they fall away, they alone will be held responsible. The era of David and Solomon is the Golden age of Hebrew History. David was the warrior; Solomon the builder. In the world outside of Israel it was the age of Homer, the beginning of Greek history. Egypt, Syria, and Babylon were very weak. Israel was the greatest and mightiest of all the world. People came from the world over to see Israel, Solomon and his wisdom.
- h. 10:1-29 The Visit of the Queen of Sheba  
Her exclamation when she saw the riches of Solomon, "the half was not told me."

## 1 Kings

### i. 11:1-43 The End of Solomon's Reign

The apostasy of Solomon's old age is one of the most pitiful spectacles in the Bible. Perhaps the account of it was intended by God to be an example of what luxury and ceaseless rounds of pleasure will do to even the best of men.

## II. I Kings 12:1-11

## II Kings 17:41

### a. Ch. 12 Division of the Kingdom

The kingdom of Israel lasted 120 years. Saul, David and Solomon each reigned 40 years. After Solomon's death, the kingdom was divided. Ten tribes, forming the northern kingdom, called "Israel," and Judah and Benjamin forming the southern kingdom, called "Judah." The northern kingdom lasted about 200 years and was destroyed by Assyria 721 B. C. and the southern kingdom lasted about 300 years and was destroyed by Babylon about 600 B. C. Date for division of kingdom, 983-931 B. C.

### b. Ch. 13-14 Jeroboam, King of Israel

A brave, industrious officer of Solomon's army. Led a revolt against Solomon. Solomon sought to kill him, so he fled to Egypt to King Shishak, who was later to return and plunder Israel. For this act, Ahijah prophesied of Israel's destruction for their calf worship.

#### 1. 14:21-31 Rehoboam, King of Judah

Son of Solomon, a plundering fool. Reigned 17 years.

### c. 15:1-8 Abijam, King of Judah, 915-913 B. C.

Reigned 3 years. Wicked like his father. But in battle with Jeroboam he relied upon God, defeated Jeroboam, and recovered some of the northern cities.

### d. 15:9-24 Asa, King of Judah

Ruled 41 years. He was the best of the lot. He brought many good reforms to the people. So concerned was he with idolatry worship, and its wrongness, that he removed his mother from being queen because she worshipped idols.

### e. 15:25-32 Nadab, King of Israel, 911-910 B. C.

Son of Jeroboam who walked in the way of his father. He reigned for two years and was assassinated by Baasha.

## 1 Kings

- f. 15:33-16:7 Baasha, King of Israel, 910-887 B. C.  
Got the throne by violence. Reigned 24 years. Warred with Judah. Judah hired Assyria to attack him.
- g. 16:8-14 Elah, King of Israel, 887-886 B. C.  
Assassinated while drunk, by Zimri, who slew all the house of Elah.
- h. 16:15-20 Zimri, King of Israel, 886 B. C.  
Reigned seven days. Was burned to death.
- i. 16:15-20 Omri, King of Israel, 886-875 B. C.  
Capable man, but wicked above all that preceded him. Made Samaria his capitol. Politically, he became one of Israel's greatest kings, but religiously, he continued in his apostasy.
- j. 16:29-22:40 Ahab, King of Israel, 875-854 B. C.  
Wickedest of all the kings of Israel. He married Jezebel, a Sidonian princess, who brought with her Tyrian-Baal worship; even built an altar for her gods in Samaria. She maintained 850 prophets who slew the prophets of Jehovah. The Lord God intervenes with his prophet Elijah, one in whom prophetic power culminated. He honored God and like Moses performed miracles. His non-Israelitish extraction, his sojourn at Zarephath, bringing a blessing to the pious heathen woman, and several other things, point to the time when the Lord also will cause the heathen to partake in the blessing of the kingdom of God; and the raising of the dead child of the widow performed by him, as well as his ascent into heaven, are types of the raising of the dead and the ascension of Christ, before whose coming the spirit of Elijah was revived in John the Baptist.
- k. 22:41-51 Ahab's Death, Jehoshaphat of Judah  
He closed his reign with a brutal crime against Naboth, and was slain in a war with Syria. Jehoshaphat of Judah had originally made peace with Ahab, gave his son, Joram to Ahab's daughter, Athalia, in marriage, and joined Ahab in war against Syria.
- l. 22:51-53 Ahaziah, King of Israel  
His reign resembles that of his father Ahab.



## Questions on I Kings

1. What according to I Kings 1:49 was Adonijah doing when he “took hold of the horns of the altar?
2. How in 2:4 was Solomon, the newly anointed king, to walk? What were the promises?
3. Why was Solomon consumed with the request of Adonijah to marry Abishag? Result? 2:22, 25
4. What was Solomon’s sole request of God? 3:9
5. Describe the wisdom of Solomon. 4:29-34
6. David was forbidden to build the Temple (5:6), but with a friend of his father’s, Hiram of Tyre, what did Solomon desire Hiram to supply? 5:10
7. What promise did God give to Solomon? 6:12-13
8. Give me your comments on the Temple and it’s construction. Chapters 7-8
9. What was the purpose of the second visit of God to Solomon? 9:4-9
10. How would you characterize the Queen of Sheba’s visit to Solomon? 10:1-2, 5
11. What problem arises for Solomon in 11:1-6?
12. Because of Solomon’s apostasy, what did the Lord God do in judgment? 11:12-13
13. To whom would God give the 10 tribes according to 11:31, 35-36, 39?
14. What was the “heavy yoke” that Solomon had placed on the Israelites? 12:14
15. Who did Rehoboam, son of Jeroboam, look to for advice and get? 12:9-18 Result? v. 19
16. Who was the man called by God to be a godly prophet and what did he say would happen? 13:1-5
17. What consistent story arises from Scripture about the kings, chapters 14-16, especially Ahab, 16:29-33?
18. What does 17:4-5 mean about Elijah being sustained by ravens?
19. What does 18:12-13 suggest about the appearance and reappearance of Elijah according to Obadiah?

20. How could Elijah think that he was the only one left after the miracles of 19:12-13, according to 19:14?
21. What does 21:25 suggest was the real problem with Ahab?
22. Was the humility of Ahab exhibited in 21:28-29 enough to save his life in 22:37-38? Why not? 21:19
23. Why could not the son of Ahab, Ahaziah, act any differently than the father? 22:51-53

### Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF II KINGS

## Name

Refer to information given in the outline of I Kings

## Purpose

Refer to information given in the outline of I Kings

## Analysis

### I. II Kings 1:1-10:36 – Continuation from I Kings

#### A. II Kings 1-2:25 - Ahaziah, King of Israel.

His reign resembles that of his wicked father Ahab. Elijah now is translated into heaven. Elijah's ministry had lasted about 25 years. He thought he had failed in his work but God, however, did not. His work done, God sent a deputation of angels' chariots to bear him away to heaven.

#### B. II Kings 3:1-8:15 - Joram of Israel.

Joram removed the pillar of Baal from Samaria. With Jehoshaphat, he undertook an expedition against the rebellious Moabites. The ministry of Elisha occurs at this time. Elijah's influence is to be seen in the fact that Joram caused the Tyrian Baal worship to cease as a state religion. It is also to be seen in the schools of the prophets which he founded for the purpose of religious and intellectual training to call the nation back to God. Of the miracles that he performed, the greatest of all spiritually speaking, is that of Naaman. Elisha anoints Hazael to succeed Ben-Hadad as king of Syria. A prophet of Israel anointing a foreign king to punish the prophet's own nation. God had, however, instructed this to be done, I Kings 19:15; designing that Hazael be one of God's instruments for punishing Israel for their frightful sins, 10:32-33. Would you say that God still does this today? Or would He?

#### C. 8:16-24 - Jehoram of Judah.

He introduced the idolatries of Ahab into Judah. During his reign, Edom and Libnah revolted.

#### D. 8:25-29 - Ahaziah of Judah.

#### E. 9:1-10:36 - Jehu of Israel.

This man utterly exterminates the Baal worship of Ahab and Jezebel. Hosea (1:4,5) condemns the blood thirsty manner of Jehu, and this is in harmony with the present representation in Kings. (Remember how Jehu slew the 70 sons of Ahab.) Not only this death but the author relates vividly the blood thirsty deeds of Jehu. He is commended

## 2 Kings

insofar as he obeyed the Lord (10:30) but he is condemned because his obedience was not complete (10:29,31). Jehu was the type of man who would obey God in the manner most pleasing to himself.

### I. II Kings 11:1-17:41 – Renewed hostilities between the two kingdoms.

The ministries of Elijah and Elisha were successful in bringing about the removal of foreign idolatries. Israel, however, then sank back to where she had been before. Through Ahaz of Judah, the Syrian idolatry was brought even unto Jerusalem. When Israel and Syria opposed Ahaz, he sought the help of Assyria. Thus, this great nation came into contact with Palestine, and in 722 B.C., Israel fell before her.

- A. 11:1-21 - Athaliah usurps the throne of Judah.
- B. 12:1-21 - Joash of Judah repairs the temple.
- C. 13:1-9 - Jehoahaz of Judah. For a time, Israel was captured by Syria.
- D. 13:10-25 - Jehoash of Israel recovered from Syria some of the cities that had been taken from his father.
- E. 14:1-22 - Amaziah of Judah.
- F. 14:23-29 - Jeroboam II of Israel. During his reign Israel reached great material power and prosperity.
- G. 15:1-7 - Azariah of Judah. Judah, at this time, was also outwardly prosperous.
- H. 15:8-12 - Zechariah of Israel.
- I. 15:13-16 - Shallum of Israel.
- J. 15:17-22 - Menahem of Israel pays tribute to Tiglath-Pileser III (727 B.C.).
- K. 15:23-26 - Pekahiah of Israel.
- L. 15:27-31 - Pekah of Israel becomes an ally of Syria against Judah.  
Tiglath-Pileser invades northern Palestine and takes Naphtali captive.
- M. 15:32-38 - Jotham of Judah.
- N. 16:1-20 - Ahaz of Judah seeks the aid of Tiglath-Pileser III against Israel and Syria.
- O. 17:1-41 - Hoshea, the last king of Israel, 730-721 B.C.

He paid tribute to the king of Assyria but made a secret alliance with the king of Egypt. Then came the Assyrians and administered the final death-blow to the Northern Kingdom. Samaria fell and its people followed the rest of Israel into captivity. The

prophets of that time were Hosea, Isaiah and Micah. The Northern Kingdom lasted about 200 years. Every one of its 19 kings had walked in the steps of Jeroboam. God had sent prophet after prophet to change them but to no avail. Since there was no remedy for their idol worship God allowed them to be taken into captivity in Assyria, the capitol of Nineveh.

### III. II Kings 18:1-25:30 - The Kingdom of Judah to Captivity.

A. 18:1-20:21 - Hezekiah of Judah.

The account of Hezekiah's reign – beginning and duration – are recorded in Isaiah 36-37. It is summarized in II Chronicles 32. The original is the account in Isaiah and upon this the accounts in II Kings and in Chronicles are based. The historicity of the Scriptural account is confirmed by the discovery of Sennacherib's own narrative of his conquests of Palestine. He relates that he conquered 46 cities and took 200,150 inhabitants captive. Hezekiah's sickness, recovery and eventual death are recorded, 20:20-21.

B. 21:1-18 - Manasseh

At this time those who were anti-theocratic in principal gained power, with the result that pagan idolatry thrived as never before.

C. 21:19-26 - Amon.

Continued in idolatry of Manasseh and was murdered.

D. 21:1-23:30 - Josiah.

Only important thing that happened during his reign was that the entire Pentateuch was recovered and used in the temple worship.

E. 23:31-35 – Jehoahaz - reigned three months and was taken into captivity.

F. 23:36-24:7 - Jehoiakim or Eliakim.

During this time (605 B.C.) Nebuchadnezzar first attacked Jerusalem, and Daniel carried captive.

G. 24:8-17 - Jehoiachin - reigned 3 months and then deposed to Babylon.

H. 24:18-25:26

Captivity of Judah by Babylon, 606 B.C. It took Nebuchadnezzar 20 years to capture and take captive all of Judah. He left nothing but rubble in Jerusalem. Zedekiah was taken into Babylon after his eyes were taken out. The captivity of Judah by Babylon had been predicted 100 years before by Isaiah and Micah (Isaiah 39:6, Micah 4:10). Now that it was accomplished, Jeremiah predicted that it would last 70 years, Jeremiah 25:11-12.

## Questions on the Book of II Kings

1. Why did Ahaziah want to take Elijah prisoner? 1:10-11
2. What really did Elisha request when he asked for a “double portion of Elijah’s spirit?” 2:9  
Elijah’s response? 2:10
3. What kind of a message do we get from 2:23-25?
4. The king of Moab’s desperate attempt to induce Edom to turn against Israel failed. How did King Mesha try to get the god Chemosh to assist him? 3:27
5. What do the miracles of Elisha in Chapter 4 suggest?
6. How was Gehazi punished for his lie? 5:23-26 Was “to his descendents forever” fair?
7. What kind of war strategy is this in 6:21-23?
8. How do you explain 6:27-30?
9. Why did Elisha cry? 8:12
10. How does King Jehu explain the destruction of the house of Ahab? 10:11-16
11. In chapter 12 we hear of a good king named Joash. What were the three kinds of gifts he collected for the Temple repair? 12:4-5
12. After Elisha died he was buried. What meaning should we attach to this incident recorded in 13:20-21?
13. According to 14:5-6, what was and is the law concerning “sin?”
14. If, according to 15:1-3, Azariah had done “right in the eyes of the Lord,” why the judgment of God of leprosy for him in 15:5?
15. What does 16:15 mean when it says “the bronze altar will be used for seeking guidance?”
16. How can a merciful God do what is recorded in 17:18-22? Romans 1:21, 24, 26, 28
17. What unfortunate worship philosophy was present among those foreigners who inhabited Israel? 17:32-34, 41?
18. How did Hezekiah pay what King Sennacherib demanded in 18:15, 16?
19. What, according to Chapter 20, was Hezekiah’s request of God? And what was the sign of a favorable answer? 20:9-11

2 Kings

20. What surprise came to Josiah's attention in 22:8-13?

21. What positive steps for the Lord God of Israel did Josiah take in 23:4, 8, 10, 12, 15, 19, 20?

22. What instructions "to celebrate" were given by Josiah, 23:21-23?

23. What happened to Judah at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar in 25:1-21?

**Paragraph Summaries**

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# THE BOOK OF I CHRONICLES

## Name

In the Hebrew Bible the two books of Chronicles form a single work and bear the title “the words of the days” (divere hayyamin). As seen in Chronicles 27:24 the term is used in the sense of annals.

## Author

According to Baba Bathra 15a, “Ezra wrote the genealogy of Chronicles unto himself.” This Jewish tradition thus attributes the authorship of Chronicles to Ezra and by the words “unto himself” possibly intends us to understand that Ezra continued the history down to his time.

When, however, one compares the conclusion of II Chronicles with the opening verses of Ezra, it appears that the opening verses of Ezra are taken from Chronicles (not vice versa). The edict is expanded or given in fuller form in Ezra, and one or two minor changes are made. Now, if an editor had added this edict to Chronicles, why did he not make the wording in both instances identical?

A comparison of the two edicts therefore (II Chron. 36:22,23 with Ez. 1:1-4) seems to show that Chronicles is earlier than Ezra. But this, of course, is not decisive. The language of Chronicles shows that it comes from the general period of Ezra, and we may date the book in the latter half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, B.C. – probably between 450-425. It is possible that Ezra was the author.

**Significance of the Double Narrative.** As many of you have noticed, much of I Chronicles and II Samuel are almost identical. Usually repetition of biblical history means importance. But I wonder if that holds true of this part of Old Testament history? Possibly the importance in this can be found that as II Kings deals with both the North and South Kingdoms, I Chronicles deals with the Southern Kingdom – the Kingdom of David. Would this give you any insight into the reason for the double narrative?

## Purpose

It is somewhat difficult to determine what the purpose is, but I would suppose that it is or was to defend Judaism against the claims of the Samaritans and the pretensions of the Gentiles. The writer, I suppose, sought to prove that the Judaism of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, B.C., was the only true one, and to accomplish this he appealed both to its antiquity and to its wonderful achievements. As you have noticed, much of the history of the northern Kingdom is passed over. The writer of the book stresses the life of David and those events which have to do with the nation’s worship at Zion and the preparation of the temple building. For this reason also, in the life of Solomon, it is the temple and its dedication rather than personal events in Solomon’s life, which receive the central emphasis. For this reason also, the writer stresses the work of the kings that opposed idolatry, such as Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah. By reminding the people of the glory that God has given them, he hopes to convince them that the true blessing will come only in obedience to the theocratic principles that God has established.



## Analysis

### I. I Chronicles 1:1-9:44 - Genealogical Material

1. 1:1-54           Generations of Patriarchal times.
2. 2:1-3:24        The 12 sons of Israel.
3. 4:1-23          The Family of Judah.
4. 4:24-43         The Sons of Simeon.
5. 5:1-26          Sons of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh.
6. 5:27-6:66      The Families of Levi.
7. 7:1-40          Families of Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, half Manasseh, Ephraim, Asher.
8. 8:1-40          Benjamin, genealogy of Saul's house.
9. 9:1-44          Family of Saul.

### II. I Chronicles 10:1-29:30 - The Reign of David

1. 10:1-14         The last days of death of Saul.
2. 11:1-12:40     The capture of Jerusalem. David's heroes.
3. 13:1-16:43     The Ark brought from Kirjath Jearim to Zion.  
David's song.
4. 17:1-27         David forbidden to build the temple. His throne to be established.
5. 18:1-20:7      The account of David's conquests.
6. 21:1-22:1      The numbering of the people.
7. 22:2-19         Preparations for building the temple.
8. 23:1-26:32     Arrangements of the Levites.
9. 27:1-34         Organization of the government.
10. 28:1-29:30    David's last instructions and his death.

## Questions of the Book of I Chronicles

1. Where in Chapter 3 are given the names of David's sons and daughter?
2. What is the prayer of Jabez in Chapter 4:9-10? What are the four requests of Jabez?
3. Why are the Temple musicians mentioned and named in 6:31-36?
4. Why is the history of Saul's death recorded differently in 10:13-14 than in the Samuel account?
5. Why wouldn't David drink the water that had been brought to him? 11:17-19
6. Why was there such a judgment on Uzzah in 13:9-11?
7. What kind of a promise did Nathan give to David from the Lord? 17:13 Explain "never."
8. How did the kindness that David wanted to show to Hanun backfire? 19:2, 5, 17-19
9. How according to 28:11-12, 19 did David know how the Temple was to be constructed?
10. What was the motive for "giving" to the Temple construction? 29:3-4, 9

## Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF II CHRONICLES

## Name

Refer to information given in the outline of I Chronicles.

## Purpose

Refer to information given in the outline of I Chronicles.

## Analysis

### I. II Chronicles 1:1-9:31 – The Reign of Solomon

A. The wisdom and wealth of Solomon. Can we take a lesson from his request of the Lord?

B. 2:1-18 Solomon's preparations for building the temple.

For almost 400 years Israel had used only the Tabernacle for their worship service. But now things are about to change. God chooses Solomon to build this fine temple. Just the cost of the materials – gold, silver and wood from Lebanon were estimated at 2 to 5 billion dollars. The temple was built much like that of the tabernacle but it was double in size. Ninety feet long, thirty feet wide and forty-five feet high, I Kings 6:2. It took 3,000 Israelites and 150,000 Canaanites seven years to build this temple without the sound of any hammer or tool, I Kings 6:7.

C. 3:1-5:1 – The building of the Temple

### The Temples of God...Halley's Comments

THE TABERNACLE. Only a tent. God's localized dwelling place in Israel for 400 years. Most of the time at Shiloh.

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE. Its glory was short-lived. Plundered within five years after Solomon's death. Destroyed by Babylonians, 586 B.C.

EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE. Not an actual temple, but a vision of a future ideal, restored temple, Ezekiel 40-43.

SYNAGOGUES. Arose during the captivity. Not temples, but small buildings, in sacred Jewish communities, for local meetings.

ZERUBBABEL'S TEMPLE. Built after return from captivity. See in Ezra and Nehemiah. Stood 500 years until replaced by Herod's Temple.

HEROD'S TEMPLE. This is the temple to which Christ came. Built by Herod of marble and gold. Destroyed by Romans, 70 A.D. John 2:13, Matthew 24.

CHRIST'S BODY. Jesus called His body a Temple, John 2:19-21. In Him, God tabernacled among men. Jesus said earthly temples were not necessary to worship God, John 4:20-24.

THE CHURCH, collectively, is a temple of God, I Corinthians 3:16-17. God's dwelling place in the world.

EACH INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN is a temple of God, I Corinthians 6:19, of which the grandeur of Solomon's Temple may have been a type.

CHURCH BUILDINGS are sometimes called Temples of God, but nowhere so designated in the Bible.

THE TEMPLE IN HEAVEN. The Tabernacle was a pattern of Something in Heaven, Hebrews 9:11,24. John saw a Temple in Heaven, Revelations 11:19. But later God and the Lamb had become the Temple, Revelations 21:22.

D. 5:2-7:22 The dedication of the Temple.

The dedicated treasures. The Ark of the covenant. Solomon blesses the people. His prayer.

E. 8:1-9:28 Various activities of Solomon.

Visit from the Queen of Sheba. She admires, yes, I suppose, shows an envious eye for his wealth. Solomon reigned forty years and died.

## II. II Chronicles 10:1-36:23 The History of Judah to its Fall.

A. 10:1-12:16 The reign of Rehoboam.

Son of Solomon who reigned 17 years. During his reign, ten out of the twelve tribes seceded from his kingdom. During his reign, Shishak of Egypt plunders Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple.

B. 13:1-22 The reign of Abijah, son of Rehoboam.

Wicked like his father during his three-year reign. Defeated Jeroboam and in so doing recovered some of the northern cities.

C. 14:1-16:14 The reign of Asa, son of Abijah, 912-872 B.C.

The best of all the kings of Judah. He served the Lord with a great amount of zeal. Besides removing his own mother from being queen, for idol worship, he put away the gods of Asherim and the Sodomites (male prostitutes).

D. 17:1-20:37 The reign of Jehoshaphat of Judah. 874-850.

"He sought the Lord in all things." Inaugurated a type of "mission work" as he sent the priests and Levites out on trips to read the Law of Moses.

## 2 Chronicles

E. 21:1-20 Jehoram's reign, 850-843.

Was a "good" fellow, but he fell into bad company. He married the daughter of Jezebel, Athaliah. While he ruled, Jerusalem was plundered by both the Arabians and Philistines. The Bible describes his death, - "his bowels fell out and he departed without being desired."

F. 22:1-12 Athaliah and Athaliah.

Ahaziah reigned one year. He was the son of Athaliah. Was very wicked. He was killed by Jehu. Athaliah reigned six years, 843-836 B.C. Fanatically devoted to Baalism, she massacred her own grandchildren and usurped the throne herself.

G. The reign of Joash.

He was the grandson of Athaliah, one of whom escaped the sword of Athaliah, and was hidden in the Temple for six years. When he was seven, Jehoida the priest, engineered Athaliah's removal, and placed Joash on the throne. He cleared the land of Baalism and collected money from the people to help repair the temple. This is where we get the "Joash Chest." However, after Jehoida died, he too turned to Baalism, and had Zechariah, the son of Jehoida, stoned to death. Shortly thereafter, the Syrians captured and executed judgment on Joash, who had forsaken the true God.

H. 25:1-28 Amaziah - reigned 29 years, 803-775 - "did right, but not with a perfect heart."

I. 26:1-23 Uzziah, 787-735; he reigned 52 years.

At first he "set himself to seek God." Later he became arrogant and God smote him with leprosy.

J. 27:1-9 Jotham, 749-734; reigned for 16 years.

"He ordered the ways before the Lord his God."

K. 28:1-7 Ahaz. 741-726, 16 years.

Introduced Baal worship again. Judah was brought low because of him.

L. 29:1-32:33 The reign of Hezekiah, 726-697...29 years.

Began his reign with a great reformation. Cleaned house. Throughout his reign Isaiah was his trusted advisor. In his sixth year, the Northern Kingdom fell, and in his 14<sup>th</sup> year, Sennacherib invaded Jerusalem. Hezekiah pays him tribute, and then becomes sick. Prays for an extension of life...the Lord grants him 15 more years. Hezekiah's tunnel.

M. 33:1-25 Manasseh and Amon, 697-640; 57 years reign for both.

Wickedest of all Judah's kings. Amon reigned two years.

## 2 Chronicles

N. 34:1-35:27 Reign of Josiah, 639-608, 31 years.

He began reigning at the age of 8 years. Was a fine ruler. During his reign, the “book of the law” was found and instituted into their worship.

O. 36:1-4 Jehoaz, three months, 608. Deposed by Pharaoh and taken to Egypt.

P. 36:5-8 Jehoiakim, 11 years, 608-597.

Was placed on the throne by Pharaoh. Exact opposite of Josiah, his father. Left to die outside the city gates. Jehoichin, his son, reigned for three months; then taken into captivity in Babylon where he lived 37 years.

Q. 36:1-23 Destruction of Judah. Zedekiah.

Placed on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar. Was a weak king. Because of his rebellion he was carried to Babylon in chains, having had his eyes removed.

### Questions on II Chronicles

1. Considering the phrase “nothing is too good for the Lord,” why the ornate and ostentatious construction and interior of the temple? Chapters 1-5
2. What does Chapter 5, verse 14 mean?
3. When the foreigner comes to the temple to pray, what do the prophets envision because of this? 6:32-33
4. Why do you think that the chronicler of II Chronicles omits the accounts of Solomon’s wives and rebellions at the end of his life (9:29-30), as in I Kings 11:1-40?
5. During the reign of Asa, all who would not seek the God of their fathers with heart, soul and mind, were put to death, 15:12-15. Why the use of the Law to coerce?
6. Why would Asa not seek healing from God for his foot ailment, but rather depended on physicians? 16:6, 11-13
7. What was Uzziah known for in particular? 26:14-15 Result, v. 16
8. Why did King Ahaz become more and more unfaithful? 28:22-23
9. After Hezekiah had purified the temple in 29:1-18, what did they do then? 29:25
10. What was the “crown jewel” of Hilkiah the priest’s life? 34:14-16
11. To whom did the city of Jerusalem fall? 36:15-18

**Paragraph Summaries**

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# THE BOOK OF EZRA

## Name

The book is named in the Hebrew Bible after its principal character. In the Septuagint it bears the designation (Esdras deuteron), and in the Vulgate, it is called the first book of Ezra. (liber primus Esdrae).

## Author

Although the book itself does not in its entirety claim to be the work of Ezra, nevertheless tradition seems to be justified in making such an assertion. For one thing, some of the book (ch. 7 ff) is written in the first person singular. It is quite possible that Ezra used these passages as a basis and added to them information obtained from other sources. The book bears the mark of unity, and if the "I" sections were the work of Ezra, it would seem to follow that the remainder is his also. However, the school of higher criticism does not regard this view of authorship. Since these critics nit-pick, for the most part, their negative criticism will not even be discussed. The date of Ezra's ministry, as far as can be established, is 465-424 B.C.

## Purpose

This work serves the purpose of giving an account, from the religious or priestly points of view, of the restoration of the nation to its land. It lays emphasis upon the establishment of the people in the land as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation that is to walk in the light of the Law.

## Analysis

### I. Ezra 1:1-2:70 - The First Return of the Exiles

- A. 1:1-4 - Cyrus makes his proclamation. (Handwriting on the wall, Dan. 5:25-31).
- B. 1:5-11 - The people respond to Cyrus' edict. Offerings are made for the project, and Cyrus restores the vessels of the temple.
- C. 2:1-70 - The first exiles return, under Zerubbabel and Joshua. If this chapter (42,360) is compared with the list given in Nehemiah 11:1-13:3, it will be observed that there are some numerical differences. These, however, are to be explained as due to copyists' errors in the course of the transmission of the text.

### II. Ezra 3:1-6:22 The Restoration of the Worship of Jehovah

- A. 3:1-3 - In the 7<sup>th</sup> month the people gather to Jerusalem and the altar of burnt offering is erected. The people then offer sacrifices.
- B. 3:4-7 - The offerings are renewed and the Feast of Tabernacles observed.



## Ezra

- C. 3:8-13 - In the second month of the second year of the return, work on the temple was begun. The work was accompanied with praise and thanksgiving, but many who had seen Solomon's Temple wept.
- D. 4:1-5 - The adversaries of Judah and Benjamin first seek help in the building of the temple. But Zerubbabel rejects their aid, whereupon they hire counselors to frustrate the purpose of the returned exiles. This continues until the reign of Darius, the Persian.
- E. 4:6-24 - Opposition comes during the reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes I. A letter is sent to Artaxerxes, with the result that the work is brought to a halt. A similar effect had been produced even during the days of Zerubbabel, for in verse 24 we read that the work on the Temple ceased even to the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Darius.
- F. 5:1-17 - Haggai and Zachariah stir up the people to work upon the temple. Opposition appears and the matter is referred to Darius. Verses 16-17 contain the letter or copy of the letter sent to Darius.
- G. 6:1-12 - Darius searches for Cyrus' decree, and himself decrees that the work of the temple is to continue.
- H. 6:13-16 - The edict of Darius obeyed, and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Adar, in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Darius, 515 B.C., the temple is finished.
- I. 6:17-22 - The temple is dedicated; the passover observed. Behistun Stone.

### III. Ezra 7:1-10:44 The Return under Ezra, 457 B.C.

- A. 7:1-10 - The book now skips over many years in order to introduce the reader to the events which are connected with Ezra in the reign of Artaxerxes. Ezra's lineage is given and he is described as a ready scribe of the Law of Moses. In the 5<sup>th</sup> month of the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes, he comes to Jerusalem.
- B. 7:11-26 - Artaxerxes gives Ezra a commission.
- C. 7:27-28 - Ezra blesses God for the King's commission.
- D. 8:1-14 - A list of those who went up to Jerusalem.
- E. 8:15-20 - Ezra gathers the chiefs together at the river by Ahava.
- F. 8:21-36 - Ezra proclaims a fast. On the 12<sup>th</sup> day of the first month, they leave for Jerusalem.
- G. 9:1-14 - Ezra mourns when he learns that his people have not separated themselves from the world, but have intermarried with the heathen again.
- H. 9:5-15 - Ezra prays.
- I. 10:1-17 - Ezra undertakes reform. Does his reform seem severe?
- J. 10:18-44 - A list of those who had taken strange wives.

## Questions on Ezra

1. What was to be the motivation factor for people to help rebuild the temple in Jerusalem? 1:4-5, 2:68-69
2. Why the “weeping aloud” of those who saw the foundation of the new temple laid? 3:11-12
3. Why would Zerubbabel refuse to let the enemies of Judah and Benjamin help them rebuild the temple? 4:24
4. Why did the building of the house of God stop, according to 4:24?
5. What purpose does 6:11 serve in the overall view of temple construction?
6. How would you describe Ezra in 7:5-10? What are the characteristics described?
7. How would such authority as described in 7:26 be given to a teacher?
8. What substitute action was taken in 8:21-23 when Ezra desired not to ask for soldiers for protection?
9. Why was marrying outside of “the holy race” not acceptable? 9:1-2
10. How does Ezra see the brief respite from the sword of the hand of foreign kings? 9:8-9
11. What happened according to 10:17 to the foreign wives of Israelites? Fair?

## Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

## Name

In modern Hebrew Bibles the book is named after its principal character.

## Author

The author of this book was Nehemiah himself as appears from the usage of the first person pronoun. The book records Nehemiah's mission to Jerusalem and the reforms which he instituted there. Unlike Ezra, Nehemiah was a layman. Yet his work served to complement that of Ezra, and the two were used of God in the establishment of the post-exile Jewish nation.

## Analysis

### I. Nehemiah 1:1-7:73 – Nehemiah Restores the City Walls of Jerusalem.

- A. 1:1-2:20 – Nehemiah begins speaking in the first person; “And it came to pass in the month Chislev, in the 20<sup>th</sup> year, as I was in Shushan the palace...” Thus the date and setting are given. Word is brought to Nehemiah that the Jews in Palestine are in great affliction and reproach, and that the walls of Jerusalem have been burned and the city gates are down. Nehemiah grieves at the news and prays to God to show mercy on him. He then introduces himself as the King's cup-bearer. The prayer is answered. The king then asks Nehemiah why his face is sad. He then tells the king why, and is then permitted to go to Jerusalem. After his arrival there, Nehemiah makes a tour of the walls.
- B. 3:1-6:19 – The rebuilding of the walls begins. Opposition soon appears. Sanballat mocks the Jews. Tobiah, the Ammonite, also ridicules by saying that the wall is so weak a fox could break it down by walking on it. Nevertheless, Nehemiah fortifies his men and continues the work. Even after more opposition, the wall is finished in 52 days, 142 years after its destruction in 586 B.C.
- C. 7:1-73 – Nehemiah now gives his brother Hannani charge over the city.

### II. Nehemiah 8:1-13:31 – The Reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah.

- A. 8:1-10:39 – The covenant is renewed. Ezra reads the Law of Moses for seven days from morning until midday. They understood and then confessed their sins. “This public reading and exposition of God's book brought a great wave of repentance among the people as a great ‘revival’, and a solemn covenant to keep the law. It was the finding of the Book of the Law that brought Josiah's great Reformation (II Kings 22): It was Martin Luther's finding a Bible, which the Roman Papacy had driven out of circulation, that made the Protestant Reformation and brought religious liberty to our country. The blight of the Roman Catholic Church is the substitution of its Papal Decrees for God's Word. The weakness of present-day Protestantism is the neglect of the Bible, which it professes to follow. The grand need of today's pulpit is simple Bible preaching. Most other preaching is not worth listening to.” Halley, page 217.
- B. 11:1-36 – This chapter contains a list of those who dwelt in Jerusalem. The rulers of the people are to dwell there and also one out of every ten.
- C. 12:1-26 – A list of Priests and Levites given.

## Nehemiah

- D. 12:27-43 – The walls are dedicated.
- E. 12:44-47 – The people support the priests.
- F. 13:1-13 – Nehemiah visits Jerusalem a second time.

## Questions on Nehemiah

1. Why, according to 1:4, 7, did Nehemiah weep?
2. Why would Sanballat the Samaritan be disturbed to hear about Nehemiah's return to rebuild Jerusalem? 2:10
3. Was the fact that the walls of Jerusalem continued to be built a factor identified in 4:16, or was something else at work?
4. How did the economic crisis experienced in Jerusalem at the wall's repairing affect the work and attitude of the people? 5:1-19
5. How do you characterize the work of Nehemiah? Principle or opportunism? 5:16-18
6. What would have transpired had Nehemiah been tempted to waver in the face of threats against him? 6:11-14
7. Is there biblical reference for people in worship to "raise their hands and shout?" 8:5-6.
8. From the days of Joshua to Nehemiah, "the feast had not been celebrated like this." 8:17 What does this mean?
9. According to 9:17-36, how did the Lord God get the attention of the Israelites as they fell into apostasy, esp. vv. 30-31?
10. Where in Chapter 9:32-38 do we find the words of sincere repentance?
11. What did Nehemiah do to those who violated the Sabbath? 13:15-22

## Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF ESTHER

## Name

This book takes its name from its principal character "Esther." This is a Persian word meaning "star." The Hebrew name for this book – Esther – was Hadhassah, and means "myrtle."

## Author

According to Baba Bathra 15a, "the men of the Synagogue write...the roll of Esther." Josephus (Antiquities 11:6:1) considered Mordecai to be the author, and this opinion seems to have been held in the Synagogue. In favor of this there has sometimes been urged the fact that in the last two chapters of Esther mention is made of letters and writings of Mordecai. But there is no evidence that these letters and writings are the Book of Esther or even a part thereof. Furthermore, in the light of 10:3 it seems rather clear that Mordecai was not the author of the book.

The very fact is, that we do not know who the author of this book is. It seems clear that he lived in Persia rather than in Palestine, since he exhibits such an intimate acquaintance with Persian life and customs. Doubtless, in composing Esther, he made use of some of Mordecai's writings (9:20) and the books of Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia (2:23 and 19:2) and probably also of oral tradition. As to the date of the writing of the book, according to 10:2, the book was written after the death of Ahasureus (Xerxes). The date of Xerxes' assassination is commonly accepted as 465 B.C.

However, by many scholars today, the historicity of this book is denied for many and various reasons, but the greatest of these objections can be found in the fact that in the entire book of Esther, the name of "God" is not mentioned once. But why is the name of God omitted? We must first of all remember that not all the Jews taken into captivity in Babylon wanted to return to Judea when they were freed by Cyrus. Even though God had not rejected them for their remaining in Babylon, they no longer were associated with the covenant God of Israel. The book of Esther, it would seem, serves the purpose of showing how divine providence overrules all things; even in a distant land, God's people are still in His hands. But since they are in a distant, far country, and not in the land of promise, His name is not mentioned. By causing us to behold the workings of providence, the book does turn our eyes to God who determines the destinies of men and nations.

## Analysis

In order to get the dates of Esther chronologically accurate as possible, we place her reign 40 years after the temple was rebuilt (Ezra) and 30 years before the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah). It is very simply a story of a Jewish girl marrying a Babylonian King...and what her God-fearing influence did for the Jews.

Esther

### **Esther 1 – Queen Vashti disposed.**

The great feast about which this chapter speaks was held in preparation for a famous expedition against Greece. Vashti seems to have been deposed before (Xerxes) Ahasuerus left before battle, 482 B.C., and he married Esther 478 B.C., after he returned from the disastrous expedition against Greece, 1:3 and 2:16. (Shushan or Susa 200 miles east of Babylon.)

### **Esther 2 – Esther becomes Queen.**

Ahasuerus dies 13 years after they were married. Esther then could have lived into the reign of her step-son Artaxerxes. As Queen-mother she may have been influential in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.

### **Esther 3,4,5,6,7 – Haman's Decree.**

His decree was to kill all the Jews in the province because they were interfering in the king's business. (Ahasuerus' 12<sup>th</sup> year, Esther's 5<sup>th</sup>). When Esther went into the king to plead on the Jews' behalf, he showed that even though he had been married to her for five years, he still adored her. (I wonder how often this is true in our own homes?) The outcome of all of Haman's complaining was that he was hanged in the place he had prepared to have Mordecai hanged. (Mordecai was Esther's cousin.)

### **Esther 8,9 – Deliverance, Feast of Purim.**

According to Persian law, a king's decree could not be reversed, even by him, 8:8, Daniel 6:15. Hence, the massacre of the Jews, which he had approved, and could not reverse. However, Esther pleaded with him to make another decree allowing the Jews to defend themselves. As a result, the Jews killed 75,000 of their enemies, and thus were not annihilated. The Feast of Purim was first observed.

### **Esther 10 – Mordecai's Greatness.**

When Xerxes had realized that it was Mordecai who had saved his life from potential assassins (Ch. 6,7) he elevated Mordecai to the position of second in command next to him. Imagine, Xerxes' prime minister being a Jew... Queen Esther being a Jew? This, of course, was God's will, and it led to the paving of the work of Ezra and Nehemiah.

## **Questions on Esther**

1. Why did Queen Vashti refuse the king's invitation to the banquet? 1:12
2. Why do you suppose that Esther concealed her identity to the king? 2:10 & 20
3. What good turn of events came as a result of Mordecai's observation? 2:21-23

4. Why, according to Chapter 4, especially vv. 8-10, did Haman plot to kill the Jews?
5. What, according to 4:15-16, did Esther decide to do before going to the king with her request about the Jews?
6. Why, according to Chapter 6, was Mordecai honored when Haman was building a gallows for him?
7. What, according to 8:11, did the king's edict provide for the Jews?
8. What unfinished business did the Jews attend to? 9:5-10

### Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF JOB

## Name

The Septuagint, in a postscript, following ancient tradition, identify Job with "Jobab" the second king of Edom (Gen. 36:33). With the names and places that we find mentioned in the book of Job, its setting would seem to be among the descendants of Esau. All we seem to really know, however, is that the book is named after its principal character.

## Authorship

The view of the date and authorship of the book which seems to be most free from objection regards the book as composed at some time during the reign of Solomon. This view was advanced by Martin Luther, and by scholars of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – Keil and Delitzsch. Another view expressed in Baba Bathra 14b (Talmud) Moses was said to be the author of the book. The reasoning behind this thinking is that while Moses was in the wilderness of Midian (Ex. 2:15) which bordered on Edomite country, he could easily have learned of the story of Job from Job's immediate descendants; or Job may yet have been alive and could then have related what experiences he had to Moses himself. In opposition to this view, it has been said, that parts of Job are written in the style of Proverbs, and that the writer of Proverbs was the writer of Job. However, it is quite unlikely that a book of the reflective nature of Job would have been written before the giving of the Law and by one whose chief occupation was Law-giver. What is your pleasure? Shall we go with Luther?

## Subject of the Book

Permit me to quote from *Halley's Commentary* on this matter. "The book is a philosophic discussion, in highly poetic language, of the problems of human suffering. Very early in history men began to be troubled with the awful inequalities and injustices of life; how a good God could make a world like this, where so much of the suffering falls on those who least deserve it. We do not now understand the problem any better than they did in Job's day. We come into life, having nothing whatever to do with bringing ourselves here. We open our eyes and look around, and we are just a big question mark, "What's it all about?" And the older we grow, the more we see the world's inequalities and injustices, and the bigger the question mark grows – how could a good God make a world like this? But though we may not understand the problem, we have more reason to be reconciled to it. For in the meantime, God himself has come down and become a partaker with us in our suffering. It is not as though he had made a world where there was to be suffering, and then held aloof and said, "Let it suffer." The story of Jesus – the world's most righteous man and the world's greatest sufferer, is an illustration of God suffering with His creation; and we ought not have any difficulty in believing that it is all for some good purpose, though we cannot now understand. Then too, Jesus rose from the dead, giving assurance of a future Life where all mysteries will be solved and all inequalities will be adjusted." To this quote I add my personal comments; dare we say that our sufferings have ever compared to Job's? What kind of faith do we display in times of sorrow or frustration – as we gulp tranquilizers, suck on sleeping pills, and worry till ulcers display themselves in our



tummies, when we have a Savior that says, "Him that cometh to Me will I IN NO WISE CAST OUT?"

## Analysis

### I. Job 1:1-2:13 - The Prologue

- A. 1:1-5 - In the midst of great prosperity Job is truly a pious man. This section gives the setting of the narrative which takes place east of Palestine in the Arabian desert.
- B. 1:6-12 - The Lord allows Job to be tried. Note well that Satan is subject to the omnipotent God; he can go only so far as God permits. God allows Satan to ravage Job's inheritance and family, but what does he NOT allow to happen? (Remember the Apostle Paul's words, I Cor. 10:13, "BUT GOD IS FAITHFUL, WHO WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO BE TEMPTED ABOVE THAT YE ARE ABLE...")
- C. 1:13-22 - The four messengers (Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, Elihu). Like repeated strokes the four come to Job. In all this, Job sins not. His true piety is thus manifested.
- D. 2:1-10 - Satan again turns his attention to Job and grievously afflicts him, probably with the disease of elephantiasis, a form of leprosy. Yet he refuses to curse God, as his wife had commanded, but rather exhibits magnificent patience in midst of suffering.
- E. 2:11-13 - Job's three friends visit him to comfort and sympathize. They are affected by his grief and show respect for his suffering by seven days of silence.

### II. Job 3:1-26 - Job's Complaint.

He wishes he's never been born, and longs for death. His description of death is superb. God, however, later rebukes him for his ignorance of death (38:17).

### III. Job 4:1-31:40 - The Discourses with the Three Friends.

#### A. 4:1-14:22 - The First Cycle of Discourses

- 1. 4:1-5:27 - Eliphaz' first speech
- 2. 6:1-7:21 - Job's first reply
- 3. 8:1-22 - Bildad's first speech
- 4. 9:1-11:22 - Job's second reply
- 5. 11:1-20 - Zophar's first speech
- 6. 12:1-14:22 - Job's third reply

#### B. 15:1-21:34 - The Second Cycle of Discourses

- 1. 15:1-35 - Eliphaz' second speech
- 2. 16:1-17:16 - Job's fourth reply
- 3. 18:1-21 - Bildad's second speech

4. 19:1-29 – Job’s fifth reply. Out of the depths of despair, suddenly, as if he had seen a new light in all his troubles, Job bursts forth in one of the finest confessions of faith ever recorded, “I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH, AND THAT HE SHALL STAND AT THE LATTER DAY UPON THE EARTH: AND THOUGH AFTER MY SKIN WORMS DESTROY THIS BODY, YET IN MY FLESH SHALL I SEE GOD.”
  5. 20:1-29 – Zophar’s second speech. He ignored the words of Job (above).
  6. 21:1-34 – Job’s sixth reply
- C. 22:1-31:40 – The Third Cycle of Discourses
1. 22:1-30 – Eliphaz’ third speech. He seems to reach the height of blasphemy here.
  2. 23:1-24:25 – Job’s seventh reply. He doesn’t lose faith.
  3. 25:1-6 – Bildad’s third speech. A mere protest against Job’s words.
  4. 26:1-14 – Job’s eighth reply. Job regards Bildad’s reply as useless.
  5. 27:1-31:40 – Job’s final reply to his friends. It can be summarized in 27:5, “Till I die I will hold fast my integrity.”

#### **IV. Job 32:1-37:24 – The speeches of Elihu.**

After Job had silenced his three friends, Elihu sets in to destroy him. And was this man conceited! Much of what he said consisted in telling Job what he was going to tell him. Sound familiar?

#### **V. Job 38:1-42:6 – The Lord speaks.**

These wondrous words of the Lord constitute both the answer to Job’s prayer and desire that he might confront God and also the true answer to the problem. By continual reference to the creation and the incomprehensible nature of the created universe, God brings to Job the absolute distance between the Creator and the creature. Man being the creature, cannot comprehend the infinite wisdom of God or the mystery of His rule. Job now realizes more than ever that it is futile for man to think that he can penetrate the mysteries of God’s providential dealings with His people. Job has found a God-given peace, even though all his questions were not answered. He now realizes that “all things work together for good to those who love God.”

Job now gets rid of his old narrow-theological thinking, and embraces the Lord as sovereign, no matter what is to happen in his life. All now seems to be well, even though Job doesn’t understand everything, he doesn’t question the mysteries of God. God is upon the throne. That is enough. Job therefore abhors his words and repents.

God’s grace is further manifested in that He commands the three to take sacrifices and go to Job that Job may pray for them. Job’s innocence is thus further attested. Indeed, one of the purposes of this remarkable book is to defend the integrity of Job. Finally, Job is richly blessed of God and dies “being old and full of days.”

## Questions on Job

1. What, according to 1:20-21, does Job see in the terrible happenings that transpired to his family?
2. What, according to 2:4-7, was Satan unable to do to Job per his agreement with God?
3. What does Eliphaz attempt to accomplish with his words recorded in 4:1-11?
4. What was Eliphaz's suggestion to Job in 5:8-16?
5. With the disaster Job is facing, what condition seems to be setting into his life? 7:8-16
6. What kind of response does Bildad give to Job? 8:1-7
7. What is Job's confession and answer to Bildad in 9:14-20?
8. What is Job's answer to his dilemma? 9:33-35
9. Why does Job question God like he was his adversary in court? 10:8-17
10. What was the counsel of Zophar about Job's sin and how that related to his life? 11:13-20
11. Why does Job appeal to the creation in 12:7-12?
12. Why does Job refer to his critics the way that he does in 13:1-12?
13. What is Job's concern about his sin in 14:15-17?
14. What is the traditional wisdom with which Eliphaz bolsters his earlier advice. 15:17-26
15. What does 16:18-21 seem to say about Job's vindication?
16. In 17:10-16, in what does Job place his hope for the future?
17. In 18:5-21, what does Bildad want to accomplish with his argument about how the righteous suffer?
18. Of what does Job prophesy in 19:24-29?
19. What does Zophar seem to want to say about his health in 20:4-11?
20. How does Job explain the success of the wicked? 21:7-15
21. How does Eliphaz one last time try to reach Job? 22:21-30

## Job

22. What does Job treasure more than food? 23:8-10
23. In 24:21-24, Job states that God truly judges the wicked, but in His own time. But what would Job like to see in this?
24. Who are the “dead” referred to in 26:5?
25. The big question in 28:12, 20 is “Where can wisdom be found?” What is the answer?  
28:23-28
26. What is Job lamenting in Chapter 29?
27. In 30:20-23, Job directs his thoughts away from men to God. What is his accusation?
28. Why does Job call out for a curse on his land in 31:38-40?
29. Why did Elihu visit so long before responding to Job’s complaints and the other three counselors’ advice to him?
30. Of what is Elihu woefully ignorant in 33:23-28?
31. God does not need “time” to determine the judgment He will place on evildoers. What quality of God makes this possible? 34:21-28
32. What does 36:26 mean?
33. How does Job look upon himself after hearing the Lord’s reply in Chapters 38-39?  
In 40:1-2?
34. When God finished speaking to Job, how did Job respond to his three “friends?” 42:7-9

### Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF PSALMS

## Name

The Hebrew name for the entire collection of Psalms was the “Book of Praises” or simply, Praises. This corresponds with the designation in the New Testament as the “Book of Psalms,” Luke 20:42, Acts 1:20. In the Greek manuscripts the book is known as the “Psalmoi,” although in some it appears as “Psalterion” (a collection of songs). The Vulgate follows the Septuagint, Liber Psalmorum, and from this the English term is derived.

## Author

In the statement of the Bareitha (Baba Bathra, 14b) “David wrote the book of Psalms with the help of ten elders; with the help of Adam, the first, and Melchisedek, Abraham, Moses, and Heman, Jeduthun and Asaph – the three sons of Korah.” Evidently the statement above must be understood, not in the sense that David composed each and every one himself, but rather that David collected the Psalms that had already been composed by the elders. Of the 150 Psalms, 73 are assigned to David as the author, because in the title, the word “ledhavidh” occurs (this means ‘belonging to David’). Fifty of the Psalms are anonymous. Psalm 90 has been assigned to Moses. Twelve of the Psalms – 50, 73-83 are given to Asaph (cf. I Chron. 15:17). The sons of Korah, i.e. descendants, (Numbers 16; 26:11; I Chron. 9:19) are mentioned as the authors of ten Psalms – 42, 44-49, 84, 87, 88). Two Psalms are ascribed to Solomon (72, 127). One Psalm is ascribed to Ethan the Ezrahite (89).

In the New Testament certain Psalms are ascribed to David as the author. Thus, Acts 4:25 ascribes Psalm 2 to David; Acts 2:25-28 and 13:36 ascribe Psalm 16 to him; Romans 4:6-8, Psalm 32; Acts 1:16-20a and Romans 11:9ff, Psalm 69; Acts 1:20b, Psalm 109; Matthew 22:42ff, Mark 12:36ff, Luke 20:42-44 and Acts 2:34, Psalm 110; Hebrews 4:7, Psalm 95.

But let us not be too engrossed in finding who penned the Psalms. Let us rather read and enjoy these grand expressions of praise. They are of God for all of us. Let us read and sing them in our hearts, making them our own. Catch David’s note and spirit. He had marching songs, prayer songs, rally songs, hilltop songs, confession songs. Sing as you march. Keep step with David and David’s Lord all the way.

One final note – there are numerous quotations from this book found in the New Testament. At least twenty of these are in direct reference to Christ and His life and death. So thoroughly did these Psalms become a part of Jesus’ mental nature, that He uttered His dying agonies on the cross in quotation from them: 22:1, 31:5, Matthew 27:46, Luke 23:46. He said that many things in the Psalms were written of Him (Luke 24:44).

## Division and Number

In the Hebrew text as well as in most ancient versions, the Psalter is divided into five books, each of which terminates in a doxology – the last Psalm forming a fitting concluding doxology to the entire Psalter. Thus:

- I. Psalms 1-41
- II. Psalms 42-72
- III. Psalms 73-89
- IV. Psalms 90-106
- V. Psalms 107-150

In Book I the divine name Jahweh (The Lord) appears 273 times and Elohim (God) only 15 times. In Book II Elohim appears 164 times, and Jahweh appears only 30 times. In Book III Jahweh appears 44 times, Elohim 43 times. In Book IV Jahweh is used 103 times and in Book V Jahweh is used 236 times; Elohim 7 times. Psalm 53 is repetition of Psalm 14 but used Elohim.

The Psalms are not arranged in chronological order but related Psalms do occur together. Thus, 3-4, 9-10 and 42-43 are related; also larger groups such as 95-100 and 146-150 belong together; also 111-112. Sometimes groups are arranged according to author as 42, 44-49 (sons of Korah) and 73-83, Asaph. Psalms which bear similar descriptive inscriptions are placed together, as 50-60 (Michtam, which we think is a song of covering or atoning for one's sins) and 120-134 (Songs of Ascent). Did you notice anything in Psalm 51?

### **The Collection of the Psalter**

It is difficult to determine how the present Psalter (entire 150 chapters of Psalms) took its form, but there were earlier collections of Psalms. Furthermore, there seems to be little doubt that the present fivefold division is earlier than the time of the Septuagint (200-250 B.C.). It is probable that David himself began a formal collection and arrangement of the Psalms. David instituted the liturgical use of the Psalms at least, such as I Chron. 16:40ff, and he also instituted the service in song at the sanctuary (I Chron. 6:31). But it is impossible to tell to how great an extent David went, to collect and arrange his Psalms. There is no evidence that David had all his Psalms used at the Sanctuary. Hezekiah may have been responsible for arranging the first three books of the Psalter. At least, in his time, there were collections of David's and of Asaph's Psalms (II Chron. 29:30). It is impossible to tell how or when Book IV was collected but probably Ezra was the final editor of the entire collections.

### **The Psalms Were Written To Be Sung**

A NOTE FROM *Halley's Commentary*: "Moses sang, and taught the people to sing, Ex. 15; Deut. 32:33. Israel sang along the way to the Promised Land, Num. 21:17, Deborah and Barak sang, Judges 5. David was musical through and through, and sang with all his heart, II Sam. 6:5, 14, 16. Hezekiah's singers sang the words of David with trumpets sounding, II Chron. 29:28-30. Nehemiah's singers sang loud at the dedication of the wall, Neh. 12:42. Paul and Silas sang in prison, Acts 16:25. At the dawn of creation 'the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy,' Job 38:7. In heaven 10,000 times 10,000 angels sing, and the whole redeemed creation joins in the chorus, Rev. 5:11-13. In heaven everybody will sing, and never, through endless ages, tire of singing God's praises." Imagine – in order to sing the Psalms of David, there was an orchestra of 4,000 to accompany the singers, I Chron. 23:5.

## Position and Purpose of the Psalms

Hold your Bible in your hand and turn to the middle of the book. It is the Psalms. (Incidentally, Psalm 118:8 is the exact center of the Bible.) Not merely is this true physically. There is a deeper truth. It is central also in human experience.

This book is used by Hebrew and Christian alike even in our day. The Psalms were written for use in the temple, for which many were prepared. They were written for the heart to worship God out under the open heavens, or in the pit of despair, or in a cave of hiding. When you find yourself in deep need, you can always find a Psalm which expresses your inmost feeling. Or, if you have an abounding joy, the words are there for you too.

It is the book for all who are in need, the sick and the suffering, the poor and the needy, the prisoner in exile, the man in danger, the persecuted. A book for the sinner, telling him of God's great mercy and forgiveness. A book for the child of God, leading him into new experiences with the Lord. It tells of God's law in its perfection, and pronounces blessings upon the one who will keep it.

## Analysis

Possibly one of the most significant things about the Psalms, is that they speak prophetically about someone of the house of David, greater than David, in whom God's promise to David of an Eternal Throne would find ultimate fulfillment, see II Samuel 7. That Someone, who was to come almost 1,000 years later, was known to the Jews as the Messiah, the Redeemer, as Job speaks about Him. But as we study the Psalms that we will call the "Messianic Psalms" let us notice how precisely they correspond to the life of Christ, even though at the time of their writing, He had not yet descended to earth.

Psalm 2:2,6,8,12 – Jesus is here referred to as the "Anointed King," who will "rule the nations."  
He is also called the "Son," a forecast of the deity of Christ.

Psalm 16:10 – Here is a clear-cut prediction of His victory over death.

Psalm 22:1,16,18 – A picture-prophecy of the Crucifixion of Christ. Sneers of His enemies; His hands and feet pierced; His garments parted; dying words are even foretold.

Psalm 41:9 – To be betrayed by a friend. It could have referred to David, but is quoted in the New Testament as referring to Christ, John 13:18.

Psalm 45 – The glorious reign of a King sitting on an Eternal Throne.

Psalm 69:21 – Another picture of His suffering; gall and vinegar given to Him.

Psalm 72:11,17,19 – The reign of an Eternal King.

Psalm 78:2 – Another part of His life; to speak in parables.

Psalm 89:3,27,28,34,35 – The endlessness of David's throne under God's "Firstborn," 27.

Psalm 110:1,4 – At the time of David the office of king and priest were to be separate. Jesus was to be both King and Priest.

## Psalms

Psalm 118:22 – Jesus to be rejected by the leaders of His own nation.

Much more time could be used to analyze these particular passages that refer to the Messiah, but may I suggest, that since we do not have this time, that YOU return to re-read these passages in the light of the promises of Christ.

### Total Psalms Analysis

Psalm 1 – Blessedness of those who delight in God's Word. How much this particular Psalm should mean to us, in view of the fact that Christ has lived, has died and arisen, that the Word might have completion and fulfillment in the life of every Christian.

Psalm 2 – The first of the Messianic Psalms.

Psalm 3 – David's trust in God during Absalom's rebellion. Selah is first used here (71 times in Psalms). Could have been an orchestral interlude.

Psalm 4 – A hymn of trust as David retired to sleep.

Psalm 5 – A morning prayer. David knows that God will protect him from his enemies.

Psalm 6 – A cry of a broken heart, one that is conscious and sorry for sin. This is the first of the "Penitential Psalms" (Bathsheba?).

Psalm 7 – Another prayer for protection.

Psalm 8 – Man to be lord over God's creation.

Psalm 9 – A Psalm of thanks for victories.

Psalm 10 – David's prayer for help to curb the wickedness of the people.

Psalm 11 – Impending doom on the wicked. Those who transgress God's will cannot escape unpunished. (Still holds true today?)

Psalm 12, 13 – The wicked walk all around David, yet he fears not.

Psalm 14 – Sinfulness of men all over the world; same as Psalm 53 quoted in Romans 3:10-12 showing man's need for a Savior.

Psalm 15 – True citizens of God.

Psalm 16 – A Psalm of the Resurrection, as predicting Jesus' resurrection (Acts 2:27).

Psalm 17 – Encompassed by his enemies, David prays.

Psalm 18 – David's hymn of thanksgiving as he ascended the throne of Israel.

Psalm 19 – The Glories of God's creation. The God that man can see in the created things of nature is truly known to man through His written Word.

Psalm 20 – A Psalm of trust.

Psalm 21 – Thanks for victory – for which David prayed.

Psalm 22 – A Messianic Psalm.



## Psalms

Psalm 23 – The Shepherd Psalm. The best-loved chapter in the Old Testament.

Psalm 24 – The King's arrival at Zion.

Psalm 25 – Prayer of a sin-oppressed soul.

Psalm 26 – David here protests his righteousness, exact opposite of Psalm 25.

Psalm 27 – Devotion to God's House. If David loved what was a place of animal sacrifice, how much more should we love our House of Worship where the story of Christ's sacrifice is continually told to use?

Psalm 28 – A prayer of thanks for answering David's prayer.

Psalm 29 – Voice of God in a thunderstorm.

Psalm 30 – Song of praise at the dedication of the palace.

Psalm 31 – A Psalm of suffering and victory. Jesus quoted this Psalm as His last words from the cross, Luke 23:46.

Psalm 32 – A Psalm of penitence, confession and forgiveness, obviously encouraged by David's sin with Bathsheba.

Psalm 33-34 – Psalms of joy, praise and thanks for deliverance.

Psalm 35 – Imprecatory Psalm—they breathe vengeance on enemies.  
Others 52, 58, 59, 69, 109, 137.

(From Psalms 35-150 we will pick out and give an analysis of those Psalms that are vitally important to all of us.)

Psalm 38 – Another Psalm of penitence. A Psalm of bitter anguish.

Psalm 39 – A Psalm of the brevity, frailty and vanity of life. "Jeduthun" in this and the titles of 62 and 77. Some thought has been supported to believe that he was one of David's musical leaders, the other two being Asaph and Heman, I Chronicles 16:37-42.

Psalms 42-45 – "Sons of Korah" in the titles of Psalms 42-49, 84, 85, 87, 88 were a family of poetic Levites, organized by David, in preparation for the temple service.

Psalm 46 – Zion's battle song. Basis of Luther's famous hymn *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*, battle hymn of the Reformation.

Psalm 49 – Vanity of earthly riches. Not unlike the teachings of our Lord Jesus. Matt. 6:19-34 and Luke 12:16-21.

Psalm 51-66 – Prayers of David for mercy, strength against his enemies, deliverance from them, and protection against them.

Psalm 67 – A missionary Psalm. In anticipation of the Glad News of the Gospel encircling the earth.

Psalm 72 – One of Solomon's Psalms, the other being 127. Messiah's reign.

Psalm 78 – This and Psalms 81, 105, 106, 114 are called historical Psalms. They are poetical recitations of Israel's past history.

## Psalms

Psalm 88 – Pitiful cry of a life-long sufferer. “Heman” in title, was one of David’s song leaders.

Psalm 90 – Being a Psalm of Moses, as we would suppose, who lived 400 years before David, it could very well have been the first Psalm.

Psalm 91 – A magnificent hymn of trust. No evil shall befall you. God will give His angels charge over you in all your ways. What a glorious thing to have faith like this.

Psalm 104 – A nature Psalm. God’s care over His Works. It reminds us of Jesus’ words, “Not a sparrow will fall without your Heavenly Father.” Matt. 10:29b.

Psalm 109 – Vengeance for God’s enemies. Another imprecatory Psalm.

Psalm 110 – A Messianic Psalm. Matt. 22:44, Acts 2:34, Heb. 1:13, 5:6, 10:13.

Psalm 113-118 – The “Hallel” Psalms. They were sung in families on the night of the Passover. 113-114 at the beginning of the meal; 116-118 at the close of the meal. May have been sung at the Last Supper (Matt. 26:30).

Psalm 119 – the longest Psalm–176 verses. The glories of the Word of God.

Psalms 120-134 – Designated for vocal singing. Songs of “Degrees” or Pilgrim songs.

Psalm 137 – A Psalm of the captivity. Longing to return home.

Psalms 146-150 – are called the “Hallelujah” Psalms, each beginning and ending with “Hallelujah,” which means “Praise the Lord.” “The grand outbursts of Hallelujahs with which the book or Psalter comes to a close, is carried over into the end of the Bible itself, and is echoed in the heavenly choir of the redeemed, Rev. 19:1,3,4-6.” (Quote from *Halley’s Commentary*.)

## Questions on Psalms

1. The Law of God can be very restrictive and confining. How is it that the writer of Psalms 1 can say that “his delight is in the Law of the Lord?” v. 2
2. Is “anger” in the Christian life good, and if so, how so? 4:4 and Ephesians 4:26
3. How do you explain 6:5?
4. We are part of the creation of God. According to 8:2-5, who is higher than we are in created order?
5. Why, according to 10:11-15, do the wicked believe that God will not hold them accountable for their deeds?
6. What is the source of David’s anxiety and desire for deliverance in 13:1-4?
7. What is the Old Testament principle concerning “usury?” 15:5, Exodus 22:25-27

## Psalms

8. How does David in Chapter 16:9-11 express his confidence in the resurrection?
9. When David depends on God's daily call and watchfulness, what does "apple of His eye" mean in 17:8-9?
10. Does not the claim of "my righteousness" in 18:24 appear to be a pretentious boast?
11. Where is this passage used most frequently? 19:14
12. Of what do the verses of Chapter 22:1, 14, 18 remind you?
13. Why are we so often compared to the "sheep of the pasture" and our God, "the good Shepherd?" Chapter 23
14. Why, in 25:6-7, does the Psalmist David three times use the word "remember" when God promised the opposite in Jeremiah 31:34?
15. David describes in Chapter 32 the conditions that exist in an unrepentant child of God! What are they? vv. 1-4
16. When do prayers according to 35:13 go unanswered? Psalm 66:18, Proverbs 21:13
17. What does it mean in Chapter 42 when it says in vv. 1-2, that a "deer pants for water?"
18. Martin Luther's battle hymn of the Reformation was taken from the inspired words of Psalm 46. Can you explain why?
19. What is the stark reality of riches? 49:16-20
20. What is the basis for the words of Psalm 51?
21. How does the director of music describe the corruption of man? 53:1-3
22. What do Psalm 51:5 and 58:3 have in common as they define the child?
23. What does David discourage about the accumulation of wealth? Psalm 62:10
24. How do this metaphor and similar thoughts in Psalm 66:9-11 apply themselves to our lives? Isaiah 48:10
25. How does David express the thought that there are times when God does not answer prayer? Psalm 66:17-20
26. What does it mean when in 68:6 it states that "God sets the lonely in families?"
27. Of what does the substance of Psalm 69 remind you?

Psalms

28. Of what is Psalm 71 a plea and from whom?
29. What is the overall theme of Psalm 73? Memorize vv. 23-27
30. What is the perplexing question of Asaph, the writer of 77:1-9?
31. What is the writer of Psalm 78 referring to in vv. 18-29?
32. In Psalm 81, how does the Lord God describe His relationship to “their stubborn hearts?” vv. 12-16
33. What is the author of Chapter 84, vv. 10-12, attempting to say?
34. Give a description of God from Psalm 86:15-17.
35. What does Chapter 89, vv. 30-34, suggest about God’s faithfulness to His people?
36. What does Psalm 90:1-10 have to say about age and being past 80?
37. How are we cared for each hour of every day according to Psalm 91:9-12?
38. What, according to 94:11-13, does discipline accomplish?
39. Why cannot a corrupt government and a good one work toward the same goals? 95:20-23
40. What does Psalm 98 want us to know about “salvation?”
41. Why are the Old Testament references in 100:3 and Psalm 23 suggestive of God’s children being “sheep?”
42. How is the Lord’s compassion to his children demonstrated in 103:8?
43. In Psalm 106:30-31, how does God credit to Phinehas his righteousness and why? Is this not biblically contradictory?
44. In your judgment, how is Psalm 110 a messianic Psalm?
45. How is the “fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom” according to 111:10?
46. Why the seeming “repetition” of the singular thought in 118:2-4?
47. What is the author’s answer to the question posed in 119:6? vv.10-16
48. How does “meditation on God’s law make one wiser than his enemy” according to Psalm 119:97-100?

## Psalms

49. What does the “lifting my eyes to the hills” mean in 120:1-2?
50. What is the point of 122:1 when it refers to the “house of the Lord?”
51. How can the “peace of Jerusalem” really happen? 122:6-8
52. What is the overall theme and understanding of Psalm 127?
53. What does Psalm 130 provide in the words “forgiveness” and “waiting?”
54. In the eyes of the author of Psalm 133, how important is “unity?” vv.1-2
55. What knowledge is too “wonderful and too lofty” for David to consider? Psalm 139:1-5
56. How are we created? 139:14-15
57. Where is Psalm 145:15-16 often used?
58. What is the “vengeance” talked about in 149:7-9?
59. For those who object to musical instruments in worship, how are we to understand 150:3-6?

## Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

## Name

In the Hebrew Bible the title is “The Proverbs of (Mishele) Solomon, the son of David, King of Israel,” 1:1. The word “mashal” indicates a brief, pithy saying which expresses wisdom. It is, strictly speaking, a representation or comparison. This word has a wider force than the English “proverb.”

## Author

Notice how the book opens: “The Proverbs of Solomon.” Solomon was a great king, famous for his riches and wisdom. Kings came from the ends of the earth to hear him lecture on zoology, botany, science, and even morals. Did you notice, by the way, how up to date is his philosophy? Different than the Book of Psalms, which is a book of poetry, Proverbs is a book of practical ethics. Solomon wrote 3,000 proverbs, 1,005 songs (I Kings 4:32). Solomon himself was particularly qualified to write this book. “God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore,” I Kings 4:29.

That Solomon was the author of the book implies no more than that he gathered these sayings already current among the people, given by the Holy Spirit through the centuries, and put them into the orderly arrangement that we see today. See what Solomon said about this in Eccl. 12:9, where it is recorded, “He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs.” Someone has said that the Proverbs were a collection of maxims woven together into a didactic poem around a general topic, wisdom. Several names are given in the book regarding authorship:

Solomon	Proverbs 1:1
The Wise	Proverbs 22:17
Men of Hezekiah	Proverbs 25:1
Agur	Proverbs 30:1
King Lemuel and his mother	Proverbs 31:1

This book is filled with words of wisdom. There is one terse saying after another. Men have tried to add to them and have failed. A brilliant lawyer tried it once. He thought he could do it before breakfast. He came away from the task humbled and baffled, and glorying in the marvelous works of God. Your guess then to the absolute authorship of Proverbs is acceptable.

## Analysis

When you read the book of Proverbs, put Christ instead of wisdom in the verse, see I Cor. 1:30. You will see a wonderful power in this book. “And we know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true,” I John 5:20.

**I. Proverbs 1:1-9:8 – The Praise of Wisdom. (Fatherly words to your sons.)**

The contents of this section are as follows: Introduction, pointing out its purpose, namely to impart true wisdom and knowledge, vv. 1-6; re-statement of theme of the whole section, v. 7, indeed of the entire book, and warnings against the sin of violence, 1:7-9; wisdom personified; she cries aloud against her enemies, 1:20-33; reception of wisdom and understanding urged, 2:1-22; the blessings which true wisdom brings set forth, 3:1-20; promises of care for those who have true wisdom, 3:1-26; practical advice on a man's relationship with his neighbors, 3:27-25; practical admonitions of a father to his son, 4:1-5:6; admonition to faithfulness in marriage, 5:7-23, the folly of becoming another's surety pointed out, 6:1-5; the folly of the sluggard described, 6:9-18; of troublemakers, adultery and wisdom again personified.

**II. Proverbs 10:1-22:16 – Wisdom and Fear of God Versus Folly and Sin.**

This section is characterized by the fact that each verse contains a complete proverb, consisting of two members, each having (in Hebrew) only three or four words, e.g., 10:1, "A wise son brings joy to his father; but a foolish son grief to his mother." It has been pointed out that in this section, the happier aspects of life predominate. Many of the proverbs also warn against the wrong use of the tongue. In this life men are rewarded according to their actions.

**III. Proverbs 22:17-24:22 – Sundry Duties and Rules.**

The admonitions herein are described as "words of the wise." These proverbs are also addressed to "my son" and exhibit more or less a continuing argument. Yet they are all of practical character.

**IV. Proverbs 24:23-34 – Further Sayings of the Wise.**

This section serves as an appendix to 22:17-23:16 and says basically the same thing.

**V. Proverbs 25:1-29:27 – Miscellaneous Sayings by Solomon.**

Seems to be an appendix to 10:1-22:16 because there is a sameness in V and II.

**VI. Proverbs 30:1-33 – The Words of Agur.**

Verses 1-4 are introduced as an oracle, and point out the conclusion of a skeptic as to the impossibility of knowing God. This is answered in vv. 5-6 by an appeal to consider God's revelation, and a prayer in verses 7-9 that the suppliant be preserved. Verses 10-33 consist of nine groups – the so-called "numerical" proverbs, in which the number "four" is conspicuous, such as 30:15b: "There are three things that are never satisfied, four that never say, 'Enough!'"

**VII. Proverbs 31:1-9 – The Words of Lemuel.**

These proverbs are addressed to the king by his mother, who urges upon him moderation, chastity and uprightness.

**VIII. Proverbs 31:10-31 – A Song in Praise of the Virtuous Woman.**

Could this woman have been Bathsheba who spoke these wonderful words to Solomon? If so, never a more dedicated woman could be found, regardless of the sin which she committed.

**Summary**

God wants to give us of His Wisdom...the wisdom that created the heavens and earth, that we might use it in all of life (James 1:5). This would put an end to all the confusion and evil in the world, wouldn't it? Human wisdom can never solve life's problems. Only God knows the ways of men. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," Psalm 111:10.

**Questions on Proverbs**

1. Why does the writer of Proverbs address himself to "my son," rather than to "my daughter?" 1:8-15
2. Why, according to 1:28-33 will God not listen to their prayers? Deuteronomy 1:45; Isaiah 1:15
3. What will happen to the person who follows the instruction of 3:5-6? v. 6b
4. Why is "wisdom" so often referred to as "she" in chapters 1-3? v. 14
5. As it relates to the life of an "adulteress," what does chapter 5:6 mean?
6. What could an innate "lazy" person learn from 6:6-11?
7. What are the seven deadly sins according to 6:16-19?
8. Why, in Proverbs, is the person seducing another into adultery referred to as a "she?" 7:10-27
9. Chapter 8:22-31 has traditionally been thought to be another messianic psalm. How so?
10. Of what are we reminded by those who need to endlessly "talk?" 10:19-21
11. How does 11:14 help in decision-making?



## Proverbs

12. What does 11:22 mean?
13. Is this form of discipline in 13:24 still acceptable? 22:15; 19:18; 23:13-14; 3:11-12
14. What does 14:34 mean?
15. How does 16:3-4 relate to Romans 8:28?
16. How can 16:31 be true?
17. Why should the testing of a Christian take on these dimensions? 17:3, Jeremiah 17:10
18. What does 18:7-8 mean?
19. How is 20:7 possible?
20. What is the author of Proverbs attempting to communicate with 21:9, 19?
21. What significance does 22:6 have in the lives of parents whose children give them incredible difficulty?
22. Of what significance are boundary stones? 22:28; 15:25; 23:10
23. What is the counsel about wine or alcoholic beverages according to 23:31-33? 31:6; Psalms 104:15; Ephesians 5:18; I Timothy 5:23
24. What is the “repayment” referred to in 24:12? Romans 14:12; Revelation 22:12
25. What is the overall point that the writer of Proverbs is making relative to 24:33-34? 6:10-11
26. What does “heaping coals of fire on his head” refer to in 25:21-22? Romans 12:20
27. What value is the counsel in 27:2? II Corinthians 10:12, 18
28. What does 27:17 mean?
29. How would you explain 28:9?
30. How does 28:28 apply to us today?
31. What three things are never satisfied? 30:16
32. What does 30:17 mean?
33. What three things are “too amazing” for the writer of 30:18-19?

Proverbs

34. What three things make the earth tremble? 30:21-23

35. Who might “those who cannot speak for themselves” be? 31:8-9



**Paragraph Summaries**

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# THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

## Name

In the Hebrew the book bears the title, "The Words of the Preacher" (divere qoheleth), the son of David, King of Jerusalem, 1:1. The words thus designate the function of the leader who speaks in the assembly. Thus the word, "Preacher" is approximately correct.

## Author

The actual name of the author is not mentioned in the book. It has been assumed, however, that because of the words "the son of David, King of Jerusalem" in 1:1, that Solomon was intended, and so it has been held by some that Solomon was the author. This appears to be supported by the reference to great wisdom (1:16) and great works (2:4-11), allusions which seem to refer to Solomon. However, the Solomonic authorship of the book is not held by a great many protestant leaders, because, 1) the name of Solomon does not appear, 2) all the writings of Solomon bear his name in their titles, and 3) the background of the book does not seem to fit the age of Solomon. It was the time of misery and VANITY (the word occurs 37 times in the book) 1:12-2:26. A time of death had begun for Israel 3:1-15; injustice and violence were present 4:1-3; there was heathen tyranny 5:7-9; death was preferred to life 7:1; and "one man ruleth over other men to their hurt" 8:9. This just doesn't sound like the Age of Solomon when all seemed to be going well for Israel. Anyway, the language and diction of the book seem to point to the time of Malachi. In the Talmud, Baba Bathra 15a, it is stated that the book belongs to Hezekiah – he was the author. Early Christian tradition seems to give the authorship, nevertheless to Solomon. Luther, however, was one of the first to disagree. He, however, does not state who he believes wrote the book. Take your pick; I'll stick with Solomon as the author.

## Purpose

Those who say the book contains the influence of Greek philosophy such as the tenet of Epicureus, "eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we may die," don't understand just in what context Solomon meant this when he wrote: "There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labor," 2:24. Nor do they know what they are saying when they say that the book is at variance with the teachings of the Gospels. If this is all that the book was to portray, then why does God allow it to be placed among the other books of the Bible?

The key to the proper understanding of the book is to be found in the words of the conclusion – 12:13,14 – "FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, FOR THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN. FOR GOD WILL BRING EVERY DEED INTO JUDGMENT, INCLUDING EVERY HIDDEN THING, WHETHER IT IS GOOD OR EVIL." There can be no higher purpose in life than this. This is the same great goal that our Lord laid down for us in the Sermon on the Mount. It is a divine demand for absolute perfection, the goal for which God's people must ever strive.

Nevertheless, although the goal for which we should strive is clear, we fall far, far short of attainment. And the reason for this is stated in Ecclesiastes 7:29, "LO, THIS ONLY HAVE I FOUND: THAT GOD HATH MADE MAN UPRIGHT, BUT THEY HAVE SOUGHT OUT MANY INVENTIONS." The word "inventions" translated means thoughts, reckonings, devices. The idea is that God made man perfect (straight, right) but man has deviated from this condition in discovering for himself devices of his own that are contrary to his original condition. In other words, we learn here that man has fallen from his original state of uprightness in which the Lord created him. This is not similar to Greek philosophy, in any sense of the word. It is true Biblical teaching.

Then why such illusions to the glory of wealth and wisdom, or the passage just mentioned before in that there was nothing better to do than to eat, drink, etc? Such passages do not teach that the enjoyment of these things is an end in itself. They are but practical directions to the God-fearing soul for his guidance through life. Life, however, in all its aspects, is meaningless apart from God. Life outside of God, no matter for what one strives, whether it be wealth, prosperity, peace, is all vanity. Solomon tried it...he knows. VANITY OF VANITIES...ALL IS VANITY...that is the theme of the book.

Life apart from God then can have no meaning...there can be no true abundance, true joy, harmony or purpose. Jesus stresses this point Himself when He says in John 10:10b, "I am come that they might have life, that they might have it more abundantly." If man then, or the world, be regarded as the ultimate standard or point of reference, all is vanity. All then becomes without meaning, and can only lead to despair. The only possible interpretation of the world then is to regard it as the creation of God and to use and enjoy it for His glory.

## Analysis

### I. Ecclesiastes 1:1-11 – The Prologue

A. 1:1 – Heading

B. 1:2-11 – Introduction to the book. The basic theme is introduced in vv. 2-3, namely the vanity of all things. This is not to be construed in a materialistic sense as though life itself is evil. Life apart from God is vanity and evil.

### II. Ecclesiastes 1:12-6:12 – The Vanity of all Things

A. 1:12-18 – To search after human wisdom is vanity. The preacher himself has undertaken an investigation, the results of which he states here.

B. 2:1-11 – Pleasures are also vain. The first part of the investigation proves the fact that pleasures, wealth are all empty.

C. 2:12-23 – Wisdom and riches are vain.

D. 2:24-3:15 – Human efforts are also in vain, and one cannot always enjoy the fruits of his labors.

E. 3:16-4:6 – Wickedness and oppression are prevailing in the earth.

## Ecclesiastes

## Ecclesiastes

- F. 4:7-12 – Two can succeed better than one in various things.
- G. 4:13-16 – Wisdom and poverty are better than folly and riches.
- H. 5:1-7 – Man must observe his responsibility and fear God.
- I. 5:8-6:12 – The vanity of riches.

### **III. Ecclesiastes 7:1-12:7 – The Words of Wisdom**

- A. 7:1-14 – Practical advice for the well-ordered life.
- B. 7:15-22 – All men are sinners, but the strength of the wise lies in wisdom. (“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”)
- C. 7:23-29 – The conclusion of the preacher’s investigation. Mankind is sinful: “I found one upright man among a thousand, but not one upright woman among them all.” God has made man upright “but they have sought out many inventions,” 7:29.
- D. 8:1-8 – The king is to be respected.
- E. 8:9-17 – Although it seems as though the wicked may fare better than the righteous, the preacher knows that this is not so before God.
- F. 9:1-10 – Order and administration of the world.
- G. 9:11-10:3 – Observations on wisdom and folly.
- H. 10:4-20 – Wise and foolish comparison.
- I. 11:1-12:7 – Practical observations.

### **IV. Ecclesiastes 12:8-14 – Epilogue**

The Conclusion. Man should fear God and keep His commandments.

### **Questions on Ecclesiastes**

1. Why according to 1:2-8 does the “Teacher” have and express such a meaninglessness of this world?
2. How futile and empty can our lives be? 1:10-11
3. How can “more knowledge bring more grief” according to 1:18?
4. How does the “Teacher” describe “chasing after the wind” in 2:1-10, 11?
5. Wisdom may not be all that people think that it is, but it is better than what? 2:13

Ecclesiastes

6. What does 2:24-26 seem to articulate?
7. In what way are we the same as animals and at the same time different, 3:18-21? Genesis 2:7
8. What is the point of 4:9-12, especially the last part of v-12?
9. What is the principle about the accumulation of wealth in 5:8-10?
10. How and when is a stillborn child better off than a man who cannot enjoy his prosperity?  
6:3-6
11. Why is 7:1 a real truism?
12. How can such a discovery be possible? 7:27-28
13. What do we know about the future? 8:7, Jos. 4:13-16
14. How does 8:11-13 relate to capital punishment?
15. Is there possible communication between those who die and the living? 9:5, 10
16. How can 10:19 be true?
17. What does the "Teacher" mean when he suggests "to cast our bread on the water"? 11:1
18. Why remember the creator? 12:1-2
19. What does the "silver cord" represent in 12:6-7? Where is the spirit of man in death?
20. What is the "conclusion of the matter" in 12:13-14?

**Paragraph Summaries**

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# THE BOOK OF SONG OF SOLOMON (SONG OF SONGS)

## **Name**

In the Hebrew the book is named in accordance with its first verse, "The Song of Songs" (shir hashshirim), i.e., the best of songs.

## **Author**

The book is claimed to be by Solomon, and this opinion is not contradicted by most of the modern Bible critics. There is no sufficient reason for denying such authorship, since the book does have some contact with other writings of Solomon.

## **Purpose**

The Song of Solomon has been called the Christian's Love Song. The key text is 6:3, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine..." This is a song of love in marriage in Oriental language and imagery. The persons are Solomon and the Shulamite maid and the daughters of Jerusalem. The idea of love of husband and wife sets forth the love of Jehovah and His people. This is seen in many passages in the Bible. Moreover, Solomon as a lover was a type of Christ. See Ephesians 5. Personal love to Christ is the greatest need of the church today. The knowledge of sin forgiven and of Christ's redeeming work has drawn us to Him.

We would seem to feel that God placed this book in the Canon in order to teach us the purity and sanctity of the estate of marriage which He Himself has established. When we read the Song of Solomon, our hearts will be purer, and we shall realize all the more the heinousness of that temptation which would lead us to unfaithfulness among those who are married. Since the purpose of the book is not mere entertainment, but is spiritual and poetic, we may understand why God has given it to us. For even the faithful servant of the Lord is tempted to break the sixth commandment. In the polygamous world, and in the sophisticated modern world, unfaithfulness may be regarded as something light and trivial. But when we Christians turn from the callused sinfulness of daily world, and read the Oriental imagery of this portion of Holy Scripture, we are blessed and we are helped. So long as there is impurity in the world, we need, and need badly, the Song of Solomon.

## **Interpretation**

"On its face, the poem is a eulogy (formal praise) of the joys of wedded life. Its essence is to be found in its tender and devoted expressions of the intimacies and delights of wedded love. Even if it were no more than that, it is worthy of a place in God's Word, even though the name of God is nowhere mentioned; for marriage was ordained by God. And on proper mutual attitudes in the inner familiarities of married life depend, to a very large extent, on human happiness and welfare.

## Song of Solomon

“However, both Jews and Christians have seen deeper meaning in this poem than its reference to human wedlock. The Jews read it at the Passover as allegorically referring to the Exodus, where God espoused Israel to Himself as His Bride, his love for Israel being here exemplified in a ‘spontaneous love of a great king, and a humble maid.’ In the Old Testament Israel is called God’s Wife, Jeremiah 3:1 and Ezekiel 16:23.

“Christians quite commonly referred to the Song of Solomon as a song of Christ and the Church; for in the New Testament the church is called the ‘Bride’ of Christ, Matt. 9:15; Matt. 25:1; John 3:29; II Cor. 11:2 and Eph. 5:23, indicating that the joys of human wedlock are a counterpart and foretaste of the joyous relation between Christ and His Church.

“How could a man with a thousand women have a love for any one of them that would be fit to be typical of Christ’s love for the Church? Well, a number of Old Testament saints were polygamists. Even though God’s law was against it from the beginning, as Christ so plainly stated, yet in Old Testament times God seemed to have accommodated Himself, in measure to prevailing customs. Kings generally had many wives. It was one of the signs of royalty. And Solomon’s devotion to this lovely girl seemed to be genuine and unmistakable. Then too, he was king in the family which was to produce the Messiah. And it seems not unfitting that his marriage should prefigure the Messiah’s Eternal Marriage to His Bride, the Church.” *Halley’s Commentary*.

### Analysis

- I. **1:1-2:7** – The bride longs for the bridegroom. They meet and praise one another. In 1:5,6 the bride describes herself as “black but comely.” From 1:8 on, the two sing one another’s praises.
- II. **2:8-3:5** – Their love increases. The maiden, using beautiful expressive figures from nature, 2:11-13, sings the praises of her beloved.
- III. **3:6-5:1** – This passage contains the espousal, 4:8, and praise of the bride.
- IV. **5:2-6:9** – The bride longs for her beloved and sings his praises while he is gone.
- V. **6:10-8:4** – The beauty of the bride is described.
- VI. **8:5-14** – Here the beauty of love is shown.

### Questions on Song of Solomon

1. What do you think the author of Chapter one had in mind when writing this chapter? Literal or figurative expressions?
2. Why is the use of the “gazelle” so often found on Song of Songs? Chapter 2:9, 16



Song of Solomon

Song of Solomon

3. What do you think is the reality of Chapter 3, v.4?
4. Twice in Chapter 4, reference is given to “pomegranate.” What is it and why?
5. How does the “dew” of 5:2 relate to the book?
6. Why so often in Chapters 5-7 is there the reference to “wine?”

### Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

## Name

The book is named after its principal character, and the one who was considered to have been the author. The name "Isaiah" could very well have come from the words "yesha" (salvation) "Yahu" (Jehovah), meaning: "The Lord is salvation."

## Author

And this is where the real problem lies. For almost 2500 years of New Testament history, Isaiah had been considered to be the exclusive author of the book we are reading. After a few isolated cases of Biblical criticism, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the roof fell in during the period of rationalism (this was during the 18<sup>th</sup> century). During this time, everybody and his friend began to tear away at the authority and historicity of the Bible, with special emphasis on the Book of Isaiah. Why the Book of Isaiah? Possibly because within this book we find countless prophecies (more than any other book in the Old Testament) of the Messiah Himself. You see, these rationalists believed that with a logical approach to the Book of Isaiah, they could come up with reasonable answers as to who the author was...but what they forgot about the authorship was that the writer or writers of this book, along with all the rest of the books of the Old and New Testament, were inspired by the Holy Ghost to write what they did. Therefore, a reasonable, humanistic approach to the book cannot be reliable. This can be seen in the literary criticism of Isaiah. (Divisions: chapters 1-39; 40-66; some chapters 55-60.)

- I. **The Talmud (Baba Bathra) states that Hezekiah and his company wrote Isaiah. However, the word for "wrote" in the Hebrew KTB mans "edited or published."**
- II. **Moses Ben Samuel Ibn Gekatilla, who lived about 110 A.D., declared that chapters 1-39 belonged to Hezekiah, the second part (40-66) to the time of the second temple or the time of the Babylonian exile.**
- III. **Ibn Ezra in 1155 A.D., said that 40-66 was written possibly by a second or even third Isaiah.**
- IV. **During the period of rationalism the critics said:**
  - A. That chapter 50 was written by Ezekiel or someone who lived in the time of the Exile.
  - B. That all the chapters of Isaiah were written by a prophet who lived near the end of the exile.
  - C. That it was impossible for one man to have written about something after he was already dead.
- V. **But the defenders of the theory that the book has but one author, and that was Isaiah, say what they do, because:**

- A. Isaiah is quoted more in the New Testament by Jesus and the Apostles than any other prophet (21 times, plus other allusions). In John 12:38-41 quotations are made from Isaiah 53:1 and Isaiah 6:9...and how could this have been done if there had been two or even three authors?
- B. The nature of the 21 quotations and the manner in which the Isaianic language appears in the New Testament makes it clear that the entire book was written before the inspired writers of the New Testament, and that they regarded it as the words of the prophet Isaiah.
- C. Ecclesiasticus (Ben Sira) speaks in his book of Isaiah as "one who comforted those in Zion," not incidentally, in Babylon. Why should this man, Ecclesiasticus, who lived six centuries later, mention it if he did not know him and hear about him as a great prophet, and not two or three others?
- D. Chapter 1:1 ascribes the book to Isaiah, the son of Amoz. If it were written by as many authors as the critics think, why would the phrase, "son of Amoz" be added?
- E. The author comes from Palestine and not Babylon...and this is shown in the writings by his familiarity with the plants and trees that are familiar to Palestine and not Babylon...cedar, cypress and oak, 41:14,19.
- F. In 62:6 the walls of Jerusalem are standing. In 40:9 the cities of Judah, as well as the walls of Zion, are still in existence. Could this have happened or have been true if they had been in exile? Or how could the author have written this if they had been in exile in Babylon.
- G. REASONS FOR NOT ATTRIBUTING ISAIAH 40-66 TO ISAIAH:
  - 1. Isaiah's name is not mentioned once (see reason under "purpose").
  - 2. Doesn't seem to suit time of Isaiah (742 vs. 568) Assyria.
  - 3. Written in different style than the prophecies.
- H. However, there is a unity in the chapters that is often forgotten. For instance, the phrase:
  - 1. "Holy One of Israel" in 1-39 is mentioned twelve times; in 40-66 it is mentioned fourteen times.
  - 2. Other words that characterize both portions of the prophecy, such as "thornbush, delusion, cross," and "sayeth the Lord."
  - 3. Chapters 36-39 serve as a connecting link between earlier Assyrian period and later Babylonian.
  - 4. There are passages in Zeph., Neh., Jer., and Zech. which seem to reflect upon parts of 40-66 and hence indicate that the latter portion of Isaiah was in existence when these prophets wrote.
- I. Evidence of unity can be found by comparing the first part with the second: 1:11,13 with 61:8; 1:14 with 43:24; 1:14-19 with 43:26; 1:15 with 59:1-20; 1:29 with 65:3.

- J. Masoretic texts dated to 895, 1000 and 1008 all have the entire book of Isaiah with minor alterations and eliminations, as proof for the one author. The Dead Sea Scrolls found in 1947-50 date Isaiah back to 800 B.C. The Qumran manuscripts state that the entire book belongs to Isaiah.

## Purpose

The purpose of this noble prophecy is to teach the truth that salvation is by Grace; that is, that it is of God and not of man. This it embodies in the very name of the prophet, but it is clearly taught in his words as in 1:27 we read: "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." Even through 40-66 this theme is carried out with precision.

As we know, Isaiah's ministry was at a crucial time in Judah's history. The Assyrian power was rising and in the light of this fact, two groups appeared in the nation -- one sought alliance with Assyria, the other with Egypt. Isaiah, however, forbade human alliances (wonder if this would help our world situation) and urged the nation to trust in the Lord. As a sign of deliverance he proclaimed the birth of the Messiah and prophesied concerning the nature of His Kingdom. In the latter portion of his prophecy, 40-66, he sets forth the spiritual walk and the destiny of the people of God.

## Analysis

### I. Isaiah 1:1-12:6 – Prophecies Concerning Judah And Jerusalem.

- A. 1:1-31 – This chapter serves the purpose of showing the relationship between the sins of the people and their sufferings, and the further need of punishments for purifications.
- B. 2:1-4:6 – Messiah's reign and judgments upon the people. This section closes showing the internal condition of the church when Christ reigns.
- C. 5:1-30 – The prevalent iniquities of Judah. The sins of the people, and the woe that will befall them are set forth, and this is followed by the announcement of the Lord's punishment.
- D. 6:1-13 – Isaiah's vision of the Lord.
- E. 7:1-12:6 – Prophecies uttered during Ahaz' reign. This section contains a promise of deliverance from Syria; evils that will arise as a result of alliance with Assyria. The Messiah speaks urging faithfulness to His Word. The people then praise God for His Salvation.

### II. Isaiah 13:1-23:8 – Prophecies Of Judgment Upon The Nations.

- A. 13:1-14:32 – the fall of Babylon announced. The judgment that is to fall on Babylon is symbolized by heavenly bodies ceasing to give their light, 13:10-18. In chapter 14, the destruction of Babylon is again related and more definitely connected with Israel's release from bondage.

- B. 15:1-16:14 – The burden of Moab. The towns and cities of Moab are represented as laid waste and bemoaning their fate. In chapter 16, an exhortation is made to the Moabites to seek allegiance with the house of David for deliverance.
- C. 17:1-14 – The burden of Damascus. A prophetic picture of doom which lies in wait for the enemies of Israel.
- D. 18:1-7 – The woe upon Ethiopia. The catastrophe is described under the figure of a vine, ripe with fruit, and suddenly destroyed.
- E. 19:1-25 – The burden of Egypt.
- F. 20:1-6 – The approach of the Assyrian. Here is given a symbolical sign (the prophet walks naked and barefoot three years), of the defeat of Egypt and Ethiopia, the enemies of Assyria.
- G. 21:1-17 – Three further burdens.
- H. 22:1-25 – The burden of the Valley of Vision. Vv. 1-14 describe Jerusalem during a siege. It is difficult to say what siege is intended. Possibly it refers to the capture of Jerusalem by the Assyrians during the days of Manasseh. Shebna (who is supposed to have been the treasurer of the royal court) is now to be removed, because he is a friend of the Egyptians.
- I. 23:1-8 – The burden of Tyre. Destruction of Tyre announced.

### III. Isaiah 24:1-27:13 – The Lord's Great Judgments.

- A. We cannot connect this section to a specific event. It seems rather to set forth the philosophy of God's judgment in the eyes of the writer Isaiah. Isaiah's purpose is to exalt God as sovereign ruler of all. And so, he seeks to show that God can and will visit the earth in judgment. In this visitation, God's own people may suffer that they may ultimately be glorified, but the enemies of God will utterly perish.

### IV. Isaiah 28:1-35:10 – Prophetic Warnings.

- A. 28:1-33:24 – Discourses dealing principally with the relation between Judah and Assyria. An announcement is made of the fall of Samaria, and Judah's folly for trusting in Egypt to save her. After Judah is invaded and laid desolate, her restoration is told in 33:1-24.
- B. 34:1-35:10 – The contrasted future of Edom and Israel. Two chapters constitute one prophecy. One against all the enemies, then against Edom. In chapter 35 a picture of the glorious Messianic future is presented.

### V. Isaiah 36:1-39:8 – Historical Appendix.

Sennacherib invades Judah (ch. 36); Hezekiah the king sends for Isaiah (37:1-5) who utters a message of comfort (37:6-35) and the Assyrian army is destroyed by the Angel of the Lord (37:36-38). Hezekiah is sick unto death, but his life is lengthened by the Lord (38:1-8) and the thanksgiving of Hezekiah follows. From Babylon come envoys who

seek the treasures of the temple (39:1-2) and Isaiah announces the Babylonian Captivity (39:3-8). These chapters serve not only as an historical appendix to chapters 1-35 but also as a bridge to connect the earlier chapters with the latter half of the book. First of all, the Assyrian period, then the Babylonian...thus we are prepared for the atmosphere that we find when we begin to read chapter 40. (A note of interest: with the exception of Hezekiah's Psalm of thanksgiving, chapters 36-39 are repeated, with minor variations, in II Kings 18:13-20:19.)

## VI. Isaiah 40:1-66:24 – The Being And Destiny Of The Church Of God.

The theme of this section, more than the return from the Babylonian exile, is rather the church of God in its relations with God and man, and its purpose, progress and design.

- A. Chapter 40 – Here is given a general promise of blessing and consolation. The people are commanded to prepare for a new and glorious appearance of the Lord, vv. 1-8, who will come with a strong hand, yet as a tender shepherd to his people. His absolute power is present for the help of his people, vv. 26-31..
- B. Chapter 41 – Israel is weak, but the Lord will help and deliver her. Many of the passages in Isaiah 40-66 compare favorably with those in Jeremiah. For instance, Isaiah 56:11 and Jeremiah 6:15; Isaiah 53 and Jeremiah 11:19.
- C. Chapter 42 – The servant of the Lord appears as the Savior of mankind.
- D. Chapter 43 – Israel is the Lord's own people with whom He will be present in affliction.
- E. Chapter 44 – Israel is God's servant, whom He will abundantly bless. Even though she has sinned and done contrary to God's law, God has blotted out Israel's transgression and has redeemed her, and will send Cyrus as a deliverer. (Even the Old Testament teaches, as is the theme of the New Testament, that it is God's grace that saves us, not we ourselves, Ephesians 2:8-9.)
- F. Chapter 45 – Cyrus will be victorious, being used of God for Israel's sake.
- G. Chapter 46 – An illustration of the truths set forth in chapter 45.
- H. Chapter 47 – The judgment of God will fall on Babylon, which is personified as a virgin. She is to fall because of her oppression to Israel, her pride, her trust in wickedness, and her knowledge and wisdom.
- I. Chapter 48 – Israel calls upon God the Lord, but not in truth.
- J. Chapter 49 – The servant (here also the nation and its head, the Messiah) is set forth as the one who is to restore those who are in bondage.
- K. Chapter 50 – The sins of the people have brought them their distress. Only the Messiah will be able to redeem them.
- L. Chapter 51 – The righteous are exhorted to follow in the steps of Abraham.
- M. Chapter 52 – Here is set forth the future glory of God's people in comparison with their past state, a captivity from which they are commanded to flee.

- N. Chapter 53 – Although the Messiah has been proclaimed, few have believed concerning Him. In this chapter, you find one of the most exacting prophecies concerning the Messiah’s life, especially of His suffering.
- O. Chapter 54 – The future glory of God’s people.
- P. Chapter 55 – The restrictions of the old church are gone, and the church stands open to the entire world.
- Q. Chapter 56 – The righteousness of God will be fully revealed.
- R. Chapter 57 – The righteous who have died are relieved from evil to come.
- S. Chapter 58 – Israel is a sinful nation, which exhibits hypocrisy rather than love to the needy; had Israel been obedient, God’s favor would have continued.
- T. Chapter 59 – Israel’s sins have separated her from God.
- U. Chapter 60 – The change which awaits the spiritual Israel is a new and blessed light upon Zion.
- V. Chapter 61 – The Servant (here, the Messiah) who is to bring about great change is introduced as describing the object of His mission, and the blessings that flow as a result of His Word are given in vv. 4-11.
- W. Chapter 62 – The Servant will continue until righteousness and salvation shine forth.
- X. Chapter 63 – The destruction of the enemies of the wicked is the work of the Messiah.
- Y. Chapter 64 – Confidence is expressed in the mighty power of God.
- Z. Chapter 65 – The Gentiles are called, v. 1. The Jews, because of their sins, are rejected, vv. 2-7; there is, however a chosen remnant, vv. 8-10. The unbelieving Israel shall be ashamed, but the true servants of God will sing for joy in their hearts, vv. 11-16; the blessings of the new heaven and earth are cited, vv. 17-25.
- AA. Chapter 66 – The Lord dwells in the humble heart, not in the earthly temple.

### Questions on Isaiah

1. According to 1:3-4, what is the problem with the people of God, the Israelites? II Cor. 4:3-4
2. What is meant by the “mountain of the Lord” in 2:3? Micah 4:1-3
3. What is meant by the “swords” and “spears” of 2:4?
4. What are the six woes of 5:8-23?
5. Who else saw a vision similar to the one in Isaiah 6:3? Rev. 4:1-8
6. Where were the phrases in 6:9-10 recorded again in Scriptures and by whom? Matt. 13:14-15

7. Is the statement in 7:9b a “truism” today as it was 750 years before Christ?
8. Of what is Isaiah 7:14 a prophesy?
9. What is the great “light” that Isaiah is referring to in 9:2-7?
10. To what is 11:1-3 referring to?
11. To what is 11:6-8 referring?
12. To what is 14:12-14 referring? Rev. 9:1, 12:9
13. What is the “key to the house of David” that God will place on the shoulder of Judah?
14. Of what does 25:8 remind you? I Cor. 15:54
15. Wherein lies “perfect peace” according to 26:3-4?
16. Of what does 26:19 refer?
17. To what is 28:16 referring?
18. What is the “farming” illustration to suggest? 28:23-29
19. What does 29:13 mean?
20. Where is this quoted in the New Testament and what does it mean? 29:16 (Rom. 9:20)
21. What kind of a reference is spoken of in 32:1-2?
22. Could Isaiah have known in prophesy about “9-11” according to 34:18-19?
23. Could the reference in 35:8-10 be the same message that John wrote about in Rev. 21:26-27?
24. Does the Lord always deliver his people from the difficulties that surround them? 36:18-20
25. In Isaiah 38:2-7, is this a matter of God changing His mind?
26. Why was comfort to be finally brought to Jerusalem? 40:1-3
27. Of what was 40:3-8 a prophesy?
28. What is Isaiah attempting to suggest by 40:12-14, especially v. 13?
29. What, according to 40:29-31, does hope produce?



30. What is the great promise written in Isaiah 41:9-10?
31. What profound statement do you find in 42:3-4?
32. What is the message of 46:3-4?
33. What is God's great double promise recorded in 49:14-16a?
34. In 52:7-8, what does the author mean when he refers to "beautiful feet?"
35. Of what does 52:13-15 again refer?
36. Chapter 53, vv. 1-5 what was it that Isaiah explained in prophesy 750 years before Christ?
37. Where are these verses recorded in the New Testament: 53:7-8?
38. By whom was 53:9 fulfilled? Matthew 27:57-60
39. What is God's covenant to His people and now supported in 54:9-10?
40. To what is the author referring in 55:1-3?
41. What promise of the Word is given in 55:10-11?
42. What accusation is given by Isaiah in 56:9-12 about Israel's spiritual leaders?
43. What is true "fasting" according to 58:6-7?
44. Where in the New Testament do you find similar words to 59:16-17?
45. Where in the New Testament do you find similar words to 60:19-20?
46. Where in the New Testament do you find similar words to 61:1-2?
47. What is the beauty of 61:9-10?
48. What does 63:16 mean?
49. How effective are our good works outside of a relationship with God in 64:6?
50. Where in the New Testament do we find words similar to these, 65:17-19?
51. What does 65:24 mean?
52. How will the unbelievers spend eternity? Is. 66:24; Matt. 3:12, 25:41; Mark 9:48

## Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

## Name

The prophecy is named after the prophet himself. In the Septuagint it appears as Heremias, and in the Latin, Jeremias.

## Author

There is no satisfactory reason for doubting that Jeremiah himself was the author of the entire book. In chapter 36:1-2 we learn that in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoiakim, the Lord commanded the prophet to take a book-roll and to write therein all the prophecies which had been revealed to him from the days of Josiah even to the present. In response to this command, Jeremiah summoned his scribe, Baruch, who wrote all the prophecies down at dictation, v. 4. Baruch then went to the temple and read here all that had been dictated to him, v. 8. A year later, in the 9<sup>th</sup> month, a fast was proclaimed and again Baruch read the prophecies publicly. This act was reported to the princes, who summoned Baruch to bring the roll before them. The princes then permitted Baruch and Jeremiah to escape, but brought the roll to Jehoiakim, who upon hearing it read, cut it to pieces with a scribe's knife and cast it into the fire, vv. 9-23.

The Lord then commanded Jeremiah to take another roll and to write in it all that had been found in the previous book. Jeremiah dictated to Baruch all the contents of the former roll "and there were added besides unto them many like words," 36:32. Thus there came into existence the first written record of Jeremiah's prophecies from Josiah to Jehoiakim. It is obvious, however, that this dictated roll does not coincide with our present book of Jeremiah, since our present book contains many prophecies uttered at a time subsequent to the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoiakim. It is quite possible that at later times Jeremiah dictated further to Baruch. Like Jeremiah, Baruch was taken into Egypt (43:6) and it is likely that in Egypt Baruch gathered and edited all of Jeremiah's prophecies. Even the arrangement of the prophecies may be due to the suggestion of Jeremiah, although actually carried out by Baruch. As to Baruch, all the evidence indicates that he was simply a scribe and that whatever he did in the way of editing was done at Jeremiah's direction.

## Life of the Author

More is known of the life of Jeremiah than of any other of the Old Testament prophets. Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiah, of the priests of Anathoth, or the modern Anata, about an hour and a half walk northeast of Jerusalem. While still a young man (age 20), he was called to be a prophet, 1:6. This call came in the 13<sup>th</sup> year of Josiah's reign. Jeremiah's ministry continued until after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, 586 B.C., and lasted altogether about 50 years. After he was called into his prophetic office he learned that the destruction of Jerusalem was imminent and that it would be done by an enemy from the north, 1:11-16. Five years after his call, the Book of the Law was found in the temple (II Kings 22-23), and as a result a type of reform was established among the people. But as we shall see, it did no real good, for the prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction was still to take place.

Jeremiah pulled no punches. He told the people of their impending destruction. At first animosity broke out in his hometown (11:18-23) and the prophet moved to Jerusalem. Apparently even his family had dealt treacherously with him, 12:6. Nevertheless, that period of Jeremiah's ministry was probably the happiest, and when Josiah died, Jeremiah lamented his loss, II Chronicles 35:25a.

Josiah was followed by Jehoahaz, who reigned three months. Jeremiah prophesied his doom, 22:11-17. After Jehoahaz came Jehoiakim. During his reign the famous battle of Charchemish was fought. Jerusalem was sieged and finally taken, and Daniel, along with many others was taken into captivity. During this time Jeremiah had prophesied the captivity of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, and also the 70 years of captivity, 25:1-14.

In Chapters 7-9 we find the great address of Jeremiah. Even the priests were upset about it so they decided to put him to death, chapter 26. In 36:1, Jeremiah is commanded to put into book-roll form his prophecies. So he and Baruch sit down to work. Jehoiakim became so angry with the prophet that he personally destroyed the writing so that they had to be redone the second time. Jeremiah and Baruch, whom the Lord had hidden because of the anger of the king, rewrote the prophecies, to which a few new ones were added.

Jehoiachin, the next king, reigned for only three months and was taken into Babylon as Jeremiah had predicted, 22:24-30. The third son of Josiah, Zedekiah, who had been appointed by the Babylonians, followed him to the throne. But Zedekiah sought allegiance with Egypt, while Jeremiah urged him to continue to support Babylon, the lesser of the two evils, 27:12-22. Finally Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem, and Zedekiah was taken, with his people, into captivity. Jeremiah, at the capture, left for Benjamin territory, but was thought to be deserting, so he was captured and thrown into prison. Later he was freed, only to be caught speaking against evil. He was placed in a slimy cistern, from which he was rescued by a Cushite, Ebed-Melech, 38:7-13. When finally Jerusalem fell, Zedekiah was blinded and together with his people, was taken off into captivity. Nebuzaradan, the Babylonian general, set Jeremiah free and permitted him to remain in his own land, 39:11-14. He went to the governor, Gedaliah, but after a short time, the governor was murdered by ruthless opponents, headed by a certain Ishmael, 41:1-2. The Jews now feared vengeance on the part of the Babylonians and sought to go to Egypt for safety, 41:17. Against this action Jeremiah protested, 42:9-22. His words proved to be of no avail and he was forced to accompany the Jews to Egypt, 43:1-7. At Tahpanhes, the place in Egypt where the Jews settled, the prophet continued his ministry, 43:8-13 and chapter 44, bringing the messages that were delivered there.

## Purpose

The nature of Jeremiah's ministry is expressed in the words that the Lord uttered to him at the time of his call to the prophetic work. The great theme that rushes through Jeremiah's messages is that of destruction to Judah and that this judgment will come in the near future. It will come because the people are deserving of it. (Will this be true today of any nation that despises the Word and the will of God?) They will have given themselves over to idolatry, to forsake the Lord. Against this dark background of threat and punishment, however, there appear some of the most glorious Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. Like Isaiah of the previous century, Jeremiah was permitted to see Christ's day. These prophecies are not divorced from the

background of warning. They rather are the outcome of pleading with the nation to repent, as in 3:14,16-17.

In Chapter 23 we have the promise of the righteous branch, and again in 31-33. The climax of these Messianic promises in Jeremiah is perhaps the following, "In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, the Lord our righteousness," 33:16. The earthly city is to be destroyed, but one day she shall dwell safely...the Lord our righteousness.

## Analysis

### I. Logical Arrangement

It must be obvious from a simple examination that the contents of the prophecies are not arranged in what we would call a chronological order. It is true that there is a certain underlying plan to the book. And so, chapters 1-25 form a unit in themselves, containing as they do, both woe and destruction against Judah. But the order and arrangement are not strictly chronological. Chapters 26-45, which deal with Jeremiah's personal life, form a unit. Chapters 46-51 also form a unit, being prophecies against a foreign power. Chapter 52 is a historical appendix.

Arguments have been used against the absolute authority of the book by merely mentioning that if it was truly God's Word things would be in chronological order. If you would know most oriental writers, including the writers of the Koran, you will find out that they are not necessarily interested in chronology. Repeating certain facts, especially facts that through prophesy will affect the entire nation, that, to the oriental writer, is most valuable. If we look at the Book of Jeremiah this way, we find the answer to the question.

### II. Chronological Arrangement

As they appear, Jeremiah's prophecies are not arranged in chronological order, and such a classification is difficult to make. However, the following will give a general idea of the order in which the prophecies were delivered.

- A. Under Josiah. Only 1:1 and 3:6-6:30 are actually dated under Josiah's reign. Even so, they form an important part to the section to which they belong. So, we may assign the following passages to Josiah's time:
1. 1:1-9 – The time is the 13<sup>th</sup> year of Josiah; Jeremiah receives his call from the Lord.
  2. 2:1-3:5 – The passage contains the first message of the prophet to the sinful people and nation.
  3. 3:6-6:30 – Jeremiah announces the punishment of Judah by the coming of a nation from the north.
  4. 7:1-10:25 – This message is delivered and intended to arouse those who have put false trust in the temple, and condemns them for their idolatry.

## Jeremiah

5. 11:1-13:27 – Here Jeremiah stresses what will happen upon violation of the covenant. In chapter 13, to make a lasting impression, Jeremiah used the symbol of the girdle... the once beautiful girdle is now tattered and torn.
  6. 14:1-15:21 – A representation of drought. The people blamed and even now hated and tried to kill Jeremiah, thinking him to be the cause for the drought. He intercedes to God in their behalf, but God is immovable. 15:19, Jeremiah's Grotto.
  7. This section belongs to the previous one. Another picture of Judah's desolation. The reason possibly that God allowed or even demanded that Jeremiah not marry, 16:2.
  8. 18:1-20:18 – The coming exile is symbolically represented by the potter's clay and the earthen bottle. Jeremiah put in prison and in painfully made stocks, which were made to stretch the body.
- B. Under Jehoahaz – No prophecies uttered during his reign.
- C. Under Jehoiakim – The following are dated to his time:
1. Chapter 26 – Jeremiah and those disciples of his were sent to trial and Jeremiah, who had friends, was freed, but Uriah was killed.
  2. Chapter 27 – Jeremiah puts yoke on his neck symbolizing how the Babylonians would be a yoke to the people of Judah.
  3. The 4<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoiakim, the year in which Nebuchadnezzar came to destroy Jerusalem, Daniel 1:1. Prophecy of the 70-year captivity given, Chapter 25:11-14, and 29:10.
  4. Chapter 35 – The prophecy concerns the Recabites, those who believed in living an ascetic life.
  5. Chapter 36 – Belongs to the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoiakim, referring to the writing down of the prophecies, their destruction and re-writing.
  6. Chapter 45 – Jeremiah utters his brief message to Baruch, his scribe.
  7. Chapters 46-49 – Prophecies difficult to date. At any rate, Jeremiah prophesies the destruction of Egypt, Moab, the Philistines and the Ammonites, those of Edom, Syria, Hazor and Elim.
- D. Under Jehoiachin – No prophecies attributed to his time. He, however, is mentioned in a prophecy 22:24-30 during reign of Zedekiah.
- E. Under Zedekiah
1. Chapter 21:1-22:30 – The siege begins. King Zedekiah frightened at the approach of the Babylonians asks Jeremiah to intercede to God for them. Jeremiah advises to give the city to them... was this man a traitor?

## Jeremiah

2. Chapter 23 – Continues the prophecies of 21-22. It consists in the denunciation of the false prophets who had arisen, and had held out false hope, safety and security for the people.
3. Chapter 24 – Again is a symbolic approach to the problem; the two baskets of figs...one good and one bad.
4. Chapter 27 – Shows how the prophet thwarted the designs of neighboring peoples to induce the Judean king to join with them against Babylon.
5. Chapter 28 – Jeremiah's opposition to the false prophet Hananiah who had removed the yoke from his neck. He died in two months.
6. Chapter 29 – Jeremiah's letter to those in exile in Babylon, offering them encouragement, for in seventy years they would be free.
7. Chapters 30-31 – These chapters serve to teach the nation that although her present suffering is grievous, there will be a glorious future.
8. Chapter 32 – Belongs to the 10<sup>th</sup> year of Zedekiah. The prophet buys the field in Anathoth to symbolize that the people someday will return and inhabit and even cultivate that land.
9. Chapter 33 – Belong to the period of Jeremiah's imprisonment under King Zedekiah. It contains a Messianic prophecy and a promise of the continuation of David's throne.
10. Chapter 34 – Zedekiah decrees the freedom of all slaves. The people agree but go back on their word, and are severely denounced.
11. Chapter 37 – Jeremiah tries to leave Jerusalem to get food. He is caught, stamped as a deserter, and imprisoned.
12. Chapter 38 – Imprisonment of Jeremiah under Zedekiah.
13. Chapter 39 – Captivity of the king and burning of Jerusalem. Position of authority given to Jeremiah by Babylon.

### F. Under Gedaliah – To the reign of Gedaliah are assigned these prophecies:

1. Chapter 40 – Is a prophecy revealed to Jeremiah after the captivity. Gedaliah is warned that an Ishmaelite seeks to kill him, but he refuses to believe it.
2. Chapter 41 – How Ishmael slew Gedaliah.
3. Chapter 42 – Is a warning to the remnant left in Judah not to go down to Egypt for protection.
4. Chapter 43:1-44:30 – Relating how the people refused to listen to Jeremiah, and set out for Egypt anyway, taking him with them. A symbolical act with the stones to show that Nebuchadnezzar will yet smite Egypt, 43:9. In 44, Jeremiah tells reason for destruction of Judah and Jerusalem.
5. Chapter 50-52 – Prediction of the fall of Babylon, the Medes being named as the conquerors. Chapter 52 is same as II Kings 24-25 in history. It records the captivity of Judah.

Questions on Jeremiah

1. What great and comforting message did God give to Jeremiah? 1:4-5
2. What is the meaning of the prophesy God gave to Jeremiah in 1:14-15?
3. What above everything else in 2:5-13 did the Lord tell the Israelites that concerned Him most?
4. What does “backsliding” or apostasy do to God’s people? 2:19
5. How can sin not be and finally be forgiven? 2:21-22
6. What illustration is used in 3:6-10 to describe Judah’s behavior before God?
7. What is the real sadness that happens when God’s people step away from His Word? 3:15-16
8. Is it possible according to 4:10-11 for God to deceive His people? Explain
9. What is the reason given for God withholding forgiveness? 5:7-8
10. What comfort does 5:18-19 give to the children of Israel in the midst of God’s condemnation of them?
11. What is the “tester of metal” in 6:27-30 and what does this mean?
12. What is the answer to the question posed in 8:4-5?
13. Of what does Jeremiah encourage the people to boast in 9:23-24?
14. What is the imagery used by Jeremiah to define the abilities of the gods of the Canaanites in 10:3-5?
15. What complaint of Jeremiah’s is similar to one we offer to our God often? 12:1-4
16. What was the significance and meaning of the issue of the linen belt in 13:1-11?
17. Why did Jeremiah use this illustration in 13:23 when speaking of the house of Judah?
18. How critical is the condition of Judah according to 17:1-3?
19. What is the issue of the “heart” according to 17:9-11?
20. What was the judgment God placed on the people of Judah for violation the Sabbath? 17:27



## Jeremiah

21. What is the meaning of the potter wheel and the potter in 18:1-6?
22. How is this possible as described in 19:8-9?
23. Is the real complaint of Jeremiah deception of the Lord or something else? 20:7-8
24. Why does the Lord have to explicitly define for Judah the “way of life and death” issue in 21:8-10?
25. What prophetic insight did God give Jeremiah to write, as recorded in 23:5-6?
26. What is the danger of doing what 23:30-32 suggest? James 3:1
27. What is the meaning of the “issue of the figs” in 24:1-10?
28. What according to 25:11-14 will happen to the King of Babylon after the 70 years of Judah’s captivity?
29. Why was Jeremiah threatened with death? 26:7-8
30. What is the glorious promise God gives to the remnant who lived through the 70 years of captivity? 29:11-13
31. Of what is 31:15 a prophesy?
32. What will the “new law written on their hearts” accomplish according to 31:33-34?
33. What specific situation does 33:15-16 refer to?
34. What does Ebed-Melech’s kindness to Jeremiah suggest? 38:12-13
35. What is finally advisable when it comes to listening to the Word of God? 42:6, Luke 11:28, 1 John 2:5
36. In 50:6-7, what does Jeremiah say in the problem of the “scattered sheep?”

## Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS

In the Hebrew Bible, the book is named after its first word, 'echah' (how). In the Septuagint it is named after the content, the Tears of Jeremiah. Our English title is derived from the Latin, the Lamentation of Jeremiah.

## Author

Even though the book says nothing about the author – who he was or where he came from - the situation of Jeremiah weeping over the loss of the throne of Israel does give some weight to the thought that either Jeremiah or even his scribe, Baruch, could have been the writer.

According to tradition, both Jewish and Christian, Jeremiah is considered to be the author of the book. This tradition first appears in the title of the book in the Septuagint, which reads, “and it came to pass after Israel had been taken away into captivity and Jerusalem had been laid waste, that Jeremiah sat weeping and lamented this lamentation over Jerusalem and said...” The Vulgate (written by Jerome) repeats these words and adds “with a bitter spirit sighing and wailing.”

What then is the origin of this tradition? Some think that it came about because of a misreading of II Chronicles 35:25 in which Jeremiah is seen lamenting over Josiah. Yet if we read the entire book of Lamentations, nothing is said about Josiah. Scholars seem to think that this is another book of Lamentations that Jeremiah wrote, that we do not have as part of our Bible.

Whoever the author was (I believe it was Jeremiah because there are at least 15 passages in both Lamentations and Jeremiah that are almost exact quotations of each other) he wrote in the language similar to Jeremiah or his scribe Baruch.

## Purpose

The book of Lamentations represents the attitude of a devout believer in the theocracy (government in which God rules His people through chosen leaders) toward the destruction of the theocracy. The nation has become so vile, that the Lord has left His sanctuary and evil forces have destroyed it. The poet mourns deeply that the nation has become sinful but he realizes that the Lord is righteous. He thus calls upon the people to repent. At the same time he sees how evil has become the action of those who have destroyed the Holy City, and then calls for their punishment.

This is one of the most tragic books in the Bible. The nation from whom salvation was to come has become so filthy that God would destroy her outward theocratic form. Against the background of this fact we may understand the cry, “How does the city sit solitary that was full of people? How is she become as a widow?... She that was great among nations, and the princes among provinces is become a tributary!”

## Lamentations

The thought of Jeremiah sitting on a stump weeping over the fallen city is very characteristic of the time that Jesus himself wept over the city...but who, in turn, as he hung from the cross, uttered these words, "Weep not for me but weep for yourselves and for your children." Tolerance of evil is the norm of our day...is there any reason for the crime rate in our country not to be increased 250% in the last 10 years, coupled with the thought that in 1968 not one man or woman was executed for committing a crime? Is there any reason why we should not today, as Jeremiah did those many years ago, speak out against evil and the results of evil in our land?

### Analysis

#### **I. Chapter 1 – The desolate and forsaken Jerusalem.**

The poet pictures vividly the lamentable condition of the forsaken city. This description climaxes in verse 11b, where the city personified speaks, "See, O Lord, and consider; for I am become vile." In v. 18 the city again speaks proclaiming her own desolation and uttering a plea that her enemies be punished.

#### **II. Chapter 2 – The reason for the Lord's anger with the city are now set forth.**

The poet urges the nation to seek the Lord and it responds to the plea, vv. 20-22.

#### **III. Chapter 3 – This chapter contains a remarkable acrostic.**

Each letter of the alphabet begins three verses. In vv. 1-3 it begins with Aleph, vv. 4-6 with Beth, etc. The nation is again personified. It laments the tragic condition that has come upon it. Then in vv. 21-39 it recalls the Lord's mercies that it is not entirely consumed, and trusts in His goodness. In vv. 40-54 the people of the nation are exhorted to search and try their ways and to turn again to the Lord. Finally in vv. 55-66, after the acknowledgement that God has heard its cry, the nation calls upon Him for vengeance upon its foes.

#### **III. Chapter.4 – This chapter shows the contrast between Zion's former splendor and her present condition.**

#### **IV. Chapter 5 – The nation appeals to the Lord to remember its afflictions.**

These afflictions are truly great but the nation would trust in the eternal God, v. 19.

### Questions on Lamentations

1. Why, in Chapter 1, is Jerusalem personified as "she?"
2. How could the prophets of Israel fail to warn her of God's impending judgment? 2:14
3. How could 2:20 have happened?
4. What can we honestly say of God's mercy to us? 3:22-23

Lamentations

5. According to 3:37-38, do accidnets happen?



**Paragraph Summaries**

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# THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

## Name

In Hebrew the prophet's name is Yehezque'l, which we believe means, "God strengthens." No mention is made of the prophet's name in the Bible outside of his own book.

## Author

In Baba Bathra we read, "The men of the great Synagogue wrote Ezekiel and the twelve." Another ancient statement concerning the authorship of the book comes from Josephus in his Antiquities, "But not only did he (Jeremiah) predict to the people (the destruction of Jerusalem and the Exile) but also the prophet Ezekiel who wrote two books about these things and left them (for posterity)." Even though this passage is somewhat obscure, what Josephus was referring to in the "two books" was 1-32 and 33-48. The summary of the critics as to authorship very simply states that the whole book from beginning to end bears unmistakably the stamp of a single mind, that of Ezekiel.

## Purpose

Ezekiel was a priest of Jerusalem, the son of Buzi, a man of whom little more is known. With the deportation of Jehoiachin, he was taken into exile into Babylon, 1:1, where he resided at Tel Abib 3:15 on the river Kebar. Ezekiel was married and had his own home 24:16-18. His call to the prophetic office came in the 4<sup>th</sup> month of the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the captivity, 1:1-2, and his ministry lasted about 22 years. On the day the siege of Jerusalem began his wife, whom he loved very dearly, died. He also came to know Daniel who had gone into captivity nine years before him. That he knew Daniel is evident from 14:14 & 20 and 28:3.

It was Ezekiel's task to impress upon the exiles the fact that calamity had come because of their sinfulness. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Thus we notice in the prophecy a great doctrine of personal responsibility. Even the theocracy, which had been instituted many years before, must come to an end, if the chosen nation persists to live in sin. God, however, does not delight in the death of the wicked. For He freely offers deliverance to all. "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" One day Israel will be re-gathered into her own land and will have one king. There will be true worship of the Lord, and then the city will be called "Jehovah shammah" (the Lord is there). So we can see that the book reveals the faithfulness of God to His eternal purposes. The sinful nation must be destroyed but yet God will not forsake His own.

## Observations

Without a doubt, two of the most difficult books of the Bible to interpret are Ezekiel and Revelation of John. I am very skeptical of those who come to me with the answers to the prophecies in both these books, or those who place the entire spiritual emphasis of the Scriptures on these books. Incidentally, Ezekiel chapter 1 and Revelations 4 speak about the cherubim;

Gog and Magog - Ezekiel 38 and Revelations 20; Eating the Book - Ezekiel 3 and Revelations 10; New Jerusalem - Ezekiel 40-48 and Revelations 21; River of the water of Life - Ezekiel 47 and Revelations 22. You will also notice that the statement, "They shall know that I am God" was repeated 62 times in the book. God wanted to impress upon them that He was their God...they rejected Him and served idols. The Babylonian Captivity cured the Jews of idolatry. Would such captivity by our enemies cure us of our idolatry...self-worship, money worship?

## Analysis

### I. Ezekiel 1:1-24:27 – Prophecies uttered before the overthrow of Jerusalem.

- A. 1:1-3:21 – Introduction. The prophet reveals how he received a vision and beheld the majesty of the Lord. "In the 13<sup>th</sup> year," which in all probability means the 13<sup>th</sup> year of Ezekiel's life, the whirlwind approaches from the north, thus signifying that it is from the north that judgment will come upon the nation. After this manifestation comes Ezekiel's call and he proceeds to Tel Abib where the Lord reveals to him that he is to be the watchman of Israel.
- B. 3:22-27 – A second vision of the glory of the Lord.
- C. 4:1-7:27 – Here we find symbolic actions. Ezekiel is to represent the siege of Jerusalem, 4:1-3; by lying on his side, he is to announce the punishments of the nation's sins, 4:4-8; by the kind of food he eats, he is to set forth the consequences of the siege. Chapters 6-7 treat of the judgment that will fall on the land and nation.
- D. 8:1-8 – The prophet is transported in the spirit to the City of Jerusalem to behold a vision of its destruction.
- E. 9:1-11:25 – The punishment of Jerusalem. The Lord's ministers pass through the city to destroy all who remain.
- F. 12:1-14:23 – The Lord forsakes the city because of its unbelief and its following after false prophets.
- G. 15:1-17:24 – The certainty and necessity of the punishment.
- H. 18:1-32 – The love of God toward sinners.
- I. 19:1-14 – The lamentation over the princes of Israel.
- J. 20:1-24:27 – The last utterances of warning before the downfall.

### II. Ezekiel 25:1-32:32 – Prophecies of judgment against foreign nations.

### III. Ezekiel 33:1-48:35 – Prophecies concerning the restoration which were uttered after Nebuchadnezzar had taken Jerusalem.

- A. 33:1-22 – The new covenant and the love of God for the sinner.
- B. 34:1-31 – The time will come when the people will recognize the Lord and there will be among them a true prophet.

- C. 35:1-15 – The devastation of Edom.
- D. 36:1-38 – The restoration of the people of Israel.
- E. 37:1-28 -- The vision of the dry bones, symbolic of the resurrection of Israel.
- F. 38:1-39:29 – The prophecy of Gog and Magog. Are these two chapters a prophecy of the end of the world, the evil nations, or religious institutions (World Council of Churches, the Communist Nations) that will band together into one world government or church to defeat and destroy the true church? As the prophecies demonstrate, these powers will be utterly defeated by the Messiah, that they will be (symbolically) seven years in burning the enemies' weapons and seven months in burying the dead. This comforting prophecy of Gog and Magog prepares the way for the glorious vision which is revealed in the last nine chapters of the prophecy.
- G. The vision of the Church of God. The whole description of this heavenly Jerusalem is summed up in the very last words of the prophecy, the LORD IS THERE. That is the time when there will be true worship of Christ...not in an earthen temple, but in true spirit and truth. Could it have been true that even though Ezekiel didn't know the true Messiah, that he spoke about Him and the joy of being with Christ in heaven? That to me seems to be the point of the last nine chapters.

### Questions on Ezekiel

1. How was Ezekiel's vision of God in 1:26-28 different from most other visions of God?
2. How are the Israelite people described in Chapter Two?
3. What does it mean that the scroll that Ezekiel was to "eat" was "sweet as honey?" 3:1-3
4. What was the terrible judgment that God placed on Jerusalem that He had never done before? 5:8-11
5. What's going to make the difference between the Israel of the past and the one in 11:16-19?
6. Why in Chapter 16 (before and after vv. 15-16, 26-29) is there such an emphasis on prostitution and promiscuity? (literal or figurative?)
7. How true is the proverb in 16:44?
8. What does Chapter 18, v. 4 mean to the people who originally read it?
9. How could the Lord God say what He did of Israel in 20:25-26? Rom. 1:24-32
10. What does the phrase "stand in the gap" in 22:30 mean?

11. Where in the New Testament is there a warning about Ezekiel 33:8?
12. What kind of a warning does 34:8-10 have to say to spiritual leaders, even pastors?
13. What does 35:6 mean?
14. What, in Chapter 37: 2-3, are the “bones in the floor of the valley” to signify?
15. What is the meaning of the joining of the two sticks in 37:19-20?
16. How are Chapters 38 and 39 translated throughout much of Christendom today?
17. How was a priest to take care of a family who lost a loved one if he “could not come close to the dead person?” 44:25-31

### **Paragraph Summaries**

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# THE BOOK OF DANIEL

## Name

The book is named after its principal character, Daniel. This name was also given to David's second son, I Chronicles 3:1, Ezra 8:2 and Nehemiah 10:6.

## Person

If our calculations are right, Daniel was just a boy of about 15-18 when Nebuchadnezzar carried him off into Babylon. For some reason the king favored Daniel and had his name changed to Belteshazzar so that he could learn Chaldee science and wisdom in preparation for the king's court. Refusing to eat the food that was sent to him by the king could have caused him death, but he and his three friends were men of principle. They refused to eat what had been brought to them because it could have come from a sacrifice that they had given to their heathen gods. What a remarkable man Daniel was! Absolutely unswerving in his own religious convictions, yet so loyal to his idolatrous king that he was trusted with the affairs of the empire.

## Author

Even though it would appear on the surface that Daniel was the author of the book, much criticism has been directed toward that presupposition. It was not questioned until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D., by a man named Porphyry. It seems that this man was a Christian-hater and did write a book to prove his thoughts, called *Against the Christians*. (Incidentally, the book has been lost with the exception of the chapter on the criticism of Daniel.) Porphyry thought that since the Book of Daniel spoke so clearly about the period of Maccabees, 168-164 B.C., that it would have been impossible for anyone not living in that time to have written about it. Daniel lived 400 years before that so it was impossible, he thought, for Daniel to have had anything to do with it. That was the basis of his argumentation. Since the time of the period of rationalization in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, many more have jumped into the ring to try and prove the same thing.

But what are the proofs for the authorship of Daniel? First of all, Jesus Christ quoted from Daniel (Matthew 24:15 with Daniel 9:27 and 12:11). Whether Christ's reference be to Daniel 9:27 or 12:11, he says that "the abomination of desolation" was spoken by Daniel the prophet. This is interesting since both 9:27 and 12:11 are thought by modern critics to have come from the time of the Maccabees. Then there is this one more thought, in the following passages of the New Testament, that there is at least indirect approval of the genuineness of the book of Daniel, Matthew 10:23, 16:27ff, 19:8, 24:30, 25:31 and 26:64.

## Purpose

The Book of Daniel seeks to show the superiority of the God of Israel over the idols of the heathen nations. Although these nations had been God's instruments in punishing Israel, nevertheless they will in time pass from the scene. In the latter days the God of heaven will erect

a kingdom that will never be destroyed. Although the end of this period of our history will usher in with it terrible times of persecution (Matthew 24-25), the Messiah will come and God's eternal kingdom will be established. Daniel then may be said to clearly teach the sovereignty of God in his dealings with human kingdoms.

### Observations

Since the Babylonian Captivity lasted about 70 years, and Daniel was a young man when the captivity started, it could have been possible that Daniel was well over 90 before he died, because reference is made to his activity even at the close of the captivity. Babylon was said to have been a city 60 miles in circumference. The walls were 300 feet high, 35 feet beneath the surface of the ground. The wall was 80 feet thick. What do you say about monuments to man?

### Analysis

- I. Chapter 1. Introduction to the entire book. Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem and among the captives which he brings to Babylon are four youths who are trained for service at the court. By refusing to partake of the anointed food of the king they show the triumph of God's grace and make remarkable progress in their training.
- II. Chapter 2. Nebuchadnezzar has a dream in which he sees a colossus. His wise men cannot interpret it for him but Daniel does the job for them. Daniel says the colossus represents four kingdoms. It is thought that the four kingdoms are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. As we know from history, it was these four kingdoms that ruled the world from the time of Daniel to Christ, when His Kingdom of Grace and Truth was established in the hearts of those who would believe in Him.
- III. Chapter 3. The story of Nebuchadnezzar erecting a golden image and then asking all his subjects to bow down to it. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refuse to bow down and are thrown into the furnace. But in the furnace the king sees the men unharmed and accompanied by the fourth. He then commands them to come forth and he blesses their God.
- IV. Chapter 4. The king has another dream. Daniel interprets it. The dream is then fulfilled upon the king, who for a season, is bereft of his sanity. Upon his recovery he praises the God of Daniel. The seven times referred to here may have reference either to years or as the Babylonians calculated, summer and winter as seasons...the period then being 3-1/2 years.
- V. Chapter 5. Belshazzar makes a great feast during which the handwriting on the wall appears. Daniel interprets this writing as a warning of doom to Belshazzar. The warning is fulfilled and Belshazzar slain. The Babylonian Empire now falls to the Median Empire with Darius at the helm, 606-536 B.C.
- VI. Chapter 6. Darius the Mede follows upon the throne after Belshazzar. Aroused by jealousy, certain rivals of Daniel devise a plot to destroy him. Daniel is accused of violating the law of the Medes and Persians and is cast into the den of lions.

- VII. Chapter 7. Another dream, this time about the four beasts. These chapters represent the same nations as the images in Chapter 2. The only change is that the fourth empire has a threefold history. For on the head of this beast there are ten horns which symbolize ten nations. A little horn then arises and uproots three of the horns. This horn is thought to be that of the Papacy, a combination of the leopard beast and lamb spoken about in Revelations 13. (By the way, three temporal Roman kingdoms were handed over to the Papacy in 754 A.D. Connection?) When, however, the little horn seems to have overcome the saints of the most high, God intervenes and the fourth beast is destroyed, and the saints recover the kingdom. Research, anyone?
- VIII. Chapter 8. Under the symbolism of a ram and a he-goat, Daniel in a vision sees the Medo-Persian Empire destroyed by Greece under Alexander. When Alexander perishes, the kingdom is divided – the four horns.
- IX. Chapter 9. Having studied the prophecy of the 70 years (Jeremiah's) Daniel prays to God making confession of their sins. Daniel's prayer is answered by Gabriel in the prophecy of the "Seventy Weeks." The period of the captivity was 70 years; the time to the coming of Christ will be seven times that.
- X. Chapter 10. An introduction to the revelation in 11-12.
- XI. Chapters 11-12. The rise of anti-Christ and his warfare described. Daniel commanded to seal up the book and the prophecy is concluded.

### Questions on Daniel

1. Is the same gift God gave to Daniel in 1:17 still present in our midst and time? Explain
2. What truth comes out at you as you read Chapter 2, v.11?
3. What was the reward that God gave Daniel and his three friends for interpreting the dream?  
2:47-49
4. What, according to Chapter 3, is the important message of the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego?
5. What does it mean when Nebuchadnezzar said, "my sanity was restored?" 4:34
6. Why did Daniel refuse Belshazzar's gift in 5:17, and then accept it in 5:29?
7. What is the main point of Chapter 6, Daniel in the lion's den?
8. Where is 7:13 repeated in the New Testament?
9. What was the reason Daniel prayed the extensive prayer he did in Chapter 9, according to vv. 18-19?

Daniel

10. What does Chapter 11, vv. 31-32 mean and where is this found in the New Testament?

11. How, according to 12:3, will God's children be rewarded in eternity?

### Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF HOSEA

## Name

The book was named after the prophet Hoshe'a. He was a prophet to the northern kingdom, yet making occasional references to Judah of the southern kingdom. Hosea can be dated about the last 40 years of the northern kingdom. The maximum period that he could have prophesied would be 790-697 B.C. The minimum period would have been about 750-725 B.C. This would put him in the same period of time as the prophet Isaiah. At the beginning of his reign, Jeroboam II was the king of Israel (790-749) and Uzziah was king of Judah (787-735).

## Situation

Some 200 years before Hosea's time, ten tribes out of the twelve had seceded from the kingdom of David and had set up an independent kingdom, with the golden calf as the official national god. In the meantime God had sent the prophets Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Amos, and now, Hosea. But they still persistently refused to return to Jehovah and sunk deeper into idolatry.

## Author

Hosea was the son of Beeri and prophesied in the kingdom of the ten tribes. There is no argument sufficient enough to support any other than Hosea himself as the author of the book. Therefore we believe Hosea to be the author.

## Purpose

In the ministry of Hosea to the ten apostate northern tribes, there is manifest the grace of God. It is to these tribes, ripe for destruction, that the prophet is sent. His great purpose is to reveal the love of God for sinful and rebellious people and nations. He pictures that nation, under the symbolism of a faithless wife, as a nation that has committed spiritual adultery, and he pleads with the people to repent and turn from their ungodly ways. The time has come when Israel must dwell in period of refinement...then after she has repented and has returned from exile, then God's mercy will again be shown. Sad were the days that the eyes of Hosea witnessed.

## Analysis

### I. Hosea 1-3:5 – God's Relations with His People.

QUESTION: Are we to understand the first three chapters as having really taken place? From all that was read on this subject, the combined thoughts agree that the historical narrative presented was true and that Hosea had actually married a harlot, but also that the narrative was a symbolical interpretation of the condition of the northern kingdom, i.e., adulterous in her relationship to God.

Hosea begins by saying that the Lord had commanded him, "Go, take thee a wife of whoredom and children of whoredom; for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord." In answer to the command Hosea relates that he married Gomer and that she bore him several children. For example, Hosea's oldest daughter was named Loruhammah (i.e., not has mercy been shown), and he took the occasion of her birth to announce to Israel, "I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away." 1:6. Another he named Lo-Ammi (i.e., not my people) and this name stood for the message of the Lord, "Ye are not my people." 1:9. By naming his son Jezreel, he was symbolically saying, "retribution, the hour of punishment is come." Hosea then repeats the names without the "Lo" (not), 2:1, of the time when they would again be God's people. What can the story of this adulterous woman and her children portray? It seems to portray the love of God for the sinful and adulterous nation and reaches its climax in the announcement that the children of Israel will be as the sands of the sea.

## II. Hosea 4:1-14:10 – Various Discourses of the Prophet.

Hosea here reveals himself as the prophet of the "decline and fall of the northern kingdom." Chapters 4-8 lay special stress upon the guilt of the sinful kingdom, 9-11:11 emphasize the punishment that is to come to Israel, and 11:12-14:10 point to the future blessing that awaits a repentant nation. The background for these prophecies is the threat of the Assyrian Empire. Hosea shows himself to be a man of deep conviction, and at times his anger against sin manifests in language that is sometimes quite harsh. On the other hand, when the prophet sets before the nation the sublime love of the Lord, the language of the book is filled with great beauty. What an amazing book!

### Questions on Hosea

1. What is another word for Chapter 1, v. 7?
2. What was the issue with Gomer, the wife of Hosea? 2:4-7
3. How was Hosea to respond to Gomer according to 3:1-3?
4. What was the issue or charge against Israel in 4:1-3?
5. Why is v. 6 of Chapter 5 important for us to know?
6. What does 6:6 mean to us?
7. What kind of people are they for whom God "remembers all their evil deeds?"
8. If God "rejects" Israel as 9:17 suggests, is there a chance for them to return? How?
9. What does 10:11 mean?

10. Where is 11:1 recorded in the New Testament?

11. There is always a “way back to God.” What is it according to 14:1-3?

### Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF JOEL

## Name

The book is named for its author, Yo'el who is said to be the son of Pethuel and this is all that the book states about him. Do we know anything for certain about this man? All that can be inferred with any certainty from his writings is that he lived in Judah, and in all probability, prophesied in Jerusalem. The date of his ministry is also a disputed point; though so much is certain...that he did not live in the reign of Manasseh or Josiah, or even later, as some suppose, but was one of the earliest of the 12 prophets. For even Amos 1:2 commences his prophecy with the passage from Joel 3:16 and closes it with the same promises, adopting in Amos 9:13 the beautiful imagery of Joel, of the mountains dripping with new wine and the hills overflowing (Joel 3:18). Isaiah, again, in his description of the coming judgment in chapter 13, had Joel in mind and in verse 6 he actually borrows a sentence from his prophecy (Joel 1:15), which is so peculiar that the agreement cannot be an accidental one. Consequently, Joel prophesied before Amos or before the reigns of Uzziah and Jeroboam II. This would theoretically put his life and writing during the reign of Joash – about 830 B.C.

## Author

I believe that the book was written by Joel but again, modern criticism does not agree, for the reason that the language of the book does not agree with the language of the time in which Joel lived...but seems to be the language of a different time. By the way, these same critics would probably agree that Abraham Lincoln did not write the Gettysburg Address because it did not appear to be the language of his time nor the same style of writing that he was accustomed to doing.

## Purpose

Joel's purpose is to warn the nation of the need of humility and repentance and the certainty of coming judgment. At the same time he seeks to keep the heart of the people faithful to the promises of God by reminding them of the coming salvation and the destruction of their and God's enemies.

## Analysis

### I. Joel 1:1-2:27 – The Plague of Locusts

- A. 1:1 – Superscription. Although the superscription does not state the fact, there is more or less agreement that Joel spoke these words in Judah.
- B. 1:2-20 – The book opens with the description of a devastating plague of locusts, vv. 2-4; this is followed by a command to repentance. (I wonder if the locusts here can be interpreted literally as the promiscuous woman-wife of Hosea or must we interpret it in a figurative way?) The priests are bid to proclaim a fast and solemn assembly at the house

of the Lord, vv. 5-14, with the words, "Alas for the day!" the prophet announces the coming of the Lord, a day of trouble and visitation.

- C. 2:1-27 – The prophet commands that a trumpet be blown since the day of the Lord is coming. It is a day of darkness in which the enemy will enter the city. In vv. 3-10 Joel gives a description of this invading army and announces that the Lord with His army will meet the invader, v. 11; therefore the people should repent and fast and turn to the Lord, vv. 12-27; the Lord will respond to this repentance by a mighty deliverance.

## II. Joel 2:28-3:21 – The Blessing and Judgment of the Lord.

- A. 2:28-32 – A prophecy of the Messianic age, when the Spirit of God is poured out upon all flesh and the Gospel will be offered to all. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered." The fulfillment of this prophecy of grace occurred when the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, Acts 2:17.
- B. 3:1-21 – The captivity of Judah and Jerusalem will be brought again but for the rest of the nations there will be judgment in the valley of Jehoshaphat, vv. 1-8. It will be announced to these nations that it will be a time of war and judgment, (vv. 9 & 16); for God's people, however, there will be everlasting blessing, "Judah shall dwell forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation."

Here is a quote taken from Henrietta Mear's book, *What the Bible is All About*: "After Israel has been restored and the nations of the earth have been judged (Joel 3:1-2) then will the everlasting Kingdom be set up (Joel 3:20). Once again Palestine, the land of promise, will be the center of power and the gathering-place of the nations for judgment. Christ will return to establish His rule as sovereign. God will dwell in Zion, 3:17."

What is your evaluation of what she says?

### Questions on Joel

1. What is Joel trying to say about life in Chapter 1, vv. 2-3?
2. Even as the enemy approaches (locusts), God offers them new hope and blessing. But what do they need to do? 2:12-14
3. What does 2:28-31 seem to suggest of "the day of the Lord?"
4. What was even the practice of the Israelites during the time of Joel? 3:3
5. What does 3:10 mean?

**Paragraph Summaries**

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# THE BOOK OF AMOS

## Name

The prophet's name was Amos, not to be confused with the name of Isaiah's father, Amoz. He was a prophet of Judah, the southern kingdom, with a message to Israel, the northern kingdom. He lived during the reign of Uzziah, king of Judah (787-735 BC). No doubt, as a boy he had known Jonah and possibly Elisha. Hosea was his co-worker. When Amos' work was coming to a close, Isaiah and Micah appeared.

## Author

Author of the entire prophecy was Amos. The prophet was from Tekoa, a town about five miles southeast of Bethlehem, where he was a herdsman, a sheep raiser and a dresser of sycamore trees, 7:14. While he was in the ordinary course of his ordinary occupation the Lord called him to be a prophet, 7:14-15. He himself describes his call in the words, "And the Lord took me as I followed after the flock, and the Lord said unto me, go, prophesy unto my people Israel." From the book itself, we learn the type of people to whom Amos preached. They were rich people, self confident and sure that no evil would befall them. The rich oppressed the poor, and justice was sadly lacking in the courts. With true courage Amos rebuked these evils and pleaded with the nation to turn to the Lord. It is generally held that Amos was the author of the complete book to which his name has been ascribed.

## Observations

Notice some of the unique figures of speech he uses: "NEITHER SHALL HE STAND THAT HANDLETH THE BOW," 2:15. Jeroboam's stalwart archers were accustomed to press forward upon the enemy. They never gave in. What foolishness to talk of the unerring archers of Israel failing to stand anywhere at anytime. "AND HE THAT IS SWIFT OF FOOT SHALL NOT DELIVER HIMSELF," Amos went on. What? Shall Israel's fleet-footed runners be using their speed to run away from battle? Has this insolent prophet gone crazy? "NEITHER SHALL HE THAT RIDETH A HORSE DELIVER HIMSELF," thunders the messenger. There was no horsemen in all of the world like Jeroboam's invincible cavalry. But the climax is reached in these words of Amos, "THUS SAYETH THE LORD; AS THE SHEPHERD TAKETH OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE LION TWO LEGS, OR A PIECE OF AN EAR; SO SHALL THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL BE TAKEN OUT THAT DWELL IN SAMARIA IN THE CORNER OF A BED," 3:12. This sounds like mockery. The idea of powerful Israel being likened to a poor sheep...or the fragments of a poor, eaten sheep.

Yet this is what came to pass. In less than fifty years Israel was utterly destroyed and the pitiful remnant of her people were not even as the leg of a sheep taken from the mouth of a devourer. Such is the picture of God's abhorrence of sin. To every question as to why great empires have fallen, the answer is sin. The secret of a great man's undoing is sin. Let Amos help all of us to see sin in its true light.

## Purpose

The prophecy of Amos is an example of the goodness of God to an unworthy nation. The Israelites of the north had rejected the Davidic covenant and hence any claim to the promises of Jehovah. At the same time, they were smug and confident in the belief that, since they were the chosen people, no calamity could come upon them. **THEY WORSHIPPED GOD WITH THEIR LIPS BUT THEIR HEARTS WERE FAR FROM HIM.** Their lives were characterized by selfishness, greed, immorality, oppression of the poor. There was no justice in the land. To such a people came Amos to warn them of their impending doom. But more than being just a prophet of impending doom, he also prophesies a blessing to them. In so doing, he is proclaiming the faithfulness of God to His covenant, a faithfulness which can be realized when He brings again the captivity of His people, 9:14.

## Analysis

### I. Amos 1:1-2:16 – The Announcement Against the Nations.

- A. Superscription. Possibly Uzziah is mentioned first in order to show that Amos regarded the lineage of David as legitimate (Hosea 1:1). The earthquake occurred two years after Amos had prophesied (Zechariah 14:5), but before he committed his messages to writing.
- B. 1:2 – Theme of the section. Note that the Lord speaks from Jerusalem, for Zion was the legitimate sanctuary.
- C. 1:3-2:3 – Prophecies against nations.
- D. 2:4-16 – Prophecies against the chosen people, Judah (2:4-5), Israel (2:6-16).

In these prophecies, Amos employs a certain framework to give strength to his message. First the statement, “For three transgressions, yea for four, I will not turn away.” Then follows mention of a characteristic sin, then the announcement of the judgment. This scheme holds the attention of the reader until, having finally come to Israel, the prophet breaks forth in all his vehemence to proclaim the coming of exile.

### II. Amos 3:1-6:15 – The Judgment of Israel.

- A. 3:1-15 – God’s quarrel with His people.
- B. 4:1-13 – Despite past punishments, Israel has not returned to the Lord.
- C. 5:1-27 – The Lord laments over Israel as over a virgin that is fallen.
- D. 6:1-15 – Introduction of a cry of woe.

### III. Amos 7:1-9:15 – Five Visions of the Coming Judgment.

- A. 7:1-3 – The first vision – the plague of locusts.
- B. 7:4-6 – The second – fire devours the great deep.

- C. 7:7-17 – The third – the plumbline. To this vision there is added in vv. 11-17 the historical account of the command of Amaziah to Amos to leave the land.
- D. 8:1-14 – The fourth – a basket of summer fruit.
- E. 9:1-10 – The fifth – the destruction of the sanctuary.
- F. 9:11-15 – The promise of the Messianic blessing.

### Summary

Men today need such dealing as Amos gives at times when sin abounds. We get to be too tender and gentle with the common sins of the people, afraid that we might offend them. We forget to denounce; we lose the power of righteous indignation. Not so with Amos, plumbline prophet that he was. The crooked wall always hates the straight line. So men hate Amos. They will hate us too if we speak out. Nevertheless, learn to speak out, no matter what it costs. Remember the MAN with the scourge of small cord purging the temple? John 2:13-16.

### Questions on Amos

1. What does Amos mean in the imagery spoken in 1:2, “the Lord roars?”
2. What was the difference between the sins of Judah and Tyre, Ammon and Gaza? 2:4-5
3. What is the finality with which each of us need to think when facing our God? 4:11-12
4. Why did the Lord God despise the assemblies, feast offerings and songs of His people? 5:21-23
5. What does a “plumb line” have to do with God’s standard among His people? 7:7-8
6. What is the powerful message of 8:11-12, and what does it mean today for us?
7. What does 9:11 mean?

### Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

## Name

This little prophecy is named after its author "Obhadhyah. Just exactly who he was we do not know, nor do we know exactly in what period of time he wrote the prophecy that is ascribed to him. His name means "servant or worshipper of Jehovah."

## Purpose

The prophet's purpose is to show that Edom's actions toward Judah will be punished, but Judah herself will be glorified. 1-14 contain the heading, v. 1, and the general threat against Edom. Edom trusted in her pride but God will bring her low, confounding her mighty men. Edom's conduct was unbrotherly, v. 12, and the Lord points out to her what she should have done. 15-21 announces the coming of the day of the Lord when Edom, like other nations, will be visited for her sin. Nevertheless, there will be deliverance in Zion and the Kingdom will belong to the Lord.

## Observations

South of the Dead Sea and on the western border of the Arabian plateau lies a range of precipitous, red sandstone heights known as Mt. Seir. It is here that Esau settled after he had sold his birthright to his brother Jacob. Having driven out the Horites (Genesis 14:5-6) he occupies the whole mountain. These Horites are spoken about in the time of Abraham. Sela or Petra "Rock" was their capital. Today it is called the silent city of the forgotten past. The descendants of Esau were called the Edomites. They would go out on raiding expeditions, and then retreat to their impregnable fortresses where they kept alive in their hearts a bitter enmity toward the Jews that began with Jacob and Esau. They never failed in helping an enemy attack the Jews. At the time of Christ, through Herod, they obtained control of Judah. They disappeared from history after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 A.D.

Since there were four periods of early history in which the Edomites were engaged in helping to plunder Jerusalem, it is difficult to say which of these periods of time Obadiah was referring.

- |                              |                               |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Reign of Jehoram 850-843  | II Chronicles 21:8,16-17      |
| 2. Reign of Amaziah 803-775  | II Chronicles 25:11-12, 23-24 |
| 3. Reign of Ahaz 741-726     | II Chronicles 28:16-21        |
| 4. Reign of Zedekiah 597-586 | II Chronicles 36:11-21        |

At any rate, within four years after the destruction of Jerusalem in 582 B.C., Edom was raided and wiped off the face of Palestine by the same Babylonians that they had assisted in plundering Jerusalem. Few of the Edomites were left, but those that did, lived in southern Judea. The very last that we hear of them was after the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans in 63 A.D., when the Herods (an Edomite family or Idumeans) were put in rule over Judah. This then was the fulfillment of the prophecy spoken of by Obadiah in his book.



# THE BOOK OF JONAH

## Name

The book takes its name from the author, Yonah (a dove).

## Author

Jonah was a native of Gath-hepher, a town about an hour's distance from Nazareth in Galilee. Jewish legend tells us that he was the son of a widow of Sarepta, whom Elijah brought to life. Whether this is true or not we do not know, but he probably was a disciple of the great Elisha and succeeded him as prophet. Jonah lived during the reign of Jeroboam II (783-743 B.C.) and aided him in making the northern kingdom of Israel very powerful and prosperous (II Kings 14:25). Jonah was a very famous statesman.

For the past half-century we have been living in an age that has created a certain attitude toward the book of Jonah. It is impossible to open the book and take a reading from it anywhere without people's thoughts centering upon a fish. Men have been so busy with tape lines trying to find the dimensions of the fish's belly that they seem to have no time to plumb the depths of the teaching of the book. Read it and find out about it.

## Is the Book Historical?

Among modern theologians today, the book of Jonah, at least the part containing the account of Jonah being in the fish's belly, is dubbed as a parable, an allegory, or a prose poem. No one was there to see for sure if what Jonah recorded was true, so we have to take the word of someone responsible and accept it on that basis. Jesus, our Lord, says in Matthew 12:39-41 that Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days. That settles it for us. If what He said was not true and historical, then He is not our Savior, either. It is as plain as that. The "how" to the story is not recorded. Yet the fact of this miraculous act was recorded. We cannot nor dare say any more.

## Purpose

The fundamental purpose of the book of Jonah is not found in its missionary teaching. It is rather to show that Jonah being cast into the depths of the sea and yet brought up alive is an illustration of the death of the Messiah for sins not of His own, and of the Messiah's resurrection. Jonah was an Israelite and servant of the Lord, and his experience was brought about because of the sins of the nations (Nineveh). The Messiah was the Israelite and the true servant of the Lord whose death was brought about by the sins of the world. As we find in Matthew 12:39-41, the experience of Jonah has as its basic purpose to point forward to the experience of that One that "is greater than Jonah."

The ministry of Jonah also served to point out the stubborn and rebellious character of the Israelites. Many prophets had arisen and the nations had not repented but when Nineveh heard the words of one prophet, it repented in sackcloth and ashes.

### **Analysis**

**Chapter 1.** – Jonah’s Flight. “Tarshish,” v. 3, is thought to be Tartessus in Spain. Jonah was shooting for the farthest place from home.

**Chapter 2.** – Jonah’s prayer resembles many of the Psalms. He must have been used to praying in the Psalms. His return.

**Chapter 3.** – Jonah begins to preach. The people take him seriously.

**Chapter 4.** – Jonah’s disappointment. He had come not to seek their repentance but their doom. God deferred punishment. Compassion for children.

# THE BOOK OF MICAH

## Name

The book is named after the Prophet Micah, whose name appears in a longer form in Judges 17:1,4, "Micahyahu."

## History

Micah was a country preacher who lived in the days of Isaiah and Hosea, 749-697 B.C. He worked during the reigns of Jothan, Ahaz and Hezekiah. His home was about 20 miles south of Jerusalem in the town of Morasthite on the Palestinian border. He was preaching there at the same time that Isaiah was preaching in Jerusalem, and Hosea in Israel. Micah was a prophet of the common people and of country life; Isaiah preached to the court in the city of Jerusalem. His message was to both Israel and Judah, addressed primarily to their respective capitals, Samaria and Jerusalem. Its three main ideas were their sins; their destruction; and their restoration. Even though many of the ideas in the book are disconnected, they are still there. Interspersed between these thoughts are those concerning future glory, restoration, and denunciations by Micah of the social evils of the day, 2:2. Micah felt keenly about these social evils. He saw the unfair treatment of the poor by the rich. He felt that these sins cried up to heaven. No class was free from corrupting influences; princes, people and priests are all affected alike, 2:2,8,9,11. Micah makes them all smart under the lash. Micah wanted them to know that every cruel act to one's fellow man was an insult to God. God is offended by the conduct of the people and the rulers. In spite of the state of things, the people tried to carry on their religious observances. Micah shows the uselessness of all this in 6:7-8.

## Purpose

The purpose of this book which apparently, because of its fragmentary character, presents a summary of Micah's ministry. To set forth the nature of God's complaint against his people, to announce the certain punishment of sin and the sure salvation to come, which salvation will center around the appearance of the divine Messiah.

## Analysis

### I. Micah 1:1-2:13 – Threats against Israel and Judah.

- A. 1:1 – The superscription may be regarded as the work of Micah himself. If it is not, then it must be regarded as the work of a scribe working under divine inspiration.
- B. 1:2-16 – God's anger against Samaria and Judah. Micah lived to see his words come true, v. 6. In 734 B.C., the Assyrians carried away all of the northern Israel, and in 721 Samaria itself became a "heap." The places named in vv. 10-15 were in west Judah along the Philistine border, the home of Micah.

- C. 2:1-13 – The reasons for the divine displeasure; the brutality of the rulers, i.e., the treatment of the poor, seizing of their property and clothing...and on top of that, surrounding themselves with false prophets who justified their actions.

## II. Micah 3:1-5:15 – Judgment followed by restoration.

- A. 3:1-12 – The second denunciation of Micah culminating in the announcement of Jerusalem's destruction, v. 12.
- B. 4:1-5:1 – Establishment of God's glorious kingdom. 4:1-3 is the same, with slight variations as Isaiah 2:2-4. He announces the glorious rule of Israel with Zion at her head. I suppose that we could interpret this in two ways:
1. The first coming of Christ and what it did for the world.
  2. The second coming of Christ and what joy it will bring for those who have faith and trust in Him.
- C. The birth of the new King and His Kingdom – In verse 2 the future birth of the Messianic King is declared. His humanity is set forth in that He is to come forth out of Bethlehem, and His true deity, in that places of His goings forth are from old, from the days of eternity.

## III. Micah 6:1-7:20 – Punishment of the people and God's final mercy.

- A. 6:1-16 – Again, the sins of Micah's time; ingratitude to God; religious pretense; dishonesty; idolatry; punishment.
- B. 7:1-20 – Reproof and promise. Micah laments prevailing treachery, violence, and blood-thirstiness. Again, the promise of punishment. He closes with the vision of the future when God and His people shall be supreme, and the promise to Abraham be fully accomplished.

## Simple Essentials of Real Religion

The Old Testament gives us a definition of religion. What does God require of thee? Read Micah 6:8. How does this compare with man's present-day definition of "religion?"

Do justly – good ethics in all of life.

Love mercy – consideration for others, when justice has not been done.

Walk humbly with thy God – personal experience with God.

Paul would call this the "mind of Christ." LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU, WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS, Philippians 2:5. If our religion is only a great creed, grand cathedrals and elaborate rituals, then we have nothing. All must be filled with the mind of Christ. We must worship Him in Spirit and Truth, John 4:24. Christ wants us to have more than a beautiful creed even if it is spiritual and true. He wants the spirit of Christ to be lived out through our daily lives, and to be exhibited in all of our conduct, in our homes, and in our business. Can our religion stand this test?

## Questions on Micah

1. What does 2:11 suggest of the people's choice of a prophet?
2. Is 3:1-3 a literal or figurative expression, and what does it mean?
3. Where does Chapter 3, verse 4 happen?
4. What does 5:2 promise?
5. What kind of obedience does God expect from His covenant people? 6:8
6. When does life come to this, 7:5-6?
7. According to Micah, what does God look like? 7:18-19

# THE BOOK OF NAHUM

## Name

In the name “Nahum” it means “comfort for Judah.” You will notice that his name is in the word “Capernaum” which means village of Nahum. This may indicate that he was a resident or a founder of Capernaum, which was later made famous as the center of Jesus’ ministry.

## Author

Nahum, the writer of the book, was a native of Elkosh. In Assyria, near the ruins of Nineveh, there is a tomb which the natives point to as belonging to Nahum. Yet most authorities believe that Elkosh was in Galilee. Today it lies in ruins. If Nahum was a native of Galilee it is possible that he did see or hear about King Hezekiah and Isaiah, because they all lived at about the same time. Since the fall of Nineveh took place about 607 B.C., Nahum’s dates were about 663-607 B.C. No doubt when the cruel Assyrians invaded his country and carried away the ten tribes of Israel, he escaped into the southern kingdom of Judah. He probably took up his residence in Jerusalem, where seven years later he witnessed the siege of the city by Sennacherib that ended with the miraculous destruction of the Assyrian host. You remember, 185,000 perished in one night as II Kings 19:35 records. It may be that Nahum 1:2 refers to this. Shortly after this event, Nahum wrote his book.

## Theme of the Book

The theme of the book is the destruction of Nineveh, the city that Jonah warned. Nineveh is a culprit and God is sending Nahum to declare his righteous judgment on her. In judging Nineveh, we see God judging a sinning world. The book of Nahum was written about 150 years after the revival of Jonah’s day when the city of Nineveh was brought to repentance in “dust and ashes.” Mercy unheeded, finally brings judgment.

God sent Nahum to predict the final doom and complete overthrow of Nineveh and her empire. This empire had been built up by violence. The Assyrians were great warriors. They were out on raiding expeditions continually. They built their state on the loot of other people. They did everything to inspire terror. They said they did this in obedience to their god, Asshur. God was going to doom her to perish in a violent and extraordinary way.

Assyria had enjoyed a brilliant epoch of 300 years in which she was a worldwide empire. Nineveh was the capitol of this mighty empire. It was in 721 B.C. that she destroyed Israel and threatened Judah, but God was going to see that Assyria’s doom was final. The message of Nahum shows what God can do with a wicked and rebellious people. He will utterly destroy them. Nahum’s prophecy was not like Jonah’s – a prophecy to repentance, but of final doom.

## Vital Statistics

The city of Nineveh was founded shortly after the flood by Nimrod, Genesis 10:11 ff. It rose to world power about 900 B.C. By 765 B.C., God had sent Jonah to straighten out Nineveh...and it followed God's orders – for a time. Yet 150 years later, Nineveh had again completely fallen away...this is what prompted the prophecy of Nahum. At this time, greater Nineveh was about 30 miles long and 10 miles wide. It was protected by five walls and three canals, built from the labor of foreign captives. Jonah's mention of 120,000 babies, Jonah 4:11, suggests that there could have been over a million in population. The inner city of Nineveh was about three miles long and about a mile wide. It was protected with 100-foot high walls, broad enough at the top to hold four chariots driven abreast.

## Analysis

### I. Nahum 1:1-7 – The Judge

In the first chapter we see God, the holy Judge, sitting on the bench of the court of heaven judging the wicked city of Nineveh. The case is presented. This God is a just God. Therefore he must avenge all crimes. Study the prophet's vision of God in Nahum 1:2,3,7. Find the words that are used of Him as Judge: jealous, vengeful, wrathful, great in power, will not acquit the wicked, indignant. As Father: slow to anger, good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, knowing them that trust Him.

### II. Nahum 1:8-14 – The Verdict

A look at the verdict of Nineveh:

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| A. Condemned to utter destruction      | 1:8-9 |
| B. Captured while defenders were drunk | 1:10  |
| C. Name blotted out                    | 1:14  |
| D. God to dig her grave                | 1:14  |

### III. Nahum 2 and 3 – The Execution

The picture of the siege and fall of Nineveh, and the desolation which followed are described with graphic eloquence. God would make an end of her with an overrunning flood; her name would be utterly cut off, and He would dig her grave. The mustering of the armies around Nineveh, and the marshalling of the forces within the city are pictured in such a way that the prophet makes his hearers see all the horrid sights of the tragic scene. Outside the walls the Medes have gathered. Shields are brilliantly painted. Robes are of purple. Terrible spears glitter in the sun. Knives on their chariot wheels flash in the light. Inside the city pandemonium reigns. Too late, the king tries to rally his drunken nobles to defend their beloved city. But the Tigris has caused a flood which has washed away most of the wall which had seemed to be an impregnable bulwark. This aided their enemies.

## Nahum

So deep and effectively did God dig the graves of the Ninevites that every trace of its existence disappeared for ages and its sight was unknown. When Alexander the Great fought the battle of Arbela nearby in 331 B.C., he didn't know there had been a city close by. When Napoleon camped there, he too was not aware that once there was a great city there. As Nineveh then sowed, so she did reap...I wonder if this is any example for us?



# THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK

## Name

The book takes its name from the prophet, who we all assume was the author of his own book. In the Septuagint, his name appears as Ambakouk and in the Vulgate, Habacuc.

## Author

Little is known about this prophet of faith except that he asked questions and received answers. He, like many men today, could not reconcile his belief in a good and righteous God with the facts of life as he saw them. He was troubled with the eternal "why." Even today, a man of faith finds himself bewildered at the many things that are going on around him. We ask, "Why does God allow such awful crimes to go unchecked? Why doesn't God stop men in their mad rush, if He is all-powerful?"

The question "Why do the wicked prosper?" is discussed. It seems to contain a complaint to God that He should punish His own nation for their wickedness by a nation even more wicked, 1:13. We even see the prophet complaining of the lack of justice in God's management of the world. Why is God silent in times of disaster? 1:13.

Habakkuk, in all his difficulties, went to God in prayer and waited patiently for His answer, 2:1. He went on the watchtower and listened to God. It has been said that when Habakkuk looked at his circumstances, he was perplexed, 1:3, but when he waited for God and listened to Him, he sang, 3:18-19.

Habakkuk was a prophet, 1:1, but we find something else of interest about him. He was one of the Levitical choristers in the temple, 3:19, or helped in the arrangement of the services. We learn much about him as a thinker and a man of faith, from his own words. He was a contemporary of Jeremiah at home, and with Daniel in Babylon.

## History

The world empire of Assyria had fallen, just as Nahum had prophesied. Egypt and Babylon had then contended for the place of power. At the battle of Carchemish, 605 B.C., in which King Josiah was killed, the Babylonians were conquerors, and the great kingdoms of Babylon and Chaldea were united under Nebuchadnezzar. Habakkuk knew only too well that Judah must fall before this great rising power. But one question rose in his mind and troubled him greatly. Why should any nation as wicked as Babylon conquer a nation like Judah, which was less evil? It seemed to him that it was just a matter of evil triumphing over evil. What good would come of this? God had revealed to him His ultimate plan. Judah needed punishment. God was using Babylon to correct Judah, but Babylon's turn would come. Babylon would be utterly blotted out. As you will see, the book seems to be a dialogue between God and the prophet, which ends with a hymn in which can be found words of new confidence in the Lord.

## Analysis

### I. Habakkuk's Complaint – Chapter 1.

It is a complaint to God that his own nation should be destroyed for its wickedness, by a nation that is more wicked. Habakkuk could not see the justice in this. Yet, God replies in 1:5-11 that He has a purpose in the conquests of the Chaldean (Babylonian) armies.

### II. God's Answer – Chapter 2:4.

“Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by faith.” The thought is, that those who are proud, namely the Chaldeans, have not faith, and therefore were condemned. The only one that will last is the one who has faith. So there is presented a contrast between those who have faith and those who are puffed up with pride. It is a contrast that separates not only the Chaldeans and the elect of Israel, but all mankind. The fact that man is filled with pride is in itself an evidence of his doom. So it was with the Chaldeans; these people were being used by God but they were proud of their accomplishments; they would not, therefore, live. “The just shall live by faith” – the reoccurring theme of the Apostle Paul, and of Luther, during the period of the Reformation.

### III. Habakkuk's Song – Chapter 3.

In spite of the gloom that hovered above the heads of the children of Israel, in their impending doom, in spite of what Habakkuk saw in the very near future for them, there was a note of optimism. Not from the enemy, but from that assurance in 2:4, that the just would live by faith, in spite of their troubles and captivity. For God's people there was a glorious future – Habakkuk knew it – it was a long way off, but it was absolutely sure. So, Habakkuk utters a prayer of thanksgiving, culminating in the words: “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; YET WILL I REJOICE IN THE GOD OF MY SALVATION.” 3:17-18. An optimist of the first magnitude!

# THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

## Name and Authorship

Little is known of Zephaniah, the writer of this book. Two facts of his personal history appear in the first verse of the prophecy. We learn that very likely he was a prince of the royal house of Judah, being a descendant of Hezekiah. He was in a position to denounce the sins of the princes, for he himself was an aristocrat. He lived in the reign of the good king Josiah. His name means "hidden of Jehovah."

Zephaniah began his ministry as a prophet in the early days of the reign of Josiah, 641-610 BC. Fifty years had elapsed since the prophecy of Nahum. Three of Hezekiah's descendants had succeeded him (II Kings 20:21). Two wicked and idol-worshiping kings had preceded Josiah on the throne, and the land was overrun with evil practices of every kind. Social injustice and moral corruption was on every hand. The condition was as bad as it could be when Josiah, only sixteen years of age, undertook to promote religious revival. He became one of the most beloved kings of Judah. He took a hatchet and hewed down the altars and images. How the words of Zephaniah must have encouraged the reformers.

As you read the book, you will be appalled at its contents. There is nothing but denunciations, dire threats and wrath. One commentator says that the punishment and the chastisement is the "graver countenance of love," FOR WHOM THE LORD LOVETH HE CHASTENETH, AND SCOURGETH EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVETH," Hebrews 12:6. We see in all of this a proof of God's love. The book begins with sorrow but ends with singing. The first of the book is full of sadness and gloom, but the last contains one of the sweetest songs of love in the Old Testament.

## Purpose and Analysis

Zephaniah's purpose is to warn the nation of approaching doom. He depicts the day of wrath but also points forward to the coming of deliverance.

### I. The Day of the Lord – Zephaniah 1:1-2:3.

The general theme is set forth in 1:2, namely, that God will consume all things from off the land. The prophet then shows the specific application of this theme, referring it to Judah and to Jerusalem, and to all that is found there, man and beast, the whole system of idolatry, the royal seed; it will be utter destruction, 1:3-13. After this vivid description of the coming punishment, Zephaniah announces that the day of the Lord is near. This day is described in agonizing terms, 1:14-18. In 2:1-3 the Lord's mercy is set forth in the appeal to repent and seek the Lord, with which the prophet closes this section.

**II. Prophecies against the Heathen Nations, Zephaniah 2:14-15.**

Like many other prophets Zephaniah also turns his attention to the heathen or pagan nations in order to reprove them for their sins. Thus to leave them without plea when wrath comes and also to reveal to them the fact that the sovereign disposition of the destinies of the nations lies in the hands of the Lord, and that He will surely punish those who have mistreated His people.

**III. The Sin of Jerusalem and the Future Salvation – Zephaniah 3:1-20.**

In the first seven verses the prophet announces a woe upon Jerusalem and characterizes her sin. He then proceeds, vv. 8-20, to announce the coming deliverance. There will be a remnant of Israel, a pure remnant, and the daughter of Zion will sing, for the mighty Lord is in the midst and He will save.

# THE BOOK OF HAGGAI

## Name

The book is named after its author, Haggai, which means, "my feast." He probably was born in Babylon during the exile and returned to Palestine with the first exiles. It is quite possible that he had known Daniel in Babylon. What Haggai prophesied can be dated about 520 BC, the same period of time as the Chinese philosopher, Confucius.

## History

Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi are the last of the prophetic books. Each of these prophets belongs to the period after the exile. They prophesied to the Jews after they had returned to Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar had captured Jerusalem and had completely destroyed the temple. This had not brought the Jews to national repentance. In reading Ezra we find that when Cyrus, king of Persia, issued a decree permitting all the captives to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild their temple, that only about 50,000 returned. Most of these were priests and Levites, and the poorer among the people. Although the Jews increased in power and numbers, they never established their political independence. They were a subject people under Gentile rulers from this time on.

About sixteen years before, the Jews had returned to their own land under Zerubbabel and had begun to build the temple (Nehemiah 12). But their enthusiasm waned. They made no progress beyond laying the foundation. The Samaritans and their enemies were determined that Jerusalem should not be rebuilt (Ezra 4). This meant that the work lay unfinished for fifteen years. During these years each person became interested in building his own home. It was then that Haggai rose and gave his message. He encouraged the people to build the temple again. This time it was finished in four years. It seemed incredible that God's people should have waited so long to do the very thing they had come back to do.

## Analysis

### I. A Message of Rebuke – Haggai 1:1-11 – Month of September.

A poor handful of people return from captivity to rebuild the temple and restore the worship of Jehovah. It became a large task because they labored under the same old sins, idolatry and intermarrying with idolatrous neighbors. Few in number, and harassed by the enemy, they lost their spiritual strength. They turned to building personal homes, with which the Lord was not pleased. God sent punishment, poor crops, droughts and scanty trade to make them understand. Haggai's challenge to the people, his stern call to duty was an effective tonic. They began to rebuild, 1:12-15. How was it that God responded to their repentance, v. 13?

**II. A Message of Courage – Haggai 2:1-9 – October 21<sup>st</sup>, Haggai’s Second Appeal.**

As the people were building, a new discouragement seized them. The older ones, remembering the splendor of the temple of Solomon, were greatly disappointed in this temple. It did not measure up in any way, they thought. How inferior in size, and costliness of the stones. The smaller foundation was laid because of limited means. All these pessimists dampened the enthusiasm of the builders. But a word of cheer comes from Haggai, 2:7 and 2:9. Read these verses.

**III. Message of Assurance – Haggai 2:10-23 – December 23-24, Haggai’s 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Address.**

This message of cleansing and blessing was delivered three months after the temple was started. Haggai made the people see their impurity. He made them see their sinfulness. He showed why their prayers were not answered and told them that if they would renew their zeal, they would find that God would bless them. Even though they heard the blessing they couldn’t see God working fast enough. Now, Haggai said, God was working for them and they would see the difference. “From this day will I bless you,” 2:18-19. God begins when we begin.

# THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

## Name

The name of the book is derived from the prophet himself, Zekar-yah. It appears in the Septuagint as Zacharias and thus also in the Vulgate.

## History

Zechariah, a young prophet who had stood alongside the aged prophet, possibly spoke his opening message in 1:1-6 between Haggai's second and third message, between vv. 9-10 of Haggai 2, when work on the temple was just a little more than a month along. His work, as it would seem, began with strengthening the children of Israel as they built the temple and warning them not to disappoint God as their fathers had done. He pictured God's love and care for His people. He quickened their hopes by painting in glowing colors the time of perpetual blessing that was coming to Israel in the far off ages.

Zechariah, like Haggai, was a prophet to the remnant of the Jews who returned from Babylon after the 70 years of captivity. The Jews, once a powerful nation as God had planned them to be, were now a pitiful and insignificant remnant, dwelling in their promised land only because of the courtesy of a foreign ruler. Both Haggai and Zechariah tried to tell the people that it would not always be so. One day the Messiah would come and release them from the bondage of sin and death through the promises of His Word. Then they would have peace, not between nations and rulers, but peace with God through the Messiah, as we find recorded in John 8:31-32.

Zechariah was a priest, possibly identified with the Zechariah of Nehemiah 12:16, who was born in Babylon. His name means "Jehovah remembers." He was a poet, while Haggai was a plain, practical preacher. Zechariah's keen enthusiasm for the rebuilding of the temple kept the people at the task of finishing the work. Serious crop failures and depressions among the people had made them despondent during Haggai's time. They needed a new voice...Zechariah provided that voice. Zechariah's voice does not condemn the people, but presents to them rather the presence of God to strengthen and help them, when he says, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts....." 4:6-10.

## Purpose

In reading the book of Zechariah, one has the tendency to become confused with all the comparisons, representations and symbols and therefore lose what the prophet, Zechariah, through inspiration was trying to convey. I believe that his purpose was to strengthen the weakened nation of Judah and its governor, Zerubbabel, with the many promises of the Messiah. If you will note, Zechariah foretells the Savior more than any other prophet, except Isaiah:

Christ the Branch	3:8
Christ my Servant	3:8
Christ's entry in Jerusalem on a colt	9:9

Christ the Good Shepherd	9:16, 11:11
Christ the Smitten Shepherd	13:7
Christ betrayed for 30 pieces of silver	11:12,13
Christ's hands pierced	12:10
Christ's people saved	12:10, 13:1
Christ wounded in His friend's house	13:6
Christ's coming on the Mt. of Olives	14:3-8
Christ's return in Judgment	14

## Analysis

### I. Zechariah 1:1-16 – INTRODUCTION

In the 8<sup>th</sup> month of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Darius the Word of the Lord was made known to Zechariah, who begins the message with a command to repent and not to act as sinful ancestors of the nation had done.

### II. Zechariah 1:6-6:16 – THE VISIONS OF THE NIGHT

- A. 1:7-17 – INTRODUCTORY VISION. Through God's messengers he observes the events on the earth. The man upon the red horse is the Angel of the Lord, and the riders are the Lord's servants who have ridden through the earth to do His bidding. The earth is found to be peaceful and quiet but Judah still suffers from the effects of God's indignation.
- B. 1:18-21 – FIRST VISION. The four horns represent the enemies of the Kingdom of God, and the smiths are to break them into pieces. These four horns are the same as spoken about in Daniel 7:7-8.
- C. SECOND VISION – The Measuring Line. The coming prosperity of Jerusalem is seen. The city walled in by the presence of God is great in extent and blessed by His favor.
- D. 3:1-10 – THE THIRD VISION. The prophet sees the High Priest of the temple clothed in dirty garments (symbolical of sin) and praying for mercy. Satan sees the scene with jealous eye.
- E. 4:1-14 – THE FOURTH VISION. The candlestick (the people of God) and the olive trees (the Spirit). Whatever obstacles the people must overcome in building the temple will be done by the Spirit of God.
- F. THE FIFTH VISION. The Flying Roll is a symbol of divine judgment on the people for sin.
- G. 5:5-11 – THE SIXTH VISION. Israel will fill up the measure (ephah) of its sins and the Lord will restrain (lead) the course of sin in the nation.
- H. 6:1-8 – SEVENTH VISION. Winds of heaven serve as divine judgments.
- I. 6:9-15 – EIGHTH VISION. A general prophecy of restoration under Christ.



**III. Zechariah 7:1-8:23 – The Question of Fasting**

Should the day of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple be set aside as a day of fasting? The answer is that the Lord delights in obedience rather than in fasting. God will now turn toward His people with abundance of blessing if they will but walk in His ways.

**IV. Zechariah 9:1-14:21 – Future of the World Powers and God's Kingdom.**

- A. 9:1-10:12. Zion shall be delivered and will triumph over the heathen world. This shall be accomplished through her King, the Messiah.
- B. 11:1-17. The Good and foolish Shepherd.
- C. 12:1-13:6. A further picture of Israel's turning unto the Lord.
- D. 13:7-14:21. A judgment to purify Israel, and the future glory of Jerusalem.

# THE BOOK OF MALACHI

## Name

The book is named after its author, Mal'achi. The Septuagint regards the word as a common noun, not a proper name, and translates, "The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by the hand of the messenger," although it does have the title "Malchias." Even if Malachi is a proper name, there does seem to be a connection between it and "my messenger," 3:1.

## Author

The entire book is a unit, the work of one author. Of the life of Malachi, however, nothing is known, although there are certain indications in the book itself which enable one to determine the approximate date of the author. For we find in 1:7-10 and 3:8 that the temple had been completed and sacrifices offered. We find in 1:8 that a Persian governor was ruling in Jerusalem. This consideration shows that the prophecy is after Haggai and Zechariah, possibly as much as 100 years after, or about 450-400 BC.

The early zeal connected with the building of the temple seems now to have died out and the religious laxities and abuses which Malachi condemns are the same as those present under Ezra and Nehemiah. As 2:10-12 show, mixed marriages were present, the payment of tithes had been neglected and blemished sacrifices had been offered.

So the Jews, favored of God above all nations, discouraged by their weakness, and chained to their sins, had settled down in a lethargic state of mind to await the coming of the promised Messiah. Malachi promised them that the Messiah would come but that it would mean judgment for such as they.

## Understanding Malachi

We have finally come to the last book of the Old Testament. It sums up much of the history of the Old Testament. Martin Luther called John 3:16 "The Little Gospel." In the same way we may speak of Malachi as the "Little Old Testament." Malachi is the bridge between the Old and New Testaments. To show this, read 3:1. Who is "My Messenger?" Read John 1:23 and Luke 3:3,4. A silence of 400 years lies between the voice of Malachi and the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "prepare ye the way of the Lord."

The Old Testament closes with the word "curse." The New Testament closes with blessing, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

By this time a hundred years or more had passed since the Jews returned to Jerusalem after the captivity in Babylon. Malachi is the last prophet to speak to Israel in her own land. Israel here means all the remnant of Israel and Judah that remained after exile. The first enthusiasm after the return from Babylon had spent itself. Following a period of revival (Nehemiah 10:28-39) the people had become cold religiously and lax morally. The prophet, Malachi, came as a reformer

but he encourages while he rebukes. He dealt with a people perplexed, with spirits failing, whose faith in God seemed to be one in danger of collapse. They seemed to almost have become hostile to Jehovah. Like John, the forerunner of Christ, Malachi was just a voice in the wilderness.

### Analysis

#### I. Malachi 1:1-2:9 – The Sins of the Priests.

Not only were the people to fault for their neglectfulness but also the priests who became irreverent and neglectful. Malachi 1:11-12, God says, “WHERE IS MINE HOUR?...O PRIESTS THAT DESPISE MY NAME.” The prophet rebukes these careless priests for offering worthless animals in sacrifice to God, that they would not offer to the governor. They had completely lost sight of their calling and deserved the disdain brought upon them. They refused to work except for money. God’s condemnation begins with the rulers (Malachi 2:1-9). Shouldn’t the same be true today?

#### II. Malachi 2:10-3:18 – The Sins of the People.

What would you think of a person who deliberately held something before his eyes and then complained that he could see nothing? What would you suggest might solve the difficulty? Well, this is what Malachi had to do. The Jews declared that Jehovah did not love them as He said (1:2). They could not see that this love had been anything special to them.

Another result of this laxity of loyalty to God was in the growing prevalence of social sins, Malachi 3:5. Malachi 3:7 reveals the religious indifference and skepticism of the people. Amid all the hypocrisy of the day there were still those in the Jewish community who feared and remained faithful to God. We find this in 3:16. Malachi longed to develop a strong body of enthusiastic believers who could influence his people’s future. It is interesting to note that God bent His ear to hear His people speak about Him, 3:16. Notice the social sins:

Spiritless Routine Worship	1:6-8
Evil Associations	2:10-12
Questioning God’s Justice	2:17-3:6
Robbing God	3:7-12
Impatient in Waiting	3:17-4:3

These were the sins that Malachi rebuked. Are they ours too? Suppose we do find some of these sins in our daily lives. What are we to do? Confess them to God. Israel was troubled about the result of her confession. Malachi had to encourage the people by assuring them of God’s wonderful love and giving them the beautiful promise in 3:7. Mark it in your Bible!

#### III. Malachi 3:4 – Coming Things.

Now the Lord promises, through the prophet, that He will send His messenger to prepare the way before Him, and then the Messiah will come. But who may abide the day of His

coming, for His coming will purge the nation, 3:1-6? If the people wish to delight in the blessing of the Lord, they must be obedient to the laws which He has revealed, 3:7-12. However, when the day of the Lord comes, there will be a distinction between the righteous and the wicked, 3:13-4:3. The conclusion therefore is that the nation should be obedient to the law of Moses and that Elijah will come before the appearance of the great and terrible day of the Lord, 4:4-6. Yes, and for those who believe, the Son of Righteousness will come with healing in His wings.

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

As far as we can determine there were about 400 years from the last Biblical recorded history of the Old Testament to the birth of Christ. Just exactly why this was a period of "silence" with regard to church history, prophecy and fulfillment, no one is quite sure. So in order to get some factual history of this time we have to turn away from the Scripture to the report of secular historians.

The first period of that 400 years is referred to as the PERSIAN PERIOD, which lasted about 430-332 BC. For about 200 years, Persia was a world power. For the most part, the first 100 years was a comparative joy for the Jewish people. They lived in good surroundings with comparative freedom. The last of these 100 years has been blocked from Jewish history.

The second period was called the GREEK PERIOD. It lasted from about 331-167 BC. Up to this point in history, all of the world powers had been localized in Asia and Africa. The historical beginning of the Greek Empire can be traced back to about the time of the Trojan War, which was contemporaneous with the era of David and Solomon. The brilliant era of Socrates, the great philosopher, was about the same time as that of Ezra and Nehemiah. After years of semi-glorification, Greece rose to world power and respect under Alexander the Great (336 BC) who at the age of 20 took command of the Greek army and swept eastward over the lands that had been under the dominion of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon and Persia. By 331 BC the whole world lay at his feet. When he invaded Palestine in 332, he showed great kindness to the Jews. He even offered them immunities in Alexandria, while establishing Greek cities, culture and language in all the conquered territories. Yet after a brief reign, he died in 323 BC.

At this time, his empire fell to his four generals, for he had no heirs to his throne. Egypt, and later Palestine, went to his general, Ptolemy. Great numbers of Jews at this time settled in Egypt, as well as in other centers of culture, spreading everywhere the knowledge of their God and the hope of the Messiah.

It was during this time, about 285 BC, that the Old Testament was translated into Greek. This version of the Scriptures is called the "Septuagint," meaning 70, because 70 noted Hebrew scholars did this great work. You will find it referred to by Roman numerals LXX.

During the tail end of the Greek domination of history, there arose the SYRIAN KINGDOM, from about 175-164, under the violent and cursed leadership of one of those appointed generals of Alexander, Antiochus Epiphanes. He believed that the Jews were to be exterminated, and set out to do it. He "devastated Jerusalem, 168 BC, defiled the Temple, offered a sow on its altar, erected an altar to Jupiter, prohibited Temple worship, forbade circumcision on pain of death, destroyed all copies of the Scripture that could be found, and slaughtered everyone discovered in possession of such copies. He sold thousands of Jewish families into slavery, and resorted to every conceivable torture to force the Jews to renounce their religion." *Halley*, 355. Many Jews, however, refused, and a period of martyrdom began.

The cruelties of this terrible king, Antiochus, brought about the revolt of the Maccabees under the leadership of Mattathias. This was referred to as the PERIOD OF INDEPENDENCE, 167-163 BC. Aroused by the patriotism and religious ardor of Mattathias, a group of patriotic Jews gathered about him and began an insurrection that spread rapidly. When he died, his son, Judas took his place. In an attempt to crush this rebellion under the Maccabees, Antiochus was defeated in three deadly conflicts. The cause of Judas had seemed hopeless, mainly because he was outnumbered 10 to 1 and on top of that, his few followers were untrained and without equipment. But this band of ragged but loyal Jews, inspired by an undying faith in God, came out victorious. How does this compare with the six-day war in 1968? Fighting for their land of Palestine today? Or what does it mean about the history of the Jews from then to the present time?

The ROMAN PERIOD, 63 BC to the time of Christ. In 63 BC. Rome gained possession of Palestine under Pompeii. Antipater, an Idumean (Edomite) was appointed ruler of Judea. He was succeeded by his son, Herod the Great, who was king from 37 to 3 BC. This was Herod that ruled Judah when Christ was born.

During the period of 400 years between the words of Nehemiah to the coming of Christ, other important historical facts were established. Josephus, the historian, tells us that already at the time of Ezra, the CANON of the Bible was established...in other words, which books of the Old Testament were fixed as those inspired by God.

Books written or compiled during this period were the APOCRYPHA. These books were added to the Septuagint and then to the Latin Vulgate, Translation of Jerome. Josephus rejected them as Scripture because the Jews never accepted them, and because Christ never quoted from them. The Roman Catholic Church uses these books to prove many of the doctrines they believe to be true. For instance the doctrine of purgatory. The proof for such a place can be found in II Maccabees.

Modern theologians today contend that the BOOKS OF ENOCH (a group of fragments of various unknown authors, containing revelations reputed to have been given to Enoch and Noah), speaking about the Messiah, tell us about the lost years of Jesus to the extent that it can be proved that he was not the true Messiah. *The Lost Years of Jesus Revealed* by Rev. Dr. Francis Potter.

Just "why" the 400 years between the Old and New Testaments and the years between Christ's 13<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> year are not revealed to us in the Word, no one will ever know on this earth. Possibly because they were of no spiritual significance for us. Yet the Old Testament revealed the Promised Messiah, and the New Testament spoke of this fulfillment in Christ. That is all we need know for our salvation. What is important now, is that we confine ourselves to that revealed Word....read, study and pray about it. For in that Word is the doctrine of salvation in Christ alone.

## OLD TESTAMENT LIFE AND CULTURE

It is amazing that the world should owe so much to so small a part of it. Yet it does. The little country of Palestine, which is only 150 miles long by 50 miles wide, is the cradle of Christianity. Even more astonishing than its size is its diversified topography. From Jerusalem to Jericho, a distance of 15 miles, there is a drop of 3000 feet. At the north end of the Jordan valley are Mt. Lebanon (6000 ft.) and Mt. Herman (9000 ft.) perennially covered with snow. At the southern end the Jordan River flows into the Dead Sea, 1275 ft. below the Mediterranean Sea, perennially thick with stifling heat. Thus we readily see that Palestine was a land of contrasts.

Palestine is by no means a farmer's paradise. The only stable products of the land have been the olive and the vine. The valleys and the coastal plain are the only places where grain is raised. The early Hebrews were mainly keepers of sheep and goats. The Prophet Amos and King David were both taken "from following the flock."

A typical Old Testament city looked much like a medieval castle set on a hill. The Hebrews no doubt borrowed their architecture from the Canaanites for there is nothing distinctive about it. Indeed, it was the Canaanite architecture that struck terror into the hearts of these semi-nomadic people. In Deuteronomy 1:28 we read: "The people are greater and taller than we; the cities are great and fortified up to heaven." (RSV)

The Hebrews did not build as magnificent cities as the Canaanites though. Canaanite cities were built by slave labor. The Hebrews still remembered Egypt. They were lovers of freedom. Men of the desert will not tolerate slaves. They much prefer democracy to vast urban pleasantries. For this reason, no doubt, Hebrew cities were small: Jerusalem -13 acres; Megiddo - 13 acres; Debir - 7-1/2 acres (640 acres to a square mile). Population, too, was small; e.g. recent archeological excavations show that Debir had about 1000 people, occupying 150 to 250 homes.

Sites for Old Testament cities were chosen for their strategic importance in warfare. Military considerations determined the general locality, but water supply determined the particular spot. Later, they learned to line cisterns with lime plaster, which was waterproof. This enabled them to collect and store water, so permitting them to build cities away from water sites, as for example, Lachish. The cisterns were dug in the ground or out of solid rock. Much of the water came from the roofs and streets. The filth it took with it is better not mentioned.

The most impressive part of an Israelite city was the fortified gate. The gate was the hub around which the whole life of the city revolved – the place where you met friends, gossiped and caught up with the news. Sacredness was also associated with the gate, for after the Exile when Nehemiah rebuilt Jerusalem, the priests "purified the people, and the gates." Government also was akin to the gate. It was the seat of the local government and justice, for it was the only place large enough for the populace to assemble: "Then the king arose, and took his seat in the gate...and all the people came before the king," II Samuel 19:8 (RSV). Cf. Job 29:7-10, 21ff, Ruth 4. It was here at the gate that you found beggars, peddlers, laborers to be hired, tradesmen, shoppers and the scribe to write your letters. In larger cities there were small shops within the

city walls called bazaars, see Jeremiah 37:21. One can only begin to imagine the noise in such a place.

We cannot over-emphasize the family in Hebrew society. During the semi-nomadic period of Israel's existence the family and clan were the most important units in the social structure. The clan protected against the desert warriors called Habiru. As more and more the Israelites became farmers and lived in cities the emphasis shifted more and more to the family.

We must rely solely on our imaginations though as to what incidents might arise in a home where there were two wives at the same time and one half of the children were step-brothers and step-sisters to the other half.

The stability of the family had its foundation on the absolute authority of the father. He was in every sense a king in his own house. The family was his property and subject to his sovereign will. He could sell his daughters into slavery and put disobedient children to death. His wife could be divorced without explanation and without the responsibility of maintenance. His sons, however, could not be sold, but he did arrange their marriages.

An Israelite wife could not leave her husband. She was her husband's property as were the sheep and goats. She might find herself playing second fiddle to another woman who became her husband's wife without her having been informed. A woman could not inherit property, so the Old Testament writers associate widowhood with the orphans and the poor. It seems though that life for a woman was not as bad as it could have been. She was much better off than her contemporaries, and even more so than many women of the East today. A woman worked hard, but her place was not that of an unpaid domestic servant. She was the mother of the sons of the house and this status won for her privileges commensurate with its responsibilities.

Many, if not most, men had two wives (Deuteronomy 21:15). A man of great affluence would have more. However, the Israelite who was loyal to the religion of Moses married only one wife, which was the ideal advocated by the prophets. The poor man likewise had only one wife, for he could not make the necessary payment to the father for another wife. The payment might be cash, gifts, or, as in the case of Jacob, it could be "worked off," as when Jacob served Laban 14 years for Rachel and Leah.

An Israelite boy married young. The eminent Professor Koehler has calculated that on the average a man was a father at 19, a grandfather at 38 and a great-grandfather at 57.

From the moment of formal betrothal, the young couple were married and not simply engaged. There was, however, sometimes an interval before they began to live together. The actual wedding consisted only in the bridegroom bringing the bride to his own home. This was done in procession followed by a feast with friends that lasted up to a week or even a fortnight (Judges 14:12).

The average Hebrew family lived in a one-room home. They lived, worked, ate, and slept in the same room, which was shared for some part of the year by one or two sheep and goats. In the winter (rainy season), it was ill lit and suffocating (no chimneys for the fire); in the summer, it



was infested with insects. The house itself was made of mud and leaked when it rained hard; hence the proverb likening the difficulty of keeping water out with the difficulty of controlling a nagging wife:

“A continual dripping on a rainy day and a contentious woman are alike” (Proverbs 27:15).

The roof was made of brushwood overlaid with earth and clay. A small roller was kept on the roof so that it could be rolled after every rain. The roof was indeed flimsy, cf. Palsied Man, Mark 2:4.

Windows were few and small. The summer sun was regarded as a greater menace than the winter rain. As there was no glass, and since the windows had to serve as vents for the fire, they were covered with lattice or shutters. The lighting was a simple oil lamp, made of a saucer with a lip, pinched between the potter's thumb and forefinger, on which rested the wick. The lamp was always left burning so that there would be some form of lighter (matches had not yet been invented).

Going to bed must have been a very delicate operation. Just imagine the stuffiness, snoring (animals as well as humans) and the yelling of babies. Then, to top it all, one slept on the earthen floor covered by the cloak worn during the day (Exodus 22:27).

Meals were eaten squatted on the floor with a mat for a table in front of you. Tables and chairs were known but they were luxuries only the rich could afford. The woman at Shunem was pampering an honored guest (Elisha) when she “put there for him a bed, a table, a chair and a lamp, II Kings 4:10.

The roof of the house was the one luxury even of the poor. Here one could take fresh air and say his prayers. Of course, it did provide socially as well for here neighbors carried on their conversations. When Matthew 10:27 speaks of proclaiming on the housetop this is a public proclamation. Jeremiah 19:13 speaks of pagan altars also being on the roof. The roof also was the family wash-line, as well as the place to dry figs, flax, etc. When we consider how much the roof was used it is not at all amazing why in Deuteronomy 22:8 the law was given: “When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring the guilt of blood upon your house, if any one fall from it.”

Children were the desire of every married couple: “Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons of one's youth, happy is the man who has his quiver full of them” (Psalm 127:4). Sons were especially meant, for the son could help with the work and perpetuate the family name. So important was the maintenance of the family that the “Levirate Law” was given in Deuteronomy 25:5-10. Daughters were by no means despised though.

Education, in terms of the twentieth century, hardly existed in ancient Israel. (The synagogue did not come into existence until the Babylonian Exile.) There were scores of jobs to be done: fields, vineyards, shepherding. Youth was short. A Hebrew lad matured very early.

Between the Exodus (1250 BC) and the Exile (586 BC) Israelite industry (if we may call it that) developed. Trade guilds were started and pattern goods were being primitively mass-produced. Mining and construction work was well under way in the reign of Solomon. Slavery was already provoking criticism from the religious leaders.

The chief textile industry was in wool. Of course, much of the spinning was still done in the home on a simple hand spindle (Proverbs 31:19 and Judges 16:13), for the spinning wheel was not invented until the 16<sup>th</sup> century AD. The weaving then took place on either a horizontal or vertical loom.

The art of metal work is still shrouded in mystery. The Old Testament describes the work of a minor in Job 28:1-11, but it never describes a smith at work. We do know, however, that he worked with gold, silver and copper. He could also hammer metal into sheets, solder, weld and polish.

In the last twenty years archeologists have brought forth a wealth of knowledge of the metal industry which flourished in the desert region of Arabia. The center of this industry was Ezion-geber, King Solomon's naval base on the Red Sea. This industrial site is the largest ever discovered in the Near East. Here Solomon traded copper and iron for gold.

These discoveries help us to explain where Solomon's great wealth came from for his fabulous Jerusalem. It explains why the kings of Israel were interested in retaining the Edom region. It bears out Deuteronomy 8:9: "a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper."

The Israelite conquest of Palestine must have coincided with the transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age, for we are told in Judges 1:19 that Judah "took possession of the hill country, but he could not drive out the inhabitants of the plain because they had chariots of iron." These iron chariots gave the Canaanites military supremacy in the plains. Later, during Samuel's time, it was the Philistines who held a monopoly on the iron production and carefully guarded its technical secrets.

So it was also a decisive economic victory when Saul and Jonathan defeated the Philistines at Michmash. I Samuel 13:19-22: "Now there was no smith to be found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines said, 'Lest the Hebrews make themselves swords or spears;' but every one of the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen his plowshare, his mattock, his axe, or his sickle; and the charge was a pin for the plowshares and for the mattocks, and a third of a shekel for sharpening the axes and for setting the goads. So on the day of the battle there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people with Saul and Jonathan; but Saul and Jonathan his son had them."

Gold and silver were not mined in Palestine but were imported on a large scale. Silver was used as a medium of exchange and gold was used for ornamentation.

Pottery work was of the connoisseur type before the Israelites came to Palestine. After their arrival this art fell into evil days. The Israelites were a simple folk more interested in the practical side of life than aesthetic side.

Once the Israelites entered Palestine they learned the art of farming no doubt from the Canaanites. There were few Israelites who were not connected with the soil. Many were the people who daily left the towns to work in the fields. For this reason, the psalmist speaks of "going out" and "coming in" in that order. Farming became the occupation of most Hebrews, and so it was that seedtime and harvest divided the Hebrew calendar. The religious calendar was also influenced by the farmer's year and its three most ancient feasts were associated with the harvest of barley, wheat, and summer fruits.

When Israelites first entered Palestine, her people exchanged the community life of the tribe and clan for the kind of existence in which private property assumed a new importance. Grazing land was held in common but not so the cultivated land. This land was parceled out into small farms, which were passed down from generation to generation. Soon, however, a wealthy class came into existence, which tried to buy out the small property owners and turn the small farmers into huge estates. It was to this unscrupulous society that Micah referred, when he denounced those who "covet fields and seize them; and houses, and take them away; they oppress a man his house; a man and his inheritance: (2:2). The story of Naboth's vineyard (I Kings 21:1-16) reflects the struggle of a small farmer against a ruthless man of affluence.

The farmer lived from hand to mouth. He grew mostly what he needed for food: barley and wheat for bread, grapes for wine and raisins, and olives for oil.

The Israelites by no means abandoned their flocks and herds. They farmed and bred cattle. The Old Testament word "cattle" was all-inclusive: sheep, goats, oxen and asses. Horses were reserved for the chariot divisions of the army, and we have little idea as to when camels were domesticated, so the ass was the poor man's beast of burden for a while anyway.

The Israelites before the days of Jesus were poor fishermen. In fact, the Hebrew word for fish means anything within the genus from a minnow to a whale. They were too distant from the Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee lay much to the north to be of use to the early settlers of Palestine.

The Old Testament is notorious for war. From Israel's entrance into Palestine until her crushing defeat under Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Exile, she was always being entangled in a war or war alliance. In the early days the clansmen themselves fought their own battles. Later on, under the monarchy, a standing army was the main defense of the nation. Military service was a religious obligation for all male adults over the age of twenty.

Saul gathered valiant men for a personal bodyguard (I Samuel 14:52). This became the nucleus for a regular army. David had his guerrilla forces before he ascended the throne. It was Solomon though who really established the regular army. The Old Testament historian tells us: "And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in

Jerusalem” (I Kings 10:26). See also: Amos 5:3; II Chronicles 26:11; compare II Kings 25:19; Deuteronomy 20:5-8.

The main division of the army would be the chariotry, the cavalry, and the infantry. This we deduce by archeological discoveries concerning the Assyrian army. The Israelite army probably did not have a cavalry until the eighth century BC. The offer of horses to Hezekiah (701 BC) by the Assyrians was in mockery: “Come now, make a wager with my master the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to set riders upon them” (II Kings 18:23). The frequent references to “horsemen” (e.g. II Kings 13:7) is best understood as referring to horses used in chariots.

The backbone of the army was the infantry. They alone could fight in the mountains. No doubt this is what is in mind when the Syrians referred to the God of Israel as “gods of the hills” (I Kings 20:18). An infantryman’s uniform consisted of bronze helmet, coat-of-mail (leather with metal scales), bronze greaves worn on the legs, and leather sandals. The principal weapons were a sword, a spear, and a lance. Swords were long and short, single and double-edged and were worn in a sheath at the left side (unless, like Ehud, a man were left-handed – Judges 3:16). A spear consisted of a bronze or iron head connected to a wooden shaft and were flung at the enemy (I Samuel 18:11). The lance was lighter and shorter than the spear and used for hand to hand combat. Slings were also dangerous weapons (consider David and Goliath, I Samuel 17). Cf. Judges 20:16 and II Kings 3:25-27. Bows and arrows were also very important.

The battle was always inaugurated by a solemn act of sacrifice. Cf. I Kings 8:44 ff. The intercessions made on such an occasion may be sampled by reading Psalm 20, which is a liturgical prayer for the king before entering upon battle. Solely the prophet (I Kings 22) or an oracle determines the moment and circumstances of the battle. By this means the will of God was discovered. Battles were usually made in the spring when food was plentiful. “In the spring of the year, the time when kings go forth to battle” (II Samuel 11:1). Cf. II Kings 18:17-37 to see that propaganda is certainly not new in warfare. The cruelty of torture is too ghastly to speak of.

The government of Israel expanded in these seven centuries from that of a tribe to a highly centralized government under an absolute monarch. Saul was plowing in the fields when he was called to be king. His court was conducted under a tamarisk tree. Solomon, however, was born in purple. He had a beautiful palace and temple in his capital.

The coronation service of the king assured his sanctity and set him apart from his fellow countrymen. His crown was more like a miter and characterized his office as essentially religious. (The coronation of an English monarch still refers to the anointing of Solomon with holy oil by Zadok the priest.)

# THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

## A Synoptic Gospel

The term “synoptic” comes from the Greek word “sunopticos” and means “seeing the whole together, taking a comprehensive view.” But as applied to the Gospels, the word has come to mean affording, presenting, or taking the same or a common view. We call the first three Gospels in our English versions the “Synoptic Gospels” because they present the same general view of the life, death, resurrection and teaching of our Lord. The fourth Gospel does not contradict the Synoptic Gospels; it merely surveys the life and work of Christ from a different standpoint.

## Authorship

The early church unanimously ascribed this Gospel to the Apostle Matthew. Papias, a historian of the second century, says, “Matthew composed the Logia in the Hebrew tongue, and each interpreted them as he was able.” (In the four places in the New Testament where the word “logia” is used, it means “oracles,” meaning those words that God spoke to man.) Irenaeus (about the 4<sup>th</sup> century) said, “Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect.” Origin of Alexandria, about the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century, assigned the Gospel to Matthew. Present day historians say that what these men say about the Gospel of Matthew and its author “may be accepted as representing a uniform 2<sup>nd</sup> century tradition.”

Matthew was not conspicuous among the apostles, and it would be strange for tradition to assign the Gospel to him if he did not write it. But we can see how well he fit the task. As a tax collector, probably under Herod Antipas, he had the standing of a civil servant and would need to know not only his native Aramaic, but also the Greek spoken in Galilee. His ready acceptance of Jesus’ invitation shows that he must have cherished the Jewish expectancy of the Messiah. If we note that he either quotes or alludes to the Old Testament more frequently than any of the other evangelists, that he quotes from both the Hebrew and the Septuagint, that he makes use of Hebrew parallelism, that he speaks much of the “kingdom of heaven,” perhaps in allusion to the prophecies of Daniel, we feel impressed that this Gospel was written by a patriotic Christian Jew.

## Occasion and Date

The exact occasion or reason for the writing of the Gospel of Matthew is not known. But knowing the time and the situation that surrounded Matthew, we find that not only Matthew, but each Gospel writer was confronted with a definite need; that he formed a definite purpose for the Gospel, and that he selected his materials under the guidance of the Holy Spirit with that object in view. The purpose and need, we believe, was to bring the message of God’s salvation in Christ to all the world. Well now, how about the date of the writing of the Gospel?

Since none of the Synoptic writers, not even the Greek Matthew, report the fall of Jerusalem (76 AD) and the Temple, but speak of these events as still in the future, they must have been written

before this tragedy or long after it. We assumed, then, that they must have been written before 70 AD. Furthermore, since Acts is also silent with regard to these catastrophes, it too must have been written before 70 AD. Since Luke's Gospel is earlier than the Book of Acts, and Matthew undoubtedly is earlier than Luke, we believe that Matthew must have prepared his Greek Gospel shortly after he wrote his Aramaic text. We therefore date the Greek Matthew, about 50 AD.

### **Points and Peculiarities**

- I. Matthew is the Gospel dealing with the King and the Kingdom. In Greek the term "kingdom of heaven" occurs 33 times and the term "Kingdom of God" occurs four times. Jesus is called the "Son of David" nine times (three times in Mark, three times in Luke, never in John). Matthew either quotes from or alludes to the Old Testament 65 times; often using the Hebrew Old Testament and sometimes the Greek Septuagint.
- II. The words "righteous" and righteousness" occur more often in Matthew than in the three other Gospels combined.
- III. Matthew is the only Gospel in which the word "church" occurs. It appears three times in 18:18 and twice in 18:17.
- IV. Matthew has six great addresses. The Sermon on the Mount (chap. 5-7); the address to the Twelve (chap. 10); the Seven Great Parables of the Kingdom (chap. 13); the discourse on humility, stumbling blocks and forgiveness (chap. 18); the denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees (chap. 23); and the Olivet Discourse (chap. 24-25).
- V. There are 15 parables and 20 miracles in Matthew. Of these, ten parables and three miracles are peculiar to this Gospel.
- VI. Matthew alone tells of Judas' repentance (27:3-10); of the Jews' request that Christ's blood be on them and their children (27:25); of the sealing of the stone, the setting of the guard, and the fabrication of the story that the disciples came and stole the body while the guard slept (27:62-66); and the rising of many saints after our Lord's resurrection (27:51-52).

### **Purpose and Plan**

Matthew wrote the Gospel to encourage and confirm the persecuted Jewish Christians in their faith, to confute their opponents, and to prove to both that the Gospel was not in contradiction of the teachings of the Old Testament, but rather a fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham and David. It is evident that under the circumstances the Jewish Christians needed a clear proof of the nature of Christ's person and Mission, and a refutation of the objections of unbelieving Jews. Matthew undertakes to do this in his well-arranged Gospel.

How does he set out to achieve this purpose? By submitting proof that Jesus in His person is the divine-human Messiah; that His words and works are those predicted of the Messiah; that the nation through its leaders slew Him; that His death was a Ransom for many; that he has rejected the nation for the time being; that the "kingdom" will assume a new form during the time of the

nation's rejection; that He will build His church during this time; that His followers are commissioned to carry this Gospel to all nations; and that Christ will return to reward His followers with the Gift of eternal life in heaven with Him. The following is a tabulated form of His purpose in the analysis.

### **Analysis**

- I. The birth and qualifications of the Messiah – Chapter 1.
- II. The recognition of the Messiah – Chapter 2.
- III. The preparation of the Messiah for His Ministry – Chapter 3:1-4:11.
- IV. The presentation of the Messiah to Israel – Chapter 4:12-16:20.
- V. The Words and Works of Christ in the face of the Cross – Chapter 16:21-20:34.
- VI. The rejection of Israel by the Messiah – Chapters 21-23.
- VII. The Messiah's predictions to His Disciples – Chapters 24-25.
- VIII. The Passion, Triumph of the Messiah – Chapters 26-28.

### **Questions on Matthew**

1. What does Chapter 1, verse 22 suggest?
2. How did Herod find out the real place of Jesus' birth? 2:6
3. Why was Jesus baptized? 3:5
4. Why did Jesus heal? 4:23-24
5. What does it mean that "Jesus came to fulfill the Law?"
6. What sobering truth does 6:14 suggest about forgiveness?
7. What message to we get from 6:25-34 about worry?
8. What promise does God give to us about our witness? 10:17-20
9. Could a loving God really create "hell" and why? 10:26-28

10. How would it be more tolerable for Sodom on the day of judgment than Capernaum? 11:23-24
11. How can sin against Christ be forgiven and sin against the Holy Spirit not be forgiven? 12:30-32
12. What does this message in 16:18-19 mean?
13. What was the problem with the disciples in 17:14-20?
14. Church discipline is defined in 18:15-20. Who is responsible for this in the church?
15. How do we know that Jesus was not an evolutionist from 19:1-4?
16. Wherein lies the “fairness” of 20:1-16?
17. does 21:12-13 still apply to us today, and how?
18. When (day and hour) will the end of this age be? 24:14
19. What facts about judgment day do these verses support? 25:31-40
20. What is distinctive about 26:26-29?
21. What does Jesus’ resurrection really do for us? 28:1-10

### **Paragraph Summaries**

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# **THE GOSPEL OF MARK**

## **Jesus the Wonderful**

The emphasis of Mark is the Superhuman Power of Jesus, demonstrating his Deity, His miracles. It omits the Sermon on the Mount and most of Jesus' long discourses. It narrates the things that Jesus did rather than what he said. It seems to have the Gentile readers particularly in mind.

### **Mark the Person**

John Mark was the son of Mary, whose home in Jerusalem was a meeting place for the disciples, Acts. 12:12. Being a cousin of Barnabas, Col 4:10, he may have been a Levite, Acts. 4:36. It has been surmised that he was the young man that "fled naked" on the night of Jesus' arrest, Mark 14:51-52, just beginning to be interested in Jesus. The language of I Peter 5:13 may mean that he was a convert of Peter's.

Fourteen years later, about 44 AD, he went with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, Acts 12:25, and started with them on their First Missionary Journey, but turned back. Later, about 50 AD, he wanted to go with Paul on the Second Missionary Journey, but Paul refused to take him. This occasioned the separation of Paul and Barnabas, Acts 13:5, 13; 15:37-39. Then Mark went with Barnabas to Cyprus.

Some 12 years later, about 62AD, Mark is in Rome with Paul, Col 4:10; Pln 24. Four to five years still later, Paul just before martyrdom, is asking for Mark to come to him, II Tim. 4:11. It truly seems from this incident that in his later years, Mark became one of Paul's intimate and beloved helpers. Mark was with Peter in Babylon when Peter wrote his first Epistle, I Peter 5:13. Early Christian tradition has it that Mark was really a companion of Peter, and he wrote the story of Jesus as Peter told it. Peter was a man of action, and it seems to be reflected in the style of Mark's Gospel, as the reoccurring word "straightway." The Gospel was thought to be written and published in Rome between 60 and 70 AD.

### **What Papias said about Mark**

Papias, a pupil of the Apostle John, wrote in his "Explanation of the Lord's Discourses," that he had made it his business to inquire of the Elders and followers of the Elders and, "The elder said this also; Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately all that he remembers...not, however in order...of the words and deeds of Christ. For neither did he hear the Lord nor was he a follower of His, but later on, as I said, he attached himself to Peter, who would adapt his instruction to the need of the occasion, but not teach as though he were composing a connected account of the Lord's "oracles" so that Mark made no mistake in His writing down some things as he remembered them. For one object was in his thoughts...to omit nothing that he had heard, and to make no false statements."

### **Purpose and Plan**

Matthew depicts the Messiah as King; Mark as the servant of Jehovah. The Greeks were contemplative and the Romans active. In His association with Paul, Barnabas and Peter, Mark often observed how certain incidents and sayings went home to the hearts of the listeners. They were facts that represented Christ as the Servant of Jehovah. Farmer says, "It is not strange that

Mark

this Servant conscription...this remarkable blend of strength and submission, achieving victory through apparent defeat...should appeal to Peter. He himself was an ardent, whole-souled man who knew both defeat and victory. He himself had hired servants (Mark 1:29) and now for years had been a servant of Christ (Acts 4:29). That it did appeal and became familiar to the early Christians can be seen from Acts 3:13, and 4:30. Temperamentally, Mark seems to have been like Peter. And his experience in a wealthy home where servants were kept (Acts 12:123), and as himself *huperetes* of the Apostles in Christian Service, it fitted him both to appreciate and record the character and doings of the perfect servant, the Servant of Jehovah. For Roman Christians that heroic figure would have peculiar fascination.”

If this was his purpose, how does he set out to achieve it? By filling in consciously or unconsciously, the outline of Peter’s sermon in Acts 10:34-43? Mark, like Peter, introduces John the Baptist as the predicted forerunner of Christ, and thus like him, supports his whole narrative with the authority of the Old Testament. Mark, like Peter, represents the baptism and temptation of Christ, as the preparation of the servant for His task, Acts 10:37-38, and His ministry in Galilee and on the way to Jerusalem as His going about, “doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him” (vv. 38-39), and like him declares that he has manifested Himself to His disciples after His resurrection and charged them to preach the Gospel to all the people (vv. 40-43). We may present the Plan of the Gospel in tabulated form as follows.

### Analysis

1. Preparation of the Servant, 1:1-13
2. The Ministry of the Servant of Galilee, 1:14-7:234
3. The Ministry of the Servant North and East of Galilee, 7:24-9:50
4. The Servant on the way to Jerusalem, ch.10
5. The Ministry of the Servant in Jerusalem, chs. 11-13
6. The Submission of the Servant to Death, chs. 14-15
7. The triumph of the Servant in the Resurrection and Ascension, ch. 16.

### Questions on Mark

1. What was special or different about John’s baptism of people compared to Jesus’ command? 1:4-8
2. Why was Jesus baptized? Mark 1:9-10; Matt. 3:15
3. What was the key to the healing of the Leper? 1:40-41
4. Why the instructions of 3:12?
5. What does 3:28-29 mean?

Mark

6. What does 3:34-35 say about our family of origin?
7. How can the healing of 5:27-34 be applied to our present day circumstance?
8. Why is there wisdom to know what you are really asking for? 6:14-29
9. How can the “heart” be the seat of the evil expressed in chapter 7, vv. 21-23?
10. Why do you think that Peter was given such a severe “rebuke” in 8:33?
11. What is the most significant thought in 9:41-42?
12. Why does the New Testament in Jesus’ words look so disparaging about wealth? 10:21-25
13. What implications does 11:17 have for us?
14. Did the Lord God need to forsake His Son in His suffering for our sin? 15:34 Explain
15. What does the remark between 16, vv. 8 and 9 suggest?

### **Paragraph Summaries**

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# THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

## Name

Luke's name is mentioned only three times in the New Testament: Colossians 4:14, where he is called the "beloved physician," Philemon 24 where he is called Paul's "fellow-worker," and II Timothy 4:11 where he was with Paul in the dark hours of approaching martyrdom. It is worthy to mention that reference is also made to Mark, in these three passages, indicating possibly that Mark and Luke were companion workers. Luke also appears in the pronoun "we" in many sections of the Book of Acts.

## Author

The writer of the third Gospel was Dr. Luke, Paul's companion (Acts 16:10-24). He was a native of Syria and was apparently not a Jew, for Colossians 4:14 places him with the other Gentile Christians. If this is true he is the only Gentile writer of the New Testament books. It can be easily seen that Luke was an educated man and a keen observer. We learn from Acts 1:1 that Acts was written by the author of this third Gospel.

The first document definitely to ascribe the Gospel to Luke is the *Muratorian Fragment*, which derives its name from Muratori, an Italian who discovered the Fragment in the Ambrosian Library in Milan in 1740. It dates back to about 170 AD. It says that Luke, the physician, whom Paul had taken with him on his journeys, composed the third Gospel in his own name. There are later verifications of this fact, but this one will suffice. One point that might be noted here is that the same characteristics of style and vocabulary, and the same dedication in both Luke and Acts, indicate that the Gospel was written by the same man who wrote Acts. Indicative of this style is the medical language in both Luke and Acts, which I believe indicates that the author was a physician.

## Understanding Luke

For those of you who are able to read Greek, you will find that Luke's prologue, 1:1-4 is the most classic piece of Greek in the New Testament. It is a masterpiece of composition. Anyway, Luke's Gospel was written for the Greeks. Beside the Jew and Roman, the Greek was another who had been preparing for Christ's coming. He differed from the other two in many ways. He possessed a wider culture, loved beauty, rhetoric and philosophy. Luke, an educated Greek himself, would be well fitted for this task. Luke presents Jesus as the ideal of perfect manliness. Matthew presents Jesus as King to the Jews. Mark presents Him as the Servant of Jehovah to the Romans. Luke presents Him as the perfect man to the Greeks.

This is the Gospel for the sinner. It brings out Christ's compassionate love in becoming man to save man. In Luke we see God manifest in the flesh. Luke deals with the humanity of our Lord. He reveals the Savior as a man with all His sympathies, feelings and growing powers...a Savior suited to all. In this Gospel we see the God of Glory coming down to our level, entering into our conditions, and being subject to our circumstances.

Luke's Gospel is the Gospel of Christ's manhood. This we must know, however, although He mingles with men, He is in sharp contrast to them. He was the God-man. There was as great a difference between Christ as the Son of Man, and we, the sons of men, as Christ the Son of God, and we, the sons of God. The difference is not merely relative, but absolute. Make this fact plain. Read the words of the angel to Mary, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee" (Luke 1:35) refers to our Lord's humanity. It is in contrast to ours. Our human nature is unclean (Isaiah 64:6) but the Son of God, when He became incarnate, was "holy." Adam in his unfallen state was innocent, but Christ was holy.

### **Date**

It is thought that Luke wrote his Gospel about the year 60 while Paul was in prison in Caesarea (Acts 27:1) and followed it with the Book of Acts during Paul's Roman imprisonment, the two years following. His time in Caesarea afforded him plenty of time to get firsthand, from original companions of Jesus, and the first founders of the church, accurate details about Jesus' life and work. It was very possible that Luke used "sources," oral at least, maybe even some written, but under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to produce the Gospel of Luke.

### **Purpose**

Luke's Gospel was occasioned by his desire to confirm Theophilus in the Christian faith and through or by him to do the same for all who might read the Gospel. (Possibly Theophilus was a high ranking Roman official whom Luke had instructed in the word, at either Philippi or Antioch. This Gospel was to solidify him in his faith.) Here we notice the real purpose of the writer and the method by which he seeks to realize his purpose. One of the commentators says that Luke's design is mainly to set forth the perfections of the Son of Man as the Friend and Redeemer of Men, the Savior of all that believe and receive Him. In a very special sense, the Messiah was to be the Redeemer of His people. He was to discharge in full the awful debt they had incurred and to secure their complete deliverance. Luke's object is mainly to reveal the REDEMPTION wrought out by our glorious Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Here for the first time in the New Testament do we meet with the word "redemption" (1:68). Check the others, 2:38 and 24:21.

### **Points and Peculiarities**

- I. In this Gospel, Jesus' humanity is developed. He was SUBJECT to Joseph and Mary, 2:51; He REJOICED in the Spirit, 10:21; He WEPT over the city, 19:41; He PRAYED more earnestly and His SWEAT became as it were great drops of blood, 22:44. He CRIED "Father into Thy hands I commend my spirit," 23:46. He had a MEAL with Simon, 7:36-50; with Mary and Martha, 10:38-42; and many others.
- II. Luke makes much of PRAYER. Christ is presented as praying 15 times in the four Gospels, 11 of which are found in Luke's Gospel. Luke also has many teachings of prayer peculiar alone to his Gospel.
- III. Luke also makes much of PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING. It begins and ends with worship in the Temple (1:9, 24:52). Luke alone gives us the words of the great hymns

which have since been set to music: The Ave Maria, 1:28; the Magnificat, 1:46-56; the Benedictus, 1:68-79; the Gloria in Excelsis, 2:14; and the Nunc Dimitis, 2:29-32.

- IV. WOMEN AND CHILDREN are prominent in this Gospel. Luke tells us most about Elizabeth and Mary. Anna, the widow of Nain; the woman bound by Satan; the woman who was a sinner; the woman who appealed to the unrighteous judge, are all mentioned in this Gospel. Children are referred to in this Gospel with more affection than in any of the others. Certain children brought to Him are called "infants," 18:15; Jairus' daughter was an only daughter, 8:41-42; and the widow of Nain's son was the only son of his mother, 7:12.
- V. Luke uses many medical terms and shows special interest in sickness and those infirmed with sickness.

### **Analysis**

- I. The birth of the REDEEMER'S forerunner, 1:5-80.
- II. The birth and the childhood of the REDEEMER, chapter 2.
- III. External and internal preparation of the REDEEMER, 3:1-4:13.
- IV. The REDEEMER'S early ministry in Galilee, 4:17-7:50.
- V. The REDEEMER'S later ministry in Galilee 8:1-9:6.
- VI. The REDEEMER'S withdrawal northward, 9:7-50.
- VII. The REDEEMER'S later Judean and Perea ministry, 9:51-19:28.
- VIII. The REDEEMER'S closing ministry in Jerusalem, 19:29-21:37.
- IX. The REDEEMER'S betrayal, trial and death, 22-23.

### **Questions on Luke**

- 1. What did the angel of the Lord say about the work and ministry of John? 1:16-17
- 2. What main thoughts jump out at you as you read the 2nd chapter?
- 3. Did Jesus know as a 12 year old what He knew by inspiration or incarnation? 2:49-52
- 4. What one fact do you derive from the story of Jesus' temptation in 4:1-13?
- 5. How did Jesus do what He did in 4:28-30

6. If healing prayer does not always seem to work, what might be the answer? 5:12-13
7. In the parable of the sower can a person be a saved person (believe in Christ) and deny that faith? 8:11-15
8. Who is Jesus' real family?
9. What was the sign of Jonah? 11:29-31
10. What does Jesus call worry? 12:22-27
11. What happens to good folks who die in ignorance? 12:47-49
12. What is the "division" that Jesus came to create? 12:49-53
13. What does it mean in 14:25-27 that the cost of discipleship includes "cross bearing?"
14. How can 15:7 be true?
15. Is or can divorce be OK? When? 16:18
16. What brings change? 16:27-31
17. What if your brother who sins against you in 17:3-4 isn't sincere?
18. What does it mean the "the kingdom of God" is within you?" 17:20-21
19. Was Judas ever a believer as a disciple? 22:3-6, John 6:20
20. What was the difference between Judas and Peter in 22:31-34?
21. When was Jesus' work for mankind finished? 23:44-49
22. When were the disciples' eyes opened so they recognized the Savior (risen)? 24:30-32

### **Paragraph Summaries**

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# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

## Name

The Gospel was named after its author, who, as we shall see, was John, the disciple whom Jesus loved.

## Author

The author does not identify himself until he comes to the end of the book, 21:20, 24, where he states that he is the "disciple whom Jesus loved;" that is, John the Apostle, the most intimate personal friend of Jesus. We hear Jesus referring to him as the "son of thunder," possibly because of a temper that John had when Jesus first met him. John's father was Zebedee, a fisherman in good circumstances; his mother was Salome, a devout follower of the Lord who may have been a sister to Mary, the mother of Jesus, Mark 15:40, John 19:25. His brother was James.

John may have been about 25 years of age when Jesus called him. He had been a follower of John the Baptist. In the reign of Domitian, John the disciple was banished to Patmos but afterward, he returned to Ephesus and became the pastor of that wonderful church. He lived in that city to a ripe old age, the last of the 12 apostles. During this time he wrote his Gospel concerning the deity of Christ, co-eternal with the Father. John, the apostle of our Lord and his beloved disciple, wrote his Gospel nearly a generation after the other evangelists, somewhere between 80 and 100 AD, at the end of the first century, when all the New Testament was completed except for his own writings. The life and work of Jesus was well known at this time. The Gospel had been preached; Paul and Peter had suffered martyrdom; all the apostles had died, and Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Roman legions, 70 AD.

## Dependence and Language

There has been much criticism in the past decade about the authorship of John, questioning whether or not its inspiration can be trusted, simply because there is much in this Gospel that the other Synoptics record; in some places, almost identical. Now if it is true that John did write his Gospel, then he is primarily dependent upon his own knowledge of the facts of Jesus' life, rather than on the facts from Matthew, Mark and Luke. But how can we prove that John was not dependent on the other three Gospels for his Gospel? Well, apart from the two miracles, 6:4-21, and the passion story, all is different in the fourth Gospel. There are intimations of Jesus' Galilean ministry, but no full accounts of it (2:1-12; 4:43-54; 6:1-7:9). John, instead of borrowing directly from the synoptic accounts, supplements them with the history of the early Judean ministry, which they omit. John's Gospel assumes the existence of the Synoptics and does not repeat much that is found in them. It has its own plan and purpose, and selects its own materials in attaining that purpose. This does not mean that John did not use some of the phrases that appear in the other three Gospels, but he may well have taken them from his own recollections.



## Occasion and Date

Many suggestions have been offered to define what occasioned John to write his Gospel. First of all, it was suggested that he wrote it at the pleadings of his fellow disciples. Another says that John wrote to supply the deficiency of the other three Gospel writers. But I would rather believe that primarily, John had the leading and enabling of the Holy Spirit in the writing of the Gospel; his intimate friends may have encouraged him to write it. There was, no doubt, also the felt need that the church should have a fuller commentary on the work and teaching of Jesus than had been produced beforehand. This Gospel is such an intermingling of interpretation with narrative materials. As to the date of the writing, after all considerations have been examined, it was established that the Gospel was written by John the Apostle during the years 85-90 AD in Ephesus.

## Points and Peculiarities

- I. This Gospel has an announced purpose (John 20:30,31). "Signs," figures, and discourses are chosen with a view to attaining his purpose.
- II. John omits the account of the birth of John the Baptist, and of Jesus' birth, genealogy, youth, baptism, temptation, transfiguration and ascension. Christ is definitely deity, and for deity, these things have no significance.
- III. John only records Jesus' Judean ministry. Without this Gospel, Jesus' ministry would seem to have lasted only 1½ years. It is in this Gospel that four Passovers are noted; 2:13, 5:1; possibly 6:4, 13:1 and 18:28, and because of this we know that his ministry lasted at least three years.
- IV. There are no parables in John. The word in 10:6 should be rendered proverb or allegory, not parable.
- V. There are eight miracles in John, all but two, the feeding of the 5,000 and the walking on the sea, being peculiar to John.
- VI. Some of the characteristic words in John are: "believe" and words related to "believe," about 100 times (strangely enough the words "belief" and "faith" never occur in this Gospel).

## Purpose

John's aim is strictly a spiritual aim and purpose, for he says, "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life in His name," 20:30-31. John's purpose then was to lead the people who read his Gospel to faith in Christ Jesus and to eternal life. This he sought to do by proving the deity of Christ by the "signs" that he represents Jesus as having done. But a study of the Gospel shows that he also tries in various other ways to prove the same thing, as in representation of the person and work

of our Lord, and by various figures applied to Christ (Bread, Light, Shepherd, Truth, Life, Vine, etc.). This then is his real purpose; let us note how the plan of the Gospel works this out in the:

### **Analysis**

- I. The essential glory of the SON OF GOD, 1:1-5.
- II. The incarnation and general reception of the SON OF GOD, 1:6-18.
- III. The revelation of the SON OF GOD to Israel, 1:19-12:50.
- IV. The revelation of the SON OF GOD to the disciples, Chapters 13-17.
- V. The glorification of the SON OF GOD in His Passion, Chapters 18-19.
- VI. The manifestation of the SON OF GOD in Resurrection, power and glory, Chapters 20-21.

In closing our discussion of this Gospel, permit me to make this remark. Jesus gave Peter, the disciple who denied Him thrice, an opportunity of confessing Him thrice. He restored him to full privileges of service. Christ only wants those who love Him to serve Him. If you love Him, you must serve Him. No one who loves Christ can help but serve Him. What are Jesus' last words in the Gospel? "FOLLOW THOU ME." This is His Word to each of us. May we all follow Him in loving obedience until He comes again.

### **Questions on John**

1. How do vv. 3 & 10 of chapter one conflict with the whole evolutionary process?
2. Why is 1:14 so critical to the whole doctrine of Christ.
3. Does this verse (1:29) suggest that all people's sin has been forgiven without their desire or confession? Explain
4. What is significant about the miracle of the wedding of Cana? 2:1-11
5. What is significant about 2:11? Why?
6. In the story of Nicodemus in Chapter 3, what does the phrase in v. 8 mean, "So it is with everyone born of the spirit?"
7. Why are vv. 16-18 called the "Gospel in a nutshell?"
8. What does 4:24 mean?

9. How could 5:24 and 2:11 refute the thought that “one must personally accept Jesus as Savior” to be saved?
10. On what was the choice for the twelve disciples made? 6:66-71
11. What does the note in the NIV above chapter 8 suggest?
12. How does the “truth” according to 8:31-32, 35, 36 “set free?”
13. Why was the man described in 9:1-4 born blind?
14. What are the two predictions found in 11:4-5?
15. What is significant about the phrase in 12:20-22, “Sir, we would like to see Jesus?”
16. How is Satan defined in 12:30-31, 14:30 and 16:11? Explain.
17. Moses was the Lawgiver. Jesus came to save those who were lost. How do we explain this “new command” in 13:34?
18. Isn’t the phrase “I am the way” rather arrogant of Jesus? Explain. 14:6-7, Acts 4:12
19. Who really lives in us after conversion, Jesus or the Holy Spirit? Explain. 14:16-17
20. Why is 15:16-19 important in our understanding of conversion? I Cor. 12:3
21. Is the unity of which Jesus speaks a “possibility” in the church of the new millennium? John 17:11-12, I Cor. 1:10-11
22. What is truly significant (Chapter 18-19) about the suffering and death of Christ?
23. What is a relationship with Christ all about? 20:29
24. What point is significant about the story of Peter’s reinstatement in 21:15-19?

### Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF ACTS

## Name

Little is known of Luke, except that in Colossians 4:14 he is called the “beloved physician,” and is classed as a Gentile in verse 11. Eusebias says that he was a native of Antioch. Another writer thinks that he was from Philippi. Be that as it may, he was a man of culture and scientific education, a master of classical Greek. He joined Paul at Troas, Acts 16:10, and then continued to refer to his work as “we.” Luke remained at Philippi until Paul returned six or seven years later, 16:40, and rejoined with Paul, 20:6, and then was with him to the end. Since he was a physician, he was especially valuable to Paul.

## Authorship

Unlike Paul’s Epistles, the author of Acts does not name himself. The use of the personal pronoun “I” in the opening sentence, is evidence that its first recipients knew from where it had come. For the most part, from the earliest critics, the Book of Acts has been ascribed to the writer, Luke. The *Muriatorian Canon* says, “but the Acts of the Apostles were written in one volume. Luke compiled for the most excellent Theophilus what things were done in detail in his presence, as he plainly shows by omitting both the death of Peter and the departure of Paul from the city, whence he departed for Spain.” Internal evidence reveals too that Luke was the author of Acts. For instance, 1) The “we” sections in Acts (16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:16) indicate that the author was one of Paul’s companions on his journeys. 2) The rest of Acts is by the same writer as the “we” sections as is evident from the similarity of language and style in all of the book. 3) The medical language in the Acts and the writer’s interest in sickness and the sick suggest that the author was a physician.

## Date

It has been thought that the abrupt close of the Book of Acts indicates the date of the book. The reason, I believe, that the Book of Acts was closed so abruptly was that there was nothing further to report at the time. Since Paul came to Rome in 59 A.D. and had been in the city two years when Acts closes, we confidently date the book at 61 A.D.

## Understanding Acts

The Gospels set forth the Son of Man, who came to die for our sins. The Acts shows the coming of the Son of God in the Power of the Holy Spirit. The Gospels set forth what Christ began to do by the Holy Spirit through his disciples. The Gospels tell of the crucified, risen Savior. The Acts portrays Him as the ascended and exalted Lord and Leader. The Gospels tell us of Christ’s teaching. In Acts we see the effect of these teachings on the acts of the Apostles.

Acts is really not a record of the acts of the Apostles as no extensive accounts are given of any Apostles, except Peter and Paul. It records the acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles. His

name is mentioned about 70 times. Look for some work of the Holy Spirit in every chapter. The word “witness” is used over 30 times. “Ye shall be My witnesses” is the heart of the Book of Acts. Salvation comes to the world through Christ alone (4:12) and so men must know Him. Christ’s plan includes us. Are you witnesses? If not, why not? It is true that Christ alone can save the world but Christ cannot save this world alone. This is His plan. If you have no witness for Christ, look into your heart. “For out of the abundance of your heart the mouth speaketh,” Matthew 13:34.

Christ had told His disciples that He would send the Spirit and he “shall testify of Me; and ye shall also bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning.” This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, chapter 2, when His Spirit was poured out on the disciples. From that moment, as they bore witness to the Savior, the Holy Spirit bore witness at the same time in the hearts of the hearers and many were brought to the Lord.

It is a wonderful thing to know that when the Spirit prompts you to speak to someone about Christ, He has been working in that heart and making it ready to receive your witness. There is a perfect example in Acts 8 where Philip was sent to speak to the Ethiopian. Read the ever-thrilling story.

### **Purpose and Plan**

The situation of the church gives rise to the purpose of the book. The need for authoritative information concerning the activity of the leaders of the church is supplied by the narratives that represent Peter and John as approving of Paul and his Gospel. The need for proof that the Christian movement is one movement is met by the accounts of how the Holy Spirit was given to Samaria by the ministry of Peter and John; to Cornelius and his household by Peter alone; and to the 12 former disciples of John the Baptist by the ministry of Paul.

But we may approach the study of Luke’s purpose in yet another way. It is clear that he sought to show what the ascended Christ continued “both to do and to teach” through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit after He had returned to heaven. If this can be done, the believer in the deity of Christ will be quite convinced of the supernatural character of Christianity. To accomplish this purpose, Luke begins by declaring that Christ had given commandment to the Apostles and instruction concerning the kingdom of God, after His resurrection and before His ascension. He continues by telling us that Christ had instructed the Apostles to wait for the coming of the Spirit before proceeding to their world task of evangelism.

Having thus connected the program of the church with the Lord’s instructions and commission, Luke proceeds to trace the development of Christianity under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. He shows how the vacancy among the Apostles was supplied by prayer and the casting of lots; how the Holy Spirit came upon the waiting Apostles and instituted a great revival in Jerusalem; how the Apostles were delivered in the persecutions of Jerusalem; how God punished those who lied to the Holy Spirit; how the officers needed to attend to the temporal affairs of the new church, which were divinely selected; how Stephen boldly faced death; how the Holy Spirit fell on the Samaritan believers; how the persecuting Paul was brought to the feet of Jesus on his way to Damascus; how the door of faith was opened to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius; how

the Lord delivered Peter from prison, and how the Gospel was carried to Asia Minor and Italy by Paul and his fellow-laborers. We shall now present these facts in the:

### Analysis

- I. The commission of the Apostles from Christ, 1:1-11.
- II. The equipment of the Disciples for their task, 1:12-2:47.
- III. The development of the work in Jerusalem, 3:1-8:1a.
- IV. The extension of the Gospel to Judea, Samaria and country, 8:1b-40.
- V. The conversion and early ministry of Paul, 9:1-31.
- VI. The progress of the Gospel to the Gentiles, 9:31-11:30.
- VII. The persecutions by the civil governments, chapter 12.
- VIII. The first missionary tour of Paul, chapter 13-14.
- IX. The victory for Gentile freedom at the Jerusalem Council, 15:1-35.
- X. The second missionary tour of Paul, 15:36-18:22.
- XI. The third missionary tour of Paul, 18:23-21:16.
- XII. The arrest and trial of Paul in Jerusalem, 21:17-23:30.
- XIII. The imprisonment of Paul in Caesarea, 23:31-26:32.
- XIV. The voyage of Paul to Rome, 27:1-28:15.
- XV. The imprisonment of Paul in Rome, 28:16-31.

In conclusion, we have found the Book of Acts to be a textbook on Missions and Evangelism. Let's put this into application; there are 200 million people in the United States today. Suppose you were the only Christian among them. You win one soul of the 200 million today. Then, tomorrow, you two win one soul each for Christ. On the following day, each of you four do the same....and do you know how long it would take with that zeal "every one win one" to bring all 200 million to Christ? A startling fact....one day short of a month. Shall we start a G.O. Club? Each one G-E-T O-N-E?

### Questions on Acts

1. What did the disciples really fail to understand about “kingdom restoration” in 1:6-8?
2. Where in the Old Testament is it prophesied that someone else would replace Judas? 1:20
3. Is the gift of tongues in 2:3-4 the same miraculous event as spoken of in I Cor. 12:9-11? Explain.
4. What, according to Acts 2:38-39, happens in baptism?
5. What three issues became the focal point of the worship of the disciples? 2:42 ff
6. What compelling challenge was offered to the Jewish authorities by Peter and John when they were warned to stop speaking about Jesus? 4:19-20
7. How was income equalization handled in 4:32-35?
8. What was the central issue of the life of Ananias and Sapphira? 5:1-9
9. Why was the counsel that Gamaliel gave to the Sanhedrin wise counsel? 5:34-38
10. What two qualifications were necessary in choosing the seven who were to carry out “prayer and the ministry of the Word?” 6:1-6
11. What do we know of Stephen in 7:57-60?
12. Why, according to Peter, was Simon refused to become part of the ministry of the apostles? 8:20-24
13. What do you believe is the most significant point of Saul’s conversions in Chapter 9?
14. In the episode with Cornelius in Chapter 10, what was the significance of verse 15? And its meaning today?
15. Is this incident similar to what happened after 9/11/01 at Yankee Stadium? Explain. 13:4-5
16. What is the impact of 13:46-47 then and today?
17. What seemed to be the issue that kept Paul from choosing Mark as a missionary companion? 15:37-41
18. Was Paul’s request of the magistrates in 16:37-38 justified? Explain.
19. What was the issue of the preaching of Apollos? 18:24-26

20. How do we explain the Holy Spirit's presence in the gift of tongues? 19:2-6
21. How is 19:11-12 possible?
22. What does the miracle of 20:7-12 suggest?
23. What phrase in 20:22-38 just seems to jump out at you re: Paul's own eulogy?
24. What did Paul believe was the cause of his trial? 26:6-8
25. What did the snake incident of 28:3-6 convince them about Paul?
26. What did Paul turn his cell into according to 28:30?

### **Paragraph Summaries**

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# THE BOOK OF ROMANS

## Name

We now begin the study of the Epistles in the New Testament; 13 of the 21 were written by Paul, and so they are called the Pauline Epistles. He wrote his letters to the churches at Thessalonica, Galatia, Corinth and Rome during his missionary journeys. It was while he was prisoner in Rome that he wrote his letters to the church at Ephesus, one to the Colossians, one to Philemon and the Philippians. After his imprisonment he wrote two letters – one to Timothy and one to Titus.

Paul was born at Tarsus, of pure Jewish stock. His teacher was Gamaliel, the great teacher of the Pharisees. Like all Hebrew boys, he learned a trade – he was a tent maker. At Jerusalem he was present at the stoning of Stephen, who was the first Christian martyr. No doubt, this made a tremendous impression on him. On the way to Damascus, on a mission to persecute more Christians, the young Pharisee had a head-on collision with Jesus Christ. After his miraculous conversion he was baptized and received the commission to preach the Gospel. He retired to Zrabia and spent three years there in study and preparation.

After laboring in Tarsus for three years, and one year in Antioch, directed by the Holy Spirit, Paul became a great missionary to the Gentiles. On his three journeys he founded many churches and wrote his Epistles. The combination of Roman citizenship, Greek education and Hebrew education, wonderfully qualified him for his great work, but you will find that he trusted alone in the grace of God in Christ Jesus, 1:5.

A life filled with sacrifice and suffering, he sealed his testimony with his own life's blood. Tradition says that he was beheaded at Rome and his body buried in the catacombs.

## Understanding Romans

Did you have a hard time reading the Book of Romans in comparison to the Gospels? I'm sure you did. And this is for two reasons: 1) The literary style of Paul, who had the habit of starting a sentence and then digressing and digressing, until you wonder what the subject of the sentence was, and 2) the Epistle is written about a problem that to us is no problem at all but was then a live, burning issue: whether or not a Gentile could be a Christian without becoming a Jewish proselyte. We think of Christianity as being a Gentile religion, because so few Jews are Christian. But Christianity started with the Jews, and certain Jewish leaders were determined that it should remain that way.

## Date and Occasion

The date of the writing of this Epistle was probably the winter of 57-58 AD. Paul was in Corinth at the close of the third missionary journey, on the eve of his departure to Jerusalem with the offering for the poor believers, 15:22-27. A woman named Phoebe, of Cenchrea, which was a suburb of Corinth, was sailing for Rome, 16:1-2. Paul took advantage of the situation to send

this letter by her. There was no postal service then, and if something was to be delivered, it had to be done by someone going to that place. She carried this letter to Rome. Titus carried II Corinthians, Tychicus carried Ephesians and Colossians, and Onesimus, Philemon.

## Purpose and Plan

Judging from the contents of the Epistle, the apostle's purpose seems to be: 1) to teach the believers at Rome the fundamental doctrines of salvation and so to fortify them against the error of the Judaizers, chapters 1-8; 2) to explain the unbelief of Israel and to indicate its extent and duration, chapters 9-11; 3) to urge his readers to enter into the fullness of Christian life, chapter 12; 4) to admonish them to be subject to the higher powers and to have love for one another, chapter 13; 5) to enjoin them to exercise tolerance toward the weak, 14:1-15:13; 6) to reveal to them his purpose and plans, 15:14-33 7) to commend Phoebe to the church at Rome, 16:1-4; and 8) to send his greetings to many former associates and friends, 16:5-27. The key of the book can be found in Romans, 1:16-17. Will you read that for us, please?

## Analysis

### I. WHAT ARE WE BY NATURE? Romans 1:1-3:20.

The Spirit of God has taken an x-ray picture of the heart of man and has not found it good, but evil and sinful, so bad that it cannot be displayed to a mixed audience, for we hear, "there is none that doeth good, no not one." The Maker and Judge of man, God the Father, asks the jury in heaven, "Is there no one who will plead the cause for these prisoners shackled by sin?" No one answers. Then the Son of God says, "Yes, I am here to represent these. It is true, they are guilty, but I bore their sins and guilt on the cross. I died in their place that they might go free." So the Judge set them free.

### II. HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN: Romans 3:21-5:21.

How does God save sinners? Through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. He has offered us salvation, not by what we do or by what we are, but He has justified us before God; that is, He has made us right with God. We too have great benefits when we are justified by God's grace. Grace is unmerited favor. In this life we find that faith is followed by peace, pardon and promise, 5:1-5, and more than all, the assurance of salvation, 5:6-11. How can a man be justified by God? Read 3:24-28. God imparts His righteousness to us in the following manner:

- A. By grace, 3:24 – the source of it.
- B. By God, 3:26, 8:33 – He is the giver of it.
- C. By blood, 3:24, 5:9 – the reason for it.
- D. By faith, 3:22 – the means whereby it is received.
- E. By works, James 2:21-23 – the way it is shown.
- F. By experience, 5:1-4 – the blessings from it.

### III. HOW TO LIVE A CHRISTIAN LIFE, Romans 6-8.

Probably the question of the century, wouldn't you say? But it isn't as complex as it may sound, if we look to the Word for the answer. First of all, RECKON – “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead to sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord,” 6:11. We must first of all realize that Christ has made us dead to sin; we are no longer the slaves of sin – the chains have been removed, we are free. Secondly, YIELD – “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God,” 6:13. This means, “let go” of your life and “let God” live through you. This is the surrendered life. This is the right way to live a life of victory and blessing. When this happens, the Christian finds a new standard for his life. He does not try to live up to the law, for he is no longer under it. He strives to please the One who dwells in him. “For me to live is Christ”...that is His glory.

### IV. THE PROBLEM OF JEWISH UNBELIEF, 9-11.

The story of the Jews being set aside and scattered throughout the world without a homeland without a king is a warning for us. God is a sovereign God; He will do what He will. He has a perfect right to turn to the Gentiles because the Jews would not accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior, 9:32. They tried to set up their own righteousness. But man does not build up righteousness. He only receives it. If God will set aside His chosen people, will He not set us aside if we are disobedient? Let us be careful to heed His commandments. Let us ask Christ to take our lives and lead them in His path...then we can't fail. Halley says, “Israel's rejection is temporary. It resulted in the salvation of the Gentiles. But the day will come when all Israel shall be saved,” 11:26. Do you agree with this? If so, why?

### V. HOW TO SERVE GOD, 12-16.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service,” 12:1. In this appeal Paul urges us to have our life measure up to our belief. He says that the doctrine of justification of faith will not allow us to be lax in our daily life and conduct. We are saved to serve. The Christian's life must be lived in direct relationship to his conviction of faith.

A modern definition of a Christian is “a person who will die for the church he will not attend.” How many of us will say nothing when Christ's name is brought into question or is used in vain. Let others see Christ in you. Live for Him and then you will be ready to die for Him.

## Questions on Romans

1. Why, in 1:16, is the Gospel to go first to the Jews?
2. What are the conditions of a person that Paul suggests lead to sexual impurity and even homosexuality? 1:21-28
3. How will the judgment of God be based for those who do not know the Law? 2:12-16
4. What three issues are true of us all according to 3:10-12?
5. How, according to 4:1-5, was Abraham justified?
6. Where do we receive true peace (5:1-2) and what are the results of peace in our lives? 5:3-4
7. According to 5:12 & 17, where did death come from?
8. What happens in baptism according to 6:1-5?
9. How do we count ourselves “dead to sin?” 6:11-14
10. What is the battle Paul is fighting in 7:15-25?
11. What is the difference between a person whose mind is controlled by the Spirit and one who is not? 8:5-8
12. What happens to prayers that seem not to make sense? 8:26-27
13. What great messages are included in 8:31-39?
14. Who is the true Israel? 9:6, 27; 11:5-7, 25-26
15. What does 10:1-4 tell us of the “end of the Law?”
16. When can we know someone is saved? 10:9-13
17. What is the message of “rejection” recorded in 11:13-23?
18. Who is able to fully understand the knowledge and wisdom of God? 11:33-34
19. What we do needs always to be done in love. That being true, what does it mean in the context of 12:20-21?
20. What is the two-fold purpose of governing authorities? 13:1-6

21. What does it mean in 14:13 that we should not put a stumbling block in our brother's way?
22. How, according to 15:5-7, was unity to be gotten?
23. What significance is the "naming of people" in Chapter 16, and "warning" in 16:17-18?

### **Paragraph Summaries**

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# THE BOOK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

## Name

This first letter of Paul was written to the church in Corinth; a church that, like many today, are filled with problems and divisions. The letter shows us that factions, moral laxity, want of reverence, abuses of spiritual gifts, and various doctrinal oppositions had come into the church. The Epistle gives Paul's inspired instructions as to the method of dealing with these and other problems.

## Understanding Corinthians

The name "Lord" is very common in this book. One has the feeling that much of the problem in the church at Corinth was this very fact; that the people and the educated philosophers of the day would not accept the fact that Jesus was Lord of all.

The archeologist's spade is making Corinth live again for all humanity, for Corinth was the most fabulous and important city of Greece in Paul's day. Men spent their days in tournaments and speeches. Luxury and public immorality was popular among these great industrial and seafaring people. Their gods were gods of lust and pleasure, as is true in any society of people that have become affluent and fat.

As in most cities, there was a large colony of Jews who had kept a strong moral standard and held to their religious belief, but the city itself was a center of debased forms of the worship of Venus. In Acts 18, we find out how the Gospel reached this wicked city. Paul, then about 50 years old, in the garb of a working man, entered the busy city and went through its streets in search of a workshop where he might earn his own living. There were no billboards or TV to announce this great evangelist's coming. He just came into town and began tent making. He went into business with well-to-do tent-makers Aquila and Pricilla. He was always able to support himself, making enough to carry on his missionary work. A wonderful work was done in Corinth in the one and a half years that Paul was there. He began speaking in the synagogues to mixed congregations of Jews and Gentiles.

## Occasion and Date

About three years after Paul had left Corinth, while he was in Ephesus some 200 miles to the east across the Aegean Sea, doing the most marvelous work of his God-given career, a delegation of leaders of the Corinthian church was sent to Ephesus to consult with Paul about some very serious problems that had arisen in the church. Then it was, about 57 AD, that Paul wrote this letter. He had written a previous letter, 5:9; possibly many of them. But the one that we know about is the one we have in our Bible today, I Corinthians.

## Purpose and Plan

The Apostle's purpose is clearly perceived from the contents of the Epistle. He writes 1) to rebuke the party spirit and to give a true conception of the relation between the Christian worker

and his work, chapters 1-4; 2) to enjoin the disciplining of the person guilty of incest, chapter 5; 3) to reprove the church for not trying the grievances between its members, but going to law before the heathen about them, chapter 6; 4) to answer their questions concerning marriage and divorce, chapter 7; 5) concerning the eating of food offered to idols, chapters 8-10; 6) to correct the disorders that had arisen in the behavior of the women, chapter 11; 7) the exercising of spiritual gifts, chapters 12-14; 8) to refute those who denied the resurrection of the dead, chapter 15; 9) to urge their participation in the collection for the poor believers, 16:1-4; 10) to inform them of the plans of the future 16:5-9; and 11) to commend certain of the fellow-workers to them, 16:10-18.

## **Analysis**

### **I. Introduction, 1:1-9.**

### **II. The Rebuke of the Party Spirit, 1:10-4:21.**

### **III. The Problems with Sexual Morality, chapters 5-7.**

- A. Discipline of the incestuous woman, 5:1-13.
- B. Legal problems brought before the heathen, 6:1-11.
- C. Fornication in the light of the sacredness of the body, 6:12-20.
- D. Marriage and divorce, chapter 7.

### **IV. The Subject of Food Offered to Idols, 8:1-11:1.**

- A. Some general principles, chapter 8.
- B. Pay for the ministry.
- C. The admonition from the history of Israel, 10:1-13.
- D. Prohibition of idolatry and practice of, 10:14-22.
- E. The use and abuse of Christian liberty, 10:23-11:1.

### **V. The Disorders connected with Public Worship, 11:2-14:40.**

- A. The veiling of women in public worship, 11:2-16.
- B. The disorders concerning the Lord's Supper, 11:17-34.
- C. The regulations concerning spiritual gifts, 12-14.

### **VI. The Doctrine of the Resurrection from the Dead, chapter 15.**

### **VII. Immediate Practical Concern of Paul, 16:1-18.**

### **VIII. Conclusion, 16:19-24.**

### Questions on I Corinthians

1. What was Paul's most earnest desire as it related to the church of Corinth? 1:10-11
2. What do verses 13-17 really mean as they relate to baptism? 16:15-17
3. What are the "foolish and weak things" God has chosen to shame the wise and strong?
4. What might pastors and spiritual leaders learn from 2:1-5?
5. How is it that we truly "know" spiritual things? 2:10-16
6. What causes "divisions" and "growth" in a church? 3:1-9
7. What does 3:12-17 seem to imply about our life of sanctification?
8. What two issues in 4:1-5 take captive our attention?
9. Why is 5:1-5 such an issue in Paul's mind?
10. What great truth/principle is found in 6:1-5?
11. What is the principle in 6:9-11?
12. Why does the Christian flee immorality? 6:15-20
13. According to 7:2-7, what was Paul's "gift?"
14. What principles of marriage and divorce are articulated in 7:8-16?
15. In what regard can our "freedom in the Gospel" be a stumbling block to the weak? 8:1-13
16. How does Paul in 9:19-22 explain his freedom and weakness under Christ's law?
17. What great principle is established in 10:12-13?
18. What point is Paul making in 10:23-31, especially as it relates to "freedom and conscience?"
19. In 11:3-16, what is the clue word as it relates to the propriety in worship?
20. In the principle of understanding the Lord's Supper, what are four words in 11:17-31 that stand out?
21. Why is 12:3 such an important verse?



22. We all have gifts with which to serve the Lord, 12:21-26. Which of the gifts enumerated in 12:28-31 are still in existence? Explain.
23. According to 13:8-13, which spiritual gifts of the Apostolic Age would cease to exist?
24. What is Paul referring to when, in 12:31 he suggests “to eagerly desire the greater gifts” and in 14:1-7, he identifies that gift as “prophesy?”
25. What is your over-all view of “tongues” in 14:18-25?
26. What does orderliness of worship have to do with “the silence of women” in the worship?” 14:34-40
27. What is the essence of the Gospel? 15:1-8
28. What is the essence of our faith? 15:12-22
29. What is said about the “resurrected body” in 15:35-58?
30. What are the principles of a “collection for God’s People? 16:1-4

### Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF II CORINTHIANS

## Name and Author

As the first, the second letter of Paul's to the church in Corinth was to settle some internal disturbances brought about by a particular false prophet who is not named. Internal evidence will provide enough evidence for us to assume that Paul was the author, for the writer calls himself Paul, 1:1, 10:1.

## Understanding Corinthians

Paul was somewhat worried as to how the church at Corinth would receive his first letter. He wondered how they had accepted his rebukes, so he sent Titus and perhaps Timothy (I Cor. 4:17, 16:10) to Corinth to find out the effect of the epistle. Having been at this time in Ephesus during a near riot (Acts 19) Paul flees that city through Troas, where unable because of pressing thoughts about Corinth to start a mission, he proceeds to Macedonia. There he anxiously awaits and finally meets again with Titus, who brings the report that the majority of the church had received his letter in the proper spirit. The minority although, as Titus probably explained, continued to deny that Paul was a genuine Apostle of Christ. Perhaps among other things, they denied Paul's genuineness because he was not one of the original twelve. (By the way, one reason the Mormons believe they are the true church today is because they have established again the 12 apostles as Christ did.) Then it was that Paul, about the year 57 AD penned this second letter and sent it on ahead by Titus, expecting himself to soon reach Corinth. His main purpose in this second letter seems to be to vindicate himself as the Apostle of Christ, and to remind them that he had founded the church at Corinth and that he did have a right to have a say in its management.

Paul gives more of his personal history in this letter than in any of the other epistles. He reveals his courage and his self-sacrificing love. He speaks of glorying or boasting 31 times, because he was so compelled. Read II Cor. 12:11. Paul also tells some things which happened in his life that are only revealed in this letter.

His unusual suffering, 11:23-27

His escape from Damascus in a basket, 11:32-33

His experience of being caught up in a third heaven, 12:1-4

His thorn in the flesh, 12:7

He told none of these things until he was compelled to do so, to prove that if he wanted to boast, he had good reason.

## Purpose and Plan

Paul writes II Corinthians in order to 1) set forth the purpose of his sufferings in Asia, 1:3-11; 2) to justify himself in the changing of his plans with reference to his returning to Corinth, 1:12-2:4; 3) to give instructions as to the treatment of the offender, 2:5-11; 4) to express the joy at his hearing the good news from Corinth, 2:12-13; 5) to represent the Gospel and its ministry as superior to the Law and its ministry, 2:14-6:10; 6) to appeal for separation and for reconciliation with him, 6:11-7:16; 7) to urge the Corinthians to bring the collection to a speedy and a satisfactory conclusion, 8-9; and 8) to establish his authority as an apostle, 10:1-13:10.

# THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

## Name

Galatia was a section of southern Asia Minor, which included the cities of Iconium, Lystra, Derbe and probably the Pisidian Antioch. It was the region of Paul's first missionary journey.

## Understanding Galatians

This epistle shows that the believer is no longer under the law but is saved by faith alone. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," 5:1. The law is that portion of God's Word found in the first five books of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy) by which every phase of Israel's life was guided.

During Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 16:6) he was delayed in Galatia by sickness (Gal. 4:3). Though ill, this tireless servant of the Lord could not remain silent but kept on preaching the Gospel. His theme was "Christ crucified," 3:1. It was at this time that he succeeded in founding the Christian churches in Galatia, 1:6. They were scattered over a rural district and the people were country folk. Teachers of the law had followed Paul, teaching salvation by works, claiming that even if Christianity were true, Christians should be circumcised and do all the works of the law. The false teachers told their people that the reason Paul did not teach this was because he was not a true apostle. Reasonably so, this upset the new converts.

Circumcision was the initial rite of the Jewish religion. If a person who was born a Gentile wished to become a Jew, he must observe this ceremonial law. It was much like a foreigner in our country taking out citizenship papers. If he actually takes out papers, although he was born on foreign soil, he is just as much a citizen as one born here. In addition to the command by the false prophets (Judaizers) that the Gentiles were to be circumcised in order to gain God's favor, they created all kinds of other laws and ceremonies, demanding that the Gentile Galatians keep them. Paul wanted them to know that works, ceremonies, - indeed nothing could bring them to Christ. Salvation comes by believing on Christ.

Being quite gullible, the Galatians were about to accept the false views of the self-made prophets. When Paul heard it, so urgent did the matter seem, that since no one was with him to write it, he wrote the letter himself, 6:11. No other book in the New Testament carries with it more spiritual weight, pointing out quite vividly that the way to salvation is not by works, not by the deeds of the flesh, but by faith in Christ Jesus. This epistle was Luther's battle cry for the Reformation; he even considered it his epistle. It was all but lost from sight from the fifth century to the Reformation. In more recent times, it has served as a bulwark against that radical criticism which would deny the genuineness of the Pauline Epistle.

## Occasion and Date

Paul together with Barnabas had founded this church and others on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:14-14:23). Silas accompanied him on the second missionary journey to visit these churches again. At Lystra he added Timothy to his party. We are also told that the visitors

delivered to these churches the decrees that had been issued at Jerusalem. The result was that the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily (Acts 16:1-5). Probably thinking that the cause of Gentile freedom from the law was now established on a firm basis, the missionary party entered a larger field of service. They visited North Galatia, Macedonia and Greece before retracing their steps to Jerusalem and Syrian Antioch (Acts 16:6-18:22). Luke had joined the missionaries at Troas and had accompanied them as far as Phillipi (Acts 16:10-40). From Corinth Paul had written the two Epistles to Thessalonica.

Desiring to further his missionary endeavor, Paul set out on his third journey, going through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, the "upper country," (Acts 18:23; 19:1) and taking up a three year residence at Ephesus (Acts 18:23-19:41; 20:31). From Ephesus he wrote several letters to the church at Corinth, among them our I Corinthians, and apparently made a short visit to that church. Serious trouble arose at Ephesus, and so, Paul moved quickly to Macedonia where he met Titus, 7:6 and wrote II Corinthians (Acts 19:41-20:2a). He did not stay long in Macedonia, but soon went to Greece where he spent three months (20:2b-3). During his absence from South Galatia certain Jewish teachers from Palestine came to his region and violently opposed Paul and his teaching. They denied his authority as an apostle, and repudiated his doctrine of grace. The situation became very serious and Paul, unable to return to South Galatia at once (Gal. 4:19-20) wrote the Epistle to the Galatians.

We cannot tell how soon these Judiazers came to Galatia after Paul had last visited them, or how long it took for Paul to learn of the defection in those churches. But it was after the council of Jerusalem where the fight for Gentiles' freedom was apparently won (Gal. 2:5), for Paul had two times visited them (Gal. 4:13-16).

I personally feel that there is a real force in the contention that Paul followed a certain doctrinal and stylistic pattern in his writings and that because of the similarities of I Cor., II. Cor., Galatians and Romans in this respect, these Epistles must have been written close together. I also think that the developments in Galatia may not have started immediately after Paul visited this region, and that news may not have reached Paul before he got to Macedonia or Greece on this third journey. Because of this, I would believe that Paul wrote this Epistle from Macedonia or Greece around 55-56 AD.

### **Purpose and Plan**

Since Paul's authority had been denied in Galatia, and his Gospel repudiated, he undertakes to meet this situation in the Epistle. He proceeds:

1. to base salvation on the work of Christ 1:1-5
2. to assert the authenticity and the divine origin of the Gospel 1:6-24
3. to prove his official recognition by the Apostles and leaders at Jerusalem 2:1-10
4. to show his consistency, even in dealing with Peter 2:11-21
5. to defend the doctrine of justification by faith, chapters 3-4
6. to establish the Galatians in liberty 5:1-15

## The Book of Galatians

7. to teach his readers the methods of victory and spiritual growth 5:16-26
8. to exhort them to sympathy 6:1-5
9. to urge them to give liberally 6:6-10
10. to warn them against the Judaizers 6:11-18

### Questions on Galatians

1. Why was Paul so amazed at what the Galatian Christians had done? 1:6-9
2. Explain from 1:11-17 how Paul received the message of Christ? Is this normal?
3. How is 1:23-24 possible?
4. What was the issue in 2:1-4?
5. What was the hypocrisy of which Paul accused Peter? 2:11-18
6. What is the issue of 1:19-21?
7. How would both Jew and Gentile be justified? Should not the Jew be an exception? 3:6-13  
How is the Law a curse?
8. How did man come to know the Law and what is its purpose? 3:19-25
9. In baptism you are “clothed with Christ.” 3:26-29 What does that mean?
10. In 4:1-7, what does “born under the Law” mean?
11. How was the joy of the Galatians and how did Paul feel about this? 4:8-15
12. Of what significance is 4:21-27 today?
13. Of what is Paul so adamant in 4:31-5:6?
14. How is freedom in Christ to be used? 5:13-15
15. Who is not guilty of 5:19-21?
16. What happens when 5:24 takes place? 5:22-26
17. How do we help someone who is trapped in a sin? 6:1-4

The Book of Galatians

18. What is the message of 6:7-10?

19. What should be my "boast?" 6:12-15



**Paragraph Summaries**

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# THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

## Name

It would appear on the surface that the Epistle of Paul that we read for today was directed to the Ephesians. Yet, later documentary evidence has produced the theory that this letter was not necessarily written to the church at Ephesus but at Laodacia and that later interpolations led to the addition of the word "Ephesians."

## Understanding Ephesians

In this Epistle we enter the Holy of Holies in Paul's writings. Paul speaks in II Corinthians 12:2 of "being caught up to the third heaven." Well, here as it were, he gives his report. He seems to be carried away as he tells it. It is the greatest revelation of truth that God has given to man. It is the mystery that has been hidden from before the foundation of the world.

This book shows the great mystery of the church. The real Church is the Body of Christ, and believers are members of that sacred body of which Christ is the Head. The Father not only prepared a body for Jesus Christ to suffer in, but also prepared a body for Him in which He should be glorified. The Greek word for church is "ecclesia" which means an assembly of "called out ones." Christ is taking out a people for His name, Acts 15:14. The church is the Body of Christ. Every believer is a member of Christ's body, and He is the Head of the Church.

Imagine for a moment that the Body is like a great building. The stones are redeemed human beings. Christ occupies the great throne room or Head. All the parts are like rooms in the building. With this picture in mind it is easy to see the whole story of the mystery of the church. The suffering of Christ in an earthly body is now made up for, by erecting a spiritual body or building.

## Similarities and Style

Although Ephesians and Colossians have many similarities, they also have some differences. From the standpoint of subject matter, Colossians sets forth the dignity of Christ, the Head of the Church, and Ephesians the sublimity of the Church, the Body of Christ. From the standpoint of style, Colossians is largely controversial while Ephesians is calm and almost entirely free from controversial elements. One commentator states, "We pass into the stillness and hush of the sanctuary when we turn to Ephesians."

## Authorship

I think that the simple fact that the writer calls himself Paul, 1:1 and 3:1, is satisfactory reason for attributing the book to him. Along with that, the Epistle follows his style of writing, beginning with the greetings and thanksgivings, leading to a doctrinal discussion and concluding with practical exhortations and personal matters. A point to note here is that out of 155 verses in Ephesians, 78 are found in Colossians in varying degree of identity. Could it be that Paul had just finished Colossians when he began the Book of Ephesians?

## Background

Paul laid the foundation of the church at Ephesus on his return trip from his second missionary journey, but he remained there only a short time on that occasion, Acts 18:19-21. Apparently, Aquila and Priscilla carried on the work during his absence, Acts 18:20-19:1. When he returned to Ephesus on his third missionary journey he spent three years in that city, Acts 19:1-20:1. He now won twelve disciples of John the Baptist to Christ and preached three months in the synagogue, Acts 19:1-8. When the opposition to his message became unbearable, he withdrew to the school of Tyrannus where he preached for two more years, 19:9-10a. During this time the Word of God went to all of Asia, vs. 10b. Paul did special miracles here and induced many to give up their magical arts, vs. 11-19. But when Demetrius and his craftsmen set the city in an uproar, which involved two of Paul's companions, Gaius and Aristarchus, and even the town clerk could scarcely quiet the mob, Paul left Ephesus for Macedonia, 19:23-20:1. On his return from Greece by way of Macedonia, he met the elders of Ephesus at Miletus and gave them one of the most touching charges ever given in scripture, 20:17-38.

It appears that Paul wrote this letter from prison about 60 AD intended as a circular letter to the province of Asia. Then as the letter was read, the name of the congregation to which the reader had come would insert their name. Since the letter was meant for the Church in Ephesus and her daughter churches, and since it was undoubtedly distributed from Ephesus, it soon became to be known as the Epistle to the Ephesians.

## Purpose

Paul's real purpose in writing this letter is to set forth God's purpose of summing up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth, 1:9-10. That is, Christ is predestined to be the center and administrator of all. More particularly he thinks of the Church and the part which it is to play in the carrying out of this program. After the salutation, 1:1-2, he sets forth the believer's blessings in Christ 1:3-14, prays for them to come to an understanding of their dignity and privileges 1:15-23, explains what they have already experienced 2:1-10, praises the new relation of the Gentiles to the Jews in Christ 2:11-22, glories in the revelation and proclamation of this union of the two in the body of Christ 3:1-9, indicated the meaning of the Church to the principalities in heaven 3:10-13, and prays that they may live up to their opportunities, 3:14-21.

Now he admonished his readers to unity of life and doctrine 4:1-6 (is by any stretch of the imagination the ecumenical movement of today), exhorts his readers to forsake the old life and turn to the new 4:17-5:21, applies these principles to the relations between husbands and wives 5:22-33, children and parents 6:1-4, servants and masters 6:5-9, exhorts his readers to put on the whole armor of God and do battle for Christ 6:10-20, explains the mission of Tychicus 6:21-22, and pronounces the benediction, 6:23-24.

## Analysis

### I. Spiritual Blessings, Chapter 1

- A. God's eternal purpose; the redemption, adoption, forgiveness, and the sealing of a people for God's own possession, determined from eternity.



## The Book of Ephesians

- B. Heavenly places, a key phrase in this book. The ultimate that man in Christ will receive, a portion of we who are in Christ already enjoy.
- C. Paul's prayer for them 16-23.

### II. **The Church Universal, Chapters 2-3**

- A. Saved by grace 1-10.
- B. Once one nation; now all nations 2:11-22.
- C. Mystery of Christ 3:3-9, that God's salvation will include more than the Jews, but many Gentiles.
- D. Grandeur of the Church 3:8-11.

### III. **Oneness of the Church, Chapter 4**

- A. One body, that of Christ. (Church history till today.)
- B. New Obligations 25-32; be considerate of one another.

### IV. **New Obligations, Chapters 5-6**

- A. Fornications 5:3-14.
- B. Singing 5:18-21.
- C. Husbands and wives 5:22-33.
- D. Parents and children 6:1-4.
- E. Servants and masters 6:5-9.
- F. The Christians' armor 6:10-20.

## Questions on Ephesians

1. What are the issues of predestination that we need to know? 1:3-6, 11-12
2. What is our inheritance and what is our guarantee? 1:13-14
3. What does the phrase "under His feet" mean in 1:20-23?

## The Book of Ephesians

4. What makes us different from the way we were? 2:1-7
5. Why can verse 10 of chapter 2 not be separated from 2:8-9?
6. The “wall of hostility” that has separated Jew and Gentile has been destroyed so that we are “one in Him.” 2:13-18 What does that mean?
7. What does “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets” mean in 2:19-22?
8. Why were “the unsearchable riches of Christ” hidden for so many years? 3:7-13
9. What point does Paul want the Ephesians to “grasp” in 3:16-19?
10. How does the church serve Christ and in so doing create “unity?” 4:3-6
11. What is the purpose of our calling? 4:11-13
12. When does “spiritual infancy” disappear? 4:14-16
13. What is the three-fold exercise Paul wants us to practice in 4:22-28?
14. What does being “imitators of Christ” mean? 5:1-4
15. What does God command of both husbands and wives? 5:22-32
16. What is God’s instruction to fathers and children? 6:1-4
17. What armor do we need to protect from the “evil one?” 6:10-17

### **Paragraph Summaries**

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# THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS

## Name

Philippi was a town in Macedonia, just directly north of Greece. It was to the congregation in Philippi, that he had begun on his second missionary journey, that he wrote his letter.

## Author

All external evidence gives weight to the fact that Paul was the author of this letter. Internal evidence is equally convincing. For the writer calls himself Paul, 1:1. The historical details, the language and style, and the tone of the letter all point to Paul as the author. Bauer, a famous New Testament critic, however, does not agree with these statements. He says that the doctrinal differences between this letter and all the rest that Paul wrote are quite noticeable, giving 3:12 as an example (read it please). What is your comment on this thought?

## Understanding Philippians

The Epistle to the Philippians is a letter rather than a treatise, and it is a letter full of tender affection and unfeigned joy. (As a matter of fact, the word “joy” or “rejoice” is used in this epistle 16 times.) Imagine a man in prison about to die, with chains holding him fast, singing the praises of his Lord and Savior. His words seem to come from a light heart. It is evident that the soul of the apostle is free. There is an atmosphere of joy even from prison. What an example for us in time of temptation and spiritual imprisonment.

This church in Philippi, founded at about 51 AD, was in a sense Paul’s best-loved church, for it entered more sympathetically into his sufferings and needs than any other church. Even though he had a great joy and relationship with the congregation at Thessalonica, yet his loyalty to the Philippians was much greater. In this church, Lydia and the jailer were among the first converts (Acts 16). Luke, the beloved physician, was its pastor for the first six years. It may have been Luke’s home, where he practiced medicine. He may have been the one primarily responsible for the development of the unspotted character of the church. As far as we know, the Philipian church was the purest and the most faithful of all the New Testament churches.

At the time of the writing of the letter, which we believe to have been done about 10 or 11 years after Paul began the congregation, or at about 61 AD, Paul was in prison in Rome, not in Caesarea as some have intimated (compare Phil. 1:19-29 with Acts 23:23-26:32). His only source of food and clothing was that which he had received from the prison. The church at Philippi realized this and sent Paul a gift of money by the hand of Epaphroditus to try and help make his life in prison as comfortable as possible. This letter then, to the church at Philippi, was directed to them by Paul in thanks for the gift they had sent to him. (Incidentally, it seems that was the only church from which Paul received any wages...could you suggest a reason for this?) It was only after Epaphroditus had healed from the wounds he received in coming to Paul, that he delivered the letter to the church at Philippi.

## Purpose

As it has been said, Paul wrote this Epistle primarily to express his gratitude for the gift that the Philippians had sent him and to admonish them to steadfastness and humility. But there are also other purposes discernible. We gather the following from the contents of the Epistle he wrote: **1)** to express his appreciation for their fellowship, confidence in their progress and ambition for them 1:3-11; **2)** to report on his circumstances, hope and fears 1:12-26; **3)** to exhort them to unity, humility and consistency 1:27-2:18; **4)** to inform them of his purpose to send Timothy and Epaphroditus to them 2:19-30; **5)** to warn them against the Judaizers 3:15-4:1; **6)** to appeal for the reconciliation of Euodia and Syntyche 4:2-3; **7)** to admonish them to joyfulness, prayerfulness and the pursuit of all that is good 4:4-9; **8)** to express gratitude for his recent gift 4:10-20; and **9)** to send greetings 4:21-23.

## Analysis

### I. The Gospel in Rome – Chapter 1

- A. Timothy – In all probability it was Timothy who wrote the letter to the church of Philippi, under Paul’s guidance and dictation, vs. 1-2.
- B. Paul’s prayer for them, vs. 3-11 – In such a way Paul begins almost all of his epistles; compare those in Eph. 1:16-23 and Col. 1:9-12. In v. 5 he mentions “fellowship in the furtherance of the Gospel.” This refers to the offerings of money that they had sent him. This made them sharers of his work.
- C. Gospel Growing in Rome, vs. 12-18 – Paul’s imprisonment had actually turned out to be a blessing. For as a result, he had come into contact with officials of the kingdom, and had actually converted some in Nero’s court, 4:22. Paul rejoiced in prison in Philippi, Acts 16:25, and now he rejoiced in the Roman jail, v. 18.
- D. Paul’s desire for death, vs. 19-26 – The old man, marred by stripes and scourging, now desires to pass this present life to be with Christ...“for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain,” 1:21.
- E. The sufferings of the Philippians, vs. 27-30 – Soon Paul assured them that their persecutors would receive their reward, would reap what they had sown.

### II. The Humility of Christ – Chapter 2

- A. The example of humility, vs. 1-11 – One wonders why this great exhortation on humility, the very best in the entire Bible. Possibly it was because there were seeds of faction in the pride of certain Philippian leaders, possibly as Euodia and Syntyche, 4:2. Literally the word “humility” or “humble” means emptying oneself out of his pride. It was Christ who completely emptied Himself of His pride. It was Christ who completely emptied Himself of His glory, to become as you and me.
- B. His joy in the day of Christ, vs. 12-18 – Paul can’t wait until that rapturous climax of Joy in Christ when he leaves this earth to be with his Lord.

## The Book of Philippians

- C. His plan to return to Philippi, vs. 19-30 – Paul tells them of his intention to return to see them again. Common view tells us that he was acquitted and did revisit Philippi and other churches in the east, I Tim. 1:3; later was recaptured and brought back to Rome.

**III. The Heavenly Goal – Chapter 3** – All that the Judaizers were now teaching in Philippi, Paul had once taught. Paul himself had possessed righteousness by the Law, which was being preached by the Judaizers in marked degree there now, 4-6...but now Paul considers all of this “refuse” or “dung,” for his whole dependence is now in Christ. The life, which he has led, has been like a race to the finish line...the prize for winning is life everlasting in Christ who shall then change their bodies and his, like unto the Lord’s.

### **IV. Joy – Chapter 4**

- A. Euodia and Syntache, vs. 2-3 – These two socialites seem to have been allowing their personal grievances to become an annoyance to the church. They were possibly women leaders in the area.
- B. Rejoice, Rejoice, Rejoice, vs. 4-9 – What courage in Christ for a man who had been beaten, robbed, spit upon and kicked. An example for us?
- C. Coming of Epaphroditus, vs. 10-20 – Verse 17 is the climax – “Mission Gifts.”
- D. Social Standing, vs. 22 – “They of Caesar’s household.”

## Questions on Philippians

1. As Paul writes from his house prison in Rome, how does he describe his feelings for the church of Philippi? 1:3-11
2. In 1:12-14, what are the results of Paul’s “chains?” (3 things)
3. Does the “motive” for preaching Christ make a difference? 1:17-18
4. What does Paul mean in 1:20-26?
5. What “attitude” did Christ have that Paul thought the Philippians needed? 2:1-11
6. What are the conditions for us that we should “shine like stars?” 2:12-18
7. What was special about Timothy in the eyes of Paul? 2:19-22
8. Why such a harsh characterization of the Judaizers in 3:1-6?

The Book of Philippians

9. What is the “gain-loss” factor of 3:7-11?
10. Why does Paul suggest to “forget the past?” 3:12-19
11. What will we be like in eternity? 3:20-21
12. What happens even among Christians? 4:2-3
13. What is the problem with worry? 4:4-7
14. How does one practice the “mental leash law?” 4:8-9
15. Where does real contentment come from? 4:10-14

**Paragraph Summaries**

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# THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

## Name

Paul, the author of this letter, (1:1, 23; 4:18) wrote from prison in Rome about 60 AD. The letter was written to a little church at Colosse in Phrygia, from which country some were present at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, Acts 2:10. The city was near the border of Asia, 100 miles east of Ephesus. It does not appear from 2:1 that Paul had ever visited the city yet he did speak of trying to get there to greet the Christians. Epaphras (1:7; 4:12-13) seems to have been its founder. Tychichus seems to have been the man that delivered Paul's letter to the congregation. He had picked up the letter and Onesimus (Philemon's slave), and was now returning both to Colosse.

## Understanding Colossians

Ephesians and Colossians were written about the same time, while Paul was a prisoner in Rome. They both contain great doctrines of the gospel and are to be read aloud in the churches. They are very similar in style, yet different in emphasis. For Ephesians talks about all believers, calling them the "body" of Christ. Colossians talks about the "Head" of the body, Jesus Christ. In Ephesians, the Church of Christ is the important item. In Colossians the Christ of the Church is emphasized. Both are needed for there cannot be a head without a body. Notice this all the way through Colossians – Christ, Christ, Christ.

Heresy had broken out in the church at Colosse, misleading the young believers, calling for the worship of angels, 2:18, and a strict observance of Jewish ceremonies, 2:16, 21. This heresy was a mixture of Jewish, Greek and Oriental religions, and all this called forth the statement of the truth of the supreme Lordship of Christ. This epistle draws a faithful portrait of Christ in all His glory and dignity.

Christ is all in all. The failure of the Colossians was at this very point "not holding fast the Lord." The place that Christ holds in any religion determines whether it is true or false. Some thought in Paul's day, as now, that Jesus was but a man, and Christ was the divine spirit, which came at His baptism and left Him at the cross. This meant that Christ did not die, but simply that Jesus died. You can see that this is the root and error of many cults today. Every modern cult is based on just the same old heresy and misrepresents the truth in regard to Christ, His person and work. It is good for us in reading this epistle to examine our own faith and to see just where it is that we have put Christ in our belief.

Anyway, it was this Epaphras who went to Rome carrying to Paul the report of the false teachings and heresies in the church at Colosse. It was then that Paul wrote the letter to the Colossians, delivered to them not by this man Epaphras, but by Tychichus.

## Occasion

During the more than two years of Paul's absence from the province of Asia an insidious error had crept into the church of Colosse. It appears that a type of Judaistic Christians had come to Colosse and had introduced a teaching that had three elements in it: (1) *a distinctively Jewish element* as seen in Paul's reference to circumcision, the ordinances that are against us, meats and drinks, feast days, new moons and Sabbaths 2:11-16; (2) *an ascetic element*, as seen in his reference to ordinances, "Handle not, nor taste," 2:20-23; and (3) *a speculative element*, as is seen in the warning against "philosophy and vain deceit," 2:8. Paul writes against these errors. That would be the general content to the Book of Colossians.

## Purpose and Plan

Paul meets these errors not with indignant controversy, for they were not yet developed, nor by personal authority, for these Christians were not his converts; but by the noblest form of controversy, which is the pure presentation of counter truths.

After giving thanks for their attainments and praying for their progress 1:1-12 he sets forth the supremacy of Christ over all principalities and powers 1:13-19, the completeness of the redemption provided by Him 1:20-23, and his own sufferings. In the proclamations of this message 1:24-2:3, he warns the Colossians against the "philosophy and vain deceit" of the false teachers that had come to Colosse, who ignored the full deliverance from sin made in Christ Jesus 2:4-15. He admonishes them, accordingly, not to submit to ritual practices nor to turn to the worship of inferior beings 2:16-19, but to recognize the fact that in dying and rising with Christ, they had died to the old life and to earthly ordinances and had risen to a new life and to heavenly principals 2:20-3:4. He encourages them to apply this death and resurrection in a practical way in their personal lives, 3:5-17, and in the various special relationships of life 3:18-4:6; he explains the mission of Tychicus and Onesimus 4:7-9; sends greetings 4:10-17, and closes with a benediction 4:18.

## Analysis

### I. THE DEITY OF CHRIST (The Deeper Life) Chapter 1

- A. Paul's thanksgiving for them. How many times this is evident in Paul's letters, emphasizing the words "faith, love and hope."
- B. Paul's prayer for them, vs. 9-12. Paul prays for spiritual wisdom for the, so as to be patient under all circumstances.
- C. The Godhead of Christ, vs. 13-30. Just who is this that they worship? Paul tells the "firstborn of all creation," the "firstborn from the dead and the Head of all principality and power."
- D. Thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, v. 16. Wonder if the theory of evolution is correct? Check this passage. (By the way, on what day were the angels created?)



## Colossians

- E. Suffering for the church, vs. 24-29. Not that the suffering of Christ is insufficient for our salvation, but the church as a whole cannot arrive at perfection until it has gone through suffering. Paul was anxious to bear his share.
- F. Christ in you, the hope of glory, v. 27. This is what it is to be a Christian. Living in Him, this wonderful, glorious Person, the Creator of the universe, in whom we have redemption through His blood.

### II. CHRIST ALL-SUFFICIENT (The Higher Life) Chapter 2

- A. Paul's personal interest in them, vs. 1-5. Even though he had not seen them, he has a sincere interest in their welfare.
- B. Mystery, v. 2. This was a word used by the philosophers of the day, possibly in definition of a religious practice.
- C. The philosophers of Colosse, vs. 4 and 8. They believed a portion of that doctrine of Christ and His work that was reasonable to the mind. The same is happening today...they know of, but not about, the Lord.
- D. Legalists vs. 16 and 20-22. Unlike the philosopher, a man who does not bother with those things he does not understand but wants to know WHAT TO DO to become a Christian. He sees certain laws in or without the church that he can keep, and he does them, believing that this is righteousness. Christ is in the background, not to be reckoned with personally.
- E. Worship of Angels, v. 18. Is this being taught today?
- F. Asceticism, vs. 20-23. Fasting and restrained sensual indulgence. Where can this be found today?

### III. LIFE IN CHRIST (The Inner Life) Chapter 3

A person to person relationship with Christ is the emphasis here. Christ in you, you in Him, 1:27. Being rooted and grounded in Him, you walk in Him, for He is "the Way, the Truth and the Life", John 14:6.

### IV. PERSONAL MATTERS (The Outward Life) Chapter 4

We now want our new life to be seen and felt by others v. 5. This is the way we represent Christ in the world. Christians means "Little Christs." The life in Christ is not only written about by authors, it is demonstrated in the life of everyone who trusts in Him as the only way to salvation. Does your life display this light? It should.

## Questions on Colossians

1. What does it mean in 1:15 when it says that "Jesus is the image of the invisible God"?

## Colossians

2. If “all things were created by Him,” then where do the angels come from? Explain. 1:16-18
3. How is the Gospel clearly articulated in 1:21-23?
4. What does Paul say is the reason for his “proclaiming and admonishing”? 1:28-29
5. On what does Paul insist, so that they will not be deceived by “fine sounding arguments”? 2:1-4
6. What are the component parts of “overflowing with thankfulness” in 2:6-7?
7. What is the warning in v. 8?
8. How does one know God the Father? v.9-10
9. What is the circumcision without hands? v. 11-12
10. How is the Gospel articulated in v. 13-15?
11. What are all religious observances and festivals really intended to demonstrate? v. 16-17
12. What is the warning in v. 18-19?
13. Why are spiritual “Laws” harmful? v. 20-23
14. What happens as we set our minds on Christ? 3:1-10
15. What garment identifies us as Children of Christ? 3:12-17
16. Is 3:18-22 still viable in this culture? Explain.
17. Why the devotion to prayer? 4:2-6
18. What is Tychicus’ spiritual gift? 4:7-9
19. How about Epaphras’? 4:12-13

### **Paragraph Summaries**

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# THE BOOK OF I THESSALONIANS

## Name

This letter of Paul's was written about 51 AD from either Athens or Corinth to the church at Thessalonica, that Paul had just three months previously started.

## Understanding Thessalonians

The theme of the book could be said to be the truth about the second coming of Christ. It seems that the people in Thessalonica, anticipating that second coming during Paul's life, were somewhat concerned about their dead brothers and sisters not being able to participate in this rapturous glory. Paul sets their minds at ease with this epistle.

Paul, accompanied by Timothy and Silas, had spent only three Sundays at Thessalonica on his second missionary journey, but during that time, he had not only founded the church but had firmly grounded it in the faith. In the short time he was there, Paul had created a great stir. His enemies accused him of "turning the world upside down," Acts 17:6. On account of this great stir, the brethren sent the apostle away. He went on to Berea, Athens and Corinth, and we think that it was from one of these last two places that he wrote the letter to the Thessalonians and sent it by Timothy. We know he had only been gone for a short while for he said he was "bereaved of you for a season of an hour."

It is an unprecedented thing even in the ministry of Paul, this establishing of a flourishing church in less than a month. He preached to them for three Sabbath days, although no doubt he continued his meeting with them during the week. But during this very short stay in Thessalonica, a great number of Greeks and women believed, Acts 17:4. He began at once to feed his church with the meat of the Word. He talked of the Holy Spirit, 1:5, of the Trinity, 1:6, and of the second coming of Christ, 1:10.

But then he had to leave because of the pressure of the city leaders. When Paul got to Athens, filled with anxiety about the young church in Thessalonica, he immediately sent Timothy back to them to strengthen their faith, and to bring him news of how they were getting along. By the time Timothy returned, Paul had gone from Athens to Corinth. Timothy brought news that was a great comfort to the Apostle-founder of the church...in that they were bearing their persecutions bravely; but that some had died. Others were puzzled to know how those that died would get any benefit of the Lord's coming, a doctrine that Paul had evidently stressed in Thessalonica. Others, so overwhelmed by the truth of Christ's return, neglected their daily tasks, 4:10-12. Wishing to correct these wrong views and to inspire and comfort these new converts, Paul wrote this epistle.

Incidentally, to view the importance of the resurrection of Christ and his second coming as being all-important, Paul makes mention of the coming of Christ in no less than 21 different places (in both epistles). At the end of every chapter, a special note is mentioned. In view of all this, should anyone raise the question, "Will Christ come again?"

## Purpose and Plan

Naturally the situation at Thessalonica determined in a large measure the purpose of this letter. Thus, Paul wrote to commend them for their faith; to defend himself against the charges of the enemies; to strengthen the bonds between himself and the Thessalonian church; to exhort them to moral purity, brotherly love and diligent application to their daily work. To correct their erroneous views of the Lord's return; and to encourage them to watchfulness, considerateness, and the fulfillment of their religious duties. The following then is the analysis of that plan.

## Analysis

### I. FAME OF THE CHURCH, Chapter 1

- A. An inspiration to young people, v. 1. If you wish to know how to get along with other folks in Christian work, just go over the things that are said by Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is the kind of service the Lord Jesus would have us render in His name. Paul did not try to please men in ways that displeased God. He did not try to capture men by flattery. He was not covetous of what they had. He was not seeking glory for himself in his work. He kept at his task day and night. He always encouraged men.
- B. Giving thanks always for all things. He did not leave those new converts in Thessalonica without some assurances...he told them that even though he was far removed from them, he carried them all in his heart in prayer. Do we do the same for those who are new in the faith? If you find it difficult to speak to others about Christ, try speaking to Him about others.
- C. Examples of what we believe, v. 7. This is what everyone in the world is looking for...Christians who live the Christian life, who act what they believe. This is what this small church did. Nothing was mentioned about the financial condition of their "annual budget." But their faith in God was known everywhere, v. 8. Their missionary enthusiasm in sounding forth the Word of God had been felt all through Greece. They were what every church should be.

### II. PAUL'S CONDUCT AMONG THEM, Chapter 2

Paul gives these descriptions of his ministry to the church with the greatest humility, "not in vain, bold, not of deceit, nor of uncleanness nor of guile, pleasing God, no flattery, for God's glory, gently, affectionate, laboring night and day, backed by holy living, successful in its results." What an example for us to follow. Paul urges us "that ye walk worthy of God," v. 12. A Christian's walk is a Christian's life. An Indian pastor who was worried over the inconsistent lives among some of the flock said to the missionary, "There is much crooked walk by those who make good talk."

**III. TIMOTHY'S REPORT, Chapter 3**

Timothy returns with the news of their steadfastness and devotion, even under persecution. This filled Paul with unbounded joy. In the midst of their persecution and suffering, Paul flashed the light of that wonderful day when they should be made perfect and unblamable, when they shall be changed in a moment, and be holy before their Creator, v. 13.

**IV. IMMORALITY, LOVE, AND THE LORD'S COMING, Chapter 4**

- A. Immorality, v. 1, 8 – Sexual impurity was practiced among the Thessalonians also. Paul warns against this happening in the church.
- B. Brotherly love, vs. 9-12. This was supposed to be practiced, even in the distribution of wealth, but not to the lazy beggars.
- C. Where in the Bible do we find what Christ is going to do for us? Verse 16. What could be done with these words, v. 18?

**V. THE LORD'S COMING, Chapter 5**

He shall come as a thief in the night, without warning, to judge both the living and the dead. We should ever be on the watch. We should not live a life of sleepy indulgence but of wakeful watching, v. 6. The hope of Christ's coming does not mean idleness...activity should be the theme of our lives as we find in this chapter, vs. 16-22. Is yours?

**Questions on I Thessalonians**

1. What, according to the apostle Paul, are the marks of "conversion?" (1:9-10)
2. What are the 10 conditions of a "Manual for Ministers" described in 2:1-12?
3. How must the message of the pastors be accepted according to 2:13-15? Explain.
4. What does Paul mean when he says that "he could no longer stand it"? (3:1-5) Explain.
5. What were the reasons behind the "night and day of prayer" of 3:9-10?
6. What is the "more and more urging" in 4: 1-2?
7. How do we learn to "control our bodies" in sanctification? (4:3-8)
8. What does true "brotherly love" do within us? (4: 9-12)

## I Thessalonians

9. What incredible promises do we have about "end of life issues" in 4:13-18?
10. Why is the "coming of Christ" compared to a "thief"? (5:1)
11. What does Paul mean in 5:7-11 that we "belong to the day," and what hope do we have in this?
12. Who are those who are "over us" and what does this mean? (5: 12-13)
13. What "encouragements" are we provided in 5:14-18?
14. What does 5:19-22 say about the gift and the function of "prophesies"?

### **Paragraph Summaries**

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# THE BOOK OF II THESSALONIANS

## Name

The second epistle of Paul, like the first, was written by Paul to the church at Thessalonica, possibly only a few weeks after he had written the first. In the first epistle, Paul had spoken of the Lord's coming as being quite sudden and unexpected. In this epistle, however, he explains that it will not happen until after the apostasy (definition on page 2).

## Understanding II Thessalonians

This is the second epistle on the "blessed hope," or the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ. These Thessalonians were forward-looking people. Paul talks to them about what is uppermost in their minds and thoughts. The first epistle says, "He is surely coming again." The second epistle says, "But work and wait till He comes."

The second coming of Christ is mentioned 318 times in 260 chapters of the New Testament. From this we can see that the subject is important. We read the prophecies of the Old Testament with deepest interest, to find out about our Lord's first advent upon the earth. We should be just as interested to discover what the New Testament teaches regarding His second coming "in great power and glory." He said He was coming here again. Here are His words: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again," John 14:3. He intended that His disciples should understand that His second coming would be as literal as His going away.

Many believe that Christ will not come again until all the world has been converted, but verses 7-12 of this first chapter seem to destroy this view. Read them carefully and you will find that the thing emphasized is that the coming of the Lord will be a terror for the disobedient, for Christ says, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" What shall He find in our lives when He comes?

## Background

For the history of the founding of the church and the classes of people in it, see under I Thessalonians. It does not seem as if either Paul or any of his helpers had returned to Thessalonica since the sending of the first epistle from Corinth. But the new teaching concerning the Day of the Lord, discussed above, had been brought to them and had caused great confusion. It appears to have originated in some imaginary revelation of the Spirit, a forged letter, supposing to have come from Paul or in oral and written reports from the region where Paul was ministering. It seems that the attack upon Paul and his associates had died down, and that the confidence of the church in them was fully restored.

## Purpose and Plan

The following seems to be the purpose of the epistle:

- I. To comfort the Thessalonians in their persecutions, 1:4-10.
- II. To point out the fact, that though the coming of our Lord and His gathering of us unto Him are imminent, 2:1, the Day of the Lord will not come until the apostasy has set in and the "man of lawlessness" has been revealed, 2:2-10.
- III. To exhort the readers to steadfastness and adherence to the things he has taught them, whether by word of mouth or by an epistle from him, 2:13-3:5.
- IV. To admonish the disorderly and idle to a quiet and orderly walk, 3:6-15.
- V. To give them a token whereby they may distinguish the Epistles from those of forgers, 3:17.

## Analysis

### CHAPTER I – THE DAY OF THE LORD

The particular feature of the Lord's coming emphasized in this chapter is that it will be a day of terror for the disobedient. In I Thessalonians chapter 4, Paul had said that Jesus would descend from heaven, and at the shout of an archangel, all believers would be caught up to be forever with the Lord. Here he adds that the Lord will be accompanied with the "angels of power" in flaming fire, 7, rendering vengeance to the disobedient. Note that in II Peter 3:7, 10, it is stated that the destiny of the earth is to be burned with fire.

### CHAPTER II – THE APOSTASY

The purpose of this Epistle, as brought out in this chapter, is that the Lord's coming would not be right away; but that it would come after the apostasy. Well, what then, is this apostasy? It is called the "falling away," in which a person called "the man of sin," in the temple of god professes himself to be God, and exalts himself against God, 3, 4. A false church headed by an imposter. Some of the early church fathers looked for a personal antichrist, to be manifested after the fall of the Roman Empire.

The Protestant reformers, during and after Luther, being in touch with the terrible corruption of the church in the Middle Ages, believed the Papacy, an institution headed up in a person, usurping to itself authority that alone belongs to Christ and being itself responsible for the prevailing corruption, to have been a manifestation of the man of sin.

In our own times, after 2,000 years of church history, there is still wide difference of opinion. There are many who believe that it refers to a period immediately before the Lord's coming. Yet, the spirit of the thing was already at work in Paul's day, 7. The story of the church as a whole, even to this day, makes a sorry looking picture. Taking a broad general view of the visible church, as it has existed from the first century until today, it is not inaccurate to call it an



## II Thessalonians

apostate church, of which the Papacy thus far has been the worst manifestation. What the future holds, we do not know.

### **CHAPTER III – PRACTICAL PREPARATION IN SERVICE**

The time of this glorious event is left with God. The delay in the Lord's coming gives us real opportunity for service. There are two wrong ideas of His coming: either we become restless and troubled for waiting so long, or grow idle because we know that when He comes, He will right every wrong and overthrow iniquity. We are not just to stand and wait, but rather to have our loins girded for service, making ready for the glorious day of His return. Let us not abandon the work that Christ has given us to do.

Paul gives instruction to the Thessalonians: Stand fast; don't be influenced by false teaching; hold that which you have been taught; don't lose your foundation of truth; comfort your hearts; establish yourself in every good word and work. Then Paul asks for their prayers, 3:1. His heart was burdened and he needed their fellowship. He had great confidence in their faith. Now, as we wait, we find the Lord giving us great opportunities.

- I. Being loyal to Him, 2:15.
- II. Evangelizing the world, 3:1.
- III. Praying for His servants, 3:1-2.
- IV. Patiently waiting for Him, 3:5.
- V. Living a holy life, 3:6-14.

How much more blessed it would be if those "committed" disciples of our Lord would waste themselves on Him while they wait, but sad to say, the majority would rather build themselves names, kingdoms and barns. How is it today or how will it be tomorrow with us? How do we occupy our time?

### **Questions on II Thessalonians**

1. What are the issues about which Paul is "boasting" in 1:3-4?
2. What is the "evidence" Paul is talking about in 1:5-6?
- 3.. When will this "relief" come to the church of Thessalonica? 1:7-10
4. What was not to "surprise" the church of Thessalonica? 2:1-3
5. What are the characteristics of the "Lawless One" in 2:3-4?
6. When will the "Lawless One" be revealed? 2:5-12

## II Thessalonians

7. Of what is Paul giving them assurance in 2:5-12?
8. What are the issues for which Paul is requesting “prayer”? 3:1-4
9. What was Paul trying to accomplish in 3:6-10?
10. What was supposed to happen if the people did not associate with those who were lazy?  
3:11-14

### **Paragraph Summaries**

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# THE BOOK OF I TIMOTHY

## Name

When Paul bade the Ephesian elders farewell, he told them that they would not see his face again, Acts 20:25. But it seems that his long imprisonment in Rome changed his mind, and some 6 or 7 years later he did revisit Ephesus, where he had left his young associate, Timothy. When he saw the conditions there, he told Timothy that he would return to help him solve some of the problems. Since he was detained in Macedonia, he wrote Timothy this first letter so that he would know how to carry out his work. Timothy, by the way, was a native of Lystra; his mother was a Jew, his father was a Greek. He was one of Paul's first converts in Lystra. When Paul returned on his second missionary journey, he took Timothy from his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice (two of the most faithful women in the New Testament). He took him along to Ephesus, to which place Paul wrote this first letter many years later.

## Understanding I Timothy

The key verse in this epistle is 3:15, "that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God." Realizing that behavior is based on belief, Paul stresses sound doctrine.

First and Second Timothy, and Titus, are the three "pastoral epistles" written to ministers in charge of important churches, instead of to the churches themselves. Both Timothy and Titus were given directions for shepherding the sheep, for guarding the churches after Paul should be called "home," as he knew he soon would, II Timothy 4:7-8. Timothy had been entrusted with the government and supervision of Ephesus, and Titus to the church at Crete. How inadequate both of these young men must have felt.

As we hear the shouts of the youth today that the establishment in which we live today is "phony,"....the church is the same, and even the Bible....it is well to note in the first epistle the exact places where the admonitions are really up to date and not so old-fashioned as is sometimes thought. For those who think the Bible is out of date, underline all those things which Paul wrote to Timothy, that apply today. You will be amazed to find how much of the Book you have underlined.

Paul, in his work in Ephesus, had won a vast multitude to Christ. In the succeeding years the number of converts increased tremendously. Within the next 50 years so many of the non-Christians turned to Christ that their heathen temples were almost forgotten. One of the things to remember about this time of the early church is that there were no church buildings. Groups of Christians met in homes. No churches were built until about 200 years after Paul's time; not until Constantine put an end to the persecution of the Christians. This meant that there would be hundreds of small congregations, each with its own pastor. These pastors were called "elders," Acts 20:17. In the letters to Timothy, they are called "bishops." Timothy's work was with these pastors. Since there were no seminaries for training, Paul had to train his own men....but in spite of all these handicaps, the church still grew....because....the Word was taught in its truth and purity. Is the same true today?

## Analysis

### I. FALSE TEACHERS, CHAPTER 1

- A. The false teachers, 3-11. One of the grievous problems Timothy had to face began years before, according to Acts 20:29-30, but was now in full force.
- B. Paul's unworthiness, 12-17. As was true in Paul's life, the closer we walk with Christ, the deeper the sense of inadequacy and humility.
- C. Hymenaeus and Alexander, 19-20. Two ring leaders of the false teachers from whom, in his apostolic authority, Paul had withdrawn the right to church membership (delivered to Satan, v. 20). Could this Alexander have been the same person as mentioned in Acts 19:33, but at this earlier date, a friend of Paul?

### II. PRAYER, AND THE PLACE OF WOMEN, CHAPTER 2

- A. Prayer for rulers, 1-8. Nero was the ruler at this time. Paul encourages prayer for bad rulers as well as good.
- B. Place of women in the church, 9-15. The caution here is against the overdoing of display of dress, especially in worship; and against becoming too much like men.

### III. BISHOPS AND DEACONS, CHAPTER 3

Their qualifications: Probably intended as an ideal, not a legal enactment. "One wife" meant to exclude, not single men, but polygamists. Does "women" in v. 11 mean those holding office?

### IV. COMING APOSTASY, AND A MINISTER'S WORK, CHAPTER 4

- A. Apostasy, 1-5. This passage seems to say that, though the church teaches that the Word of God is the pillar of truth, yet there shall always arise in the church systems of gross error, such as not to marry, abstinence from certain foods and drinks. Visible today to some degree in the Catholic church and portions of Mormonism, such teaching tends to put the emphasis on what man can do, rather than on what God has done for man.
- B. A good minister, 6-16. The best way to combat incipient error is by unceasing reiteration of simple gospel truths. "Reading, exhorting, teaching," 13. The Bible itself will do the job, if only given the chance.

### V. WIDOWS AND ELDERS, CHAPTER 5

- A. Widows, 1-16. The church at Ephesus was about 10 years old and its charity work by the Christians there must have been well organized. Paul stresses in v. 8 that if a Christian could not support his own descendants, he was worse than an unbeliever.
- B. Elders, 17-25. Then, as now, busybodies were diligently whispering against their church leaders, v. 19. This had to be corrected.

### VI. SLAVES AND RICHES, CHAPTER 6

Christianity abolished slavery, not by denouncing it, but by teaching the doctrine of human brotherhood.

## Questions on I Timothy

1. What “kinds” of false teaching or heresy is Paul warning Timothy about in the first verses of Chapter 1, v. 3-4?
2. For whom is the Law of God intended? Why? v. 8-11
3. Is the excuse that Paul offered for his past behavior justified in verses 12-14? Explain.
4. What is the significance of Paul referring to himself as “Chief of Sinners?” v. 15-20
5. What are Paul’s instructions on worship? 2:1-8
6. In Chapter 2, what do verses 9-15 have to do with worship?
7. What are the qualifications of an “overseer” or elder in 3:1-7?
8. How does a “deacon” differ from an overseer in his qualifications? v. 8-13
9. What are Paul’s instructions to Timothy as it relates to spiritual trends in “last days?” 4:1-8
10. What instructions does Paul give to Timothy relative to his life? 4:9-15
11. Why the great section in Chapter 5, v. 1-16 about “widows?” What is Paul’s intent and message?
12. What can we learn from Chapter 5, v. 17-24 about remuneration to church workers?
13. In Chapter 6:1-2, how are slaves to regard their masters?
14. How does clear doctrinal teaching avoid “quarrels and controversies?” 6:3-5
15. How is the “love of money the root of all evil” in 6:6-10, 17-20?

## Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF II TIMOTHY

## Name

The Book of Acts closes with Paul in prison in Rome about the year 63 AD. The common belief is that he was acquitted, returned to Greece and Asia Minor, later re-arrested, taken back to Rome and executed about 66-67 AD. Paul wrote this epistle to Timothy while he was awaiting death.

## Understanding II Timothy

It was in the wake of the great persecution of Nero that Paul was re-arrested somewhere in Asia Minor, II Timothy 4:13, and brought back to Rome by the agents of Rome, not as at first, by the Jews. This time as a criminal, 2:9, not as before, on some technical violation of Jewish law. For all we know it could have been in connection with the burning of Rome. For was Paul not the leader of the people who were being punished for the crime? Had he not been in Rome, for the past two years, just before the fire? Very easy to lay this crime at Paul's feet. But whether that was the charge or not, we do not know. His trail had gone so far that he knew there was no physical means of escape. While waiting in the dark dungeon "for his departure" he wrote his last letter to Timothy, his bosom friend and trusted co-worker, begging him to be faithful in spite of everything.

It is well to remember that this is Paul's last writing. His pen was to be dried forever. This epistle is very personal. He mentions 23 individuals. Although alone and facing death, he yet forgot himself and thought of others. What an example to behold...especially for us who in this life seem at times to be concerned only about us...and forget about others. Besides this attitude there exists no hint of doubt in Paul's mind as to what happens after death. He knew that when that hour would come, he would go straight to the arms of HIM whom he had loved and served so patiently and devotedly. This epistle is an exultant cry of a dying conqueror.

## Purpose and Plan

Paul undertook to relate his own experiences and expectations, and to encourage and instruct Timothy. After the salutation, 1:1-3, he:

- I. Appeals for brave adherence to the Gospel, 1:3-18, and for steadfastness and endurance in the work, 2:1-13.
- II. Gives instruction concerning Timothy's personal ministerial conduct, 2:14-26.
- III. Warns against the grievous times that are coming, 3:1-9.
- IV. Urges Timothy to follow his example, 3:10-13.
- V. Encourages him on the ground of his early training, 3:14-17.
- VI. Appeals for faithful preaching in view of the coming apostasy, 4:1-8.

## II Timothy

- VII. Expresses his longing for fellowship, 4:9-18, and sends greetings, 4:19-22.

### Analysis

#### I. "I KNOW HIM," CHAPTER 1

- A. The life, v. 1. Paul's mind here is on eternal life, "that day."
- B. His prayers for Timothy, 3-5. What a great example in the beginning of every letter, that is, to give thanks.
- C. Paul's assurance, 6-14. That Christ was his Savior, for whom now Paul was a preacher, teacher and apostle. He couldn't help but be.
- D. The disaffection at Ephesus, 15-18. The saddest part of Paul's life, seeing the false teachers take over in Ephesus and then being unable to do anything about it.

#### II. ADVICE TO TIMOTHY, CHAPTER 2

- A. Avoid business entanglements, 1-7.
- B. Endure suffering, 8-12. Yet his mind is on "eternal glory."
- C. Handle the Word properly, 14-21.
- D. Be gentle, 22-26.

#### III. GRIEVIOUS TIMES, CHAPTER 3

- A. Terrible times, 1-14.
- B. The Bible, 14-17. The only antidote against corruption.

#### IV. PAUL'S LAST WORDS, CHAPTER 4

Why did Paul succeed? Because "the Lord stood with me," was his answer. That is why he could fight the good fight. Can we, or dare we?

### Questions on II Timothy

- 1. What issues of encouragement stand out to Timothy from Paul in 1:3-7?
- 2. Why the message of "be not ashamed" in 1:8-18?
- 3. What are the things that would provide "insight" into Timothy's work in 2:1-7?
- 4. What does it mean that "God's word is not chained" in 2:8-13?

## II Timothy

5. Among the warnings of apostasy and unbelief, there is v. 19 of Chapter 2. What is foundational in our Christian life? 2:14-19
6. What specific warnings of entrapment does Paul warn Timothy about in 2:20-26?
7. What according to 3:1-5 will be obvious signs of end-times?
8. What “folly will be clear to everyone” in 3:6-9?
9. Paul endured many difficult times and situations. What is the real basis for this confidence in 3:10-17?
10. What does Paul encourage Timothy to do even when temptation to be lax in teaching happens? 4:1-5
11. Of what was Paul sure in 4:6-8?
12. How were some affected by difficult times? 4:9-14
13. What is God’s promise to all of us? 4:16-18

### Paragraph Summaries

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# THE BOOK OF TITUS

## Name

Titus is not mentioned by name in the Book of Acts. He was a Greek (Gal. 2:1-3) converted under Paul's ministry (Titus 1:4) from heathenism. He apparently lived in Syrian Antioch; at any rate, it seems as if Paul and Barnabas took him along to Jerusalem (Acts 15:2). Some think that since Paul refers to him in Galatians, he must have been well known there. Just on special occasions do we hear about Titus, and then quite briefly.

## Understanding Titus

The importance of good works is stressed in this epistle. Not that we are saved by good works, but saved unto good works, that good works may be a demonstration of our faith. God presents his ideal for the church, its officers, and members.

The epistle to Titus was written by Paul. Titus was Bishop of Crete, a most difficult task, 1:12-13. Paul had given Titus the difficult post before settling the differences at Corinth, tactfully persuading the church to do the right thing in the matter of divisions. Paul's second letter shows how successful Titus was in this mission. Titus was a Gentile. Being one of Paul's first converts, he accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem seventeen years after Paul's conversion.

When Paul heard that Apollos was about to go to Crete, he took the opportunity to send a letter to Titus. It is full of practical advice to a young minister to help direct him in his administration, and to warn him against the heretics of the day. He asks Titus to come to him and report on the condition of the church on the island. Although this was a personal letter, undoubtedly it was read to the church.

## Similarities

Titus and II Timothy, it is thought, were written about the same time, about 65 AD. They deal with the same subject; the appointment of proper leaders for the Christian congregation. Titus in Crete, Timothy in Ephesus; the problem in both places was about the same.

## Analysis

### I. CHAPTER 1, ELDERS

- A. In hope of Eternal Life, v. 2. Paul, like Peter, I Peter 1:3-5, as he neared the end of this earthly road, kept his eyes steadfastly fixed on heaven. It had been an increasing spiritual burden for him to stay alive, to suffer the abuse of the evil ones. Yet he withstood, as we too, even though tempestuous waves of this life seem to want to drown us. Paul is looking steadfastly toward that day when he can be forever with the

Lord, I Thess. 4:13-18, and to receive the crown of righteousness which the Lord would give, II Tim. 4:6-8.

B. Qualifications of an Elder

Practically the same as those given in I Timothy.

C. False Teachers, 10-16

They were an “abomination” and a “reproach” to the people. The “mouths” of the false prophets were to be stopped, not by force, but by the vigorous proclamation of the truth, v. 11.

## **II. CHAPTERS 2 AND 3, GOOD WORKS**

The emphasis that is placed here, again and again, is that we are not justified by our good works but by faith, 3:7. However, we still have an obligation to be “an example of good works,” 2:7, “be careful to maintain good works,” 3:8, “maintain good works for necessary uses,” 3:14. The false teachers were “unto every good work reprobate,” 1:16. Where is our characterization?

# THE BOOK OF PHILEMON

## Understanding Philemon

Christian love and forgiveness are given prominence in this book. It shows the power of the gospel in winning a runaway thief and slave, and in changing a master's mind. This is a book in "applied Christianity," a text of social service.

We don't know whether Paul coveted this honor or not, but tucked away in your New Testament between Titus and Hebrews, you will find a model letter written by a master of letter writing. It is a personal letter from Paul to Philemon. Only one chapter of twenty-five verses but containing such strong and beautiful statements and so well expressed, that it stands out as a gem, even in the Book of Books.

Notice the courtesy and tactfulness of Paul's letter. Our letter writing can be a ministry for God, if we make it so. Some who find it hard to speak to anyone about Christ can write about Him. Then, too, a letter is good for the one who receives it for he has a chance to read and re-read it. Use the pen in witnessing to your friends. Remember all that has been preserved to us of Paul's ministry has come mainly through his epistles. What a heritage his letters are for all Christians today.

In this letter Paul intercedes with Philemon (who was an outstanding member of the church of Colosse), for a runaway slave by the name of Onesimus, who had stolen from his master and made his way to Rome. There he had been providentially brought face to face with Paul and had found Christ as his Savior. He became endeared to the apostle by his devoted service. But Paul knew that he was Philemon's lawful slave and so he could not think of keeping him permanently. So Paul sends him home and pleads with Philemon to take him back. He makes himself personally responsible for the debts that Onesimus owes, asking that they be charged to his (Paul's) account. He wished to save the runaway slave from the severe and cruel punishment he deserved according to Roman law. Paul feels that the slave must encounter his outraged master alone.

This letter deals with the question of slavery. Paul does not demand the abolition of slavery, but he shows that slavery can never be the fruit of Christianity. This beautiful letter from God's aged servant, in bonds for the Gospel, foreshadows the time when the bonds of Christ's love should break the bonds of slavery.

Onesimus was merely one of a world of slaves belonging to a handful of masters. In 300 BC, 21,000 citizens of Athens owned 400,000 slaves. It was not so different proportionately in the days of the Roman Empire, at the time of the writing of this epistle. Roman masters owned from 10 to 200, even a thousand or more slaves, who had no rights of life or liberty.

## Occasion and Date

The runaway slave, Onesimus, would soon find himself in need in Rome. We do not know just how he was brought under the influence of Paul but we know that he was, v. 10. Perhaps one of Paul's co-laborers may have encountered him in the city and have led him to Paul, or Onesimus may have heard of Paul's preaching back home, or since he came to Rome. At any rate, he came into contact with Paul, and Paul led him to Christ, v. 10. At once, Onesimus (whose name means "profitable") turned to waiting on Paul as a true son. He would gladly have kept him in Rome, that in Philemon's place he might minister to him; but he did not feel free to do so without Philemon's consent, vs. 13-14. Furthermore, there was a need for Onesimus to return to his master. He had repented but had not made restitution. Paul felt that Onesimus must return, and Onesimus probably felt the same way. But to send him back was to place him at the mercy of his master. The Roman law practically imposed no limits to the power of a master over his slave. When Tychicus was dispatched to Asia with the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, Onesimus was sent with him. Tychicus would plead with Philemon for the penitent slave. Paul also thought it necessary to write a brief note of personal entreaty and to send it with Onesimus. This is the occasion for the epistle. Since this epistle is so closely connected with the epistle to the Colossians and since the two were sent at the same time, we naturally date the present epistle the same as the epistle to the Colossians – 60 AD.

## Purpose and Plan

(Note: This epistle does not deal with the problem of slavery but it exemplifies, in the tactfulness and teaching of Paul, the Christian way of dealing with a grievous social evil that can't be eradicated at the time.)

Paul's main purpose is to affect a reconciliation between Philemon and Onesimus. With what delicate tact he pleads the cause of Onesimus. After an affectionate salutation to Philemon, to Apphia, who was probably his wife, to Archipus, who may have been his son, and the to the church which met in his house, vs. 1-3, he gives thanks for Philemon's faith toward the Lord Jesus and his love, shown in charitable deeds toward the saints, vs. 4-7. He then presents a series of arguments why Philemon should forgive Onesimus and receive him back, and gives some hints that Philemon might want to set him free, vs. 8-21. These arguments are his authority, his age, his imprisonment, his relations to Onesimus, his relations to Philemon, his offer to pay whatever Onesimus may owe Philemon, and his hope that Philemon will rejoice in his heart. He ends with the statement concerning his prospects and plans, v. 22, and sends greetings from his fellow workers, vs. 23-24.

## Analysis

- I. The Salutation, 1-3.
- II. The thanksgiving for Philemon, 4-7.
- III. The entreaty for Onesimus, 8-21.
- IV. The Apostle's personal affairs, 22-24.
- V. The Benediction, 25.

# THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

## Name

The book of Hebrews was written to the nation of the "Hebrews" whose capital was Jerusalem. It was the intended purpose of the writer to inform these Jews that Jesus of Nazareth was the Savior, revealed to them in Old Testament times; that same Jesus that they had rejected. He was more than Moses, Joshua, David, and even Abraham. He was the "only begotten" of God.

## Understanding Hebrews

We as Christians have that which is better, better in every way. The key word to the book of Hebrews is "better." It occurs thirteen times. There are words in this book that help us in understanding it. Trace the words "eternal, perfect, once, blood, without, better," and the expressions "we have...therefore let us; sat down, and heavenly."

The author of the epistle is unknown. Many have speculated but there is no certainty. Hebrews is attributed to Paul, and although many have questioned his authorship, there is an abundance of evidence in his favor.

This book has been called the "Fifth Gospel." The other four describe Christ's ministry on earth; this one describes his ministry in heaven at God's right hand.

The glories of the Savior are exhibited in this epistle. Our eye is fixed on Jesus, the "author and finisher of our faith," 12:2. He is set before us "crowned with glory and honor in the heavens," 12:9.

This book was written to Jewish Christians, probably of Jerusalem, who were wavering in their faith. Because of the taunts and jeers of their persecutors, the Jewish Christians were beginning to think that they had lost everything – altar, priests, sacrifices – by accepting Christianity. The apostle proves that they had lost only the shadow, but now to be given the substance (Jesus Christ). They were undervaluing their privileges in Christ and were engaged in self-pity and discouragement. They were in danger of even giving up their faith, 5:11-12. They had started well, 6:10, but had not made progress, 6:11. The Christian life is like riding a bicycle; if you do not go on, you go off. The writer is trying to lead them from an elementary knowledge to a mature grasp. He exhorts them to be loyal to Christ. He shows them the superiority of Christianity over Judaism. The writer wanted to keep them from drifting back into their old Jewish rites and ceremonies. They were urged to let go of everything else, in order to hold fast the faith and hope of the Gospel.

The book is also a timely warning and a word of comfort to all, especially in this day when many have so little instruction in the things of Christ and are inclined to be led astray by so many fads and cults. Do we have this solid instructional base or are we being led away by the outward appearance that the established church gives today?

## Date

It seems that this letter was written about 70 AD shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome. It could well have been written by Paul from Rome, because we read in 13:24, "they of Italy salute you." We know that Timothy was a good friend of Paul and according to 13:23, Timothy was with the writer.

## Purpose

We believe this epistle was written to prepare the Jewish Christians for the approaching fall of Jerusalem. It had been about a generation since Jesus had uttered this warning: "This generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished," Matthew 24:2,34. Jewish Christians, after accepting Jesus as their Messiah, continued to be zealous for the Temple rites and sacrifices, thinking, we suppose, that their beloved city, under the Messiah's reign was about to become the capital of the world. Instead, they were about to receive the shock of their lives. By one stroke of the Roman army, the Holy City was to be wiped out, and the Temple rites cease.

This epistle was written to explain to them that animal sacrifices, to which they were so zealously attached, were no longer of any use. That the killing of a bullock or a lamb would never take away a sin; that these sacrifices had never intended to be perpetual; that they were planned to be an age-long picture of the coming sacrifice of Christ. Now that Christ had come, they had served their purpose and passed away forever.

## Analysis

The writer of this letter goes about to establish the supremacy of Christ and Christianity, 1:1-10:18, and then as required by the acceptance of that truth, to warn the readers against apostasy, 6:4-8; 10:26-31; 12:14-19; to encourage them to renewed effort, 6:1-12; 10:19-39; 12:12-17; and to exhort them to make a complete break with Judaism, 12:18-13:17. More in detail: after giving a summary view of his main subject, 1:1-4, the writer sets forth the superiority of Christ to angels, 1:5-2:18; to Moses and Joshua, the founders of the Old Economy, 3:1-4:2. He exhorts his readers to enter into the rest provided, 4:3-16; he expounds the nature and scope of Christ's high priesthood, representing it as after the order of Melchizedek (Genesis 14:17-20), but functioning in the manner of the Levitical Priesthood, chapters 5-7. He contrasts the sanctuary and the service under the Old Covenant with those under the new, chapters 8-9, and legal sacrifices with the sacrifice of Christ, 10:1-18. He admonishes his readers to be faithful to the New Covenant in view of the dangers of apostasy (falling away), their former endurance, the achievements of faith on the part of the ancients and of Christ, the proofs of sonship, and the greater privileges of Christianity, 10:19-12:29. He concludes with exhortations to practice the Christian principles and to separate from Judaism, chapter 13.

## A Point to Note

It is well to notice that angels and human spirits (of those who die) are not the same. Human life is a different order of creation than angels. We do not become angels when we die. Angels are a

## Hebrews

separate creation of God. They are now and always will be, in heaven, our servants, 1:14. Angels worship Christ as we do.

When God wanted to save man from his sin, He did not send an angel, but His Son. God came not in the form of an angel, but in the form of a man. He became Man to redeem man. He suffered as a man, and He died as a man that He might be our Redeemer, 2:10. Jesus tasted the bitterness of death for us in order that He might render the devil powerless – who has the power of death. He came up from the grave with the keys of hell and of death; no longer can the devil lock any of us in death. What a great consolation for the Christian in time of need, when confronted with the frustrations and the problems of life which seem “to chain him in.” As Paul did say, “O death where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory?”

# THE BOOK OF JAMES

## Name

There were three persons of that name; the son of Zebedee; the son of Alphaeus; and the Lord's brother. The last of these is regarded as the writer of this epistle. He does not call himself the brother of Jesus, but only a "slave," perhaps because he felt his weakness too keenly for one who was the blood relation of Christ.

## Understanding James

The law of Christ for daily life is found in the word "doers." "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only," 1:22. The book of James is the most practical of all the epistles and has been called "a practical guideline to Christian life and conduct." This book is the proverbs of the New Testament. It is filled with moral precepts. It states the ethics of Christianity. It is full of figures and metaphors (figure of speech implying a resemblance). It is often quite dramatic in style. It compels real thought. Hebrews represents real doctrine; James presents deeds. They go together in vital Christianity. There is no conflict between Paul and James. Only superficial reading of both would bring out that criticism.

Paul dwells on the source of faith in Christ. James tells of the fruit of our faith. One lays the foundations in Christ; the other builds the superstructure. Christ is both the author and finisher of our faith. Not only are we to believe it but to live it. But although Paul lays great stress upon justification by faith we have noticed that in his epistles (i.e., Titus) he also lays stress on good works. It is an astounding fact that while Paul uses the expression "rich in good works," I Tim. 6:18, James uses the expression "rich in faith," 2:5.

James exalts faith. He says its trial works patience. His epistle opens and closes with a strong encouragement to pray, 1:6; 5:14-18. He only denounces the spurious faith, which does not produce works.

James mentions the name of God seventeen times, but he repeats the name of Jesus only twice. James was bitterly opposed to Jesus and His claims up to the time of Jesus' death, but after the resurrection he was converted by a special and private interview with the Lord (I Cor. 15:7). This adds value to James' testimony as to the deity of our Lord. Immediately he became a man of prayer and was soon made bishop of the church at Jerusalem, Acts 15:13-21. His life's work was to win the Jews and to help them understand Christianity. At the end he was slain by the Jews in 62 AD. Tradition tells us that he was forced to the roof of the temple to denounce and blaspheme the name of Christ. He rather proclaimed the fact that Christ was the Son of God. He was thereupon hurled from the top of the temple to his death.

James tells us that his epistle is written to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, those who live outside of the Promised Land. The Jews to whom he wrote did not cease to be Jews, although they had embraced Christ. Many of them had been converted at Pentecost and had



James

carried home only a partial understanding of Christianity. To continue to edify them, James wrote the epistle.

### **Purpose and Plan**

The author undertakes to meet the needs of his fellow Jewish Christians in the dispersion. After a brief salutation, 1:1,

- I. He admonishes his readers to take a right attitude toward trials and temptations, 1:2-18.
- II. He exhorts them to receive the Word properly, 1:19-27.
- III. He forbids them to show partiality to others, 2:1-13.
- IV. He demonstrates to them the insufficiency of faith without works, 2:14-26.
- V. He warns them against the sin of the tongue, 3:1-12.
- VI. He sets forth the nature of true and false wisdom, 3:13-18.
- VII. He rebukes them for being quarrelsome, worldly and filled with pride, 4:1-10.
- VIII. He instructs them to be considerate toward their brethren, 4:11-12.
- IX. He upbraids them for their attitude and conduct in their business life, 4:13-5:6.
- X. He exhorts them to patience, endurance of the ills of life, 5:7-12.
- XI. He tells them what to do in times of affliction, 5:13-18.
- XII. He points out the importance of restoring an erring brother, 5:19-20.

### **Analysis**

#### **I. CHAPTER 1 – TRIALS – DOERS OF THE WORD**

After the briefest of introductions James plunges into the first section of his letter, SPIRITUAL ARITHMETIC. The arithmetic of the Bible is important and none of us can afford to ignore it. James invited all Christians to “count.” “Count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations,” 1:2. We usually count it joy when we escape temptation and sorrow. Instead, we should count testing as a glorious opportunity to prove our faith. Why we must count it joy is not of the trial itself but what it will work out. In other words, use your trials. What is the purpose of the testing? To make us patient, patient to understand that His ways may not always be our ways...patient to make us understand that He is our God and we His people.

**DOERS OF THE WORD** – Don’t be merely listeners to God’s Word but put the Gospel into practice. What is the good of man saying that he has faith, if he does not prove it by actions? We must not be satisfied with only hearing. We must go on doing, v. 22. If any person is a hearer and not a doer, he is like a person looking at himself in a mirror and then going away and forgetting how he looked, 1:24. Now try this experiment to prove the truth of this statement. Look in a mirror and then turn away. Close your eyes and try to

remember how you look. You can't picture yourself. Now try to recall how your best friend looks. It is easy to remember another face, but not your own. That is the reason James says we must keep looking into the mirror of God's Word to remember how we look, to find out the sin in our life. He who looks carefully into the Scriptures and practices them, will be blessed in what he does. If any thinks he is religious and doesn't control his tongue, this man's religion is vain. The religion that does not influence the tongue is not a true or vital one. An uncontrolled tongue in a Christian is a terrible thing. Guard it. Control your temper. It is dangerous. Under trial, be slow to speak. Keep the draft closed and the fire will go out, 1:26.

## II. CHAPTER 2 – RESPECT OF PERSONS – FAITH AND WORKS

**RESPECT OF PERSONS, 1-13.** The "royal law" spoken of in v. 8 was the golden rule which they were practicing only within the limits of their own social circle. The law of liberty, v. 12, is the law or plan of Christ in which there is forgiveness and liberation from sin. The law of Moses had no such provision.

**FAITH AND WORKS, 14-26.** Doctrines are supplementary not contradictory. Paul very firmly states that it is by faith alone that man is justified. Good works are a response of man's faith. James, saying the very same thing, however, approaches it from the other point of view, saying, "if you do not demonstrate in your faith that you believe, I question your faith."

## III. CHAPTER 3 – THE TONGUE

- A. Power of the tongue, 1-12 – Mean words have wrecked many a home, divided many a church, and sent unnumbered millions to the pits of despair. Yet there are many religious people who seem to make not even the slightest effort to control their tongue. The Book of Proverbs reminds us, "A fool's mouth is his destruction," "he that guards his mouth guards his life," "even a fool when he holds his peace is counted wise," 13:3, 17:28, 18:7, 21.
- B. Wisdom, 13-18. A discussion of the wisdom of man.

## IV. CHAPTER 4 – WORLDLY MINDEDNESS

- A. Origin of wars, 1-2. Covetousness.
- B. Unavailing prayer, 2-3; double-mindedness, 4-19; the tongue, 11-12. self-sufficiency, 13-17. "If the Lord will," v. 15.

## V. CHAPTER 5 – THE RICH – PATIENCE – PRAYER

The rich, 1-6; patience, 7-11; swearing, 12; singing, 13; prayer, 13-18. To win a soul for Christ, 19-20, pleases God immensely, for which He overlooks many of our weaknesses. Compare I Peter, 4:8.

## The First Epistle of Peter

The First Epistle of Peter is the Epistle of hope in the midst of suffering. Some 70 words for suffering occur in it. The Apostle represents suffering as the will of God (4:19); he reminds his readers of the sufferings of Christ (1: 11, 2:21, 23, 5:1) and holds him up as an example to the believers in this respect (2:21: 4:1, 2). He admonishes them to expect suffering (4:12) and not to be troubled by it (3:14), but to bear it patiently (2:23: 3:9), yes even to rejoice in suffering (4:13) knowing that their brothers elsewhere suffer the same thing (5:9). He also points out the value of suffering (1:6, 7; 2:19, 20; 3:14, 44, and warns against suffering as an evildoer (2:20: 4:15). The Epistle is therefore not doctrinal but predominately practical.

### Authorship

This Epistle was universally recognized as a work of the Apostle Peter in the early Church. The internal evidence sustains the external. Once the writer calls himself Peter (1:1) He is well acquainted with the life of Christ and with His teachings. The words "*gird yourself with humility* (5) seem to allude to Christ's girding Himself with a towel when He washed His disciples feet (John 13:3-5) The admonition to *feed the flock of God* (5:2) recalls Christ's words to Peter, "feed my lambs" "feed my sheep" (Jn 21:15-17) . He spends some time over Christ's person in His suffering (2:19-24) and admonished his readers to remember that they are partakers of Christ's suffering (4:13).

Let's provide a brief sketch of Peter's life. Peter is called Simon or Simeon (Acts 15:14: 2 Peter 1:1) was born at Bethsaida. (Jn. 1:44) His father's name was Jonas (Matt 16:17) or John (Jn. 1:42) with whom he and his brother Andrew carried on the trade of fishermen at Capernaum, and where he afterwards lived (Matt 8:14) with his wife and mother (I Cor. 9:5). He was brought to Christ by Andrew and Jesus gave him the name Cephas (Jn. 1:40-42). This was his first call, his call to discipleship. He had two other calls, one to a constant companionship with Christ (Matt 4:19, Lk. 5:10) and another to apostleship (Matt 10:2, Mark 3:14-16). His earnestness and courage marked him from the first as a leader of the disciples. His name always appears first in the list of apostles (Matt 10:2, Mk. 3:16, Lk 6:14) and of the 3 in the inner circle. His life may be studied in two times, the before and after of Pentecost.

### Background and Destination

The Epistle is addressed to as "*the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia*" 1:1. The word "elect" as well as the whole contents of the Epistle indicates that the readers were Christians. But what does "*sojourners of the Dispersion*" mean? James writes to the "*12 tribes which are of the Dispersion*" (Jas 1:1) and these are great Jewish Christians outside Palestine, perhaps of the Eastern Dispersion ; but Peter does not

address his readers as the "12 tribes". It seems clear that he does not have in mind exclusively or even primarily Jewish Christians, for he calls the former state of his readers, "the time of your ignorance" 1:14) and reminds them of Him "who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." (2:9-10). And so we deduce from this that the believers addressed here are predominately Gentiles.

### Occasion and Date

We can learn the condition of these churches only from the Epistle itself. The churches were under the "elders" 5:1. Acts 20:17-35. Some sort of persecution was in progress (3:17) 4:12-19), but there is no hint of martyrdom, imprisonment, confiscations or demands of emperor worship. The persecutions were rather in the form of slanderous attacks upon them as Christians (4:14-15) They seem to have been ridiculed for withdrawing from the licentious shows and amusements of the heathen (4:4-5) they may even have been accused of disloyalty to the state (2:13-17). There may also have been certain tendencies in the churches that caused Peter to write, as the tendency to fall in with the heathen way of living (2:11, 12,) and a greedy and domineering spirit among the elders (5:2-3 16)

### Purpose and Plan

It is highly probable that Silvanus was not only the bearer of the Epistle, but also Peter's scribe (5:12) and that he corrected Peter's dictation. The one "in Babylon, elect together with you" 5:13, is probably some well-known woman in the city, or perhaps Peter's wife; it can hardly be taken as a figurative representation of the church. Peter wrote to encourage the believers in their present trial, to admonish them to live befitting so great a salvation. Stated in his own language, he had written them, "exhorting, and testifying that this is the grace of God" 5:1-1-2) The "grace of God" speaks of the salvation that Paul preached to the churches of Asia Minor, and that Peter also proclaimed. The believers needed to be assured that they were fundamentally right. He chides them to make full use of this grace in their daily lives.

### A Possible Outline

1. salutation, 1:1-2
2. The Certainty of the Future Inheritance, 1:3-12
3. A Befitting Personal Life, 1:13-2:10
4. A befitting Social and Domestic Life, 2:11-3:12
5. A befitting Faith and Conduct in the middle of Persecution, 3:1`3-4:6)
6. A befitting Conduct and Attitude in the Light of the End, 4: 7-19
7. A befitting Relationship Between the Elders and the Congregation, 5:1-11
8. Conclusion, 5:12-14

# THE BOOK OF I JOHN

## Name

According to long-received tradition, John made Jerusalem his headquarters, caring for Jesus' mother until her death, and after the destruction of Jerusalem made his residence at Ephesus, which by the close of the Apostolic generation had become the numerical and geological center of Christian population. Here he lived to a great age. His special care was the churches of Asia Minor. Among his pupils were Polycarp, Papias and Ignatius (for reference to these men, check page 674 of Halley, Church Fathers), who became respectively, bishops of Smyrna, Hieropolis and Antioch. In his old age, he wrote his Gospel, three Epistles, and the book of Revelation near the end of the century.

## Understanding I John

This letter was written by the aged Apostle John in about 90 AD, probably in Ephesus. Unlike the other apostles, he does not address his letter to any church or any particular person. He writes to all Christians, old and young, 2:12-14. He calls Christians by a tender word "teknia" which means "born ones" or "children." God is dealing with his very own born-again children.

John told us he wrote his gospel "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name, John 20:31." He wrote his epistle that those who believe in Christ might KNOW that they have eternal life, 5:13.

Turn to the Gospel of John 20:31 and read it with I John 5:13. The Gospel was written to show men how they might receive eternal life. The Epistle of John was written to assure those who have believed that they HAVE eternal life by believing "that Jesus is the Christ." This first Epistle must have been intended as a companion to the Gospel, because all the way through the Gospel we see the word "believe" repeated, and in the Epistle the word "know" (30 times in this letter).

This Epistle has a confident exultant tone all the way through. John was the disciple whom Jesus loved. He stood close to Him on the cross of Calvary. He looked into an empty tomb on the morning of the resurrection. On Patmos, he was lifted up by the Spirit and saw a door opened into heaven. This one gives us his witness of these facts. We know "that which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life"....Jesus. John gives us evidence of his knowledge. He has heard and seen and handled the Word of Life. He longs to bring his hearers into intimate fellowship with the Father and His Son, that their joy might be full, 1:3,4,7; 2:13-14.

Christ who was God, took on flesh and dwelt with men so they could hear His voice, see His face, and feel the touch of His living hand. This brought God down to man, that we "may have fellowship." To walk in fellowship is to live in agreement. God wants us to have fellowship with Him and in Him to have fellowship with one another, 1:3. HOWEVER, "if we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth," 1:6.

## Occasion for the Letter

This epistle was apparently called forth by the error that had crept in among the believers in these regions and by their need for instruction and warning. Irenaeus tells us about these things. He says, "John, the disciple of the Lord, preaches this faith, and seeks by the proclamation of the Gospel to remove the error which by Cerenthus had been disseminated among men, and a long time previously by those Nicholaitains, who are an offset of that 'knowledge' falsely so called, that he might confound them." Historically, he represents the Nicholaitains as being earlier, at least they were earlier in this region. He identifies them with Nicholaus, Acts 6:5, and says, "they lived lives of unrestrained indulgence. The character of these men was very well pointed out in the Revelation of John as teaching that it is a matter of indifference to practice adultery, and to eat things sacrificed to idols." He represents Cerinthus as having been educated in Egypt and as holding that the world was made by a lesser God, that Jesus was born of Mary and Joseph, that at baptism, the Christ descended upon Him, that then He proclaimed the unknown Father and performed miracles, and that the Christ departed from this life before He died and rose again. Thus the error seems to have involved a claim to superior knowledge by all; on the part of some also the denial of the reality of the body of Jesus; on the part of others, or the permanent indwelling of Christ in Jesus; and at least on the part of some, the open practice of licentiousness.

The internal evidence indicates that some of the errorists had withdrawn from the church, 2:18-19. The believers knew the truth, 2:21, but they tended to love the world and the things of the world, 2:15-17, and to remain indifferent toward their needy brethren, 3:15-18. This was because they were untrue to their light, 2:24-27, and had not entered into the full assurance of salvation, 5:13. They were hated by the world, 3:13, and needed to know the true character of the world, 5:19. Moved by these facts, John wrote this epistle.

## Purpose

John wrote to meet the doctrinal and practical needs of his readers. More specifically, he seems to have had four great purposes: (1) to enhance his own joy, (2) to keep them from sin, 2:1, (3) to lead them to an assurance of salvation, 5:13 and 2:12, and (4) to warn them against error, 2:26. Still more in detail, he (1) affirms the reality of the incarnation, 1:1-4, (2) discusses the practical aspects of the sin question, 2:6, (3) stresses the new commandment of love of the brethren, 2:7-11, (4) exhorts all classes to separate from the world, 2:12-17, (5) warns his readers against false teaching, 2:18-29, (6) admonishes them to live in the light of what they are and what they shall be, 3:1-12, (7) supplies various tests of salvation, 3:13-24, (8) shows how to distinguish between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error, 4:1-6, (9) entreats his readers to practice brotherly love, 4:7-21, (10) sets forth the logical outworking of faith in Christ, 5:1-12, (11) assures his readers of their eternal salvation and encourages them to make full proof thereof, 5:13-17, and then (12) summarizes all the things that the believer really knows, 5:18-21.

## Analysis

### I. **Right Behavior I John 1:1-3:24.**

John gives seven tests of Christian behavior. Read these and find what your rating is as a Christian. They are easy to find because each of these tests is introduced by “if we say” or “he that saith.” The test is this...if we say one thing, and do another, we are not living as Christ would want us to in full fellowship with Him. Let us then take the seven tests:

FIRST TEST: Walk in the Light.

“If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth,” 1:6.

SECOND TEST: Admit that you are a sinner.

“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us,” 1:8.

THIRD TEST: Obey God’s Will.

“He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him,” 2:4.

FOURTH TEST: Imitate Christ.

“He that sayeth he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk, even as He walked,” 2:6.

FIFTH TEST: Love Others.

“He that saith he is the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even till now,” 2:9.

SIXTH TEST: Relationship to the World.

“If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,” 2:15.

SEVENTH TEST: Prove Christ is Righteous By Your Life.

“If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him,” 2:29.

### II. **Right Belief, I John 4:1-5:11.**

Is a creed necessary? Read John 3:13 and see. “Whosoever believeth hath everlasting life.” Christianity without Christ is nothing. It is important what we believe.

### III. **Rich Rewards, I John 5:12-21.**

Assurance of Eternal Life, 5:13....Power of Prayer, 5:14-15....Power of Intercession, 5:16....and Victory, 5:18 and 5:4-5.

# THE BOOK OF II JOHN

## Name

John the Apostle was the writer of this epistle. The other apostles had all passed on by this time. John alone was left, one of the most gifted men of his time...yet an old, old man, the last surviving companion of Jesus. How appropriate, the title, "elder."

## Understanding II John

This letter is a good example of John's private correspondence. It is addressed to an unknown Christian woman. This by the way is the only book in the bible addressed to a woman.

The word "truth" is found five times in this short letter of but 13 verses. It is the key word. "Love" occurs four times. Truth and love are inseparable. We must test all the teachings in the world by the Scriptures, "for the truth's sake," v. 2. This is the final test. Test your experience by the Word of God, but never test the Word of God by your experience.

The truth that John speaks of is from above, the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus. We are to walk in the truth, not just to admire it. Then we will love one another, v. 5. This love is genuine and not subject to change. "The love of Christ constrains us," II Corinthians 5:14. The proof of our love is in our walk. "This is love that we walk after His commandments," v. 6.

## Analysis

### The Doctrine of Christ

"He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son," v. 9. This is the test of the Gospel. Not what I think, or what someone else has thought or said or done, but what has Christ said? What is He to you? Is He really the Son of God? Is He really the ONLY way to salvation? Can you assist Him in your salvation?

Many false teachers were traveling among the churches, vs. 7-11, who would not confess that Jesus Christ was here in the flesh. These were deceivers and an antichrist, v. 7. See also I John 4:1-2. They did not believe in the humanity of Christ. They denied his incarnation. If you call him "Lord" and deny His deity, you are a liar and an antichrist. John says this.

Apply this test to some of the popular religious movements of our day...Christian Science, Spiritualism, Unity, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, and other similar movements. They deny the "Christ doctrine" mentioned here.

Don't be friendly with these false teachers...for they can only lead you astray. For if we entertain them, listen to them, we are thus sharing in their wicked work.



## II John

Concerning this type of fellowship, the Lord and His apostles stress that we “avoid them”...not join, or tolerate, but separate ourselves from when it comes to worship, prayer or confession. If we do not, then we are transgressing His will. (Romans 16:17)

The Apostle wrote to express his appreciation of the loyalty of this lady and her children, vs. 1-4, to entreat the “lady” to walk in love and keep the commandments of the Lord, vs. 5-6, to warn her against the deceivers that were abroad, vs. 7-11, to inform her of his plan to visit her soon, v. 12, and to convey the greeting of the children and of her sister, v. 13. Special attention is given to the hospitality that John prohibits, vs. 10-11.

1. What is the issue that John speaks against in v7-8?
2. What is the warning that John gives about those who come with another “Christ” than the One they knew? v9-11
3. What comfort is v12 to those who read this epistle?

# THE BOOK OF III JOHN

## Name

This letter was too written by the Apostle John about 85-90 AD. It was written to a man called Gaius. Just who this Gaius was we do not know, since three different references to a Gaius are mentioned in the New Testament. Acts 19:29, Acts 20:4 or I Corinthians 1:14 (Romans 16:23).

## Situation

Trouble had arisen in the Church of which Gaius was a member or leader. Itinerate preachers, seemingly sent by John had visited the church; but Diotrephes, apparently an influential layman had spoken against the apostle, had refused to recognize the messengers of the Gospel, and had opposed those who received them. No reason for his attitude and conduct is given, except that he wanted to have pre-eminence. It was probably not doctrinal, although since there were various schisms in the church those days, Diotrephes may have preferred Paul to John. There is, however, not proof of this. This distressing situation in the church led John to write this letter.

## Understanding III John

In this Epistle Jesus is spoken of as being the "Way." The man, Gaius, to whom this was written was a warm hearted friend of John. He was a type of true Christian layman that we wish could be exemplified in more of us, because he was one who dedicated his wealth and talent to the Lord...in other words, he was a good "steward" of all that he possessed. We see his purse strings are loose, and his latchstring is out. All that he has belongs to Christ. He is a picture of the man who has found Christ to be the "Way," and in his everyday life he tries to show that gracious "way" to others. Such men, here and there, have through the years kept not only the church alive in an unfriendly world, but have kept Christ's love burning brightly in the midst of God's people when all seemed dark.

Gaius was noted for his loving hospitality. John urges him to continue entertaining the traveling preachers in spite of bitter opposition of an autocratic and blustering church official named Diotrephes, hindering the cause.

What a splendid thing to be rich and powerful, and to choose to lay all your gifts and talents at Jesus' feet, like Gaius and Demetrius.

## Analysis

John wrote the epistle to express his love for Gaius, v. 1, to assure him of his prayers for his prosperity and health, v. 2, to tell him of his joy at his stand for the truth, vs. 3-4, to commend him for having received the visiting preachers, vs. 5-6, to encourage him to do it again when they return, vs. 6-8, to inform him that he may come and deal with the domineering Diotrephes, vs. 9-10, to commend Demetrius, who was probably the bearer of the epistle, vs. 11-12, and to inform

### III John

him that he hopes soon to visit him to talk these things over face to face, vs. 13-14. Thus we have in this epistle an intimate glimpse into some aspects of Church life in Asia Minor toward the close of the first century.

1. Why is v2-4 special to those whose love of God is displayed in the recognition of their “faithfulness”?
2. What is special about the activity of v5-6, Hebrews 13:1-2?
3. To whom is John encouraging “hospitality” and why? v7-8
4. What are the complicated issues surrounding Diotrephes? v9-10
5. How does Demetrius differ from Diotrephes? (v11-12) What does this mean to us?

# THE BOOK OF JUDE

## Name

The writer calls himself "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James," v. 1. James was the brother of Jesus, therefore, Jude must also have been a brother of Jesus. The Gospel shows that Jesus had a brother by that name, Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3. He is therefore not to be identified with the other six Judes or Judases mentioned in the New Testament: Luke 3:30, Acts 5:37, Mark 3:19, Acts 9:11, Acts 15:22, Luke 6:16 or Acts 1:13.

We know practically nothing about the life of this Jude. He was apparently one of the younger brothers of Jesus, Matt. 13:55 and Mark 6:3. With the rest of the brothers he SEEMS to have disbelieved in Jesus before the resurrection, John 7:3-8. But he was apparently convinced of the deity of Jesus by that event and is found with the other brothers and Mary in the upper room after the ascension, Acts 1:14. He was married, and apparently traveled a good deal, taking his wife with him on his travels, I Cor. 9:5. He probably confined his ministry to Israel, carrying out the general agreement of the Jerusalem Council, Gal. 2:9.

## Quote From an Apocryphal Book?

Many ancient historians and early Church Fathers generally held that Jude quoted from several apocryphal books, and therefore rejected it as being equal to the rest of scripture, God's inspired Word. It was held that at v. 9 the writer quotes from the Assumption of Moses and at v. 14 from the book of Enoch. Philippi denied this saying that Jude merely wrote from oral tradition, and this is possible. The fragment of the Assumption of Moses that has come down to us is broken off before the burial of Moses is reached, and we really cannot tell what followed in the part that is missing. There is great similarity between Enoch 1:9, 5:4 and Jude 1 ff. One commentator admits the possibility of a quotation in both instances. But with regard to the Book of Enoch in particular he says, "Granting such a quotation, the fact does not warrant us to affirm that he indorses the book. Paul cites from three Greek poets: from Aratus, Acts 17:28, from Menander, and from Epimenides, Titus 1:12. Does anyone imagine that Paul indorses all that these poets wrote? To the question from Epimenides, Paul adds, 'This testimony is true, Titus 1:13,' but no one imagines that he means to say the whole poem is true. So Jude cites a passage from the non-canonical book, not because he accepts the whole book as true, but this particular prediction he receives as from God." This seems to be a satisfactory solution to the problem.

## Background

It is impossible to determine with certainty the locality for which this epistle was intended. Jude merely says, "To them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ," v. 1. He admonishes them to build themselves up in their most holy faith, v. 20. The persons addressed were Christians. The contents are such as would chiefly interest Jewish Christians and the Epistle may have been intended primarily for those in Palestine and adjoining countries. But all Christians are before the writer's mind. The evils are those opposed in II Peter, and it does not seem as if both would write to the same people, especially not if Jude is somewhat dependent

Jude

upon II Peter. It seems more likely that Jude was meant for the same people as those for whom the author's brother James wrote his Epistle.

### **Occasion and Date**

Very distressing news had reached Jude as to the state into which some Christians were drifting. Perhaps in his journeys as an evangelist he had learned of the serious condition of these people. He had planned to write them a doctrinal treatise on the common salvation but found it necessary to write about the false teachers and their teachings, v. 3. These teachers had stealthily crept in among the believers, v. 4, and were, generally speaking, abusers of the grace of God and deniers of the Lord Jesus, v. 4. They were sexual perverts, v. 1, haughty ralliers, vs. 8-9, ignorant busy bodies, v. 10, potential murderers, and greedy imposters, v. 11, defilers of church authorities, self-appointed leaders, and empty pretenders, v. 12, wild and aimless wanderers, v. 13, murmurers, complainers and sensualists, v. 19. What an array of wickedness. And it was this knowledge of the presence of these wicked persons that led Jude to write this epistle. Date seems not be later than 75 AD.

### **Fallen Angels**

Here and in II Peter 2:4 are the only scriptural references to the fall of the angels. Rev. 12:9 seems to refer to their later defeat.

### **Purpose and Plan**

In this epistle Jude is much concerned about the "faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints," v. 3. By the "faith" he does not mean the mere trust or mental assent to a doctrine, but that the doctrine, both dogmatic and practical, which has been committed to the church by divine authority and is fixed and unalterable. He exhorts his readers to "contend earnestly" for that faith, particularly now that certain false brethren have crept in among them, vs. 3-4. He reminds them that judgment had fallen upon sinners in the past, vs. 8-13, cites Enoch and the Apostles to show that the ungodly will be judged, vs. 14-19, exhorts his readers to spiritual growth and soul-winning, vs. 20-23, and pronounces the doxology, vs. 24-25.

### **Analysis**

- I. Salutation, vs. 1-2
- II. General admonition to contend for the faith, vs. 3-4.
- III. Historical proof that God judges the wicked, vs. 5-7.
- IV. The stern denunciation of the false teachers and their teachings, vs. 8-13.
- V. The assurance that God will judge the wicked, vs. 14-19.
- VI. Admonition to spiritual growth and soul winning, vs. 20-23.
- VII. The Doxology, vs. 24-25.

# THE BOOK OF REVELATION OF ST. JOHN

## Name

By well-established tradition and in the opinion of the great body of Christian scholars, the author was the Apostle John "the beloved disciple," the most intimate earthly friend of Jesus.

## Understanding Revelation

Revelation is the only book of prophecy in the New Testament. It is the only book in the Divine Library that especially promises a blessing to those who read and hear. "Blessed" is a strong word. Blessed is he that readeth is what the book of Revelation says of itself, but after reading the first chapters about the churches, and the last chapters describing heaven, not many of us read much more.

Revelation presents a glorious reigning Christ. The Gospels presented Him as a Savior, One who came to take the curse of sin from us, but in this last book, we see no humiliation. In one Revelation is the most remarkable book in the whole sacred canon. Revelation tells us about the reign of Christ on this earth which Satan wants to control. It tells of Christ's complete and eternal victory over Satan. It describes Satan's defeat and punishment eternally. It tells more about Satan's doom than any other book. No wonder Satan doesn't want man to read it.

## Unraveling the Riddle

Does Revelation mean riddle? Most people seem to think it does. But it means just the opposite "unveiling." It is written in symbols. "It was sent and signified" by the angel to John. The deaf and dumb have a sign language. Each gesture is filled with meaning. So is every sign in Revelation. There are 300 symbols in this book, and each has a definite meaning. Symbols are wonderful and speak great truths.

The content of the book seems to indicate that most of its events are yet to be fulfilled. The book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, not the revelation of John. It is not the revelation of the growth of the Church and the gradual conversion of the world, but it is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. It was given by Christ Himself to John 1:1-2. The book deals with the return of the Lord to this earth. It describes the readiness or unreadiness of the church for this great happening, 3:20. There are descriptions of the tremendous events on earth and in heaven just before, during and after His coming.

What is meant by the "time is at hand," v. 1:3? Almost 2000 years have passed since these words were spoken, but the idea is the "next on the program." No matter how much time may intervene, the next thing after the day of grace is the kingdom age to be ushered in by our Lord's coming.

There are few people with any imagination who have not sat down and thought, "I wonder how it feels to be king." But Christ says that when He comes, He will make us reign as king, 1:6.

Then those “that pierced Him” shall see Him, 1:7, see also Zechariah 12:10. While that means especially the Jews who openly crucified and rejected Him, it also refers to us...who daily crucify Him with our actions and thoughts.

It has been said that the saving blood of Christ runs through the entire Bible like a red cord. It has also been said that the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ runs through the Bible like a golden thread. We are saved and washed clean in His blood, in order that we may be eager for His return.

## **Background**

When, for his testimony of Jesus, 1:9, John was exiled to the Island of Patmos. While there, he was forced to labor hard in the mines and quarries. Domitian, the Roman ruler in 95 AD was supposed to have sent him there. While he was there, the Lord appeared to him, and directed him to write this book, 1:10-13. No doubt behind the Lord’s command lay the needs of the churches in a day of fierce persecution and of the church of all time since then. It seems as though the “angels” are the ministers of the congregations.

## **Purpose and Plan**

The purpose of the book is by the Holy Spirit Himself declared to be, “to show unto His servants the things which must shortly come to pass,” 1:1. There ought not to be any difficulty about the clause “which shortly come to pass.” God does not reckon time as we do, II Peter 3:8; besides, the New Testament constantly represents the coming of the Lord as near at hand, I Thess. 4:16-17; Phil. 4:5; James 5:8-9; I Peter 4:7. It asks us to watch and look for Him at any time, Mark 13:33-37; I. Thess. 1:10; Rom. 13:11-12; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:28. This clause therefore does not necessarily mean that the fulfillment will begin at once, but merely that we are to look for it to begin at any time. Involved in this general purpose are such immediate aims as the purification, encouragement and fortification of the seven churches, and beyond them the whole Church; and the establishment of God’s people in the belief of the ultimate triumph of Christ and His cause.

As was pointed out earlier, this book is the “revelation of the Person and the Work of Christ.” The verb “gave” (edoken) is a Hebrew word in the Greek and means “granted.” It is not to be supposed that Jesus even in His glorified state did not know the events of the future until the Father made them known to Him. He knew them immediately and completely. The thought is rather that God granted Him this wonderful revelation of Himself in connection with the outworking of His future purpose. Regarding this as the probable meaning of the opening words of the book, we would analyze it as follows:

## **Analysis**

### **I. Introduction, Chapter 1:1-11**

### **II. The Self-revelation of Christ, Chapter 1:12-20**

## The Revelation of St. John

- A. The place of Christ, vs. 12-13
- B. The characteristics of Christ, vs. 13-16
- C. The message of Christ, vs. 17-20

### III. Christ and the Church, Chapters 2-3

- A. The church in Ephesus, 2:1-7
- B. The church in Smyrna, 2:8-11
- C. The church in Pergamum, 2:12-17
- D. The church in Thyatira, 2:18-29
- E. The church in Sardis, 3:1-6
- F. The church in Philadelphia, 3:7-13
- G. The church in Laodicea, 3:14-22

### IV. Christ and the Great Tribulation, Chapters 4-19

- A. The preparations in Heaven, Chapters 4-5
- B. The opening of the Six Seals, Chapter 6
- C. The first parenthesis, Chapter 7
- D. The opening of the 7<sup>th</sup> seal, 8:1
- E. The sounding of 6 trumpets, 8:2-9:21
- F. The 2<sup>nd</sup> parenthesis, 10:1-11:14
- G. The sounding of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet, 11:15-18
- H. The 3<sup>rd</sup> parenthesis, 11:19-14:20
- I. The pouring out of the seven bowls of Wrath, Chapters 15-16
- J. The judgment of Babylon, Chapters 17-18
- K. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb, 19:1-10
- L. The public appearance of Christ and His own, 19:11-21

### V. Christ and His Reign, Chapter 20

- A. The binding of Satan, vs. 1-3
- B. Christ's reign, vs. 4-6
- C. Loosing and final doom of Satan, vs. 7-10
- D. Judgment of the great white throne, vs. 11-15



**VI. Christ and the Eternal State, Chapter 21:1-22:5**

- A. The new realms; The New Heaven, the New Earth, New Jerusalem, 21:1-2
- B. The blessedness of the New Realm, 21:3-6a
- C. The invitation of the New Realm, 21:6b-7
- D. The portion of those excluded from the New Realm, 21:8
- E. Description of the New Jerusalem, 21:9-22:5

**VII. Conclusion, Chapter 22:6-21**