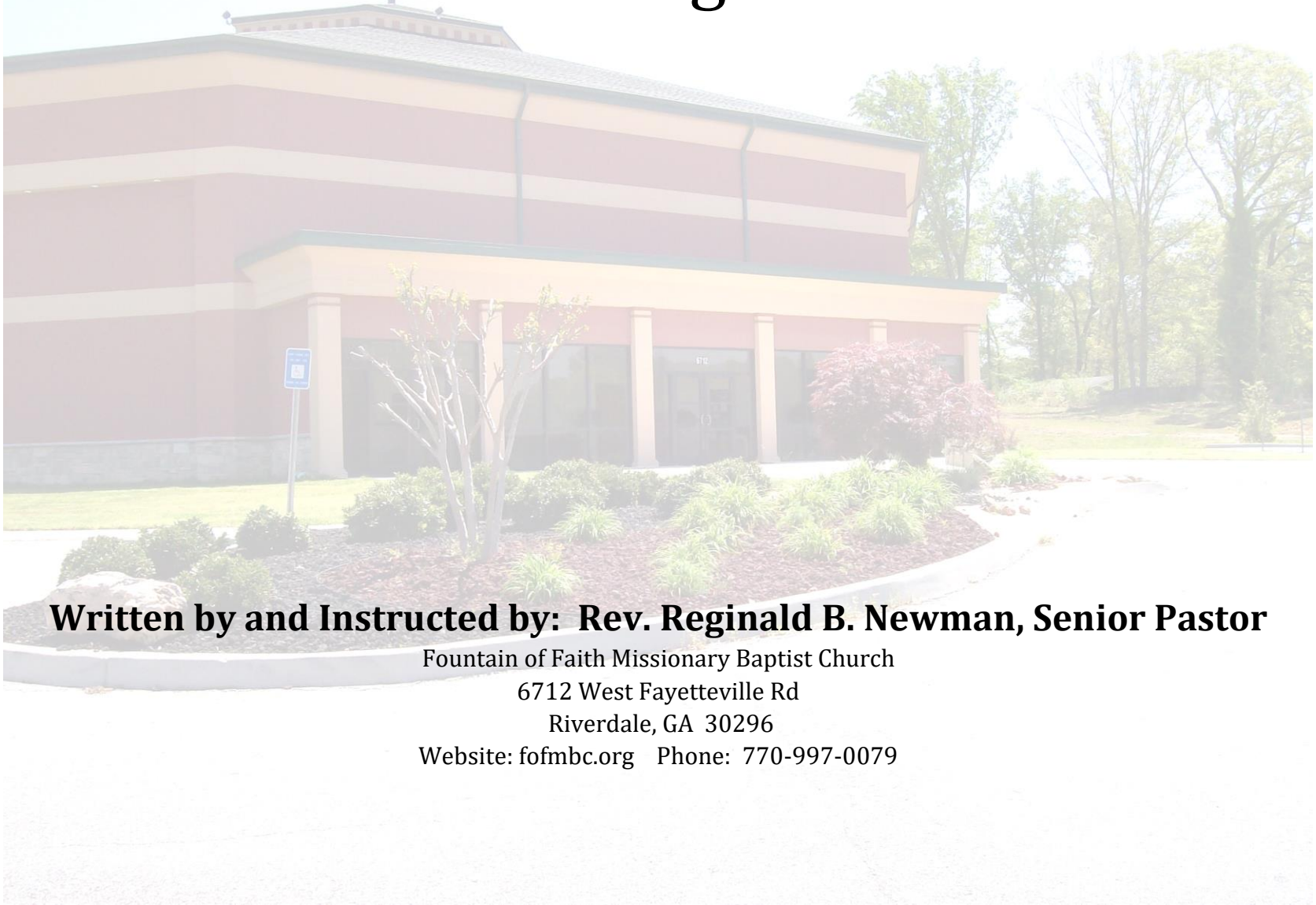


The Bible: Making It Make Sense



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Purpose of the Bible

The purpose of this Bible study is to provide a basic understanding of God's word, and to assist the reader/student in an orderly approach to studying the Bible. This course of study will consist of instructional classes and some self-test opportunities to gauge the level of comprehension of God's word. I'm requiring that individuals would sign up for classes and make a commitment to study. These classes will provide an option of in-person/ and or virtual attendance. The New International version of the Bible (NLT) will be used for this study. Please note that the virtual aspect of these classes will be limited to electronic feedback only.

Make It Make Sense An Overview of the Bible

The word "Bible" comes from the Latin and Greek words meaning "book," and it is a fitting name, because the Bible is a book for everyone. The Bible is not just one book, but it is an entire library of books. The Bible contains, but is not limited to the following subject matter: history, poetry, prophecy, philosophy, biographies, and personal letters, but more than that the Bible is God's Word. The Bible has a total of sixty-six (66) books, there are thirty-nine (39) books in the Old Testament and twenty-seven (27) books in the New Testament.

In terms of its purpose, the Bible is the revelation of God to humanity. The creator of the universe reveals Himself to the created, and the Bible gives clear and direct instructions on how to be properly related to God. Additionally, the Bible teaches us how to be in proper relationship with and with one another, and with ourselves. The Bible tells us we are sinners and that God has provided a plan of salvation through Jesus the Christ. (John 3:16) **"For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."** (NLT) Additionally the Bible, provides us with a comprehensive purpose statement. (2nd Timothy 3:15-17) **"You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive salvation that comes from trusting Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip His people to do every good work."** (NLT)

I believe that each of us ought to be able to determine from these verses of scripture that God has left His word for us to be prepared for life.

Table of Contents

Purpose.....	Page 3
Table of Content.....	Page 4
An Overview of the Bible.....	Page 5
Outline of the Bible.....	Page 6
Frequently Asked Bible Questions.....	Page 7
Timeline of the Bible (Diagram).....	Page 8
Basic Timeline of the Bible (outlined).....	Page 9-10
The Story of the Old Testament.....	Page 11-12
Brief Summary 66 Books.....	Page 13-17
The Story of the New Testament.....	Page 18-20
Seven Great Doctrines of the Bible.....	Page 21-33
The Rapture.....	Page 34-36
Bibliography.....	Page 37
Notes.....	Page 38-42

Overview

The Bible is comprised of 66 (sixty-six) books and is divided into two categories, namely the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word testament simply means a **covenant or an agreement**; therefore, both the Old and New Testaments are God's old and new covenants or agreements with His people. Approximately 40 (forty) different human authors contributed to the Bible, and these authors wrote over a time period of about 1,500 years. The Bible's unity is due to the fact that, ultimately, God is the author. The Bible is God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16).

The human writers wrote exactly what God wanted them to write, and the result was the perfect and divine word of God. (Psalm 12:6) **"The Lord's promises are pure, like silver refined in a furnace, purified seven times over."** (2 Peter 1:20-21) **"Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God."** Jesus is the central figure in the Bible. The Old Testament prophesied that Jesus was coming, and in the New Testament the prophecy was fulfilled with Jesus' entrance into the world. Jesus is more than a man; Jesus is God in the flesh. God almighty became a man to give us a clear picture of who He is and what He is like. John 1:14 **"So the Word became human flesh and made His home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen His glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son."** Jesus is the incarnate word which was made flesh.

Outline of the Bible

The Old Testament books

- I. **The Law:** Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
- II. **History:** Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1st Samuel, 2nd Samuel, 1st Kings, 2nd Kings,
1st Chronicles, 2nd Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.
- III. **Poetry:** Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and The Song of Solomon.
- IV. **Major Prophets:** Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel.
- V. **Minor Prophets:** Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

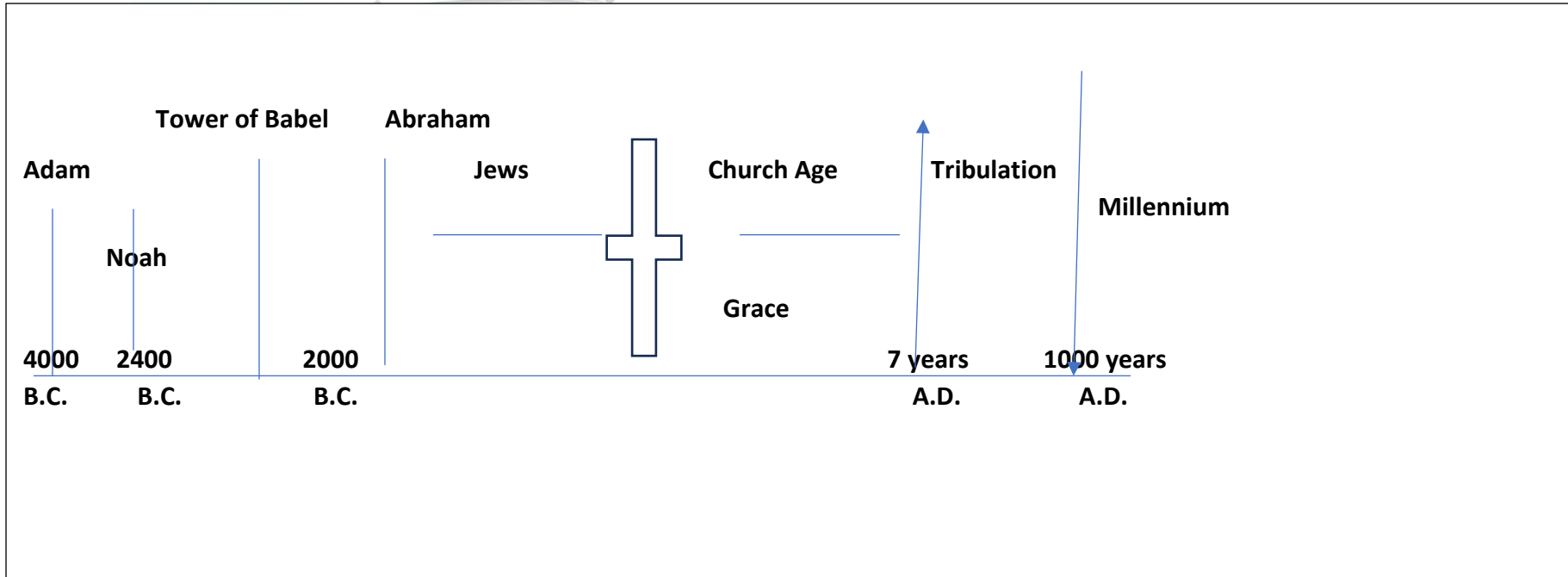
The New Testament books

- VI. **History of Jesus** Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
- VII. **History of the Church** Acts
- VIII. **Pauline Letter to the Churches**
Romans, 1st Corinthians, 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st Thessalonians, and 2nd Thessalonians.
- IX. **Pauline Letters to Individuals**
1st Timothy, 2nd Timothy, Titus, Philemon.
- X. **General Epistles** Hebrews, James, 1st, 2nd Peter & 1st, 2nd, 3rd John, Jude and Revelation

Frequently Asked Bible Questions

1. What is the purpose of the Bible?
2. How do I interpret what I have read in the Bible?
3. What role does prayer play in understanding the Bible?
4. How do I reconcile seemingly contradictions in the Bible?
5. Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people?
6. Can I lose my salvation?
7. What is the best translation of the Bible?
8. How can I explain the Trinity?
9. What is the Christian view of suicide?
10. What is the Bible's view on tithing?
11. Where was Jesus those three (3) days between death and resurrection?
12. What is the difference between Logos and Rhema?
13. How can Jesus be both God and man?
14. What does the Bible say about divorce and remarriage?
15. What are the lost books of the Bible?
16. Why are there four (4) gospels?
17. What does JEDP mean as it relates to the first five books of the Bible?
18. What languages were the Bible written in originally?
19. How long did it take to write the Bible?
20. Why isn't the Bible written in chronological order?

The Bible: Making It Make Sense



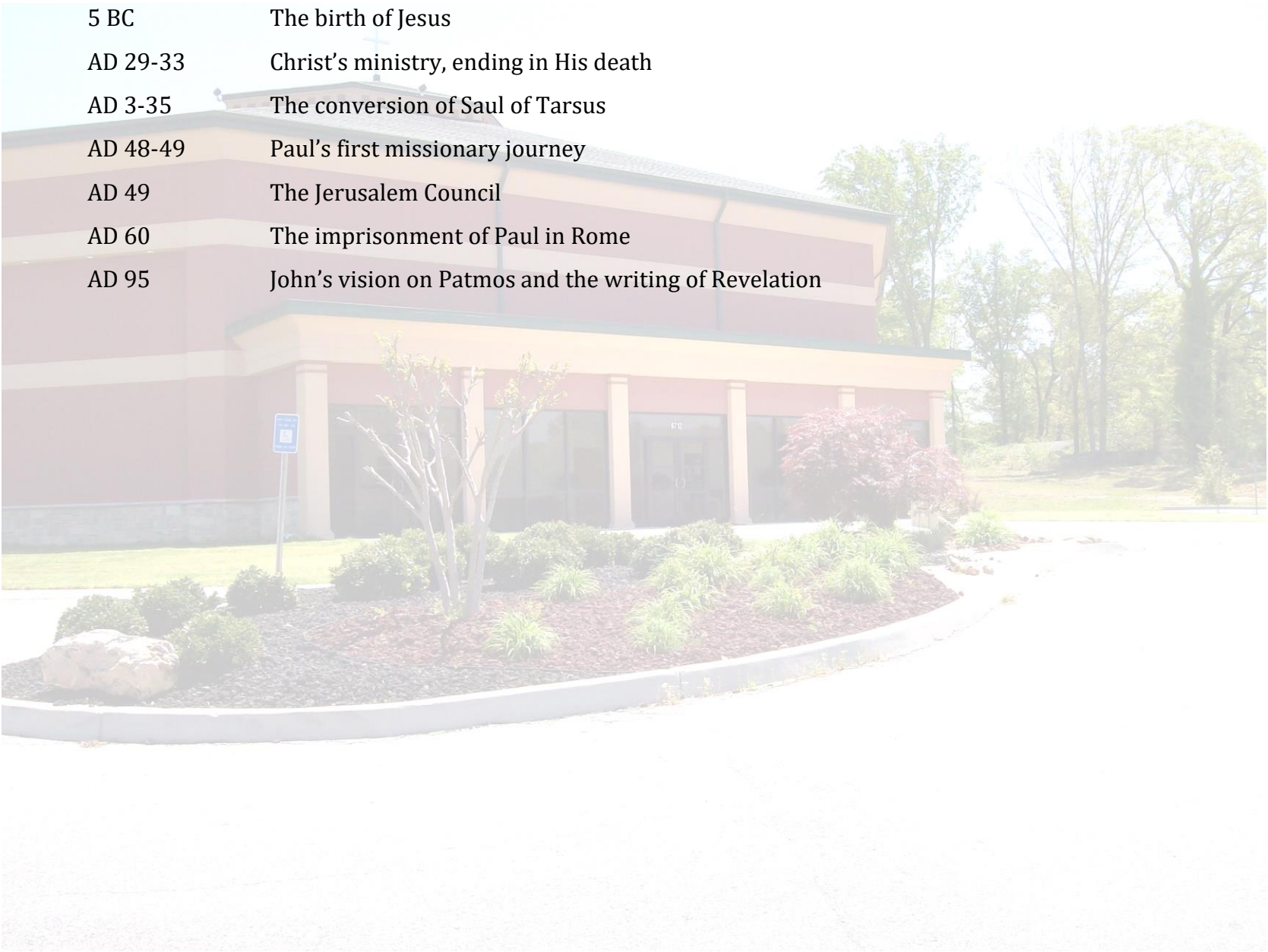
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Let's start with a basic timeline of the Bible

In its most basic sense, the Bible timeline is endless and eternal, as it chronicles creation through the end of ages. The Bible timeline begins in Genesis, 4000 BC and ends with the writing of the book of Revelation approximately AD 95. Some highlights from the biblical timeline are:

4000 BC	Creation of the world
2344 BC	Noah and the ark
2166 BC	The birth of Abram
2066 BC	The birth of Isaac
1526 BC	The birth of Moses
1446 BC	Israel's exodus from Egypt
1406 BC	Israel's entrance to the Promised Land
1383 BC	The death of Joshua
1052 BC	The coronation of King Saul
1011-971 BC	The reign of King David
959 BC	Solomon's temple completed
931 BC	The dividing of the kingdom
875 BC	The ministries of Elijah and Elisha in Israel
739-686 BC	The ministry of Isaiah in Judah
722 BC	The fall of the northern kingdom to Assyria
586 BC	The fall of the southern kingdom to Babylon
538-445 BC	The Jews' return to Jerusalem after the exile
515 BC	The second temple finished



5 BC The birth of Jesus
AD 29-33 Christ's ministry, ending in His death
AD 3-35 The conversion of Saul of Tarsus
AD 48-49 Paul's first missionary journey
AD 49 The Jerusalem Council
AD 60 The imprisonment of Paul in Rome
AD 95 John's vision on Patmos and the writing of Revelation

The Story of the Old Testament

The Old Testament is comprised of thirty-nine (39) books, and of those 39 books there are five (5) categories: **Law, History, Poetry, and Prophecy both major and minor prophets.**

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Books of the Law: | Genesis through Deuteronomy. |
| • Books of History: | Joshua through Esther. |
| • Books of Poetry: | Job through the Songs of Solomon. |
| • Books of the Major Prophets: | Isaiah through Daniel. |
| • Books of the Minor Prophets: | Hosea through Malachi. |

At this point, it's proper to address some additional books that are not included in the Protestant Bible. There are two (2) basic terms we need to address: **apocrypha and deuterocanonical**. The word apocrypha means, *hidden*. The Roman Catholic church has several more books in the Old Testament than the Protestant Bible, and because certain books **do not** appear in the Protestant Bible, we call them hidden or apocrypha. The second word we need to address is deuterocanonical and it means *second canon*. As it relates to Scripture, canon means that *books of the Bible have been deemed as accurate, authoritative, and inspired accounts*. The "Apocrypha-Deuterocanonical" books were primarily written in between the Old and New Testaments.

The books of the "Apocrypha" include the following: 1st and 2nd Esdra, Tobit, Judith, the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, the Letter of Jeremiah, the Prayer of Manasseh, 1st and 2nd Maccabees. as well as the addition to the books of Ester and Daniel.

Be mindful that not all of these books are included in the Catholic Bibles. The nation of Israel treated the "Apocrypha/Deutero-canonical" books with respect; but never accepted them as the true books of the Hebrew Bible. Without delving too deeply in the process of canonization of scripture, the "Apocrypha-Deuterocanonical" books do not meet the requirement of being accurate, authoritative, and inspired accounts. The sixty-six (66) books in the Protestant Bible are recognized as canon, because they have been determined by scholars to be divinely inspired, an accurate account with no

falsehoods, the book evinced (clearly demonstrated) a divine capacity to transform lives, and was accepted as God's word by the people to whom it was first written.

Now back to the structure of the Old Testament. The first five (5) books of the Bible address the **laws** God gave to His people to protect them. The next twelve (12) books reveal the **history** of and the relationships of God's people. The next five (5) books record the **poetry** of God's people. It bears saying that eastern culture does not require poetry to be bound by the use of couplets. Following the poetry era, God sent prophets to instruct His people. The prophets had one job, and that was to clearly, concisely, and correctly proclaim what God had spoken. The final seventeen (17) books of the Old Testament address the **prophecies** God gave to His people via the prophets.

The Old Testament prophets are divided in one of two categories: **major or minor**. The difference between a major prophet as opposed to a minor prophet is the length of the message and not the depth of the message. Prophecy in the Bible is described as foretelling and forthtelling. **Foretelling** is *predictive*, while **forthtelling** is *about envisioning and creating a desired future*.

One mistake that often takes place while reading the Bible is the idea that you are reading a progressive and consistent storyline until you reach the end of the story. However, as you read the Bible you will begin to find that some stories are repeated in different books. You will discover that there is no clearly defined on-going story from the beginning to the ending, because God's message was often times repeated to different generations. The Bible is not recorded in chronological order, but the Bible is written in topical order.

Please remember that Jesus is the central figure of the Bible, and Jesus can be seen in all sixty-six (66) of the Bible. What follows is listing of Jesus' presence in every book of the Bible.

Brief Summary of all Sixty-six (66) books in the Bible, and Jesus' presence in each book.

Old Testament Books

Genesis

God created the universe by speaking everything into existence, and the word that God spoke is Jesus. Remember Jesus is the word of God, (John 1:1. 14) God then creates humans in His own image and places them in a garden. Eventually the man and woman who God created rebelled against their creator, and lose their place in the garden this act of rebellion caused the fall of man. God's remedy for sin was and still is the shedding of blood. An animal was slain and the man and the woman covered themselves in the skins of that slain animal. The blood of that slain animal points to Jesus the Christ shed blood for the remission of sin. In Genesis 3:15 we are given God's eternal remedy for sin, **"Then the Lord God said to the serpent, because you have done this, you are cursed more than all animals, domestic and wild. You will crawl on your belly, groveling in the dust as long as you live. And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."**

There are times when the King James Version of the Bible makes certain things clearer, and the KJV of Gen. 3: 15 ***"And I will put enmity between the serpent and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."*** This verse of scripture is known as the **"protoevangelium"** *'the first gospel'* that was ever proclaimed and it point us to Calvary and Jesus' ultimate victory of the serpent. The idea of Gen 3:15 is, there will be an ongoing battle between Jesus, the seed of the woman, and Satan. (Remember a woman doesn't have seed so this verse is a reference to the Virgin Birth). However, mankind continued in sin; and the rebellion was so severe that God decides to destroy humanity with a flood. God graciously preserves Noah and his family. Later God blesses Abraham and his family. God promises Abraham that generations will be blessed because of his *faithfulness*, and God *promises* to bring a Savior to reconcile humanity to God. **(Jesus is the Word of God)**

Exodus- The Hebrew children are now living in Egypt and forced into slavery. God prepares an Israelite named Moses to lead the people to freedom. The king of Egypt refuses to release the slaves, and God sends a series of plagues upon Egypt. The tenth (10) plague was the death angel, and the death angel killed all these families who did not have the blood of the lamb smeared on their houses. God leads Israel over the Red Sea, and Moses receives the Ten Commandments from God. The law is the basis of a covenant between God and His people. **(Jesus is the Passover lamb).**

Leviticus- God establishes a sacrificial system to atone for the sin of the people. God gives Moses plans for the tabernacle. God commands that the ceremonies conducted in the tabernacle are to be overseen by Aaron, Moses' brother. Aaron was the high priest. **(Jesus is the high priest, lampstand, showbread, and the sacrifice on the altar).**

Numbers- The children of Israel arrive at the border of Canaan, but the people refuse to enter the land due to their lack of faith and fear of the Canaanites. God then condemns them to wander in the wilderness for forty (40) years until the unbelieving Israelites die. Israel was led through the wilderness by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. **(Jesus is the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night).** Exodus 13:21 ²¹ **The LORD went ahead of them. He guided them during the day with a pillar of cloud, and he provided light at night with a pillar of fire. This allowed them to travel by day or by night. NLT**

Deuteronomy- The new generation of Israelites are now ready to possess the Promised Land. In a series of final speeches, Moses rehearses to the new generation what the Lord has done and not to forget God. Moses dies in Moab. **(Jesus is the prophet greater than Moses)**

Joshua- Joshua is Moses' successor, and Joshua leads the children of Israel across the Jordan River and into Canaan. God overthrows the city of Jericho, and Joshua leads the people in a successful campaign to conquer all of Canaan. Every tribe is given an inheritance in Canaan. **(Jesus is the commander of the army of the Lord)**

Judges- Joshua dies and the children of Israel began to turn away from God, and God judges them for idolatry. The Israelites begin to worship the gods of the Canaanites. God allows enemies to oppress His people, and the suffering causes them to repent. This cycle is repeated many times in Israel's history. **(Jesus is the true and final judge)**

Ruth- During the time of the judges, a famine strikes the land, and a widow named Naomi returns to Israel with her daughter-in-law named Ruth. Ruth is noticed by Boaz, and since Boaz is related to Naomi, Boaz marries and redeems Ruth. Boaz and Ruth become the great grandparents of Israel's greatest king, David. **(Jesus is the kinsman redeemer)**

1 Samuel- Hannah, the mother of Samuel, prays to the Lord for a child, and when she becomes pregnant, she dedicates her son, Samuel, to the Lord. Samuel is raised by the judge and high priest Eli. After the death of Eli, Samuel becomes Israel's final judge. The people demand a king and Samuel anoints Saul as the first king of Israel. Saul starts out well, but soon he begins to become *prideful* and *ignore* God's commands. God rejects Saul and directs Samuel to anoint David, a young shepherd, to kill the giant Goliath and become the king of Israel. **(Jesus is anointed shepherd king who kills the giant)**

2 Samuel- David is crowned and unites all the tribes of Israel as one nation. God makes David a promise that a son of his will rule on the throne forever. Unfortunately, David falls into the sin of adultery and tries to cover his sin by having the woman's husband killed. God pronounces judgment on David's house and trouble begins with his family. David's daughter is raped by her half-brother, who is then killed by Absalom David's son. Then Absalom plots to overthrow his father David, and Absalom is killed during a battle.

1 Kings- David dies, and his son Solomon becomes king of Israel. Solomon is blessed by God with wisdom, riches, and honor. Solomon erects the temple in Jerusalem, but later Solomon forsakes the path God ordained for him. Solomon marries many women and begins to worship the gods of his wives. Solomon's son Rehoboam becomes king, but his foolish choices lead to a civil war and the nation is fractured into two kingdoms. Rehoboam remains king of the southern kingdom, and Jeroboam is king of the northern kingdom. **(Jesus is righteous King of kings and Lord of lords)**

2 Kings- The prophet Elijah is miraculously taken into heaven, and Elisha takes his place as prophet to Israel. Wicked kings rule in both the southern and northern kingdoms of Israel, but God raises up some reformers such as Hezekiah and Josiah. Due to Israel's continued rebellion to God, God allows the Babylonians to destroy Jerusalem.

1 Chronicles- A genealogy traces God's people from Adam to the kingdom years, with an emphasis on David's rule in Judah. The rest of the book covers much of the same material as 1st and 2nd Samuel. **(Jesus is the faithful restorer of the kingdom)**

2 Chronicles- Here we find a review of the same material in 1st and 2nd Kings, emphasizing king David's rule in Judah. The temple is rebuilt.

Ezra- After 70 years of captivity in a foreign land, the people of Judah return to their homeland. A descendant of David named Zerubbabel with the assistance of some priest rebuild the temple. **(Jesus is the restorer of the temple)**

Nehemiah- After Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem, Nehemiah servant to the king of Persia discovers that the walls of Jerusalem are in need of repairs. Nehemiah travels to Jerusalem and despite the tactics and schemes to derail his effort, ultimately the walls of Jerusalem are restored. **(Jesus is the redeeming builder of the walls)**

Esther- Esther is a Jewess, but she keeps her identity a secret until God orchestrates a set of events, and God used her and her ethnicity to rescue the nation. **(Jesus is the sovereign protector of His people)**

Job- Job suffers extreme spiritual warfare, and everything he owns is taken; but Job trusted God and he is restored. **(Jesus is the living redeemer and true comforter)**

Psalms- A collection of spiritual songs and praises unto the Lord. The Psalms include worship, adoration, thanksgiving, lament, and prophecy. The most beloved of all the psalms is number 23 where David paints a portrait of the good shepherd. **(Jesus is the good shepherd)**

Proverbs- A collection of moral teachings, and this book is directed to those in search of wisdom. **(Jesus is wisdom)**

Ecclesiastes- A wise older man reflects on life, and what he has learned from his experiences. **(Jesus is the meaning of life)**

Song of Solomon- A dramatic love story is revealed. **Jesus is the loving bridegroom coming for His bride)**

Isaiah- Isaiah is called as a prophet in Judah, and he prophesies the advent of the Messiah. **(Jesus is the promised Messiah, Wonderful counselor, the Mighty God, the everlasting father, and the prince of peace)**

Jeremiah- Jeremiah's life as a prophet was very difficult, but through Jeremiah God promises to establish a new covenant with Israel. God gives Jeremiah a prophecy in which the potter molds clay on a wheel. **(Jesus the potter and the righteous branch)**

Lamentation- A long acrostic, a writing in which certain letters in each line spell out a word, and Jeremiah weeps over Judah. **(Jesus is the weeping prophet)**

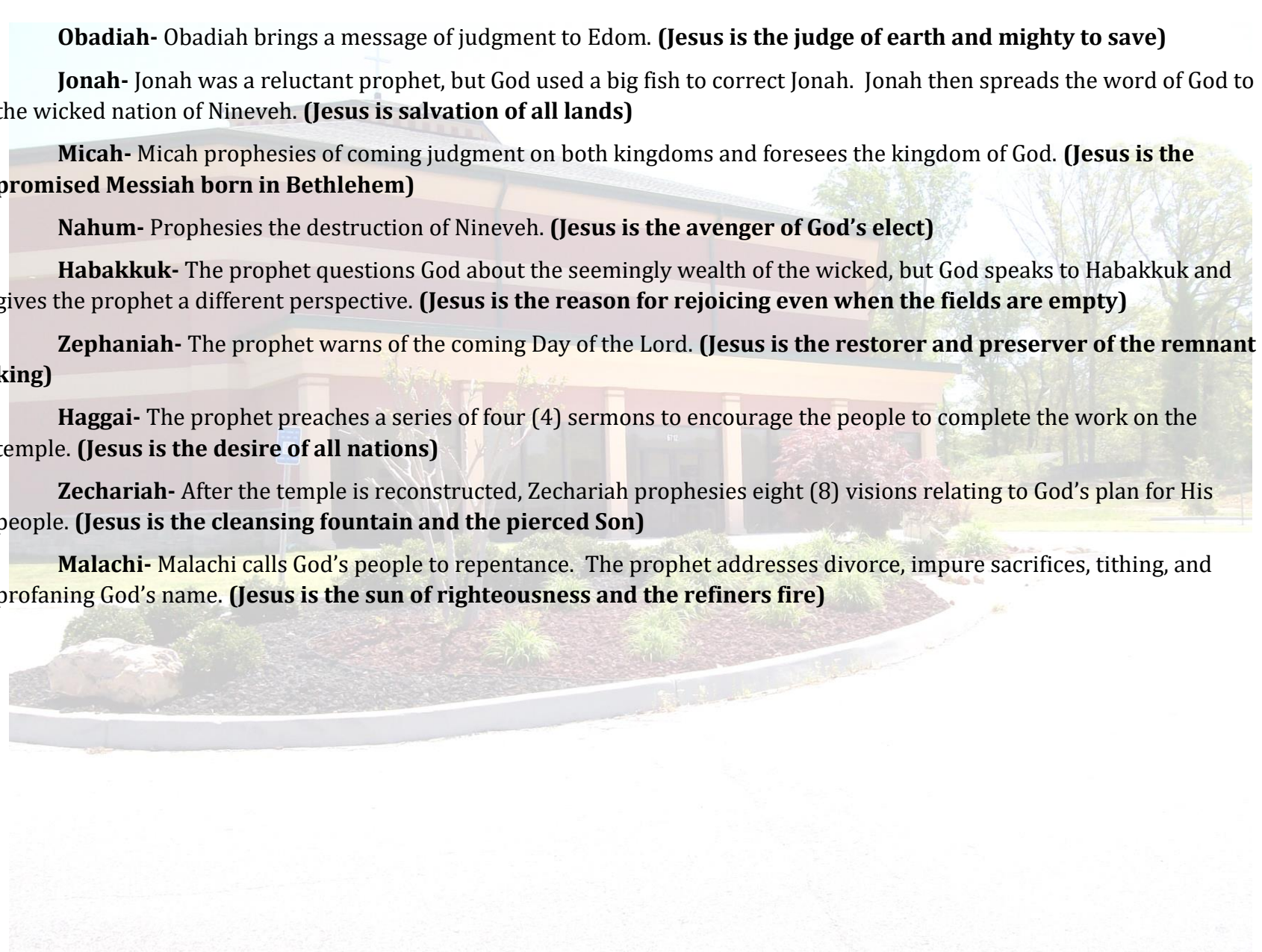
Ezekiel- The written prophecies of Ezekiel a priest turned prophet. Ezekiel addresses God's anger against Judah due to their idolatry. **(Jesus is the river of life bringing healing streams)**

Daniel- Daniel and three (3) of his young friends are taken captive to Babylon, but they remain steadfast to their faith in God. Daniel's friends are thrown into a fiery furnace, and Daniel is cast into a lions' den; but their God delivers them. **(Jesus is the fourth man in the fire)**

Hosea- Hosea's ministry is to call Israel to repentance, and at God's word — Hosea marries a prostitute. The story expresses God never ending love for humanity. **(Jesus is the ever-faithful husband pursuing an unfaithful bride)**

Joel- Joel's ministry addresses Judah during a time of drought and plagues, as reminders of God's judgment on the nation. Joel's prophesied that God would cause His spirit to fall upon both men and women. **(Jesus is the restorer of what the locust have eaten, and the one who pours out His spirit on all flesh)**

Amos- The prophet pronounces judgment against Damascus, Tyre, Gaza, and even against Judah. After the destruction of Israel, God promises there will be a time of restoration. **(Jesus is the burden bearer and true restorer)**



Obadiah- Obadiah brings a message of judgment to Edom. **(Jesus is the judge of earth and mighty to save)**

Jonah- Jonah was a reluctant prophet, but God used a big fish to correct Jonah. Jonah then spreads the word of God to the wicked nation of Nineveh. **(Jesus is salvation of all lands)**

Micah- Micah prophesies of coming judgment on both kingdoms and foresees the kingdom of God. **(Jesus is the promised Messiah born in Bethlehem)**

Nahum- Prophesies the destruction of Nineveh. **(Jesus is the avenger of God's elect)**

Habakkuk- The prophet questions God about the seemingly wealth of the wicked, but God speaks to Habakkuk and gives the prophet a different perspective. **(Jesus is the reason for rejoicing even when the fields are empty)**

Zephaniah- The prophet warns of the coming Day of the Lord. **(Jesus is the restorer and preserver of the remnant king)**

Haggai- The prophet preaches a series of four (4) sermons to encourage the people to complete the work on the temple. **(Jesus is the desire of all nations)**

Zechariah- After the temple is reconstructed, Zechariah prophesies eight (8) visions relating to God's plan for His people. **(Jesus is the cleansing fountain and the pierced Son)**

Malachi- Malachi calls God's people to repentance. The prophet addresses divorce, impure sacrifices, tithing, and profaning God's name. **(Jesus is the sun of righteousness and the refiners fire)**

The Story of the New Testament

The New Testament has different types of books also. In the New Testament, the first four (4) books give us a historical account of Jesus' life. These first four (4) books are called the gospels of the life of Jesus, and they include: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The next book in the New Testament is also a historical book in that the book of Acts describes the history of the church. The apostle Paul is credited with writing a majority of the New Testament, and the next thirteen (13) books are directly and/or indirectly attributed to Paul's penmanship. Paul writes letters (epistles) to churches and individuals. Those letters constitute almost fifty percent (50) % of the New Testament. The New Testament ends with additional letters from various writers. From the book of Hebrews through Revelation we find the last nine (9) books of the New Testament. The New Testament story is mainly about Jesus the Christ, the church he founded, and the growth of the church under the leadership of Jesus' apostles after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

New Testament books

Matthew- Matthew writes to Jews and records the life of Jesus the Christ from the point of view that **Jesus is the son of David, and is the rightful king to rule over Israel.** Jesus is crucified and is resurrected. **(Jesus is the king of the Jews)**

Mark- Mark writes to Romans and records the life of Jesus the Christ from the point of view that **Jesus is the righteous servant of God.** Jesus is crucified and resurrected. **(Jesus is the Servant king)**

Luke- Luke writes to Gentiles and records the life of Jesus the Christ from the point of view that **Jesus is the son of man** who came to save the world. Jesus is crucified and resurrected. **(Jesus is the Son of Man)**

John- John writes to Jews, Gentiles, and all humanity and records the life of Jesus the Christ from the point of view that **Jesus is the Son of God.** John's gospel is universal. Jesus is crucified and resurrected. **(Jesus is the Son of God)**

Acts- After Jesus' resurrection and ascension, He empowers the church through the Holy Spirit. Saul of Tarsus is converted and become the Apostle Paul to the Gentile nation. **(Jesus is the risen Lord bringing salvation)**

Romans- Paul writes this book after one of his missionary journeys, and he reports that the righteousness of God can declare guilty sinners righteous based the sacrifice of Jesus the Christ. **(Jesus our justification and righteousness)**

1st Corinthians- Paul writes to the church at Corinth to give them instructions on how to address problems in the church. **(Jesus is the Rock)**

2nd Corinthians- After the church at Corinth has worked through some problems, Paul writes to encourage the church and to defend his apostleship. **(Jesus is the sanctifier of the church)**

Galatians- False teachers have entered the church, and Paul writes to condemn the mixture of law and grace. **(Jesus is liberation that fulfills)**

Ephesians- Paul writes to the church at Ephesus and teaches that salvation comes by grace through faith in Christ and not our own works. **(Jesus is the head of the church)**

Philippians- Paul writes this letter from a Roman prison, and Paul's goal is to thank the church at Philippi for their love and the gift they sent him. The gospel message is advancing despite hardship, and Christians can rejoice in all things. **(Jesus is joy)**

Colossians- Paul writes to the church at Colosse, and teaches that Jesus is Christ, Savior, Lord, and Creator of all things. **(Jesus is the first born of all creation)**

1st Thessalonians- Paul writes to the church at Thessalonica to encourage and commend them for their steadfastness. Paul tells the church that *The Day of the Lord* is coming, and He will judge the world. **(Jesus is the coming again with a shout)**

2nd Thessalonians- The church is suffering through persecution. Paul assures them that they are not experiencing God's judgment. Paul encourages the church to remain faithful until Christ returns. **(Jesus the believer's patience)**

1st Timothy- This letter is written to Timothy, Paul's son in ministry. This letter is a pastoral epistle, and Paul teaches Timothy concerning the duties and responsibilities of pastoring a church. Paul encourages Timothy to be on guard concerning false doctrine, pray for the membership of the church, train other leaders, and preach the truth. **(Jesus is the mediator between man and God)**

2nd Timothy- In this letter Paul continues to encourage Timothy in the faith, and Timothy must remain loyal to what is important. **(Jesus is the seed of David)**

Titus- This letter from Paul is also a pastoral epistle. Titus is an overseer of churches on the island of Crete. Titus is encouraged to be aware of false teachers, avoid distractions, and model the Christian life because he is an example for other believers. **(Jesus is the blessed hope and faithful pastor)**

Philemon- In this short letter to Philemon, Paul encourages Philemon who is a believer to reconcile his runaway slave Onesimus. Paul asks Philemon to welcome Onesimus back, not as a slave but as a brother in Christ. **(Jesus is the redeemer and restorer)**

Hebrews- The human writer of this letter is debated, and some believe in the Pauline penmanship and others claim an unknown author, but we know that all scripture is God-inspired. The Jewish members of the church are tempted to return to Judaism, and this epistle is written to refute the belief that the law can save. This book encourages members to move on to full spiritual maturity. **(Jesus is the high priest and the finisher of our faith)**

James- In this practical book, James gives us some optics of what faith in actions really looks like. James asserts that faith in God will change our prayer life, our words, our response to trials, and how we treat others. **(Jesus is the one at work in our faith)**

1st Peter- The apostle Peter writes to believers who experience persecution due to their faith in God. Peter reminds the believers that the Lord is with them as they face suffering. **(Jesus is the living stone and the chief corner stone)**

2nd Peter- While facing death Peter writes to the church encouraging them to avoid false teachers, and to live in holiness. **(Jesus is faithful, longsuffering, and not willing that any should perish)**

1st John- The apostle John writes to the church teaching that those who belong to Christ are redeemed, and must walk in the light, confess sin, and obey God's word. **(Jesus is love and the true eternal God)**

2nd John- The apostle John teaches that the Christian life is a balance of truth and love. **(Jesus is the truth by which we walk in love)**

3rd John- The apostle compares and contrast the lives of two (2) men, Gaius and Diotrephes who demonstrate hospitality or the lack of hospitality. **(Jesus is the good and hospitable host)**

Jude- Although the message of the gospel will not change, there will always be those who seek to pervert the message. We are given a great benediction. **"Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault. All glory to him who alone is God, Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! Amen."** NLT. **(Jesus is He who keeps us from falling and stumbling)**

Revelation- Jesus reveals to the apostle John, future events. The key to the book is in Chapter 1: 19 **"Write down what you have seen-both the things that are now happening and the things that will happen."** NLT. The end times will be marked by an increase in wickedness, the rise of the Antichrist's one world government, and Satan will unleash his wrath on the people of the earth. Finally, the Lamb of God returns to earth with the armies of heaven, defeating Satan, the Antichrist, and wickedness of every generation. **(Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the slain lamb, and the King of kings)**

Seven Great Doctrines of the Bible

1. Scripture – (Bibliology)

Let's first understand that doctrine means anything that is taught. Having said that, when we approach the doctrine of Scripture, it is our attempt to understand what God has said in the Bible. As we study Scripture, four (4) words will aid us in our understanding and those four (4) words are:

- ❖ **Revelation**
- ❖ **Inspiration**
- ❖ **Illumination**
- ❖ **Interpretation**

The first word is **REVELATION**: the basic meaning is to *unveil, or to make known that which was hidden*. Absent of God revealing Himself we will never know Him; for He is past our understanding. Therefore, God has revealed Himself in His word, and by studying Scripture we receive the opportunity to know God. The second word is **INSPIRATION**: and inspiration is *the teaching that the Bible is God-breathed*. The belief that the Bible is inspired by God causes us to deem the Bible as the inerrant and infallible word of God. If per chance the Bible is the work of human authors, then there's no compelling reasons to follow its doctrines or moral guidelines. The Bible itself declares that it is God-breathed (2nd Timothy 3:16-17). There are some different views of inspiration; however, I will only briefly mention them because this study is not an in-depth teaching on Scripture.

*The four views on inspiration are: Plenary verbal inspiration, Limited inspiration, Dictation view of inspiration, and the Neo-orthodox view of inspiration. The most accepted view is that of **plenary verbal inspiration which states that every single word in the Bible is the very word of God**.*

The third word as it relates to Scripture is **ILLUMINATION**: the basic thought in illumination is *that a light has been turned on in order to aid our understanding*. The fourth and final word is **INTERPRETATION**, and the basic thought in interpretation is *to give an explanation of what God's word means*. The Bible provides for the understanding and explanation of God's word in (2nd Peter 1:20-21) "**Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever**

came from the prophet's own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God." We must realize that interpreting God's word is a process, and in order to explain or understand Scripture we must rely on the Holy Spirit and our own studies.

Explaining Scripture involves the process of "**HERMENEUTICS.**" Biblical hermeneutics is the study of *principles and methods of interpreting the text of the Bible*. 2nd Timothy 2:15 commands us to be involved in hermeneutics. The purpose of hermeneutics is to help us to know how to properly interpret, understand, and apply the Bible.

The steps in biblical hermeneutics are:

1. Interpret the Bible literally
2. Interpret from a historical and grammatical view. Spend some quality time in exploring the time in which the text was written and who was the intended audience. It's critical to understand the meaning of the words contextually.
3. Understand that the best interpreter of Scripture is Scripture.

Basically, in understanding Scripture, we are in search of what the Bible says, what does it mean, and how it impacts us. There are two (2) more very important words that are critical to our understanding of Scripture and they are: **Exegesis and Eisegesis**. Exegesis is the process of drawing out of a text its intended meaning; while eisegesis is reading into a text a meaning that is not actually there.

Exegesis employs a three (3) step approach:

- a. **Understanding the grammar of a text.**
- b. **Understanding the meaning of individual words in a sentence.**
- c. **Understanding the message as a whole in its context.**

Although we painstakingly apply these three (3) approaches to Scripture; ultimately the Holy Spirit sheds light upon divine truth. The basic steps in interpreting Scripture are to understand what the passage meant for the person who first spoke it and his audience, and what it means for the reader today. Be careful about moralizing - applying your moral values to Scripture, and personalizing - applying your personal values to Scripture. I pray that you enjoy the journey.

Self-Test

- 1) What is the difference between exegesis and eisegesis?
- 2) Define logos and rhema.
- 3) Explain how revelation aids in understanding scripture.
- 4) What is moralizing and personalizing scripture?
- 5) Define biblical hermeneutics, and what steps are involved in understanding scripture?
- 6) What is the difference between inspiration and illumination?
- 7) What is the storyline of the Old Testament?
- 8) What is the difference between a literal and a figurative interpretation of the Bible?
- 9) What is the storyline of the New Testament?
- 10) Name the different types of books in both the Old and New Testaments.

2. God the Father -(Theology)

Before we can attempt to discuss the doctrines of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, we must address to some degree the doctrine of the Trinity. One of the more difficult and challenging concepts of Christianity is the *doctrine of the Trinity*. The Bible teaches that God is the Father, God is the Son, and God is the Holy Spirit. The Trinity is One God existing in three Persons; however, the Trinity does not support the idea of many gods. There is, but one God. **Deuteronomy 6:4 “Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.”** The word “Trinity” is not found in the Bible, it’s a term we apply to describe the triune nature of God. The Trinity consists of three (3) Persons, three (3) coexistent, and three (3) co-eternal persons who compromise the Godhead. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are the three (3) Persons of the Trinitarian concept. We see instances of the Trinity in Genesis **1:1-2, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.”** Here we see God the Father created the universe by speaking it into existence, God the Son was the spoken word of God the Father was used to create, and God the Holy Spirit hovering over the surface of the water. In the New Testament we see another instance of the Trinity. **Matthew 3:16-17 “After His baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on Him. And a voice from heaven said, this is my beloved Son, who brings me great joy.”** In this instance, God the

Father is speaking, God the Son is being baptized, and God the Holy Spirit is descending in the form of a dove. The goal here is to distinguish the three (3) Persons of the Trinity, God the Father is the first Person of the Trinity, Son is the second Person of the Trinity, and Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity. Scripture reveals that the Holy Spirit is subordinate to the Father and the Son, and the Son is subordinate to the Father. *Subordination* does not suggest that either of the three Persons of the Trinity are lesser than any other, it simply means each Person has a different task to perform. God the Father is our Creator, God the Son is our Christ, and God the Holy Spirit is our Comforter and Conqueror. I realize that the Trinity is a difficult concept, but as we continue through this study, we will address it more in depth.

Any serious attempt to define God is a lesson in spiritual futility, because God is beyond our capacity to define or understand. Since we can't adequately define God or understand God, The Bible does not try to prove God's existence, or God's eternal nature, the Bible simply says "**In the beginning God...**" By default, we must conclude that God already existed before the beginning because God created the beginning. Our goal here is to describe God. God the Father is the source of all things and has created all things that exist. God the Father has divine as well as personal attributes. The divine attributes of God the Father are:

God's Divine Attributes:

Omniscient- God is all-knowing, **Omnipresent-** God is at all places all the time, and **Omnipotent-** God is all-powerful.

God's Personal Attributes:

Holy- God is only good and never evil, **Love-** God is only interested in what's best for us, and **Just-** God is not a respecter of persons and God treats all of us the same.

God the Father is an infinite, and personal Spirit, **John 4:24 "For God is a Spirit, so those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth."** God the Father is neither male nor female God is a spirit. God has been identified as the Father from eternity past by His Son **John 3:16 "For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."** Eternity past means before anything was created. Ephesians 1: 3-6 **"All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. Even before He made the world, God loved us**

and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure.”

This passage helps us to understand that at least three (3) things existed in eternity past:

- (A) God saw humanity as lost and in need of a Savior.
- (B) The Savior was present.
- (C) God had worked out the plan of redemption.

God the Father has many names, and those names describe the essence of God the Father.

- Elohim God the creator mighty and strong.
- El Shaddai God almighty.
- Jehovah Jireh The Lord who provides.
- Jehovah Rapha The Lord who heals.
- Jehovah Nissi The Lord our banner,
- Jehovah Shalom Tho Lord our peace.
- Jehovah Tsidkenu The Lord our righteousness.
- Jehovah Rohi The Lord our shepherd.

Self-Test

- 1) What are the three (3) great relationships in the Bible?
- 2) How would you explain the existence of God?
- 3) Scripturally define the Trinity?
- 4) What are the divine and personal attributes of God?
- 5) Does God have a gender?
- 6) What is God's plan of redemption?
- 7) Why is God the first Person in the Trinity?
- 8) What does the word Jehovah mean?
- 9) How is God omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent?

10)What does it mean to worship God in spirit and in truth?

3. God the Son-(Christology)

In the trinitarian concept, God the Son is the second Person in the Trinity. The Bible presents Jesus as the divine Son of God. (John 1:1,14) **“In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. V14. “So, the Word became human flesh and made His home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen His glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son.”** Hence Jesus is the Son of God, while also becoming God in the flesh. Jesus is fully God and fully man, and this concept is known as the **hypostatic union**. (Philippians 2:6-11) **“Though He was God, He didn’t think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, He gave up His divine privileges; He took the humble position as a slave and was born as a human being. When He appeared in human form, He humbled Himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross. Therefore, God elevated Him to the place of highest honor and gave Him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God.”**

The hypostatic union expresses the dual nature of Jesus as both man and God. Other terms have been used to express Jesus’ duality of nature, such as: **the Incarnation of Jesus, and The Virgin birth of Jesus.** Though a mystery, the Virgin Birth of Jesus the Christ is the basis for salvation and is one of the pillars of Christianity. Absent the Virgin Birth of Christ, Christianity fails as a faith-based religion. Our entire faith rest on the validity of the Virgin Birth; after all, if Jesus the Christ were not born of a virgin, then He can’t claim to be the Savior of the world. The Virgin Birth face more attacks and criticism than all the other miracles of the Bible; but the Virgin Birth is foundational to the Christian faith. The Virgin Birth was prophesied in the Old Testament Isa. 7:14 **“All right then, the Lord Himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call Him Immanuel (which means God is with us.”** In the New Testament the prophecy is fulfilled in Luke 1:34-35 **“Mary asked the angel, but how can this happen? I am a virgin, The angel replied, the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the baby to be born will be holy, and He will be called the son of God.”** The Virgin Birth is critical to salvation.

Both the deity and the humanity of Jesus are equally important; because as a man Jesus experienced all that we encounter, but as God Jesus is able to deliver us from all that we face. As we study God the Son, we will explore five (5) areas of His life: **1. Deity, 2. Humanity, 3. Death, 4. Resurrection, and 5. Ascension and Return.** Jesus’ deity is recorded in John 1:1, his humanity

in John 1:14, his death in Matthew 27:50, Mark 15:37, Luke 23:46, John 19:30. Jesus' resurrection is recorded in Matthew 28:5-6, Mark 16:5-7, Luke 24:4-6, John 20:15-17. Jesus' ascension is recorded in Acts 1:6-11.

The ministry of Jesus began with His baptism by John, (Matthew 3:13-17) and His temptation by Satan (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13). Jesus chose twelve (12) disciples (Matthew 10:24; Luke 6:12-16) which symbolized the regathering of the twelve (12) tribes of Israel. Jesus preached repentance, the arrival of the kingdom of God, to offer salvation to the outcasts, healing of the sick and demon possessed, and His glorious return. Luke 4:18-21) **“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord’s favor has come. He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at him intently. The he began to speak to them. The Scripture you’ve just heard has been fulfilled this very day?”**

The turning point in Jesus' ministry came at Caesarea Phillipi after Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:13-19). After Peter's confession, Jesus spoke of His impending death and resurrection. (Matthew 16:21) **“From then on Jesus began to tell his disciples plainly that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, and that he would suffer many terrible things at the hand of the elders, the leading priest, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised from the dead.”** We typically refer these words as **the passion of Christ**. On the night Jesus was betrayed, He instituted the Lord's Supper and this last meal with Jesus and His disciples was the beginning of the new covenant that would be sealed by Jesus' blood and the victorious reunion in the kingdom of God. (1st Cor. 11:23-26) **“For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me. In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper saying, This cup is the new covenant between God and his people-an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this to remember me as often as you drink it. For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again.”**

Jesus was crucified, but on the first day of the week He arose. Not only did Jesus rise from the grave, but He stayed forty (40) days with the disciples and ascended into heaven. (Acts 1:6-9) **“So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom? He replied, The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere-in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him.”**

Self-Test

- 1) Explain the difference between the Virgin Birth and the Immaculate conception.
- 2) Was the Resurrection of Jesus physical or spiritual?
- 3) Why did Jesus choose twelve (12) apostles?
- 4) What is the Passion of Christ?
- 5) What does the bread and wine symbolize in the communion meal?
- 6) What is the hypostatic union?
- 7) Where does Jesus reside now, and what is His ministry?
- 8) Identify Jesus in Gen. 3:15.
- 9) Why was it necessary for Jesus to depart before the Holy Spirit would arrive?
- 10) Describe the Imminent return of Jesus.

4. God the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology)

The Holy Spirit is the third (3rd) Person in the Trinity. In the Trinity we have One God operating in three (3) Persons namely God the Father as Creator, God the Son as Christ, and God the Holy Spirit as Comforter. We have additional scriptural evidence of the Trinity in 2nd Cor. 13:14 **“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”** Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He promised that the Holy Spirit would come and dwell within believers. John 14:16-17 **“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive Him, because it isn’t looking for Him and doesn’t recognize Him. But you know Him, because He lives with you now and later will be in you.** Jesus promised the eternal indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit not only indwells (lives within the believer), but believers in Jesus the Christ are baptized, led by, regenerated by, received by, and believers are sealed by the Holy Spirit. I will reference Scripture as to the work of the Holy Spirit in the following areas:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| a. Regeneration | John 3: 3, 5; Titus 3:5 |
| b. Indwelling | Romans 8: 9,11 |
| c. Baptism | 1 st Cor. 13:13; Acts 2:17-41 |
| d. Sealing | Ephesians 1:13 |

e. Gifts	Romans 12:6-8; 1 st Cor. 12:8-10; Ephesians 4:11
f. Conviction	John 16:8
g. Truth	John 14:17
h. Comforter	Acts 9:31; John 14:16-26
i. Guides	John 16:13
j. Bears Fruit	Galatians 5:22-23
k. Sanctifies the Church	Romans 15:16
l. Reveals mysteries	Isa. 40:13-14; 1 st Cor. 2:10,13

Self-Test

- 1) Who is the Holy Spirit?
- 2) What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit?
- 3) What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?
- 4) What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?
- 5) What role does the Holy Spirit accomplish in salvation?
- 6) Is it possible to grieve the Holy Spirit, if so, how?
- 7) What is the difference between being baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit?
- 8) How does a person know whether or not he/she has been filled with the Holy Spirit?
- 9) Does speaking in tongues signify a person has been filled with the Holy Spirit?
- 10) Have you identified your spiritual gift?

5. Salvation (Soteriology)

Soteriology is the study of the *doctrine of salvation*. **Soteriology** addresses how Christ's death secured the salvation of those who believe. In addition, Soteriology aids our understanding of redemption, justification, sanctification, propitiation, and substitutionary atonement. *Salvation basically means deliverance from anything.*

The following are some frequently asked questions concerning salvation.

- Once a person is saved are they always saved?

- Is salvation by faith only, or are works required?
- Is baptism required for salvation?
- What is repentance and is it necessary for salvation?
- What does it mean to be born again?

A summary of soteriology is provided in Titus 3: 5-8 **“He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. Because of His grace He made us right in His sight and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying, and I want you to insist on these teachings so that all who trust in God will devote themselves to doing good. These teachings are good and beneficial for everyone.”**

These verses of Scripture reveal God’s mercy to sinners, and what God did to secure the salvation the world needed. This passage lets us know that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were all involved in the salvation of humanity.

Self-Test

- 1) What is Soteriology?
- 2) Is salvation an event or a process? Explain.
- 3) Explain how God had our salvation in mind in Gen. 3:15?
- 4) What is sanctification and when does it take place?
- 5) Describe how Salvation is a gift? Ephesians 2:8
- 6) What is justification?
- 7) Explain the difference between justification, sanctification and glorification?
- 8) What evidence do you have of your salvation?
- 9) Have you ever led someone to Christ?
- 10) What is eternal life?

6. The Church-(Ecclesiology)

The word church is a translation of the Greek word “**ekklesia**,” and the basic meaning is an assembly or the called-out ones. The idea here is Jesus called us out of our old life and into a brand-new life with Him and the body of believers who believe in Him. Jesus established church in Matthew 16: 18 **“Simon Peter answered, You are the Son of the living God. Jesus replied, You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means rock), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.”**

Let’s be clear Peter is not the rock of the church, but the requirement for one to become a member in the church of Jesus Christ is to have the same confession of Peter that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God. The church came into existence in Acts 2:1-4 **“On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.** However, Jesus established the church prior to her coming into existence, and Jesus Christ is the head of the church as stated in Ephesians 1:22-23 **“God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made Him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is His body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all thing everywhere with Himself.”**

Considerable debate has been given as to whether the church is an organism or an organization. Just by the very nature of those words organism and organization, it seems very clear that the church is an *organism that required organization* to maintain a healthy existence. An organism is a living, interconnected system where each part contributes to the whole; while an organization consists of distinct units that provide systems for continuity. As it relates to the church, the organism needs the organization to remain healthy. With all of her faults and imperfections, the church is still Jesus’ chosen vessel to carry the message of the Gospel into all the world. The reason the church is imperfect is — imperfect people are members of the church; however, Jesus spoke the church into existence and ensured the church’s victorious future saying **“... the powers of hell will not conquer it.”** In addition to the birth of the church, the church faced great persecution and due to the persecution, the church experienced rapid growth and the message of the gospel spread to many nations. Shortly thereafter, the church entered a period of transition and God raised the Apostle Paul to lead the Gentile nations into the church.

The persecution of the church caused the church to leave Jerusalem and disperse into Judea and Samaria. However, the persecuted church carried the message of the gospel with them. Acts 1:8 **“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”** During this time the church experienced tremendous growth and the Lord added to the church daily. The phenomenal growth of the church led the church into a period of transition.

At this point in the history of the church, Jesus converts Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road. Saul’s name is changed to Paul and Jesus used Paul to evangelize the Gentile nations. (Acts 9:6;10-18) The apostles of Jesus concentrated their evangelistic efforts on Jews, while Paul’s ministry was primarily to the Gentiles. Jesus commissioned Paul to go on three (3) missionary journeys, and the result of the mission trips caused the gospel to reach many more people. Unfortunately, there was strife in the church due to the inclusion of Gentiles, but God’s plan was to save the whole world.

Self-Test

- 1) What is the church?
- 2) What was Pentecost, and how was the church birthed at Pentecost?
- 3) Who is the head of the church, and why?
- 4) Explain whether the church is an organism or an organization.
- 5) What assurance did Jesus give that the church would endure?
- 6) According to Acts 1:8, which comes first the power or the Holy Spirit?
- 7) How did persecution cause the church to spread and grow?
- 8) Who was the Apostle Paul and what was his ministry?
- 9) What is the purpose of the church?
- 10) When were the Samaritans and Gentiles included in the church?



7. Last Things - (Eschatology)

Eschatology is the study of what the Bible says is going to happen in the end times. How we understand eschatology has an impact on how we should live our lives, and what we expect to occur in God's plan. One of the primary verses of scripture as it relates to eschatology is Titus 2: 11-13 **"For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God. While we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed.** We will briefly discuss the following doctrines as it relates to eschatology, and the order in which we will discuss these doctrines create a timeline for future events.

- **The Rapture of the church. (1st Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).**
- **The Rise of the Antichrist (Daniel 9:27, 2nd Thessalonians 2:7-8, Rev. 13:1, , Rev. 19:20).**

- **The Tribulation. (2nd Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 6-16; -19:6-10).**
- **Th Battle of God and Magog. (Ezekiel 38-39)**
- **The Abomination of Desolation. (Daniel 12:11; Mark 13:14; Revelation 12:17)**
- **The Battle of Armageddon. (Mark 14:62; Revelation 19:11-21)**
- **The Judgment of the Nations. (Matthew 24:31-46)**
- **The Binding of Satan. (Revelation 20:1-3)**
- **The Millennial Kingdom. (Isaiah 60: -62; Ezekiel 40-48; Revelation 20)**
- **The Last battle. (Revelation 20:7-10)**
- **The Great White Throne. (Revelation 20:11-15)**
- **The New creation. (Revelation 21-22)**



The Rapture

The word **rapture** does not appear in the Bible, but clearly, we find evidence of the rapture. *Rapture means to be carried off, or to be caught up.* The basic idea of the rapture of the church is God will remove all believers from the earth before the time of tribulation. (1st Corinthians 15:50-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

“What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever. But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will be transformed! It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And who are living will also be transformed. For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies. Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: Death is swallowed up in victory.”

And now dear brothers and sisters we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died. So, you will not grieve like people who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with Him the believers who have died. We tell you this directly from the Lord; we who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet Him ahead of those who have died. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, first, the Christians who have died will rise from their graves, then together with them we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. So, encourage each other with these words.

The view of this study is that the rapture will take place before the tribulation period (**Pre-tribulation**); however, there are other views of the rapture suggesting that the rapture will take place during the tribulation (**Mid-tribulation**) and some believe that the rapture will take place after the tribulation period (**Post-tribulation**).

Here are some of the salient points regarding the rapture from the pre-tribulation view.

- a. God will remove all believers whether dead or alive from the earth before the period of tribulation comes to the earth.
- b. The souls of believers will spend eternity with the Lord; however, the human body must be changed in order to inherit life forever.
- c. Believers will meet the Lord in the air.

The rapture will take place suddenly without warning or notice. (Matt. 24:37-42) **“When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah’s day. In those days before the flood, the people were enjoying banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered the boat. People didn’t realize what was going to happen until the flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes. Two men will be working together in the field; one will be taken the other left. Two women will be grinding flour at the mill; one will be taken, the other left. So, you, too, must keep watch! For you don’t know what day your Lord is coming.”**

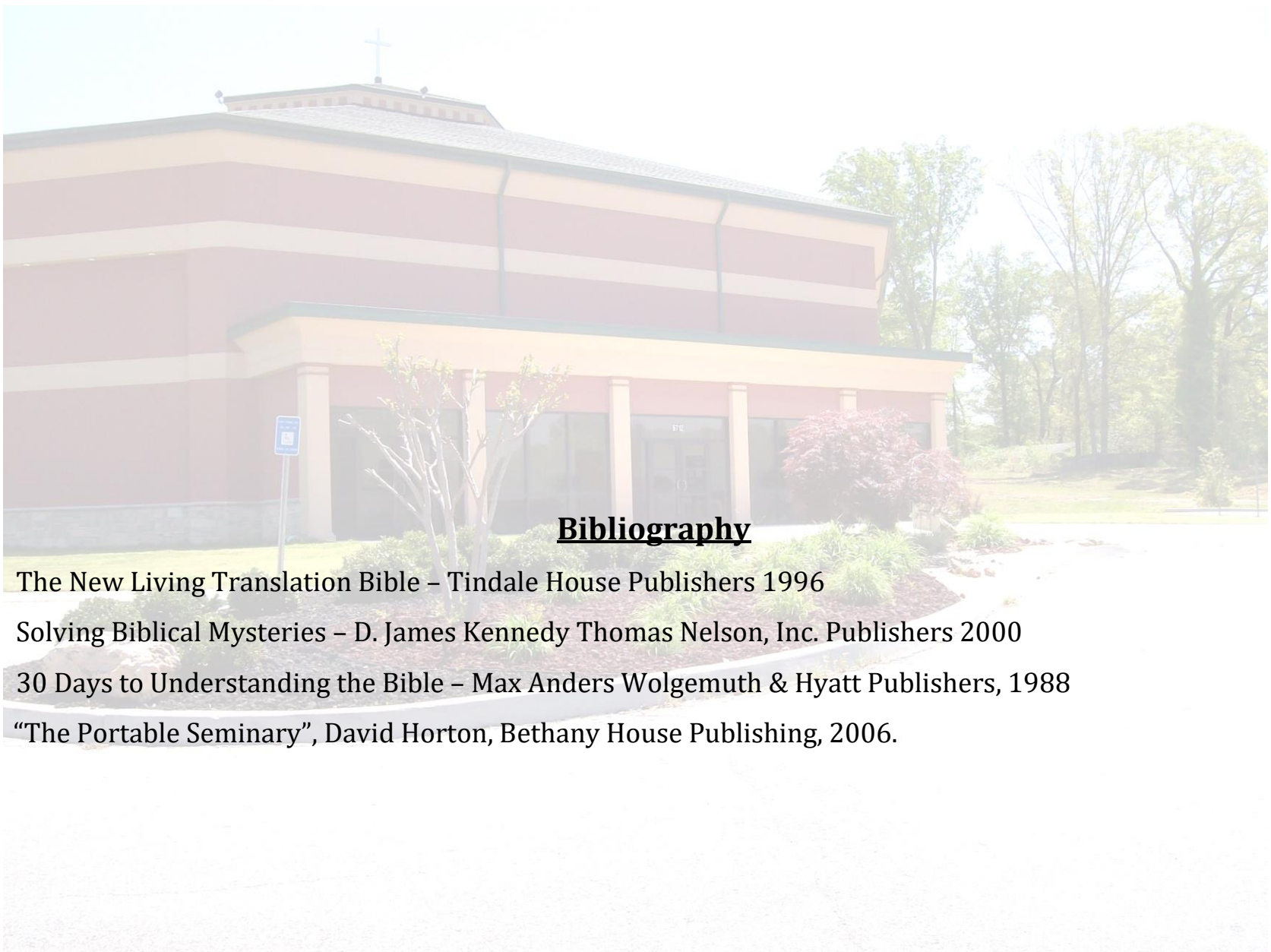
Jesus will come like a thief in the night to carry those who believe in Him to heaven. We do not know the hour or the day in which the Lord will come; therefore, we are advised to stay ready for His return. Of particular notice is the reality that not all persons will be raptured. Inevitably some will be left behind due to their unbelief in Jesus the Christ. The rapture is distinguished from the Second Coming of Christ principally by the positioning of Jesus. At rapture, believers will meet Jesus in the clouds, but in the Second Coming Jesus will actually touch down on earth and stop atop the Mount of Olives.

- **The rise of the Antichrist-** After the church has been raptured, a satanically empowered man will gain worldwide control with promises of peace. He will be aided by another man, called the false prophet, who heads up a religious system that requires worship of the Antichrist.
- **The Tribulation-** A period of even (7) years in which God’s judgment is poured onto sinful humanity. Some scholars believe that is the time of the Judgment Seat of Christ and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb will take place in heaven.
- **The Battle of Gog and Magog-** In the first part of the tribulation, a great army from the north, in alliance with other countries from the Middle East and Africa attacks Israel and are defeated by God’s intervention. Some scholars believe this battle takes place just before the tribulation.
- **The Abomination of Desolation-** At the midway point of the seven- year tribulation, the Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel. The Jews are scattered, and many turn to the Lord. A great persecution breaks out against all who believe in Christ. (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15-16)
- **The Battle of Armageddon-** At the end of the tribulation period, Jesus returns with the armies of heaven and saves Jerusalem. The Antichrist and the false prophet are captured and thrown into the lake of fire.
- **The Judgment of the Nations-** Christ will judge the survivors of the tribulation as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. The righteous will enter the Millennial Kingdom, and the wicked will be cast into hell. Some scholars believe that at this time the Old Testament saints will be raised from the dead.
- **The Binding of Satan-** Satan will be bound and held in a bottomless pit for the next 1,000 years.

- **The Millennial Kingdom-** Jesus will rule the world, and Jerusalem will be its capital. This will be a 1,000-year period of peace on the earth.
- **The Last Battle-** At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan will be released from his prison for a short time. He will deceive the nations once again, and there will be a rebellion against the Lord that will be quickly defeated. Satan will be cast into the lake of fire never to reappear.
- **The Great White Throne-** All those who rejected Christ and those who were in hell will be brought forth to stand before God in final judgment. All sinful humanity will be cast into the lake of fire.
- **The New Creation-** God completely remakes the heavens and earth. God wipes away all tears and there will be no more pain, death, or sorrow. New Jerusalem descends from heaven, and the children of God spend eternity with the Lord.

Self-Test

1. What is the purpose of the Antichrist?
2. What will happen in the great tribulation?
3. What will happen at the judgment of nations?
4. When will the millennial kingdom of Christ take place?
5. What are tribulation saints?
6. When will the rapture take place?
7. What is the abomination of desolation?
8. Who will be present at the Great White Throne judgment?
9. What are the seventy (70) weeks of Daniel's prophecy?
10. When will the rapture occur in relationship to the tribulation?



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