

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness...”

2 Timothy 3:16

We have heard it dozens of times over the years from people in every walk of life about every type of written word imaginable. “I couldn’t live without it...it’s my bible.” The executive assistant may be referring to a daily planner; the auto mechanic to his technical manual; the airline pilot to a checklist; the writer to her thesaurus. Thousands of people every day pick-up well-thumbed books marked with important notes. The expression is given to a work considered authoritative in a discipline or occupation. The Daily Racing Form is considered the bible of horse racing, the Sporting News the bible of baseball, A Dictionary of Modern Language Usage, the bible of the English language.

But the Bible (always written with a capital letter) refers to the sacred book of Christianity. The Bible is meant to be well thumbed, re-read, referred to daily, and never disputed or doubted (although healthy discussion and study are integral to its use). The Holy Bible is the answer to every question, the final word on every issue, the guideline for happiness, and the whole truth in absolute final and perfect form. How could any Christian ever compare something as minor as a manual or textbook to God’s Holy Word?

The Bible is the primary way God communicates with his people. God is so great and wonderful that he has chosen to condescend to communicate with his children. It is similar to a mother talking with her baby. She does not use her highly educated vocabulary in complex sentences, but rather she lowers herself in such a way that the baby is able to begin to understand her meaning. Similarly, the Bible has been written in such a way that little children can understand great biblical principles; however, it also has many levels of meaning, such that, even a

lifetime of study will not avail the most dedicated biblical scholar its full comprehension.

Paul discusses the gospel in 1 Thessalonians 2:4-7 ending his statement with, *“But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.”*

The Bible is God’s inspired word. It was written in three languages, **(Greek, Aramaic & Hebrew)** by **34-40 different authors** in **12 countries and 3 continents**, over a **1400-1800 year period**. Yet, most pastors, teachers and biblical scholars say that there are few, if any,

contradictions. Indeed, when you find what may seem to be a contradiction, a little further study with a good teacher will help clear it up. **We believe that the Bible is the inspired, infallible, inert Word of God. It represents not relative truth, but absolute truth.** The Bible does not change over time with different cultures or different scientific findings. Lastly, you cannot believe that part of the Bible is true and some of it is in error or not true. You must accept that the entire Bible is true or none of it is true.

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic. Aramaic as well as Koine (common) Greek was spoken by Jesus and His disciples. The vast majority of the OT was written in Hebrew and translated into Greek around

250-100 B.C. This translation is referred to as the Septuagint or the LXX. **The NT was written in Koine Greek**, the most popular language in the Mediterranean world around the time of Jesus.

Men wrote the Bible and each word used was inspired by the Holy Spirit. In Bruce Milne's book **Know the Truth**, he states, "Inspiration refers to the way in which God's self-revelation has come to be expressed in the words of the Bible. It is that activity of the Spirit of God whereby he superintended the human authors of Scripture so that their writings became a transcript of God's word to man. To call the Bible 'inspired' is simply another way of saying that it is God's authoritative self-revelation."

1. What does the Bible say about inspiration? Read 2 Timothy 3:16 _____

1.1. Read 2 Peter 1:19-21 _____

1.2. Read Jeremiah 1:5-9 *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations./ Then I said, 'Alas, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, because I am a youth.'/But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' because everywhere I send you, you shall go, And all that I command you, you shall speak. / Do not be afraid of them, For I am with you to deliver you," declares the LORD. / Then the LORD stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me, "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth."*



1.3. Read Isaiah 6:7-8

2. Hermeneutics is the science of interpreting Scripture. In other words the Bible is infallible as correctly interpreted. Therefore certain basic principles must be used (these principles come primarily from Bruce Milne's book, ***Know the Truth***).

2.1. **Scripture must be interpreted literally** (natural & straightforward).

2.1.1. According to the original meaning (relevant to the situation to which it was addressed before attempting to relate it to ourselves).

2.1.2. According to literary form, (poetry, prose, parables, allegory, etc.).

2.1.3. According to context.

2.2. **Scripture must be interpreted by Scripture.**

2.2.1. Interpret according to the purpose of Scripture.

2.2.2. Interpret in the light of other passages on the same theme.

2.2.3. Interpret the earlier in the light of the later and fuller.

2.3. **Scripture can be interpreted only by the Holy Spirit.**

2.3.1. True understanding is not natural to us; it is God's gift. (Matthew 11:25; 16:17)

2.3.2. The Holy Spirit is a corporate Spirit. (2 Corinthians 12:12f). He brings forth understanding to each individually and through his chosen teachers.

2.3.3. God's Spirit is holy. Our understanding is related less to the capacity of our brains than to the extent of our obedience. The opposite of ignorance is not knowledge but obedience. (Matthew 5:8).

2.4. **Scripture must be interpreted dynamically.**



2.4.1. After asking, what did this mean in its own time and context and what does it mean in the light of the whole of Scripture, we must ask, what does this mean for today – here and now in the life of this congregation, that person, and in my own life?

3. The Bible has several sections. Let's examine those parts of the Bible that will help us in using it as a study tool.

3.1. How many total books in the Bible?

3.2. How many books in the OT?

3.3. How many books in the NT?

3.4. Some Bibles have a Preface, a Forward and/or an Introduction. Read these pages in your Bible and record some of the facts you find.

3.5. Look in the back of your Bible. You may find a subject index and a concordance. These are very valuable sections when you are searching for a particular Bible verse(s). If you have a concordance at the end of your Bible, look up the word "scripture." Record the list of verses you find on the subject.

3.6. Many Bibles have other valuable information; for example, maps that provide valuable information during certain times.

Record the other sections in your Bible and list how these sections are used.



4. In the Old Testament Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. These books are referred to as the Law, Torah or Pentateuch. They are, Genesis Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Scan each of these books and record one of the primary features in each book.

4.1. **Genesis:** _____

4.2. **Exodus:** _____

4.3. **Leviticus:** _____

4.4. **Numbers:** _____

4.5. **Deuteronomy:** _____

5. **The second major section of the OT consists of three books** and covers a period of history called the Conquest Period. These books include **Joshua, Judges** and **Ruth**. These books cover over 350 years and span the time from Joshua who took over from Moses to Saul the first king of Israel. **Much of the following information on various books of the Bible (OT & NT) is from The International Inductive Study Bible (NASB compiled by K. Arthur and Precept Ministries.**

5.1. **Joshua.** For years Joshua had faithfully served Moses – and God. How well Joshua understood the meaning of his name, “The Lord is salvation.” All his contemporaries, except Caleb, had died in the wilderness because they had not believed God. But God spared Joshua and Caleb because they had followed Him fully. Now Moses was dead and God had appointed Joshua to lead the children



of Israel into the land of promise. Their salvation from their enemies would not come from the east nor from the west but from the One who made the heaven and the earth!

5.2. **Judges.** During Joshua's leadership, Israel finally entered the land promised to Abraham. There were giants in the land, but none who were greater than God. The Captain of the Host was able to subdue all Israel's enemies. In one battle, the sun even stood still and the moon stopped until the people of Israel avenged themselves on their enemies. Then there arose a generation which did not know war, nor did they know the Lord or the work He had done for Israel. Israel went from victory to defeat and plunged into more that 300 years of darkness. These were the days of the judges, days from which we can learn valuable lessons.

5.3. **Ruth.** The book of Ruth is set chronologically in the midst of the dark years of the judges. It offers encouragement and hope to those who decide to follow God. This story of love and dedication revolves around three people who determine in their hearts to walk in integrity, clinging to their God and His precepts – three people who know who their King is and who do what is right in His eyes.

6. **The next major section consists of six (6) books.** These are **1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles.** These books record the days of the kings of Israel and cover a period of approximately 500 years.

6.1. **1 Samuel.** The days of the judges were dark until God raised up Samuel as a prophet, priest, and judge. Samuel would do what was right in God's eyes. But the people weren't satisfied. They cried, "Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations!" With that plea they rejected the Lord as their King. What would it be like to live under a monarchy rather than a theocracy? The children of Israel were soon to find out as the times of the kings began. The kingdom, at first united, was divided because of the disobedience of the kings. The kingdom divided after King Solomon around 930 B.C.

6.2. **2 Samuel.** The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness. He will not always strive with us; nor will He keep His anger forever. "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him. For He Himself knows our

frame; He is mindful that we are but dust” (Psalm 103:8, 9, 12-14). These are the words of David.

- 6.3. **1 Kings.** David – the warrior, the great king, the man loved but chastened by God – was getting old. At the end of his life many people were vying for his throne. First Kings, which records the final events of David’s life, begins a new era for Israel, one that begins with untold glory and ends with apostasy (abandonment of one’s religious faith). The account of the kings who followed David is full of wonderful but sobering lessons. It is the history of Israel and their God, who made them a people of His own possession.
 - 6.4. **2 Kings.** This book is a continuation of 1 Kings. God is at work setting up and removing kings and kingdoms. You are introduced to His spokesmen, the prophets, who spoke His Word until Israel and then Judah were led into captivity.
 - 6.5. **1 Chronicles.** Judah had watched Assyria capture Israel in 722 BC. In 586 BC, when the Babylonians besieged Jerusalem for the third and final time, Judah lost her temple, the city of David, and the reign of the sons of David came to a halt. All seemed lost. Judah was held captive for 70 years. Then a Persian king, Cyrus, sent out a decree telling the exiles they could return and rebuild Jerusalem and their temple. Having returned from captivity, God’s people had to be reminded of “the events or annals of the days--the years,” and so Chronicles was written.
 - 6.6. **2 Chronicles.** King David wanted to build a house for the Lord, but instead the Lord promised David He would establish David’s house forever and that David’s son would build God’s house. At this point in the record of David’s life the writers of the Septuagint divided Chronicles. Second Chronicles tells of the house of David and of the house that David’s son built for the Lord.
7. **The next three books of the Bible complete the History section. These are Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther.** Counting the five books in the Pentateuch, **the total number of history books is seventeen (17).**
- 7.1. **Ezra.** Every seventh year the land was to lie fallow. This was God’s ordinance to His people, part of His law by which they were to govern their lives. However, for 490 years God’s people had not paid attention to this statute, nor to others. The land had missed 70 Sabbaths. As prophesied by Jeremiah, God would exact 70

years for the land. Then the Spirit of God would move on behalf of His people. He would stir up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, so that Cyrus would send out a written decree proclaiming, “The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up!” (2 Chronicles 36:23). And so a remnant returned from the land of exile to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as an everlasting possession. Ezra tells us what happen.

7.2. **Nehemiah.** Since the third millennium B.C. walls of stones surrounded the cities of the Middle East while guarded gates acted as sentinels opening to or shutting out all who wanted to enter. The city fathers would gather at the city gates to carry out their business transactions and pass their judgments on civic affairs. The condition of the walls of the city was a matter of either pride or reproach. While Ezra gives the account of the rebuilding of the temple under Zerubbabel, Nehemiah (Ezra’s contemporary) gives the account of the rebuilding of Jerusalem’s walls. His account begins in 445 B.C.

7.3. **Esther.** Throughout time people have attempted to destroy the nation of Israel, the “apple of God’s eye.” Why? Because from the Jews came the covenants, the promises, the law, and the Messiah – salvation for the world. The people of God are the enemy of Satan, the prince of this world. While a remnant from Judah returned to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, other Jews remained in the cities of their captivity. Some were welcomed as valuable members of their communities, but other were despised and hated. Some were even targeted for extermination. Esther tells the story. The book of Esther records a ten-year span during the 58-60 year interlude in the book of Ezra. Esther tells us of the inauguration of a feast which has endured over 2000 years because of one woman who, for the sake of her people, was willing to say, “If I perish, I perish.”

8. **The next five books in the OT are referred to as the books of poetry.** David and Solomon wrote four of these books **during the time of their reign.** **Job**, the oldest book in the bible is thought to **be written during the time of Genesis.**

8.1. **Job.** Job is a book born out of pain. Job’s pain was so crushing he wanted to die; he wished he had never been born. His pain was compounded because his friends wrestled with the reason for his suffering. Job’s affliction brought God’s

character and ways into question. Yet ultimately it brought deeper intimacy with God. Job, the first and probably oldest of the poetical books of the Bible, is for those who need answers from God, for those who want to say with Job, “It is still my consolation, and I rejoice in unsparing pain, that I have not denied the words of the Holy One” (Job 6:10).

- 8.2. **Psalms.** Man needs to communicate with God in prayer and in song. He needs to come before Him and honestly present that which is on his heart – whether it be distress or joy, confusion of confidence. David, writer of many psalms, appointed Levites over the service of song in the house of the Lord. They ministered with song before the tabernacle of the tent of meeting until Solomon built the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. Psalms is a book of prayer and praise, written by men but inspired by God.
- 8.3. **Proverbs.** When God appeared to King Solomon in a dream, He said, “Ask what you wish Me to give you.” Solomon asked for an understanding heart so that he could lead the nation of Israel (see 1 Kings 3). In response to that prayer “God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore. And Solomon’s wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt.” The book of Proverbs, which is wisdom literature, is a compilation of true sayings, which give wisdom and instruction. God inspired the Proverbs. Don’t rush through them. Give yourself time for meditation and application.
- 8.4. **Ecclesiastes.** Life seems inconsistent, unpredictable, and unfair at times. No matter the generation, no matter the time in history, the righteous and the wicked have the same experiences, face the same trials, and grapple with the same problems. And all end up in the grave! As people grow older they look back and see what a breath, what a vapor, life is. It passes so quickly. What was its purpose? Was what we strived to attain worth It? Did we live as we should have? “What advantage does man have in all his work which he does under the sun?” (Ecclesiastes 1:3). And what is the conclusion of it all? (Ecclesiastes 12:3)
- 8.5. **Song of Solomon.** Song of Solomon is a love story included in the canon of Scripture. On the eighth day of Passover the Jews would sing portions of the Song of Solomon, a book they compared to the most holy place in the temple. The Song of Solomon is a unified lyrical poem composed of a variety of songs.

There is no other book like it in Scripture. Remember, the phrases may seem different or unusual because of the culture of the Eastern people.

9. **The next 17 books of the OT are the books of prophecy.** These books are divided into two sections, the **Major Prophets** and the **Minor Prophets**. The books of the prophets span over 400 years and **were written during the time of the books of history**. In this section we will review the **five Major prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel)**. They are referred to as major prophets primarily because of the **length** of their books.
- 9.1. **Isaiah.** The messages of the Old Testament prophets addressed the people of Israel and Judah who lived between the years of 840 and 420 B.C. Isaiah is the first of the major prophets. Isaiah's name, Yeshayahu, means "Jehovah Saves". No other prophet gives more prophecies regarding the coming Messiah. Isaiah reveals the Messiah as the Suffering Servant and the Conquering King. Under divine inspiration Isaiah announces and declares things that are coming and events, which will occur in the future so that God's people might know there is no God besides Him.
- 9.2. **Jeremiah.** Isaiah lived and prophesied one hundred years before the Babylonian captivity; Jeremiah prophesied just before and during Babylon's three sieges of Judah. Between these two great prophets there was about a 30-year period when God didn't speak. True prophets were silent, but false prophets were very vocal, proclaiming peace rather than judgment – and the people loved it. Jeremiah's ministry began around 627 B.C.
- 9.3. **Lamentations.** Lamentations is a book of wailings that were read annually by the Jews as a reminder of the fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the temple. They were a reminder of an avoidable tragedy caused by sin – a reminder of a God who judges what who keeps His covenant forever. These expressions of grief were written sometimes between the destruction of Jerusalem and the return of the remnant after 70 years of captivity. Lamentations is a part of the major prophets even though it is relatively short. Some people believe that it was written by Jeremiah.
- 9.4. **Ezekiel.** In 622 B.C. the book of the law was found in the house of the Lord. When it was brought to King Josiah, he wept, for he saw the awfulness of Ju-

dah's sin and knew that God's wrath burned against them. Although Josiah was determined that Judah would walk after the Lord and keep His commandments, the prophetess Huldah told him that after his death God would have to bring judgment upon Judah, for they had forsaken God and burned incense to other gods (2 Kings 22). Ezekiel was eighteen years old when a handful of the nobles and princes were captured by King Nubuchadnezzar and taken from Judah to Babylon. Among them was a fifteen year-old boy named Daniel.

- 9.5. **Daniel.** Daniel's prophetic ministry began and ended in Babylon. When Nebuchadnezzar first besieged Jerusalem in 605 B.C., Daniel, who was about fifteen years old, was among the captives. As Moses predicted, Israel lost her place of supremacy among the nations because she did not obey God. Instead of being the head, Israel became the tail to be wagged by the Gentiles (Deuteronomy 28). Yet, because the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable, when the fullness of the Gentiles is complete, then all Israel will be saved, for the Deliverer will come out of Zion and take away Israel's sin (Romans 11:25-30).

10. The next **12 books are referred to as the Minor Prophets.**

- 10.1. **Hosea.** God had entered into a covenant with Israel. Yet from the time of Jeroboam's reign of the northern kingdom through Jeroboam II's reign, Israel continued to play the harlot. God begged her to return to Him, but she would not listen.
- 10.2. **Joel.** Joel uses a present day plague to call God's people to repentance. As he does this, Joel like the other prophets, warns them of the coming day of the Lord – a day that is as sure as the promises of God.
- 10.3. **Amos.** The northern kingdom consisted of 10 tribes referred to as Israel. Jeroboam 1 was the king and Israel became prosperous and politically secure. However, they had set up golden calves and had their own feast, which were not in accord with God's teaching. After Jeroboam died and (later) Jeroboam II reigned, a shepherd from the small city of Tekoa, just ten miles south of Jerusalem, appeared on the scene. Then the Word of the Lord came.
- 10.4. **Obadiah.** God said that whoever touched Israel touched the apple of His eye. According to Obadiah 1:10-14, Edom had touched God's eye. Edom did not

respond as God wanted, and thus comes this report from the Lord. It came as a word through “the Lord’s servant,” which is the meaning of Obadiah’s name.

- 10.5. **Jonah.** Just before God commissioned Amos and then Hosea as prophets to the northern kingdom to warn Israel of the impending invasion by the Assyrians, He appointed the prophet Jonah to go to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. Fifty years later, Assyria would take the northern kingdom into captivity. The focus of Jonah is not a man trapped in the belly of a great fish; the focus is people engraved on the heart of God.
- 10.6. **Micah.** Micah knew his calling and was ready to fulfill it, for Micah knew his God. What a contrast he is to the prophet Jonah! Micah, whose name means, “who is like Jehovah,” reminds a rebellious people that “the Lord is coming forth from His place.”
- 10.7. **Nahum.** One hundred years had passed since Jonah went to Nineveh to proclaim its destruction. Now another prophet, Nahum, proclaims his vision from God regarding Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. What a sharp contrast between Nahum’s prophetic message and the meaning of his name – comforter!
- 10.8. **Habakkuk.** “The righteous will live by his faith.” This verse, which pierced Martin Luther’s heart and as a result brought about a reformation, is from Habakkuk 2:4. Paul echoed it in Romans and Galatians, but its roots are in the Old Testament, where God affirms that salvation has always been by faith and faith alone.
- 10.9. **Zephaniah.** During the latter years of King Josiah’s reign, Israel was a spiritual oasis which was surrounded by apostasy – an abandonment of faith. Zephaniah’s prophecy came during Josiah’s reign as a stormy blast calling God’s people to humility and righteousness in the face of the day of the Lord’s anger.
- 10.10. **Haggai.** Only a remnant returned to Jerusalem after the 70 years of exile – a small remnant in comparison to the number of people taken captive. They began to rebuild the temple, but soon became discouraged. What was enthusiastically begun was forgotten before God’s house was completed. Then around 520 B.C. the word of the Lord came to Haggai.

10.11. **Zechariah.** The walls of Jerusalem were torn down and the people were not at peace. The temple was only partially rebuilt. Born in Babylon, Zechariah was among the remnant who returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua. Although Zechariah belonged to the priestly line, he, like Haggai his predecessor, was to be God's prophet to the returned and discouraged remnant.

10.12. **Malachi.** Over and over the children of Israel saw that God stood by His word. Just as Solomon wrote in Proverbs, the hearts of kings were in God's hands and He could turn them wherever He wanted. Why then did the remnant of Israel think that they could live and worship any way they wanted once they had returned from their 70 years of exile and had settled again in Israel? Had they grow tired of waiting for the fulfillment of the prophecies which promised that the Messiah would reign as King over all the earth? Had God abandoned them as He had Esau's descendants? Did they think He would allow the heathen nations who had come against them to go unpunished? Or were they entertaining thoughts that God really did not love them, that He would not keep His covenant promises? Whatever it was, once again the remnant became apathetic in their relationship with God. So He spoke one more time through Malachi, whose name means "my messenger".

11. God was silent for over 400 years.

12. **The New Testament.** From the New Bible Dictionary it states: "The NT stands to the OT in the relation of fulfillment to promise. If the OT records what God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, the NT records that final word, which he spoke in His Son, in which all the earlier revelation was summed up, confirmed and transcended. The mighty works of the OT revelation culminate in the redemptive work of Christ; the words of the OT prophets receive their fulfillment in Him. But he is not only God's crowning revelation to man; he is also man's perfect response to God – the high priest as well as the apostle of our confession (Hebrews 3:1). If the OT records the witness of those who saw the day of Christ before it dawned, the NT records the witness of those who saw and heard him in the days of his flesh, and who came to know and proclaim the significance of his coming more fully, by the power of His Spirit, after his rising from the dead."

13. The **first four books of the New Testament are referred to as the Gospels.** They

were written by different men for different audiences even though they record some of the same events. These four books record some of the history of Jesus. **The Gospels are not to be thought of as history books in the classic sense, but rather they represent those thoughts, ideas and truths that God wanted to communicate to His children through His Son Jesus Christ.** The **fifth** historic book is **Acts**. Acts is a continuation of the Gospel of Luke and of course was written by Luke.

13.1. **Matthew.** The author of Matthew wrote this book for the Jews. It includes the genealogy of Jesus, which is important information to the Jews and of less importance to Gentiles. Matthew presents Jesus as a King. Royalty is the theme of this book with full reference to the OT. The book begins with Abraham. God promised Abraham that through his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:15:1-6). Where was this son of Abraham? God promised Isaiah that a child would be born, a son would be given, and the government would rest on His shoulders. His name would be Wonderful Counselor, Might God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. He would occupy the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6,7). Where was this Son of David? No one knew until a baby's cry went up from Bethlehem. The Magi from the East arrived in Jerusalem saying, "here is He who has been born **King of the Jews?**" The One who was to be ruler in Israel (Micah 5:2), the son of David, the son of Abraham, had been born.

13.1.1. Record the theme of this book. Matthew 21:4-5 _____

13.2. **Mark.** Mark views Jesus totally differently than the other writers of the Gospels. Mark portrays Jesus as humble servant. Mark is not writing to the Jews, he is writing his gospel **to the Romans**. The Romans were a people of great strength, actions and deeds. Their question would be, 'What can this Jesus do for me?' Even though Jesus was the King of the Jews, the gospel was not just for the Jews, it was for the whole world. Before Jesus would reign as King of Kings, He would be servant of all by dying for mankind. Mark tells of the works and authority of the One who came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.

13.2.1. Record the theme of this book. Mark 10:45 _____

13.3. **Luke.** This gospel is written **to the Greeks**. Jesus is portrayed as pure humanity or as an ideal man. Luke includes information on Jesus' childhood and family life. His emphasis is on compassion and love. In addition, you will find more details and parables than in the other two books. In Matthew we see Jesus as King of the Jews. In Mark we see the Servant who came to give His life a ransom for many. Then Luke takes us consecutively through the days of the Son of Man. In this book we see the fulfillment of the things written about Him in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms, things that no other Gospel tells us.

13.3.1. Record the theme of this book. Luke 19:10 _____

13.4. **John.** God in the flesh! What would that be like? What would He do? How would He live in relationship to the Father once He came to earth? How would people know He was God? Would He force people to believe in Him? And what about those who refused to believe He is God? And what of those who believed, who followed Him? What would God in the flesh expect from them? And what if they failed? This gospel is very different from the other three and is the most provocative. **John portrays Jesus as absolute deity. His audience is not just the Jews, or the Romans or the Greeks, but the whole world.** His purpose in writing this book is to demonstrate the savior's deity, indeed that Jesus is God. It would be hard for some to believe, but their belief or unbelief would be a matter of life or death.

13.4.1. Record the theme of this book. John 20:30-31 _____



13.5. **Acts.** “I’m going away.” The eleven heard nothing else. The promise of another Helper, the Holy Spirit, fell on deaf ears. The thought that they could do the works that Jesus had done – and even greater – must have seemed preposterous to them. Jesus had died and been buried. But He has also risen! For over 40 days the disciples saw, heard, and touched the Word of Life as He spoke with them of things concerning the kingdom of God. And then once again He was gone, taken away before their very eyes! He left with the promise to send the Spirit and He commissioned His disciples to reach the world. Acts takes up where the Gospel of Luke ends, with the resurrection appearances of Jesus, and goes on to record his ascension, the coming of the Holy Spirit and the rise of the church.

13.5.1. Record the theme of this book. Acts 1:8-9 _____

14. **The next 9 books of the NT are referred to as Paul’s Epistles.** These are messages/ **letters to actual churches** located in various geographical areas. The form of the epistle is the letter. Even though they are addressed to individuals, they are meant for a wider audience. In modern times the equivalent letter would be the ‘letter to the editor’, which is meant to be made public. These letters all begin with greetings and end with final greetings and/or benediction.

14.1. **Romans.** The gospel Paul preached, justification by faith alone, was under siege. While many directly opposed this gospel, others twisted it to suit their own preferences. The Judaizers said salvation might be by grace but the believer is “kept” by the law. They insisted that circumcision was necessary for salvation. At the other extreme, the antinomians taught that you could be saved by grace and still live any way you wanted – even continue in sin. Only a clear explanation of the gospel could refute such errors. Eager to prove the gospel’s power to save and sanctify both Jew and Gentile, Paul, like a wise lawyer, calls the gospel to the witness stand and examines it from every angle.

14.1.1. Record the theme of this book. Romans 1:16-17 _____

14.2 **1 Corinthians.** Sin abounded in the cosmopolitan city of Corinth, the chief city of Greece. Corinth overlooked the narrow isthmus that connected the Greek mainland with Peloponnesus and received ships in its two harbors. At one time it was home of at least twelve heathen temples. The Corinthians were intrigued by Greek philosophy and captivated by the disciplined training and athletic events held at the Isthmus. The worship ceremonies carried out by a thousand temple prostitutes connected with the temple of Aphrodite (the goddess of love) bred blatant immorality throughout Corinth. Prostitutes openly plied their wares and meat markets thrived on sales from the sacrifices offered in the temples. The Corinthians ate well, satisfied their sexual urges without condemnation, flirted with the wisdom of men, and did all they could to keep their bodies as beautiful as those of the Greek gods. After establishing the Corinthian church Paul eventually went to Ephesus, where he stayed for three years. From there he wrote his first epistle to the Corinthian believers, who so desperately needed help and correction.

14.3. **2 Corinthians.** Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, was taught and appointed by Jesus Christ. Strong in faith, confident, and greatly used by God, Paul was loved by multitudes and hated by thousands. Determined that the grace of God would not prove vain, he labored more than anyone. However, Paul's labor was not without cost. He endured conflicts without and fears within. Yet he persevered. What were his conflicts, his fears, his sufferings? Are they similar to yours? And how did he endure? What held him? Paul answers these questions in 2 Corinthians.

14.4. **Galatians.** Galatia is located in Asia Minor. The gospel introduced the Jews to a new way of life – that of grace rather than law. The old covenant with all of its regulations was made obsolete by the new covenant (Hebrews 8:13). This transition was difficult for some Jewish believers to handle, and a group called the Judaizers sprang up. The Judaizers embraced Christianity but said that some of the old covenant rites, including circumcision, still must be observed. The truths in this epistle will liberate you to

walk in that glorious freedom of a righteous life in the Spirit – truths you can glean through careful observation.

14.4.1. Record the theme of this book. Galatians 2:20 _____

14.5. **Ephesians.** Ephesians, the fourth-largest city in the Roman Empire, was the home of the temple of the goddess Artemis, sometimes referred to as Diana. Of all the deities in Asia, none was more sought after than Artemis. But by the time of Paul, Ephesus’s position as a center of trade was lost because the harbor was no longer navigable. From that point on, the worship of Artemis became the city’s means of economic survival. The tourist and pilgrim trade associated with Artemis made many people in Ephesus wealthy. Silversmiths made their living selling images of this goddess and her temple. Innkeepers and restaurant owners grew rich from the large influx of worshipers who traveled great distances to see the temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Even the temple treasure served as a bank, loaning large sums of money to many, including kings. And since Artemis was the patroness of sex, prostitutes sold their bodies without condemnation in the two-story brothel on Marble Road. God sent Paul to live in Ephesus and called out for Himself a church, a light to illumine the occulted darkness of this city. Ephesus is located in on the west coast of Asia minor, what is now know as Turkey.

14.5.1. Record the theme of this book. Ephesians 6:10-18 _____

14.6. **Philippians.** Blocked by the Spirit of God from going into Asia and Bithynia, Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia asking him to come to Macedonia and help the churches there. Confident that God had given him direction, Paul sailed with Timothy and Luke from Troas on a second missionary journey. Philippi, in Macedonia, basked in the fact that it was also a Roman colony which ensured its citizens all the benefits of Roman citizenship. As was his custom, when Paul reached a city he sought out the Jews. While there were not enough Jews living

in Philippi to form a synagogue, the Jews there met for Prayer on the Sabbath. Little did Paul realize that he would end up in prison. God knew there would be a Roman jailer and his family who needed Jesus.

14.6.1. Record the theme of this book. Philippians 4:19 _____

14.7. **Colossians.** Colossae was located twelve miles from Laodicea and about a hundred miles east of Ephesus in the valley of the Lycus River in the southern part of ancient Phrygia, the adopted home of Oriental mysticism. Many Jews, Phrygians, and Greeks came to Colossae because it was on a main trade route. The mixture of backgrounds made the city an interesting culture center where all sorts of new ideas and doctrines from the East were discussed and considered. With all these ungodly influences, it is no wonder that the Christians at Colossae were on Paul's heart during his imprisonment in Rome. He may never have seen their faces, but they belonged to his Christ and he was one with them in spirit. Physically he might be bound by chains, but he could reach them by letter. This was one way he could protect them from the wolves who were out to devour God's flock.

14.7.1. Record the theme of this book. Colossians 2:8 _____

14.8. **1 Thessalonians.** Thessalonica was located in Macedonia (Greece) and is one of the few NT cities that exist today. Timothy joined Paul and Silas while they were in Lystra on Paul's second missionary journey. Since his father was a Greek, Timothy hadn't been circumcised. There was no sense in causing any unnecessary conflicts with the Jews who were in those parts, so Paul had Timothy circumcised. Things went smoothly until Paul had his vision of a man from Macedonia appealing to him to come and help them. After being thrown in prison in Philippi, they remained undaunted and convinced of their heavenly commission. The trio traveled on through Amphipolis and Apollonia and came to Thessalonica. There they found a Jewish synagogue, where for three Sabbaths Paul reasoned with the Thessalonians



from the Scriptures. Jews and Greeks, including a number of leading women, heard and believed.

14.8.1. Record the theme of this book. 1 Thessalonians 2:4; 4:16; 5:2,23

14.9. **2 Thessalonians.** It had been four to six months since Paul wrote his first epistle in A.D. 51 to the church. Their persecution had not subsided, but much to Paul's joy, his labor had not been in vain; they withstood the attacks of the tempter. However, Paul was concerned about some issues in the church. Once again, during his second missionary journey he had to take time to write – and put distinguishing mark on this letter. The church had to know without a doubt that it was from him.

14.9.1. Record the theme of this book. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 (The Parousia - second coming)

15. **The next four books of the Bible are grouped together because they address leaders, pastors and teachers** in the church. These books were written after Paul had established his churches, completed his three missionary journeys and had been attested in Rome. **The form of these books is also the letter.** The books begin with a greeting and end a benediction. **Each book is addressed to a specific person.**

15.1. **1 Timothy.** After 30 years of labor for the gospel, the work had taken its toll on Paul. His body bore the brand marks of a servant of Jesus. However, the intensity of his suffering was minor compared to the intensity of his love and concern for the churches etched upon his heart. Timothy, his faithful co-laborer, was pastor at the strategically important church at Ephesus. Possibly concerned that he might be delayed and that Timothy might need something in writing to set before others as an ever-present reminder, Paul wrote his first epistle to his beloved son in the faith. This epistle would become a legacy for the church and a pillar and support of the truth.

15.1.1. Record the theme of this book. 1 Timothy 3:15 _____

15.2. **2 Timothy.** Timothy is affectionately addressed as “my beloved son.” Because of Paul’s close relationship with Timothy and his concern for the church, he decided to write one more letter to Timothy. This letter reminded Timothy of the crucial matters concerning the ministry and urging him to make every effort to come quickly – before winter.

15.2.1. Record the theme of this book. 2 Timothy 2:1-13 _____

15.3. **Titus.** Titus, a gentile, was one of Paul’s close friends and companion. Titus is mentioned in Galatians 2:1 when he went with Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem. Titus also assisted Paul in the Corinthian church. In 2 Corinthians 8:6 he is urged to complete his collections of funds to support the church. This book addresses church leaders and Christian behavior.

15.3.1. Record the theme of this book. Titus 1:5f _____

15.4. **Philemon.** Philemon was a believer from Colossae and owned slaves. One of his slaves, a man named Onesimus, had run away and found his way to Paul. Under Roman law a slave could be put to death by his master, or he could be sold and the money returned to the original owner. In Athenian law a slave who was in danger of losing his life could seek sanctuary at an altar. This altar could be the home of a private family like Paul. Both Philemon and Onesimus were brothers in Christ.

15.4.1. Record the theme of this book. Philemon 17, 18 _____

16. The previous sets of Epistles were written to specific churches and to church leaders. **This next set of 8 Epistles are referred to as general epistles and were written for the edification of Christians.**

16.1. **Hebrews.** Persecution increased as the gospel spread. The persecution was especially intense for Jewish believers because they had turned their back on the world and its ways and had abandoned the ordinances of the law that Jews had embraced since the time of Moses. This left them in a no-man's land. Jews as well as Gentiles who did not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ could not understand them, nor would many tolerate their newfound faith without challenge or attack. Imagine yourself in a similar situation. What if you were wrong about Jesus Christ? What if He were not really the Messiah? And what about the new covenant? What if it didn't replace the old covenant? What if you really did need a continuing blood sacrifice for your sins? What If?

16.1.1. Record the theme of this book. Hebrews 3:15 _____

16.2. **James.** James was Jesus' half-brother. Full of unbelief and convinced that Jesus was nothing more than his eldest brother, James told Jesus to take His disciples and go up to the Feast of Booths and do His works there. Jesus might have found more disciples there, but James was not to be numbered as one of them – until Jesus rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:7). Convinced from that point on that Jesus was the Christ, James would lay claim not to his physical relationship to Jesus but to his spiritual relationship as a bondservant of the Lord Jesus Christ. James became a pillar of the church, a leader of the council of Jerusalem, and a friend of Peter and Paul.



16.2.1. Record the theme of this book. James 1:2-4

16.3. **1 Peter.** The hour had come for the Shepherd to be smitten and for the sheep to be scattered. Jesus chose to spend His final hours with His eleven, preparing them for the tribulation that would come. After the tribulation had begun and many Christians were persecuted beginning with Stephen's death and continuing through the persecution of Christians by Nero who had blamed the burning of Rome on God's children, Peter began to prepare his followers. Peter wrote his first epistle on the eve of Nero's persecution.

16.3.1. Record the theme of this book. 1 Peter 3:15-18

16.4. **2 Peter.** A fisherman by trade, Peter had been captured and transformed by a Shepherd. Is it any wonder that even in Peter's darkest hour, the welfare of God's sheep was uppermost in his mind? Ever since the day he stood with Jesus by a fire, the morning air full of the aroma of roasting fish, Peter had known the way he would die. But Peter would be faithful. His concern about his death and the way he would die would not override his concern for his Lord's sheep, the sheep Jesus had commissioned him to feed and shepherd. And so, sometime around A.D. 63 or 64, Peter writes "to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours." In A.D. 64, according to tradition, Peter was crucified upside down for the Lord he once denied knowing. How Peter had grown in the grace and knowledge of his God!

16.4.1. Record the theme of this book. 2 Peter 3: 1-9

16.5. **1 John.** As a boy, John thought of Jesus as just a cousin, one of the sons of Aunt Mary, his mother Salome's sister. (His mother, Solome, saw the crucifixion and went to the tomb on Easter morning.) Little did he realize that someday he would be chosen by God to be one of His twelve apostles. He had been known as a "son of thunder" (Mark 3:17); but a transformation had taken place. Now he



was called “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” John wrote his first epistle to protect his children from a deception that could darken their understanding if they were not warned about the brewing storm of gnosticism – a teaching which could keep them from having fellowship with him (1 John 1:3). (Gnosticism is a belief in dualism, i.e., the belief that matter (world) was evil, and was totally separate from and in opposition to the world of spirit.)

16.5.1. Record the theme of this book. 1 John 3: 11-18 _____

16.6. **2 John.** A caring father can’t ignore something that threatens his children. So around A.D. 90 the paternal apostle John sat down to write another epistle. It is short, to the point, and needful – even today.

16.6.1. Record the theme of this book. 2 John 4-6 _____

16.7. **3 John.** Love cares about the individual. Love encourages. Love rebukes. Love walks in truth. And so, in love, John wrote a third epistle before he was exiled to Patmos, where he wrote Revelation.

16.7.1. Record the theme of this book. 3 John 5-8 (the writer praises Gaius); 3 John 9-10 (the writer denounces Diotrephes) _____

16.8. **Jude.** Jude had to speak up. He had intended to write one thing, but was compelled to write another. Jude wasn’t an apostle and wasn’t a pillar in the church, like his brother James. Although he was the half-brother of Jesus Christ, Jude did not claim any relationship to Jesus Christ other than that of being His bond-servant. Initially Jude didn’t believe in Jesus (John 7:5), but finally he saw Jesus as He was – the Son of God – and then he understood; Jude had grown up in

the presence of the One who came to save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). No wonder Jude had to write what he did!

16.8.1. Record the theme of this book. 2 Timothy 2:1-13 _____

17. **The last book is the book of Revelation.** This book foretells the future. John, one of the sons of Zebedee, identifies himself throughout his Gospel not by his name, but as “the one whom Jesus loved.” John walked in faith, taking Jesus at His word, and was secure in His love. Therefore, when John was banished to the Isle of Patmos (and, according to tradition, submerged in a cauldron of hot oil), he remained steadfast in Jesus’ love. While John was on Patmos, God unveiled to him the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and what soon would come to pass – a revelation unparalleled, the last to be given. It was about A.D. 95. With John’s revelation the New Testament canon of Scripture would be complete. The church could be secure. Every prophecy would be fulfilled, just as God had said.

17.1. Record the theme of this book. Revelation 1:19

18. **Bible Study Tools.** Bible study tools are books that help teachers and students gain a better, often in depth understanding of Bible teachings. These tools are Bible Dictionaries, Bible Atlas, Commentaries, Reference books, etc. During class, or at one of our socials, we will show you these tools in case you have some interest in purchasing them for your own personal libraries. The Internet is also a source of information when you are doing Bible study. If you have the gift of teaching from the Holy Spirit, it would be advisable for you to visit Christian book stores, church libraries and find a Bible teacher mentor that can help you in your future study.



During the week read/sing the following song as a reminder of this lesson.

Thy Word Have I Hid In My Heart - Ernest O. Sellers

Thy Word is a lamp to my feet, a light to my path always; to guide and to save me from sin and show me the heav'nly way. Forever, O Lord, is Thy word; established and fixed on high; Thy faithfulness unto all men; abideth forever nigh. At morning, at noon, and at night I ever will give Thee praise; for Thou art my portion, O lord, and shall be thru all my days! Thro' Him whom Thy Word hath foretold, the Savior and Morning Star, salvation and peace have been brought to those who have strayed afar. Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.



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