

# **Through The Bible**

**Complete  
Notes & Outlines**

**J. Vernon McGee**

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**Guidelines**  
**for the Understanding of the**  
**Scriptures**  
by  
**J. Vernon McGee**

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**INTRODUCTION**

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**IS THE BIBLE IMPORTANT?**

The Bible is probably the most maligned Book that ever has been written. It has been attacked as no other book has ever been attacked. Yet it has ministered and does minister to literally millions of people around the globe, and it has been doing this now for several thousand years. A Book of this nature and with this tremendous impact upon the human family certainly deserves the intelligent consideration of men and women.

Sir Walter Scott, on his deathbed, asked Lockhart to read to him. Puzzled, as he scanned the shelf of books that Walter Scott had written, he asked, “What book shall I read?” And Sir Walter replied, “Why do you ask that question? There is but one book; bring the Bible.” There is only one Book for any man who is dying, but it is also *the* Book for any man who is living. A great many folk do not get interested in the Bible until they get to the end of their lives or until they get into a great deal of difficulty. While it is wonderful to have a Book in which you can find comfort in a time like that, it is also a Book for you to *live*—in the full vigor of life. It is a Book to face life with today, and it’s the Book which furnishes the only sure route through this world and on into the next world. It is the only Book that can enable us to meet the emergencies and cushion the shocks that come to us in life. The Bible is different from any other book.

That this Book has influenced great men who, in turn, have influenced the world is evident. Let me share with you some quotations.

There was an African prince who came to England and was presented to Her Majesty Queen Victoria. This prince asked a very significant question, “What is the secret of England’s greatness?” The queen got a beautifully bound copy of the Bible and presented it to the prince with this statement, “This is the secret of England’s greatness.” I wonder, friend, if England’s decline to a second-rate and then third-rate nation may be tied up in the fact that England has gotten away from the Word of God.

Gladstone, statesman, prime minister, probably one of the greatest legal minds Britain ever produced, said, “Talk about the questions of the day! There is but one question, and that is the Gospel. That can and will correct everything. I am glad to say that about all the men at the top in Great Britain are Christians.” That was way back in the 1800s. Gladstone continued, “I have

been in public position fifty-eight years, all but eleven of them in the Cabinet of the British Government, and during those forty-seven years have been associated with sixty of the master minds of the century, and all but five of the sixty were Christians.” I personally think that part of the problems we are having in the world today is that we have too few Christians at the top, too few who are acquainted with the Word of God.

Michael Faraday, perhaps the greatest scientific experimenter back in the 1800s, said, “But why will people go astray, when they have this blessed book of God to guide them?” Sir Isaac Newton, a scientist in the preceding century, said, “If the Bible is true, the time is coming when men shall travel at fifty miles an hour.” And Voltaire, the French skeptic, commented, “Poor Isaac. He was in his dotage when he made that prophecy. It only shows what Bible study will do to an otherwise scientific mind.”

It might be interesting to note what some of our early Presidents had to say about the Bible. John Adams, our second President, said, “I have examined all [that is, all of Scripture] as well as my narrow sphere, my straightened means, and my busy life will allow me, and the result is that the Bible is the best book in the world. It contains more of my little philosophy than all the libraries I have seen, and such parts of it I cannot reconcile to my little philosophy I postpone for future investigation.” Then President John Quincy Adams said, “I speak as a man of the world to men of the world; and I say to you: search the Scriptures. The Bible is the book above all other to be read at all ages and in all conditions of human life; not to be read once or twice through and then laid aside, but to be read in small portions every day.” And the Presidents back in those days, who made our nation great, did not get us into foreign wars and were able to solve the problems of the streets. Someone may counter, “But the problems weren’t as complicated then as they are now.” They were for that day, friend. Not only England but also the United States has gotten away from the Word of God. And the farther we get, the more complicated our problems become. Right now there are men in positions of authority in this land who are saying that there is no solution to our problems. That is the reason I am teaching the Word of God in its entirety—I believe it is the only solution. And, frankly, friend, we had better get back to it.

Another President, Thomas Jefferson, said this about the Bible, “I have always said, and always will say, that the studious perusal of the Sacred Volume will make better citizens, better husbands, and better fathers.” This is something to think over today when our citizens are burning down the cities in which they live and when divorce is running rife.

It was Daniel Webster who made this statement, “If there be anything in my style or thoughts to be commended, the credit is due to my kind parents for instilling into my mind an early love of the Scriptures.” What about you today, Christian parent? Are you making a Daniel Webster in your home or a little rebel? Webster also made this statement, “I have read it [the Bible] through many times. I now make a practice of going through it once a year. It is the Book of all others for lawyers as well as divines. I pity the man who cannot find in it a rich supply of thought and rules for conduct.”

## THE BOOK OF BOOKS

*Born in the East and clothed in Oriental form and imagery, the Bible walks the ways of all the world with familiar feet, and enters land after land to find its own everywhere. It has learned to speak in hundreds of languages to the heart of man. It comes into the palace to tell the monarch that he is a servant of the Most High, and into the cottage to assure the peasant that he is a son of God. Children listen to its stories with wonder and delight, and wise men ponder them as parables of life. It has a word of peace for the time of peril, a word of comfort for the time of calamity, a word of light for the hour of darkness. Its oracles are repeated in the assembly of the people, and its counsels whispered in the ear of the lonely. The wicked and the proud tremble at its warnings, but to the wounded and the penitent it has a mother's voice. The wilderness and the solitary place have been made glad by it, and the fire on the hearth has lit the reading of its well-worn pages. It has woven itself into our dearest dreams; so that love, friendship, sympathy and devotion, memory and hope put on the beautiful garments of its treasured speech, breathing of frankincense and myrrh.*

—Henry van Dyke

## **IN WHAT WAY IS THE BIBLE UNIQUE?**

In many ways the Bible is a most unusual Book. For instance, it has a dual authorship. In other words, God is the Author of the Bible, and in another sense man is the author of the Bible. Actually, the Bible was written by about forty authors over a period of approximately fifteen hundred years. Some of these men never even heard of the others, and there was no collusion among the forty. Two or three of them could have gotten together, but the others could not have known each other. And yet they have presented a Book that has the most marvelous continuity of any book that has ever been written. Also, it is without error. Each author expressed his own feelings in his own generation. Each had his limitations, and made his mistakes—poor old Moses made mistakes, but when he was writing the Pentateuch, somehow or other no mistakes got in there. You see, it is a human Book and yet it is a God-Book.

It is a very human Book, written by men from all walks of life, prince and pauper, the highly intellectual and the very simple. For example, Dr. Luke writes almost classical Greek in a period when the Koine Greek was popular. His Greek is marvelous! But Simon Peter, the fisherman, wrote some Greek also. His is not so good, but God the Holy Spirit used both of these men. He let them express exactly their thoughts, their feelings, and yet through that method the Spirit of God was able to overrule in such a way that God said exactly what He wanted to say. That's the wonder of the Book, the Bible.

It is a God-Book. In the Bible God says twenty-five hundred times, "God said . . . the Lord has said . . . thus saith the Lord," etc. God has made it very clear that He is speaking

through this Book. It is a Book that can communicate life to you. You can even become a child of God, begotten “not by corruptible seed, but by incorruptible, by the Word of God that liveth and abideth forever.” It is God’s communication to man. And if God spoke out of heaven right now, He would just repeat Himself because He has said all that He wants to say to this generation. And, by the way, He didn’t learn anything when He read the morning paper. When man went to the moon, he didn’t discover anything that God didn’t already know when He gave us the Bible. He is the same God who created this universe that we are in today.

The Bible is both divine and human. In a way it is like my Lord who walked down here and grew weary and sat down at a well. Although He was God, He was man. He talked with people down here and communicated with them. This is a Book that communicates. It speaks to mankind today. The Bible is for men as they are.

*The Bible is a corridor between two eternities down which walks the Christ of God; His invisible steps echo through the Old Testament, but we meet Him face to face in the throne room of the New; and it is through that Christ alone, crucified for me, that I have found forgiveness for sins and life eternal. The Old Testament is summed up in the word Christ; the New Testament is summed up in the word Jesus; and the summary of the whole Bible is that Jesus is the Christ.*

—Bishop Pollock

## HOW DO YOU KNOW THE BIBLE IS FROM GOD?

How do you know the Bible is the Word of God? This is a good question, and it should be asked and answered.

**1. Preservation**—One of the objective proofs, one of the external proofs, has been the marvelous preservation of the Bible. There was a king of old—we read about him in Jeremiah—who, when the Word was sent to him, took a penknife and cut it to pieces. But it was rewritten, and we have that Word today. Down through the centuries there have been a great many Bible burnings. Today there’s a great deal of antagonism toward the Bible. In our country today it is not being burned because we think that we are too civilized for such behavior. The way they try to get rid of it is just to outlaw it in our schools and in many other places. (Yet we talk about our freedom of religion and freedom of speech.) In spite of all the attacks that have been made upon the Bible, it still today exists, and, of course, it’s one of the best sellers. For many years it was *the* best seller, but it’s not today. I regret to have to say that, but it is true. And that is certainly a commentary on our contemporary society. It reveals that the Bible is not really occupying the place that it once did in the history and in the life of this nation. Yet, I think the amazing preservation of the Word of God is worthy of consideration.

**2. Archaeology**—Another way in which we can know the Bible is the Word of God is through archaeology. The spade of the archaeologist has turned up many things that have proven

that it is the Word of God. For instance, there were those who for many years denied the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch on the basis that writing was not in existence in Moses' day. You haven't heard anybody advance that theory recently, have you? Well, of course not. For years the spade of the archaeologist has turned up again and again evidence of the validity of the Bible. The city of Jericho and the walls that fell down is one example. Now there has been some argument between Miss Kathleen Kenyon and John Garstang relative to specifics, but it's well established that the walls fell down, and I'll let them debate about the time and all that sort of thing. The Word of God has been substantiated there, and in many other ways archaeology has demonstrated the accuracy of the Bible. Many of the manuscripts that have been found do that also. It's quite interesting that when the Isaiah scrolls, the Dead Sea scrolls, were found, the liberal leaped at that because he thought he had found an argument that would discredit the Bible. However, the scrolls have not discredited the Bible, and it seems that the liberal has lost a great deal of interest in them. This is a field into which you might do some research, as I cannot go to any great length in this brief study.

**3. Fulfilled Prophecy**—If I were asked today if I had just one thing to suggest that would be a conclusive proof that the Bible is the Word of God, do you know what I would suggest? I would suggest fulfilled prophecy. Fulfilled prophecy is the one proof that you can't escape, you can't get around. And the Bible is filled with fulfilled prophecy. One-fourth of the Scripture, when it was written, was prophetic; that is, it announced things that were to take place in the future. A great deal of that—in fact, a great deal more than people imagine—has already been fulfilled. We could turn to many places where prophecy has been fulfilled exactly. We find that there were many local situations that were fulfilled even in the day of the prophet. For example, Micaiah was the prophet who told Ahab that if he went out to battle as he planned, he would lose the battle and would be killed. However, Ahab's false prophets had told him he'd have a victory and would return as a victorious king. Because he didn't like what Micaiah said, Ahab ordered him locked up and fed bread and water, and he would take care of him when he got back. But Micaiah shot back the last word, "If you come back at all, the Lord hasn't spoken by me." Well, evidently the Lord had spoken by him because Ahab didn't come back. He was killed in the battle, and his army was defeated. He had even disguised himself so that there would be no danger of his losing his life. But an enemy soldier, the Scripture says, pulled his bow at a venture; that is, when the battle was about over, he had just one arrow left in his quiver; he put it in place and shot, not really aiming at anything. But, you know, that arrow had old Ahab's name on it, and it found him. It went right to its mark. Why? Because Micaiah had made an accurate prophecy (see 1 Kings 22).

On another occasion, the prophet Isaiah said that the invading Assyrian army wouldn't shoot an arrow into the city of Jerusalem (see 2 Kings 19:32). Well, now, that's interesting. Micaiah's prophecy was fulfilled because a soldier shot an arrow by chance, pulled his bow at a venture. Wouldn't you think that among two hundred thousand soldiers—that "great host"—perhaps one might be trigger-happy and would pull his bow at a venture and let an arrow fly over the wall of Jerusalem? Well, he didn't. If the enemy had shot an arrow inside that city, they could be sure that Isaiah was not God's prophet. But he was, as was proven by this local fulfillment of his prophecy. But Isaiah also said a virgin would bring forth a child, and that was seven hundred years before it was literally fulfilled. And then, if you want a final proof, there were over three

hundred prophecies concerning the first coming of Christ which were all literally fulfilled. As Jesus Christ was hanging there on the cross and dying, there was one prophecy recorded in the Old Testament that had not been fulfilled. It was, "They gave me vinegar to drink" (Psalms 69:21). Jesus said, "I thirst," and the enemy himself went and fulfilled prophecy (see John 19:28-30). It's a most amazing thing. Men can't guess like that. It has been rather amusing to watch the weatherman. During the summer season in Southern California he does fine, but when we get to the change of seasons—well, your guess is as good as his. In the nation Israel, a prophet had to be accurate. If he was not accurate, he was to be put to death as a false prophet. God told His people that they would be able to distinguish a false prophet from a true prophet. A true prophet must first speak into a local situation, which Isaiah did. When that prophecy came to pass, they would know they could trust him to speak concerning the future, as Isaiah did. We can look back now and know that it was fulfilled.

There are so many other prophecies. Tyre and Sidon are over there today exactly as God's Word said twenty-five hundred years ago they would be. Egypt today is in the exact position God said it would be in. All of these are amazing, friend, and fulfilled prophecy is one of the greatest proofs that the Bible is indeed the Word of God. You see, men just can't be that accurate. Men can't guess like that—even the weatherman misses it.

Let me show you that, according to mathematical law of problematical conjecture, man could never, never prophesy. Suppose that right now I would make a prophecy. Just by way of illustration, suppose I'd say that wherever you are it's going to rain tomorrow. I'd have a 50 percent chance of being right because it'll do one of the two. For some of you it would probably be accurate. For others it would not. But suppose that I add to that and say it would start raining tomorrow morning at nine o'clock. That would be another uncertain element. I had a fifty-fifty chance of being right at first; now I have a 25 percent chance. Every uncertain element that is added reduces by 50 percent the chance of my being right—the law of problematical conjecture. Now suppose that I not only say that it's going to start raining at nine o'clock, but I also say it'll stop raining at two o'clock. Well, believe me, friend, that has reduced my chances now another 50 percent which brings it down to 12 ½ percent. Can you imagine my chance of being right now? But suppose I add three hundred uncertain elements. There's not a ghost of a chance of being accurate. I just couldn't hit it—it would be impossible. Yet the Word of God hit it, my friend. It is accurate. The Bible has moved into that area of absolute impossibility, and that to me is absolute proof that it is the Word of God. There is nothing to compare to it at all. I have given very few examples of fulfilled prophecy, but there is in the Word of God prophecy after prophecy, and they have been fulfilled—literally fulfilled. And by the way, I would think that that indicates the method in which prophecy for the future is yet to be fulfilled.

**4. Transformed Lives**—I offer two final reasons as proof that the Bible is the Word of God. One is the transformed lives of believers today. I have seen what the Word of God can do in the lives of men and women. I'm thinking right now of a man in Oakland, California, who listened to my Bible-teaching program. I know this man. I'm not going into detail in his life at all, but he probably had as many problems, as many hang-ups, and he was in as much sin as any man that I know anything about. And this man began to listen to the radio program. I hear of people who just hear the Gospel once and are converted. I think it's possible and that it's

wonderful. But this man listened to it week after week, and he became antagonistic. He became angry. Later he said to me, “If I could have gotten to you when you were teaching the Epistle to the Romans and told me that I was a sinner, I would have hit you in the nose,” and frankly friend, I think he could have done it. He’s much bigger and much younger than I am. I’m glad he couldn’t get to me. Finally, this man turned to Christ. May I say to you, it has been wonderful to see what God has done in his life. Again and again and again this testimony could be multiplied. Young and old have found purpose and fulfillment in life, marriages have been saved, families reunited, individuals have been freed from alcoholism and drug addiction. Folk have had their lives transformed by coming to Christ. Now let me give you a reason. When I finished seminary, I was a preacher who majored in the realm of the defense of the Gospel, and I attempted to defend the Bible. In fact, I think every message I gave entered into that area. I felt if I could just get enough answers to the questions that people have for not believing the Bible that they would believe. But I found out that the worst thing I could do was to whip a man down intellectually. The minute I did that, I made an enemy and never could win him for the Lord. So I moved out of the realm of apologetics and into another area of just giving out the Word of God as simply as I could. Only the Bible can turn a sinner into a saint.

**5. Spirit of God Made it Real**—Another reason that I’ve moved out of the realm of apologetics is because there has been a certain development in my own life. I have reached the place today where I not only believe that the Bible is the Word of God, I *know* it’s the Word of God. And I know it’s the Word of God because the Spirit of God has made it real to my own heart and my own life. That is the thing that Paul talked to the Colossians about. He prayed that they “might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” I also want this, because I found out that the Spirit of God can confirm these things to your heart and that you don’t need archaeology or anything else to prove that the Bible is God’s Word. A young preacher said to me some time ago, “Dr. McGee, isn’t it wonderful that they have discovered this,” and he mentioned something in particular. And I said, “Well, I don’t see anything to be excited about.” He was greatly disappointed and even chagrined that I was so far away from it that I did not respond enthusiastically. “Why, what do you mean?” he asked. “Is it possible that this hasn’t impressed you?” Well, I answered him this way, “I already knew it was the Word of God long before the spade of the archaeologist turned that up.” He asked how I knew it, and I said, “The Spirit of God has been making it real to my own heart.” I trust that the Spirit of God is going to make the Word of God not only real to you to incorporate into your living, but that He is also going to give you that assurance that you can say, “I *know* that it’s the Word of God.”

*Whence but from Heaven, could men unskilled in arts,  
In several ages born, in several parts,  
Weave such agreeing truths, or how, or why,  
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?  
Unasked their pains, ungrateful their advice,  
Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price.*

—Dryden



## WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY REVELATION? INSPIRATION? ILLUMINATION? INTERPRETATION?

*Revelation* means that God has spoken and that God has communicated to man. *Inspiration* guarantees the revelation of God. *Illumination* has to do with the Spirit of God being the Teacher—He communicates. *Interpretation* has to do with the interpretation that you and I give to the Word of God.

### REVELATION

Revelation means that God has spoken. “Thus saith the Lord,” and its equivalent, occurs over twenty-five hundred times. The Lord didn’t want you to misunderstand that He had spoken. Notice Hebrews 1:1, 2:

*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.*

Wherever you will find two persons, endowed with a reasonable degree of intelligence, who harbor the same feelings and desires, who are attracted to each other more or less, you will find communication between them. Persons of like propensities, separated from each other, delight in getting in touch with each other and rejoice in receiving communication from each other. This innate characteristic of the human heart explains the post office department, the telephone, and the telegraph.

Friends communicate with friends. A husband away from home writes to his wife. A boy or girl at school will write home to dad and mom. And ever and anon there travels the scented epistle of a girl to a boy, and then the boy returns an epistle to the girl. All of this is called communication. It is the expression of the heart. The Scripture says, “Deep calls to deep.” You will recall the story of Helen Keller. I remember the thrill that came to me when I read the account of this woman, shut out from the world by blindness and deafness, without means of communication; and then a way was opened up so she could communicate—probably better than many of us who can see and hear.

Now, on the basis of all this, I would like to ask you what I believe is a reasonable and certainly an intelligent question: Isn’t it reasonable to conclude that God has communicated with His creatures to whom He has committed a certain degree of intelligence and whom He created in His likeness? May I say to you, if we did not have a revelation from God, right now I think that you and I could just wait and He would be speaking to us, because we could *expect* God to speak to us. You will notice that the writer to the Hebrews says that God in the Old Testament spoke through the prophets, and He now has spoken through Christ. Both the revelation to the prophets in the Old Testament and the revelation of Christ in the New Testament are in the Word of God, of course, and that is the only way we would know about the communication from either one. The Bible has sixty-six books, and God has spoken to us through them.

*This Book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword and the Christian's character. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand object, our good is its design and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is given you in life and will be opened in the judgment and will be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labour, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.*

—Author Unknown

## INSPIRATION

This brings us to the second great subject which is *inspiration*. I personally believe in what is known as the plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, which means that the Bible is an authoritative statement and that every word of it is the Word of God to us and for us in this day in which we live. Inspiration guarantees the revelation of God. And that is exactly what this Book says. Two men, Paul writing his last epistle to Timothy and Peter writing his last epistle, both had something pretty definite to say about the Bible:

***All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*** (2 Timothy 3:16, 17)

Notice that *all* scripture is given by inspiration. The word *inspiration* means *God breathed*. God said through these men, as He said here through Paul, exactly what He wanted to say. He hasn't anything else to add. Peter expresses it this way:

***For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.***  
(2 Peter 1:21)

It is very important to see that these men were moved, as it were, carried along, by the Holy Spirit of God. It was Bishop Westcott who said: "The thoughts are wedded to words as necessarily as the soul is to the body." And Dr. Keiper said, "You can as easily have music without notes, or mathematics without figures, as thoughts without words." It is not the thoughts that are inspired; it's the *words* that are inspired.

There is a little whimsical story of a girl who had taken singing lessons from a very famous teacher. He was present at her recital, and after it was over she was anxious to know his reaction. He didn't come back to congratulate her, and she asked a friend, "What did he say?" Her loyal friend answered, "He said that you sang heavenly," She couldn't quite believe that her teacher had said that; so she probed, "Is that *exactly* what he said?" "Well, no, but that is what he meant." The girl insisted, "Tell me the exact *words* that he used." "Well, his exact words were, 'That was an unearthly noise!'" May I say to you, there is a difference between unearthly noise and heavenly sound. Exact words are important.

Believe me, it is the words of Scripture that are inspired—not the thoughts, but the words. For instance, Satan was not inspired to tell a lie, but the Bible records that he told a lie. It's the words that are inspired. And the Lord Jesus said, "It is written," quoting the Word of God in the Old Testament—the men who wrote gave out what God had to say. In Exodus 20:1 Moses wrote: "And God spoke all these words, saying . . . ." It was God who did the speaking, and Moses wrote what He said.

Over the years there have been discovered many very excellent manuscripts of the Scriptures. Speaking of the manuscripts in Britain, Sir George Kenyon, the late director and principal librarian of the British Museum, made this statement: "Thanks to these manuscripts, the ordinary reader of the Bible may feel comfortable about the soundness of the text. Apart from a few unimportant verbal alterations, natural in books transcribed by hand, the New Testament, we now feel assured, has come down intact." We can be sure today that we have that which is as close to the autographs as anything possibly can be, and I believe in the verbal plenary inspiration of the autographs—that is, the original manuscripts.

Way back yonder in the second century Irenaeus, one of the church fathers, wrote: "The Scriptures indeed are perfect, forasmuch as they are spoken by the Word of God and by His Spirit," Augustine, living in the fifth century, made this statement, "Let us therefore yield ourselves and bow to the authority of the Holy Scriptures which can neither err nor deceive." And Spurgeon commented, "I can never doubt the doctrine of plenary verbal inspiration; since I so constantly see, in actual practice, how the very words that God has been pleased to use—a plural instead of a singular—are blessed to the souls of men." *God* speaks in this Book to our hearts and to our lives.

## **ILLUMINATION**

Illumination means that since you and I have a Book, a God-Book and a human Book, written by men who were expressing their thoughts and while doing this they were writing down the Word of God, only the Spirit of God can teach it to us. Although we can get the facts of the Bible on our own, the Spirit of God will have to open our minds and hearts if we are to understand the spiritual truth that is there.

Paul, writing to the Corinthians, said:

***But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the ages unto our glory; which none of the princes of this age knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (1 Corinthians 2:7-9 NSRB)***

Now you and I get most of what we know through the eye gate and the ear gate or by reason. Paul tells us here that there are certain things that eye has not seen nor ear heard, certain things that you can't get into your mind at all. Then how in the world are you going to get them?

***But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:10 NSRB)***

Verse 9 sometimes goes to a funeral. The minister implies that the one who has died didn't know too much down here, but now he will know things he did not know before. While that probably is true (we will get quite an education in heaven), that is not what the verse says. Long before you get to the undertaker, there are a lot of things down here that you and I can't learn through natural means. The Holy Spirit has to be our Teacher.

You remember that our Lord inquired of His disciples, "What are men saying about Me?" They said that some were saying one thing and some another. (And today you can get a different answer from almost every person you happen to ask. There are many viewpoints of Him.) Then He asked His disciples:

***. . . But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 16:15-17)***

God is the One who revealed the truth to Simon Peter. And today only God can open up the Word of God for us to really understand it.

On the day of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, He walked down the Emmaus road and joined a couple of men as they walked along. Entering into their conversation, He asked them:

***. . . What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth,***

***which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.*** (Luke 24:17-20)

As you will recall, Jesus had predicted that. And it is interesting to see that written prophecy had been saying it for years. Then they expressed the hope that had been theirs:

***But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done.*** (Luke 24:21)

And they went on to tell about what they knew and what the women had reported. “Those who were with us went to the sepulcher . . . but Him they saw not.” Their hopes had dimmed, and darkness had entered their hearts. Now listen to the Lord Jesus:

***. . . O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*** (Luke 24:25-27)

Friend, wouldn't you have loved to have been there that day and heard Him go back in the Old Testament and lift out the Scriptures concerning Himself? And after He finally made Himself known to them as they sat at the evening meal, this is their comment:

***. . . Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?*** (Luke 24:32)

You see, we are studying a Book that is different from any other book. It is not that I just believe in the inspiration of the Bible, I believe that it is a closed Book to you unless the Spirit of God will open your heart and make it real. When Jesus returned to Jerusalem at that time, He continued teaching the disciples:

***And he said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.*** (Luke 24:44)

Notice that He believed Moses wrote the Pentateuch; He believed the prophets spoke of Him and that the Psalms pointed to Him. Now here is the important verse:

***Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.*** (Luke 24:45)

And, friend, if He doesn't open your understanding, you're just not going to get it, that's all. That is the reason we ought to approach this Book with great humility of mind, regardless of how high our IQ is or the extent of our education.

Referring back to 1 Corinthians, Paul goes on to say:

*Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*  
(1 Corinthians 2:13, 14 NSRB)

I am never disturbed when one of these unbelievers, even if he's a preacher, comes along and says he no longer believes the Bible is the Word of God (he never did believe it, to tell the truth) because that's the way he *should* talk. After all, if he is not a believer, he cannot understand it. Mark Twain, who was no believer, said that he was not disturbed by what he did not understand in the Bible. What worried him were the things he *did* understand. There are things an unbeliever can understand, and it's those which cause many to reject the Word of God. It was Pascal who said, "Human knowledge must be understood to be loved, but Divine knowledge must be loved to be understood."

As I leave the subject of illumination let me add this: Only the Spirit of God can open your mind and heart to see and to accept Christ and to trust Him as your Saviour. How wonderful! I have always felt as I entered the pulpit how helpless I am because, believe me, Vernon McGee can't convert anyone. But I not only feel weak, I also feel mighty—not mighty in myself, but in the knowledge that the Spirit of God can take my dead words and make them real and living.

## INTERPRETATION

Interpretation has to do with the interpretation that you and I give to the Word of God. And this is the reason there are Methodists and Baptists and Presbyterians, this kind of teacher and that kind of teacher—we all have our interpretations. And where there is disagreement, somebody is evidently wrong.

There are several rules that should be followed as we attempt to interpret the Bible.

**1. The overall purpose** of the Bible should first be considered. And that is the reason I teach all of it—because I believe you need to have it all before you can come to any dogmatic conclusion concerning any particular verse of Scripture. It is important to take into consideration all verses that are related to that subject.

**2. To whom the Scripture is addressed** should next be considered. For instance, way back yonder God said to Joshua, "Arise, go over this Jordan" (Joshua 1:2). When I was over in

that land, I crossed the Jordan River, but I didn't cross it to fulfill that Scripture. And I didn't say, "At last I've obeyed the Lord and have crossed over Jordan." No. When I read that verse I know the Lord is talking to Joshua—but I believe there is a tremendous lesson there for me. All Scripture is not *to* me, but all Scripture is *for* me. That is a good rule to keep in mind.

**3. The immediate context** before and after a Scripture should be observed. What is the passage talking about? And what other passages of Scripture deal with the same thing?

**4. Discover what the original says.** If you do not read Hebrew or Greek, when you read the American Standard Version you're right close to what the Lord said. Frankly, I cannot recommend the modern translations, although there are good things in them. I have found that because we are so divided doctrinally, every group that attempts to translate the Bible just naturally injects into the translation their particular viewpoint. Therefore, if the liberal is going to do the translating, you may get a taste of liberalism. If the fundamentalist is going to do the translating, you'll get his bias in certain places. However, the men who did the original English translations were men who believed that the Bible was the Word of God and handled it accordingly. When there were words they could not translate, they simply transliterated them (for instance, *Abba* and *baptizo*). The danger in modern translations is that translation is done in a dogmatic fashion. When you translate, you have to take something out of one language and put it into another language in comparable terms—identical terms if possible. The thing that most of our modern translators are trying to do is to get it into modern speech. And in doing so, they really miss what the original is saying. Personally, I stick by the Authorized (King James) Version. I feel that *The New Scofield Reference Bible* has made a tremendous step forward in making certain distinctions and corrections that needed to be made in the Authorized Version. I recommend that also, although I still use my old *Scofield Reference Bible*. I know my way around through the Book, and, after all, the old scout will follow the old trail. However, the important thing is to attempt to determine the exact words of the original.

**5. Interpret the Bible literally.** The late Dr. David Cooper has stated it well: "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise."

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## GUIDELINES

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*Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.* (Psalm 119:18)

There are certain guidelines that each of us should follow relative to the Word of God. I guarantee that if you will follow these guidelines, blessing will come to your heart and life. Certainly there should be these directions in the study of Scripture. Today a bottle of patented medicine, no matter how simple it might be, has directions for the use of it. And any little gadget

that you buy in a five-and-ten-cent store has with it directions for its operation. If that is true of the things of this world, certainly the all-important Word of God should have a few directions and instructions on the study of it. I want to mention seven very simple, yet basic, preliminary steps that will be a guide for the study of the Word of God.

1. Begin with prayer
2. Read the Bible
3. Study the Bible
4. Meditate on the Bible
5. Read what others have written on the Bible
6. Obey the Bible
7. Pass it on to others

You may want to add to these, but I believe these are basic and primary. Someone has put it in a very brief, cogent manner: “The Bible—know it in your head; stow it in your heart; show it in your life; sow it in the world.” That is another way of saying some of the things we are going to present here.

### **1. Begin with Prayer**

As we saw when we dealt with the subject of illumination, the Bible differs from other books in that the Holy Spirit alone can open our minds to understand it. You can take up a book on philosophy, and if a man wrote it (and he did), then a man can understand it. The same is true of higher mathematics or any other subject. There is not a book that ever has been written by any man that another man cannot understand. But the Bible is different. The Bible cannot be understood unless the Holy Spirit is the Instructor. And He wants to teach us. The fact of the matter is, our Lord told us, “He will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). When we open the Word of God we need to begin with the psalmist’s prayer:

*Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.* (Psalm 119:18)

When the psalmist wrote these lines, he had in mind the Mosaic system, of course; but we widen that out to include the sixty-six books of the Bible and pray today, “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy *Word*.”

When the Apostle Paul was praying for the Ephesians, he did not pray for their health (although he may have at another time), and he did not pray that they might get wealthy (I don’t know that he ever did that), but Paul’s first prayer for these Ephesians is recorded in his little epistle to them:

*Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.* (Ephesians 1:15, 16)



Now what would Paul pray for? Here it is:

***That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.***  
(Ephesians 1:17, 18)

Paul's prayer, you see, is that they might have a wisdom and an understanding of the revelation of the knowledge of Him—that is, that they might know the Word of God. And that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened, that they might know something of the hope of the calling they had in Christ. This is the prayer of the Apostle Paul. And if anyone remembers me in prayer, this is exactly what I want them to pray for—that my eyes (my spiritual eyes) might be open. Also I would like to remember you in prayer that way. I believe the most important thing for you and me today is to know the will of God—and the will of God is the Word of God. We cannot know the Word of God unless the Spirit of God is our teacher. That is what Paul says over in the first epistle to the Corinthians:

***Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*** (1 Corinthians 2:12-14 NSRB)

The reason today that so many don't get anything out of the Bible is simply because they are not letting the Spirit of God teach them. The Word of God is different from any other book, you see, because the natural man cannot receive these things. To him they are foolishness. God has given to us the Spirit that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. He alone is our teacher; He alone can take the Word of God and make it real and living to us.

God *wants* to communicate with us through His written Word. But it is a supernatural Book, and it will not communicate to us on the natural plane for the very simple reason that only the Spirit of God can take the things of Christ and reveal them to us. Notice this very interesting verse of Scripture:

***For what man knoweth the things of a man, except the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.*** (1 Corinthians 2:11 NSRB)

In a very succinct and understandable manner, this gives the reason the Spirit of God must be our Teacher. You and I understand each other, but we do not understand God. I believe it is perfect nonsense to talk about a generation gap through which we cannot communicate. While it has always been true that it is difficult for an older person and a younger person to see eye to eye, we can communicate with each other because we are all human beings. We understand each other. But, frankly, I don't understand God unless He is revealed to me. I do not know how God feels. I used to wonder how He would feel at a funeral. Well, I find the Lord Jesus there at the funeral of Lazarus and see that He wept. I know how He feels today. I know how He feels about many things because the Spirit of God through the Word of God has revealed them to me.

When I was pastor in Nashville, Tennessee, I got up one bright morning and looked out my window. During the night about five inches of snow had fallen and covered up all the ugliness with a beautiful blanket. I sat upstairs in my study looking out over the scene when I noticed an elder of my church, who lived next door, come out on his porch with two coal scuttles filled with ashes which he was going to empty in the alley. I saw him stop and look over the landscape, and I just smiled because I knew how he felt—just like I felt, looking out on that snow that had fallen during the night. But when he started down the steps, he slipped. Not wanting to spill the ashes, he held them out and hit one of those steps with a real bump. I couldn't help but laugh. I guess if he had broken his neck I still would have laughed. But I noticed that he looked around, and when he was satisfied that nobody had seen him, he got up with great satisfaction and started out again. About half way out on the sidewalk we had a repeat performance; only this time he fell much farther because it was all the way to the sidewalk. And it looked to me like he bounced when he hit. This time he really scanned the landscape. He didn't want anybody to see what he had done. And I knew how he felt. I would have felt the same way. He got up and looked over the landscape, went out and emptied his ashes, and when he got back to the porch, he looked over the landscape again—I don't think this time to admire the scene but to make good and sure that no one had seen him fall. I didn't say a word until Sunday morning. When I came into the church, I went right by where he sat, leaned down and said, "You sure did look funny yesterday carrying out the ashes!" He looked at me in amazement. He said, "Did you see me?" I said, "Yes." "Well," he said, "I didn't think anybody saw me." And I said, "I thought that. I knew exactly how you felt." You see, he had a human spirit and I had a human spirit—we understood each other. But who can understand God? The Spirit of God. And that is the reason the Holy Spirit teaches us, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

Renan, the French skeptic, made an attack on the Word of God, as you know; yet he wrote a "Life of Christ." His book is divided into two sections, one is the historical section, the other is the interpretation of the life of Christ. As far as the first part is concerned, there probably has never been a more brilliant life of Christ written by any man. But his interpretation of it is positively absurd. It could have been done better by a twelve-year-old Sunday school boy. What is the explanation of that? Well, the Spirit of God does not teach you history or give you facts that you can dig out for yourself; a very clever mind can dig out those. But the interpretation is altogether different. The Spirit of God has to do the interpreting, and He alone must be the Teacher to lead us and guide us into all truth. We must have the Spirit of God to open our eyes to see.

And we are told to ask His help. Over in John 16 the Lord Jesus says,

*I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Nevertheless, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you. A little while, and ye shall not see me; and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.* (John 16:12-16 NSRB)

So the Lord Jesus is saying that we are to ask. He has many things for us, and He has sent the Holy Spirit to be the teacher. Again over in chapter 14 He says,

*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* (John 14:26)

The Holy Spirit is the Teacher, and He must be the One to lead us and guide us into all truth, friend. If you ever learn anything through my Bible study program, it will not be because this poor preacher is the teacher, it will be because the Spirit of God is opening up the Word of God to you.

This, then, is the first guideline: Begin with prayer and ask the Spirit of God to be your teacher.

## **2. Read the Bible.**

The second guideline may seem oversimplified.

Someone asked a great Shakespearean scholar years ago, “How do you study Shakespeare?” His answer was very terse, “Read Shakespeare.” And I would say to you: Read the Word of God. Do you want to know what the Bible has to say? Read the Bible. Over and above what any teacher may give you, it is all-important to read for yourself what the Bible has to say.

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan has written some very wonderful and helpful commentaries on the Bible. In fact, he has a series of books that I recommend on all sixty-six books of the Bible. I know of nothing that is any better than them, and when I started out as a student, they had a great influence on my study of the Word. It is said of him that he would not put pen to paper until he had read a particular book of the Bible through fifty times. So don't be weary in well doing, friend; just read the Word of God. If you don't get it the first time, read it the second time. If

you don't get it the second time, read it the third time. Keep on reading it. We are to get the facts of the Word of God.

There is a very interesting incident over in the book of Nehemiah:

***And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spoke unto Ezra, the scribe, to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. And Ezra, the priest, brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all who could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read from it facing the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.***  
(Nehemiah 8:1-3 NSRB)

This is a very remarkable passage of Scripture. You see, these people had been in Babylonian captivity seventy years; many of them had never heard the Word of God. It did not circulate much in that day. There were not a hundred different translations aboard nor new ones coming off the press all the time. Probably there was just one or two copies in existence, and Ezra had one of those copies. He stood and read before the water gate.

***So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.***  
(Nehemiah 8:8 NSRB)

From the way the account is given, I assume that men of the tribe of Levi were stationed in certain areas among the people. After Ezra had read a certain portion, he would stop to give the people who had listened an opportunity to ask questions of the men who were stationed out there to explain the Bible to them.

***. . . And the Levites caused the people to understand the law; and the people stood in their place.*** (Nehemiah 8:7 NSRB)

Not only did they read the Word, but they caused the people to understand it.

We need to read the Bible.

There are so many distractions today from the study of the Word of God. And the greatest distraction we have is the church. The church is made up of committees and organizations and banquets and entertainments and promotional schemes to the extent that the Word of God is not even dealt with in many churches today. There are churches that have disbanded the preaching service altogether. Instead they have a time in which the people will be able to express themselves and say what they are thinking. I can't imagine anything more puerile

or more of a waste of time than that (although it is a fine excuse to get out of preaching for a lazy preacher who will not read or study the Bible). I find that the people who are more ignorant of the Bible than anyone else are church members. They simply do not know the Word of God. And it has been years since it has been taught in the average church. We need to read the Bible. We need to get into the Word of God—not just reading a few favorite verses, but reading the *entire* Word of God. That is the only way we are going to know it, friend. That is God’s method.

#### WHEN YOU READ THE BIBLE THROUGH

*I supposed I knew my Bible,  
Reading piecemeal, hit or miss,  
Now a bit of John or Matthew,  
Now a snatch of Genesis,  
Certain chapters of Isaiah,  
Certain Psalms (the twenty-third),  
Twelfth of Romans, First of Proverbs—  
Yes, I thought I knew the Word!  
But I found that thorough reading  
Was a different thing to do,  
And the way was unfamiliar  
When I read the Bible through.  
You who like to play at Bible,  
Dip and dabble, here and there,  
Just before you kneel, weary,  
And yawn through a hurried prayer;  
You who treat the Crown of Writings  
As you treat no other book—  
Just a paragraph disjointed,  
Just a crude impatient look—  
Try a worthier procedure,  
Try a broad and steady view;  
You will kneel in very rapture  
When you read the Bible through!*

—Amos R. Wells

Then the third guideline is . . .

### **3. Study the Bible.**

Someone came to Dr. Morgan, years ago, and said, “You speak as though you are inspired!” Dr. Morgan replied, “Inspiration is 95 percent perspiration.” The Bible needs to be studied. We need to realize that the Spirit of God will not teach us something that we could get ourselves by study. I used to teach the Bible in a Bible Institute, and the classes were made up of all kinds of young folk. Among them were a few very pious individuals, and I understood these

young people very well after a period of time—I confess I didn't understand them at first. Their pious facade, I found, covered up a tremendous ignorance and vacuum relative to the Word of God. Some of them would not study the night before an exam. They always would give an excuse that they were busy in a prayer meeting or a service somewhere. I had the feeling that some of them believed that they could put their Bibles under their pillows at night and as they slept, there would come up through the duck feathers the names of the kings of Israel and Judah! Believe me, it won't come up through the duck feathers. We have to knuckle down and study the Word of God. A fellow student in a Bible class when I was in college said, "Doctor, you have assigned us a section that is very dry." The professor, without even missing a step, said to him, "Then dampen it a little with sweat from your brow." The Bible should be studied, and it is very important to see that. There is a certain knowledge that the Spirit of God is not going to give you. I do not think He is revealing truth to lazy people. After all, you never learn logarithms or geometry or Greek by just reading a chapter of it just before you go to sleep at night!

Now you may be shocked when I say that I do not encourage devotional reading of the Bible. Over a period of years I have learned that a great many people who are very faithful in what they call devotional reading are very ignorant of the Bible. I stayed with a family for over a week when I was holding meetings in a place in middle Tennessee. Every morning at the breakfast table we had devotions. Unfortunately, breakfast was always a little late, and Susie and Willie were rushing to get away to school. I am confident that they didn't even know what was read. Dad was wanting to get away to work, and he generally made the Bible reading very brief. Always he'd say, "Well, I'll read this familiar passage this morning because we don't have much time." And, believe me, we didn't. By the time the reading was over, Susie and Willie left the table like they were shot out of a gun, and Dad got out of there almost as quickly as they did, and Mother was left with the dishes—and I wondered if she had really heard what had been read. I determined right there and then that in my home we wouldn't have devotional reading. I have always encouraged members of my family to read the Bible on their own. That is the reading that is profitable.

Someone is going to say, "But I have my devotions at night after the day is over." Now really, don't you have them right before you go to bed? You've got one foot in bed already, one eye is already closed, and you turn to a passage of Scripture to read. Now, friend, you cannot learn mathematics that way. You cannot learn literature that way. You cannot learn the *Bible* that way. You have to *study* the Word of God. You ought to read it when you can give time to it. And if you can't find time, you ought to *make* time. Set apart thirty minutes or an hour. Or if you do things haphazardly like I do, read thirty minutes one day, perhaps only five minutes the next day, and two or three hours the next day, however it fits into your program. I put down no particular rule except that each person should read for himself, and boys and girls should be encouraged to read the Bible for themselves. Some folks feel that they ought to have devotional reading together. And that is fine, if the Lord leads you to do it, but I guarantee you will not be intelligent Bible students after twenty years of doing it like that. You also need to study the Word of God on your own.

It was said of John Wesley that he was a man of one Book. What made him a man of one Book? Well, he got up and read the Bible at four and five o'clock every morning—read it in five

different languages. Believe me, he studied the Word of God. And you and I need to study the Word; we need to get the meaning of the Bible.

This leads me to the fourth guideline:

#### **4. Meditate on the Bible.**

Meditation is something that God taught His people. The Word of God was to be before the children of Israel all the time—so that they could meditate on it.

*And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. (Deuteronomy 6:6-9)*

Now that is an amazing statement coming from the Lord. He told them to write the Word of God upon the doorposts. In other words, wherever they turned, it was just like looking at billboards. You cannot drive up and down our streets and highways without seeing liquor signs and cigarette signs—billboards galore! Now you can understand why people today drink liquor and why they smoke cigarettes—it is before them all the time. The Lord knew human nature. He knew us. And He told His people to get the Word where they would see it. It was on their doorposts, on their gates, and they wore it on their garments. And they were to talk about it when they were walking. They were to talk about the Word when they sat down. They were to talk about it when they went to bed and until they went to sleep. God asked His people to meditate on His Word.

Now what does it really mean to meditate on the Word of God? There is a very interesting statement over in the first Psalm:

*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. (Psalm 1:1, 2)*

To meditate is to ruminate, to bring to mind and consider over and over. Ruminating is what a cow is doing when she is chewing her cud. You know how the old cow goes out of a morning, and while the grass is fresh with dew she grazes. Then when the sun comes up and the weather is hot, the old cow lies down under a tree, or stands there in the shade. You see her chewing and you wonder what in the world that cow is chewing. She will chew there for an hour or two. Well, she is meditating, friend. She is bringing the grass she ate of a morning (we are told that a cow has a complex stomach) out of one chamber and is transferring it to another. In the process

she is going over it again, chewing it up good. You and I need to learn to do that in our thought processes. We are to get the Word of God, read it, have it out where we can look at it, then think about it, meditate on it.

Many times in preparing a message I'll take a verse of Scripture and spend hours doing nothing but reading it over and over, checking what others have said about it, and just keep reading it. Finally new truth will break out from that particular passage. I remember hearing Dr. Harry Ironside say that he had heard a lecture on the Song of Solomon which left him dissatisfied. He said that he read the Song of Solomon again, got down on his knees and asked God to give him an understanding of it. He did that again and again—in fact, he did it for weeks and months. Finally new light broke from that book. When I teach the Song of Solomon I generally give his interpretation for two reasons: it satisfies my own mind and heart more than does any other interpretation I have heard, and also I know the man who got it had spent a great deal of time in meditation.

There are folk who write to us saying that the wife listens to our Bible study by radio at home, and the husband listens to it at work, and of an evening at the dinner table they discuss the Scripture that was covered. That is meditation; it is going back over it again. Riding along in the car alone is a good place to take a passage of Scripture and really give thought to it.

How many of you, after you have had “devotions,” meditate upon that passage during the day? Most people read it and then forget it—never thinking about it again until it is called to their attention. Or, if they read it at night, they jump into bed as quickly as they can, turn out the light, and go to sleep, forgetting all about it. Meditation is almost a lost art in our contemporary society. Frankly, television in many homes absolutely blots out the possibility for meditation. It is changing the spiritual life of many families today. One of the reasons that our churches are becoming colder and more indifferent to the Word of God is simply because there is that lack of meditation upon the Word of God.

Remember (in Acts, chapter 8) the Ethiopian eunuch who was riding along reading Isaiah. He was actually studying Isaiah, because he was in a passage with which he was having trouble—he did not know what it meant. Here is a man who is reading and studying, and the Spirit of God is going to open the Word of God to him. That is the reason the Holy Spirit had Philip there to explain the chapter to the Ethiopian. It opened up a new world to him, and he came to know Christ. The record says that he went on his way rejoicing. What was making him rejoice? He was meditating, friend. He was going back over that fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Have you ever meditated on that Lamb who was brought as a sheep to the slaughter? Who was He? He came down here and identified Himself with us who like sheep have gone astray and have turned every one to our own way. And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. How often do you meditate on these things? Well, the Ethiopian did. It always has been a matter of speculation as to what he did after that. Tradition says that he went back to his land and founded the Coptic church of Ethiopia. That could well be; we do not know. However, the interesting thing is that he went on his way rejoicing, which lets us know that he was meditating on the Word of God.

## **5. Read what others have written on the Scriptures.**



I know that this is a dangerous rule, because many folk depend on what someone else says about it. Also there are many books on the market today that give wrong teaching concerning the Word of God. We need to test everything that is written by the Bible itself.

However, you and I should consult a good commentary. With each outline of the books of the Bible I list recommended books, commentaries that I have read and have found helpful. You will find it very profitable to read what others have said. Actually you are getting all the distilled sweetness and study of the centuries when you read books written by men who have been guided in their study by the Spirit of God. You and I should profit by this. There have been some wonderful, profound works on the books of the Bible.

In addition to commentaries, a concordance is invaluable. I can recommend three: Young's concordance, Strong's concordance, and Cruden's concordance—take your pick. Also you will need a good Bible dictionary. The Davis Bible dictionary is good if you don't get the wrong edition. *Unger's Bible Dictionary* I can recommend without reservation.

Every teacher and preacher of the Gospel has a set of books that he studies. He needs them. Someone asks, "Should he present verbatim what somebody else has written?" No, he should never do that, unless he gives credit to the author. But he has a perfect right to use what others have written. I have been told that some of my feeble messages are given by others, and sometimes credit is given and sometimes no mention is made of the author at all. As far as I'm personally concerned, it makes no difference, but it does reveal the character of the individual who will use someone else's material verbatim and not give credit for it. A professor in seminary solved this problem. When someone asked him if he should quote other writers, he said, "You ought to graze on everybody's pasture, but give your own milk." And that means that you are to read what others have written, but you put it in your own thought patterns and express it your way. You have a perfect right to do that. The important thing is that we should take advantage of the study of other men in the Word of God.

## **6. Obey the Bible.**

For the understanding and the study of the Scriptures, *obedience* is essential. Abraham is an example of this. God appeared to him when He called him out of Ur of the Chaldees and again when he was in the Promised Land. But Abraham ran off to Egypt when famine came, and during this time God had no word for him. Not until Abraham was back in the land did God appear to him again. Why? Because of lack of obedience. Until Abraham obeyed what God had already revealed to him, God was not prepared to give to him any new truth. So it is with us. When we obey, God opens up new truth for us.

Even the gospel which is given to save our souls is given for the very definite purpose of obedience. The greatest document that ever has been written on the gospel is the epistle to the Romans. And Paul put around the gospel this matter of obedience. He begins with it:

***By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name.*** (Romans 1:5)

Again at the end of Romans Paul comes back to this:

***But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.*** (Romans 16:26)

“Obedience of faith” is the last thing Paul says in this epistle. What is between? He sets before us what the gospel is, that great doctrinal section; then he concludes with a section on duty—what we’re to do. Paul put around the gospel this matter of obedience.

*Obedience* to the faith. This is where Adam and Eve went wrong. Eve not only listened to Satan, the enemy of God, but she also disobeyed God.

Obedience to God is very important. And we must recognize that God will not continue to reveal truth to us if we become disobedient. We must obey the Bible if we are to profit from its reading.

Also obedience is important because there are folk who measure Christianity by you and by me. Cowan has well said, “The best way to defend the Gospel is to live a life worthy of the Gospel.” That is the way you prove it is the Word of God.

Four clergymen were discussing the merits of various translations of the Bible. One liked the King James Version best because of its simple, beautiful English. Another liked the American Standard Version because it is more literal and comes nearer to the Hebrew and Greek texts. Still another liked a modern translation because of its up-to-date vocabulary. The fourth minister was silent. When asked to express his opinion, he replied, “I like my mother’s translation best. She translated it into life, and it was the most convincing translation I have ever seen.”

You will recall that Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians:

***Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.*** (2 Corinthians 3:2, 3)

*The Gospel is written a chapter a day  
By deeds that you do and words that you say.  
Men read what you say whether faithless or true.  
Say, what is the Gospel according to you?*

—Author Unknown

That little jingle is true, by the way.

Oh, how important it is to obey the Bible! I believe that today Christianity is being hurt more by those who are church members than by any other group. That is one of the reasons that we have all of this rebellion on the outside—rebellion against the establishment, which includes the church. A placard carried by one in a protest march had four words on it; “Church, no; Jesus, yes.” Candidly, the lives of a great many in the church are turning people away from the church. There was a barrister in England years ago who was asked why he did not become a Christian. This was his answer, “I, too, might have become a Christian if I had not met so many who said they were Christians.” How unfortunate that is! We need to examine our own lives in this connection. How important it is to *obey* the Word of God!

## **7. Pass it on to others.**

Not only read the Bible, not only study the Bible, not only meditate on the Bible, and not only read what others have written about it, but pass it on to others. That is what we all should do. You will reach a saturation point in the study of the Word unless you do share it with others. God for some reason won't let you withdraw yourself from mankind and become some sort of a walking Bible encyclopedia, knowing everything, while the rest of us remain ignorant. I think that is the reason He said:

*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.* (Hebrews 10:25)

God has told us to be witnesses. He said, “Ye shall be witnesses.” He did not say that we should be scholars, walking encyclopedias, or memory books. Do not bury God's truth in a notebook. Someone has said that education is a process by which information in the professor's notebook is transferred to the student's notebook, without passing through the mind of either. Well, there is a great deal of Bible truth like that. It is not practiced, not shared. We are called to be witnesses today, therefore we ought to pass it on to others.

I learned this lesson when I was in seminary. I pastored a little church, as did five other fellows, and we found that when we were graduated, we were at least a year ahead of the other members of the class. Why? Because we were smarter than the others? No. Because we were passing it on. God was able to funnel into us a great deal more than He might have otherwise.

My friend, pass it on.

These, then, are the seven basic guidelines to follow as you take in your hands the Word of God:

1. Begin with prayer
2. Read the Bible
3. Study the Bible

4. Meditate upon the Bible
5. Read what others have written on the Bible
6. Obey the Bible
7. Pass it on to others

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## HOW TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

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1. Begin with prayer  
1 Corinthians 2:9-14; John 16:12-15; John 14:26
2. Read the Bible  
Nehemiah 8:1-3
3. Study the Bible  
Nehemiah 8:8
4. Meditate upon the Bible  
Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Psalm 1
5. Pass the Bible on to others  
Hebrews 5:12; Romans 12:7

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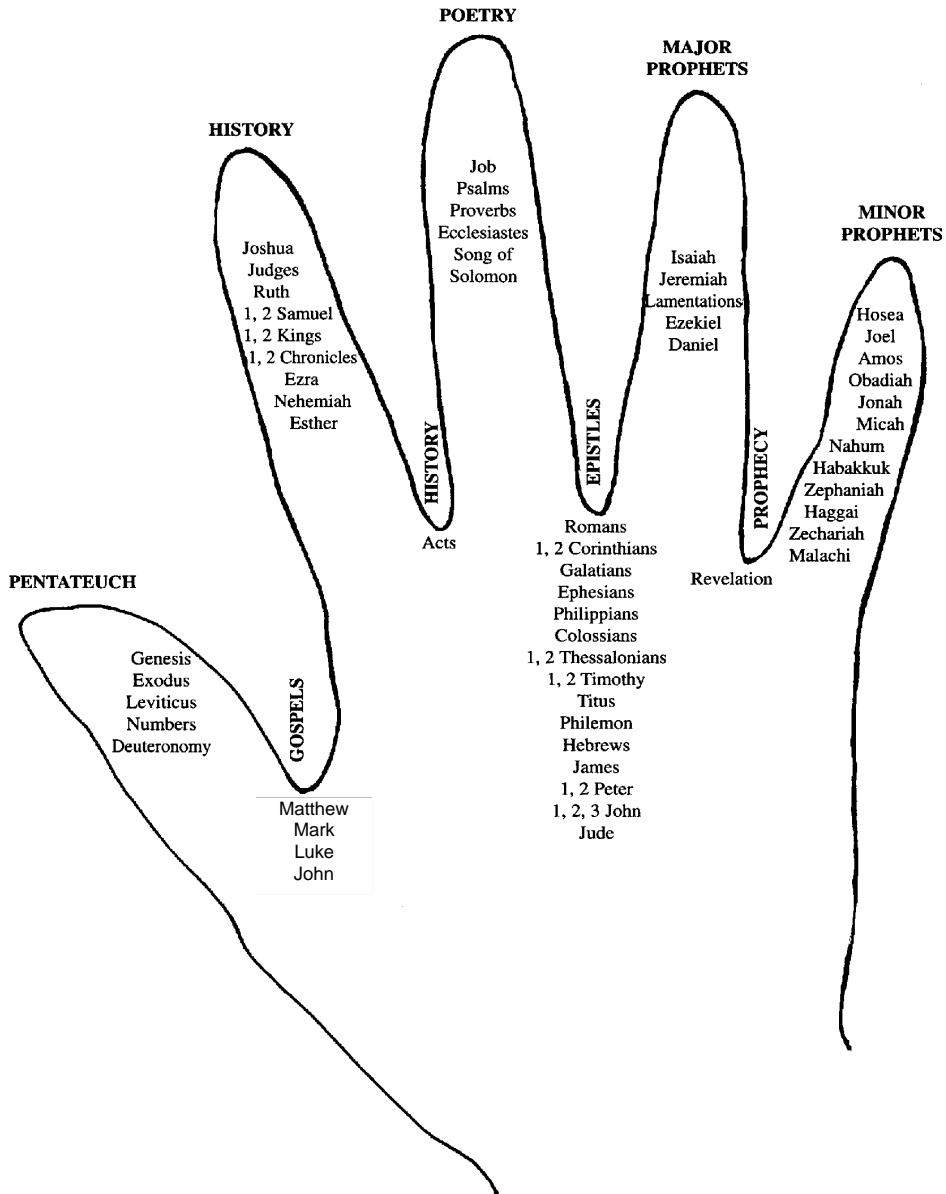
## HOW TO STUDY EACH CHAPTER

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Locate:

1. The theme
2. The most important verse
3. The most prominent word
4. The teaching about Christ
5. The command to obey
6. The promise to claim
7. The new truth learned  
Psalm 119:18



A handy guide for memorizing the Books of the Bible.

**Notes & Outlines**

# **GENESIS**

**J. Vernon McGee**

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## THE PENTATEUCH

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The first five books of the Bible are called the Pentateuch. *Pentateuch* means “five books.” These books were written by Moses and are identified in Scripture as the Law. Although the Mosaic authorship has been questioned, it is affirmed by conservative scholars and confirmed by archaeology. Bible believers unanimously accept the Mosaic authorship (Deut. 31:9, 24, 26; Acts 7:37, 38).

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### GENESIS

“The Seed Plot of the Bible”

**WRITER:** Moses

**NAME:** Genesis

The name *Genesis* is taken from the Septuagint. The Septuagint (LXX) is a Greek translation made of the Old Testament in Alexandria at the order of Ptolemy Philadelphus about 285-247 B.C. Josephus tells us that this translation was made by 72 priests (hence its name) in 72 days. Six priests were from each of the 12 tribes. Christ and Paul quoted from this translation of the Old Testament. It is older than any of the Hebrew texts extant today.

Genesis is the book of beginnings and the families — the beginning of creation, man, woman, sabbath, marriage, family, work, sin, murder, sacrifice, races, languages, culture, civilization and redemption.

*Genesis* means “origin,” “source,” “birth.” The meaning closest to that of the original is “birth.” It is derived from the Greek verb *gennaō*, which means “to beget” or “give birth to.” Genesis is the book of beginnings and sources, but more particularly it is the book of births — this is often overlooked. It is the book of generations. According to this understanding of Genesis, it falls into two natural divisions:

1. Gen. 2:4 — The Book of the Birth of Heaven and the Earth (from Septuagint)
2. Gen. 5:1 — The Book of the Birth of Men

Simply stated, the Book of Genesis is the record of the “family tree” of the Jews. It is the genealogy of heaven, earth, and man. Even the new birth is suggested in Genesis 3:15, where is the first mention of a Redeemer.

**OUTLINE** (According to genealogies):

- Gen. 1:1 — 2:6 Book of generations of heavens and earth — divine poem of creation — God’s creative work
- Gen. 2:7 — 6:8 Book of generations of Adam (men, *anthropoi*) — Adam was created, but children born to him
- Gen. 6:9 — 9:29 Generations of Noah
- Gen. 10:1 — 11:9 Generations of sons of Noah
- Gen. 11:10-26 Generations of sons of Shem (Gentiles)
- Gen. 11:27 — 25:11 Generations of Terah
- Gen. 25:12-18 Generations of Ishmael
- Gen. 25:19 — 35:29 Generations of Isaac (why Abraham left out, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called” cf. Gen. 21:12; Heb. 11:8, 9; Rom. 9:7)
- Gen. 36:1 — 37:1 Generations of Esau
- Gen. 37:2 — 50:26 Generations of Jacob (genealogy of rejected line given first, chosen line last, cf. 1 Cor. 15:46 for principle in giving genealogies)

**KEY:** Generations

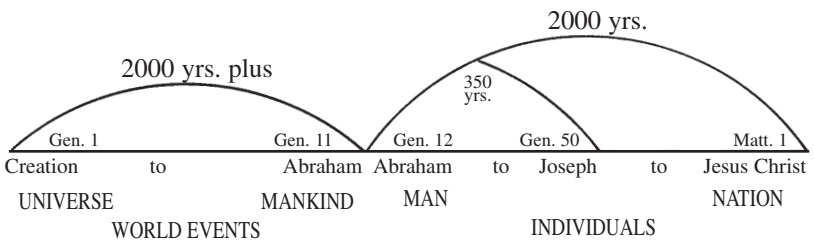
**PURPOSE:** To give us the families — Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 28:13, 14; Acts 3:25; Gal. 3:6, 9, 16.

The first 11 chapters cover a minimum of 2000 years. It could easily be a thousand times longer. From chapter 12 to chapter 50 the time is 350 years. This should arrest our attention.

11 chapters cover 2000 years, plus.

39 chapters cover only 350 years.

Certainly the record slows down at chapter 12. Better stated, the first 11 chapters constitute an introduction to the remainder of the book and the Bible. This chart may prove helpful.





## COMMENTS:

Abraham is more important to God than the universe. It is being only fair to an author to place the emphasis where he places it.

In the New Testament God indicates emphasis in the same way. The four Gospels record the main events in the life of Jesus Christ. Examine the following facts:

There are 89 chapters in the 4 Gospels:

4 chapters cover the first 30 years of His life,

85 chapters cover the last 3 years of His life,

27 chapters cover the last 8 days of His life.

Which is more important to the writers, judging from the space given to each — the first 30 years or the last 8 days? Four chapters cover the first 30 years and 27 chapters cover the last 8 days. When you turn to the Epistles, you discover why the emphasis is on the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4). These facts constitute the gospel; your salvation rests upon them. Do you believe that Jesus Christ died for your sins, and that He was raised for your justification? This is essential.

One of the harshest and most frequently heard criticisms of the Bible concerns the creation account. It is pointed out that other nations of antiquity had such a story. This is true, but a comparison of the Genesis record with one of the best of a secular nation, the Babylonian tablets of creation, will show the superiority of the Genesis record. Here all is contrast:

### Babylonian

Tablets begin with chaos

Heavenly bodies are gods

Polytheistic theology  
(many gods)

Work of a craftsman

Characterized by puerility  
and grotesqueness

Out of harmony with science

### Bible

Bible begins with cosmos, perfection

Heavenly bodies are matter

Monotheistic truth (one God)

God spoke

Grand and solemn realities of the  
Creator God who is holy and is a  
Savior

In accord with science (many scien-  
tists are believers)

## OUTLINE:

### I. Entrance of sin on earth, Chapters 1—11

#### A. CREATION, Chapters 1, 2

1. Heaven and Earth, 1:1  
*“Create” (bara) occurs only 3 times, vv. 1, 21, 27*
2. Earth became waste and void, 1:2
3. Re-creation, 1:3 — 2:25
  - a. First Day — light, 1:3-5
  - b. Second Day — air spaces (firmament), 1:6-8
  - c. Third Day — dry land appears and plant life, 1:9-13
  - d. Fourth Day — sun, moon, stars appear, 1:14-19
  - e. Fifth Day — animal life (biology), 1:20-23
  - f. Sixth Day — fertility of creation and creation of man, 1:24-31
  - g. Seventh Day — sabbath, 2:1-3
  - h. Recapitulation of the creation of man, 2:4-25  
*(Law of recurrence)*

#### B. FALL, Chapters 3, 4

1. Root of sin — doubting and disobeying God
2. Fruit of sin — *“Out of the heart proceed...murders...”*  
(Matt. 15:19)

#### C. FLOOD, Chapters 5 — 9

1. Book of generations of Adam — through Seth — beginning of man’s history — obituary notices, 5
2. Antediluvian Civilization — cause of flood and construction of ark, 6
3. Judgment of flood, 7
4. Postdiluvian civilization — after the flood, 8
5. Postdiluvian life — new beginning, 9

#### D. TOWER of BABEL and confusion of tongues, Chapters 10, 11

1. Ethnology — sons of Noah, 10
2. Tower of Babel, 11  
*(Contrast to Day of Pentecost)*

### II. Preparation for the coming of the Redeemer of all mankind, Chapters 12 — 50

#### A. ABRAHAM (faith), Chapters 12 — 23

*(Development of faith by 7 appearances of God)*

1. God’s call and promise to Abram — his response by lapse of faith, 12
2. Abram returns to land from Egypt — separates from Lot

- God then appears the third time to Abram, 13
3. First war — Abram delivers Lot; first priest — Abram blessed by Melchizedek, 14
  4. God reveals Himself more completely to Abram — reaffirms His promises, 15
  5. Unbelief of Sarai and Abram — birth of Ishmael, 16
  6. God makes covenant with Abraham (Abram becomes Abraham) — confirms promise to Abraham about a son, 17
  7. God reveals coming destruction of Sodom to Abraham — Abraham intercedes on behalf of inhabitants, 18
  8. Angels warn Lot — Lot leaves Sodom — God destroys cities of the plain, 19
  9. Abraham repeats sin at Gerar about relationship of Sarah, 20
  10. Birth of Isaac — Hagar and Ishmael cast out — Abraham at Beer-sheba, 21
  11. God commands Abraham to offer Isaac — restrains him — reconfirms covenant with Abraham, 22
  12. Death of Sarah — Abraham purchases Machpelah cave for burial place, 23

**B. ISAAC (the beloved son), Chapters 24 — 26**

*(Choosing of a bride compares with Christ and the church)*

1. Abraham sends servant for bride for Isaac — Rebekah returns with him — becomes Isaac's bride, 24
2. Death of Abraham — birth of Esau and Jacob (twins) to Isaac and Rebekah — Esau sells birthright to Jacob, 25
3. God confirms covenant to Isaac — Isaac misrepresents relationship with Rebekah — Isaac digs well in Gerar, 26

**C. JACOB (“Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth”),**

Chapters 27 — 36

1. Jacob and Rebekah connive to get blessing intended for Esau, 27
2. Jacob leaves home — at Bethel God appears to him — confirms Abrahamic covenant, 28
3. Jacob arrives in Haran — meets Rachel and Uncle Laban — serves for Rachel — deceived into marrying Leah, 29
4. Birth of sons of Jacob — Jacob prepares to leave Laban — Jacob's bargain pays off, 30
5. Jacob flees from Haran — Laban overtakes him — Jacob and Laban make Mizpah covenant, 31

6. Crisis in life of Jacob: at Peniel a Man wrestles with him — Jacob's name changed to Israel, 32
7. Jacob meets Esau — Jacob journeys to Shalem, 33
8. Scandal in Jacob's family: Dinah defiled — brothers avenge by slaying men of Hamor, 34
9. Jacob returns to Bethel — Rachel dies at Bethlehem — Isaac dies at Hebron, 35
10. Family of Esau which becomes nation of Edom, 36

**D. JOSEPH (suffering and glory), Chapters 37 — 50**

1. Jacob dwells in Canaan — Joseph sold into slavery, 37
2. Sin and shame of Judah, 38
3. Humiliation in Egypt, 39, 40
  - a. Overseer in house of Potiphar — tempted then framed by wife of Potiphar — imprisoned, 39
  - b. Joseph in prison interprets dreams of baker and butler, 40
4. Exaltation in Egypt, 41 — 48
  - a. Joseph interprets dreams of Pharaoh — made overseer of Egypt — marries Asenath — birth of Manasseh and Ephraim, 41
  - b. Jacob sends 10 sons to Egypt for corn — audience with Joseph — leave Simeon as hostage — return home with corn and refunded money, 42
  - c. Jacob sends sons (Benjamin included) again to Egypt — entertained in Joseph's home (does not reveal his identity), 43
  - d. Joseph sends brothers home — arrested by steward — cup found in Benjamin's sack, — Judah pleads for Benjamin, 44
  - e. Joseph reveals identity — tender reunion with brothers — invites Jacob and all family to Egypt, 45
  - f. Jacob with family (70) move to Egypt — Jacob and Joseph reunited, 46
  - g. Jacob and brothers dwell in Goshen — presented to Pharaoh — famine forces Egyptians to sell land to Joseph for Pharaoh — Joseph swears he will bury Jacob in Canaan, 47
  - h. Jacob on deathbed blesses Joseph's sons, 48
5. Death and burial of Jacob and Joseph, 49, 50
  - a. Jacob gives deathbed blessing and prophecy for 12 sons, 49
  - b. Death and burial of Jacob in Canaan — death and burial of Joseph in Egypt, 50

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*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*



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**Notes & Outlines**

# **EXODUS**

J. Vernon McGee

## EXODUS

**WRITER:** Moses

### A CONTINUED STORY:

Exodus continues the account which was begun in Genesis, although there was a lapse of at least 3 1/2 centuries. Genesis 15:13 says that the seed of Abraham would spend 400 years in a land that was not theirs. It is difficult to be dogmatic about the chronology of the patriarchal period. It has been omitted purposely from these outlines. The word that opens Exodus is a conjunction which is better translated “and” rather than “now.” Exodus has been called the sequel to Genesis. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan wrote, “In the book of Exodus nothing is commenced, nothing is finished.”

### MESSAGE:

Exodus means “the way out.” Redemption is by blood and by power. The message is stated in Hebrews 11:23-29.

### KEY VERSE:

*I am the LORD thy God, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.* (Exodus 20:2)

### COMMENT:

Seventy souls of Jacob entered Egypt (Genesis 46:27). It is conservatively estimated that 2,100,000 left Egypt at the time of the Exodus. Although we cannot be certain of dating during this early period, it would seem that Joseph entered Egypt under the Hyksos or shepherd kings. This was the 15th to 17th dynasty. They were Semitic conquerors from Mesopotamia, Bedouin princes from the desert. They were related to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Actually, the Israelites were their only friends, as they were hated by Egyptians. Amasis, military leader of Egypt, led a rebellion against the Hyksos kings, deposed them, and was made Pharaoh. It was Ramses II in this line who was the Pharaoh of the oppression and the one “who knew not Joseph.”

Moses' life is divided into three 40-year periods:

1. 40 years in Pharaoh's palace in Egypt,
2. 40 years in the desert in Midian,
3. 40 years in the wilderness as leader of Israel.

The training in Egypt, evidently in the Temple of the Sun, did not prepare Moses to follow God in leading Israel out of Egypt. God trained him in the desert for 40 years to reveal to him that he could not deliver Israel alone. God gave Moses a B.D. (Backside of the Desert) degree.

“And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds” (Acts 7:22). The wisdom of Egypt is not to be despised even today. The construction of the pyramids and the retention of brilliance in the colors they used reveal they knew architecture and chemistry. Also, they knew the distance to the sun. And writing was a highly developed science among them.

After God prepared Moses to deliver his people, He sent him back to Egypt after 40 years. Moses is to assemble elders of Israel and go to Pharaoh. Pharaoh will refuse to let Israel go. His refusal will open the contest between God and the gods of Egypt. Pharaoh was a representative of the gods of Egypt. Egypt was dominated by idolatry — “gods many and lords many.” There were thousands of temples and millions of idols. Back of idolatry was Satan. There was power in the religion of Egypt — “Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith” (2 Timothy 3:8). Pharaoh asked, “Who is Jehovah?” He had never heard of Him. “And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go” (Exodus 5:2). God introduced Himself. Pharaoh got acquainted with God and acknowledged Him as God. “And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time; the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked” (Exodus 9:27). “Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you” (Exodus 10:16).

Two points of significance arise from this episode:

A. Why the plagues?

They were God’s battle with the gods of Egypt. Each plague was directed against a particular god in Egypt. “For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD” (Exodus 12:12).

1. The Nile was turned to blood — the Nile was the lifeblood of Egypt and sacred to Osiris.

2. Frogs — Heka was the frog-headed goddess. It was an offense to the goddess to kill frogs.



3. Lice — Geb was the earth god.
4. Flies (beetles or scarabs) were sacred to Ra (the sun god), Ra-Ammon, and Khepara. Gold scarabs have been found in the tombs.
5. Murrain on cattle — Egypt was a land of “zoo-olatry.” They worshiped animals. Apis was the black bull that was worshiped. Mumified bulls have been found in a pyramid near Memphis, Egypt. There is a note of humor that God injects here. Imagine the Egyptians worshipping a sick cow!
6. Boils — the priests had to be spotless. They could not serve in their temples with boils.
7. Hail — Egypt is a land of no rainfall. There is less than one inch a year in Cairo. Isis was the goddess of air.
8. Locusts are a judgment from God (compare locusts in Joel and Revelation).
9. Darkness — Egyptians worshiped the sun (Ra).
10. Death of firstborn — the firstborn in Egypt were set aside for the service of the gods.

B. What does it mean to harden the heart of Pharaoh?

The word “harden” has in it the idea of “to twist with a rope.” The suggestion is that God hailed Pharaoh into court and made him reveal what was already in his heart. He was not permitted to cover up or compromise. He had to reveal his true intent and thought. See Exodus 4:21; 7:3; 14:4 and Romans 9:17-24.

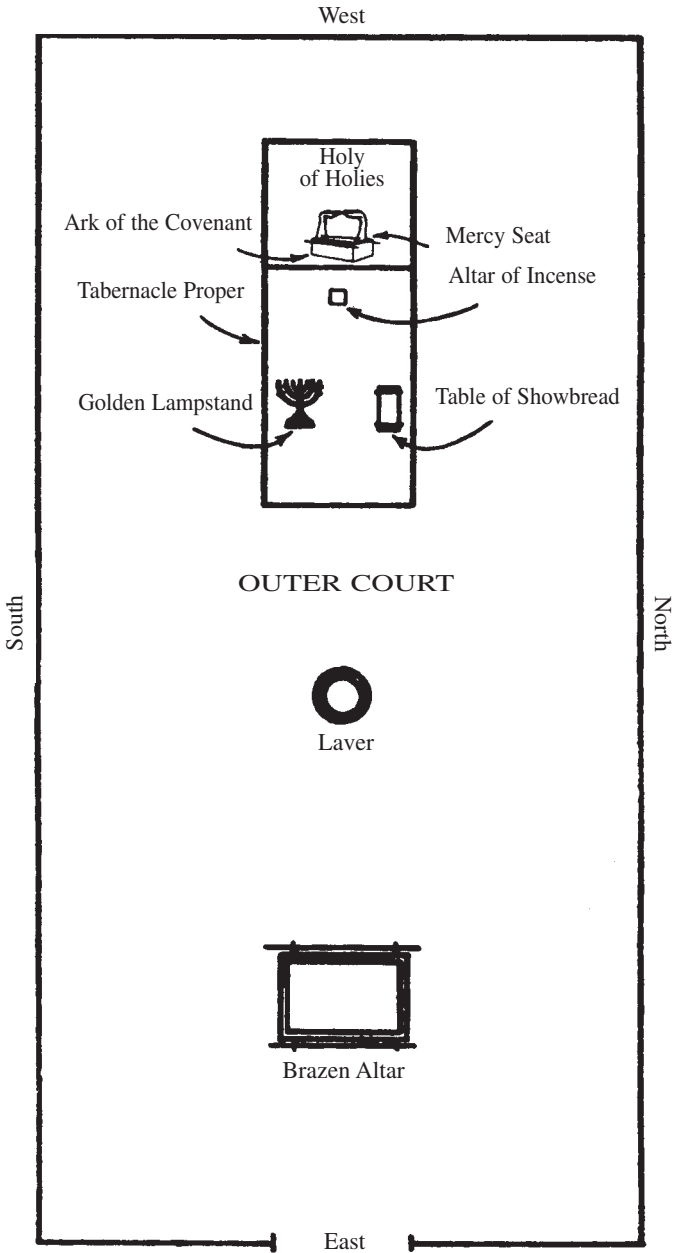
The Passover is the oldest religious holy day or holiday in continuous celebration. It sets forth redemption by blood. God delivered His people out of Egypt by blood and power. This was the grace of God described to them in this fashion, “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you unto myself” (Exodus 19:4). God wanted to reveal to His own people that He had power to deliver them.

The Law was then instituted with their permission. The Ten Commandments are a segment of the Mosaic Law. Legislation that regulated the social life in relationship to the Ten Commandments was given in the remainder of the Pentateuch.

The great emphasis was upon the construction of the tabernacle and the service of it. The sacrificial system was the heart of the worship of God. Sin must be dealt with before God can dwell with His people. “And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8).

The floor plan of the tabernacle and the furniture of it should be learned by every student of the Scriptures.

# Tabernacle Floor Plan



## OUTLINE:

### I. A DELIVERER, Chapters 1 — 11

- A. Slavery of Israel in Egypt, 1
- B. Birth of Moses — first 40 years in Pharaoh's palace, 2
- C. Call of Moses — second 40 years in Midian, 3  
(incident of burning bush)
- D. Return of Moses to Egypt — announcement of deliverance to Israel, 4
- E. Contest with Pharaoh, 5  
(9 plagues against idolatry of Egypt, battle of the gods)

### II. DELIVERANCE (*by blood and power*), Chapters 12 — 14

- A. Institution of Passover — tenth plague, death of firstborn (*blood*), 12
- B. Crossing Red Sea — destruction of army of Egypt (*power*), 13, 14

### III. MARCHING to Mt. Sinai (*spiritual education*), Chapters 15 — 18

*(7 experiences correspond to Christian experience)*

- A. Song of redeemed — wilderness of Shur, 15:1-22  
*(no bed of roses after redemption)*
- B. Marah, bitter water sweetened by tree, 15:23-26  
*(Cross sweetens bitter experiences of life)*
- C. Elim (*fruitful Christian experience*), 15:27
- D. Wilderness of Sin — manna and quail, 16  
*(Christ is the Bread of Life)*
- E. Smitten Rock ("That Rock was Christ"), 17:1-7
- F. Amalek (*the flesh*), 17:8-16  
(victory on the hilltop, Deuteronomy 25:17, 18)
- G. Jethro, priest of Midian, 18  
*(worldly wisdom in contrast to revelation)*

### IV. The LAW (*condemnation*), Chapters 19 — 24

- A. Arrival at Mt. Sinai — agreement to accept the Law, 19
- B. Ten Commandments — order for the altar, 20
- C. Social legislation, 21 — 24

**V. BLUEPRINT and CONSTRUCTION of tabernacle, Chapters 25 — 40**

*(a pattern and picture of Christ)*

- A. Blueprint for tabernacle — pattern of garments for high priest, 25 — 30
- B. Workmen for tabernacle — Sabbath a sign to Israel, 31
- C. Golden calf — broken law — Moses' intercession, second tables of the Law, 32 — 35
- D. Construction of tabernacle, 36 — 39
- E. Tabernacle erected — filled with glory of the Lord, 40

Exodus begins in gloom and ends in glory.

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## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

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**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter —
  
2. Most important verse —
  
3. Most prominent word —
  
4. Teaching about Christ —
  
5. Command to obey —
  
6. Promise to claim —
  
7. New truth learned —

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**Notes & Outlines**

# **LEVITICUS**

**J. Vernon McGee**

# LEVITICUS

**WRITER:** Moses

**PLACE:**

In the Book of Leviticus the children of Israel were marking time at Mount Sinai. The book opens and concludes at the same geographical spot, Mount Sinai, where God gave the Law. Exodus concludes with the tabernacle constructed and the glory of the Lord filling it. Leviticus gives the order and rules of worship in the tabernacle. The Hebrew word *Vayikrah* opens the book, and it means “and He called.” God moves into the tabernacle and speaks from there rather than from Mount Sinai. He calls the people to Him and tells them how to come. This is the exact meaning of the church — *ekklesia*, “called out ones.” The Lord Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice” (John 10:27).

**PURPOSE:**

This is the one book that the critic is categorically convinced should not be in the Bible. Dr. John Haynes Holmes, the humanist, has said, “The Book of Leviticus is not fit to be in the Bible.” In contradistinction to this extremely biased opinion, others with equal scholarship find it to be a very important book. Dr. S. H. Kellogg called it the “greatest book” in the Bible. Dr. Albert C. Dudley called it “the most important book in the Bible.” Dr. Parker said, “Considered as embracing the history of one month only, this may claim to be the most remarkable book in the Old Testament.”

This book was given to Israel for direction in living as a holy nation in fellowship with a holy God. It was a code of law for the total well-being of Israel — physical, moral, and spiritual. Sacrifice, ceremony, ritual, liturgy, instructions, washings, convocations, holy days, observances, conditions, and warnings crowd this book. All of these physical exercises were given to teach spiritual truths. Paul states that “these things were our examples” (1 Corinthians 10:6).



Leviticus reveals Christ. Tyndale, in his *Prologue into the Third Book of Moses*, said, “Though sacrifices and ceremonies can be no ground or foundation to build upon — that is, though we can prove nought with them — yet when we have once found Christ and His mysteries, then we may borrow figures, that is to say, allegories, similitudes, and examples, to open Christ, and the secrets of God hid in Christ, even unto the quick: and can declare them more lively and sensibly with them than with all the words of the world.”

For us it gives the direction to God and instructions for spiritual worship. Worship would take on a new meaning if the average Christian properly appreciated the contents of this book. Worship for us today is no longer by ritual or in a specific place. To the woman of Samaria Jesus said,

*...Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what. We know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.* (John 4:21-24)

**KEY:** Holiness to Jehovah

**MESSAGE:** The message is twofold:

1. Leviticus teaches that **the way to God is by sacrifice**. The word *atonement* occurs 45 times.

*For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.* (Leviticus 17:11)

Atonement means to cover up. The blood of bulls and goats did

not actually take away sin. It covered over until Christ came to take away our sins.

*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.* (Romans 3:25)

2. Leviticus teaches that **the walk with God is by sanctification**. The word *holiness* occurs 87 times.

*And ye shall be holy unto me; for I, the LORD, am holy, and have separated you from other people, that ye should be mine.* (Leviticus 20:26)

God gave strict laws governing the diet, social life, and daily details involving every physical aspect of the lives of His people. These laws have a greater spiritual application to His people today.

Access to God is secured for the sinner through the shed blood of Christ.

*Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world. But now once, in the end of the ages, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* (Hebrews 9:25, 26)

Those redeemed by the blood of Christ must live a holy life if they are to enjoy and worship God.

*Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.* (Hebrews 13:20, 21)

## COMMENT:

Leviticus is a remarkable book, as the contents are considered in the light of the New Testament. These suggestions are illustrative of this:

1. The five offerings which open this book are clear, crystal-cut cameos of Christ. They depict His hypostatical person in depth and His death in detail (chapters 1 — 7).

2. The consecration of the priests reveals how shallow and inadequate is our thinking of Christian consecration (chapters 8 — 10).

3. The diet God provided for His people was sanitary, therapeutic, and contains much spiritual food for our souls (chapter 11).

4. The attention given to motherhood is a further example of God's thinking concerning womanhood (chapter 12).

5. The fact that leprosy and its treatment are prominent in the heart of this book on worship, demands our attention. Those who have been given gracious insights into Scripture have found here a type of sin and its defiling effect on man in his relation to God. The cleansing of the leper finds its fulfillment in the death and resurrection of Christ in a most unusual sacrifice — two birds (chapters 13 — 15).

6. The great Day of Atonement is a full-length portrait of the sacrifice of Christ (chapter 16).

7. The importance of the burnt altar in the tabernacle highlights the essential characteristic of the cross of Christ (chapter 17).

8. The emphasis on instructions concerning seemingly minute details in the daily lives of God's people reveals how God intends the human family to be involved with Him (chapters 18 — 22).

9. The list of feasts furnishes a prophetic program of God's agenda for all time (chapter 23).

10. The laws governing the land of Palestine furnish an interpretation of its checkered history and an insight into its future prominence. The nation Israel and the promised land are inter-

twined and interwoven from here to eternity (chapters 24 — 27).

Genesis: man ruined,  
Exodus: man redeemed,  
Leviticus: man worshipping.

## **EXODUS**

Exodus offers pardon  
God's approach to man  
Christ is Savior  
Man's guilt is prominent  
God speaks out of the mount  
Man is made nigh to God

## **LEVITICUS**

Leviticus offers purity  
Man's approach to God  
Christ is Sanctifier  
Man's defilement is prominent  
God speaks out of the tabernacle  
Man is kept nigh to God

## **OUTLINE:**

- I. The five offerings and the law of them, Chapters 1 — 7**
  - A. Sweet savor offerings (person of Christ), 1 — 3**
    - 1. Burnt offering (Christ our substitute), 1**
    - 2. Meal offering (loveliness of Christ), 2**
    - 3. Peace offering (Christ our peace), 3**
  - B. Non-sweet savor offerings (work of Christ on cross), 4, 5**
    - 1. Sin offering (sin as a nature), 4**
    - 2. Trespass offering (sin as an act), 5**
  - C. Law of the offerings, 6, 7**
- II. The priests (all believers are priests), Chapters 8 — 10**
  - A. Consecration of priests, 8**
  - B. Ministry of priests, 9**
  - C. Restrictions on priests (death of Nadab and Abihu), 10**
- III. Holiness in daily life (God concerned with His children's conduct), Chapters 11 — 22**
  - A. Food of God's people, 11**
  - B. Children of God's children, 12**
  - C. Cleansing of leprosy, 13, 14**

- D. **Cleansing of running issues**, 15
  - E. **Great Day of Atonement**, 16
  - F. **Place of sacrifice; value of the blood**, 17
  - G. **Application of commandments to life situations**, 18 — 20
    - 1. **Immorality** condemned (amplification of 7th commandment), 18
    - 2. **Social sins** (application of commandments), 19
    - 3. **Penalty** for breaking commandments, 20
  - H. **Laws for personal purity of priests**, 21, 22
- IV. The holy holidays**, Chapter 23
- V. **Laws and prophecies for the promised land**, Chapters 24 — 26
    - A. **Lampstand, showbread, and death penalty for the blasphemer**, 24
    - B. **Sabbatic year, year of Jubilee and law of kinsman redeemer**, 25
    - C. **Conditions of blessing in the land (a prophetic history)**, 26
- VI. Dedication and devotion — concerning vows**, Chapter 27

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## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

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**Notes & Outlines**

# **NUMBERS**

**J. Vernon McGee**

## NUMBERS

(Called *Arithmoi* in the Septuagint, meaning “Arithmetic”)

**WRITER:** Moses (see outline of Genesis)

**THEME: “PILGRIM’S PROGRESS”** — walking, wandering, working, warring, witnessing, and worshiping. It is a handbook for pilgrims. “Chart and compass come from Thee.” It is a road map for the wilderness of this world.

*For whatever things were written in earlier times were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope.* (Romans 15:4)

*Now all these things happened unto them for examples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come.* (1 Corinthians 10:11)

*These all died in faith, not having received the promises but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.* (Hebrews 11:13)

*Dearly beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.* (1 Peter 2:11)

*I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.* (John 17:14,15)



## **FORWARD MARCH:**

In the Book of Numbers, we see the children of Israel depart from Mt. Sinai and march to Kadesh-barnea. At Kadesh-barnea, the attitude of unbelief is crystallized into actual disobedience. The light is focused on faith, and they failed. “So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief” (Hebrews 3:19). After Kadesh-barnea, they began to wander until that entire generation died in the wilderness (two notable exceptions were Joshua and Caleb). The years of wandering were a veritable saga of suffering, a trek of tragedy, and a story of straying.

Numbers gets its name from the two censuses recorded in chapters 1 and 26. C. H. Mackintosh called it “a divine history of the wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness for about 38 years and 10 months, commencing with the first movement of the camp after the tabernacle was reared.”

## **KEY PASSAGE:** Numbers 14:29-31

*Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all who were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, who have murmured against me, doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swore to make you dwell therein, except Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun. But your little ones, whom ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.*

These verses outline the experiences of the children of Israel during the time of wandering until the new generation came to the east bank of the Jordan in the land of Moab.

## COMMENT:

It was 150 to 200 miles from Mt. Sinai to Kadesh-barnea — a journey in that time of 11 days (Deuteronomy 1:2). They spent 30 days at Kibroth. That means they spent 40 years on a journey that should have taken 40 days. At Kadesh-barnea, walking was turned to wandering. They did not advance an inch after Kadesh-barnea; at the end of the wanderings they came back to the same place (Numbers 20:1).

That their number was decimated is seen by a comparison of the two censuses:

603,550 fighting men (Numbers 1:46)

601,730 fighting men (Numbers 26:51)

1,820 loss (They were told to “be fruitful and multiply.”)

The census in the first chapter furnishes a yardstick by which a total figure can be estimated. Dr. Melvin Grove Kyle gave to his students this approximation, which he considered a conservative figure.

600,000 fighting men (Numbers 1:46)

400,000 women

200,000 older men

800,000 children

100,000 mixed multitude

2,100,000 TOTAL (tribe of Levi not included)

## From Egypt to Mt. Sinai

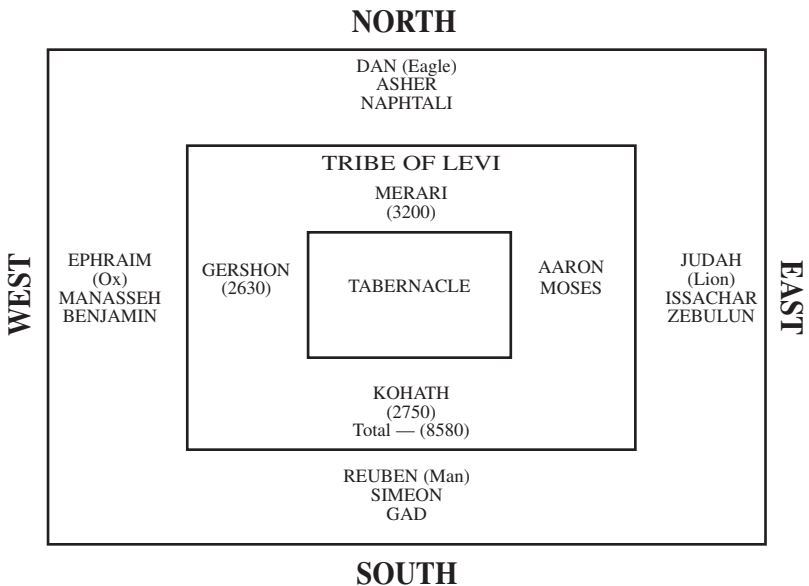
The first 10 chapters deal with the order of the camp. Israel was not a mob crossing the desert. Every man had to know who he was and where he belonged in the camp.

## From Mt. Sinai Onward

The tabernacle was the center of the camp, and the twelve tribes were arranged according to the situation of the tabernacle. They marched according to their position. The tribe of Levi was directly around the tabernacle according to their families.

### HOW ISRAEL ENCAMPED ON WILDERNESS MARCH CHART OF CAMP

#### 12 Tribes of Israel



The 40 years of wandering and the unbelief at Kadesh-barnea are not recorded in the “faith” chapter of Hebrews (chapter 11). The record of their unbelief is recorded in Hebrews 3:7-19. This is the “doubting chapter.”

## THE ORDER BY WHICH THEY MARCHED IS GIVEN IN NUMBERS 10:11-36

	<i>Section 7</i>	<i>Section 6</i>	<i>Section 5</i>	<i>Section 4</i>	<i>Section 3</i>	<i>Section 2</i>	<i>Section 1</i>
	Dan	Ephraim	Kohathites	Reuben	Gershon Merari	Judah "Praise"	Moses Aaron, Ark
Mixed Multitude	<i>bearing standard</i> (v. 25)	<i>bearing standard</i> (v. 22)	<i>bearing sanctuary</i> (v. 21)	<i>bearing standard</i> (v. 18)	<i>bearing tabernacle</i> (v. 17)	<i>bearing standard</i> (v. 14)	<i>(v. 33)</i>
	Asher Naphtali	Manasseh Benjamin	Sons of Levi	Simeon Gad	Sons of Levi	Issachar Zebulun	
	—————→						<b>FORWARD MARCH!</b>

The years of wandering were not exactly wasted. God taught them many precious lessons during this period — among them:

1. The **rebellion of Korah** led to the confirmation of the priesthood of Aaron by the budding of the almond rod. This has become a picture of the priesthood of Christ, which is based on His resurrection.
2. The offering of the **red heifer** in chapter 19 sets forth the method God uses to keep believers clean. Chapters 16 through 19 all have to do with the priesthood.

*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.* (1 John 1:7)

3. The constant complaining of the people led to the judgment by serpents and the provision of the **serpent of brass** as the remedy. This teaches us that Christ was made sin for us.

Numbers 22 — 25 gives us the account of **Balaam**, one of the bad men of the Bible, a rogue of revelation, a scoundrel of Scripture, a villain of the volume. He was a strange character. He was a heathen prophet with magical powers (Numbers 22:6). He is specifically labeled a soothsayer (Joshua 13:22). He received the rewards of “divination” (Numbers 22:7). He confessed that he used these methods (Numbers 23:23).

He gave four of the most remarkable prophecies in the Scriptures regarding Israel:

1st prophecy — Numbers 23:8-10

2nd prophecy — Numbers 23:20-24

3rd prophecy — Numbers 24:5-9

4th prophecy — Numbers 24:17-24 (This is a source from which the wise men could have known about the star.)

Balaam had some knowledge of God, and God used him (Numbers 22:9, 20, 22, 31). He is a strange anomaly. The Scriptures have a great deal to say about him — see Numbers

31:16; Deuteronomy 23:4, 5; Joshua 13:22; Joshua 24:9, 10; Nehemiah 13:2; Micah 6:5; 2 Peter 2:15; Jude 11; Revelation 2:14.

Every preacher of any consequence has preached on Balaam. Here are a few observations from some of these men. Bishop Butler: “Self-deception — Balaam persuaded himself that his sin could be brought into rules of conscience and revelation.” Cardinal Newman: “The dark shadow cast over a noble course by standing always on the ladder of advancement and by the suspense of a worldly ambition never satisfied.” Charles Spurgeon: “Double-minded man — he could see the right, and yet his lower nature turned him from it.” B. H. Carroll: “He had but one real mind — greed and power. Religion — a stalking-horse.”

Scripture distinguishes between the *way* of Balaam, the *error* of Balaam, and the *doctrine* of Balaam:

“The *way* of Balaam” (2 Peter 2:15) was that he prostituted his gift for gain, he was covetous, he commercialized his office.

“The *error* of Balaam” (Jude 11) was that he concluded a righteous God must curse Israel. He was unaware of the grace of God revealed in God’s redemption of Israel out of Egypt.

“The *doctrine* of Balaam” (Revelation 2:14) was his counsel to Balak. Finding that he could not curse Israel, he showed Balak how to break down the wall of separation by marriage with women of Moab (Numbers 31:15, 16).

At chapter 26, the new generation has come of age. The generation that came out of Egypt has died in the wilderness. Preparation is made for entering the promised land.

## OUTLINE:

### I. Fitting out the nation Israel for wilderness march, Chapters 1 — 8

(Preparation for the pilgrimage)

#### A. Order of the camp, Chapters 1 — 4

*“Let everything be done...in order.”*

##### 1. First census, Chapter 1

*(603,550 of those able to go to war [v. 3].*

*Probably 2 1/2 million came out of Egypt.)*

*An Israelite must be able to declare his pedigree, know who he is in order to serve and fight.*

*A Christian must know his pedigree — “Now are we the children of God” (1 John 3:2).*

##### 2. Standards and position of the 12 tribes on wilderness march, Chapter 2

*They had to know where they belonged (see chart) and rally around their standard. Each had his God-appointed place and service.*

##### 3. Census, position, and service of Levites on wilderness march, Chapter 3

(Census of firstborn)

a. Aaron and Moses, vv. 1-4

b. Tribe of Levi given to Aaron, vv. 5-13  
(cf. John 17:6, 9)

c. Three families of Levi, vv. 14-20

d. Gershon — in charge of curtains, coverings, and cords, vv. 21-26

e. Kohath — in charge of articles of furniture, vv. 27-32

f. Merari — in charge of boards, bars, pillars, sockets, and vessels, vv. 33-37

- g. Total of Levites (22,000), vv. 38, 39
  - h. Census of firstborn of all Israel (22,273), vv. 40-51
4. Service of Levites about the tabernacle, Chapter 4 (census of Levites [ages 30-50] for service)
- B. Cleansing the camp, Chapters 5 — 8**  
(Reason: “Our God is a consuming fire” [Hebrews 12:29])
- 1. Restitution and jealousy offering, Chapter 5
    - a. Defilement by disease and death, vv. 1-4  
*For the Christian, lepers represent the flesh; the dead represent the world.*
    - b. Restitution, vv. 5-10  
*Repentance is more than saying, “I am sorry” (2 Corinthians 7:10).*
    - c. Jealousy offering, vv. 11-31  
*“I am a jealous God.”*
  - 2. Vow of the Nazarite: the triune blessing, Chapter 6
    - a. Nazarite vow, vv. 1-21  
*Voluntary and temporary*
      - (1) Not to drink wine or strong drink, v. 3  
*His joy is to be in the Lord.*
      - (2) Not to shave head, v. 5  
*He is to bear shame (1 Corinthians 11:14).*
      - (3) Not to touch dead body, v. 7  
*He is to forsake father and mother.*
    - b. Triune blessing, vv. 22-27
  - 3. Gifts of the princes, Chapter 7  
*All give the same. The smallest gift is recorded.*
  - 4. Light of lampstand and laver for Levites, Chapter 8



- a. Light of lampstand, vv. 1-4  
*(Walking in the Light)*
- b. Levites cleansed, vv. 5-26  
*The Christian's cleansing is by the Word.*

## **II. Forward March!, Chapters 9, 10**

### **A. Passover and covering cloud, Chapter 9**

- 1. Passover observed by all on wilderness march, vv. 1-14
- 2. Pillar of cloud by day; pillar of fire by night, vv. 15-23

### **B. Silver trumpets, Chapter 10:1-10**

*(Used for moving Israel on wilderness march and calling an assembly)*

### **C. Forward March! Order of march, Chapter 10:11-32**

*(See chart.)*

### **D. Halt!, 10:33-36**

## **III. From Sinai to Kadesh, Chapters 11, 12**

### **A. Complaining and murmuring of people displeasing to the Lord, Chapter 11**

*Complaining is initiated by the "mixed multitude" (vv. 4-6).*

*God provides quail because of dissatisfaction with manna (v. 31).*

*When Moses complains, God permits the appointment of elders (v. 16).*

### **B. Jealousy of Miriam and Aaron; judgment of Miriam, Chapter 12**

*(Rebellion in high places, an infection which delays the march)*

#### **IV. Failure at Kadesh, Chapters 13, 14**

*(Place of decision; great breach of the covenant)*

##### **A. Spies chosen and sent into land of Canaan; return and report, Chapter 13**

1. Cause for sending spies (cf. Deuteronomy 1:22), vv. 1-3
2. Choice of spies, vv. 4-16
3. Commission of spies, vv. 17-20
4. Conduct of spies, vv. 21-25  
*(Did a thorough job)*
5. Confirmation of facts, vv. 26, 27
6. Misinterpretation of facts, vv. 28, 29; 31-33  
*(Majority report: giants vs. grasshoppers)*
7. Right interpretation of facts, v. 30  
*(Minority report: reliance upon God)*

##### **B. Israel refuses to enter because of unbelief, Chapter 14**

*“So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief” (Hebrews 3:19).*

#### **V. Faltering, fumbling and fussing through the wilderness, Chapters 15 — 25**

*(Silent years — only 4 incidents recorded — no connected history: [1] log, Numbers 33:19-37; [2] did not circumcise children, Joshua 5:5, 6; [3] did not offer sacrifices to God, Amos 5:25, 26; [4] worshiped idols, Acts 7:42, 43.)*

##### **A. Delay God’s blessing; do not destroy God’s purpose, Chapter 15**

*God goes forward; the people go backward. He gives rules for the land. God said they would enter — it was as good as done. Thirty-eight years later, Israel, in*

*new generation, enters land. These are the children that the fathers thought might perish (Numbers 14:31). (Death penalty for breaking sabbath, vv. 32-36. Do all commandments carry death penalty?)*

**B. Incidents relating to the priesthood, Chapters 16—19**

**1. Gainsaying of Korah, Chapter 16**

5th murmuring, vv. 1-3

*Rebellion against divinely constituted authority. Korah, a man of great authority, has his place in the camp; Moses has his. Rebellion must be dealt with.*

6th murmuring, v. 41

*Judgment is stayed by Moses.*

**2. Aaron's rod that budded, Chapter 17**

*Office of Aaron is attested by resurrection (v. 8). Christ is priest after order of Melchizedec, established as priest after His resurrection from the dead.*

**3. Confirmation of priesthood, Chapter 18**

(Charge and position of Aaron and Levites)

*Levites receive tithes and give tithes (v. 26).*

**4. Offering and ashes of red heifer, Chapter 19**

*(Purpose: cleansing the redeemed, cf. Galatians 6:1)*

**5. Deaths of Miriam and Aaron; water from the rock, Chapter 20**

a. At Kadesh again (after 37 years), v. 1

b. 7th murmuring, vv. 2-6

c. Water from rock; disobedience of Moses, vv. 7-13

d. Edom refuses Israel passage through their land, vv. 14-21

- e. Death of Aaron, vv. 22-29
- 6. First victory of Israel; first song; serpent of brass, Chapter 21
  - a. 8th murmuring, v. 5
  - b. Serpent of brass, v. 9 (cf. John 3:14)
  - c. Israel sings, v. 17
- 7. The prophet Balaam, Chapters 22 — 25
  - a. “The way of Balaam” — covetousness, (cf. 2 Peter 2:15, 16), 22
  - b. “The error of Balaam” — ignorance of God’s righteousness (cf. Romans 8:31-34), 23
  - c. “The doctrine of Balaam” — fornication with Moabites; embrace their idolatry, 24, 25

**VI. Future (new) generation prepares to enter land, Chapters 26 — 36**

- A. Census of new generation (v. 64), Chapter 26**  
*Less than first census (cf. Numbers 1:46 with Numbers 26:51)*
- B. Woman’s place under law, Chapter 27**  
*Daughters of Zelophehad claim possession of their father. Moses appeals to God for a decision. God grants their request.*
- C. The law of offerings, Chapters 28, 29**  
*The offerings illustrate the abiding preciousness of Christ, what God thinks of Christ. True worship is thinking God’s thoughts after Him.*
- D. Law of vows, Chapter 30**  
*A vow is inviolate. A woman’s vow depends upon her father or husband. The vow of a widow or divorced woman must stand.*

- E. Judgment of Midian, Chapter 31**  
(Moses' last act)  
*Midian in the wilderness is a type of the world.  
The Christian is to be separated from the world  
(cf. Galatians 6:14; 1 John 2:15-17).*
- F. Reuben and Gad ask for land on wrong side of Jordan, Chapter 32**  
*Jordan is a type of death and resurrection of Christ.*
- G. Log of the journeys, Chapter 33**
- H. Borders of promised land, Chapter 34**
- I. Cities of refuge given to Levites, Chapter 35**  
*(To be used as refuge for manslayers)*
- J. Law of land regarding inheritance, Chapter 36**  
*(Land to remain in tribe and family)*

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## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

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**Notes & Outlines**

# **DEUTERONOMY**

J. Vernon McGee

## DEUTERONOMY

### “The Book of Experience and Obedience”

**WRITER:** Moses

Moses talked with God face to face. Moses knew God.

*He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.* (Psalm 103:7)

The children of Israel saw the acts of God but did not know Him. Moses knew His ways. Deuteronomy is the result of this intimate knowledge plus the experience of 40 years in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy 34:5-12 was probably written by Joshua and belongs to the Book of Joshua. When the Book of Joshua was written, it was placed on the scroll of the Pentateuch, making a Hexateuch.

**TITLE:**

Deuteronomy means “second law.” This is not to infer that it is a repetition of the Law as given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. It is the Law interpreted in the light of 38 years of experience in the wilderness. New situations and problems arose that were not covered by the Law specifically. There needed to be an application of the Law to life situations. (A notable example of this [Numbers 27] is the case of the inheritance of the daughters of Zelophehad, who had left no sons.)

Deuteronomy, therefore, is more than a mere recapitulation of the Law of Sinai; it is another illustration of the law of recurrence (29:1). Specific laws that needed emphasis are repeated and enlarged upon (e.g., the Ten Commandments in chapter 5). Deuteronomy is a commentary on the Mosaic Law.

There are 4 Hebrew titles of Deuteronomy:

1. *Debarim* — “The Words” or “These be the Words”
2. The *Kith*, or the Fifth of the Law
3. The Book of Reproofs
4. The Iteration of the Law

**KEY:** Love and obey

Love *of* God — 4:37; 7:7, 8; 23:5

Obey God — 4:40; 11:26-28; 30:8-20

Love *for* God — 6:4, 5; 30:6, 16, 20

This book teaches man to love and obey God. The word “love”



occurs 22 times; “obey” occurs 10 times. The motive for obedience is love. The Lord Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). The true motive for obedience is stated in Deuteronomy 6:4, 5. God’s love for man is the motive for His government and the giving of laws. Man’s love of God is the motive for his obedience. This is not the gospel, but the principle of it is here. This is the pathway of blessing. It is likewise the answer to those who do not find love in the Old Testament. There *is* love in the Old Testament, and there is law in the New Testament. Moses pleads with them to obey.

Why obey? Pleading of Moses:

1. Israel belonged to God (14:1)
2. God loved them (4:37)
3. God wanted to preserve and prosper them (4:1)
4. Their show of gratitude (4:7, 8)

### **COMMENT:**

A new generation had arrived on the east bank of the Jordan River (1:5) one month before entering the Promised Land (1:3). Those of the generation which had left Egypt were dead and their bones were bleaching beneath the desert skies because of their unbelief and disobedience.

They had broken God’s law — sins of commission;

They had failed to believe God — sins of omission.

The Law was “weak through the flesh” (Romans 8:3).

Moses gives to this new generation his final instructions from the Lord before he relinquishes leadership of the nation through death. He reviews the desert experiences, reemphasizes certain features of the Law, reveals their future course in light of the Palestinian Covenant, teaches them a new song, blesses the twelve tribes, and then prepares to die. A requiem to Moses concludes the book.

This new generation was unfamiliar with the experiences of Mt. Sinai, and they needed to have the Law called to their attention and interpreted in the light of their experience and future dwelling in the Promised Land.

The Book of Deuteronomy has been the center of attack by the critic. First the authorship of the book was challenged. The original criticism was that Moses could not have written it because there was

no writing in existence in Moses' day. That has subsequently been soundly refuted. Next the critic stated that the purpose of the book was to glorify the priesthood at Jerusalem, but neither the priesthood nor Jerusalem is mentioned in Deuteronomy.

The probable reason for the satanic attack upon the Book of Deuteronomy is that the Lord Jesus Christ quoted exclusively from this book in beating back Satan's temptation. Little wonder Satan hates this book.

1st temptation — Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4  
compare Deuteronomy 8:3

2nd temptation — Matthew 4:7; Luke 4:12  
compare Deuteronomy 6:16

3rd temptation — Matthew 4:10; Luke 4:8  
compare Deuteronomy 6:13 and 10:20

The Old Testament prophets quoted from Deuteronomy frequently. There are also over 80 references to it in the New Testament.

Deuteronomy exalts the Word of God:

*And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.* (Deuteronomy 6:7)

## **STRIKING FEATURES:**

1. Greatest doctrinal statement in Old Testament:

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.* (Deuteronomy 6:4)

2. First mention of the Great Tribulation:

*But if from there thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice (for the LORD thy God is a merciful God), he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them.* (Deuteronomy 4:29-31)

3. Promise of a coming Prophet:

*The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken, according to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. (Deuteronomy 18:15-18)*

4. Test for determining true and false prophets:

*But the prophet, who shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him. (Deuteronomy 18:20-22)*

(Every prophet had to speak into a local and immediate situation.)

5. Prewritten history of Israel in the land before they enter the land: Deuteronomy 28 — 30
6. Palestinian Covenant: Deuteronomy 29:1 — 30:10
7. The Song of Moses — Prophetic: Deuteronomy 32
  - a. Call to hear, vv. 1-4
  - b. The nation returns evil for the grace of God, vv. 5, 6
  - c. Jehovah's goodness, vv. 7-14
  - d. Apostasy of the nation, vv. 15-18
  - e. Judgment of God upon them, vv. 19-25
  - f. Longing of God for His people, vv. 26-42

- g. Nations of the world blessed with Israel, vv. 43, 44
- 8. Lonely and strange death of Moses: Deuteronomy 34:5-8  
(One translation has it, "...died by the kiss of God" — God kissed Moses and put him to sleep. What a lovely thought!)

## **OUTLINE:**

- I. Reviewing the journeys, Chapters 1 — 4**
- II. Restating the Law — love and obedience, Chapters 5 — 26**
  - A. Repetition and interpretation of Ten Commandments, 5 — 7**
  - B. Religious and national regulations, 8 — 21**
    - 1. God's past dealings are assurance for future, 8
    - 2. God knew Israel — the past was not good, 9
    - 3. God sent Israel to Egypt; God brought them out of Egypt, 10
    - 4. Promised Land not like Egypt; principle of occupancy, 11
    - 5. Israel has only one place to worship in land, 12
    - 6. Warning against and test of false prophets, false gods, 13
    - 7. Diet for Israel, 14
    - 8. God's poverty program; the permanent slave; the perfect sacrifice is Christ, 15
    - 9. Three main feasts (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles); all males required to attend, 16
    - 10. Sundry laws, 17
    - 11. Priests and prophets; test of true prophet, 18
    - 12. Cities of Refuge; extent of land and extremity of Law, 19
    - 13. Laws regulating warfare, 20
    - 14. Laws regulating murder, marriage and delinquent sons, 21
  - C. Regulations for domestic and personal relations, 22 — 26**
    - 1. Miscellaneous laws concerning brother relationships, dress, building code, planting seed, and marriage, 22
    - 2. The world, the flesh, and the devil, 23
    - 3. Divorce, 24

4. Punishment of guilty (40 stripes); law protecting widows; punishment for crimes; judgment of Amalek, 25
5. First fruits — thanksgiving, 26

**III. Regarding the future of the land, (blessings and curses),**  
Chapters 27 — 30

**IV. Requiem to Moses, Chapters 31 — 34**

One Hebrew division of Deuteronomy is very good and follows the generally accepted pattern:

EIGHT ORATIONS

1st Oration — 1:6 — 4:40

2nd Oration — 4:44 — 26:19

3rd Oration — 27, 28

4th Oration — 29, 30

5th Oration — 31:1-13

6th Oration — 32 (Song of Moses)

7th Oration — 33

8th Oration — 34

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**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter—
2. Most important verse—
3. Most prominent word—
4. Teaching about Christ—
5. Command to obey—
6. Promise to claim—
7. New truth learned—

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**Notes & Outlines**

**JOSHUA  
JUDGES  
RUTH**

J. Vernon McGee

## JOSHUA

**WRITER:** Joshua (Joshua 24:26), successor to Moses (Deuteronomy 31:23)

The Talmud says that Joshua wrote all but the last 5 verses and that those were written by Phineas.

*Joshua* means “Jehovah is salvation” — the same word in the New Testament is *Jesus* (as in Hebrews 4:8).

Joshua was a great general, born a slave in Egypt.

40 years old at time of Exodus (one of spies),

80 years old when he received his commission,

110 years old at his death.

He was a man of prayer, courage, dependence upon God, faith, leadership, enthusiasm, and fidelity. He is a type of Christ in name and work. As someone has commented:

*Joshua shows that a man of average ability may become a leader in the church. He received his call not in flaming letters across the sky, but from an old man, who knew God and knew Joshua, and saw that he was fitted by God to be a leader.*

### **PURPOSE:**

Completes redemption out of Egypt. Salvation is not only a redemption from hell, but it is a redemption to heaven.

*Who [Jesus] was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.* (Romans 4:25)

### **TRANSITION:**

Up to this point Jehovah had spoken by dreams, visions, or by angelic ministry. Now a new method is introduced. The Law of Moses is the written voice of Jehovah (Joshua 1:8).

### **KEY VERSE:**

*Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.* (Joshua 1:3)

Joshua compares to Ephesians in the New Testament:

- It is prophetic of Israel and typical of the church.
- Read Israel's free title to the land (Jeremiah 23:8; Ezekiel 37:21).

- Conflict and conquest go with possession.

**KEY WORD:** Possession

Israel's *ownership* was unconditional (Genesis 12:7; 15:18-21; 17:8).

Israel's *possession* was conditional (Deuteronomy 29:9 — 30:20).

Key word is not “victory” — God gets the victory. Israel gets deliverance and possession.

Joshua 1:4 — Extent of Promised Land

13:1 — They did not possess it all.

11:16 — Joshua had conquered the land and it was available.

11:23 — Each tribe was given an allotment but had to drive out the enemy. There was to be a gradual occupation of the land by each tribe.

The Christian today is given title to spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3; Romans 5:1-11; Romans 8:37; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Galatians 5:22, 23).

The Christian's practical possession and experience depends upon conflict and conquest (Ephesians 6:10-20; Galatians 5:25; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6; 1 Corinthians 9:25-27; Hebrews 4:11). These are never attained through the energy of the flesh, but through the power of the Holy Spirit working in the yielded life of the believer (Romans 7, 8).

**COMMENT:**

There are several incidents in the Book of Joshua which need separate comments. We shall consider them briefly and in order.

**Chapter 1** — God encourages Joshua and introduces and initiates the nation into a new way of life. The wilderness journey is over. They are no longer nomads of the desert, but dwellers in the land. Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh have possessions on the wrong side of Jordan (compare Colossians 3:1-4).

**Chapter 2** — Spies are sent in, not to see *if* they could enter the land, but to explore the best way. The report of these spies is in verse 24. God turns aside to save the harlot Rahab. She believed God (vv. 10-13; cf. Hebrews 11:31). The mayor of Jericho could have been saved had he, too, believed God. None needed to have perished.

**Chapters 3, 4** — (See author's message, “Have You Crossed Over Jordan?”) The ark — not the rod of Moses — goes before and divides

the Jordan River. The ark goes before, carried by priests. Likewise, Christ goes before us through death, but goes with us through this life. Jordan is typical of Christ's death, not ours.

**Chapter 5** — Circumcision was neglected in the wilderness. God was teaching them that the old nature is no good and the new nature has no power (Romans 7:18).

The manna ceases and the children of Israel eat the old corn in the new land. Manna is for babes in Christ and represents the days of His flesh. We feed on the living Christ today (2 Corinthians 5:16, 17).

Jesus is the captain of our salvation (vv. 13-15; Hebrews 2:10; 12:1, 2).

**Chapter 6** — There may be some disagreement between John Garstang and Kathleen Kenyon about the walls in the tell at ancient Jericho, but the faith of the believer does not rest upon the shovel of the archaeologist (Hebrews 11:30). Jericho represents the world to the believer. It is strong and formidable and foreboding — the conquest depends upon faith (1 John 5:4).

Hebrews 11 reveals how faith worked in all ages in the lives of God's choicest servants as they met the world head-on and overcame by faith.

**Chapters 7, 8** — (See author's message, "Ai and I.") Defeat and victory at Ai represent the flesh in the believer. The sin of Achan was sin in the camp.

Steps in sins of the flesh (7:21):

I saw — physical

I coveted — mental

I took — volitional.

*No deliverance is experienced until sin is dealt with in the life of a believer (Ephesians 4:17-32; 1 John 1:9).*

**Chapter 9** — This begins the campaign in the south. Having driven a wedge into the heart of the land and divided it, now Joshua can go against each section piecemeal. Joshua has been compared to Alexander the Great and Hannibal as a great general. Divide and conquer was the strategy used by Joshua.

He was deceived by the Gibeonites into making a treaty with them that was contrary to the express command of God (Deuteronomy 7:1, 2). The Gibeonites represent the devil with all his cunning and clever-

ness. We are no match for him (Ephesians 6:11, 16; Revelation 12:9).

**Chapter 10** — Joshua conquers 5 kings of the Amorites (v. 5) as he continues the campaign in the south. He completes the campaign in the south by the destruction of Makkedah, Lachish, Libnah, Eglon, Hebron and Debir (vv. 29- 40).

This chapter contains the account of the long day of Joshua. “Did Joshua make the sun stand still?” is a question that is asked by skeptic and saint alike. Following are some proposed explanations of the long day of Joshua:

(1) It is the practice of some to avoid giving any interpretation. They ignore it entirely as if it were not worthy of comment.

(2) Some treat the language as poetic (v. 12). This is to adopt a non-literal interpretation that dismisses the miraculous from the incident entirely. Those who hold to this view generally refer to Judges 5:20 “...the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.” We refuse to dismiss this as poetic. We do not have enough information to state dogmatically that these are poetic statements and not matters of fact. It reminds us of the old bromide that poetic language is sometimes prosaic lying.

(3) Some call this a miracle of refraction. The emphasis is placed on verse 13.

(4) Some adopt the position that God stopped the entire solar system (v. 12). They make Joshua’s day 23 hours and 20 minutes. The other 40 minutes are found in 2 Kings 20:8-11.

(5) Some adopt the position that God blacked out the sun rather than continued its shining. The Berkeley Version translates it, “O sun, wait in Gibeon,” the ASV, “be silent.” Mauser in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* takes this position. Joshua had made a forced march all night (about 40 miles), attacked the enemy from the rear — came suddenly upon them. It was July — about 105° to 120° in the shade, and there was no shade. Joshua did not want more sun — he wanted less sun.

(6) The best explanation, it seems, is a combination of numbers 4 and 5. Joshua needed more light and less heat. God covered the sun with a storm of hailstones (v. 11). God slowed down the earth (v. 12). “Upon Gibeon” indicates that the sun was directly over — bisecting Gibeon — and the moon was going down “in the valley of Aijalon.” This is a miracle!

**Chapter 11** — This contains the campaign in the north and the conclusion of Joshua’s leadership in war (v. 23).

**Chapter 12** — Log of Joshua’s campaigns.

**Chapter 13** — Not all the land was occupied and possessed (v. 1).

**Chapter 14** — Hebron given to Caleb, born a slave, companion of Joshua. These two men were the only spies who brought back a favorable report (Numbers 14:6-9).

Caleb found the fountain of youth (v. 11). He had:

- (1) Faith to forget the past
- (2) Faith to face facts
- (3) Faith to face the future

**Chapter 15** — Judah’s land in the Promised Land.

**Chapter 16** — Ephraim’s land in the Promised Land.

**Chapter 17** — Manasseh’s land in the Promised Land.

**Chapters 18, 19** — Tabernacle located at Shiloh. Other tribes’ lands in the Promised Land.

**Chapter 20** — Cities of Refuge.

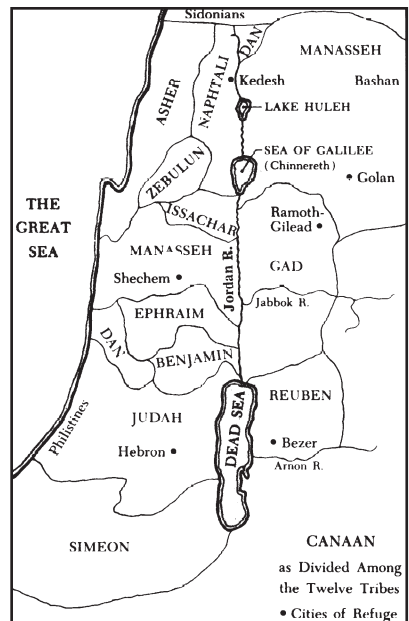
**Chapter 21** — Cities for Levites.

**Chapter 22** — Joshua dismisses the 2 1/2 tribes, and they return to the east side of Jordan.

They build an altar “to see” (v. 10). The altar was condemned, as there was only one altar, and it was for sacrifice.

**Chapter 23** — Last message of Joshua to the leaders of the nation.

**Chapter 24** — Last message of Joshua to all the tribes of Israel at Shechem (note v. 15). Verses 29-31 record the death of Joshua.



## **OUTLINE:**

- I. The land entered, Chapters 1 — 12**
  - A. Commission and command of Joshua, 1**
  - B. Contact of spies with Rahab, 2**
  - C. Crossing the Jordan River, 3**
  - D. Construction of two memorials, 4**
  - E. Conditioned for conquest, 5**
  - F. Center of land attacked, 6 — 8**
    - 1. Conquest of Jericho, 6**
    - 2. Conquest of Ai, 7, 8**
  - G. Campaign in the south, 9, 10**
    - 1. Compact with the Gibeonites, 9**
    - 2. Conquer 5 kings of Amorites (miracle of sun), 10**
  - H. Campaign in the north, (conclusion of Joshua's leadership in war), 11**
  - I. Conquered kings listed, 12**
- II. The land divided, Chapters 13 — 22**
  - A. Command of Joshua is terminated; confirmation of land to the 2 1/2 tribes, 13**
  - B. Caleb given Hebron, 14**
  - C. Consignment of land to the tribes of Israel, 15 — 19**
  - D. Cities of refuge, 20**
  - E. Cities for Levites, 21**
  - F. Command to the 2 1/2 tribes to return home; construction of altar as a witness, 22**
- III. The last message of Joshua, Chapters 23, 24**
  - A. Call to leaders of Israel for courage and certainty, 23**
  - B. Call to all tribes of Israel for consecration and consideration of covenant with God; death of Joshua, 24**



# JUDGES

## A Philosophy of History

*Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.* (Proverbs 14:34)

**WRITER:** Unknown

This book comes from the period of the monarchy, judging by the phrase which occurs 4 times, “In those days there was no king in Israel” (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). Probably written by Samuel.

**KEY VERSE:** Judges 21:25 (last verse in book)

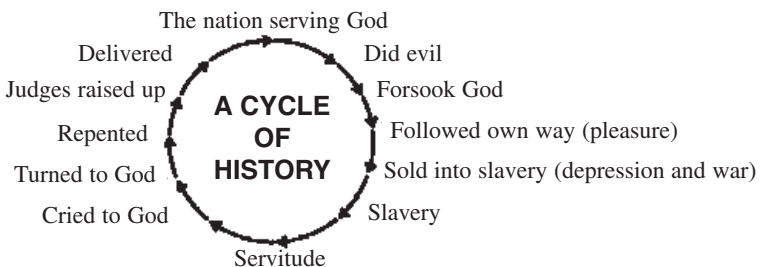
**THEME:** Backsliding — and the amazing grace of God in recovering and restoring.

**PURPOSE:** The Book of Judges serves a twofold purpose:

1. Historically it records the history of the nation from the death of Joshua to Samuel, the last of the judges and the first of the prophets. It bridges the gap between Joshua and the rise of the monarchy. There was no leader to take Joshua’s place in the way he had taken Moses’ place. This was the trial period of the theocracy after they entered the land.

2. Morally it is the time of the deep declension of the people as they turned from the Unseen Leader and descended to the low level of “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6; also compare Judges 1:1 with 20:18). This should have been an era of glowing progress, but it was a dark day of repeated failure.

This course can be plotted like a hoop rolling down the hill of time. The steps of a nation’s downfall are outlined in the last division of the book (see outline). Isaiah, chapter 1, presents these same fatal steps downward that eventually led to the final captivity of the nation.



## **COMMENT:**

The *New Scofield Reference Bible* gives as the theme of the Book of Judges “Defeat and Deliverance.” This is unusually appropriate. There is, however, another aspect which this book emphasizes — disappointment.

The children of Israel entered the Land of Promise with high hopes and exuberant expectation. You would expect these people — who were delivered out of Egypt, led through the wilderness, and brought into the land with such demonstration of God’s power and direction — to attain a high level of living and victory in the land. Such was not the case. They failed ignobly and suffered miserable defeat after defeat.

God raised up judges to deliver His people when they apostatized and cried to Him in their misery. The book takes its name from these men whom God raised up. The judges exercised their ministry for the most part in a local and restricted area.

All the judges were themselves limited in their capabilities. In fact, each one seemed to have some defect and handicap which was not a hindrance but became a positive asset under the sovereign direction of God. None of them were national leaders who appealed to the total nation as were Moses and Joshua. The record is not continuous but rather a spotty account of local judges in limited sections of the nation.

### **I. Introduction to era of the judges, Chapters 1, 2**

**Chapter 1** — Mentioned are 9 of the 12 tribes in their failure to win a total victory in driving out the enemy. The 3 not mentioned are Reuben, Issachar, and Gad. It must be assumed that they likewise failed. Each tribe faced a particular enemy. At no time was the entire nation engaged in a warfare against any particular enemy. The weakness of the tribes is revealed in verse 3 where Judah called upon Simeon for help in his local situation.

**Chapter 2** — A report on the sad condition of the people, that eventually required judges to be raised up to deliver them. This chapter outlines the entire book and God’s philosophy of human history. The words for “judge,” “judgment,” and “judged” are used 22 times. The word “evil” occurs 14 times. The people did evil and God raised up judges (vv. 11, 16). The people did evil because they did not obey God (vv. 2, 17). They did not obey because they did not believe God (v. 20). The cycle of history that they followed is given in verses 11 through 16.

## II. Era of the judges, Chapters 3 — 16

**Chapter 3** — The children of Israel intermarried with Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites among whom they lived. Israel did evil, forgot God, and served Baalim. God delivered them into slavery.

Othniel, the first judge, was raised up to deliver them. His only qualification seems to be that he was the nephew of Caleb and married his daughter.

Ehud, the second judge, was raised up to deliver Israel from the servitude of Eglon, king of Moab. His qualification was his being left-handed, which enabled him to gain the presence of the king without his concealed dagger being discovered.

Shamgar was the third judge, who was an expert with an ox goad. He used it as an instrument of war against the Philistines and delivered Israel.

All of the judges had some defect, odd characteristic or handicap that God used. The judges reveal that God can use any man or woman who is willing to be used.

**Chapter 4** — Deborah, the fourth judge, was a remarkable person and a great mother whom God raised up to deliver Israel from Jabin, king of Canaan. Deborah probably was the only judge, recorded in the Book of Judges, to rule over all of Israel. (Eli, as well as Samuel, did rule over all of Israel as judges, see 1 Samuel 2:29 — 3:21.)

Because no man was willing to take the lead, Deborah did (v. 8). She pointed out to Barak (the fifth judge) that she would go but it would not be to his honor. Jael, a woman, slew Sisera, the captain of Canaan's forces.

**Chapter 5** — Contains the song of victory of Deborah and Barak. The lawlessness of the day caused Deborah to take the lead as a mother for the sake of her children (vv. 6, 7). There are remarkable features in this song (vv. 19, 20, 23).

**Chapter 6** — “Children of Israel did evil” (v. 1) is the reason for their being delivered into the hands of the Midianites. Gideon, the sixth judge, was raised up to deliver Israel. All the judges, as we have indicated, had some weakness, defect, or unusual characteristic that God actually exploited in order to deliver His people. Gideon was a coward at heart. His threshing grain at the winepress, instead of on

the threshing floor of a hilltop in sight of the Midianites, reveals this. Here is where the angel of the Lord, with a note of sarcasm, called him, “Thou mighty man of valor.” Gideon pleads his weakness and littleness as an excuse. God equips him and encourages him in his first exploit.

**Chapter 7** — Here is where the choosing of the 300 takes place. He had an original army of 32,000. This was reduced by ferreting out the fearful and indifferent. Gideon equipped the 300 with pitchers, lamps and trumpets. The tactics of Gideon produced a riot in the army of the Midianites. Victory was Gideon’s.

**Chapter 8** — Israel wanted to make Gideon king, which he refused. Gideon’s answer is notable (v. 23). Gideon died, after which Israel went again into base idolatry.

**Chapter 9** — In most records Abimelech, the wicked son of Gideon, is not rated a judge. James M. Gray wrote, “The usurped rule of Abimelech, the fratricide, is not usually counted.” He did rule 3 years after slaying 70 other sons of Gideon. He made himself king. His abortive reign reveals the truth of Daniel 4:17 — “...the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men...and setteth up over it the basest of men.”

“Like priest, like people” is the principle here, and God judged not only Abimelech but also the men of Shechem for making him king (vv. 56, 57).

**Chapter 10** — Tola, the seventh judge, did nothing worthy to record during his tenure in office of 23 years.

Jair, the eighth judge, provided 30 donkeys for his 30 sons to ride upon. If he had lived in our day they would have driven Jaguars.

**Chapter 11** — Jephthah, the ninth judge, was an illegitimate son of a harlot. He was an outcast until Israel was at war with Ammon and needed a military leader. Jephthah had become a leader of a band of desperados. He was a sort of Robin Hood (v. 3). God used him to deliver and rule over Israel in order to humble them.

The problem in this chapter is one of human sacrifice. Did Jephthah offer his daughter as a human sacrifice? Jephthah made a rash and unnecessary vow — his cause was just (v. 27). God had called him, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him (v. 29). However, Scripture never finds fault with him (Hebrews 11:32). Abraham was not permitted to offer Isaac, and God would have prevented Jephthah from murder if his

intentions were to slay his daughter. Verse 31 offers the solution. The better translation of the last part of the verse should be “shall surely be the Lord’s or I will offer a burnt offering.” His vow was that she should never marry, which was worse than death for a Hebrew woman. With this in mind read vv. 37, 39 and 40.

**Chapter 12** — Ibzan, the tenth judge, spent his 7 years as judge making marriages for his 30 sons and 30 daughters.

Elon, the eleventh judge, did nothing worthy to record in his tenure of 10 years.

Abdon, the twelfth judge, got 70 donkeys for his 40 sons and 30 nephews during his 8 years as judge.

**Chapters 13 — 16** — The monotonous repetition of “And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD” opens chapter 13, and this is the last time it occurs.

The birth of Samson was miraculous (vv. 2-5). Samson had a golden opportunity to deliver Israel. He never did. He is one of the two most colossal failures in Scripture (Solomon is the other one). He was a Nazirite, and long hair was the badge of his office. There was no strength in him. He was anemic, a weakling both physically and morally, a mama’s boy, a regular sissy, a midget in mind and muscle. Three significant verses tell his story:

(1) Secret of Samson’s **success** —

*For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head; for the child shall be a Nazirite unto God from the womb. And he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.* (Judges 13:5)

(2) Secret of Samson’s **strength** —

*And the Spirit of the LORD began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.* (Judges 13:25)

(3) Secret of Samson’s **failure** —

*And she said, The Philistines are upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he knew not that the LORD was departed from him.* (Judges 16:20)

Note the parallel between the life of Samson and that of Jesus Christ:

- Comparison:
1. Both births were foretold by an angel.
  2. Both were separated to God from the womb.
  3. Both were Nazarites.
  4. Both went in the power of the Holy Spirit.
  5. Both were rejected by their people.
  6. Both destroyed (or will destroy) their enemies.
- Contrast:
1. Samson lived a life of sin.  
Jesus' life was sinless.
  2. Samson at the time of death prayed, "...O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes" (Judges 16:28).  
Jesus prayed, "...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).
  3. In death Samson's arms were outstretched in wrath.  
In death Jesus' arms were outstretched in love.
  4. Samson died.  
Jesus Christ lives!

### III. Results of era of the judges, Chapters 17 — 21

Some label this section an appendix to the Book of Judges. We prefer to see here God's philosophy of history (see outline).

The period of the judges is characterized by  
compromise,  
corruption,  
confusion.

**Chapters 17, 18** — This period of apostasy began in the tribe of Dan in their desire to enlarge their borders. It was another lapse into idolatry. It all can be traced to the home of Micah and his mother who spoiled him (17:2). The priest, hired by Micah to tend his idols, advised Dan to proceed with a selfish plan. This was the sweet talk of a hired preacher (17:6).

**Chapters 19 — 21** — This period is similar to the former in that it reveals compromise, corruption and confusion. This episode centers about the tribe of Benjamin. This tribe engaged in gross immorality which led to civil war. It began with the men of Benjamin abusing and finally murdering a Levite's wife. The other tribes try to exterminate the tribe of Benjamin. This period ends in total national corruption and con-

fusion, and with this the Book of Judges concludes:

*In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.* (Judges 21:25)

## **OUTLINE:**

### **I. Introduction to era of the judges, Chapters 1, 2**

- A. Condition of nation after death of Joshua (revealed in limited victories of tribes of Judah, Simeon, Benjamin, Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, Naphtali, Dan), 1
- B. God feeds into computer of history Israel's cycle in period of the judges, 2

### **II. Era of the judges, Chapters 3 — 16**

- A. 1st Apostasy; conquered by Mesopotamia; delivered through Othniel, the judge, 3:1-11
- B. 2nd Apostasy; conquered by Moabites and Philistines; delivered through Ehud and Shamgar, the judges, 3:12-31
- C. 3rd Apostasy; conquered by Jabin, king of Canaan; delivered through Deborah and Barak, the judges, 4:1 — 5:31
- D. 4th Apostasy; conquered by Midian; delivered through Gideon, the judge, 6:1 — 8:32
- E. 5th Apostasy; civil war; delivered through Abimelech, Tola, Jair, the judges, 8:33 — 10:5
- F. 6th Apostasy; conquered by Philistines and Ammonites; delivered through Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, the judges, 10:6 — 12:15
- G. 7th Apostasy; conquered by Philistines; delivered partially through Samson, the judge, 13 — 16

### **III. Results of era of the judges (confusion), Chapters 17 — 21**

- A. Religious apostasy (the temple), 17, 18
- B. Moral awfulness (the home), 19
- C. Political anarchy (the state), 20, 21

## RUTH

An addendum to the Book of Judges. A brochure of beauty. A bright picture on the black background of the judges.

**WRITER:** Samuel could have been the writer

**KEY VERSE:** Ruth 3:18

**THEME:** The kinsman-redeemer

### FEATURES:

1. A love story without using the word “love.”
2. The story of a prodigal family who went to the far country.
3. The only example of the law of the kinsman-redeemer (Hebrew *goel*) in action. Also shows how other laws of the Mosaic system operated.
4. Furnishes the link between the tribe of Judah and David. The genealogy at the end of the book becomes a most important document. It is found again in the first chapter of Matthew.
5. A lovely picture of Christ and the church.

### COMMENT:

We prefer not to break up this beautiful love story with notes and outlines of extended length. However we refer the reader to our book, *Ruth and Esther: Women of Faith* in which we attempt to tell this love story with all of its tenderness, sweetness, and loveliness.

### OUTLINE:

- I. **In the land of Moab**, Chapter 1
- II. **In the field of Boaz**, Chapter 2
- III. **On the threshing floor of Boaz**, Chapter 3
- IV. **In the heart and home of Boaz**, Chapter 4

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*



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- Meyer, F. B. *Joshua and the Land of Promise*. Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, n.d. (A rich devotional study.)
- Pink, Arthur W. *Gleanings in Joshua*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1964.
- Redpath, Alan. *Victorious Christian Living*. Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1955. (Devotional studies in Joshua.)
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## **SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**

(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter —
2. Most important verse —
3. Most prominent word —
4. Teaching about Christ —
5. Command to obey —
6. Promise to claim —
7. New truth learned —

**Notes & Outlines**

**1 & 2  
SAMUEL**

J. Vernon McGee

## 1 & 2 SAMUEL

*I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath.* (Hosea 13:11)

The Books of 1 and 2 Samuel give us the origin of the kingdom. The two Books of Samuel were classified as one in the Jewish canon. They are the first two of four Books of Kings in the Latin Vulgate.

**WRITER:** The name of Samuel is identified with these two historical books, not because he was the writer primarily, but because his story occurs first and is so prominent. He anointed as king both Saul and David. Samuel is considered the author up to 1 Samuel 25 (his death). Nathan and Gad completed the writing (1 Chronicles 29:29 ASV).

### **FEATURES:**

1. The rise of the kingdom.
2. The story of Hannah.
3. The story of little Samuel.
4. The story of David and Goliath.
5. The friendship of David and Jonathan.
6. King Saul's visit to witch of Endor.
7. God's covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7.
8. David's great sin — Bathsheba.
9. David's rebellious son — Absalom.

### **THEME:**

**Prayer** — 1 Samuel opens with prayer; 2 Samuel closes with prayer.

**Kingdom** — The change of the government from a theocracy to a kingdom; God's covenant with David.

**Prophet** — The rise of the office of prophet, who became the messenger of God in place of the priest.

**KEY VERSE:** 1 Samuel 10:25

## **COMMENT:**

There is a striking contrast between the characters in the Book of Judges and those in the two Books of Samuel. The men in Judges seem to be ordinary and average, while here the characters are outstanding and above the average. There are 6 who stand out in 1 Samuel. They are Hannah, Eli, Samuel, Saul, Jonathan, and David. First Samuel is a transitional book from the era of the judges to the kingdom. The kingdom foreshadows the coming millennial kingdom in some respects. There are certain profound global lessons for us in the setting up of the kingdom. The world needs:

1. A king with power who exercises his power righteously;
2. A king who will be in full dependence upon God and who can be trusted with power; and
3. A king who is in full obedience to God.

## **CHAPTERS AND VERSES WORTH REMEMBERING:**

- 1 Samuel 15:22 — Samuel's word about obedience
- 1 Samuel 25:29 — Abigail's word about David's relationship to God
- 2 Samuel 3:33 — Abner's epitaph
- 2 Samuel 7 — God's covenant with David (note the 7 "I wills")
- 2 Samuel 18:33 — David's grief over Absalom
- 2 Samuel 22 — Song of David (Psalm 18)
- 2 Samuel 24:24 — David's rebuke against a cheap religion

# 1 SAMUEL

## COMMENT:

### I. SAMUEL: God's prophet, priest, and judge, Chapters 1 — 8

**Chapter 1** — This First Book of Samuel opens with a cry of a godly woman. While the people cry for a king, Hannah cries for a child. God builds the throne on a woman's cry. When woman takes her exalted place, God builds her a throne.

Eli, the high priest, thinks Hannah is drunk as she prays before the tabernacle in Shiloh. When he discovers her true anxiety is for a child, he blesses her. Samuel is born to Hannah and she brings him to Eli in fulfillment of her vow.

**Chapter 2** — Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving is prophetic, as she mentions the Messiah for the first time (v. 10).

Eli's sons are evil and not fit for the priests' office. An unnamed prophet warns Eli that his line will be cut off as high priest and that God will raise up a faithful priest (v. 35). Notice verse 26 — spoken only of Samuel and Jesus.

**Chapter 3** — The story of the call of Samuel as a prophet-priest is ordinarily reserved for children. It is not only for the junior, but for the senior. Bring it out of the nursery and into the adult department, for it is not only a beautiful story but marks one of the great transitional periods in Scripture — the change from theocracy to monarchy, from priest to king. God spoke to a king through prophets. Samuel was not a wee child. Josephus says he was 12 years old (2:18 gives the wrong impression). Solomon was a grown man when he prayed, "I am but a little child" (1 Kings 3:7). Jeremiah was called to prophetic office when he wrote, "I am a child" (Jeremiah 1:6). There was a total of 4 calls to Samuel: first and second were the call of God to salvation (v. 7); the last two calls were to service (v. 10).

**Chapter 4** — Israel, without consulting Samuel, goes out to battle against the Philistines — which leads to defeat. Then they bring the ark of the covenant into battle, thinking its presence will bring victory. This reveals the superstitious paganism of the people who thought there was some merit in an object. The merit was in the presence and person of God.

Verse 5 reveals gross idolatry.

Verses 6 through 8 show that the Philistines were both superstitious and ignorant.

Verse 10 tells Israel's defeat again. The ark is captured.

Verse 18 — The capture of the ark causes Eli to collapse and fall backward, breaking his neck (he was a fat man).

**Chapter 5** — The captured ark is placed in the house of Dagon, idol of the Philistines. The idol falls over and breaks. In fear, they send the ark to Gath where it is then transferred to Ekron.

**Chapter 6** — Philistines return the ark to Israel, carried on a cart, to the field of Joshua at Bethshemesh. The ark is transferred to Kirjath-jearim.

**Chapter 7** — After 20 years Israel prepares to receive the ark. Israel turns from Baalim and Ashtaroth to serve the Lord (v. 4).

After Israel's victory over the Philistines, Samuel sets up a stone at Ebenezer, which means "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

Verses 15 through 17 give Samuel's extensive ministry as prophet, priest, and judge.

**Chapter 8** — Hosea 13:11 can be written over the remainder of 1 Samuel:

*I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath.*

Samuel made the mistake of making his own sons judges to succeed him. They were wholly unworthy and incompetent (v. 3). Samuel was a failure as a father.

Israel demanded a king and rejected God and Samuel. Israel was influenced by surrounding nations.

## II. SAUL: Satan's man, Chapters 9 — 15

**Chapter 9** — The people chose Saul. He looked like a king (v. 2). He was out looking for the asses of his father (v. 3), but the asses of Israel were looking for him (v. 20). God granted their request but sent leanness to their souls (v. 17). Is Saul (v. 21) genuinely humble?

**Chapter 10** — Samuel anoints Saul king (v. 1). Was Saul (v. 6) converted? This verse is not the final proof. The Spirit of God came upon Balaam also, but he was not converted. Succeeding events in Saul's life indicate that he was not. Verse 9 does not mean he had a *new* heart, only *another* heart. God equipped him for the office of king.

The reception of Saul as king was their rejection of God (v. 19). Saul's conduct (v. 22) is an evidence of a false modesty. Verse 25 gives the message of 1 Samuel.

**Chapter 11** — Saul began well, as he gained a victory over the Ammonites at Jabesh-gilead. All Israel accepted Saul as king (v. 15).

**Chapter 12** — Samuel transfers all authority to Saul and turns in his report as judge over Israel. Verse 3 is Samuel's autobiography — he was a remarkable man. Although Saul was Israel's choice (v. 13), God would still bless if the people would obey (v. 14). The people begin to see and acknowl-

edge their mistake (v. 19). Verse 22 is the revelation of the marvelous grace of God.

**Chapter 13** — The real nature of Saul begins to show. His son Jonathan got the victory at Michmash, but Saul blew the trumpet and took credit for it (vs. 3, 4). In presumption Saul intrudes into the priest's office (vs. 8-10). Samuel rebukes and rejects Saul (vs. 13, 14). The disarmament of Israel is revealed (vs. 19, 22).

**Chapter 14** — Again Jonathan gains a victory but Saul takes credit for it (vs. 14, 15). "Saul took credit for victory...modesty gone now" (Young). Saul's jealousy is revealed (vs. 37-45). He actually would destroy his son if he stood in the way.

**Chapter 15** — Saul's glaring rebellion is revealed in his disobedience regarding Agag. He wants to cover up his sin before the people (v. 30). Saul is rejected now as king with no hope of recovery (v. 35). Samuel loved Saul for he mourned for him. Was he Samuel's choice? A great spiritual principle is enunciated by Samuel (vs. 22, 23).

God has given Saul an opportunity to make good after his first failure, but he failed the second time. This is God's method all the way through Scripture (cf. Jacob, Jonah, Peter, Mark, etc.). God did not need to wait for the result — He already knew. However, the individual needed to know, and we need to know (Psalm 51:4; Romans 3:19; Revelation 15:3). We shall be tested, and we need the help of the Holy Spirit (James 1:12).

Why the extreme surgery in slaying the Amalekites and Agag? Move ahead about 500 years. Haman was an Agagite (Esther 3:1). God was protecting multitudes of the future, as He did at the Flood.

### **III. DAVID: God's man, and SAUL: Satan's man, Chapters 16 — 31**

**Chapter 16** — God chooses David as king to succeed Saul and sends Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint him as king. Another great principle is enunciated (v. 7). This is God's method of choosing men for a particular office and task. Because Saul is forsaken of God (v. 14), David is brought into court to play upon his harp to soothe the evil spirit of Saul.

**Chapter 17** — This chapter contains the familiar episode of David slaying Goliath with a slingshot. Why did David take 5 smooth stones to slay Goliath (v. 40)? Did he expect to miss? No, Goliath had four sons, and David expected them to come out also. David did slay them (2 Samuel 21:22). David did not expect to miss (Judges 20:16).

**Chapter 18** — David and Jonathan become fast friends, and they make a covenant for life. Saul becomes jealous of David because of the people's applause (vs. 8, 9) and twice attempts to slay him. David becomes the



favorite of the people (v. 16). Saul gives his daughter Michal to David as wife in order to trap David.

**Chapter 19** — Saul openly attempts to have David slain; he personally attempts to slay him with a javelin as David plays upon his harp (vs. 9, 10). David escapes and becomes as a hunted animal.

**Chapter 20** — Jonathan proves his love for David by protecting him (vs. 16, 17). Jonathan communicates with David the intentions of Saul by means of the shooting of arrows. Saul determines to kill David, and David flees.

**Chapter 21** — David flees to Ahimelech the priest and feeds his young men with the showbread from the holy place. Then David flees to Achish, king of Gath, in Philistine country.

**Chapter 22** — David begins to gather his mighty men. Those who came to him were in dire need — in distress, in debt, and discontented. David is hunted as a criminal. Saul slays Ahimelech and the other priests for helping David (vs. 16-23).

**Chapter 23** — David continues to flee with 600 men (v. 13). Jonathan contacts David and recognizes that David will be the next king (vs. 16, 17). Jonathan is a great man, and his attitude and action remind us of John the Baptist.

**Chapter 24** — David spares Saul's life at En-gedi because he honors his office, not the man (v. 6).

**Chapter 25** — Death of Samuel in his retirement. David encounters Nabal and Abigail. David in anger is prevented from the rash act of murdering Nabal and his servants by the presence and diplomacy of Abigail, Nabal's beautiful wife. Nabal dies after a night of drunkenness, and David takes Abigail as wife. She was a good influence in the life of David (vs. 29, 32-34).

**Chapter 26** — David again spares Saul in the wilderness of Ziph. Note the contrast between Saul and David. Obviously, Saul knows that David is God's choice, but he seeks to slay him (v. 25). David recognizes that Saul is the anointed king, and he spares him. God must deal with Saul (vs. 9-11). Is David being sarcastic with Abner (v. 15)?

**Chapter 27** — David in fear retreats to Philistia (v. 1). Achish of Gath gives David and his men the city of Ziklag.

**Chapter 28** — Saul's interview with the witch of Endor poses and provokes many questions. The primary one relates to Samuel. Did she bring Samuel back from the dead? If so, this is the only instance in Scripture.

Scripture positively condemns such practices of necromancy (Deuteronomy 18:9-14). The New Testament account of Lazarus and a rich man indicates there can be no return (Luke 16:19-31). Paul was silenced about his experience of being caught up to the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2-4). Scripture warns of these practices and predicts a future outbreak (Matthew 24:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; Revelation 16:13, 14).

Saul was abandoned of God (vs. 6, 15). Because heaven was silent, Saul turned to hell. We maintain that Samuel did not appear. There are 2 possible explanations: (1) It was a fraud, the witch was a ventriloquist (this is the position of G. Campbell Morgan); (2) an overweening desire to communicate with dead loved ones makes people victims of deceit. We believe a false spirit appeared — not Samuel. Even the witch was deceived and frightened (vs. 12-15). The false spirit communicated nothing that was not previously revealed.

**Chapter 29** — The Philistines do not trust David to fight against Israel.

**Chapter 30** — David fights against the Amalekites because of destruction of Ziklag. Note David's refuge (v. 6).

**Chapter 31** — Saul, mortally wounded in battle, tries to commit suicide. See 2 Samuel, chapter 1, for the answer to the question: "Who killed King Saul?"

*Saul failed in ruling God's property.*

*The end is self-destruction.*

*God and His authority are rejected.*

*Saul spared the Amalekites; Saul was killed by Amalekites.*

## **OUTLINE:**

### **I. SAMUEL: God's prophet, priest, and judge, Chapters 1 — 8**

#### **A. Birth of Samuel, Chapters 1, 2**

- 1.** Hannah's prayer and answer, 1
- 2.** Hannah's prophetic prayer; boy Samuel in temple, 2

#### **B. Call of Samuel, Chapter 3**

#### **C. Last judge and first prophet (prophetic office), Chapters 4 — 8**

- 1.** Ark captured by Philistines; Word of God to Samuel fulfilled; Eli dies and his sons slain, 4
- 2.** God judged Philistines because of the ark; ark returned to Bethshemesh, 5, 6
- 3.** Samuel leads in revival (put away idols and turn to Jehovah); victory at Ebenezer, 7
- 4.** Israel rejects God and demands a king; Samuel warns nation but promises a king, 8

## **II. SAUL: Satan's man, Chapters 9 — 15**

### **A. Saul received, Chapters 9, 10**

1. Saul chosen as king, 9
2. Saul anointed as king, 10

### **B. Saul reigning, Chapters 11, 12**

1. Saul's victory over Ammonites, 11
2. Transfer of authority from Samuel to Saul, 12

### **C. Saul rejected, Chapters 13 — 15**

1. Saul's rebellion against God, 13
2. Jonathan responsible for victory over Philistines; Saul took credit, 14
3. Saul's glaring rebellion and disobedience regarding Agag, 15

## **III. DAVID: God's man, and SAUL: Satan's man, Chapters 16 — 31**

### **A. David anointed, Chapter 16**

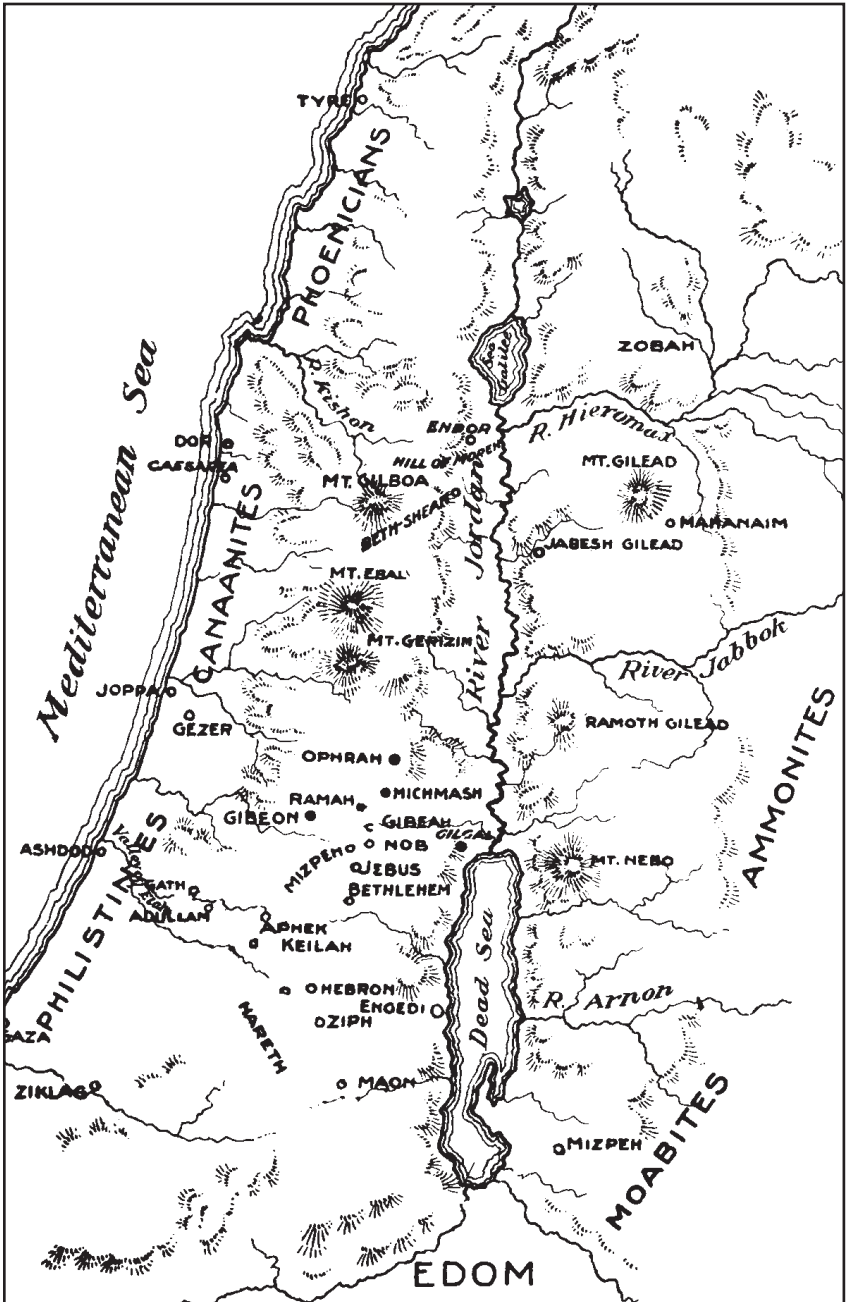
### **B. David trained, Chapters 17, 18**

1. David slays Goliath, giant of Gath, 17
2. Jonathan and David make covenant; Saul gives daughter Michal to David, 18

### **C. David disciplined, Chapters 19 — 30**

1. Saul attempts to kill David again, 19
2. Jonathan helps David escape, 20
3. David escapes to Nob and Gath, 21
4. David gathers his men; Saul slays priests of God, 22
5. David fights Philistines; Saul pursues David; Jonathan and David make covenant, 23
6. David spares Saul's life at En-gedi, 24
7. Samuel dies; David and Abigail, 25
8. David again spares Saul's life in wilderness of Ziph, 26
9. David retreats to land of Philistia (Ziklag), 27
10. Saul goes to witch of Endor, 28
11. Philistines do not trust David in battle, 29
12. David fights Amalekites because of destruction of Ziklag, 30

### **D. Saul, mortally wounded in battle, commits suicide, Chapter 31**



## 2 SAMUEL

### COMMENT:

The Book of 2 Samuel continues the message of 1 Samuel. It is given over entirely to the reign of David. The life and times of David are important because he is the ancestor of Jesus (Matthew 1:1). It shows that government of this world in the hands of man is a failure.

Many new characters appear in this book with whom the student of the Bible should familiarize himself.

#### I. **TRIUMPHS of David**, Chapters 1 — 10

David mourns the death of Saul and Jonathan.

**Chapter 1** — The question of who killed King Saul may not be answered in this chapter, but it adds another suspect. A young Amalekite, escaping out of the camp of Israel, reports to David the death of Saul (v. 8). He claims credit for slaying Saul (vs. 9, 10). David executes the young man for the crime (vs. 14-16).

David's grief over the deaths of Saul and Jonathan is touching, poetic and dramatic. It is a striking lamentation (vs. 17-27).

**Chapter 2** — David made king over Judah. Abner, captain of Saul, made Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, king over the remaining 11 tribes. Civil war ensues. David defeats Abner and the army.

**Chapter 3** — A long civil war weakens the nation, but David gradually gains in strength. David makes Hebron his home at this time. Abner, after falling out with Ish-bosheth, deserts to David. Joab, David's captain, suspects him and, seeking revenge for his brother Asahel's death, murders Abner. Abner had brought Michal to David previously as a condition of making peace with David. Note the epitaph of David to Abner (v. 33). Abner had left the city of refuge where he was safe.

**Chapter 4** — Ish-bosheth is murdered, as he lay on his bed, by his own leaders. David executes the murderers.

**Chapter 5** — After much bloodletting, David finally is made king over all Israel and moves his capital to Jerusalem. Note the approach of the 11 tribes to David (v. 2).

David takes Jerusalem from the Jebusites. Hiram, king of Tyre, furnished men and materials to build David a palace in Jerusalem.

**Chapter 6** — David does a right thing in a wrong way. He tries to bring up the ark on a cart, although God had given implicit directions for moving it. The Kohathites of the tribe of Levi were to carry the ark on their shoulders (Numbers 3 — 7). Uzzah was smitten dead because he should

have known better than to touch it. “Hands off” was made abundantly clear in God’s instructions concerning it. David then brings up the ark in a right way (v. 13). Michal rebukes David for his enthusiasm and devotion to God in bringing up the ark.

**Chapter 7** — God’s covenant with David makes this one of the great chapters of the Bible. The message of the Bible from this point on rests upon the promise God here makes to David. David desires deeply to build the temple to house the ark of God, and Nathan the prophet concurs with him in the plan. God appears to Nathan to correct him, for God will not let David build the temple because he is a bloody man. God gives him credit for his desire and promises in turn to build David a house. God promises a king and a kingdom to come in the line of David (vs. 12, 13, 16). Verse 14 not only refers to Solomon, but to Christ — “Christ was made sin for us.” Bishop Horsley translates this, “When guilt is laid upon him, I will chasten him with the rod of men.”

God confirms this with an oath (Psalm 89:34-37). David understands that a king is coming in his line who will be more than a man. Bishop Horsley translates verse 19, “O Lord God, Thou hast spoken of Thy servant’s house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me in the arrangement about the Man that is to be from above, O God Jehovah.” (See also 2 Samuel 7:25 and 23:5.)

The Old Testament prophets based the kingdom on this promise (Jeremiah 23:5).

The New Testament opens at this point (Matthew 1:1).

This was the angel Gabriel’s message to Mary (Luke 1:32, 33).

Peter began here on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:25-31; 34-36).

Paul began here in Romans (Romans 1:3).

The New Testament closes here (Revelation 22:16).

*(59 references to David in the New Testament)*

**Chapter 8** — David consolidates his kingdom, he gains victories over the old enemies of Israel (v. 12) and enlarges his kingdom (v. 15).

**Chapter 9** — David befriends Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, whose feet were lame. David brings him into his palace and gives him a place at his table (vs. 7, 10, 13). This reveals the kindness of David.

**Chapter 10** — David defeats both the Ammonites and Syrians to avenge the insult to his messengers sent to Hanun, king of Ammon.

## **II. TROUBLES of David,** Chapters 11 — 24

**Chapter 11** — David’s two great sins were committed when David remained in Jerusalem instead of being out with his army where he should

have been (v. 1). David first commits adultery with Bathsheba, then plots the murder of her husband Uriah. David thought he had gotten by with it, but he had not (v. 27).

**Chapter 12** — Nathan faces David about his sins, and David repents. Nathan applies the parable about the little ewe lamb to David's sin (v. 7). Nathan pronounces God's judgment upon David (vs. 10-12), and David acknowledges his sin (v. 13). David must learn that man reaps what he sows (v. 14). Solomon is the second son born to Bathsheba.

**Chapter 13** — David's daughter Tamar, sister to Absalom, is raped by Amnon, another son of David. David did nothing about it (v. 21). Absalom kills Amnon and flees to his mother's father, king of Geshur.

**Chapter 14** — Joab plots the return of Absalom when he sees David's love for him (v. 1). Absalom is permitted to return, but David refuses to see him (v. 24). Finally David receives him (v. 33).

**Chapter 15** — Absalom heads a rebellion against David after winning the affection of Israel (vs. 6, 10, 12). David is forced to flee from Jerusalem. David refuses to take the ark with him as a superstitious or good-luck charm (v. 25, 26). David leaves, perhaps to avert bloodshed and the slaying of Absalom (v. 30).

**Chapter 16** — Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant, betrays his master and deceives David. Shimei, of the house of Saul, curses David, yet David refuses to let Abishai slay him. Absalom takes Jerusalem.

**Chapter 17** — Absalom's advisors, Ahithophel and Hushai, disagree about the attack against David. Hushai argues that David and his men were veterans in the field of battle and Absalom was no match for them (vs. 8, 10).

**Chapter 18** — The people refuse to let David go into battle. David reveals his tender love for Absalom by urging all his captains to protect the life of his son (v. 5). Absalom is slain by Joab in battle. David's deep grief at the death of Absalom is a masterpiece of mourning (v. 33).

**Chapter 19** — David returns to Jerusalem and is restored to his throne after Joab rebukes him for his deep mourning for Absalom. Obviously, Absalom was the favorite son of David and his choice for the throne. David was a great king but a very poor father. David spares the life of Shimei.

**Chapter 20** — Sheba, a Benjamite, leads a revolt against David. The revolt is put down by Joab after he slays Amasa who showed no inclination to put down the rebellion.

**Chapter 21** — Three years of famine come as a judgment upon the nation because of Saul's zeal in slaying the Gibeonites with whom Joshua

had made a treaty of peace. David continues warring against the Philistines.

**Chapter 22** — This is David's song of deliverance after God delivered him from all his enemies. This is the same as Psalm 18. It would seem a reasonable probability that David wrote Psalm 23 about this time.

**Chapter 23** — These are David's final words. Verse 5 was David's hope. David's mighty men are listed. These are the men who came to David during the days of his rejection. They did exploits for God (vs. 13-17) and performed courageous feats beyond the call of David (v. 20). There is one blot on the escutcheon of David, as Uriah the Hittite was one of the mighty men of David (v. 39).

**Chapter 24** — David commits another sin in taking a census. By now he should trust God instead of numbers (see 1 Chronicles 21:1-7). God again punishes David but permits him to choose his punishment. David casts himself upon the mercy of God (v. 14). God sends a pestilence. David buys Araunah's threshing floor on which to rear an altar to God. David's refusal to accept it as a gift reveals his deep dedication and devotion to God (v. 24). This spot became the place where Solomon erected the temple. Although the Mosque of Omar stands there today, Israel again controls that area.

*2 Samuel continues the message of 1 Samuel. Government of this world in the hands of man is a failure.*

*I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, until he comes whose right it is; and I will give it him.* (Ezekiel 21:27)

*Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in [judgment].* (Isaiah 32:1)

## OUTLINE:

- I. **TRIUMPHS of David**, Chapters 1 — 10
  - A. David mourns the death of Saul and Jonathan, Chapter 1
  - B. David made king over Judah, Chapter 2
  - C. Civil war — Abner joins with David but murdered by Joab, Chapter 3
  - D. Ish-bosheth, son of Saul, killed, Chapter 4
  - E. David made king over all Israel; moves his capital to Jerusalem, Chapter 5
  - F. David's wrong and right attempts to bring the ark to Jerusalem, Chapter 6
  - G. God's covenant to build the house of David, Chapter 7
  - H. David consolidates his kingdom, Chapter 8



- I. David befriends Mephibosheth, Chapter 9
- J. David wars against Ammon and Syria, Chapter 10
- II. **TROUBLES of David**, Chapters 11 — 24
  - A. David's two great sins, Chapter 11
  - B. Nathan faces David with his sins; David repents, Chapter 12
  - C. David's daughter Tamar raped by Amnon, David's son; Amnon murdered by Absalom, David's son, Chapter 13
  - D. David permits Absalom to return with half-hearted forgiveness, Chapter 14
  - E. Absalom rebels against David, Chapter 15
  - F. Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant, deceives David; Shimei curses David, Chapter 16
  - G. Absalom's advisers (Ahithophel and Hushai) disagree on attack against David, Chapter 17
  - H. Absalom slain and David mourns, Chapter 18
  - I. David restored to throne, Chapter 19
  - J. Sheba revolts against David, Chapter 20
  - K. Three years of famine; Gibeonites take vengeance on house of Saul; war with Philistines, Chapter 21
  - L. David's song of deliverance (Psalm 18), Chapter 22
  - M. David's last words; David's mighty men, Chapter 23
  - N. David's sin in taking census; chooses punishment and buys threshing floor of Araunah, Chapter 24

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Crockett, William Day. *A Harmony of the Books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1959.
- Darby, J. N. *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*. Oak Park, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, n.d.
- Davis, John J. and Witcomb, John C., Jr. *A History of Israel*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1970. (Excellent.)
- Epp, Theodore H. *David*. Lincoln, Nebraska: Back to the Bible Broadcast, 1965.
- Gaebelein, Arno C. *Annotated Bible*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1917.
- Gray, James M. *Synthetic Bible Studies*. Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1906.
- Jensen, Irving L. *I and II Samuel*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1968. (A self-study guide.)
- Kelly, William. *Lectures on the Earlier Historical Books of the Old Testament*. Oak Park, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, 1874.
- Knapp, Christopher. *The Kings of Israel and Judah*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1908. (Very fine.)
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- Sauer, Erich. *The Dawn of World Redemption*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951. (An excellent Old Testament survey.)
- Scroggie, W. Graham. *The Unfolding Drama of Redemption*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970. (An excellent survey and outline of the Old Testament.)
- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Bible Commentary*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1980. (Volume 1 covers Genesis through Song of S o l o m o n with a fine summary of each paragraph by this outstanding Old Testament scholar.)
- Wood, Leon, J. *Israel's United Monarchy*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, n.d. (Excellent.)
- Wood, Leon, J. *The Prophets of Israel*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, n.d. (Excellent.)



Thru the Bible Radio Network  
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**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter —
2. Most important verse —
3. Most prominent word —
4. Teaching about Christ —
5. Command to obey —
6. Promise to claim —
7. New truth learned —

**NOTES**

**Notes & Outlines**

**1 & 2  
KINGS**

J. Vernon McGee

## 1 & 2 KINGS

The second in the series of three double books. Originally one book, they were divided by the Septuagint translators.

### **WRITER:**

Although the writer is unknown, it was written while the first temple was still standing (1 Kings 8:8). Jeremiah is the traditional writer. Modern scholarship assigns the authorship to “the prophets.”

### **THEME:**

Standard of the kingdom: “as David his father” (repeated 9 times in 1 Kings). It was a human standard, but man failed to attain even to it.

### **KEY VERSES:**

2 Kings 17:22, 23 and 25:21

### **FEATURES:**

1. Practically all the rulers were evil.
2. God’s patience in dealing with them.
3. Names of the mothers are given of both good and bad kings.
4. God’s grace in sending revival when the king, with the people, turned to Him.
5. Prominence of the prophet and insignificance of the priest.
6. God’s long delay before the captivity of both Israel and Judah.
7. Man’s total inability to rule for God.
8. Wicked kings who had godly sons, also good kings who had wicked sons.

### **KINGDOM:**

First Kings records the *division* of the kingdom; Second Kings records the *collapse* of the kingdom. Considered

together, they open with King David and close with the king of Babylon. They are the book of man's rule of God's kingdom. The throne on earth must be in tune with the throne in heaven if blessings come and benefits accrue to the people. Yet man's plan cannot overthrow God's purposes.

### **PURPOSE:**

It is a continuation of the narrative begun in 1 & 2 Samuel. Actually, 1 & 2 Samuel with 1 & 2 Kings can be viewed as one book. In these four books the history of the nation is traced from the time of its greatest extent, influence, and prosperity under David and Solomon to the division and finally the captivity and exile of both kingdoms.

The moral teaching is to show man his inability to rule himself and the world. In these four historical books we have the rise and fall of the kingdom of Israel.

### **OUTLINE:**

- I. Death of David, 1 Kings 1, 2**
- II. Glory of SOLOMON'S reign, 1 Kings 3 — 11**
  - A. Solomon's prayer for wisdom, Chapters 3, 4
  - B. Building of temple, Chapters 5 — 8
  - C. Fame of Solomon, Chapters 9, 10
  - D. Shame and death of Solomon, Chapter 11
- III. DIVISION of the kingdom, 1 Kings 12 — 2 Kings 16**  
(See table on next page)
- IV. CAPTIVITY of ISRAEL by Assyria, 2 Kings 17**
- V. DECLINE and CAPTIVITY of JUDAH by Babylon, 2 Kings 18 — 25**

# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE KINGS OF THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

JUDAH				ISRAEL			
King	Reign	Character	Prophet	King	Reign	Character	Prophet
1. Rehoboam	931-913 BC	(17 yrs.) Bad	Shematah	1. Jeroboam I	931-910 BC	(22 yrs.) Bad	Ahijah
2. Abijam	913-911	(3 yrs.) Bad		2. Nadab	910-909	(2 yrs.) Bad	
3. Asa	911-870	(41 yrs.) Good		3. Baasha	909-886	(24 yrs.) Bad	
				4. Elah	886-885	(2 yrs.) Bad	
				5. Zimri	885	(7 days) Bad	
4. Jehoshaphat	870-848*	(25 yrs.) Good		6. Omri	885-874	(12 yrs.) Bad	{ Elijah Micaiah
5. Jehoram	848-841*	(8 yrs.) Bad		7. Ahab	874-853	(22 yrs.) Bad	
6. Ahaziah	841	(1 yr.) Bad	Obadiah	8. Ahaziah	853-852	(2 yrs.) Bad	
7. Athaliah	841-835	(6 yrs.) Bad		9. Joram	852-841	(12 yrs.) Bad	Elisha
8. Joash	835-796	(40 yrs.) Good	Joel	10. Jehu	841-814	(28 yrs.) Bad	
9. Amaziah	796-767	(29 yrs.) Good		11. Jehoahaz	814-798	(17 yrs.) Bad	{ Jonah Amos
10. Azariah (or Uzziah)	767-740*	(52 yrs.) Good	Isaiah	12. Jehoash	798-782*	(16 yrs.) Bad	
				13. Jeroboam II	782-753*	(41 yrs.) Bad	Hosea
				14. Zechariah	753-752	(6 mo.) Bad	
				15. Shallum	752	(1 mo.) Bad	
				16. Menahem	752-742*	(10 yrs.) Bad	
				17. Pekahiah	742-740	(2 yrs.) Bad	
				18. Pekah	740-732*	(20 yrs.) Bad	
11. Jotham	740-732*	(16 yrs.) Good	Micah	19. Hoshea	732-722	(9 yrs.) Bad	
12. Ahaz	732-716*	(16 yrs.) Bad		<i>(Capture of Samaria and captivity of Israel)</i>			
13. Hezekiah	716-687*	(29 yrs.) Good					
14. Manasseh	687-642*	(55 yrs.) Bad					
15. Amon	642-640	(2 yrs.) Bad	{ Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Jeremiah				
16. Josiah	640-608	(31 yrs.) Good					
17. Jehoahaz	608	(3 mo.) Bad					
18. Jehoiakim	608-597	(11 yrs.) Bad					
19. Jehoiachin	597	(3 mo.) Bad					
20. Zedekiah	597-586	(11 yrs.) Bad					

\*Co-regency

*(Destruction of Jerusalem and captivity of Judah)*

\*Co-regency

# 1 KINGS

## COMMENT:

First Kings opens with the death of David and closes with the death of Jehoshaphat.

The death of David, the reign of Solomon, and the division of the kingdom are the dominant features of 1 Kings.

The evil reign of Ahab and Jezebel and the spectacular ministry of Elijah the prophet are the fitting climax to this first book of Kings.

### I. **Death of David**, Chapters 1, 2

**Chapter 1** — David becomes senile. Adonijah, a son of David, takes advantage of his father's condition and makes a bid for the throne. David anoints Solomon under pressure from Nathan and Bathsheba.

Evidently Absalom was the choice of David as his successor. After Absalom's death and as David approached old age, he lost interest in choosing his successor. This led to confusion and the abortive attempt of Adonijah.

**Chapter 2** — David charges Solomon. David's charge to Solomon (vs. 2, 3) reveals his attitude toward Solomon. Charging him to show himself a man reveals that David had little confidence in a successor who had been reared in the palace among women. David knew the tough discipline of the caves and rugged outdoor life. Solomon has a taste for comforts, luxury, and ease. David's charge reveals something of his own character.

David's legacy to Solomon is sometimes ignored.

(1) He transferred the leadership of the nation from the house of Saul and the tribe of Benjamin to Judah and established the royal house of David.

(2) He established Jerusalem as the Holy City and as the religious center and national capital for all Jews.



(3) He stamped out idolatry, practically speaking, and made the worship of Jehovah universal in the land.

(4) He made conquests of many nations who paid tribute to Israel and its king. He extended the borders of the country to Egypt on the south and to the Euphrates River in the north and east, including far more territory than at any other time in the nation's history.

(5) Although an oriental monarch with a sizable harem, David's foreign marriages were largely political and relatively free from religious and moral corruption.

(6) David was a poet and musician who endeared himself to the people as the "sweet psalmist of Israel."

(7) David planned the Temple, which was to exalt the religious life of the nation and the worship of Jehovah, although he was not permitted to build the Lord's house.

(8) Although there was still rivalry of a sort between the ten tribes of the north and Judah (and had been ever since the death of Saul and his son), even so, David had no serious difficulty in uniting all the tribes under his rule and about the national capital at Jerusalem.

(9) At the time of David's death, the nation was second to none in power and military prowess, and the people had a large measure of peace and freedom, as every man "sat under his own vine and fig tree."

David's death injects a sad note into the record.

Adonijah's treachery is revealed in his request to Bathsheba. Adonijah is slain, Abiathar removed from the priesthood, and Joab flees but is captured and slain.

Solomon made Benaiah captain and Zadok priest.

Shimei, of the house of Saul, who cursed David, is executed.

## **II. Glory of SOLOMON'S REIGN, Chapters 3 — 11**

### **A. Solomon's prayer for wisdom, Chapters 3, 4**

**Chapter 3** — Solomon was married to the daughter of

Pharaoh, but at this time he loved the Lord (v. 3). The spirit of compromise is evident in this marriage as well as his failure to remove idolatry from the land.

Solomon prayed for wisdom. Evidently he was praying for political wisdom and not spiritual discernment.

That God granted his request is manifested in the method he used in determining which of the two harlots was the real mother of the child.

**Chapter 4** — Peace and prosperity became a reality (vs. 20, 25, 26). Solomon was a prince of peace, while David was a man of war. Solomon became famous because of his wisdom. Note the areas in which he was a specialist (see vs. 32-34).

## **B. Building of Temple, Chapters 5 — 8**

**Chapter 5** — Solomon engages Hiram, King of Tyre, to build the Temple. His workers were the greatest builders of that day. The building required 30,000 Israelites, 150,000 Canaanites, 550 overseers, and 3500 subordinates.

**Chapter 6** — Solomon begins to build the Temple. It was patterned after the wilderness Tabernacle but was about twice as large. It was more ornate, elaborate, and costly. The simplicity of the Tabernacle was lost, and there seemed to be definite spiritual deterioration. There are several indications of this. For instance, the Tabernacle depended solely upon the light of the lampstand in the Holy Place, but in the Temple there were narrow windows. Natural light is substituted for the light which speaks of Christ. Also, the measurements of the cherubim over the mercy seat are given while there was no measurement of the cherubim in the Tabernacle because it speaks of the deity of Christ which cannot be measured.

The striking feature of the construction of the Temple is stated in verse 7. It took 7 years to build the Temple (v. 38).

Many other buildings surrounded the Temple proper.

The estimated cost of the Temple is \$2,450,000,000 to \$4,900,000,000.

## **Chapter 7** — Solomon builds other structures:

His own palace — 13 years in building (v. 1),

House of the forest of Lebanon (v. 2),

Palace for the daughter of Pharaoh (v. 8),

Pillars for the porch of the Temple (v. 21),

Molten sea for the Temple (v. 23),

Ten lavers of brass (v. 38),

Articles of furniture for the Temple (vs. 48, 49).

**Chapter 8** — The glory of the Lord fills the Temple after the ark is brought from the Tabernacle and installed inside the Holy of Holies (vs. 10, 11).

Solomon dedicates the Temple, giving the proper credit to David (vs. 17-20). See 1 Chronicles 22 for the account of David's gathering all the materials for the Temple. It is properly David's temple. The only temple Solomon had was on the side of his head.

Solomon's prayer of dedication reveals that he had no primitive view of God (v. 27). It is a pagan notion that God dwells in a house.

The Temple becomes the center of worship. The world was to come to the Temple to worship. Israel in captivity was to turn toward the Temple to pray.

The large number of animals sacrificed (v. 63) poses no problem when it is considered that many temporary altars were erected for this occasion (v. 64).

## **C. Fame of Solomon, Chapters 9, 10**

**Chapter 9** — God appears to Solomon the second time (v. 2) and encourages his heart. God sets up David, a very human standard, by which to measure the kings that followed him (v. 4).

The fame of Solomon spreads throughout the world. Hiram was not happy with the payment for material that Solomon made to him (v. 12).

**Chapter 10** — The visit of the queen of Sheba reveals that Solomon had succeeded in witnessing for God to the world of that day (see also v. 24). Solomon's fame had spread, and obviously multitudes were coming to Jerusalem to worship the living and true God (v. 1). In the present dispensation, the church is to go to the world, but the commission to go into all the world was not given to Israel. As Israel was true to God, she was a witness to the world, and the world came to Jerusalem to worship.

“And his ascent” (v. 5) should be translated “burnt offering.” This is the offering that speaks more fully of Christ and His substitutionary death than all others. The queen of Sheba and the world came to know about Christ through the burnt offering — “without shedding of blood is no remission of sins.” The testimony of the queen of Sheba reveals that she had come to know the living and true God (vs. 7-9).

This is one isolated experience out of many which could have been recorded. (The Book of Acts records only certain conversions such as that of the Ethiopian eunuch.) This chapter reveals that for a time Israel succeeded in witnessing to the world.

The wealth of Solomon is given in verses 14-21. The luxury of his kingdom is revealed in verse 22. All these are luxury items:

Apes for entertainment,  
Peacocks for beauty,  
Gold, silver, and ivory for magnificent decorations.

There is a frivolous and tragic note here which is symptomatic. He is called to give a witness to the world, and he spends his energy and time with apes and peacocks to satisfy a whim.

#### **D. Shame and death of Solomon, Chapter 11**

Solomon is the most colossal failure on the pages of

Scripture. “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.” He had the greatest opportunity of any man who ever lived. He began by failing to remove false religion (1 Kings 3:3). What was at first a spot is now the plague of leprosy. He has a harem of 1000 wives (vs. 1-3). David also had a harem, but his was largely political while Solomon’s is licentious.

The Lord was angry with Solomon (v. 9). The kingdom is to be divided as a judgment from God, yet it would not happen in Solomon’s day — for David’s sake (vs. 12, 13).

Jeroboam is promoted by Solomon but plots to lead the 10 northern tribes in revolt according to the word of Ahijah the prophet (vs. 29-31). When Solomon discovers this, he attempts to slay Jeroboam who flees to Egypt until the death of Solomon.

The death of Solomon concludes the chapter. He reigned 40 years.

### **III. DIVISION of the kingdom, 1 Kings 12 — 2 Kings 16**

#### **1 Kings**

**Chapter 12** — Rehoboam, son of Solomon, succeeds to the throne. Jeroboam returns from Egypt and leads 10 tribes in demanding a reduction in taxes. Rehoboam, under the influence of the young men of his kingdom, having rejected the counsel of the old men who were Solomon’s advisors, turns down the request of the 10 northern tribes. Instead of reducing taxes, he threatens to raise them (vs. 10, 11). Therefore, Jeroboam leads the 10 tribes in revolt. First Kings was written during the time of the division of the kingdom (v. 19).

Jeroboam divides the nation religiously as well as politically by setting up a golden calf in Bethel and one in the tribe of Dan. The northern tribes go into idolatry (vs. 28-30).

**Chapter 13** — God grants Jeroboam another chance by sending a prophet to him with a warning and a sign.

Jeroboam seems to repent at the time but finally plunges into total apostasy.

**Chapter 14** — Ahijah the prophet pronounces judgment on Jeroboam and measures him according to David (v. 8).

Rehoboam king of Judah led the people into idolatry and sin. There was an abnormal increase of homosexuality (v. 24).

Shishak king of Egypt came against Jerusalem and captured it. He took as booty the gold shields that Solomon had on display. Rehoboam substitutes shields of brass. There was deterioration in the kingdom now as well as division.

Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, dies.

This chapter, which describes the reigns of Jeroboam and Rehoboam, sets the pace for the sordid record of the kings of the divided kingdom. There was not one good king in the northern kingdom of Israel. There were 19 of them, and all were bad. In the southern kingdom there were 20 kings — 12 of them were bad. Only 8 of them could be labeled good kings. Out of the 8, only 5 were outstanding. (See chronological table of the kings of the divided kingdom.)

**Chapter 15** — Abijam, son of Rehoboam, succeeded his father on the throne of Judah. He was as wicked as his father (v. 3). David continues as the standard of excellence for the kings of both Israel and Judah (v. 5). (Jeroboam became the standard of evil for the kings of the northern kingdom.) The one black mark against David is recorded, not covered. Abijam did nothing worthy of mention, either good or bad; his death is recorded here.

Asa succeeded Abijam in the southern kingdom of Judah. Asa compares to David (v. 11). He led in the first revival of the nation. First Kings gives only half a chapter to his reign, but 2 Chronicles gives three chapters (chapters 14, 15, 16). We will explore his reign when we come to the Book of Chronicles.

Asa did have to bribe Ben-hadad, king of Syria, and he warred with Israel continually. Jehoshaphat succeeded Asa as

king of Judah.

Nadab, son of Jeroboam, succeeded him as king of Israel. He was evil (v. 26).

Baasha led a conspiracy against him, slew him, and reigned in his stead (vs. 27, 28). Baasha continued war against Asa (v. 32).

**Chapter 16** — Baasha's evil reign lasted for 24 years. Elah his son succeeded him but reigned only 2 years. Zimri, a captain, slew Elah while he was drunk.

Zimri destroyed every male member of the house of Baasha. He reigned only 7 days, for Omri, captain of the host of Israel, besieged Tirzah and captured it. Zimri committed suicide by burning down the house in which he was.

The northern kingdom was divided between Omri and Tibni for 4 years. Tibni died and Omri reigned alone for 8 years. Omri built Samaria and made it the capital of the northern kingdom. He plunged Israel into the depths of evil (v. 25). His pattern was Jeroboam (v. 26).

Ahab, son of Omri, succeeded him (v. 28). He was worse than his father; he was the worst king of all (v. 30). He compounded evil by marrying Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians and high priest of Baal. What evil designs Ahab did not think of, Jezebel did.

**Chapter 17** — Elijah the prophet is introduced by his walking into the court of Ahab and Jezebel and making a very brave announcement — no rain for 3 years but according to the word of Elijah. Then he departs in just such a dramatic fashion.

He retires to the brook Cherith where he is fed by ravens and drinks of the brook until it dries up. He learned that his life was no more than a dried up brook. He could truly sing, "Make me a channel of blessing today."

He was sent by the Lord to the widow of Zarephath. For many days Elijah looked down into an empty flour barrel and sang the doxology. He learned that his life was no more than an empty flour barrel.

When the widow's son died, he learned that this life was no more than a dead body. He also learned that life comes from contact.

**Chapter 18** — This is one of the most spectacular chapters of Scripture. The meeting between Elijah and Ahab is again dramatic. Note the 3 times it is announced, “Behold, Elijah is here” (vs. 8, 11, 14).

The contest is sensational as Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal (vs. 21-24). It is Elijah versus 450 prophets of Baal. John Knox was right — “One with God is a majority.” The prophets of Baal use every kind of incantation to bring fire down upon the offering in the name of Baal. Elijah looks on with a bored and skeptical eye. He uses the rapier of irony and sarcasm. They yell louder and become more frantic but to no avail. Elijah, after the prophets of Baal retire in defeat, repairs the altar of 12 stones, showing that the nation Israel is one. He then arranges the wood and the sacrifice. When barrel after barrel of water is brought up from the blue Mediterranean to Mount Carmel and poured on the altar, Elijah utters one of the great prayers of Scripture, brief but effective (vs. 36, 37).

After slaying the prophets of Baal, he announces the approach of a rainstorm from out over the Mediterranean Sea.

**Chapter 19** — Ahab reports to Jezebel that Elijah had slain all her prophets of Baal. She vows to kill Elijah. “And when he saw that” (v. 3) reveals for the first time that Elijah is a man of like passions as we are. He got his eyes off the Lord and ran from the woman. He beat a cowardly retreat to Beersheba, where he left his servant, and continued on into the wilderness to crawl under a juniper tree where he requested that he might die.

Evidently Elijah was suffering from nervous exhaustion. He was physically and mentally depleted. God gave him nourishing food and plenty of sleep. He informed Elijah that



“the journey is too great for thee” (v. 7).

Then the Lord rebuked him and treated him to a spectacular display:

- (1) strong wind — but God was not in the wind;
- (2) earthquake — but God was not in the earthquake;
- (3) fire — but God was not in the fire.

Elijah loved all of this. Then came the still small voice. This is contrary to Elijah, but God was in the still small voice.

Elijah returns to the scene of action and danger. On the way, he calls Elisha.

**Chapter 20** — God grants to Ahab another opportunity of turning to Him. A prophet of God promises victory to Ahab over the Syrians. God grants the victory which seemed impossible.

Again the prophet warns Ahab that the king of Syria will return, but God will give him another victory. God granted this victory also, but Ahab failed to obey God by sparing Ben-hadad. Judgment of God is pronounced upon Ahab (v. 42).

**Chapter 21** — Ahab attempts to buy the vineyard of Naboth, but Naboth refuses to sell. Ahab returns to his palace like a spoiled child. Jezebel promises to get the vineyard. She has Naboth slain through a dastardly plot. Ahab is overjoyed and goes to claim the vineyard. God sends Elijah to meet Ahab and pronounce judgment upon him (v. 19). Just as Naboth died, Ahab will die, and the dogs will lick his blood in the same place.

***Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*** (Galatians 6:7)

This is another instance of the operation of this immutable law of God. Also, judgment is pronounced upon the line of Ahab (v. 22) and upon Jezebel (v. 23). Ahab repents in a measure, and God delays judgment but does not revoke the sentence upon Ahab and Jezebel.

**Chapter 22** — It is strange that Jehoshaphat would become an ally of Ahab, but his son married a daughter of Ahab and Jezebel (2 Kings 8:16-18). Before making war against Syria, Jehoshaphat, who had real spiritual discernment, asked that a prophet of God be called (vs. 5, 7). Micaiah, a prophet of God, is called (vs. 8, 9). He is one of the unsung great men of God. The prophets of Baal had already told Ahab what he wanted to hear. Micaiah at first resorted to sarcasm and comedy (v. 15). Note the reaction of Ahab (v. 16).

Then Micaiah gave a ridiculous parable. Imagine God asking any creature for advice (vs. 20-23). This was a subtle way of calling the false prophets of Baal liars. Note the reaction of Ahab to Micaiah's prophecy (v. 18). Ahab orders him kept in prison until he returns from battle. Micaiah had one parting shot (v. 28). Ahab will not return alive.

Ahab uses a clever and crooked device to escape from being killed in battle. He wore the uniform of a common soldier, while Jehoshaphat was the only one dressed as a king. Ahab did not escape. Note the irony of it all:

*And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. Wherefore, he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded.* (v. 34)

Note how literally the prophecy of Elijah was fulfilled (vs. 37, 38).

Ahaziah, his son, succeeded him.

Jehoshaphat returned home a sadder but wiser man. He refused to make a further alliance with Ahaziah (v. 49).

First Kings closes with the 2-year reign of Ahaziah who walked in the steps of his father, Ahab.

## 2 KINGS

### COMMENT:

The second book of Kings continues the record begun in the first book of Kings. In fact, there does not seem to be a proper division between the two books. Ahaziah's reign in Israel is begun in 1 Kings and concluded in 2 Kings.

The king and the prophet take the place of the priest as God's instruments of communication.

**Chapter 1** — Ahaziah king of Israel, son of Ahab and Jezebel, fell down through a lattice and was seriously injured. Greatly influenced by his mother Jezebel, he sends messengers to Ekron to inquire of Baal if he would be healed.

Elijah, in his last public act as prophet, is sent by the Lord to meet the messengers with a stern rebuke, "Is it because there is not a God in Israel that thou sendest to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?" Then Elijah pronounces the death sentence upon Ahaziah.

Elijah brings down fire from heaven to destroy the two detachments of 50 sent by the king to get him. Then Elijah goes with the 3rd detachment and personally delivers the death message to Ahaziah — which was fulfilled.

**Chapter 2** — This chapter records the translation of Elijah. He goes from Gilgal to Bethel to Jericho to the Jordan river, accompanied by Elisha. Elijah promises Elisha a double portion of his spirit if he witnesses his departure. Elijah strikes the waters of Jordan with his mantle, and they two go over. Elijah departs from him in a chariot of fire (v. 11), and Elisha witnesses it (v. 12). Elisha returns over Jordan by using Elijah's mantle to smite the waters.

Elisha makes the bitter waters sweet at Jericho.

On his return to Bethel he is met by a crowd of roughnecks and hoodlums who ridicule him. This incident has been derided by the critic who seems to be totally unaware of the facts.

*And he went up from thence unto Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.* (2 Kings 2:23 KJV)

“Little children” is *nahar* or *naar* in Hebrew. It was used of Isaac when he was 28, of Joseph when he was 39 and of Rehoboam when he was 40. It also was used for the sons of Jesse (1 Samuel 16:11) and of the Hebrew children (Daniel 1:4, 17) who were at least 17 at the time of captivity, and also for the Sodomites who attacked the home of Lot. These “little children” were not from a nursery school. Elisha did not bring out the bears — God was responsible. God still judges sin and blasphemy.

They were ridiculing Elisha and scoffing at the translation of Elijah. Their irreverence was blasphemy, as it attacked one of the great doctrines of Scripture:

*Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.* (2 Peter 3:3, 4)

See also 2 Timothy 3:1-9 and Jude 7-15. The one obvious fact from this episode is that Elisha was bald.

**Chapter 3** — King Ahaziah, son of Ahab, had no son as his successor so that his brother Jehoram (Joram) reigns after him.

Moab rebels against Israel. Jehoshaphat joins forces with Jehoram to go against Moab. Jehoshaphat again calls for a prophet of Jehovah. Elisha refuses at first, but responds because of the presence of Jehoshaphat (v. 14). Elisha announces that God would give them both water, which they sorely needed, and victory over Moab, which was granted.

**Chapter 4** — This chapter contains 5 miracles performed by Elisha. While there is a similarity between the miracles of Elisha and Elijah, the miracles performed by Elisha were more extensive and greater to a degree.

(1) A widow of one of the prophets is in dire circumstances — her two sons are about to be sold into slavery. Elisha multiplies the pot of oil.

(2) A “great woman” of Shunem entertains Elisha (v. 10). Elisha promises she would have a son.

(3) When the son was grown to manhood, he died, and Elisha restores him to life (using the same method as Elijah had).

(4) Sons of the prophets are eating a soup in which there was poison, and Elisha makes it harmless.

(5) Elisha feeds 100 men with food for one man.

**Chapter 5** — Naaman, captain of the army of Syria and a great man but a leper, comes to Elisha for healing at the suggestion of his wife’s maid (a Hebrew girl taken captive). Elisha refuses to see him but sends a messenger to tell him to go wash in the Jordan 7 times (v. 10). Naaman, because of pride, refuses to go at first (vs. 11, 12). He is persuaded to swallow his pride and obey the prophet. He is healed.

Gehazi, servant of Elisha, extracts a reward from Naaman without Elisha’s permission. Elisha pronounces judgment upon him, and he becomes a leper.

**Chapter 6** — The miracle of the floating axe head reveals the character of the prophet Elisha. Elisha is the popular professor of the school of the prophets. They need larger quarters (vs. 1, 2), and Elisha goes with them to cut down timber in the Jordan valley where the accident occurs. The borrowed axe head slips off and falls into the river (vs. 4, 5). Some consider the young student careless and feel that he should not have borrowed the axe. Both charges seem unjustified, for Elisha did not rebuke him. The miracle of making

an axe head float may seem “much ado about nothing” since it is not spectacular like bringing fire down from heaven. Here we see the contrast between Elijah and Elisha. Elijah would not have done it this way or bothered with it at all. I think he would have said, “Son, forget it.” But not Elisha. Like our Lord, he is interested in the individual and his little problems. There is a great spiritual lesson here. Man is lost and the dark waters of defeat and death have passed over him. Only when the stick, representing the cross, is placed in the waters of death can man be recovered (saved) and restored to his God-given purpose and pursuit in time and eternity (vs. 5-7).

Elisha warns the king of Israel concerning the plot of Ben-hadad and thereby saves his life, not once but many times. Ben-hadad attempts to capture Elisha by sending a great host to Dothan where the prophet is staying. The servant of Elisha thinks this will be their finish, but Elisha prays that the Lord would open his servant’s eyes. God does “and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha” (v. 17). Elisha leads the blinded Syrians to Samaria as captives.

Ben-hadad lays siege to Samaria, and the inhabitants of the city are starving. The king of Samaria blames the prophet and tries to destroy him.

**Chapter 7** — Elisha promises an abundance for the very next day. Four leprous men outside the city enter the camp of the Syrian army in desperation and find it deserted. During the night the Lord had caused the superstitious Syrians to hear a great noise which they interpreted as the great host of a hired army coming to attack them. They fled in panic, leaving all their supplies behind. The lepers report to the starving populace of Samaria that there is an abundance of food in the deserted camp.

**Chapter 8** — Elisha predicts a famine of seven years and urges the Shunammite mother to leave the area. She returns at

the end of the drought and appeals to the king to restore her land. After learning who she is, he does so.

Elisha goes to Damascus, predicts the death of sick Ben-hadad and the ascension of Hazael (who will in turn destroy Israel) to the throne. Hazael pleads innocent of all such plans but carries them out.

Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, begins to reign with his father. He walks in the ways of the kings of Israel, for he had married the daughter of Ahab. Edom revolts against him, also Libnah. Jehoram dies after an 8-year reign. He is succeeded by Ahaziah his son, who joins with Joram, king of Israel, against Hazael of Syria in war. Joram is wounded.

**Chapter 9** — Elisha sends one of the sons of the prophets to Jehu in Ramoth-gilead to anoint him as king of Israel and to pronounce judgment on the house of Ahab. Jehu is proclaimed king by the army. He slays Joram king of Israel, Ahaziah king of Judah, and Jezebel. Jezebel attempts to win Jehu over by her appeal as a woman (v. 30), but she is too old (v. 33). The prophecy of Elijah is literally fulfilled (vs. 36, 37). It is the frightful finish of a frightful woman.

**Chapter 10** — The house of Ahab is exterminated by the slaying of his 70 sons. Jehu slays what remained. Jehu also kills the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah.

Jehu pretends to turn to Baal worship in order to gather together Baal's followers. When they come together, Jehu has all of them slain (v. 25). Jehu destroys Baal worship from Israel (vs. 27, 28), but he does not return to the worship of Jehovah. He merely comes back to the low level of calf worship which had been established by Jeroboam (v. 29). However, God does recognize and reward him (v. 30).

Israel begins to decline as a great kingdom (v. 32).

Jehu dies and his son Jehoahaz succeeds to the throne (vs. 34, 35).

**Chapter 11** — When Athaliah sees that her son Ahaziah

was slain by Jehu, this bloody daughter of Jezebel tries to destroy all the line of David. She destroys all the princes of the royal line except Joash who was hidden by a sister of Ahaziah.

When Joash is seven, he is revealed to the rulers of the kingdom who in turn plot the overthrow of bloody Athaliah. She is slain and Joash (Jehoash) becomes king at seven years of age (v. 21).

Jehoiada, the priest, leads in a movement to return to the worship of Jehovah (v. 17). The Baal worship which had invaded Judah is exterminated (v. 18).

**Chapter 12** — Jehoash reigns 40 years, and he does that which is right in the eyes of the Lord (v. 2). The corruption of the priesthood is corrected and the Temple repaired.

The Syrians take Gath, and Jehoash has to pay a ransom to Hazael king of Syria to save Jerusalem. Jehoash is slain by a conspiracy of his servants. Amaziah his son succeeds him.

**Chapter 13** — Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, reigns over Israel for 17 years, and he follows in the sinful steps of Jeroboam.

In desperation he turns to the Lord when oppressed by the king of Syria. The Lord delivers them, but they return to the sins of Jeroboam. Jehoahaz dies a natural death.

Joash (Jehoash) son of Jehoahaz succeeds his father to the throne. Nothing of consequence is done in his reign except he renews the war against Judah during the reign of Amaziah.

Elisha becomes sick with a fatal illness. He is visited by King Jehoahaz of Israel, to whom the prophet promises victory over the Syrians. Elisha dies. The Syrians oppress Israel, but God is gracious (v. 23).

**Chapter 14** — Amaziah son of Joash succeeds to the throne of Judah and he, too, does that which is right in the sight of the Lord — but does not quite measure up to David's standard (v. 3). He is defeated by Jehoash, king of Israel, who takes Jerusalem, breaks through the wall for 400 cubits and



removes all the gold and silver that remain in the house of the Lord. Amaziah is slain in a conspiracy at Lachish.

Azariah (Uzziah), son of Amaziah, succeeds to the throne. Jeroboam II, king of Israel, reigns 41 years and does evil according to the sins of Jeroboam I. He restores the border of Israel according to Jonah, son of Amittai, the prophet. This is the historical reference to Jonah and confirms the fact that Jonah was a real person and a prophet in Israel (v. 25). Jeroboam II dies a natural death, and his son Zechariah succeeds him.

**Chapter 15** — Uzziah king of Judah is a good king, but because he intrudes into the priest's function, he is smitten with leprosy (2 Chronicles 26:15-21). Jotham his son succeeds him (see Isaiah 1:1).

Zechariah, last of the line of Jehu, is slain by Shallum after he had reigned only 6 months. Shallum reigns only 1 month. Menahem overthrows and slays Shallum. Then he reigns 10 years and does evil as had Jeroboam.

At this time, Pul, king of Assyria, comes against Israel, and Menahem pays 1,000 talents of silver to preserve his kingdom. At his death, Pekahiah his son succeeds to the throne but reigns only 2 years, when Pekah, his captain, conspires and slays him.

During the reign of Pekah, Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, comes against Israel and takes captive the tribe of Naphtali. Pekah is slain by Hoshea. Jotham reigns in Judah and is recognized as a good king.

**Chapter 16** — Ahaz, son of Jotham, succeeds him to the throne. He is a wicked king who walks in the evil ways of the kings of Israel (vs. 2, 3).

Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, invade Judah but cannot take Jerusalem (see Isaiah 7—10). Ahaz appeals to Assyria for help, and the Assyrians take Damascus.

The term "Jews" is used for the first time in the Bible (v. 6).

#### **IV. CAPTIVITY of ISRAEL by Assyria, Chapter 17**

Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, captures the northern kingdom and exacts tribute from them. When he discovers that King Hoshea had formed a conspiracy against him, he besieges Samaria and, after 3 years, takes the northern tribes into captivity.

These are the reasons God permitted Israel to go into captivity:

- (1) Disobeyed God (v. 13)

*Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.*

- (2) Doubted God (v. 14, see also 2 Chronicles 36:15, 16)

*Notwithstanding, they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like the neck of their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God.*

- (3) Defied God (v. 15) in that they refused to observe the sabbatic year for 490 years

*To fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfill threescore and ten years. (2 Chronicles 36:21)*

The story of this nation is the story of every individual (Romans 1:5; 16:20, 26; Acts 7:51; Hebrews 12:16).

Assyria brings in foreigners to colonize the land — first mention of Samaritans (v. 29).

#### **V. DECLINE and CAPTIVITY of JUDAH by Babylon, Chapters 18 — 25**

**Chapter 18** — Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, succeeds him to the

throne and is an exceptionally good king (v. 3). There is a revival during his reign (vs. 4, 5).

Hezekiah is able to overcome the Philistines, but Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invades Judah and threatens Jerusalem. Rab-shakeh, captain of Assyria, insults Hezekiah and attempts to frighten him.

**Chapter 19** — He is successful in this, for Hezekiah puts on sackcloth and goes to the house of God to pray. In the meantime, he sends a messenger to Isaiah. Isaiah returns a message of encouragement (vs. 6, 7). Rab-shakeh becomes bold and challenges the God of Israel by sending an insulting letter to Hezekiah. Hezekiah goes into the house of the Lord and spreads the letter before God. God answers through Isaiah that He will turn the hosts of Assyria back (vs. 28, 32-34). God destroys 185,000 of the Assyrian army, and Sennacherib returns home where he is slain.

**Chapter 20** — Hezekiah takes sick and his time is come to die (v. 1). He prays for a recovery, and God hears his prayer. This is a time when a man should have died at the appointed time. After his recovery, he commits 3 foolish acts:

- (1) He permits the ambassadors from Babylon to see his treasures (vs. 12-19).
- (2) He fathers Manasseh, the worst king of all (21:2, 9, 16, 17).
- (3) Hezekiah's heart becomes full of pride (2 Chronicles 32:25).

That this is an important section is evident from its being recorded 3 times in the Word of God (in 2 Chronicles and Isaiah).

**Chapter 21** — Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, is the most wicked king of all, even surpassing Ahab and Jezebel. (Since Manasseh was 12 years old when he began to reign and Hezekiah reigned 14 years after his illness, Manasseh was

born after the recovery of Hezekiah.) Amon succeeds Manasseh and is evil as was his father (v. 20). His servants conspire against him and slay him in his own house. Josiah his son succeeds him.

**Chapters 22, 23** — Josiah begins to reign when he is 8 years old, and he reigns 31 years (22:1). He is one of the best who reigned after Solomon (22:2). A great and needed revival comes to the nation. Hilkiyah, the high priest, is his counselor, assistant, and adviser. The steps of revival are given:

- (1) Temple repaired (22:3-6);
- (2) Return to the Word of God (22:8-10);
- (3) Convicted of sin (22:11-13);
- (4) Put away idolatry (23:4);
- (5) Put away immorality (23:7);
- (6) Reinstated the Passover (23:21-23 and 2 Chronicles 35:18);
- (7) Further reformation (23:8-20).

Josiah is slain by Pharaoh-neco, king of Egypt. Josiah's son Jehoahaz reigns 3 months, then the king of Egypt makes Eliakim king, another son of Josiah, and changes his name to Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim does that which is evil (v. 37).

**Chapter 24** — Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, comes against Jehoiakim, and Judah is destroyed (v. 2). This is God's judgment upon the nation because of the sins of Manasseh (vs. 3, 4).

After the death of Jehoiakim, who reigns 11 years, his son Jehoiachin comes to the throne for 3 months. He is an evil ruler (v. 9). The king of Babylon captures him, sacks Jerusalem and takes captive all the leaders of Jerusalem — among whom is Daniel and the 3 Hebrew children (vs. 14, 15). Nebuchadnezzar also takes Jehoiachin into Babylonian captivity and makes his uncle, Mattaniah, king over Judah and changes his name to Zedekiah. Zedekiah is also an evil

king, and he rebels against Nebuchadnezzar (vs. 19, 20).

**Chapter 25** — Nebuchadnezzar comes up against Jerusalem, destroys it, and deports the people into captivity. The eyes of Zedekiah are put out after he witnesses the slaying of his own sons (v. 7). Nebuchadnezzar burns the Temple (v. 9) and transports all things of value to Babylon, including the vessels of the Temple. Jerusalem is totally destroyed.

Gedaliah is made governor and becomes the abject subject of King Nebuchadnezzar (v. 24). Before long he is murdered, and the people who remain flee to Egypt.

Jehoiachin is released from prison in Babylon and given a place of prominence there.

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Crockett, William Day. *A Harmony of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, n.d.
- Darby, J. N. *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*. Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, n.d.
- Davis, John J. and John C. Witcomb, Jr. *A History of Israel*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1970. (Excellent.)
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- McNeely, Richard J. *First & Second Kings*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1978.
- Meyer, F. B. *David: Shepherd, Psalmist, King*. New York, New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., c. 1895.  
(Devotional.)
- Meyer, F. B. *Elijah and the Secret of His Power*. London, England: Morgan & Scott, 1901.  
(A rich devotional study.)
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(Devotional.)
- Pink, Arthur W. *Gleanings from Elisha*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1972.
- Sauer, Erich. *The Dawn of World Redemption*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951.  
(An excellent Old Testament survey.)
- Scroggie, W. Graham. *The Unfolding Drama of Redemption*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1970.  
(An excellent survey and outline of the Old Testament.)
- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol. 1*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1981.  
(A fine summary of each paragraph. Highly recommended.)
- Wood, Leon J. *Israel's United Monarchy*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1979.  
(Excellent.)
- Wood, Leon J. *The Prophets of Israel*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1977.  
(Excellent.)

**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter —
  
2. Most important verse —
  
3. Most prominent word —
  
4. Teaching about Christ —
  
5. Command to obey —
  
6. Promise to claim —
  
7. New truth learned —

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## NOTES

## NOTES



Thru the Bible Radio Network  
Pasadena, CA 91109



**Notes & Outlines**

**1 & 2**  
**CHRONICLES**

J. Vernon McGee

# 1 & 2 CHRONICLES

## The ACTS of the Old Testament

### WRITER:

Probably Ezra. There is a striking resemblance in style and language to the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Evidently Chronicles was written during the Babylonian captivity. It could have been a compilation, assembled by Ezra, of diaries and journals of the priests and prophets. These two Books of Chronicles not only constituted one book in the original, but apparently also included Ezra and Nehemiah. This lends support to the authorship of Ezra and supports the Jewish tradition. Scholars have noted a similarity in the Hebrew of all four books.

### COMMENT:

Many treat Chronicles and Kings as if they were “Cabbages and Kings.” Are the Chronicles a duplication of Kings? Although they cover the same ground from Saul to Zedekiah, they are not duplications. Greek translators gave Chronicles the title of “Things Omitted” — there is more here which does not occur in the other historical books. This is another instance of the law of recurrence or recapitulation, seen previously in Genesis 2 and Deuteronomy, by which God goes over previously covered ground in order to add details and emphasize that which He considers important. This is exactly the case in Chronicles. David is the subject of 1 Chronicles; the house of David is prominent in 2 Chronicles. Chronicles gives the history of Judah while practically ignoring the northern kingdom. Chronicles does not record David’s sin — when God forgives, He forgets. The temple and Jerusalem are prominent in Chronicles. In Kings, the history of the nation is given from the throne; in Chronicles, it is given from the altar. The palace is the center in Kings; the temple is the center in Chronicles. Kings records the political history; Chronicles records the religious history. Chronicles is an interpretation of Kings — hence the constant reference in Kings to Chronicles. Kings gives us man’s viewpoint; Chronicles gives us God’s viewpoint (note this well as you read Chronicles; it will surprise you).

## OUTLINE:

### 1 CHRONICLES

#### I. Genealogies, Chapters 1 — 9

*This is important to God. We must be sons of God before we can do the work of God. “Ye must be born again” (John 3:7). These help explain the two genealogies of Christ in Matthew and Luke (compare 1 Chronicles 3:5 with Luke 3:31).*

#### II. Saul’s reign, Chapter 10

#### III. David’s reign, Chapters 11 — 29

A. David’s mighty men, Chapters 11, 12

B. David and the ark, Chapters 13 — 16

C. David and the temple, Chapter 17

D. David’s wars, Chapters 18 — 20

E. David’s sin in numbering the people, Chapter 21

F. David’s preparation and organization for building the temple, Chapters 22 — 29

### 2 CHRONICLES

#### I. Solomon’s reign, Chapters 1 — 9

*Building the temple is his most important accomplishment.*

#### II. Division of the kingdom and the history of Judah, Chapters 10 — 36

Reformations given prominence:

A. Asa’s, Chapters 14 — 16

B. Jehoshaphat’s, Chapters 17 — 20

C. Joash’s, Chapters 23, 24

D. Hezekiah’s, Chapters 29 — 32

E. Josiah’s, Chapters 34, 35

# 1 CHRONICLES

## COMMENT:

### I. Genealogies, Chapters 1 — 9

**Chapter 1** — This chapter begins abruptly with the genealogy of Adam. There is nothing extant to compare to the first 9 chapters of 1 Chronicles — the story of man from Adam through David, tribes of Israel, and especially the tribe of Levi through the 70-year captivity (Ezra 2:62). Genesis is the book of the families, and this section of 1 Chronicles selects that which God considers essential to the record leading to Christ (Genesis 5, 10, 11, 16, 21, 25, 29, 36, 46).

**Chapter 2** — This is the genealogy from Israel through Judah and Jesse to David. Also, the descendants of Caleb are traced to the offspring for whom the cities Bethlehem, Beth-gader and Kirjath-jearim are named.

**Chapter 3** — The line of David is traced through his sons and then Solomon's line, the royal family, is followed. Verse 17 — see Jeremiah 22:24 in connection with Jeconiah. The line is followed through the 70-year captivity. Verse 19 — see Matthew 1:12 in connection with Zerubbabel who was carried into captivity. Verse 22 — see Ezra 8:2 in connection with Hattush.

**Chapter 4** — The posterity of Judah through Caleb and Shelah is followed, also the tribe of Simeon.

**Chapter 5** — The tribe of Reuben is followed to the captivity. Verses 1, 2 — Reuben lost the birthright and it was given to Joseph, not Judah. Judah prevailed and the ruler came from Judah. The tribe of Gad is recorded to the reign of Jotham over Judah and the captivity of the northern kingdom. The reason for the captivity is given in vs. 25, 26.

**Chapter 6** — The tribe of Levi (family of high priests) is traced through the sons: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. The official occupation of Aaron and his sons is given in v. 49.

**Chapter 7** — Gives the genealogies of the tribes of Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim and Asher. These went into Assyrian captivity.

**Chapter 8** — Traces the genealogy of the tribe of Benjamin, with special reference to Saul and Jonathan.

**Chapter 9** — Gives the genealogy of the tribe of Levi when it was scattered among the cities of the 12 tribes. Verse 1 is a significant statement in reference to the importance of the genealogies, especially in Matthew 1 and Luke 3, as they relate to the humanity of Christ.

## **II. Saul's reign, Chapter 10**

From God's viewpoint, Saul's reign was not important. His death is recorded again and the reason for it is given (v. 13).

## **III. David's reign, Chapters 11 — 29**

### **A. David's mighty men, Chapters 11, 12**

**Chapter 11** — While only one chapter is devoted to Saul, the remainder of 1 Chronicles is devoted to the reign of David, and 2 Chronicles is given over to the reign of David's line. It is easy to see where God placed the emphasis and why. David was not only a man after God's own heart, but his line is leading to Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. This chapter records again David's ascension to the throne and catalogs his mighty men (see notes on 2 Samuel 23). These are the deeds that God considered important enough to record twice.

**Chapter 12** — Records those who came to David during the days of his rejection. Verses 15-18 give the thrilling account of the men who swam over the flooded Jordan River to join the ranks of David and pledge to him their undying allegiance.

### **B. David and the ark, Chapters 13 — 16**

**Chapter 13** — Repeats David's attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem on a cart (see 2 Samuel 6). Verse 6 clearly informs us that God did not dwell in a material house "between the cherubim."

**Chapter 14** — God prospers David materially, which was the



blessing He had promised His earthly people.

**Chapter 15** — David brings up the ark according to God's original instructions (v. 2). Verse 29 gives the reason Michal was rejected as being the mother of the royal line.

**Chapter 16** — God places the emphasis upon the sacrifices that speak of Christ (vs. 1-3). David organizes a choir and writes a psalm of praise for them to sing. David also organizes the priests into courses.

### **C. David and the temple, Chapter 17**

David's desire to build God a house delighted the Lord, and He repeats it here. Then God makes a covenant with David (see notes on 2 Samuel 7).

### **D. David's wars, Chapters 18 — 20**

**Chapter 18** — David fully organizes his kingdom and expands it to its largest extent and border. Even then, they occupied only 30,000 square miles of the 300,000 square miles God had given them.

**Chapter 19** — Joab leads a campaign against Ammon and Syria (see notes on 2 Samuel 10).

**Chapter 20** — Joab takes the city of Rabbah. This was when David committed his sin with Bathsheba. Notice that God does not record it here. When God says He will remember our sins no more, He means it.

### **E. David's sin in numbering the people, Chapter 21**

David's greatest sin in numbering the people is recorded because God permitted him to choose his punishment. Here we see who was the mastermind in promoting this sin of pride (v. 1). (See notes on 2 Samuel 24.)

### **F. David's preparation and organization for building the temple, Chapters 22 — 29**

**Chapter 22** — David's chief ambition was to build the temple. It was his plan and he gathered the materials (read carefully vs. 1-5 and vs. 14-19). The reason God did not permit David to build the temple is clearly stated in vs. 8, 9. The temple should be called David's

temple, not Solomon's.

**Chapter 23** — David makes Solomon king and organizes the Levites to serve and sing in the new temple.

**Chapter 24** — The priests are divided into orders to serve in the temple. Also, the service of the sons of Kohath and Merari is divided.

**Chapter 25** — The singers and orchestra are organized (v. 1).

**Chapter 26** — The porters and guards are organized for temple service.

**Chapter 27** — The tribes of Israel are organized to serve in connection with the temple.

**Chapter 28** — David encourages the people in building the temple. This reveals the passion of David's heart (see vs. 2, 3). He gives to Solomon the blueprint for the temple (vs. 11-13) and encourages him to build the temple (vs. 20, 21).

**Chapter 29** — Notice that David's final word to the nation had to do with the building of the temple. Indeed, David loved the Lord (vs. 2, 3). Verses 10-19 give David's great prayer which was evidently used by our Lord in the so-called Lord's Prayer. This is one of the great prayers of Scripture — it is all-comprehensive, majestic, and filled with adoration, praise, and thanksgiving. It repudiates all human merit, declares human dependence upon God, reveals self-humiliation, confession, and dedication of self, admitting that all belongs to God.

This chapter closes the book of 1 Chronicles with the death of David and ascension of Solomon to the throne.

## 2 CHRONICLES

### COMMENT:

Second Chronicles obviously carries on the account begun in 1 Chronicles with the same point of reference and emphasis. It covers chronologically the same period as Kings with certain notable emphases. The first 9 chapters are given over to the reign of Solomon. Chapter 10 records the division of the kingdom, but thereafter only the account of the southern kingdom of Judah is given. The spotlight is on the kings who followed in the line of David. Given special prominence are 5 of these kings in whose reigns were periods of revival, renewal, and reformation.

These kings were:

1. Asa (chapters 14 — 16),
2. Jehoshaphat (chapters 17 — 20),
3. Joash (chapters 23, 24),
4. Hezekiah (chapters 29 — 32), and
5. Josiah (chapters 34, 35).

Second Chronicles concludes with the decree of Cyrus after the 70-year captivity, with no record of the captivity itself. This was “time out” in God’s program. All of this is given from God’s viewpoint, in contrast to 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings. The line of David during the period of the kingdom, together with the building and service of the temple, were foremost to God in His wisdom and plan.

### I. Solomon’s reign, Chapters 1 — 9

**Chapter 1** — Solomon becomes king and prays for wisdom (v. 10), probably at the suggestion of David (1 Chronicles 22:12). Although he is given divine wisdom to rule, he doesn’t seem to have wisdom to order his personal life.

**Chapter 2** — Solomon makes preparation to build the temple and enlists a large army of workmen. He enlists technical advice and secures materials from Hiram, king of Tyre, a friend of David. He requires skilled workmen because Israelites apparently were given to agriculture (v. 7). The total number of workmen is 153,600 (v. 17).

**Chapter 3** — Solomon begins construction of the temple on Mt. Moriah where Abraham had offered Isaac (compare v. 1 with Genesis 22:2). The temple proper is twice the size of the tabernacle (v. 3), and the plan includes many surrounding buildings.

**Chapter 4** — The temple is provided with new articles of furniture. Notice that the brazen altar is 4 times as large as the one in the tabernacle (v. 1), and there are 10 lavers in the temple. There are many other additions and changes. The innovations and enlargements take away the simplicity of the tabernacle and the plain references to Christ. The tabernacle, not the temple, became the figure used in the Epistle to the Hebrews to depict the person and work of Christ.

**Chapter 5** — The ark from the tabernacle is brought into the new temple from the city of David. An unnumbered multitude of animals are offered (v. 6). The ark is brought now to a permanent place and the staves are removed (v. 9). The pot of manna and Aaron's rod had been removed from the ark (v. 10). The glory of the Lord fills the temple as it had previously filled the tabernacle (vs. 13, 14). This is God's approval.

**Chapter 6** — Solomon delivers a message and prays a prayer of dedication. Jerusalem was God's choice as well as David's choice (vs. 6, 7). Israel entertains no pagan notion that God could dwell in a man-made house when the heavens could not contain Him. Verses 21-42 give the place and plan of the temple in the future relationship of God and Israel. Daniel, in a foreign land, opens his window toward Jerusalem to pray (Daniel 6:10).

**Chapter 7** — God accepts the sacrifices (v. 1), and the temple becomes a beehive of activity (v. 6). God appears to Solomon and gives to him the condition of blessing upon Israel in the land. Verse 14 has direct reference to Israel.

**Chapter 8** — Reveals the notoriety of Solomon. Note the interesting decision he makes in reference to the daughter of Pharaoh (v. 11).

**Chapter 9** — Records the visit of the queen of Sheba to Solomon (see 1 Kings 10:1-13). The witness of Israel to the world was not in going out to the nations but having them come to Jerusalem to worship. “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem” (Psalm 122:1, 2). Our command, in contrast to this, is to go to the world. The temple at Jerusalem was for all people (1 Kings 8:41-43; 2 Chronicles 6:32, 33). This chapter reveals the partial success of Israel in witnessing. Remember that from the East came wise men to Jerusalem. In verse 4, “his ascent” should be “burnt offering.” This offering was the most complete and perfect picture of Christ (Romans 3:21, 22; Matthew 12:42). Verses 22, 23 are a further evidence of the witness of Israel. The death of Solomon concludes this chapter.

## **II. Division of the kingdom and the history of Judah, Chapters 10 — 36**

(See chart of kings at the conclusion of these comments.)

**Chapter 10** — The stupidity of Rehoboam, son of Solomon, leads to the division of the kingdom. Jeroboam leads the 10 northern tribes of Israel into rebellion.

**Chapter 11** — The early reign of Rehoboam is seen in contrast to Jeroboam’s refusal to worship God in Jerusalem.

**Chapter 12** — Rehoboam departs from the law of God; Shishak, king of Egypt, invades the land. Rehoboam dies. Notice that his mother’s name is given (v. 13). One of the striking features of this section is the giving of the mothers’ names of both good and bad kings. In God’s sight, the mother shares responsibility.

## The Kings of Judah:

(See 1 & 2 Kings for the specific features of the reign of each king.)

Rehoboam	Chapters 10 — 12
Abijah	Chapter 13
Asa	Chapters 14 — 16
Jehoshaphat	Chapters 17 — 20
Jehoram	Chapter 21
Ahaziah	Chapter 22:1-10
Athaliah	Chapters 22:11 — 23:21
Joash	Chapter 24
Amaziah	Chapter 25
Uzziah	Chapter 26
Jotham	Chapter 27
Ahaz	Chapter 28
Hezekiah	Chapters 29 — 32
Manasseh	Chapter 33:1-20
Amon	Chapter 33:21-25
Josiah	Chapters 34, 35
Jehoahaz	Chapter 36:1-3
Jehoiakim	Chapter 36:4-8
Jehoiachin	Chapter 36:9, 10
Zedekiah	Chapter 36:11-21

The five periods of revival, renewal, and reformation are enlarged upon in this section. Notice the striking features that characterize each period.

<b>Asa</b>	Return and obedience to the Word of God	15:8, 9
<b>Jehoshaphat</b>	Return and obedience to the Word of God	17:3, 4
<b>Joash</b>	Return and obedience to the Word of God	23:16-21 24:1-6
<b>Hezekiah</b>	Return and obedience to the Word of God (Passover speaks of Christ)	29:3-36 30:1, 15, 16
<b>Josiah</b>	Return and obedience to the Word of God	34:18-21

A return to the Word of God led to the repentance of the people and the reformation of the nation.

**Chapter 21** — Gives the only written prophecy of Elijah (vs. 12-15).

**Chapter 36** — Second Chronicles closes with two remarkable incidents:

- (1) The explanation of Jeremiah as to the reason God chose 70 years for the duration of the captivity — “To fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfill threescore and ten years” (v. 21).
- (2) The decree of Cyrus for the permission given to Israel to return and rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.

The 70 years are passed over entirely, as the people are out of the will of God. God’s clock is not spelled R-O-L-E-X or T-I-M-E-X but I-S-R-A-E-L, and it runs only while Israel is in the land.

# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE KINGS OF THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

JUDAH					ISRAEL				
King	Reign	Character	Prophet		King	Reign	Character	Prophet	
1. Rehoboam	931-913 B.C.	Bad	Shemariah		1. Jeroboam I	931-910 B.C.	Bad	Abijah	
2. Abijah	913-911	Bad			2. Nadab	910-909	Bad		
3. Asa	911-870	Good			3. Baasha	909-886	Bad		
					4. Elah	886-885	Bad		
					5. Zimri	885	Bad		
					6. Omri	885-874*	Bad		
4. Jehoshaphat	870-848*	Good			7. Ahab	874-853	Bad		
5. Jehoram	848-841*	Bad			8. Ahaziah	853-852	Bad		
6. Ahaziah	841	Bad			9. Joram	852-841	Bad		
7. Athaliah	841-835	Bad			10. Jehu	841-814	Bad		
8. Joash	835-796	Good	Joel		11. Jehoahaz	814-798	Bad		
9. Amaziah	796-767	Good			12. Jehoshaphat	798-782	Bad		
10. Azariah (or Uzziah)	767-740*	Good	Isaiah		13. Jeroboam II	782-753*	Bad		
					14. Zechariah	753-752	Bad		
					15. Shallum	752	Bad		
					16. Menahem	752-742	Bad		
					17. Pekahiah	742-740	Bad		
					18. Pekah	740-732*	Bad		
					19. Hoshea	732-721	Bad		
11. Jotham	740-732*	Good	Micah						
12. Ahaz	732-716	Bad							
13. Hezekiah	716-687	Good							
14. Manasseh	687-642*	Bad	Nahum						
15. Amon	642-640	Bad	Habakkuk						
16. Josiah	640-608	Good	Zephaniah						
17. Jehoahaz	608	Bad	Jeremiah						
18. Jehoiakim	608-597	Bad							
19. Jehoiachin	597	Bad							
20. Zedekiah	597-586	Bad							

*(Destruction of Jerusalem and captivity of Judah)*

\*Co-regency

*(Capture of Samaria and captivity of Israel)*

\*Co-regency



## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Crockett, William Day. *A Harmony of the Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1951.
- Darby, J. N. *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*. Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, n.d.
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Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1981.  
(Volume I covers Genesis through Song of Solomon with a fine summary of each paragraph.)

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**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
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Thru the Bible Radio Network  
Pasadena, CA 91109



**Notes & Outlines**

**EZRA  
NEHEMIAH**

J. Vernon McGee

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## POST-CAPTIVITY BOOKS

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The post-captivity books record the return and restoration at Jerusalem after the 70-year Babylonian captivity as predicted by Jeremiah. Six books belong to this series. They are divided into 2 groups:

Historical — Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther;

Prophetical — Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

Although Ezra is a continuation of the historical books begun with Joshua, the pre-captivity and captivity books could be profitably studied before beginning with Ezra. These books include all of the major and minor prophets, with the exception of the last 3 books of the Old Testament. However, we shall proceed according to the arrangement of the canon of Scripture.

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## EZRA

### **WRITER:** Ezra

He is one character who has not received proper recognition. He was a descendant of Hilkiah (Ezra 7:1), the high priest who found a copy of the law during the reign of Josiah (2 Chronicles 34:14). Ezra, as a priest, was unable to serve during the captivity, but he gave his time to a study of the Word of God — he was “a ready scribe in the law of Moses” (Ezra 7:6). Ezra was a great revivalist and reformer. The revival began with the reading of the Word of God by Ezra (Nehemiah 8). Also, he probably was the writer of 1 and 2 Chronicles and of Psalm 119 which exalts the Word of God. He organized the synagogue, founded the order of scribes, helped settle the canon of Scripture and arranged the Psalms.

*Let us pay tribute to Ezra who was the first to begin a revival of Bible study. Is this not God's program for revival?*

**THEME:** The Word of the Lord. (There are 11 direct references — 1:1; 3:2; 6:14, 18; 7:6, 10, 14, 26; 9:4; 10:3, 5.)

The place of the Word of God in the total life of His people — religious, social, business, and political.

**KEY PHRASE:** “Trembled at the words of the God of Israel” (Ezra 9:4; also see 10:3).

“We already have seen that the Babylonian captivity did not bring the Jews to national repentance, and so lead to national restoration. As the reading of Ezra will disclose, when Cyrus, king of Persia, gave permission to the captives to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple, scarcely 50,000 availed themselves of the privilege, a considerable portion of whom were priests and Levites of the humbler and poorer class.”

— Dr. James M. Gray

## **OUTLINE:**

- I. RETURN from BABYLON LED by ZERUBBABEL,**  
Chapters 1 — 6  
*(About 50,000 returned)*
  - A. Restoration of temple by decree of Cyrus,** Chapter 1
  - B. Return under Zerubbabel,** Chapter 2
  - C. Rebuilding of temple,** Chapter 3
  - D. Retardation of rebuilding of temple by opposition,**  
Chapter 4  
*(Decree of Artaxerxes)*
  - E. Renewal of rebuilding of temple,** Chapters 5, 6  
*(Decree of Darius)*
  
- II. RETURN from BABYLON LED by EZRA,** Chapters 7 — 10  
*(About 2,000 returned)*
  - A. Return under Ezra,** Chapters 7, 8
  - B. Reformation under Ezra,** Chapters 9, 10
    - 1. Prayer of Ezra,** Chapter 9
    - 2. Separation from heathen is demanded and maintained,**  
Chapter 10

The Books of Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 5:1) should be read and studied with the Book of Ezra, for all 3 were written in the shadow of the rebuilt temple and were given to encourage the people in building.

## **COMMENT:**

- I. RETURN from BABYLON LED by ZERUBBABEL,**  
Chapters 1 — 6  
*(About 50,000 returned)*
  - A. Restoration of temple by decree of Cyrus,** Chapter 1

**v. 1** — “Cyrus, king of Persia” was one of the most enlightened rulers of the ancient world. He was a subject of predictive prophecy. He was named before he was born — almost 200 years before he became king of Persia.

*Who saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.* (Isaiah 44:28)

*Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut.* (Isaiah 45:1)

He is a type of Christ.

Daniel was in the court of Cyrus and evidently led him to a knowledge of the living and true God. It was during the reign of Cyrus that Daniel gave some of his greatest prophecies, including the 70-weeks prophecy concerning Israel. The decree of Cyrus is not the point where the 70 weeks (which pertain to Israel) begin, as they were not yet returned to the land (see notes on Nehemiah).

**vv. 2-4** — “The LORD God of heaven” is a designation of God which is peculiar to Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel. You see, after the fall and destruction of Jerusalem, God could no longer be identified with the temple as the One who dwelt between the cherubim. The glory had departed; “Ichabod” was written over the escutcheon of Israel. Ezekiel saw the vision of the departure of the Shekinah glory (see Ezekiel 9 — 11). He returned to heaven. For this reason, in the post-captivity books He is “the LORD God of heaven.”

Cyrus gave permission to the Jews to:

- (1) return to the land,
- (2) rebuild the city of Jerusalem, and
- (3) rebuild the temple.

**vv. 5, 6** — Very few avail themselves of this opportunity (see Ezra 2:64, 65). Most of the captives are now settled and satisfied in Babylon. They still their consciences by giving generously to those who do return.



**vv. 7-11** — The generosity of Cyrus should be noted. He returns the vessels of gold taken from the temple by Nebuchadnezzar.

## **B. Return under Zerubbabel, Chapter 2**

**vv. 1-35** — Particular attention is given to the leadership of those who return.

**vv. 36-39** — These are the priests who return. The total is 4,289.

**vv. 40-54** — These are the Levites who return. The total is 341. The contrast in number with the priests reveals that the Levites, for the most part, remain in Babylon.

**vv. 55-60** — These are listed as the children of Solomon's servants. His servants were then from all of the 12 tribes (see 1 Samuel 8:11-16). Obviously, some from all 12 tribes return, but very few from any one tribe return.

**vv. 61-63** — Some cannot give a clear declaration as to their genealogy. Failure to give a clear title excludes them from the priesthood. This section reveals the value and particular emphasis placed upon the genealogies. This lends importance to the accuracy of the genealogy that opens the New Testament in the Gospel of Matthew which was never challenged by the enemies of Christ at the beginning. They questioned His birth and His resurrection but never His genealogy. The New Testament stands or falls upon the accuracy of it and reveals that He is the only One to fulfill the prophecies of the Old Testament in reference to David and his kingdom.

**vv. 64, 65** — Total number who return at this time under Zerubbabel:

Total congregation.....	42,360
Servants and maids.....	7,337
Singers, both male and female.....	200
Grand total .....	49,897

**vv. 66-70** — They bring the stock and chattels with them and give generously to rebuild the temple.

### **C. Rebuilding of temple, Chapter 3**

**v. 2** — They not only return to the land but also to “the law of Moses.”

**vv. 3-6** — Sacrifices and feast days are restored.

**vv. 7-9** — Preparation is made for rebuilding the temple.

**vv. 10-13** — The foundation is laid with mingled songs of praise and tears of mourning (see notes on Haggai for the explanation of this seemingly contradictory reaction to the rebuilding of the temple).

### **D. Retardation of rebuilding of temple by opposition, Chapter 4**

**vv. 1, 2** — The enemies’ first effort at disrupting the rebuilding of the temple is to offer to become allies.

**v. 3** — This is absolutely rejected.

**vv. 4, 5** — In the second effort to hinder the work, the enemy seeks to disrupt the building by various means.

**vv. 6-10** — The third effort to stop the rebuilding of the temple is a letter sent by the enemy to Artaxerxes with false accusations.

**vv. 11-16** — The contents of the letter are given (note their estimation of Jerusalem [v. 12] in contrast to God’s in Psalm 87).

**vv. 17-24** — The enemy succeeds in sending a letter to Artaxerxes, and he shoots back a reply that the work is to cease. The suspension of work continues until the time of Darius, king of Persia.

### **E. Renewal of rebuilding of temple, Chapters 5, 6**

## **Chapter 5**

**vv. 1-6** — Haggai and Zechariah encourage the people to resume rebuilding of the temple. When the leaders are challenged, they appeal to Darius.

**vv. 7-17** — Darius grants permission to resume the rebuilding of the temple.

## **Chapter 6**

**vv. 1-12** — Darius issues a decree which confirms the original decree of Cyrus.

**vv. 13-15** — The temple is rebuilt under the inspiration of Haggai and Zechariah. God is identified here as the God of Israel (not Judah). This means there were some from all tribes in Jerusalem at this time.

**v. 16** — Those who returned are likewise identified here as “the children of Israel.”

**v. 17** — The language here is more explicit: “all Israel.”

**v. 18** — The emphasis again is upon the Word of God (see also v. 14).

**vv. 19-22** — The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are observed again.

## **II. RETURN from BABYLON LED by EZRA, Chapters 7 — 10** *(About 2,000 returned)*

### **A. Return under Ezra, Chapters 7, 8**

## **Chapter 7**

**v. 1** — Artaxerxes is the same ruler mentioned in Nehemiah 2:1 (see notes on Nehemiah).

**vv. 2-5** — Ezra is descended from the line of Aaron.

**v. 6** — Ezra is a student of the Mosaic Law.

**v. 7** — This is during the 7th year of the reign of Artaxerxes. Nehemiah comes later in the 20th year of the reign of Artaxerxes.

**v. 10** — This is the 6th reference to the law of the Lord or Word of God. Ezra prepared himself to teach the Word of God.

**v. 14** — The 7th reference to law of God.

**v. 26** — The 8th reference to law of God.

**vv. 27, 28** — Ezra expresses gratitude to God and to Artaxerxes for his gifts, generosity and goodness.

### **Chapter 8**

**vv. 1-14** — The roll call of those who return with Ezra: 1,496 males are listed.

**vv. 15-19** — Twenty priests are added to the list.

**v. 20** — Two hundred and twenty Nethinims, who served the Levites, return. A total of 1,736 go with Ezra.

**v. 21** — Ezra proclaims a fast and prayer meeting that they might ask God for journeying mercies.

**v. 22** — Ezra confesses he was ashamed to ask the king for a guard inasmuch as he had boasted to the king that God would lead them up to Jerusalem.

**v. 23** — God hears and grants their petition. Ezra the priest makes the journey without a guard. Later, Nehemiah has ample protection when he makes the trip to Jerusalem.

**vv. 24-30** — The valuables are entrusted into the hands of priests.

**vv. 31-34** — Ezra makes a safe journey to Jerusalem and the valuables are delivered.

**v. 35** — Burnt offerings and sin offerings are made by those who return.

**v. 36** — Ezra presents his credentials from the king to the king's officials.

## **B. Reformation under Ezra, Chapters 9, 10**

### **1. Prayer of Ezra, Chapter 9**

One of the great prayers of the Bible. Compare it with Nehemiah 1:4-11 and Daniel 9.

**vv. 1, 2** — The sad plight of the people is reported to Ezra. Inter-marriage (with the surrounding heathen and enemies of God and Israel) leads to a practice of the abomination of the heathen. The lack of separation plunges them into immorality and idolatry. The returned remnant is in a sad, sordid and squalid condition.

**v. 3** — Ezra is emotionally involved — he fasts and even plucks the hair out of his head and beard.

**v. 4** — The 9th reference to the Word of God. Many who believe the Word of God join Ezra in mourning.

**vv. 5-15** — Ezra confesses the sins of the people and identifies himself with his people. Note occurrences of the first personal pronoun plural “we” and “our.” He recognizes the grace of God and pleads with God.

### **2. Separation from heathen is demanded and maintained, Chapter 10**

**v. 3** — The 10th reference to the Word of God. Ezra not only reads, studies, and reverences the Word of God, but he also practices it.

**v. 5** — The 11th reference to the Word of God.

**v. 6** — Ezra continues to mourn for his people.

**vv. 7-19** — The remnant that has returned assemble at Jerusalem and pledge to put away their foreign wives.

**vv. 20-43** — This is the roll call of those who did.

**v. 44** — This works a great hardship upon many, for they have children by these women. This is an example of the high cost of sin.

## NEHEMIAH

(Ezra and Nehemiah are one book in the Hebrew canon.)

**WRITER:** Perhaps Ezra

Nehemiah was a layman; Ezra was a priest. In the Book of Ezra, the emphasis is upon the rebuilding of the temple; in the Book of Nehemiah, the emphasis is upon the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. In Ezra, we have the religious aspect of the return; in Nehemiah, we have the political aspect of the return. Ezra is a fine representative of the priest and scribe; Nehemiah is a noble representative of the businessman. Nehemiah had an important office at the court of the powerful Persian king, Artaxerxes, but his heart was with God's people and God's program in Jerusalem. The personal note is the main characteristic of the book.

**DATE:**

Chronologically, this is the last of the historical books. We have come to the end of the line as far as time is concerned. The Old Testament goes no further. The Book of Ezra picks up the thread of the story about 70 years after 2 Chronicles. The 70-year captivity is over and a remnant returns to the land of Israel. The return under Ezra takes place about 50 years after Zerubbabel. Nehemiah returns about 15 years after Ezra. These figures are approximate and are given to show the stages in the history of Israel after the captivity. This enables one to see how the "70 weeks" of Daniel fit into the picture in a normal and reasonable way. The "70 weeks" of Daniel begin with the Book of Nehemiah (not with Ezra) "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks...." The background of the events of Nehemiah is "...the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times" (Daniel 9:25).

Note: The following dates, suggested by Sir Robert Anderson, seem to be a satisfactory solution to the problem of the "70 weeks" of Daniel:

Decree of Cyrus, 536 B.C. — Ezra 1:1-4

Decree of Artaxerxes, 445 B.C. (20th year of his reign) —  
Nehemiah 2:1-8

## The “70 weeks” begin.

The first “7 weeks” end, 397 B.C. — Malachi.  
(For details see Sir Robert Anderson’s *The Coming Prince*.)

### KEY WORD:

“So” occurs 32 times. It denotes a man of action and few words. Mark this word in your Bible and notice how this ordinarily unimportant word stands out in this book.

### KEY VERSES:

*And it came to pass when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven.* (Nehemiah 1:4)

*And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease, while I leave it, and come down to you?* (Nehemiah 6:3)

### OUTLINE:

- I. **REBUILDING the WALLS**, Chapters 1 — 7
  - A. **Nehemiah’s prayer for remnant at Jerusalem**, Chapter 1
  - B. **Nehemiah’s request of the king, return to Jerusalem, and review of ruins of Jerusalem**, Chapter 2:1-16
  - C. **Nehemiah’s encouragement to rebuild the walls**, Chapter 2:17-20
  - D. **Rebuilding the walls and gates**, Chapter 3
  - E. **Nehemiah’s response to opposition**, Chapters 4 — 6  
Wall completed, 6:15
  - F. **Nehemiah’s register of people**, Chapter 7  
(Only 42,360 people, 7,337 servants, and 245 singers returned. Compare this with the fact that Judah alone had 470,000 warriors [1 Chronicles 21:5].)



## II. REVIVAL and REFORM, Chapters 8 — 13

A. Great Bible reading led by Ezra, Chapter 8

B. Revival — the result, Chapters 9, 10

C. Reform — another result, Chapters 11 — 13

### THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY:

God's chosen people were called to witness against idolatry, but too often they themselves succumbed and became idolaters. God sent them to Babylon, the fountainhead of idolatry, to take the gold cure. They returned repudiating idolatry.

Their restoration as an independent nation was incomplete. They were not free from this time on to the time of the Roman Empire. The New Testament opens with them under the rule of Rome.

### COMMENT:

This book reveals what God can do through a layman who has a heart for the things of God.

## I. REBUILDING the WALLS, Chapters 1 — 7

A. Nehemiah's prayer for remnant at Jerusalem, Chapter 1

v. 1 — The use of the first person pronoun gives the impression that Nehemiah was the writer. If Ezra was the writer, he was copying from the journal of Nehemiah. This book, as was true in the Book of Ezra, has copies of letters, decrees, registers and other documents. The same man wrote both books — Ezra and Nehemiah are one book in the Hebrew canon.

vv. 2-4 — Visitors from Jerusalem come to the palace, and Nehemiah makes inquiry of them about Jerusalem and the condition of the remnant that had returned. When he learns the sad plight of the people and that the walls and gates of Jerusalem are still in shambles, Nehemiah sits down and weeps, mourns and fasts. Then he prays before the God of heaven (see note on Ezra 1:2 about the term "God of heaven").

**vv. 5-11** — This is the record of Nehemiah’s prayer. “Terrible God” (v. 5 KJV) is “reverend God.” “Reverend” should never be used in addressing a pastor or ordained preacher. It should be applied only to God. Someone has expressed it this way:

Call me Mister, call me friend,  
A loving ear to all I lend,  
But do not my soul with anguish rend,  
PLEASE stop calling me “Reverend.”

Nehemiah pleads with God and confesses his sins and those of his people (vv. 6, 7). He reminds God of His promises (vv. 8, 9). Nehemiah casts himself upon the mercy and goodness of God (vv. 10, 11). “This man” refers to King Artaxerxes.

### **B. Nehemiah’s request of the king, return to Jerusalem, and review of ruins of Jerusalem, Chapter 2:1-16**

**vv. 1-3** — Nehemiah, the cupbearer of Artaxerxes, appears sad before the king — which evidently is unusual, as the king calls attention to it. Nehemiah explains that it is because of news from Jerusalem.

**v. 4** — The king gives him opportunity to make a request. Here begins the use of the little word “so” that occurs again and again.

**v. 5** — Nehemiah asks for a leave of absence that he might go to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls.

**v. 6** — The queen evidently supports Nehemiah in his request, and the king grants it.

**vv. 7-9** — Nehemiah makes further request for material assistance and protection, as a government official, along the route. An honor guard from the king accompanies Nehemiah.

**v. 10** — The 3 leading enemies of Israel are grieved that Nehemiah has come to help his people.

**vv. 11-16** — Nehemiah comes to Jerusalem, immediately makes a secret inspection of the damage, and estimates the extent of the job.

**C. Nehemiah's encouragement to rebuild the walls,** Chapter 2:17-20

**vv. 17, 18** — Then Nehemiah calls together the leaders of Israel and reveals his plan to rebuild the walls and gates of Jerusalem. The people are encouraged to begin the undertaking.

**v. 19** — The 3 enemies use the weapon of ridicule to deter the people from attempting the Herculean project of rebuilding the walls and gates.

**v. 20** — Nehemiah's answer is brief. He would look to God and not to them.

**D. Rebuilding the walls and gates,** Chapter 3

This chapter is filled with great spiritual lessons (see author's booklet, "The Gospel in the Gates of Jerusalem").

**E. Nehemiah's response to opposition,** Chapters 4 — 6

**Chapter 4**

**vv. 1-3** — As the work progresses, the enemy continues to use the weapon of ridicule. They make light of the zeal of the workmen and laugh at their workmanship, saying that even a nimble fox could knock down the wall.

**vv. 4-6** — Nehemiah ignores their sarcasm and prays to God, but continues to build.

**vv. 7-9** — When the enemy sees that the wall is going up in spite of their ridicule, they become angry and decide to try to destroy the wall. Nehemiah continues to pray and build.

**v. 10** — Opposition comes next from within their own ranks — discouragement in the presence of the huge undertaking and the threat of the enemy making a surprise attack. Nehemiah arms the workmen.

**v. 17** — They work with one hand and hold a weapon with the other.

**v. 23** — Nehemiah injects a humorous note by adding that they did not take off their clothes during this trying experience — except, of course, when they took a bath!

**Chapter 5** — Opposition again rises from within their own ranks.

**vv. 1-5** — Some of their own brethren take advantage of the hard lot of others and give “help” by taking mortgages at excessive interest and also by buying their sons and daughters into slavery. This display of covetousness is the same as the idolatry which sent them into captivity.

**vv. 6-11** — Nehemiah is very angry when this is called to his attention, and he forces these greedy brethren to restore what they had taken.

**v. 12** — The brethren take an oath that they will restore what they had taken.

**v. 13** — Nehemiah threatens to deal with them severely if they do not carry through with their agreement.

**vv. 14-19** — Nehemiah, on a leave of absence from his position as cupbearer for King Artaxerxes, had refused to accept the salary formerly paid to the governor of Israel, which came from taxing the people. His example should have been an inspiration and example to his brethren.

**Chapter 6** — In spite of crafty opposition, the wall is finished.

**vv. 1-3** — The enemies (Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem) hear that the wall is completed, but Nehemiah honestly admits the report is a bit exaggerated (the gates are not set up).

The enemy reverses the opposition. Since they could not stop the work, they now propose to get together with Nehemiah and work out

a compromise. However, their intention is not to promote the welfare of Nehemiah. This is the satanic method of “when you can’t beat them, join them.” Today it is called the ecumenical movement.

Nehemiah properly turns it down and for the 14th time inserts the little word “so” that tells us much.

**v. 4** — The enemy approaches Nehemiah 4 times. It is interesting to note (v. 2) the name of the village where they proposed to meet — Ono. That is Nehemiah’s answer, “O, no!”

**vv. 5-7** — On the 5th approach to Nehemiah, they insert a subtle pressure to force him to meet with them. They circulate a false report that Nehemiah is attempting to rebel against Persia and set up a separate state. Gashmu (the gossip) is spreading the report (v. 6).

**v. 8** — Nehemiah politely calls them liars.

**vv. 9-14** — The enemy then hires false prophets to make Nehemiah and the people afraid.

**vv. 15-19** — Without fanfare of trumpets, great ceremony or ribbon cutting, the wall is finished. The brief, expressive word “so” tells the story — “So the wall was finished” (v. 15).

The enemy still persists in its opposition by circulating letters to the nobles of Judah, as Tobiah had evidently married a daughter of one of the nobles.

## **F. Nehemiah’s register of people, Chapter 7**

**vv. 1-4** — Nehemiah, having finished the wall, gives Hanani and Hananiah charge of Jerusalem. He instructs them to keep the gates closed at certain times to prevent the enemy from entering. “**Eternal vigilance**” is the price of Christian liberty.

**vv. 5-73** — This is a **repetition of the genealogy** given in Ezra 2. Unnecessary though this may seem to us, it is repeated because it is important to God and He challenges us to read it. “The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance” (Psalm 112:6). God never forgets the faithful. This chapter comes from the book of eternity.

## II. REVIVAL and REFORM, Chapters 8 — 13

### A. Great Bible reading led by Ezra, Chapter 8

Bible reading is essential to revival.

**vv. 1-6** — Ezra stands upon a pulpit of wood before the water gate. (The Word of God is spiritual water.) Ezra reads in the Law of Moses from morning until noon.

**vv. 7, 8** — Ezra evidently reads a portion and then the Levites, scattered in the crowd, explain it to the people. (Note: The method used here is still God's method. The Word is to be read distinctly and explained so that the people can understand it.)

**vv. 9-12** — Many people are overcome with emotion as they had never before heard the Word of God. They weep. Nehemiah urges the people not to weep but to rejoice. Here is the source of Christian strength, "for the joy of the LORD is your strength" (8:10). See also Philippians 4:13.

**v. 13** — Ezra instructs the teachers (Levites) in the law.

**vv. 14-18** — The Feast of Tabernacles is observed.

### B. Revival — the result, Chapters 9, 10

#### Chapter 9

**vv. 1-3** — The ingredients and order of revival are important. Reading the Word of God (studying and understanding it) is essential and basic. Fasting, sackcloth, and ashes reveal their attitude and sincerity. Confession and worship follow.

**vv. 4-38** — This is a great prayer of confession — praise and adoration of God as Creator (vv. 5, 6); praise and adoration because of His providential dealings with Israel; recitation and reminder of their long history. (Stephen recited this same history in Acts 7, but it led to murder, not to revival; to his condemnation, not to their confession.) Note the confession of their sins (vv. 34-38).

**Chapter 10** — The people make and sign a covenant to serve God.

**C. Reform — another result, Chapters 11 — 13**

**Chapter 11** — The rulers cast lots to see who is to dwell in Jerusalem and who is to live elsewhere in the land.

**Chapter 12**

**vv. 1-42** — **Roster** of priests and Levites who had returned with Zerubbabel.

**vv. 43-47** — **Restoration** of sacrifices and temple worship. (Notice the joy of the people.)

**Chapter 13** — Nehemiah, who had returned to Persia, comes again to Jerusalem and institutes reforms.

**vv. 1-5** — The reading of the law leads to separation.

**vv. 6-9** — Nehemiah puts Tobiah out of the apartment he had been given in the temple.

**vv. 10-14** — The Levites had not been paid. Nehemiah forces the rulers to see that the Levites receive their portion.

**vv. 15-22** — The Sabbath day is observed. Men of Tyre bring fish to sell in Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. Nehemiah forces them to leave and orders the gates of Jerusalem to be closed on the Sabbath.

**vv. 23-31** — Intermarriage among the heathen is still practiced. Nehemiah uses extreme means (v. 25) to force them not to intermarry. (Verse 28 would be humorous if it were not so serious.)

Note the humility and dedication of Nehemiah in his desire to please and to serve God (vv. 14, 31).

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

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(Character studies on Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and David have also been published. Excellent for individual or group study.)
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(An excellent Old Testament survey.)
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(An excellent survey and outline of the Old Testament.)
- Seume, Richard H. *Nehemiah: God's Builder*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1978.



Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Bible Handbook*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966.

(A concise commentary on the entire Bible.)

Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1981.

(Volume 1 covers Genesis through Song of Solomon with a fine summary of each paragraph. Highly recommended.)

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*

**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter —
  
2. Most important verse —
  
3. Most prominent word —
  
4. Teaching about Christ —
  
5. Command to obey —
  
6. Promise to claim —
  
7. New truth learned —



Thru the Bible Radio Network  
Pasadena, CA 91109



**Notes & Outlines**

**ESTHER  
JOB**

J. Vernon McGee

## **ESTHER**

*This is one of the two books of the Old Testament named for a woman. While Ruth is the story of a Gentile who married a Jew, Esther is the story of a Jewess who married a Gentile.*

### **WRITER:**

Unknown. Could Mordecai have been the writer? (See Esther 9:29.)

### **KEY VERSE:** 4:14

*For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed. And who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?*

### **A STRANGE STORY:**

God's name is not mentioned in this book; no divine title or pronoun refers to Him. The heathen king's name is mentioned 192 times. (It is true also that God's name does not occur in the Song of Solomon, but every masculine pronoun — with a possible exception of 8:6 — refers to Him.) Esther is the record of Israel in a self-chosen pathway. Opportunity had been given for the Jews to return under Cyrus, but only a very small remnant returned. Ezra and Nehemiah give the story of those who did return; Esther gives the story of those who did not return but who chose instead the prosperity and luxury of Persia. They are out of the will of God, but they are not beyond His care. Deuteronomy 31:18 explains the reason God's name does not appear. In the Book of Esther His face is hidden. There is no mention of prayer nor dependence upon God in this book. Esther is never quoted in the New Testament, nor is there even a casual reference to it. However, the Jews give it a peculiar emphasis. It is one of the five books called *Megilloth* (rolls) and is placed beside the Pentateuch in importance.

### **SUBJECT:**

Esther teaches the providence of God. "Providence" comes from the same stem as "provide," and it means simply that God will provide.

*Theologically*, providence is the direction God gives to everything: animate and inanimate, good and evil.

*Practically*, providence is the hand of God in the glove of history — and that glove will never move until He moves it. God is at the steering wheel of this universe. Providence means that God is behind the scenes, shifting and directing them. Providence is the way God coaches the runner on second base. It is the way God leads those who will not be led. As recorded in the Book of Esther, the entire Jewish nation would have been slain had it not been for the providence of God. God stands in the shadows, keeping watch over His own.

### **ANTI-SEMITISM:**

This book teaches how God met another satanic attempt to destroy the nation Israel, and how vengeance was wrought upon the perpetrators of the dastardly deed. (See Genesis 12:3.)

### **OUTLINE:**

- I. The wife who refused to obey her husband, Chapter 1
- II. The beauty contest to choose a real queen, Chapter 2
- III. Haman and anti-Semitism, Chapter 3
- IV. For such a time as this, Chapter 4
- V. The scepter of grace and the nobility of Esther, Chapter 5
- VI. When a king could not sleep at night, Chapter 6
- VII. The man who came to dinner but died on the gallows, Chapter 7
- VIII. The message of hope that went out from the king, Chapter 8
- IX. The institution of the Feast of Purim, Chapters 9, 10

### **COMMENT:**

#### **I. The wife who refused to obey her husband, Chapter 1**

v. 1 — Rather than a name, “Ahasuerus” is a title meaning “high father.” This Ahasuerus is probably the Xerxes mentioned in Ezra 4:7. The date is approximately 486 B.C.

vv. 2-6 — Before his disastrous campaign into Greece, Xerxes held a banquet with a great display of wealth and power to impress the nobles of his kingdom and to enlist their enthusiastic support.

**vv. 7, 8** — There was no pressure on anyone to drink, but there was an abundance of alcoholic beverages available.

**v. 9** — Queen Vashti made a separate banquet for the women.

**vv. 10, 11** — The king, evidently under the influence of wine, summoned the queen to appear at his banquet to display her beauty. This was contrary to accepted custom and she refused to come.

**v. 12** — Her refusal makes it evident that she was a person of nobility and strength of character.

**vv. 13-15** — This precipitated a state crisis that could not be ignored. A crisis meeting of the cabinet was called to determine what measures were to be taken.

**vv. 16-20** — Memucan, obviously a hen-pecked husband, suggested that extreme measures be adopted. The queen should be set aside permanently. The example would prevent other wives from assuming too much liberty.

**vv. 21, 22** — Under the emotional reaction of the moment, the king accepted this suggestion and made a decree to set aside Queen Vashti. This would insure the right of husbands to rule in their own homes.

## **II. The beauty contest to choose a real queen, Chapter 2**

**v. 1** — After the disastrous campaign to Greece when Xerxes was soundly defeated, he returns in deep dejection to his palace. Added to his misery is the absence of his queen and the fact that the law of the Medes and Persians cannot be altered — even by the king himself. Vashti can never again be his queen.

**v. 2** — The servants of the king, seeing his deep depression, suggest a contest be conducted to choose another queen.

**vv. 3, 4** — The contest is advertised throughout the entire kingdom.

**vv. 5, 6** — Here is where the story actually begins.

Mordecai, of the tribe of Benjamin, is one of the Jews who had not returned to Jerusalem. He had settled in the capital of Persia with no thought of returning. His name means “little man.” Evidently he is a short person, which adds to the interest of the record.

**v. 7** — He had adopted his uncle’s daughter, Esther, and had reared her as his own. She is a beautiful young woman.

**v. 8** — Mordecai enters her in the beauty contest.

**v. 9** — Esther immediately pleases Hegai, who has charge of the contest. The hand of God is beginning to move in providential dealings with a people who no longer look to Him.

**v. 10** — Esther has not revealed her nationality.

**v. 11** — The concern of Mordecai is evident, for he feels he can no longer turn to God for help.

**v. 12** — Beauty treatments took an extra long time in that day — as well as today.

**vv. 13-18** — Esther wins the contest. When the king sees her, the contest is over. He places the crown upon her head and makes her his queen.

**vv. 19-23** — Immediately Mordecai is found “sitting in the gate,” which means he has been given a political job and is now a judge. He overhears a plot to kill the king and reveals it to Esther who, in turn, reports it to the king. The deed is recorded but no reward or recognition is given to Mordecai.

### **III. Haman and anti-Semitism, Chapter 3**

**v. 1** — Haman is promoted by the king to the position corresponding to prime minister. He is an Agagite (Saul should have obeyed God and destroyed the Agagites — see 1 Samuel 15:1-9).

**v. 2** — Because of Haman’s position, the king commands all to bow and revere him. Mordecai refuses because of his training in the Mosaic Law (Deuteronomy 5:7-10). God’s people revere only God (Daniel 3:8-12; 6:4-15). Although he is walking in disobedience, Mordecai has not repudiated his God.

**vv. 5, 6** — Haman reveals that he is a small man. He should have ignored Mordecai, but his hatred knows no bounds. Haman determines to destroy not Mordecai alone, but all the Jews.

**vv. 8-11** — The king gives Haman permission to have the Jews



killed on a certain day. The king is careless of human life and makes no inquiry as to details concerning the people Haman accuses.

**vv. 12-18** — A decree is drawn up and sent throughout the kingdom permitting the people to slay the Jews on the 13th day of Adar (March). The people are shocked at such a brutal and senseless decree.

This is one of the many attempts of Satan to destroy the people of Israel and frustrate God's purpose in sending Christ into the world. Anti-Semitic purges began with Pharaoh and continued down through the times of Herod, Hitler, the Arab world, and our present society.

#### **IV. For such a time as this, Chapter 4**

**vv. 1, 2** — Mordecai mourns in sackcloth and ashes, but there is no mention of prayer.

**v. 3** — The Jews throughout the kingdom mourn, but still there is no mention of prayer.

**v. 4** — Queen Esther is embarrassed by the conduct of Mordecai, and she sends him a new suit of clothes. There is an application here. The covering of religion will not remove the fact that man is a guilty sinner before God. Neither will religion alter the fact that the wages of sin is death. Mordecai refuses the new garments.

**vv. 5-8** — Esther knows now that there is some serious crisis and she sends Hatach to learn the nature of it. Mordecai returns to her a copy of the terrible decree.

**vv. 9-11** — Esther reports back to Mordecai that there is nothing she can do, as she does not have access to the king.

**vv. 12-14** — Mordecai sends back an SOS. Her life is in danger because she is a Jewess, her relatives are in danger, and her nation is in danger. If she refuses to accept the challenge, deliverance will come from another place. Obviously this is a veiled reference to the providence of God. Mordecai believes that God will intervene. He urges Esther to act, as he now begins to see the hand of God in bringing her to the throne.

**vv. 15-17** — Esther accepts this challenge. Notice that she makes no reference to prayer, only to fasting. The strange providences of God are becoming evident, and there is revealed a confidence in the unnamed One.

### **V. The scepter of grace and the nobility of Esther, Chapter 5**

**v. 1** — For anyone to appear before the king without permission means instant death — unless the king holds out the scepter to the intruder. Esther displays a brave nobility as she arbitrarily goes into his presence.

**v. 2** — The king extends his scepter toward her, and she comes near and touches it.

*The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water; he turneth it withersoever he will.* (Proverbs 21:1)

**v. 3** — The king senses that a real crisis has arisen which brings the queen into his presence. He gives her assurance by promising to grant her request even to half of the kingdom. This is the same as giving her a signed check with his permission to fill in the amount.

God gives His children the same promise:

*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* (Philippians 4:19)

**vv. 4, 5** — Esther is still reluctant to state her case and invites the king and Haman to a banquet (luncheon).

**v. 6** — Again the king renews his assurance by offering her a blank check.

**vv. 7, 8** — The queen promises to reveal her request at another banquet on the following day, if the king and Haman will accept her invitation.

**vv. 9-14** — Haman goes from the banquet filled with joy and pride, though the sight of Mordecai dulls the edge of his joy. He returns to his home and begins to boast. But he reveals that the presence of Mordecai is the fly in the ointment. His wife Zeresh and his friends advise him to build a gallows 50 cubits high and get an order from the

king to hang Mordecai on it. Haman agrees to do this.

There are several lessons in this chapter. God is holding out the scepter of grace to a lost world today. We all must stand in the presence of the King someday. A Greek proverb is illustrated in this chapter — “Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad.”

The extreme hatred of Haman is revealed in the height of the gallows — remember that Mordecai is a very short man.

## **VI. When a king could not sleep at night, Chapter 6**

In this chapter we see the strange providences of God in operation.

**v. 1** — That the king could not sleep seems a very small thing, but God uses small things. “God swings great doors on little hinges.”

Years before, in Egypt, God brought a woman’s heart and a baby’s cry together when Pharaoh’s daughter found the baby Moses in the Nile River. By this He changed the destiny of a nation.

Evidently, hearing the uninteresting records of the kingdom was conducive to sleep. They are the king’s sleeping pill.

**v. 2** — The scribe “just happens” to read the record of Mordecai’s deed in saving the king’s life (2:21-23).

**v. 3** — The king learns that Mordecai had not been recognized or rewarded.

**vv. 4-6** — At that early hour, Haman comes to get the order from the king to execute Mordecai. Before he can state his business, the king puts a question to him, “What shall be done for the man whom the king delighteth to honor?” The unsuspecting Haman, thinking that the king is referring to him, makes an audacious suggestion.

**vv. 7-9** — The proposal reveals the real desire of Haman — he wants the throne. This honor would prepare the people for their acceptance of him.

**vv. 10, 11** — Haman is stunned and humiliated when he learns that the man to be honored is Mordecai!

**vv. 12-14** — This time Haman returns home to cry instead of boast.

His wife and friends warn him that he is in grave danger. (What a wife is Zeresh!) While Haman is still bemoaning the sad turn of events, the king's servants come to bring Haman to Esther's banquet.

## **VII. The man who came to dinner but died on the gallows,** Chapter 7

**vv. 1, 2** — For the third time the king gives Esther a blank check to fill out. He loves her and wants to please her.

**vv. 3, 4** — Esther now reveals the dastardly plot to destroy her and her people.

**v. 5** — The king demands to know the name of the man.

**v. 6** — Esther identifies Haman as the man. Haman is stunned; he did not know that Esther was a Jewess.

**v. 7** — The king likewise is astounded and shocked at his misplaced confidence in Haman. He goes into his garden to think things over.

**v. 8** — Haman pleads for his life as he falls across the couch of the queen. He is beside himself with fear. The king returns and sees Haman in this compromising position.

**vv. 9, 10** — He orders that Haman be hanged on the very gallows he had erected for Mordecai.

*No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is from me, saith the LORD.* (Isaiah 54:17)

*I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away and, lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.* (Psalm 37:35, 36)

## **VIII. The message of hope that went out from the king,** Chapter 8

Because the first decree could not be changed, another decree is issued that permits the Jews to defend themselves. The king's government that initially demanded their execution now defends them.

This brings salvation and deliverance to a people who otherwise would have perished.

A decree has gone out from God to mankind: “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:20). “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Although this has not been altered or cancelled, man need not perish, for another decree has gone out from God:

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* (John 3:16)

### **IX. The institution of the Feast of Purim, Chapters 9, 10**

The day that would have meant the destruction of the people of Israel is the day of their great deliverance. Darkness is turned into light; night is turned into day.

This day becomes another holy day for the nation and is called the Feast of Purim (9:20-32).

*The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.* (Proverbs 16:33)

Many believers know only of a distant and strange providence. They do not learn to walk with God in close fellowship, obeying His Word. As someone has expressed it,

He knows and loves and cares,  
Nothing this truth can dim:  
He gives the very best to those  
Who leave the choice to Him.

It is interesting to see that Herodotus, the Greek historian, states that the wife of Ahasuerus (Xerxes) was a cold, vindictive queen after the invasion against Greece. For an outsider, this would appear to be the fact.

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Gaebelein, Arno C. *The Annotated Bible*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1917.
- Ironside, H. A. *Notes on the Book of Esther*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1921.
- Jensen, Irving L. *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther: A Self-Study Guide*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1970.
- McGee, J. Vernon. *Ruth and Esther: Women of Faith*. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988.
- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1981.
- Whitcomb, John C. *Esther: Triumph of God's Sovereignty*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1979.

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## POETICAL BOOKS

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Job is the first of the poetical books, which also include Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and Lamentations. The reference is to the *form* of the content and does not imply imaginative or capricious content. Neither does the term “poetical” mean that it is rhythmic. Hebrew poetry is achieved by repeating an idea, a technique called parallelism.

The dialogue in the Book of Job is poetry because conversation was in poetry in that day. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer are examples in secular literature.

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### JOB

**WRITER:** Unknown

The following have been suggested: Moses, Ezra, Solomon, Job and Elihu. That Elihu is the writer seems most likely (32:16).

**DATE:** Unknown

Evidently it was written during the patriarchal period. Did Job know Jacob? It is possible. It was written before Exodus, it would seem, as there is no reference to the Mosaic Law nor to any of the events recorded in the Book of Exodus. Here are the arguments which seem to place Job with the patriarchs:

1. Length of Job’s life span (42:16).
2. Job acted as high priest in his family.
3. Eliphaz the Temanite was descended from Esau’s eldest son (Genesis 36:10, 11).

**PURPOSE:** Many problems are raised and settled in this book.

1. To determine why the righteous suffer. (This is not the primary teaching.)
2. To refute the slander of Satan.
3. To reveal Job to himself.
4. To teach patience. Was Job patient?
5. *Primary purpose:* To teach *repentance*.

God selected the best man who ever lived (Christ is the exception) and showed that he needed to repent. In contrast, we usually choose

the worst man who repents as an illustration. Manasseh, a most ungodly king, repented; Saul of Tarsus repented; St. Francis of Assisi, a debauched nobleman, repented; and Jerry MacAuley, a drunken bum, repented. God chose the best man and showed that he repented — “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5, 6).

### **ESTIMATION:**

Tennyson said of the Book of Job, “The greatest poem, whether of ancient or modern literature.” Carlyle said, “I call [Job] one of the grandest ever written with pen.” Luther said, “More magnificent and sublime than any other book of Scripture.” Moorehead said, “The book of Job is one of the noblest poems in existence.”

### **OUTLINE:**

#### **I. DRAMA, Chapters 1, 2**

*(Prose)*

##### **A. Scene I, Chapter 1:1-5**

*Land of Uz; Job’s prosperity and serenity*

##### **B. Scene II, Chapter 1:6-12**

*Heaven; Satan’s slander of God and Job*

##### **C. Scene III, Chapter 1:13-22**

*Land of Uz; Job’s loss of children and wealth*

##### **D. Scene IV, Chapter 2:1-6**

*Heaven; God and Satan*

##### **E. Scene V, Chapter 2:7-10**

*Land of Uz; Job’s loss of health and wife’s sympathy*

#### **II. DIALOGUE, Chapters 2:11 — 42:6**

*(Poetry)*

##### **A. Scene VI, Chapters 2:11 — 37:24**

*City Dump*

**1.** Job’s loss of understanding of friends, 2:11-13

**2.** Job vs. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, 3:1 — 32:1

**3.** Job vs. Elihu, 32:2 — 37:24



**B. Scene VII**, Chapters 38:1 — 42:6  
Jehovah vs. Job

**III. EPILOGUE**, Chapter 42:7-17  
(Prose)

**Scene VIII**

*Land of Uz*; Job's blessings doubled

**COMMENT:**

The prose section of the Book of Job is a gigantic, sweeping drama that encompasses earth and heaven. This does not mean it is fiction. Job is treated as a historical character in the Scriptures (see Ezekiel 14:14, 20; James 5:11). Paul quotes from the Book of Job (1 Corinthians 3:19; cp. Job 5:13). Many writers have used Job as the basis for their plots, including H. G. Wells and more recently Archibald MacLeish in his Broadway hit, *J.B.* Job's problem is a universal problem. Thomas Carlyle called the Book of Job "all men's book."

The poetry section of the Book of Job is a contest in dialogue between Job and his three friends. Later in the book, Bildad challenges Job. A brilliant dialogue in that day was what a baseball game or any other athletic event is in our day.

**I. Drama**, Chapters 1, 2  
(Prose)

**A. Scene I**, Chapter 1:1-5

*Land of Uz*; Job's prosperity and serenity

The land of Uz was somewhere in the Middle East, but beyond that there is nothing specific. Josephus gives us a glimmer of light on the location of Uz. According to Genesis 22:21 the firstborn of Nahor, Abraham's brother, was Uz. He is the founder of the ancient city of Damascus. Job lived somewhere in the Syrian desert, where later the Lord sent Paul for post-graduate studies (see Galatians 1:17).

**v. 1** — "Perfect" in the sense that he had offered sacrifices for his sons (see v. 5). "Feared God" means that he has a high and holy concept of God and as a result he hates evil.

**vv. 3, 4** — He is a wealthy man, and his ten children live in the

ease and luxury of the rich.

**v. 5** — Job's one concern is for his children.

**B. Scene II, Chapter 1:6-12**

*Heaven; Satan's slander of God and Job*

**vv. 6, 7** — God's created intelligences report to God as a matter of regular routine. They are responsible creatures. The shocking fact is that Satan has access to heaven. Even *he* has to report. He reports that he had been up and down the earth, which is his domain (see 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 2:13-17; Matthew 4:8, 9). He has never been in hell (Revelation 20:10, see author's book, *Reveling through Revelation*, volume 2).

**v. 8** — Satan obviously had been trying to get at Job, but he found there was a hedge about him. Satan cannot touch God's man without God's permission.

**vv. 9-11** — Slandering both God and Job, Satan infers that God is not worthy to be served and loved for Himself alone but that He has to pay Job to love Him. Satan suggests that Job is a time server.

**v. 12** — God grants Satan permission to get at Job's possessions, including his children.

**C. Scene III, Chapter 1:13-22**

*Land of Uz; Job's loss of children and wealth*

Job is stripped of all his earthly possessions, including his ten children.

**vv. 20-22** — Job's reaction to his tragic circumstances reveals that though his faith is shaken, it is not destroyed. Job is no time server.

**D. Scene IV, Chapter 2:1-6**

*Heaven; God and Satan*

Created intelligences make their regular report again. Satan has to admit that he has not destroyed the integrity of Job, and he asks for permission to touch his body. He is confident that Job will then curse God to His face. God gives Satan permission to touch his body, with the provision that he may not take his life.

## **E. Scene V, Chapter 2:7-10**

*Land of Uz; Job's loss of health and wife's sympathy*

Satan smites Job with a frightful disease. Job's wife suggests that he curse God and commit suicide — which is the reason Satan did not take Job's wife! Job still maintains his integrity.

## **II. DIALOGUE, Chapters 2:11 — 42:6**

*(Poetry)*

### **A. Scene VI, Chapters 2:11 — 37:24**

*City Dump*

#### **1. Job's loss of understanding of friends, 2:11-13**

Three friends of Job come to visit and comfort him: Eliphaz, a Temanite. Teman was a grandson of Esau (Genesis 36:10, 11). Bildad, a Shuhite. Shuah was a son of Abraham (Genesis 25:2). Zophar, a Naamathite. Naamah was in northern Arabia.

For seven days they mourn with Job without saying a word. They are real friends, but they are in no position to comfort Job because:

- (1) They do not understand God.
- (2) They do not understand Job.
- (3) They do not understand themselves.

They merely shake their heads in a knowing manner during the seven days of mourning.

#### **2. Job vs. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, 3:1 — 32:1**

There are 3 rounds of speeches:

- (1) By Job, then Eliphaz, and Job answers him;
- (2) By Bildad, and Job answers him;
- (3) By Zophar, and Job answers him.

This is repeated three times with one exception — Zophar does not give a third speech. The dialogue is in the nature of a contest. Under the critical and accusing eyes of his friends, Job finally explodes with his tale of woe and a wish that he had never been born.

## First Round

	Chapter
Job.....	3
Eliphaz, 1st Discourse.....	4, 5
Job's Answer.....	6, 7
Bildad, 1st Discourse.....	8
Job's Answer.....	9, 10
Zophar, 1st Discourse.....	11
Job's Answer.....	12—14

## Second Round

Eliphaz, 2nd Discourse.....	15
Job's Answer.....	16, 17
Bildad, 2nd Discourse.....	18
Job's Answer.....	19
Zophar, 2nd Discourse.....	20
Job's Answer.....	21

## Third Round

Eliphaz, 3rd Discourse.....	22
Job's Answer.....	23, 24
Bildad, 3rd Discourse.....	25
Job's Answer.....	26—31

## First Round

**Chapter 3** — Job wishes that he had never been born or that he had died at birth. Job's tranquility in his days of prosperity were disturbed by the uncertainty of life. He had dreaded the very thing that happened to him (v. 25).

**Chapters 4, 5** — Eliphaz's first discourse. He is the voice of experience. He suspects that there is secret sin in Job's life (4:8). He recounts a terrifying and hair-raising vision (4:12-16). The self-evident truth he received from the vision does not seem worthwhile for all the terror he endured (4:17). He gives some gems of wisdom as all the others do (5:6, 7). He charges that Job is being corrected for some awful secret sin and he should not complain (5:17-22).

**Chapters 6, 7** — Job's answer. His condition is much worse than his friends realize and he wishes God would destroy him, not correct him (6: 9). He expected pity and comfort from his friends (6:14). He looked for help when he saw them coming, but it was only a mirage on the desert (6:15). Eliphaz misses the entire problem (6:25). Job is willing to confess any sin he has committed. Why doesn't God pardon his sin (ch. 7) and restore him?

**Chapter 8** — Bildad's first discourse. Bildad is the voice of the past. He rests his argument on tradition (v. 8). Man can know nothing of himself. He must depend on the past (vv. 9, 10). Notice that Paul did not have this philosophy; rather he pointed to Christ and the future.

*I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* (Philippians 3:14)

Bildad is more candid and crude than Eliphaz. He considers Job a hypocrite (v. 13). He does not know the ways of God (v. 20), nor does he take into account the final outcome (v. 21).

**Chapters 9, 10** — Job's answer to Bildad. Bildad has not met the problem of Job (9:2). Job makes no claim to perfection and knows that he cannot defend himself before God. He needs someone on his side to present his case (9:19, 20). Notice Job's heart-cry for Christ (9:32, 33). He recognizes his need for a mediator to stand between himself and God. (See 1 Samuel 2:25.)

God knows that Job is not perfect, but He also knows that Job is not wicked (10:6, 7). Again Job resorts to his wish that he had not been born or had died at birth (10:19).

**Chapter 11** — Zophar's first discourse. Zophar is the voice of legalism. He holds that God is bound by laws and never operates beyond the circumference of His own laws. He is probably the senior member of the group, and he speaks with a dogmatic finality that is even more candid and crude than that of Bildad.

He accuses Job of covering his sin with words (v. 2). He even accuses Job of lying (v. 3). He assumes the pious position of being on the inside with God while Job is on the outside, unable to know

what He does (vv. 4-11). He urges Job to come clean, that he is hiding his sin (v. 14). He predicts the complete judgment of Job unless he confesses his secret sin (v. 20).

**Chapters 12, 13** — Job's answer. Job becomes bitter and sarcastic. He resents the superior claims of his friends and their accusations (12:1-3).

Job would bypass his friends and appeal to God directly (13:3). He now accuses them of lying about his case and states that they are offering him no help — they are “physicians of no value” (13:4). The faith of Job stands inviolate in spite of the onslaught of his friends (13:15).

**Chapter 14** — A great elegy on death. Trouble is the common denominator of mankind (v. 1). Job knows that death is inevitable and that he must depart from this world (v. 10). However, Job has a hope beyond death and the grave (vv. 14, 15).

## Second Round

**Chapter 15** — Eliphaz's second discourse. Eliphaz accuses Job of being his own accuser, for his words are foolish (v. 6). He defends himself and two other friends by reminding Job of their advantage of maturity over him. He states a great truth, but it is no more applicable to Job than to any other human being.

**Chapters 16, 17** — Job's answer. Job labels his friends “miserable comforters” and accuses them of uttering self-evident truths which are not applicable to him. If their situations were reversed, Job could argue as they have (16:4). Instead of helping Job, they fill him with wrinkles (16:8). He goes too far in defending himself (16:17). Job will stand by his record (16:19). He recognizes the problem of pleading his case before God (16:21). His physical condition is tragic.

**Chapter 18** — Bildad's second discourse. Bildad suggests that Job stop speaking and start listening (v. 2). His second argument follows the same pattern as his first — since the past teaches that God judges sin and since Job is being judged, he has committed some gross and secret sin. He digs up a few hoary epigrams from the past as proof.

**Chapter 19** — Job's answer. Job recognizes that his friends are becoming strangers to him and that they are growing apart (v. 3). Job is willing for his words to be made into a permanent record and he is prepared to stand by them (vv. 23, 24).

Job expresses his great faith. He is maintaining his integrity. He believes the Redeemer is coming and that he himself is numbered with the redeemed.

**Chapter 20**— Zophar's second discourse. He introduces nothing new. He rests upon his seniority and resorts to the same legalism. He still holds to the theory that Job is a very wicked person because of the law that the wicked must be punished (vv. 3-5).

**Chapter 21** — Job's answer. Job is growing weary of their false charges. He appeals to a higher court (vv. 1-4). He agrees that the wicked will be punished but insists that this does not apply to his case.

### **Third Round**

**Chapter 22** — Eliphaz's third discourse. He accuses Job of being self-righteous (v. 3). His final word to Job is a great gospel invitation, but it does not fit Job's case (v. 21). He admonishes Job to return to God (vv. 22-30).

**Chapters 23, 24** — Job's answer. Job claims that his condition is worse than his friends think it to be (23:2). He would like to present his case before God (23:3-9). Job begins to sense that he is in the sieve of God's testing and that God will bring him through his trials (23:10). Job still maintains his integrity (23:12).

**Chapter 25** — Bildad's third discourse. His answer is brief. He becomes rather thoughtful and begins to wonder why Job has not broken if he is guilty.

**Chapters 26 — 31** — Job's answer. This is Job's longest speech. His friends have not helped him, but he expresses his faith in God, the Creator.

**Chapter 27** — Job does not break under the attack of his miserable comforters.

**Chapter 28** — This is a beautiful poem about God as Creator.

**Chapter 29** — The secret sin of Job is now revealed. He is suffering from a bad case of perpendicular “I-itis.” He is filled with pride. Even a good man needs to repent. The first person pronoun, in one of its forms, occurs 52 times in this chapter. (Mark them in your Bible and be amazed.) What Job says is probably true, but he is self-righteous.

**Chapter 30** — He compares his past with his present condition. His voice is no longer a song of praise but a sigh of pain (v. 31).

**Chapter 31** — He is not guilty of the common sensual sins.

### 3. Job vs. Elihu, 32:2 — 37:24

**Chapter 32** — Elihu’s discourse. He is a Buzite — Buz was evidently an Arab tribe (Genesis 22:21). Elihu has been one of the auditors to this contest. He has kept silent because of his youth, though he wanted to speak. When the three friends have nothing more to say and have lost the contest, Elihu is angry because:

- (1) He feels that Job justified himself and condemned God (v. 2).
- (2) He feels that the three friends of Job have failed to answer him adequately.

When Elihu finally speaks, he speaks longer than any of the three friends or Job (chapters 32 — 37).

**Chapter 33** — Elihu maintains that:

- (1) God is right in all that He does;
- (2) God created man (v. 4);
- (3) God is responsible to no one (v. 13);
- (4) God speaks to man by dreams and visions [before He gave a written revelation] (vv. 14, 15);
- (5) God instructs men through discipline (vv. 29, 30). Notice that he suggests the reason for the Incarnation (vv. 6, 7).

**Chapter 34** — Elihu declares that God never acts wickedly nor commits wrong acts (v. 12).

**Chapter 35** — Elihu reproves Job for inferring that he is more



righteous than God (v. 2). God is teaching Job a lesson, and both Job and his friends missed this truth (vv. 10-12).

**Chapter 36** — God is the great Teacher (v. 22). (It was said of Jesus, “Never man spoke like this man” [John 7:46].)

**Chapter 37** — Elihu infers that God is too far removed for man to communicate with Him (vv. 22, 23). However, it is not the greatness and majesty of God that has separated man from Him; it is man’s sin that has caused the disruption (see Isaiah 59:1, 2).

**B. Scene VII, Chapters 38:1 — 42:6**  
Jehovah vs. Job

**Chapter 38** — Answer of the Almighty. God breaks through and speaks to Job. During the entire dialogue a storm has been gathering on the horizon. At this point, it breaks with fury. The crowd scatters and scurries for cover, leaving Job alone with God (v. 1). Both Job and Elihu had obscured truth with their theories and ideas (v. 2). God’s appeal to Job is on the basis of His role as Creator. Remember that this was before there was any written revelation (v. 4). Compare Romans 1:19, 20. This is a good introduction for every book on geology and origins.

This response (v. 7) predates the creation of man. Actually, man is a “Johnny-come-lately” in God’s universe. What did the writer of Job or Job himself know about the beauty of a snowflake (vv. 22, 23)? Hail is for judgment — see Revelation 8:7.

**Chapter 39** — God’s wisdom, person, and power are revealed in creation.

**Chapter 40** — God now demands Job to answer Him (vv. 1, 2). Job begins to see himself in the light of God’s presence — he is vile. Job becomes suddenly silent (vv. 3-5). The storm breaks in all of its fury and God speaks out of the whirlwind. He continues His appeal through creation (v. 6).

**Chapter 41** — God continues to quiz Job relative to His acts of creation.

**Chapter 42** — Job answers God. He recognizes the sovereignty

of God (v. 2); he confesses his sin (v. 3); he repents (vv. 4-6). God accomplishes His purpose in the life of Job. Job evidently realizes that the reason God has permitted him to suffer is to bring him to repentance. He sees himself in the light of the presence of God (see 1 John 1:6, 7).

### **III. EPILOGUE, Chapter 42:7-17**

*(Prose)*

#### **Scene VIII**

*Land of Uz; Job's blessings doubled*

This section is the final scene in the drama. It is poetic justice.

God rebukes the three friends of Job. Job becomes their priest to offer a sacrifice for them (vv. 7-9). God gives Job twice as much of everything as he had at the beginning. Did God also double the number of his children? When his cattle were destroyed, he lost them forever. When his sons and daughters died, he did not lose them:

He has 10 children in Paradise.

+ He has 10 children on earth.

God doubled the number of his children.

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Blair, J. Allen. *Job: Living Patiently*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.
- Darby, J. N. *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*. Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, n.d.
- Ellison, H. L. *A Study of Job: From Tragedy to Triumph*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.
- Epp, Theodore H. *Job — A Man Tried as Gold*. Lincoln, Nebraska: Back to the Bible Broadcast, n.d.
- Gaebelein, Arno C. *The Annotated Bible*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1917.
- Garland, D. David. *Job — A Study Guide Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.
- Gray, James M. *Synthetic Bible Studies*. Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1906.
- Jensen, Irving L. *Job — A Self-Study Guide*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, n.d.
- Mackintosh, C. H. *Miscellaneous Writings*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.
- Ridout, Samuel. *The Book of Job*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1919. (Very fine.)
- Sauer, Erich. *The Dawn of World Redemption*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951. (An excellent Old Testament survey.)
- Scroggie, W. Graham. *The Unfolding Drama of Redemption*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970. (An excellent survey and outline of the Old Testament.)
- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Bible Handbook*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966. (A concise commentary on the entire Bible.)
- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1981. (Volume 1 covers Genesis through Song of Solomon with a fine summary of each paragraph.)
- Zuck, Roy B. *Job*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1978. (A fine summary in the *Everyman's Bible Commentary* series.)



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## **SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**

(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter —
2. Most important verse —
3. Most prominent word —
4. Teaching about Christ —
5. Command to obey —
6. Promise to claim —
7. New truth learned —

**Notes & Outlines**

# **PSALMS**

J. Vernon McGee

**PSALMS**  
The Book of Worship  
The Hymn Book of the Temple

**TITLE:**

The title in Hebrew means *Praises* or *Book of Praises*. The title in the Greek suggests the idea of an instrumental accompaniment. Our title comes from the Greek *psalms*.

**WRITERS:**

Many writers contributed one or more psalms. They are as follows: David, 73; Moses, 1 (90th); Solomon, 2; Sons of Korah, 11; Asaph, 12; Heman, 1 (88th); Ethan, 1 (89th); Hezekiah, 10; “Orphanic,” 39.

David, “the sweet psalmist of Israel” (2 Samuel 23:1), has 73 psalms assigned to him (Psalm 2 is ascribed to him in Acts 4:25; Psalm 95 in Hebrews 4:7). Also, he could be the author of some of the “Orphanic” psalms. He had a special aptitude for and was peculiarly endowed to write these songs from experience. He arranged those in existence in his day for temple use.

**THEME:**

Christ (the Messiah) is prominent throughout (Luke 24:44). The King and the kingdom are the theme songs of the Psalms.

**KEY WORD:** Hallelujah

**KEY PSALM:** Psalm 150. “Hallelujah” occurs 13 times in 6 verses.

**FEATURES:**

The Psalms record deep devotion, intense feeling, exalted emotion, and dark dejection. The Psalms play with all the stops pulled out upon the keyboard of the human soul.

They run the psychological gamut. This book has been called the epitome and anatomy of the soul and designated as the garden of the Scriptures. The place Psalms have held in the lives of God’s people testifies to their universality, although they have a peculiar Jewish application. They express the deep feelings of all believing hearts in all generations.

The Psalms are full of Christ. There is a more complete picture of Him in Psalms than in the Gospels. The Gospels tell us that He went

to the mountain to pray, but the Psalms give us His prayer. The Gospels tell us that He was crucified, but the Psalms tell us what went on in His own heart during the crucifixion. The Gospels tell us He went back to heaven, but the Psalms begin where the Gospels leave off and show us Christ seated in heaven.

There are many types of psalms. Although all of them have Christ as the object of worship, some are technically called messianic psalms. These record the birth, life, death, resurrection, glory, priesthood, kingship, and return of Christ. The imprecatory psalms have caused the most criticism because of their vindictiveness and prayers for judgment. (Christians are told to love their enemies.) These psalms come from a time of war and from a people who, under law, were looking for justice and peace on the earth. They look to a time coming on the earth when the Antichrist will be in power. We have no reasonable basis to say how people should act and what they should say under those circumstances. Other types of psalms include penitential, historic, nature, pilgrim, Hallel, missionary, puritan, acrostic, and praise of God's Word.

## **OUTLINE:**

*(Corresponds to Pentateuch of Moses)*

### **I. Genesis section, Psalms 1 — 41**

*Man in a state of blessedness, fall, and recovery (Man in View)*

**Psalm 1:** Perfect Man (last Adam)

**Psalm 2:** Rebellious man

**Psalm 3:** Perfect Man rejected

**Psalm 4:** Conflict between Seed of woman and serpent

**Psalm 5:** Perfect Man in midst of enemies

**Psalm 6:** Perfect Man in midst of chastisement (bruising heel)

**Psalm 7:** Perfect Man in midst of false witnesses

**Psalm 8:** Repair of man comes through Man (bruising head)

**Psalms 9 — 15:** Enemy and Antichrist conflict; final deliverance

**Psalms 16 — 41:** Christ in midst of His people, sanctifying them to God

### **II. Exodus section, Psalms 42 — 72**

*Ruin and Redemption (Israel in View)*

**Psalms 42 — 49:** Israel's ruin  
**Psalms 50 — 60:** Israel's Redeemer  
**Psalms 61 — 72:** Israel's redemption

**III. Leviticus section, Psalms 73 — 89**  
*Darkness and Dawn* (Sanctuary in View)

**IV. Numbers section, Psalms 90 — 106**  
*Peril and Protection of Pilgrims* (Earth in View)

**V. Deuteronomy section, Psalms 107 — 150**  
*Perfection and Praise of the Word of God*

Psalm 119, an acrostic in the heart of this section, refers to the Word of God in almost every verse. It is the longest chapter in the Bible.

**COMMENT:**

One of the more noticeable features about the Book of Psalms is the systematic arrangement. This reveals that they were not put together in a haphazard manner; there is definite organization.

The major divisions correspond to the Pentateuch (see outline). This is not an artificial division but follows rather closely the Pentateuch of Moses. In each major division there are lesser divisions of clusters and series of psalms which develop a particular subject.

The Psalms were probably all set to music, both vocal and instrumental. It must have been a thrilling experience to hear several thousand voices singing them to the accompaniment of a great orchestra. Psalm 150, probably the theme of the book, could well be the chorus of every psalm.

**I. Genesis section, Psalms 1 — 41**  
*Man in a state of blessedness, fall, and recovery* (Man in View)

It has been well stated that the Book of Genesis is the entire Bible in miniature — all great truths of Scripture are germinal in Genesis. The first few psalms cover the entire Book of Psalms in the same way.

Jehovah and Elohim are the two names for God in this section, although Jehovah occurs more often:

Jehovah (Redeemer) — 272 times



Elohim (Creator) — 15 times

**Psalm 1: Perfect Man (last Adam)**

The Blessed Man is contrasted to the ungodly man. This psalm, which opens the Genesis section, begins with man instead of the material universe. The Blessed Man here is not the first Adam but the last Adam. He is not in an ideal Garden of Eden but is in the midst of the ungodly, sinners, and the scornful.

**vv. 1, 2 — Practice** of the Blessed Man (v. 1 negative; v. 2 positive)

**v. 3 — Power** of the Blessed Man (“Rivers of water” is the Word of God.)

**vv. 4-6 — Permanency** of the Blessed Man (Ungodly will perish; the Lord knows the way of the righteous.)

Two Men — Two Ways — Two Destinies

**Psalm 2: Rebellious man**

Drama of the ages: man’s rebellion against God. Another has termed it “the decisive declaration concerning the outcome of events and forces at work today.”

The truly messianic character of this psalm is revealed in the fact that it is quoted as such 7 times in the New Testament. Rebellion against God and Christ began at the arrest of Jesus (Acts 4:23-26). It has gained momentum down through the ages and will finally break in a mounting and mighty crescendo.

This second Psalm can be seen like a television program with one camera on earth and another in heaven.

**vv. 1-3 —** The camera on earth comes on, showing the peoples and rulers raging against God and Christ.

**vv. 4-6 —** The camera in heaven comes on, revealing that God the Father is unmoved by this ridiculous rebellion of little man. He pursues His plan of putting His King on the throne of this earth.

**vv. 7-9 —** The camera in heaven shifts to the right hand of the Father. God the Son asserts His authority to carry through the decree because of His resurrection (Acts 13:33). He will come to judge the nations.

**vv. 10-12** — The camera on earth comes on. God the Holy Spirit invites men to accept the Savior. “Kiss the Son” is to “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).

**Psalms 3 — 7: Sorrows of God’s remnant**

These 5 psalms form a brief series which deals with the sorrows of God’s godly remnant. The reference is directly to the Tribulation (Psalm 3:1).

**Psalm 3: Perfect Man rejected**

Morning prayer. The trials of the godly in Israel. Since trials are common to all of God’s people, the comfort is for all also.

**Psalm 4: Conflict between Seed of woman and serpent**

Evening prayer (to be sung to the accompaniment of stringed instruments). This is the plea of the Son of man and those who plead in His name.

**Psalm 5: Perfect Man in midst of enemies**

Morning prayer (v. 3). This is a cry of the godly in the time of great trouble. They seek a refuge (vv. 7, 8).

**Psalm 6: Perfect Man in midst of chastisement (bruising heel)**

Darkness, distress, and death. The first penitential psalm. Trials produce a broken spirit. The plea of David is that God will judge him in mercy and not anger.

**Psalm 7: Perfect Man in midst of false witnesses**

Cry for revenge. Cush, the Benjamite, may be Saul. This is prophetically the cry of the remnant during the Great Tribulation. This concludes the first cluster of 5 psalms.

**Psalm 8: Repair of man comes through Man (bruising head)**

Messianic psalm. God’s Man (quoted 3 times in the New Testament). It emphasizes the humanity of Christ and His ultimate victory as Man (Hebrews 2:6-8; 1 Corinthians 15:27).

**Psalms 9 — 15: Enemy and Antichrist conflict; final deliverance**

Most in this series of 7 psalms are written by David.

**Psalm 9:** Satan’s man (v. 17). The title “Muthlabben” means

“death of the son” and may refer to the death of Goliath (1 Samuel 17:4-51). The Scofield notes suggest it refers to the death of David’s son by Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:19, 20).

It looks to the time of Jacob’s trouble and God’s deliverance from the “giant,” the man of sin (vv. 8, 9, 13).

**Psalm 10:** Satan’s man, “man of the earth” (v. 18) is closely identified with the 9th Psalm. “The wicked” are described: “pride” (v. 2), “boasteth” (v. 3), there is no God (v. 4), self-sufficient (v. 6), “cursing” and “mischief” (v. 7), sin with impunity (v. 11), no judgment to come (v. 13).

**Psalm 11:** Testing of the righteous (v. 5).

**Psalm 12:** The godly in the midst of the godlessness of the Great Tribulation.

**Psalm 13:** The desperate plight of David (1 Samuel 26:20) mirrors the plight of God’s people in the Great Tribulation (vv. 1, 3).

**Psalm 14:** Depravity of man in the last days — atheistic (v. 1), filthy and rebellious (v. 3). He pleads for deliverance (v. 7).

**Psalm 15:** Those who shall enter the kingdom. The question is asked (v. 1) and answered (vv. 2-5).

### **Psalms 16 — 41: Christ in midst of His people, sanctifying them to God**

**Psalm 16:** The resurrection of the Messiah (vv. 8-11; cp. Acts 2:25-31 and 13:35-37; also Hebrews 2:13, 14). Life of Christ (v. 8), death of Christ (v. 9), resurrection of Christ (v. 10), ascension of Christ (v. 11).

**Psalm 17:** Prayer of David when he is being pursued by Saul and his life is in danger. It also pictures the Messiah when He was in danger.

**Psalm 18:** Praise of David when God delivered him from the hand of Saul. It is repeated in 2 Samuel 22. Notice the picture of the Messiah (v. 35).

**Psalm 19:** God’s message to man. The cosmos reveals the glory

and power of God (vv. 1-6). The commandments reveal the wisdom and righteousness of God (vv. 7-11). Christ reveals the power and redemption of God (vv. 12-14).

**Psalm 20:** Plea of Israel for the success of the Messiah. “The king” is the Messiah (v. 9).

**Psalm 21:** Messianic psalm. The ascension and coming again of Christ. “The king,” who is the subject of the psalm, is the Messiah. Psalms 20 and 21 present the same picture.

<b>Psalm 22</b>	<b>Psalm 23</b>	<b>Psalm 24</b>
<i>The Good Shepherd</i> <i>John 10:11</i>	<i>The Great Shepherd</i> <i>Hebrews 13:20</i>	<i>The Chief Shepherd</i> <i>1 Peter 5:4</i>
Cross Savior Foundation Dying Past Gives His life	Shepherd’s Crook Satisfier Manifestation Living Present Gives His love	Crown Sovereign Expectation Coming Future Gives His light

**Psalm 22:** X-ray of the cross (see author’s booklet by the same name). Eusebius called it “a prophecy of the passion of Christ.” It gives a new dimension of the cross.

vv. 1-21 — Humiliation → suffering → cross

vv. 22-31 — Exaltation → glory → crown

**Psalm 23:** Psalm of an old shepherd (see author’s booklet by the same name). One must know the Shepherd of Psalm 22 and have walked with Him in life to know intimately Psalm 23. “My sheep hear my voice” (John 10:27).

vv. 1, 2 — **Revelation** of the sanctuary of the Shepherd’s soul.

vv. 3, 4 — **Record** of the musings of the Shepherd’s mind.

vv. 5, 6 — **Reflection** of the happiness and hope of the Shepherd’s heart.

**Psalm 24:** The coming of the Chief Shepherd. Tradition says it was composed by David and sung when he brought up the ark from Kirjath-jearim to Mt. Zion (2 Samuel 6:12-23).

**vv. 1-6** — Companions of the King who enter the kingdom.

**vv. 7-10** — Coming of the King to set up the kingdom.

**Psalms 25 — 39: The future of God’s remnant**

This series of 15 psalms primarily records David’s personal experience, but they also look to the future when the godly remnant is in trouble. For the comfort of believers today, they contain the balm of Gilead.

**Psalm 25:** Plea for forgiveness (v. 11).

**Psalm 26:** Plea on the basis of personal righteousness. This could apply only to the Messiah. Written by David perhaps at the time of Absalom’s rebellion.

**Psalm 27:** Prayer of David.

**vv. 1-6** — *Preparation* for prayer: triumphant praise in the presence of pressing problems.

**vv. 1-3** — *Foundation* for prayer: God is salvation and strength.

**vv. 4-6** — *Meditation* on prayer.

**vv. 7-12** — *Declaration* of prayer proper: thankful prayer in presence of painful prediction (cp. v. 10 and 1 Samuel 22:3, 4).

**vv. 13, 14** — *Realization* of prayer: patience.

**Psalm 28:** A cry in time of trouble. In the storm of wickedness David finds God to be a rock (v. 1), strength, and shield (v. 7).

**Psalm 29:** The voice of the Lord. Written during a thunderstorm, Delitzsch labeled it the “Psalm of seven thunders.” “Voice of the Lord” occurs 7 times.

**Psalm 30:** A psalm-song at the dedication of the house of David (place of future temple). A song of deliverance and prospect for the future (v. 5).

**Psalm 31:** Psalm of troubles and trials, followed by prayer for deliverance, and the deliverance that follows as an answer to prayer (v. 1).

**Psalm 32:** “Maschil”: psalm of instruction. Written in connection with David’s sin and his confession (Psalm 51) and the restoration of the sinning saint (vv. 1, 2).

**Psalm 33:** Praises of redeemed people. God is worshiped as Creator, as providential Ruler. He is praised for His majestic and matchless grace. Notice the method of creation (v. 6) — God spoke into existence all of creation.

**Psalm 34:** A song of praise when Abimelech (a royal title; called “Achish” in 1 Samuel 21:10-15) drove David away, and he fled to the cave of Adullam. Compare vv. 15, 16 with 1 Peter 3:12. David’s experience is that of all God’s children (v. 19).

**Psalm 35:** A plea for God to deliver David from the hand of Saul (1 Samuel 24) and to judge the wicked.

**Psalm 36:** A Psalm of David as the servant of Jehovah.

**Psalm 37:** A promise of future blessing to the remnant of Israel in the form of an acrostic. This psalm has refreshed all of God’s saints down through the ages — it is often quoted. (See vv. 1, 4, 5, 7, 11, 23, 35, 36.)

**Psalm 38:** Confession and physical sickness; David in deep distress prays that God will not judge him in anger (v. 1). This is real conviction (v. 2). His physical sickness is the result of sin (v. 3). Disease, the result of his foolishness, is followed by mental anguish (vv. 5-8). Some dare to say that this refers to Christ and that He had a diseased body. They use Matthew 8:17. Jesus, however, was holy, harmless and separate from sin. He could not be the spotless Lamb offered for our sin if He were diseased — disease is the result of sin. Death is also. Jesus did not have to die — He said, “No man taketh [my life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (John 10:18). On the cross He dismissed His spirit (John 19:30).

**Psalm 39:** A psalm for funerals. The vanity and feebleness of humanity. This is the last psalm in the series beginning with Psalm 25.

**Psalm 40:** Messianic psalm, quoted in Hebrews 10:5-7 as referring to Christ (vv. 6-8). It is the experience of David when he fled from Absalom.

**Psalm 41:** Messianic psalm. It opens with “blessed” and closes with “blessed.” Jesus quoted this reference to Judas (v. 9) in John 13:18, and Peter referred to it in Acts 1:16.

This is the last psalm in the Genesis section. It closes on the high hope of the resurrection (v. 10). What a contrast to “a coffin in Egypt” which concludes the book of Genesis. David is the writer of 37 of these 41 psalms.

## II. Exodus section, Psalms 42 — 72

*Ruin and Redemption (Israel in View)*

(David wrote 19 of these psalms.)

### **Psalms 42 — 49: Israel’s ruin**

This series of 7 psalms by the sons of Korah are prophetic pictures of Israel in the last days.

**Psalm 42:** Heart cry of the remnant and applicable to the redeemed of all ages. It concludes with the heart cry of hope for deliverance (v. 11). This is not redemption by blood which took place in Egypt at the death of the firstborn; it is redemption by power which took place at the Red Sea.

**Psalm 43:** A call to God to act on behalf of the remnant.

**Psalm 44:** During the Great Tribulation, Israel calls upon God to deliver them as He did in Egypt in the past. It closes with a cry to redeem.

**Psalm 45:** Reign of the Messiah King. Shoshannim (or lily) psalm, a love song.

v. 1 — Introduction: psalmist can tell it better than he can write it.

vv. 2-5 — Messiah: His person and power.

v. 2 — “Thy beauty, O King Messiah, is greater than the sons of men.” — Chaldean Targumim

**v. 4** — Truth, meekness, and righteousness are eternal principles of His kingdom.

**vv. 6-8** — Messiah: His government and glory. (Heart of the psalm, vv. 6, 7.)

**vv. 9-17** — Messiah: His companions and church. (“The queen” is the church in type and figure, v. 9.)

**Psalms 46-47:** God is our refuge. This psalm and the next 2 present a picture of the benefits of the setting up of His kingdom.

**vv. 1-3** — **Sufficiency** of God

**vv. 4-7** — **Security** of God

**vv. 8-11** — **Supremacy** of God

**Psalms 46-47:** Praise and worship in the Millennium.

**Psalms 48-49:** Messiah’s victory which brings in the kingdom.

**Psalms 49-50:** Contrast of rich and poor. “Death shall feed on them” (v. 14) should be “death is their shepherd.” God delivers the redeemed from death.

### **Psalms 50 — 60: Israel’s Redeemer**

**Psalms 50-51:** Judgment. God judges His people (vv. 7-15). God judges the wicked (vv. 16-23).

**Psalms 51-52:** David’s great penitential psalm when Nathan pointed the accusing finger with the words, “Thou art the man” (2 Samuel 12:7).

**vv. 1-6** — Pardon — repentance — sorrow

**vv. 7-12** — Purity — remission — sigh

**vv. 13-15** — Power — restoration — service

**vv. 16-19** — Pleasure — reparation — song

### **Psalms 52 — 55: “Maschil” (instruction) psalms**

This series of 4 psalms is all about the coming of Antichrist.



**Psalm 52:** Mighty man of mischief — Antichrist.

**Psalm 53:** Antichrist denies the existence of God.

**Psalm 54:** A cry of faith in the times of Antichrist.

**Psalm 55:** The darkest days under Antichrist. Notice the deception of Antichrist (v. 21).

**Psalms 56 — 60: “Michtam” (engraven; permanent) psalms**

**Psalm 56:** Deep trouble. Souls of the saints are laid bare during the Great Tribulation.

**Psalm 57:** Cry for mercy (see title of psalm).

**Psalm 58:** Rebuke of unrighteousness (lawlessness).

**Psalm 59:** God’s people surrounded by enemies.

**Psalm 60:** Confession and victory for God’s people (see title).

**Psalms 61 — 72: Israel’s redemption**

**Psalm 61:** Cry and confidence of the godly. (Psalms 62 — 68 carry out the theme of Psalm 61.)

**Psalm 62:** The “only” psalm (see author’s booklet by the same name). Note the word “only” and the possessive pronoun “my.” It expresses great confidence.

**Psalm 63:** Thirst for the Water of Life (God). Chrysostom says that the early church sang this psalm every morning. It is a psalm of David, as also are 64 and 65.

**Psalm 64:** The wicked win, then God judges them.

**Psalm 65:** Song of the Millennium.

**Psalm 66:** Song (v. 1) and prayer (vv. 18, 19).

**Psalm 67:** Blessing and praise for the Millennium.

**Psalm 68:** Song of deliverance that ushers in the kingdom. A messianic psalm (cp. v. 18 with Ephesians 4:8).

**Psalm 69:** The silent years in the life of Christ. Next to Psalm 22, the most quoted psalm in the New Testament. (Psalm 22: the death of Christ; Psalm 69: the life of Christ.)

**vv. 7-12** — Dark days in Nazareth.

**vv. 20, 21** — Dark hours on the cross.

**vv. 22-25** — Imprecatory: a cry for justice.

**Psalm 70:** Urgent cry for deliverance (duplication of the last 5 verses of Psalm 40).

**Psalm 71:** The suffering Savior. Jesus aged on the cross (v. 9).

**Psalm 72:** David speaks to Solomon. The King and the kingdom are coming (vv. 11, 17, 19).

### **III. Leviticus section, Psalms 73 — 89**

*Darkness and Dawn (Sanctuary in View)*

Tabernacle, temple, house, assembly, and congregation appear in almost every psalm.

#### **Psalms 73 — 83: “Asaph psalms” (2 Chronicles 29:30)**

**Psalm 73:** Perplexity about prosperity. Why does God permit the wicked to prosper (vv. 3-9)? The answer is found in the sanctuary (v. 17). The state of the wicked is temporary; they are brought down suddenly (vv. 18, 19).

**Psalm 74:** A cry for deliverance when the temple is defiled by the enemy (vv. 7, 19).

**Psalm 75:** God answers the plea of Psalm 74. Help comes from God (vv. 6, 7).

**Psalm 76:** Prophetic of the Messiah upon the throne, and the temple open for worship.

**Psalm 77:** Perplexity about the mercy and goodness of God (v. 9). The answer again is in the sanctuary (v. 13). History reveals that God does not forget (vv. 11-20).

**Psalm 78:** The history of Israel from Moses to David.

**Psalm 79:** Future of Israel in the Great Tribulation. The temple is defiled (v. 1).

**Psalm 80:** Plea to the Shepherd of Israel to lead them again. The Shepherd is at God's right hand (v. 17).

**Psalm 81:** God's answer to the plea of Psalm 80. The trumpet of praise is blown (v. 3).

**Psalm 82:** God is in the midst of His people (the Shekinah glory in the tabernacle). He judges the judges of the people.

**Psalm 83:** Prayer for God to deliver His people from their enemies. Imprecatory prayer (vv. 9-12) is a cry for justice.

#### **Psalms 84 — 89: Looking to the future**

**Psalm 84:** Deep desire for God's house that they might look upon the face of "thine anointed" (v. 9).

**Psalm 85:** Future restoration of Israel. Kingdom blessing (v. 10).

**Psalm 86:** David prays for the future kingdom (vv. 8, 9).

**Psalm 87:** Glorious future of Jerusalem. The nations will come to Jerusalem to worship (see Isaiah 2:2; Zechariah 2:10, 11).

**Psalm 88:** Dirge of gloom, a lamentation. This is the darkest wail of woe in the Book of Psalms. The one ray of hope is "Lord God of my salvation" (v. 1).

**Psalm 89:** Song of the faithfulness of God in keeping the Davidic Covenant (cp. vv. 34-37 with 2 Samuel 7:8-17).

#### **IV. Numbers section, Psalms 90 — 106**

##### *Peril and Protection of Pilgrims (Earth in View)*

We do not become pilgrims until we become strangers.

**Psalm 90:** Dirge of death and darkness by Moses. Moses witnesses

the deaths of 1 1/2 million Israelites who came with him out of Egypt but perish in the wilderness. The wilderness becomes a vast cemetery. “Secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven” (see v. 8).

**Psalm 91:** Messianic psalm (cp. vv. 11, 12 with Matthew 4:6). Song of life and light. Saints of all ages turn here for help and hope.

**Psalm 92:** Song of praise for the sabbath day. Verse 1 is the theme. “Most High” is a kingdom phrase.

**Psalm 93:** Song of sheer praise because the King is reigning (millennial kingdom).

**Psalms 94 — 100: Kingdom songs (celebrating the Messiah’s reign)**

**Psalm 94:** A call upon God to intervene in righteousness against the wicked. A cry from the remnant in the time of trouble preceding the kingdom.

**Psalm 95:** Song of sheer joy because the king is reigning.

**Psalm 96:** A hymn to Him. He fulfills prophecy, ends idolatry, banishes Satan — creation rejoices.

**Psalm 97:** Joy to the world, the Lord has come. This is not a hymn of His 1st coming but of His 2nd coming. (“Gods” in v. 7 should be “angels” — cp. Hebrews 1:6).

**Psalm 98:** Second stanza of the new song of worship.

**Psalm 99:** Song to the king whose throne is a throne of grace and mercy (v. 1).

**Psalm 100:** Chorus of the hymn to Him. Note the rendering: “It is he that hath made us, and...we are his” (v. 3).

**Psalms 101 — 106: Praise to the King**

**Psalm 101:** Song to the King who rules in righteousness and judgment. Note Gaebelein’s rendering: “Morning after morning will I destroy all the wicked of the land” (v. 8).

**Psalm 102:** Prayer of trouble and sorrow. This is the King in

Gethsemane — His humiliation before His exaltation (Hebrews 5:7). He can sympathize with His people.

**Psalm 103:** Great psalm of praise for the tender mercies of God. “I beseech you...brethren, by the mercies of God...” (Romans 12:1).

**Psalm 104:** Hymn to God in nature because He is Creator. Psalm of creation.

**Psalm 105:** Hymn to God in history from Abraham to Moses. Psalm of providence (v. 5; cp. 1 Chronicles 16:8).

**Psalm 106:** Hymn to God in history, confessing Israel’s failure and God’s faithfulness. This psalm is the first to begin and end with “Hallelujah.” It is the psalm of pilgrims in the wilderness of this world.

## V. Deuteronomy section, Psalms 107 — 150

### *Perfection and Praise of the Word of God*

Before we can know Him, we must know the Word.  
Sin came through the broken Word;  
Israel scattered through the broken Word;  
Sanctuary destroyed through the broken Word.

**Psalm 107:** Song of the wandering Jew when he re-enters the promised land (vv. 3-6). A psalm that has blessed the hearts of saints of all ages.

#### 4 Stanzas

**vv. 1-7 — Providence:** directs pilgrims (tenor solo)

**vv. 8-20 — Pardon:** delivers prisoners (soprano solo)

**vv. 21-30 — Protection:** dissolves problems (bass solo)

**vv. 31-43 — Power:** delights (His) people (chorus)

**Psalm 108:** Israel’s praise and possessions.

**Psalm 109:** Messianic psalm — the humiliation of Christ. The Judas Iscariot psalm (cp. Acts 1:20). Note the imprecatory prayer (vv. 6-13).

**Psalm 110:** Messianic psalm — the exaltation of Christ (v. 1, cp. Matthew 22:44; Acts 2:34, 35; Hebrews 1:13; 10:12, 13; also v. 4, cp. Hebrews 5:6; 6:20; 7:21).

**Psalm 111:** Hallelujah for the works of God (a perfect acrostic psalm — Hebrew alphabet).

**Psalm 112:** Hallelujah for the righteousness of God (v. 6). “Blessed with all earthly blessings” — a perfect acrostic.

### **Psalms 113 — 118: Hallel psalms**

**Psalm 113:** A hallelujah chorus to God as Creator and Redeemer. This psalm to the majesty of God opens the Hallel psalms which are sung at the Passover feast.

**Psalm 114:** God leads His dear children along. Song of deliverance from Egypt and the origin of the nation.

**Psalm 115:** Glory to God because He is the opposite of the idols of the heathen (vv. 3-8).

**Psalm 116:** Love song because God swallows death in victory (vv. 3-15). Next to the 23rd, this psalm is the most beloved.

**Psalm 117:** Hallelujah because all nations and peoples will praise God. (Shortest psalm.)

**Psalm 118:** Messianic psalm (1 Peter 2:8; Matthew 21:42) — the hymn sung before Christ and His disciples went out into the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26). Imagine our Lord singing this hymn on that fatal night (vv. 6, 8, 14, 17, 22, 24, 26). This is the last of the Hallel psalms.

**Psalm 119:** Praise to the Word of God. Some reference to the Word of God is in every verse (except vv. 122, 132), designated *word, saying, way, testimonies, judgments, precepts, commandments, law, statutes, and faithfulness*. The psalm is a perfect acrostic (see text), in 22 sections corresponding to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

### **Psalms 120 — 134: Pilgrim psalms**

*“Songs of the Pilgrim Caravans,” “Songs of Ascents,” “Songs of Degrees.”* The key is Psalm 122:3, 4:

*Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together, whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD.*

As the tribes of Israel go up to Jerusalem to worship at the appointed feast days — Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles — they sing these psalms. Notice the ascent. They were to be going and growing spiritually in the same way.

**Psalm 120:** Chanted as the pilgrim march to Jerusalem began.

**Psalm 121:** Hills about Jerusalem come into view. The question (v. 1) should be translated, “Shall I lift up mine eyes unto the hills ...?” (see Jeremiah 3:23; Psalm 90:2).

**Psalm 122:** Jerusalem comes into view (v. 2).

**Psalm 123:** The temple comes into view; the pilgrims turn their eyes to God in hope.

**Psalm 124:** They come in sight of the grace of God and offer a prayer of thanksgiving.

**Psalm 125:** They come in sight of Mt. Zion. The pilgrims arrive in the security of Jerusalem. Assurance is the theme of their song.

**Psalm 126:** A song for the return after the Babylonian captivity. They look to the future for a larger deliverance. They come in sight of the heathen.

**Psalm 127:** The vanity of building without God. Obviously the pilgrims are in the gates of the temple.

**Psalm 128:** The family is come to Jerusalem to worship.

**Psalm 129:** The pilgrim reviews his youth and the hand of God upon him.

**Psalm 130:** The pilgrim cries out of the depths and thanks God for forgiveness. Israel will be redeemed.

**Psalm 131:** Childlike faith and simplicity of the pilgrim (notice that David is the writer).

**Psalm 132:** Messianic psalm (v. 11, cp. Luke 1:32, 33; Acts 2:30). Also a Davidic psalm — David mentioned 4 times. It looks to the time when Christ will be King in Jerusalem.

**Psalm 133:** The pilgrim thanks God for the fellowship of other brethren who have come up to Jerusalem. David is the writer.

**Psalm 134:** Pilgrim's progress. Pilgrim stands in the temple and lifts his voice in praise with the multitude. This is the last pilgrim psalm.

**Psalm 135:** Hallelujah psalm. Israel praises God for the deliverance of the past. The name of Jehovah is praised (cp. v. 13 with Exodus 3:14, 15).

**Psalm 136:** Another hallelujah psalm. Praise of His mercy — in creation, in redemption, in fighting enemies, and for the future glory.

**Psalm 137:** By the canals of Babylon. Some captive wrote this during the Babylonian captivity as he thought of Jerusalem and the temple. It is the experience of the captives away from home and in slavery.

**vv. 1, 2** — Central experience: deeply dejected in a strange land; weeping as they remember Zion. They have no heart to sing but put their harps on a willow tree.

**vv. 3, 4** — Critical experience: Babylonians, having heard of the songs sung in the temple, ask the captives to sing. They cannot sing in a strange land, out of the will of God.

**vv. 5-9** — Crowning experience: repentant, asking God for justice according to the Mosaic Law ("eye for eye, tooth for tooth" [Exodus 21:24]). This is an imprecatory psalm, law of retaliation, *lex talionis*.

**Psalm 138:** A song of wholehearted praise; a contrast to Psalm 137. Worship by the redeemed.

**Psalm 139:** A song of praise to the attributes of God.



**vv. 1-6 — Omniscience** of God (v. 6 reaction to it).

**vv. 7-18 — Omnipresence** of God (vv. 17, 18 reaction to it).

**vv. 19-24 — Omnipotence** of God (vv. 23, 24 reaction to it).

**Psalm 140:** Prophetic prayer for deliverance from “the evil man” (v. 1) or “man of sin” (prophetic of the remnant in the midst of their enemies). Imprecatory: cry for justice according to law.

**Psalm 141:** David sends out an SOS. His prayer arises from some unknown experience. The application is to the remnant in the final struggle against evil.

**Psalm 142:** Prayer of David in the cave of Adullam (1 Samuel 22:1, 2). Here is where David’s suffering begins. These are an adumbration of the sufferings of Christ, although some of David’s suffering resulted from his own sin and cannot represent the sufferings of the spotless Savior.

**Psalm 143:** Prayer of David to the faithfulness, righteousness, and lovingkindness of God. As it has been said, “David was in love with prayer.”

**Psalm 144:** David’s praise to God because of who He is; his prayer is for the same reason.

**Psalm 145:** Praise of David to God because of who He is and what He does. It looks forward to the praise of the redeemed and restored remnant in the kingdom. This is the last psalm of David.

### **Psalms 146 — 150: Hallelujah psalms**

The Book of Psalms concludes with 5 hallelujah psalms. Each begins and ends with a “hallelujah.” The night of sin and suffering is over. Weeping is past and joy has come in the morning of the Millennium. The Book of Revelation also concludes with 4 hallelujahs (Revelation 19).

**Psalm 146:** “Praise ye the Lord” (v. 1) — a praise to God for His goodness.

**Psalm 147:** A hallelujah chorus because of God’s goodness to the

earth and to Jerusalem. He is Creator, Preserver, and Keeper.

**Psalm 148:** A hallelujah chorus of all God's created intelligences in the heavens and in the earth (Revelation 5:11-13; 19:1-6).

**Psalm 149:** A hallelujah chorus because the kingdom has come through redemption by blood and judgment by power.

**Psalm 150:** A hallelujah chorus with orchestra — singing and playing with all the stops pulled out. Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth has come in the person of the King.

Stops pulled out on Creation's organ:

v. 1 — Diapason

vv. 2, 3 — Flute

vv. 4, 5 — String

v. 6 — Vox Humana

God's people can sing today for He "giveth songs in the night" (Job 35:10). As one writer has said, "A psalm a day keeps worry away."

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(A classic work and very comprehensive.)

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*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*



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**Notes & Outlines**

# **PROVERBS**

J. Vernon McGee

# PROVERBS

## **WRITER:** Solomon

Solomon is the writer of the next 3 books of the Bible: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. Proverbs is the book on wisdom; Ecclesiastes is the book on folly; Song of Solomon is the book on love. Love is the happy medium between wisdom and folly. Solomon is an authority on all 3 subjects (1 Kings 4:32-34).

## **KEY VERSE:**

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.* (Proverbs 1:7)

## **DEFINITIONS:**

“A proverb is a saying that conveys a specific truth in a pointed, pithy way.” “Proverbs are short sentences, drawn from long experience.” A truth couched in a form that is easy to remember, a philosophy based on experience, and a rule for conduct. A proverb is a sententious sentence, a maxim, an old saying, an old saw, a bromide, and an epigram.

## **FEATURES:**

The Orient and ancient East are the home of proverbs. Evidently Solomon gathered together many from other sources. He was the editor of all and the author of some. Dr. Thirtle and other scholars noted that there is a change of pronoun in the book from the second person to the third person. Their conclusions are that the proverbs in the second person were taught to Solomon by his teachers, and the proverbs in the third person were composed by Solomon.

There is a difference between the Book of Proverbs and proverbs in other writings (the Greeks were great at making proverbs, especially the gnostic poets):

1. Proverbs bear no unscientific statement or inaccurate observation; e.g., “Out of the heart proceed the issues of life” (see Proverbs 4:23); about 2700 years later, William Harvey found that the blood circulates. In contrast, in the Epistle of Barnabas (an apocryphal book) mention is made of the mythical phoenix, a bird that consumes itself by fire and then rises in resurrection. A fable such as this does not appear in the Book of Proverbs, nor anywhere else in the Bible.

2. The Proverbs are on a high moral plane. The immoral sayings that occur in other writings are not present. Justin Martyr said that Socrates was a Christian before Christ. Although, according to his admirers, Socrates portrays a high conception of morals, he also gives instructions to harlots on how to conduct themselves. The best that can be said of him is that he was unmoral.

3. The Proverbs do not contradict, while man's proverbs are often in opposition to each other. For example: "Look before you leap" vs. "He who hesitates is lost." "A man gets no more than he pays for" vs. "The best things in life are free." "Leave well enough alone" vs. "Progress never stands still." "A rolling stone gathers no moss" vs. "A setting hen does not get fat."

Although the Book of Proverbs seems to be a collection of sayings without any particular regard for orderly arrangement, the contrary is true. It is not a hodgepodge of unrelated statements, nor is it a discourse of cabbages and kings (Ecclesiastes 12:9). The book tells a story. It is a picture of a young man starting out in life. His first lesson is given in 1:7. Two schools bid for him and both send their literature. One is the school of Wisdom, the other is the school for fools. *Wisdom is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ* (see 1 Corinthians 1:30). In chapter 8, the young man goes to the academy of Wisdom where he is taught in proverbs. From chapters 10 through 24, the young man is in the classroom of Wisdom. This book is especially helpful to young men. (A very prominent jeweler in Dallas, Texas, had the Book of Proverbs bound attractively and copies given by the hundreds to young men.) The advice herein transcends all dispensations.

In a brief examination of the book, we can highlight only certain proverbs — not necessarily the most important or the most popular.

There is a proverb that is a *thumbnail sketch of every character in the Bible* (we can suggest only a few). Likewise, there is a proverb that will fit *all your friends and acquaintances*, which adds interest to the reading of the book (but may not increase your popularity if you identify them publicly).

Solomon wrote 3000 proverbs (1 Kings 4:32); we have fewer than 1000 of them in this book.

## **STRUCTURE OF PROVERBS, by A. C. Gaebelein:**

The literary form of these proverbs is mostly in the form of couplets. The two clauses of the couplet are generally related to each other by what has been termed parallelism, according to Hebrew poetry. Three kinds of parallelism have been pointed out:

1. *Synonymous Parallelism*. Here the second clause restates what is given in the first clause.

*Judgments are prepared for scoffers, and stripes for the back of fools.* (Proverbs 19:29)

2. *Antithetic (Contrast) Parallelism*. Here a truth is stated in the first clause and made stronger in the second clause by contrast with an opposite truth.

*The light of the righteous rejoiceth, but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.* (Proverbs 13:9)

3. *Synthetic Parallelism*. The second clause develops the thought of the first.

*The fear of a king is like the roaring of a lion; whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul.* (Proverbs 20:2)

## **OUTLINE:**

- I. **Wisdom and folly contrasted, Chapters 1 — 9**
- II. **Proverbs of Solomon, written and set in order by himself, Chapters 10 — 24**
- III. **Proverbs of Solomon, set in order by men of Hezekiah, Chapters 25 — 29**
- IV. **Oracle of Agur, unknown sage, Chapter 30**
- V. **Proverbs of a mother to Lemuel, Chapter 31**

## **COMMENT:**

- I. **Wisdom and folly contrasted, Chapters 1 — 9**  
**Chapter 1** — *The boy in the home starting out in life.*



**v. 5** — The challenge.

**v. 7** — This is repeated for every age and period in a person's life: childhood, teens, school age, adulthood, and the estate of senior citizen.

**v. 8** — The responsibility of parenthood — the little boy in the home is to be taught by his parents.

**v. 10** — This reminds us of Joseph (Genesis 39).

**v. 22** — *Simplicity* is “stupidity.”

**v. 32** — *Prosperity of fools* is a picture of our affluent society.

**Chapter 2** — *The boy begins to grow up and moves beyond the circle of the home.*

**v. 2** — Source of true wisdom.

**v. 16** — *Strange woman* was a harlot. God's law forbade His people from being harlots.

**Chapter 3** — *The boy is now to listen to God's law, as he was advised as a child in the home to turn to his father and mother (Proverbs 1:8).*

**vv. 5-7** — This is a popular portion, but v. 7 is usually omitted — it should be included.

**v. 9** — Material blessings always have a spiritual significance.

**vv. 11, 12** — A Christian should learn this early in life (Hebrews 12:5-11).

**vv. 33-35** — These verses are gems. The first part of v. 33 applies to Ahab and Jezebel.

**Chapter 4** — *Although the child is now a boy who has entered the big, bad and mad world, he is still counseled to remember the instruction of his father.*

**v. 7** — This thought runs like a stuck record through the entire book as the total objective of life. Wisdom, for the Christian, is Christ.

**v. 23** — The heart is the seat of the total personality. For its importance, get a concordance and look up all the references to the heart.

**Chapters 5 and 6** — *Read these chapters carefully and you will find that the young man is counseled to live a pure life for the sake of his*

*home. This is the kind of sex education that God gives.*

### **Chapter 5**

**v. 21** — The private life of the individual is always open before the Lord.

### **Chapter 6**

**v. 1** — Beware of signing a friend's note, and never become a partner with a stranger.

**vv. 6-9** — Don't be lazy. Have a plan. Be organized. Let the lowly ant teach you.

**vv. 16-19** — God loves, but God also hates. Here are 7 things on His hate parade. They are an ugly brood. Pride is number 1. Pride is a tumor of the brain. Through pride, Satan fell (Isaiah 14:12-17). Contrast these 7 things with the 7 beatitudes.

**vv. 27-29, 32** — The young man is being given a full sex education. A clean life is the only thing that meets God's standard. It is in conflict with, and actually opposite to, the "new morality."

**Chapter 7** — *Beware of the woman of easy morals.*

**Chapter 8** — *The young man is ready to go to college. The school of Wisdom and the school of fools bid for his application.*

**vv. 1-4** — Wisdom calls urgently to the young man.

**v. 13** — This is the major in the college of Wisdom.

**v. 17** — The only scholarship offered is a passionate desire to learn.

**v. 23** — *Set up* is "anointed."

**Chapter 9** — *The young man matriculates in the school of Wisdom.*

**v. 10** — This is the freshman course. It is the great lesson from the cradle through college.

*Classes are ready to begin.*

**II. Proverbs of Solomon, written and set in order by himself,  
Chapters 10 — 24**

**Chapter 10** — *The school bell rings. Notice the guidelines for the young student: vv. 1, 5, 7, 14, 16, 18, 23, 26, 30.*

### **Chapter 11**

**v. 1** — Principle for business.

**v. 10** — Think of David and Saul in connection with this verse.

**v. 15** — Don't sign the note.

**v. 16** — This reminds us of Ruth and Boaz.

**v. 22** — Beauty is only skin deep.

**v. 26** — This also reminds us of Joseph's experience in Egypt.

**v. 30** — The young man is to witness.

### **Chapter 12**

**v. 4** — Choosing a wife is more important than choosing a course.

**v. 15** — Rehoboam illustrates this proverb (1 Kings 12).

**v. 22** — Tell the truth.

### **Chapter 13**

**v. 3** — Shut up!

**v. 5** — When you talk, tell the truth.

**v. 24** — This is child psychology.

### **Chapter 14**

**v. 3** — This reminds us of the giant, Goliath (1 Samuel 17).

**v. 5** — Don't believe all you hear.

**v. 9** — This is applicable to Jezebel.

**v. 12** — This is God's answer to the man who says that it does not matter what you believe as long as you are sincere.

**v. 16** — The prodigal son did not return to the far country. Jonah never bought a second ticket to Tarshish.

**v. 34** — This is the plank that has been left out of the platform of all political parties. It is a prophecy that is coming true in the United States.

## **Chapter 15**

**v. 1** — See the story of Nabal and Abigail — “Beauty and the Beast” (1 Samuel 25:2-38).

**v. 3** — Big Brother may not be watching you, but God is.

**vv. 8, 26** — The wicked cannot do good nor think right.

**vv. 16, 17** — Read Daniel 1.

**v. 20** — The father brags about his son who does well — forgets the other.

**v. 23** — It is not only what you say, but when you say it.

**v. 29** — Does God answer prayer?

**v. 30** — The young man gets his first-quarter grades.

## **Chapter 16**

**v. 2** — This is the way we rationalize our conduct.

**v. 5** — God has not changed His mind.

**v. 7** — This is a barometer for conduct.

**v. 11** — This is a word for the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker.

**v. 12** — This is the lesson Hitler (and others like him) did not learn.

**v. 18** — The lull before the storm.

**v. 24** — Say it with words now and not with flowers later.

**v. 25** — Men are all striving for the same place, but it is not the place they think. Notice God’s way (John 14:6).

**v. 31** — A motto for the senior citizen.

**v. 33** — Applicable to the Book of Esther.

## **Chapter 17**

**v. 3** — This reminds us of Job’s sufferings.

**v. 5** — God is interested in the poverty program.

**v. 9** — You can’t believe half of what you hear, but you can repeat it!

v. 16 — Someone has rhymed it this way:

You can lead a horse to water,  
But you cannot make him drink.  
You can send a boy to college,  
But you cannot make him think.

v. 17 — It is wonderful to have friends.

v. 21 — This is when the parents receive the first-semester grades.

v. 22 — “The joy of the LORD is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:10).  
“Rejoice in the Lord” (Philippians 4:4).

v. 23 — Don’t be bribed.

v. 28 — It pays to keep your mouth shut.

### **Chapter 18**

v. 10 — “Safe in the arms of Jesus” — yes, but rather “Safe *as* an arm of Jesus.”

v. 14 — The will to fight and live.

v. 16 — This fits David, but also each one of us.

v. 21 — Have you told that loved one or friend that Jesus died for him or her? You have the keys to the kingdom of heaven — use them!

v. 22 — Let God help you choose a wife.

v. 24 — Are you a friend to your friends? “There is no friend like the lowly Jesus.”

### **Chapter 19**

v. 4 — Ask the prodigal son about fair-weather friends (Luke 15).

vv. 5, 9 — You can cut your throat with the tongue.

v. 13 — Delinquent children and a nagging wife do not make a happy home.

v. 21 — Man can make a computer; only God can put sense into it.

v. 23 — Fear of the Lord is still basic truth.

v. 24 — Boy, is he lazy!

v. 29 — God is not soft on the guilty.

## **Chapter 20**

**v. 1** — This was true at the wedding in Cana of Galilee (John 2). Christ did not make intoxicating drink.

**v. 2** — See Romans 13:1-5.

**v. 3** — Keep your nose out of your neighbor's business.

**v. 4** — Obstacles can be either stumbling blocks or stepping-stones.

**v. 9** — Guilty or not guilty? The Great Physician says, "The heart is...desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9).

**v. 12** — God not only made the bird to sing, but the ear to hear the song. God not only made the sunset, but the eye to see it.

**v. 14** — "Look at the bargain I got!" He told the salesman that the price was too high.

**v. 20** — "Honor thy father and mother" (Ephesians 6:1, 2) is still sound advice.

**v. 23** — Honesty is the best policy.

## **Chapter 21**

**v. 1** — God has to give the green light.

**v. 2** — Man rationalizes; God scrutinizes.

**v. 3** — "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:26).

**v. 4** — Attitudes and motives are the yardstick of sin.

**v. 9** — This is the man who did not know what true happiness was until he got married — and then it was too late.

**v. 13** — "God must love the poor, for He made so many of them" is ascribed to Lincoln.

**v. 30** — The power of positive preaching (2 Corinthians 13:8).

## **Chapter 22**

**v. 1** — A Dunn and Bradstreet rating.

**v. 2** — It is all level ground at the cross.

**v. 6** — "Train up a child in the [God's] way he should go and,

when he is old, he will not depart from it.” God has a way for a child, and it is up to parents to find that way. The parents should train a child in God’s way, not the parents’ way.

### **Chapter 23**

**vv. 1-3** — Don’t make a pig of yourself.

**v. 4** — Riches and education are excess baggage.

**v. 5** — Did you ever invest in a wildcat oil well?

**v. 9** — You can’t make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear. The Pygmalion and Galatea of the Bible.

**vv. 13, 14** — This is applying the board of education to the seat of knowledge.

**v. 23** — A bargain at any price.

### **Chapter 24**

**v. 10** — It takes a man to do a man’s job.

**v. 16** — Peter and Judas illustrate this.

**vv. 19, 20** — God will take care of all cases of injustice.

## **III. Proverbs of Solomon, set in order by men of Hezekiah, Chapters 25 — 29**

### **Chapter 25**

**v. 2** — Search the Scriptures. God never puts diamonds on top of the ground.

*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* (2 Timothy 2:15)

**v. 17** — “I wish that old gossip would stay home.”

**v. 19** — Judas was a bad toothache.

**vv. 21, 22** — See Romans 12:19, 20.

**v. 24** — Is this grounds for divorce?

**v. 25** — Have you heard from home lately?

## **Chapter 26**

**vv. 4, 5** — This is not a contradiction, but two actions with two results. You are in trouble if you answer a fool (v. 4). The fool is in trouble if you don't answer him — he will think he is smart (v. 5).

**Chapter 27** — *This chapter deals with the subject of friendship.*

**v. 6** — Paul rebuked Peter (Galatians 2:11-14), but they were still friends. Judas kissed Jesus, but he betrayed Him.

**v. 9** — A talk with a friend is sweeter than a bottle of Chanel #5.

**v. 10** — This is the California proverb — many folk left their friends in the Midwest, and the nearest relative is 2000 miles away.

**v. 12** — Buy insurance.

**v. 15** — Here is that battle-ax of a wife again.

**v. 17** — A sharp friend will keep you sharp.

**v. 19** — A friend is one who knows you and still loves you.

**v. 20** — No man was ever satisfied with a million.

**v. 24** — “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth...” (Matthew 6:19).

## **Chapter 28**

**v. 1** — The wicked is afraid of his own shadow.

**v. 9** — If you want God to listen to you, then you listen to Him.

**v. 13** — See 1 John 1:9.

**v. 14** — Fear God and you will have no man to fear.

**v. 24** — Parents should not ignore acts of theft in the home.

**v. 26** — “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart...” (Proverbs 3:5).

## **Chapter 29**

**v. 1** — Sudden death.

**v. 2** — For whom did you vote?

**v. 5** — Beware of the man who flatters you.



#### **IV. Oracle of Agur, unknown sage, Chapter 30**

**v. 4** — Ask Job this question (Job 38).

**vv. 8, 9** — Follow the middle of the road. Don't be an extremist.

**v. 12** — Is he talking about us?

**vv. 15, 16** — The horse constantly pulls on the rein. Abel began a march to the grave that has not ended. The woman who cannot have a child always wants to have children. We have too little rain in California and too much fire.

**v. 20** — “Illicit sex is not sin,” the sinner says. The “new morality” is not new.

**vv. 21-23** — For these four little troublemakers, a very crude bromide, which was popular when I was a boy, fits: “He is too big for his breeches.”

**v. 22** — A thumbnail sketch of Jeroboam (1 Kings 12-14).

#### **V. Proverbs of a mother to Lemuel, Chapter 31**

*A popular title would be “Advice on How to Choose a Wife.”*

**v. 1** — “King Lemuel” was evidently the pet name used by Bathsheba for her son, Solomon. Solomon does not seem to have followed her advice.

**v. 2** — “How shall I begin?” It is a delicate subject, and a man does not want his mother to speak to him on this matter of wine, women, and song.

**v. 3** — The subject here is women.

**vv. 4-7** — The subject here is wine. The Bible teaches temperance in all things. Rulers are advised (vv. 4, 5) to practice total abstinence because of their position. (Several years ago it was reported that there were 128 cocktail parties a week in Washington, D. C.) Strong drink (v. 6) is to be used as a medicine (1 Timothy 5:23).

**vv. 8, 9** — The ruler is to defend the helpless, the weak, and the poor. The ruler is to be just and righteous. The ruler represents God.

**vv. 10-31** — Choosing a wife.

**v. 10** — If a good man is hard to find, a good woman is harder to find. Scarcity makes her valuable — law of supply and demand.

**v. 11** — She must essentially be a woman whom her husband can trust.

**v. 12** — She is a help, not a millstone around his neck.

**vv. 13, 14** — She is a good worker and a bargain-hunter.

**v. 15** — A woman's work is never done.

**v. 16** — She is a good administrator.

**v. 17** — She doesn't mind physical work — she mops the floor.

**v. 18** — She is on the swing shift, but she is not a swinger!

**v. 19** — She may not be able to play the piano, but she can sew.

**v. 20** — She has a compassionate heart.

**v. 21** — She keeps her children in warm clothing.

**v. 22** — She does fancy work.

**v. 23** — Her husband is known as Mrs. So-and-So's husband.

**v. 24** — She sells handmade garments on the side for pin money.

**v. 25** — She has a good reputation.

**v. 26** — She is not a dumb blonde, brunette, or redhead.

**v. 27** — She is not lazy, but looks after her family.

**v. 28** — Her children celebrate Mother's Day with joy and reality.

**v. 29** — She never won the Miss America Pageant, but she is the winner at home.

**v. 30** — Not only should a son learn to fear the Lord, but the daughter should learn also.

**v. 31** — Her life is a book of praise.

**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter—
  
2. Most important verse—
  
3. Most prominent word—
  
4. Teaching about Christ—
  
5. Command to obey—
  
6. Promise to claim—
  
7. New truth learned—

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

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- Ironside, H. A. *Notes on the Book of Proverbs*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1907. (Very good.)
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- Moorehead, W. G. *Outline Studies in the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1894.
- Sauer, Erich. *The Dawn of World Redemption*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951.  
(An excellent Old Testament survey.)
- Scroggie, W. Graham. *The Unfolding Drama of Redemption*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970.  
(An excellent survey and outline of the Old Testament.)
- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Bible Handbook*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966. (Very valuable.)
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**Notes & Outlines**

**ECCLESIASTES  
SONG OF SOLOMON**

J. Vernon McGee

## ECCLESIASTES

**WRITER:** Solomon

The book is the “dramatic autobiography of his life when he got away from God.”

**TITLE:** *Ecclesiastes* means “preacher” or “philosopher.”

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of any book of the Bible is important to the correct understanding of it; this is no more evident than here. Human philosophy, apart from God, must inevitably reach the conclusions in this book; therefore, there are many statements which seem to contradict the remainder of Scripture. It almost frightens us to know that this book has been the favorite of atheists, and they (e.g., Volney and Voltaire) have quoted from it profusely. Man has tried to be happy without God, and this book shows the absurdity of the attempt. Solomon, the wisest of men, tried every field of endeavor and pleasure known to man; his conclusion was, “All is vanity.”

God showed Job, a righteous man, that he was a sinner in God’s sight. In Ecclesiastes God showed Solomon, the wisest man, that he was a fool in God’s sight.

**ESTIMATIONS:**

In Ecclesiastes, we learn that without Christ we cannot be satisfied, even if we possess the whole world — the heart is too large for the object. In the Song of Solomon, we learn that if we turn from the world and set our affections on Christ, we cannot fathom the infinite preciousness of His love — the Object is too large for the heart.

Dr. A. T. Pierson said, “There is a danger in pressing the words in the Bible into a positive announcement of scientific fact, so marvelous are some of these correspondencies. But it is certainly a curious fact that Solomon should use language entirely consistent with discoveries such as evaporation and storm currents (1:6, 7). Some have boldly said that Redfield’s theory of storms is here explicitly stated. Without taking such ground, we ask, who taught Solomon to use terms that readily accommodate facts? Who taught him that the movement of the winds, which seem to be so lawless and uncertain, is ruled by laws as positive as those which rule the growth of the plant; and that by evaporation, the waters that fall on the earth are continually rising again, so that the sea never overflows? Ecclesiastes 12:6 is a poetic description of death. The ‘silver cord’ describes the spinal marrow, the ‘golden bowl’ the basin which holds the brain, the ‘pitcher’ the lungs, and the ‘wheel’ the heart. Without claiming that Solomon was inspired to foretell the circulation of the blood, 26 centuries before

Harvey announced it, is it not remarkable that the language he uses exactly suits the facts — a wheel pumping up through one pipe to discharge through another?”

**KEY WORD:**

“Vanity” occurs 37 times. Most Bible teachers would give the phrase “under the sun,” which occurs 29 times.

**OUTLINE:**

- I. Problem stated: “All is vanity,”** Chapter 1:1-3
- II. Experiment made,** Chapters 1:4 — 12:12  
*Seeking satisfaction in the following:*
  - A.** Science (the laws of nature), Chapter 1:4-11
  - B.** Wisdom and philosophy, Chapter 1:12-18
  - C.** Pleasure, Chapter 2:1-11
  - D.** Materialism (living for the “now”), Chapter 2:12-26
  - E.** Fatalism, Chapter 3:1-15
  - F.** Egoism, Chapters 3:16 — 4:16
  - G.** Religion, Chapter 5:1-8
  - H.** Wealth, Chapters 5:9 — 6:12
  - I.** Morality (the “good life”), Chapters 7:1 — 12:12
- III. Result of experiment,** Chapter 12:13, 14  
*All things under the sun are vanity.*

A right relationship with God, in any age, through the way He has made, brings the only abiding satisfaction. *What a difference between the man “under the sun” and the man “in Christ” seated in the heavens far above all suns!*

**COMMENT:**

**I. Problem stated: “All is vanity,”** Chapter 1:1-3  
Solomon pursued in this book every avenue, experience, and interest of man in this life to find satisfaction and fulfillment. Solomon as king had full freedom to carry on this experiment, and he was not hindered by financial or power limitations. He could go the limit in every direction. The result is “vanity” — emptiness. Frustration and dissatisfaction met him in every experiment. The conclusions are human, apart from the divine, made by the man *under* the sun. This is the ultimate end of man’s efforts apart from God.

Do not misunderstand what is meant by “inspiration” when we say that the Bible is inspired by God. Inspiration guarantees the accuracy of the words of Scripture, not always the thought that is expressed. The

context should be considered and attention paid to the person who made the statement, and under what circumstances (e.g., in the betrayal of Christ by Judas, the *record* of the event is inspired, but the *act* of Judas was not God-inspired, but was satanic).

Keep in mind that the conclusions in each experiment are human, not God's truth. This is man *under* the sun, entirely separated from the "Sun of righteousness" who is the Son of God.

## **II. Experiment made, Chapters 1:4 — 12:12**

*Seeking satisfaction in the following:*

### **A. Science (the laws of nature), Chapter 1:4-11**

**v. 4** — Earth is permanent; man is temporary. Continuity of mankind is maintained through births.

**vv. 5-7** — The laws of nature are as fixed as the material universe itself. Some remarkable scientific statements are made here.

**v. 8** — This is a good verse to hang on the TV set. Man cannot exhaust the exploration of the universe. The more he learns reveals that there is still more to learn. This is frustrating. The physical universe is too big for little man.

**vv. 9-11** — The statement that there is no new thing under the sun seems to be untrue in this age of "gadgetry," but it is true. It is said that the atom bomb is new, but the atom has been around a long time. Actually, the atom is older than man, although man did not know it existed for a long time. All man has accomplished is to make the little atom a very difficult neighbor. The nosy human should have let sleeping dogs lie.

A computer brain and electronic nervous system can bring to man no deep and abiding satisfactions.

### **B. Wisdom and philosophy, Chapter 1:12-18**

**v. 13** — The experiment.

**v. 14** — All systems of philosophy lead up a blind alley.

**v. 15** — Philosophy and psychology cannot change human nature, nor can they correct the old nature of man. As the twig is bent, so the tree grows.

**v. 18** — Joy and satisfaction do not increase in ratio to the increase of knowledge.

### **C. Pleasure, Chapter 2:1-11**



**vv. 1-3** — This is the philosophy of hedonism, teaching that pleasure is the chief goal of life and that the gratification of all the appetites of the body is the fulfillment of moral obligation. Notice that he tries comedy — anything for a laugh.

**vv. 4-7** — He builds around himself all the comforts of this life.

**v. 8** — He has plenty of spending money and goes in for entertainment.

**v. 10** — Solomon tries everything a man can try for pleasure.

**v. 11** — When he adds it all up, it equals zero. The man under the sun finds no satisfaction permanently — only “the pleasures of sin for a season” (Hebrews 11:25).

#### **D. Materialism (living for the “now”), Chapter 2:12-26**

**vv. 12-16** — He sees that actually there is no permanent difference between the man with the high IQ and low IQ, educated and uneducated. They both come to the same end.

**vv. 17-20** — If he accumulates great wealth, he will leave it to an offspring who will be either wise or a fool.

**vv. 21-23** — Even the wise man cannot avoid sorrow, sickness, and death.

**vv. 24-26** — The best thing to do is to eat and drink, concentrate on the here and now, and get all he can out of this life. Live for the now and forget tomorrow. However, even this does not satisfy, although it is better than LSD.

#### **E. Fatalism, Chapter 3:1-15**

**vv. 1-8** — Too often men attempt to draw some Christian truth from these verses. However, this is the rawest kind of pagan fatalism. If this were true, man would be no better than a robot, zombie, computer, machine or any other push-button gadget. This type of thinking allows no room for the free will of man and the operation of the grace and mercy of God. Even the time of death can be changed (see Exodus 32:10 and Isaiah 38).

**v. 11** — God has let man put the world in his heart so that he might see that the world does not satisfy — his heart is still empty.

**v. 14** — Although God’s will is primary, fatalism leaves no place for His mercy and grace. God answers prayer.

## **F. Egoism, Chapters 3:16 — 4:16**

(Excessive love of self. Individual self-interest is the *sum-mum bonum* of life.)

### **Chapter 3**

**v. 16** — All men are wicked. You can't trust anyone. This is a cynical view of the human race, but it is reasonably accurate.

**vv. 18, 19** — This view does not accept the optimist's conclusions. Evolution says that man *was* a beast. Egoism says that man *is* a beast. This view causes the individual to despise others. It has produced the caste and class systems in all the countries of the world.

**v. 20** — He is speaking only of the body. Even Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the soul *sleeps*, not that it turns to dust.

**v. 21** — Man is different from the beast.

**v. 22** — The only thing worthwhile is for man to identify himself with his own works. This is the ancient version of the hippy and yippy philosophy.

### **Chapter 4**

**v. 1** — The egoist rebels against the establishment.

**v. 6** — This man wants to do his own thing.

**vv. 9-11** — This is the only reason for teaming up with another.

**v. 16** — This philosophy leads to a meaningless existence.

## **G. Religion, Chapter 5:1-8**

Religion has damned the world more than any other thing. Look what the pagan religions did for peoples in the past. Look at India, China, and the Muslim world. Look at the Roman Catholic world. Look at liberal Protestantism. Multitudes have joined churches since World War II to get away from God and from establishing a personal relationship to Christ.

**v. 1** — Be religious and go to church, but have as little to do with it as possible.

**v. 2** — Do not make any decision under stress of emotion. Cry at the movies, but not in church. Don't sign a pledge; don't agree to accept an office.

**vv. 4-6** — God has a great deal to say about the importance He attaches to vows (see author's book, *Learning Through Leviticus*,

chapter 27).

**v. 7** — Dreams and words are no substitute for a personal relationship with God.

**v. 8** — A Christian should be involved in a poverty program.

### **H. Wealth, Chapters 5:9 — 6:12**

#### **Chapter 5**

**v. 10** — Wealth is not wrong in itself. It is the *love* of money that is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10). To accumulate wealth for wealth's sake is wrong. The miser thinks dollars are flat so they can be stacked; the spendthrift thinks they are round so they can be rolled.

**v. 12** — The poor man is often happier than the rich man.

#### **Chapter 6**

**vv. 1-12** — The rich man can eat only three meals a day, sleep on one bed at a time, and cannot live longer than the poor man. The rich man's life is but a shadow. There is no pocket in a shroud. Job, a rich man, said that he came here with nothing and he was leaving the same way. It is rather empty to give one's life to the pursuit of that which does not bring happiness here and has no value hereafter.

### **I. Morality (the “good life”), Chapters 7:1 — 12:12**

The do-gooder, going down the middle of the road on the freeway of life. Babbit on Main Street in the Big City, doing business under a neon sign, but living in suburbia in a sedate, secluded, and exclusive neighborhood, taking it easy.

#### **Chapter 7**

**v. 1** — A good reputation and a long eulogy at the funeral is the *summum bonum* of life.

**v. 2** — From the knife and fork club to the funeral service, all is done in a dignified manner.

**v. 3** — Laughing all the way to the cemetery.

**v. 4** — Living in the presence of death.

**vv. 5-29** — Take it easy; walk softly; don't be extreme; avoid the left and the right; go down the middle; compromise; don't fight — switch.

**Chapter 8** — Neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm. He observes

that there does not seem to be too much difference between the wicked and the righteous (vv. 14, 15).

**vv. 2-5** — Obey the law. Keep out of trouble. Do not become involved.

**v. 8** — All men are equal at death. Although they may not be born equal, they die equal.

**v. 9** — Notice “under the sun.” This is man’s view apart and contrary to the viewpoint of God.

**v. 11** — You can’t get by with it. Men are deceived when they sin because of the fact that God does not judge immediately.

**Chapter 9** — Man’s wrong conclusions and pseudo-philosophy due to his ignorance, prejudice, and false premises. “Under the sun” occurs four times in this chapter.

**vv. 1, 2** — All will arrive at the same place. All will eventually be saved.

**v. 3** — Death brings about total integration. All are equal.

**v. 4** — While there is life, there is hope.

**v. 5** — This does not teach soul sleep. He is speaking only of the body (see v. 10).

**v. 9** — They lived happily ever after.

**v. 10** — This is a clear reference to the body. “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do,” do it now, for it cannot be done in the grave. The hand belongs to the body, not to the soul. It is the body that is put to sleep in the grave; it is the body that is raised (see notes on 1 Thesalonians 4:13-18). The spirit or soul goes to God (see Ecclesiastes 12:7).

**vv. 11, 12** — Life is a matter of luck or a game of chance.

**Chapter 10** — The injustice of life suggests the adoption of a moderate course.

**v. 1** — One night on the town means a lifetime in the darkness of disease or death. A mother spends twenty-one years teaching a son to be wise, and some girl comes along and makes a fool out of him in five minutes.

**v. 7** — To work hard, save your money, and study late does not always mean that you will become a success. The fool next door may

inherit a million.

**vv. 8, 9** — Don't try to get even.

**v. 11** — See Romans 3:13, 14.

**v. 19** — The one who pays the fiddler calls the tunes.

**v. 20** — Little brother is watching.

**Chapter 11** — This is the best course to follow for the moral man.

**v. 1** — Don't be afraid of doing good, although the reward may be late in arriving.

**v. 3** — Rain is predicted. Carry an umbrella. It is hard to move a redwood after it falls. It is always best to have a clear understanding in the beginning.

**v. 6** — Take a chance, provided you know what you are doing.

**v. 8** — Life for a senior citizen is not all that the brochures say it is.

**v. 9** — Youth is the time of opportunity, joy, and decision. Youth turns to Christ more easily than old age. The time to make a decision for Christ is in one's youth.

**Chapter 12**

**vv. 2-7** — A poetic picture of old age, but not a pretty picture.

**v. 2** — Failing eyesight makes it appear that the sun, moon and stars are getting dimmer. Time flies and one sad experience follows another — clouds return after rain.

**v. 3** — “Keepers of the house shall tremble” refers to the legs. The old person begins to totter.

“Strong men” are the shoulders that are no longer erect.

“Grinders” are the teeth.

“Those that look out of the windows” refers to failing eyesight.

**v. 4** — “Doors...shut in the streets” refers to being hard of hearing.

“Sound of the grinding is low” refers to the tongue. The voice of old age gets thin.

“Shall rise up at the voice of the bird” — it took an alarm clock to wake him before, now the cheep of a bird disturbs his sleep.

“Daughters of music shall be brought low” indicates that he can no longer sing in the choir, cannot carry a tune.

v. 5 — “Afraid of that which is high” — things that formerly did not frighten him.

“Fears shall be in the way” — he no longer enjoys traveling.

“Almond tree shall flourish” — our senior citizen is getting grey-haired, if his hair has not fallen out.

“Grasshopper shall be a burden” — little things annoy him.

“Desire shall fail” — romance is gone.

“Man goeth to his long home” — death comes.

v. 6 — “Silver cord” is the spinal cord,

“Golden bowl” is the head,

“Pitcher” is the lungs,

“Wheel” is the heart.

v. 7 — There is no soul sleep here. The body sleeps, but the spirit or soul goes to God.

v. 12 — Writing and study are not an end in themselves.

### III. **Result of experiment**, Chapter 12:13, 14

*All things under the sun are vanity.*

When as a child, I laughed and wept,

Time crept;

When as a youth, I dreamed and talked,

Time walked;

When I became a full-grown man,

Time ran;

When older still I daily grew,

Time flew;

Soon I shall find in traveling on

Time gone.

“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom” (Psalm 90:12).

v. 13 — “Fear God” is the message of Proverbs also. In view of the experiment made “under the sun,” the wise thing is to fear God, which means to reverence, worship, and obey Him.

To “keep his commandments” would mean to meet God’s conditions for salvation — in any age — grounded on faith in God.

*For Cain* it meant bringing a lamb;

*For Abraham* it meant believing God’s promises;

*For the people of Israel* it meant approaching God through sacrifice in the tabernacle and temple;

*For us* it is to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).

**v. 14** — God will judge every man, for every man is a sinner who is guilty before God. Christ bore a judgment death. Our sins are either on Christ by faith in Him, or else we must come before the Great White Throne for judgment.

## SONG OF SOLOMON

**WRITER:** Solomon (1:1)

Solomon was the author of 1,005 songs (1 Kings 4:32), but we have only one (Song of Songs); as the name would indicate, it is the best.

**KEY WORDS:** “Beloved,” the name for Him; “love,” the name for her.

**KEY VERSES:**

*I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine; he feedeth among the lilies. (6:3)*

*Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, he would utterly be rejected. (8:7)*

**THE MEANING:**

The Song of Solomon is a parabolic poem. The *interpretation*, not the inspiration, causes the difficulty — although there are some who actually feel it should not be in the Bible. Since it is in the canon of Scripture, it is the great neglected book of the Bible. Often young preachers are counseled not to use it until they become old men. The Jews called it the Holy of Holies of Scripture. Origen and Jerome tell us that the Jews would not permit their young men to read it until they were thirty years old. Surely any fragile flower requires delicate handling. There have been four different and important meanings found in this book:

1. It sets forth the glory of wedded love; declaring the sacredness of marital relationship and that marriage is a divine institution. To our occidental minds, it borders on the vulgar, but when it is compared to other oriental poetry, it is indeed tame and lacks the splash of color and extravagant terms which characterize oriental (e.g., Persian) poetry. The Jews taught that it sets forth the heart of a satisfied husband and a devoted wife.

2. It sets forth the love of Jehovah for Israel. The prophets spoke of Israel as the wife of Jehovah.

These two interpretations have been set forth by the scribes and rabbis of Israel and have been accepted by the church. However, there are two other interpretations:

3. It is a picture of Christ and the church. The church is the bride of Christ, a familiar figure of Scripture (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:27; Revelation 21).



4. It depicts the communion of Christ and the individual believer. The soul's communion with Christ is here set forth.

“The Song of Solomon tests the spiritual capacity of the reader.”

### **STORY OUTLINE:**

Since this book is a series of scenes, in a drama that is not told in chronological sequence, we shall make no attempt to outline the book.

The popular interpretation, that it tells the story of a girl kidnapped by Solomon, is repugnant. The book of Dr. H. A. Ironside is especially recommended, as it contains the only adequate and satisfying interpretation that I have seen. The key to the story is found in 8:11. The story is of a poor family of Ephraim in which there is a girl who is a sort of Cinderella. The poverty of the family forces her into the vineyards where she meets the young shepherd. The story of their love is first told. Then he leaves her with the promise that he will return. He is absent for a long time, and she despairs of his return. One day, the electrifying word is shouted along the way that King Solomon is coming by. She is not interested and takes no further notice until word is brought to her that King Solomon wants to see her. She is puzzled until she is brought into his presence where she recognizes him as her shepherd lover. He takes her to his palace in Jerusalem where most of the song takes place.

### **COMMENT:**

The setting of the drama is the palace in Jerusalem, and some of the scenes are flashbacks to a previous time. There is a reminder here of the Greek drama where a chorus talks back and forth to the protagonists of the play. The daughters of Jerusalem carry along the tempo of the story. Some of these dialogues were evidently to be sung. Several lovely scenes are introduced at Jerusalem which find a counterpart in the church.

When reading the Song of Solomon, take off the shoes from the natural man, for the ground on which you stand is spiritual ground.

**Chapter 1** — The drama opens at Baal-hamon, in the hill country of Ephraim.

**vv. 2-4** — The bride, in the palace in Jerusalem, reviews in her mind the meeting with the shepherd who was Solomon.

**v. 5** — She was sunburned, in contrast to the ladies of the court.

**v. 6** — She was forced by her brothers to keep the vineyard. Her “own vineyard” was her own beauty — she hadn't been able to go to the beauty salon.

v. 7 — The shepherd she met did not seem to have any sheep.

v. 8 — The shepherd is evasive.

vv. 9-17 — She falls in love with the shepherd, whom she later finds to be Solomon, the king.

## **Chapter 2**

vv. 1-7 — A love scene in the palace.

v. 1 — The bride speaks of herself. She is not boasting, but compares herself to the lowly and humble flowers of that land.

v. 2 — The bridegroom contrasts the lily with the thorns to reveal his love for her.

vv. 3-7 — The bride speaks of her love for the bridegroom. Any relationship of the believer to Christ must rest upon His love for the believer and the believer's love for Him.

vv. 8-17 — The return of the bridegroom after a trip abroad. The bride's happy anticipation of his return should be the attitude of the believer toward the return of Christ.

v. 8 — "The voice" of the bridegroom is heard first (John 5:25; 1 Thessalonians 4:16).

v. 13 — "Fig tree" suggests the nation Israel.

v. 16 — This is the highest spiritual expression of any relationship with Christ. It is the high note of the Rapture, the catching up of the believer to be with Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). This section puts into the lovely language of poetry the meaning of the Rapture. Read it again and again, and memorize it.

## **Chapter 3**

vv. 1-5 — The bride *dreams of the bridegroom* while he is away. She seeks him at night and is found by the watchman. At last, she finds the bridegroom.

vv. 6-11 — Solomon in all his glory enters Jerusalem with his bride.

## **Chapter 4**

vv. 1-15 — *The love song of the bridegroom*. This is the expression of deep desire and strong passion. Compare v. 7 with Ephesians 5:25-27. It is impossible for the believer to know (vv. 9, 10) how much Christ loves him (Revelation 2:4).

v. 16 — The response of the bride (Isaiah 53:11).

## **Chapter 5**

**vv. 1-3** — The bride is *reluctant to open the door* to the bridegroom after she has retired.

**vv. 4, 5** — A lovely custom of that day was for the lover to place sweet smelling myrrh inside the handle of the bride's door. When she rose up and placed her hand on the handle, she discovered the myrrh and knew he had been there and gone.

**v. 6** — While he was out looking for lost sheep, she was sleeping. This is a fitting picture of Christ and the contemporary church.

**vv. 7, 8** — The *bride goes looking for the bridegroom*. She meets the daughters of Jerusalem, inquires of them, and waxes eloquent concerning him.

**v. 9** — They are skeptical and cynical. The world asks us, "Who is Christ? Is He any different from other religious leaders?"

**vv. 10-16** — She knows him and knows he is different. This is a detailed and glowing description of him, which reveals that she both knows him and loves him.

## **Chapter 6**

**v. 1** — The daughters of Jerusalem are so impressed by her glowing description that they are turned from skeptics to believers.

**vv. 2, 3** — The bride continues her praise of him.

**vv. 4-10** — The bridegroom expresses his love and affection for the bride.

**vv. 11, 12** — The bride responds.

**v. 13** — The daughters of Jerusalem respond.

## **Chapter 7**

**vv. 1-5** — The daughters of Jerusalem praise the beauty of the bride. (See the description of the church as the bride of Christ in Revelation 21.)

**vv. 6-13** — An antiphony of love by the bride and bridegroom.

**Chapter 8** — The love song concludes.

**vv. 5-7** — The bridegroom speaks of love and gives the theme of the song.

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- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*. Vol. I. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1981. (The Old Testament is covered in two volumes by this eminent Hebrew scholar. Highly recommended.)

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*



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**Notes & Outlines**

# **ISAIAH**

J. Vernon McGee

## PROPHETIC BOOKS

Beginning with Isaiah, and continuing through the Old Testament, there is a section of Scripture called the prophetic portion of the Bible. Although the predictive element bulks large in this section, the prophets were more than fortune-tellers. Actually, they were men raised up of God in a decadent day when both priest and king were no longer worthy channels through whom the expressions of God might flow.

These men not only spoke of events in the far-off future but also spoke of local events in the immediate future. They had to speak in this manner in order to qualify for this office under God, according to the Mosaic code:

*But the prophet, who shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him.* (Deuteronomy 18:20-22)

If the local event did not transpire just as the prophet predicted, he was labeled a false prophet and was so treated. You may be sure that the message of the false prophet is not in the library of inspired Scripture. The prophetic books are filled with events that are local and fulfilled. A sharp distinction needs to be drawn between this portion and that which is yet to be fulfilled.

One of the greatest evidences of the fact that these men were speaking the words of God is revealed in the hundreds of prophecies that have been **fulfilled literally**. Man cannot guess the future. Even the meteorologists have difficulty in prognosticating the weather twenty-four hours in advance, although they have the advantage of all sorts of scientific and mechanical devices to assist them. No modern weather forecaster could have been an accepted

prophet in Israel! The law of compound probability forbids man from consistently foretelling the future. Each uncertain element added decreases the chance of accuracy by fifty percent. The example of hundreds of prophecies literally fulfilled has a genuine appeal to the honest mind and sincere seeker after the truth. Fulfilled prophecy is one of the infallible proofs of plenary, verbal inspiration of Scripture.

The predictive element is the peculiar and particular contribution of these men of God. This does not mean there was not this element before them or after them. The last book of the Bible closes the message of God for the future.

The prophets were extremely **nationalistic**. They rebuked sin in high as well as low places. They warned the nation. They pleaded with a proud people to humble themselves and return to God. Fire and tears were mingled in their message, which was not one of doom and gloom alone, for they saw the Day of the Lord and the glory to follow. All of them looked through the darkness to the dawn of a new day. In the night of sin they saw the light of a coming Savior and Sovereign; they saw the millennial kingdom coming in all its fullness. Their message must be interpreted before an appreciation of the kingdom in the New Testament can be attained. The correct perspective of the kingdom must be gained through the eye of the Old Testament prophets.

The prophets were not supermen — they were men of like passions as we are, but having spoken for God, their message is still the infallible and inspired Word of God:

*Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them did signify, when he testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. (1 Peter 1:10, 11)*

*We have also a more sure word of prophecy, unto which ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth*

*in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star  
arise in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophe-  
cy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For  
the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man,  
but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the  
Holy Spirit.* (2 Peter 1:19-21)

*Sweet is the harp of prophecy; too sweet not to be wronged by a  
mere mortal touch.*

— William Cowper



# ISAIAH

**WRITER:** Isaiah (1:1)

Most of the prophets moved in an orbit of obscurity and anonymity. They did not project their personalities into the prophecies they proclaimed. Jeremiah and Hosea are the exceptions to this, of course. Isaiah gives us very little of an historical character concerning himself. There are a few scant references to his life and ministry. In Isaiah 1:1 he gives “the days” in which his lot was cast. It was during the reigns of “Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.” These were not the darkest days in Judah internally. Uzziah and Hezekiah were enlightened rulers who sought to serve God. But the days were extremely dark because of the menace of the formidable kingdom of Assyria in the north. The northern kingdom of Israel was carried away into captivity during this period.

Isaiah 6 records the personal call and commission of Isaiah. This chapter should come first in the prophecy — logically if not chronologically.

Isaiah 36 — 39 is the historical section, which records the **ministry** of Isaiah during the crisis when the Assyrian host encompassed Jerusalem.

Beyond these few personal sections, Isaiah stands in the shadow as he points to another Person who is coming.

It is stated by some that Isaiah belonged to the royal family of David. This cannot be positively affirmed.

Likewise, it has been stated that he is referred to in Hebrews 11:37 as the one “sawn asunder.” This may or may not be true. The liberal critic has sawn him asunder in forging the **fake fabric** of the Deutero-Isaiah hypothesis. Some have gone so far as to fabricate a Trito-Isaiah. There is not a scrap of documentary evidence beyond the skepticism of the destructive critic. They have cut Isaiah up like a railroad restaurant pie. History presents only one Isaiah, not two or three. This method of the destructive critic could be applied one thousand years hence to prove just as easily

that there were three Dwight Eisenhowers:

- 1st — General Eisenhower, the military leader of the victorious forces of World War II — European theatre.
- 2nd — President Eisenhower of the United States, elected in 1952 and 1956.
- 3rd — Dwight D. Eisenhower, the invalid man and victim of a heart attack and a serious operation for ileitis.

We know that only one man by the name of Eisenhower fulfilled all those requirements. Likewise, only one man by the name of Isaiah can easily fulfill all the requirements as the sole author of the Book of Isaiah.

### **THEME:**

As the New Testament presents the Lord Jesus Christ as its theme, so Isaiah presents the Lord Jesus Christ as his theme. Isaiah has been called the 5th evangelist; the Book of Isaiah has been called the 5th Gospel. Christ's virgin birth, His character, His life, His death, His resurrection, and His second coming are all presented in Isaiah with definiteness and clarity. (See 1 Peter 1:10, 11; cp. Luke 4:16-22 with Isaiah 61:1-4.)

### **STYLE AND CONTENT:**

The prophecy of Isaiah is strikingly similar to the entire Bible, which can be seen in the following comparison:

<b>Bible</b>	<b>Book of Isaiah</b>
66 Books	66 Chapters
39 Books in Old Testament	39 Chapters on LAW, the Government of God
27 Books in New Testament	27 Chapters on GRACE, Salvation of God

Also, there are some 66 direct quotations from Isaiah in the New Testament. Some people have found 85 quotations and allu-

sions to Isaiah in the New Testament.

20 of the 27 books of the New Testament refer to Isaiah;  
12 books of the New Testament have direct quotations.

ISAIAH is woven into the New Testament as a brightly colored thread woven into a beautiful pattern.

ISAIAH is discernible and conspicuous in the New Testament.

ISAIAH is chiseled into the rock of the New Testament with the power tool of the Holy Spirit.

ISAIAH is often used to enforce and enlarge upon those passages that speak of Christ.

The historic interlude (chapters 36—39) leaves the high plateau of prophecy and drops down to the record of history. Even the form of language is different. It is couched in the form of prose rather than poetry. Why are these four chapters of an historical character wedged in between the two major divisions of the book? This is a reasonable question that requires investigation and rewards the honest inquirer. There are several significant factors worthy of mention:

1. Sacred and secular history are not the same. Dr. Jennings states, “Divine history is never merely history, never simply a true account of past events.” There are great **spiritual truths** couched in sacred history that are seen only by the eye of faith. The Holy Spirit must teach us the divine purpose in recording scriptural history. Let us note several suggestive reasons:

- a. These incidents might seem trite to the average historian who records great world movements; but events concerning God’s people were important according to the standards of heaven.
- b. Actually these chapters note the transfer of power from Assyria to Babylon. Babylon was the real menace to God’s people and was to begin the period designated by our Lord as “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24).
- c. This section is a record of a son of David who was beset by enemies and who went down to the verge of death but

was delivered and continued to reign. In this he foreshadows the great Son of David who was beset by enemies, delivered to death, raised from the dead, and who is coming again to reign. Hezekiah was only a man who walked in the ways of David, another weak man. Hezekiah lived to play the fool. Our Lord was greater than David and, as the crucified and risen Son of God, is made unto us “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30). There are other great spiritual truths which we will note in the chapter outlines.

2. The second significant factor in this historic section is that these particular events are **recorded three times** in the Scriptures — 2 Kings 18, 19; 2 Chronicles 29, 30; and here in Isaiah. The fact that the Holy Spirit saw fit to record them three times is in itself a matter of great importance. These records are not identical but similar. Some scholars think Isaiah is the author of all three or at least the one in Kings. Surely the Spirit of God has some special truth for us here that should cause us not to hurry over these events as if they were of no great moment.

3. Three significant and **stupendous miracles** are recorded in this brief section:

- a. The death angel slays 185,000 Assyrians (37:36-38).
- b. God heals Hezekiah and extends his life fifteen years (38:1-5).
- c. The sun retreats ten degrees on the sun dial of Ahaz (38:7, 8).

4. This section opens with Assyria and closes with Babylon. There are two **important letters** that Hezekiah received:

- a. The first was from Assyria, which Hezekiah took directly to God in prayer (37:14); and God delivered His people.
- b. The second letter was from the king of Babylon which flattered Hezekiah and which he did not take to the Lord in prayer. As a result, it led to the undoing of Judah (39:1-8).

The third and last major division (chapters 40 — 66) returns to the poetic form but is in contrast to the first major section. There we had judgment and the righteous government of God; here we have the grace of God, the suffering, and glory to follow. Here all is grace and glory. The opening “comfort ye” sets the mood and tempo.

It is this section that has caused the liberal critics to postulate the Deutero-Isaiah hypothesis. A change of subject matter does not necessitate a change of authorship. It is interesting that for 1900 years there was not a word about a second Isaiah. John refers to this section as authored by Isaiah (John 1:23). Our Lord likewise referred to this section as written by Isaiah (Luke 4:17-21). There are numerous other references that similarly confirm the authorship of Isaiah.

Philip used a chapter from this section to win an Ethiopian to Christ (Acts 8).

The prophecy of Isaiah presents another important aspect of prophecy. This has to do with the plenary, verbal inspiration of Scripture.

***All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.***  
(2 Timothy 3:16, 17)

One of the most solid proofs of the plenary, verbal inspiration of Scripture is fulfilled prophecy. Isaiah contains many prophecies that have been fulfilled since he wrote them.

There were many false prophets in Israel, as the Scriptures reveal. Read the entire record in 2 Chronicles 18. Note especially 18:22 — “Now, therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these, thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil against thee.”

The prophet had to speak into a local situation and in respect to contemporary events of his day. If his prophecy failed to materi-

alize, then he was declared a false prophet (Deuteronomy 18:20-22). If the matter came to pass, he was declared a true prophet. Isaiah prophesied into many local events. When Jerusalem was surrounded by the Assyrian army, Isaiah made a very **daring prophecy** —

*Therefore, thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it.* (Isaiah 37:33)

Also see his prophecy concerning the sickness of Hezekiah in Isaiah 38.

There are other prophecies that were not fulfilled in his lifetime, but today they stand fulfilled. See, for instance, his prophecies concerning the city of Babylon:

*And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and ostriches shall dwell there, and he-goats shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the coastlands shall cry in their desolate houses, and jackals in their pleasant palaces; and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.* (Isaiah 13:19-22)

Further fulfillments relative to Babylon are recorded in Isaiah 47. Excavations at Babylon have revealed the accuracy of these prophecies. More than fifty miles of the walls of Babylon have been excavated. The culture of this great civilization is still impressive but lies in dust and debris today according to the written word of Isaiah. This is one of many examples that could be given. Others will come before us in this study as we proceed through the book.

## OUTLINE:

### I. **Judgment (poetry)**, Chapters 1 — 35

Revelation of the Sovereign on the throne.

(The Crown, chapter 6. The government of God.)

A. Solemn call to the universe to come into the courtroom to hear God's charge against the nation Israel, Chapter 1

B. Preview of the future for Judah and Jerusalem, Chapter 2

C. Present view of Judah and Jerusalem, Chapter 3

D. Another preview of the future, Chapter 4

E. Parable of the vineyard and woes predicted on Israel, Chapter 5

F. Isaiah's personal call and commission as prophet, Chapter 6

G. Prediction of local and far events, Chapters 7 — 10  
(Hope of future in coming Child)

H. Millennial kingdom, Chapters 11, 12

I. Burdens of surrounding nations (largely fulfilled), Chapters 13 — 23

1. Burden of Babylon, Chapters 13, 14

2. Burden of Moab, Chapters 15, 16

3. Burden of Damasas, Chapter 17

4. Burden of the land beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, Chapter 18

5. Burden of Egypt, Chapters 19, 20

6. Burden of Babylon, Edom, Arabia, Chapter 21

7. Burden of the Valley of Vision, Chapter 22

8. Burden of Tyre, Chapter 23

J. Kingdom, process and program by which the throne is established on earth, Chapters 24 — 34

K. Kingdom, mundane blessings of the Millennium, Chapter 35

### II. **Historic interlude (prose)**, Chapters 36 — 39

*(This section is probably a prophetic picture of how God will deliver His people in the Great Tribulation [see 2 Kings 18, 19 and 2 Chronicles 29, 30].)*

- A. King Hezekiah and the invasion of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, Chapter 36
- B. King Hezekiah's prayer and the destruction of the Assyrian hosts, Chapter 37
- C. King Hezekiah's sickness, prayer and healing, Chapter 38
- D. King Hezekiah plays the fool, Chapter 39

### III. **Salvation (poetry)**, Chapters 40 — 66

Revelation of the Savior in the place of suffering.

(The Cross, chapter 53. The grace of God. *There is a three-fold division marked by the concluding thought in each division, "There is no peace to the wicked."*)

- A. Comfort of Jehovah which comes through the Servant, Chapters 40 — 48  
(Polemic against idolatry — help and hope come only through the Servant.)
- B. Salvation of Jehovah which comes through the suffering Servant, Chapters 49 — 57
  - 1. Redeemer of the whole world, who is God's Servant, Chapters 49:1— 52:12
  - 2. Redemption wrought by the suffering Servant, who is God's Sheep (Lamb), Chapters 52:13 — 53:12
  - 3. Results of the redemption wrought by the Redeemer, who is God's only Savior, Chapters 54 — 57
- C. Glory of Jehovah which comes through the suffering Servant, Chapters 58 — 66
  - 1. Sin hinders the manifestation of the glory of God, Chapters 58, 59
  - 2. Redeemer is coming to Zion, Chapters 60 — 66  
(Nothing can hinder God's progress — He will judge sin.)



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**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter—
  
2. Most important verse—
  
3. Most prominent word—
  
4. Teaching about Christ—
  
5. Command to obey—
  
6. Promise to claim—
  
7. New truth learned—



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**Notes & Outlines**

**JEREMIAH  
LAMENTATIONS**

J. Vernon McGee

## JEREMIAH

**WRITER:** Jeremiah, “the prophet of the broken heart”

### **HIS LIFE:**

His book is partly autobiographical since he gave us so much of his personal history.

1. Born a priest in Anathoth, north of Jerusalem (1:1).
2. Chosen to be a prophet before he was born (1:5).
3. Called to the prophetic office while very young (1:6).
4. Commissioned (1:9, 10).
5. Began his ministry during the reign of King Josiah and was a mourner at his funeral (2 Chronicles 35:25).
6. Forbidden to marry because of the terrible times (16:1-4).
7. Never made a convert, and was rejected by his people (11:18-21; 12:6; 18:18), hated, beaten, put in stocks (20:1-3), imprisoned (37:11-16), and charged with being a traitor.
8. His message broke his own heart (9:1).
9. Wanted to resign but could not (20:9).
10. He saw the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity, and was permitted to remain in the land by the captain of the Babylonian forces. When the remnant wanted to flee to Egypt, Jeremiah prophesied against it (42:15-43:3), was forced to go with the remnant to Egypt (43:6, 7), and died there. Tradition says that he was stoned by the remnant.

### **HIS PERSONALITY:**

God chose this man, who had a mother’s heart, a trembling voice, and tear-filled eyes, to deliver a harsh message of judgment. The message that he gave broke his own heart.

One author has written, “He was not a man mighty as Elijah, eloquent as Isaiah, or seraphic as Ezekiel, but one who was timid and shrinking, conscious of his helplessness, yearning for a sympathy and love he was never to know — such was the chosen organ through which the Word of the Lord came to that corrupt and degenerate age.”

The Lord Jesus Christ, weeping over Jerusalem, was a perfect fulfillment of Jeremiah.

## **HIS MESSAGE:**

The message of Jeremiah was the most unwelcome ever delivered to a people. He was called a traitor because he said that they were to yield to Babylon (34; 38:17-23). Isaiah, almost a century before him, had said to resist. Why this change? In Jeremiah's day there was only one thing left to do — surrender. In the economy of God the nation was through (15:1), and the "times of the Gentiles" had already begun with Babylon, the head of gold (cf. Daniel 2).

Jeremiah predicted the 70-year captivity in Babylon (25:9-12). However, he saw beyond the darkness to the light, and no prophet spoke so glowingly of the future as did he (23:3-8; 30; 31; 33:15-22).

The message of Jeremiah was not only unwelcomed, but it was rejected by the nation (26:8-16).

## **KEY WORDS:**

Backsliding — occurs 13 times (used only 4 other times in the Old Testament [Proverbs once, Hosea three times])

Babylon — occurs 164 times (more than in the rest of Scripture combined)

## **OUTLINE:**

*(Difficult to outline because there is no logical or chronological order)*

- I. Call of prophet during reign of Josiah, Chapter 1**
- II. Prophecies to Judah and Jerusalem prior to Zedekiah's reign, Chapters 2 — 20**
  - A. Twofold condemnation of Judah, Chapters 2 — 3:5**
    1. Rejected Jehovah
    2. Reared their own gods
  - B. Charge of backsliding during reign of Josiah, Chapters 3:6 — 6:30**
  - C. Warning delivered in the gate of the Lord's house, Chapters 7 — 10**
  - D. Israel disobeyed God's covenant made in wilderness, Chapters 11, 12**
  - E. Parable in action — the linen girdle, Chapter 13**

- F. Backsliding nation judged by drought and famine, Chapters 14, 15
- G. Jeremiah forbidden to marry, Chapters 16 — 17:18
- H. Message to king in the gate, Chapter 17:19-27
- I. Sign at the potter's house, Chapters 18, 19
- J. Jeremiah's persecution, Chapter 20

**III. Prophecies during reign of Zedekiah, Chapters 21 — 29**  
*(Leads to destruction of Jerusalem)*

- A. Answer to Zedekiah re: Nebuchadnezzar, Chapters 21, 22
- B. A bright light in a very dark day, Chapter 23
- C. Parable of two baskets of figs, Chapter 24
- D. God spells out 70-year captivity, Chapter 25
- E. Message in temple court during reign of Jehoiakim, Chapter 26
- F. Parable of the yokes, Chapters 27, 28
- G. Message of hope to first delegation of captives, Chapter 29

**IV. Prophecies re: future of 12 tribes and Judah's near captivity, Chapters 30 — 39**

- A. Coming of Great Tribulation, Chapter 30
- B. The "I will" chapter, Chapter 31
- C. Jeremiah imprisoned, buys real estate, Chapter 32
- D. Coming kingdom as promised to David, Chapter 33
- E. Zedekiah's captivity foretold, Chapter 34
- F. Rechabites obey God, Chapter 35
- G. Jehoiakim destroys Word of God with knife and fire, Chapter 36
- H. Jeremiah imprisoned again, Chapters 37, 38
- I. Judah goes into captivity; Jeremiah released from prison, Chapter 39

**V. Prophecies to remnant left in land after destruction of Jerusalem, Chapters 40 — 42**

**VI. Prophecies during Jeremiah's last days in Egypt, Chapters 43 — 51**

- A. To remnant in Egypt, Chapters 43, 44
- B. To Baruch, Chapter 45



- C. To Egypt, Chapter 46
- D. To Philistia, Chapter 47
- E. To Moab, Chapter 48
- F. To Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar, Hazor and Elam, Chapter 49
- G. To Babylon, Chapters 50, 51

## **VII. Fulfillment of prophesied destruction of Jerusalem, Chapter 52**

### **COMMENT:**

#### **I. Call of prophet during reign of Josiah, Chapter 1**

v. 1 — Jeremiah is the son of Hilkiah, the priest of Anathoth. Evidently this was the Hilkiah who found the book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses, which sparked the revival during the reign of Josiah (2 Kings 22:8; 2 Chronicles 34:14-21).

Anathoth was a few miles directly north of Jerusalem.

v. 2 — Josiah, 8 years old when he came to the throne, reigned 31 years. Jeremiah began his ministry when Josiah was 22 years old, and he prophesied during 18 years of Josiah's reign. Jeremiah was a mourner at his funeral (2 Chronicles 35:25).

v. 3 — Jehoahaz, a son of Josiah not mentioned here, reigned 3 months. Then the king of Egypt placed another son, Eliakim (Jehoiakim), upon the throne, and he reigned 11 years. When he rebelled, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, took him captive to Babylon and placed on the throne at Jerusalem Jehoiachin, who reigned 3 months and 10 days. Nebuchadnezzar took him captive to Babylon and placed Zedekiah, Jehoiachin's uncle, on the throne, and he reigned 11 years. When Zedekiah rebelled, Nebuchadnezzar came and destroyed Jerusalem, slew the sons of Zedekiah, put out Zedekiah's eyes, and took him captive to Babylon.

Jeremiah continued his ministry to the remnant left at Jerusalem. The remnant forced him to go with them when they fled to Egypt, and this is where he died.

vv. 4, 5 — Jeremiah was called to the prophetic office before his birth. The Lord told him this to give him courage and conviction.

**v. 6** — Notice the reluctance and hesitation of Jeremiah. “Child” is “young man”; he was about 20.

**vv. 7-10** — God empowered Jeremiah and put His words in his mouth.

**vv. 11, 12** — Sign of a rod of an almond tree — the almond tree is called “waker” because it wakes first from the long night of winter to bloom in the spring. Jeremiah was to be an alarm clock to wake the nation from a life of ease, luxury, and indifference to the coming danger. An alarm clock is never popular when it is ringing early in the morning.

**vv. 13-18** — Sign of the seething (boiling) pot in the north — Egypt and Assyria were no longer a danger to the southern kingdom of Judah, but the boiling pot in the north was the rising power of Babylon, which eventually would destroy the nation.

**v. 19** — Jeremiah was to alert the nation to the new danger, but they would resist and reject his warning — in fact, they would attempt to destroy him.

## **II. Prophecies to Judah and Jerusalem prior to Zedekiah’s reign, Chapters 2 — 20**

### **A. Twofold condemnation of Judah, Chapters 2 — 3:5**

- 1.** Rejected Jehovah
- 2.** Reared their own gods

### **Chapter 2**

**vv. 1-7** — God asks His people to remember the springtime of their relationship to Him. They loved and served Him. God blessed them and gave them a good land. Then they turned from Him.

**v. 8** — The reason: the priests no longer knew God and turned to Baal.

**v. 9** — The Lord would not give them up.

**v. 13** — They reared up their own gods and followed their own devices. People may reject God, but they cannot get rid of their need for Him — they must substitute something.

### **Chapter 3**

v. 1 — Judah played the harlot, yet God asks her to return to Him.

v. 3 — God judges her by withholding rainfall.

#### **B. Charge of backsliding during reign of Josiah, Chapters 3:6 — 6:30**

Backsliding is mentioned 7 times in chapter 3 (more than half the number in the entire book).

v. 6 — Pagan gods and heathen altars are placed on the mountaintops and under trees in groves. Israel had turned from the living God to these.

v. 14 — Israel belongs to Jehovah by the right of redemption out of Egypt. She is the wife of Jehovah in a spiritual relationship. Jehovah looks to the future — “I will bring you to Zion.”

vv. 15-18 — “In those days” is a reference to the millennial kingdom. This is the first of a long list of prophecies filled with glorious prospects for the future.

v. 19 — In that day the nation Israel will call Jehovah their Father — that which they have never done before.

v. 23 — See Psalm 121:1.

### **Chapter 4**

vv. 6-8 — Jeremiah continues to warn of the coming invasion by Babylon. He urges the nation to return to God.

v. 22 — This is God’s charge against His people.

**Chapter 5** — Jeremiah spells out the specific sins of the people.

v. 1 — This reminds us of Diogenes who went through the streets of the city with a lantern looking for an honest man. Jeremiah says that they are scarce in Jerusalem.

v. 8 — Adultery is the prevalent sin.

v. 23 — The people revolt against God.

v. 27 — They have become great and rich, but their homes are honeycombed with deceit.

**Chapter 6** — Conclusion of message against the backsliding nation.

**v. 1** — The tribe of Benjamin is warned to flee from Jerusalem before the fatal blow falls upon the city.

**v. 10** — The word of warning is unheeded.

**v. 13** — The entire nation is obsessed with covetousness.

**v. 14** — The propaganda of this day promises peace (1 Thessalonians 5:3).

**v. 16** — God urges them to return to the old paths of blessing, but they refuse.

**v. 22** — The enemy from the north was surely coming.

**C. Warning delivered in the gate of the Lord's house,**  
Chapters 7 — 10

### **Chapter 7**

**vv. 1, 2** — Jeremiah is now to carry his message to the people who are coming to the Lord's house to worship. If anyone in the nation should listen, it would seem that these would be the people. But their worship is formal ritualism with no life or meaningful message for their hearts.

**vv. 3, 4** — Jeremiah implores them not to depend on a dead religion to deliver them from coming judgment.

**vv. 9, 10** — Their lives deny the religion they profess.

**v. 11** — This is the same charge that the Lord Jesus will make later on when He cleanses the temple.

**v. 16** — God says that it is no longer useful to pray for the people. They are too far gone — gone too far away from God.

**v. 20** — A severe warning.

**v. 23** — The nation is commanded, "Obey my voice."

**vv. 24-27** — Although the message will go unheeded, Jeremiah's responsibility is to deliver it.

**v. 34** — Judgment is coming to Jerusalem.

**Chapter 8** — The theme is still the backsliding of the people of Jerusalem.

v. 9 — The crowning sin is that they reject the Word of the Lord.

v. 11 — False prophets are like quack doctors who offer only temporary relief instead of real or permanent healing.

v. 12 — The nation not only indulged in sinful acts, but was doing them unblushingly — with no shame.

vv. 13, 17 — The emphasis is upon the Word of the Lord — “saith the LORD.”

v. 20 — The accepted time and day of salvation were slipping away, and it would soon be too late for their deliverance.

v. 22 — God had made adequate provision, but they refuse the remedy.

**Chapter 9** — The emphasis is on the Word of God — “saith the LORD” (vv. 3, 6, 9, 13, 15, 17, 20, 22-25).

v. 1 — When Jeremiah delivers a message of judgment and sees the people spurn the solicitude of God, it breaks his heart.

v. 2 — He longs to flee from his own people who will not give up their sinning. His is a painful path.

v. 16 — He warns that they will be scattered among the Gentiles.

vv. 23, 24 — They need to have God’s set of values. Spiritual endowment is more valuable than tangible wealth.

**Chapter 10** — This concludes the message in the gate of the Lord’s house.

v. 6 — The Lord cannot be compared to anything.

v. 11 — The gods of the heathen are not creators.

v. 12 — The Lord is the Creator of the earth and the heavens.

v. 23 — Man as a creature cannot guide himself in God’s creation. God gave man everything he needed except a steering wheel. God wants to guide man.

**D. Israel disobeyed God’s covenant made in wilderness,  
Chapters 11, 12**

## **Chapter 11**

v. 3 — Judgment will ensue for disobedience.

v. 8 — The simple fact is: “Yet they obeyed not.”

vv. 12-17 — Jeremiah pronounces judgment.

vv. 18-21 — Because Jeremiah delivers faithfully God’s solemn Word, he is rejected by his hometown of Anathoth.

## **Chapter 12**

v. 6 — He is rejected by his own family for the same reason.

v. 15 — God has not utterly repudiated them. This is the glimmer of light that shines in the darkest hour.

### **E. Parable in action — the linen girdle, Chapter 13**

vv. 1-7 — Jeremiah takes a linen girdle and goes to the Euphrates to hide it.

vv. 8-27 — God explains this strange act.

v. 11 — God had bound Israel to Himself like a belt (girdle); but because of their disobedience and sinning, He will send them to Babylon.

vv. 12-14 — Fierce and harsh judgment is coming.

v. 16 — This is the last call of God before the fatal blow will fall.

v. 19 — This is a vivid prophecy literally fulfilled — total captivity.

v. 23 — It is impossible for Israel (or mankind) to do good.

### **F. Backsliding nation judged by drought and famine, Chapters 14, 15**

## **Chapter 14**

vv. 2-6 — He describes the condition of the land in the drought.

v. 7 — Jeremiah confesses, “We have sinned,” but to no avail.

v. 11 — It will do no good to pray for them.

vv. 13, 15 — False prophets lie when they say that there will be no famine or sword in the land.

v. 17 — Jeremiah is moved to tears, revealing the heart of God.

### **Chapter 15**

v. 1 — The nation is in such a desperate condition of sin that even the prayers of Moses and Samuel would not be heard.

v. 10 — Jeremiah does have a sense of humor. We still have the old adage: The best way to lose a friend is to lend him money!

v. 16 — Jeremiah finds comfort and joy in the Word of God, though it is hard to swallow.

**G. Jeremiah forbidden to marry, Chapters 16 — 17:18**

### **Chapter 16**

vv. 1-4 — God knows how women and children will suffer in the invasion.

*O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.* (Psalm 137:8, 9)

By this we know that the invading army took Israel's little ones and dashed their heads against the stones. God wants to spare Jeremiah this anguish.

Our Lord gives warning of the coming Tribulation period.

*And woe unto those who are with child, and to those who nurse children in those days!* (Matthew 24:19)

vv. 14, 15 — In this darkest moment of their history, the prophet sees the brightest future. Jehovah will restore them to the land.

v. 17 — Their iniquity is not concealed from the eye of God.

v. 21 — They must recognize and obey their God.

### **Chapter 17**

v. 5 — “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man.”

v. 7 — “Blessed is the man who trusteth in the LORD.”

v. 8 — See Psalm 1:3.

vv. 9, 10 — Only God knows how depraved the human heart

really is. No man can fathom its depths of iniquity (see Matthew 15:19).

#### **H. Message to king in the gate, Chapter 17:19-27**

**vv. 21, 22** — They are to observe the Sabbath day.

**v. 27** — Failure to obey will mean the destruction of the gates and palaces of Jerusalem.

#### **I. Sign at the potter's house, Chapters 18, 19**

##### **Chapter 18**

**vv. 3, 4** — Notice the power of the Potter and the personality of the clay. The Potter has absolute power over the clay. (Paul uses the same figure of speech in Romans 9:21 [potter] and 2 Timothy 2:21 [clay].)

**v. 6** — This teaches the incontestable and irresistible sovereignty of God.

Israel is clay in the Potter's hand. There are 3 striking and important features:

1. The Potter,
2. the clay,
3. the wheel (fortuitous concurrence of circumstances).

**v. 8** — Notice the personality of the Potter and the power of the clay. Man is different from clay — he is given a will. He can yield to God. The Potter is not arbitrary or vindictive. He is patient. "He remembers that we are dust" (Psalm 103:14).

**v. 18** — Jerusalem rejects Jeremiah and his message.

**Chapter 19** — Jeremiah pronounces a frightful judgment upon Jerusalem. The clay has resisted the hand of the Potter.

#### **J. Jeremiah's persecution, Chapter 20**

**vv. 1, 2** — Pashur, priest and governor in the temple, puts Jeremiah in stocks.

**v. 4** — Jeremiah gives a precise prophecy against Pashur.

**v. 9** — Because the message was breaking Jeremiah's heart, and it had earned for him the persecution of the religious rulers, he



attempts to resign. However, he finds that he cannot, for God's Word is in the very fiber of his being.

**vv. 14-18** — Jeremiah indulges in a sorrowful dirge of "Why was I born?" He is like Job and Elijah before him in this.

### **III. Prophecies during reign of Zedekiah, Chapters 21 — 29** *(Leads to destruction of Jerusalem)*

#### **A. Answer to Zedekiah re: Nebuchadnezzar, Chapters 21, 22**

##### **Chapter 21**

**v. 1** — In the presence of danger, Zedekiah turns to Jeremiah.

**v. 8** — God offers the nation one more opportunity to turn to Him.

**Chapter 22** — Jeremiah calls upon Zedekiah to turn back to God in obedience. He warns that failure to do so will bring immediate judgment.

**vv. 24-30** — This is the harshest judgment ever pronounced upon any man (including Cain and Judas). The man is Jehoiachin (or Jeconiah), last king of the line of David by Solomon. Matthew 1:11 reveals that Joseph was in this line and therefore could not be the father of Jesus. Jesus must come from the line of Mary through Nathan, a son of David (Jeremiah 33:17; 36:30; Luke 3:31).

#### **B. A bright light in a very dark day, Chapter 23**

**vv. 3-8** — This is the prophecy of the regathering of the nation Israel for the Millennium. It will far outstrip the exodus out of Egypt in miracle and power. Read these verses carefully.

**vv. 16-21** — The false prophets persisted in prophesying peace. God repudiates them.

#### **C. Parable of two baskets of figs, Chapter 24**

Read this chapter carefully. God makes a distinction between the remnant that was faithful to Him in the nation and the rest who were apostate. Figs and the fig tree are figures of the nation Israel (12 tribes).

#### **D. God spells out 70-year captivity, Chapter 25**

**v. 9** — God calls Nebuchadnezzar His servant.

**v. 11** — Notice how the 70-year Babylonian captivity is spelled out (read 2 Chronicles 36:21; Daniel 9:2).

**vv. 15-26** — Jeremiah concludes the prophecy by taking the familiar figure of the wine cup of the wrath of God. These are the bowls of wrath in Revelation 15 and 16 which lead to the final judgment of the 2 Babylons.

### **E. Message in temple court during reign of Jehoiakim, Chapter 26**

**vv. 8-16** — Jeremiah's message of impending judgment brings down the threat of death from the princes of Judah.

**vv. 18, 19** — Jeremiah refers them to a similar prophecy of Micah during the reign of Hezekiah (Micah 3:12).

**vv. 20-24** — Uriah was put to death by Jehoiakim for prophesying against Jerusalem.

### **F. Parable of the yokes, Chapters 27, 28**

**Chapter 27** — The yoke of Babylon would be put on the surrounding nations by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

### **Chapter 28**

**vv. 1-4** — The yoke of Babylon will be broken, and Israel (12 tribes) will return.

**vv. 15-17** — Hananiah, the prophet, is denounced as a false prophet, and death is pronounced upon him.

### **G. Message of hope to first delegation of captives, Chapter 29**

**v. 10** — After 70 years they will return.

## **IV. Prophecies re: future of 12 tribes and Judah's near captivity, Chapters 30 — 39**

### **A. Coming of Great Tribulation, Chapter 30**

**v. 3** — God promises that both Israel and Judah will return to the land (this has not been fulfilled).

**vv. 4-7** — The future glorious return to the land will be preced-

ed by the time of the Great Tribulation, labeled here “the time of Jacob’s trouble.”

**v. 9** — David will be raised from the dead to reign again over them.

**vv. 10, 11** — There is a glorious prospect for the future because of the mercy and faithfulness of God. Israel will never be destroyed although other nations will be.

### **B. The “I will” chapter, Chapter 31**

*(“I will” occurs 15 times)*

**v. 3** — The prospect of the future is bright because of God’s love for them.

**vv. 8-11** — God promises a future regathering of Israel (12 tribes) and the redemption of the nation.

**v. 9** — There exists a Father-son relationship of God to the nation, but this does not hold for the individual Israelite.

**v. 15** — This is a remarkable verse in connection with the first coming of Christ (Matthew 2:18). It will have even a larger fulfillment for the future.

**v. 22** — This is another remarkable verse that is interpreted as a reference to the virgin birth of Jesus.

**vv. 31-37** — A new covenant with Israel (12 tribes) is promised by God. This will be different from the covenant given to Moses at Mt. Sinai. The grand distinction is that this covenant will be engraved upon their hearts and not upon cold tables of stone. Their sins will be forgiven. This covenant will never be changed or abrogated.

**v. 38** — The tower of Hananeel was lost for centuries, but archaeologists have now located it again (Nehemiah 3:1; Zechariah 14:10).

### **C. Jeremiah imprisoned, buys real estate, Chapter 32**

**vv. 1-5** — Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon besieges Jerusalem in the tenth year of Zedekiah. Jeremiah is put in prison for predicting that God would deliver the city to Nebuchadnezzar and also that Zedekiah would go into captivity.

**vv. 6-15** — Hanameel, a cousin of Jeremiah, wants to sell his inheritance because of the presence of Nebuchadnezzar in the land.

Jeremiah buys the field to prove that he believes the prophecy of future blessing will come true. (Using the old aphorism, he puts his money where his mouth is.)

**vv. 16-25** — Jeremiah prays about buying the field, for he does not consider it a good business deal.

**vv. 26-44** — Jehovah answers Jeremiah by putting down the axiom that nothing is too hard for God. God is delivering the city over to the Chaldeans, and in His own time He will deliver the city from the Chaldeans. Jehovah is delivering them for judgment. In a future day, He will deliver them in mercy as He has promised.

#### **D. Coming kingdom as promised to David, Chapter 33**

**v. 1** — This glorious prophecy of the kingdom comes to Jeremiah when he is in prison.

**v. 3** — God's promise of encouragement to Jeremiah.

**vv. 14-18** — God's covenant with David (2 Samuel 7:11-25).

**vv. 19-22** — God will make good His promise to David in spite of the sin of David's line.

#### **E. Zedekiah's captivity foretold, Chapter 34**

**v. 2** — Jerusalem is to be burned with fire by the king of Babylon.

**v. 3** — Zedekiah is to be delivered to the king of Babylon.

#### **F. Rechabites obey God, Chapter 35**

**v. 16** — The Rechabites, part of the remnant, are in contrast to the nation.

#### **G. Jehoiakim destroys Word of God with knife and fire, Chapter 36**

**vv. 1, 2** — Jeremiah sends the Word of God to Jehoiakim.

**v. 18** — Baruch delivers the Word in writing to the king.

**vv. 21-24** — The king brazenly cuts the Word of God with a pen-knife and burns it with fire.

**vv. 27-28** — Jeremiah sends another message in writing.

**v. 30** — No one in the line of Jehoiakim is ever to sit on the throne of David.

#### **H. Jeremiah imprisoned again, Chapters 37, 38**

*(There are 5 recorded imprisonments of the prophet. See the Scofield Reference Bible notes for these chapters.)*

##### **Chapter 38**

**vv. 17-23** — From prison, Jeremiah pleads with Zedekiah to obey God.

**v. 28** — Jeremiah is in prison at the time of the captivity.

#### **I. Judah goes into captivity; Jeremiah released from prison, Chapter 39**

**v. 7** — Zedekiah's eyes are put out.

**vv. 11, 12** — Jeremiah is released and permitted to do as he pleases.

#### **V. Prophecies to remnant left in land after destruction of Jerusalem, Chapters 40 — 42**

##### **Chapter 40**

**v. 4** — The captain of the guard permits Jeremiah to choose whether he wants to go to Babylon or remain in the land. Jeremiah chooses to remain.

**Chapter 41** — Jeremiah speaks to the remnant.

**vv. 4-6** — They promise to obey the voice of the Lord.

##### **Chapter 42**

**vv. 18-20** — Jeremiah warns the remnant not to go to Egypt.

#### **VI. Prophecies during Jeremiah's last days in Egypt, Chapters 43 — 51**

##### **A. To remnant in Egypt, Chapters 43, 44**

##### **Chapter 43**

**v. 2** — The remnant refuses to believe Jeremiah.

**vv. 10, 11** — Jeremiah warns that Nebuchadnezzar will take

Egypt also and will yet take those of the remnant who go there for refuge. They will not escape the king of Babylon. However, they refuse to heed the warning, and they take Jeremiah with them to Tahpanhes in Egypt.

### **Chapter 44**

v. 16 — The remnant in Egypt refuse to obey the Word of the Lord.

#### **B. To Baruch, Chapter 45**

v. 1 — This message was given during the reign of Jehoiakim. (Remember that the Book of Jeremiah is not arranged chronologically.)

v. 5 — Evil days are not conducive for personal gain.

#### **C. To Egypt, Chapter 46**

v. 17 — Egypt will be reduced to a second-rate power by Nebuchadnezzar.

v. 19 — Noph is Memphis, the great city of Egypt, and is to be finally destroyed.

#### **D. To Philistia, Chapter 47**

v. 4 — There will be no help from Tyre and Sidon.

v. 5 — Gaza and Ashkelon are to be destroyed.

#### **E. To Moab, Chapter 48**

v. 4 — Moab is to be destroyed.

v. 42 — Moab is no longer to be a people. The modern nation of the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan occupies the territory of Moab.

v. 47 — Moab evidently will enter the Millennium.

#### **F. To Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar, Hazor and Elam, Chapter 49**

vv. 1-6 — Ammon is to be restored.

vv. 7-22 — Edom is to be a perpetual desolation (v. 13). Edom is to remain a city (Petra) but will not be inhabited (vv. 16-18). The continual desolation of Edom is literally fulfilled.

vv. 23-27 — Damascus, one of the oldest cities, has been

destroyed many times.

**vv. 28-33** — Kedar and Hazor, wealthy kingdoms, will become desolate.

**vv. 34-39** — Elam is to be destroyed but will be restored in “the latter days.”

All of these kingdoms are currently nonexistent.

### **G. To Babylon, Chapters 50, 51**

**Chapter 50** — Babylon, the rod of God’s anger against His own people and other nations, will, in turn, be judged and destroyed.

**v. 9** — Media-Persia will destroy Babylon.

**v. 13** — This prophecy has been literally fulfilled.

**vv. 17, 18** — God will punish Babylon as He has Assyria.

**v. 24** — Babylon will be destroyed suddenly (see Daniel 5).

**v. 26** — It is utter destruction.

**v. 28** — The report of the destruction of Babylon is to be announced in Zion.

**vv. 38-40** — The destruction of Babylon is compared to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

**v. 42** — Gabyrus, the Median.

### **Chapter 51**

**vv. 5-9** — Babylon is to be suddenly destroyed (see Daniel 5).

**vv. 25, 26** — Perpetual desolation has been literally fulfilled.

**vv. 36-38** — This has been literally fulfilled.

**v. 45** — This warning is for that day and also a day which is yet future.

**vv. 60-64** — Jeremiah wrote out the predicted judgment on Babylon.

## **VII. Fulfillment of prophesied destruction of Jerusalem, Chapter 52**

Jeremiah recounts Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction of Jerusalem in detail. What he first gave as prophecy, he now writes as history.

**vv. 31-34** — This is the end of Jehoiachin in the line of David through Solomon.



## LAMENTATIONS

**WRITER:** Jeremiah

**ESTIMATION:**

“There is nothing like the Lamentations of Jeremiah in the whole world. There has been plenty of sorrow in every age, and in every land, but such another preacher and author, with such a heart for sorrow, has never again been born. Dante comes next to Jeremiah, and we know that Jeremiah was the great exile’s favorite prophet.” (Whyte)

The book is filled with tears and sorrow. It is a paean of pain, a poem of pity, a proverb of pathos, a hymn of heartbreak, a psalm of sadness, a symphony of sorrow, a story of sifting, a tale of tears, a dirge of desolation, a tragedy of travail, an account of agony, and a book of “boo-hoo.” It is the wailing wall of the Bible.

**KEY VERSE:**

It explains the reason that Jerusalem is in ruins.

*The LORD is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment. Hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow; my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity.* (Lamentations 1:18)

**FEATURE:**

Jeremiah reminds us of Another as He sat weeping over Jerusalem. The only difference is that Jerusalem was in ruins and the temple burned as Jeremiah gazed upon the debris. Jesus, about 6 centuries later, wept over the city because it would be destroyed again in the near future.

To Jeremiah, the destruction of Jerusalem was a matter of history.

To Jesus, the destruction of Jerusalem was a matter of prophecy.

No blues singer ever sang a sadder song than Jeremiah. Lamentations is composed of 5 of his sad songs, which are elegies.

## OUTLINE:

### I. Elegy, Chapter 1

A call to consider the destruction of Jerusalem.

**vv. 8, 18** — The reason for the frightful destruction.

**v. 12** — An invitation to all to enter into the sorrow of the prophet.

### II. Elegy, Chapter 2

**v. 10** — Doleful details of the effect of the judgment of God upon the remnant that remain.

**v. 15** — The elation of the enemy from without.

### III. Elegy, Chapter 3

The tragic and catastrophic destruction of Jerusalem would have been total had it not been for the mercies and faithfulness of God.

### IV. Elegy, Chapter 4

Contrast between the former state of prosperity and the present state of Jerusalem in poverty.

### V. Elegy, Chapter 5

A cry to God to remember the nation Israel. "Prayer of Jeremiah."

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Gaebelein, Arno C. *The Annotated Bible*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1917.
- Gray, James M. *Synthetic Bible Studies*. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1906.
- Ironside, H. A. *Notes on Jeremiah*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1946.
- Jensen, Irving L. *Isaiah and Jeremiah*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, n.d. (A self-study guide.)
- Jensen, Irving L. *Jeremiah: Prophet of Judgment*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966.
- Meyer, F. B. *Jeremiah: Priest and Prophet*. Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, 1894.  
(A rich devotional study.)
- Sauer, Erich. *The Dawn of World Redemption*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951.  
(An excellent Old Testament survey.)
- Scroggie, W. Graham. *The Unfolding Drama of Redemption*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970.  
(An excellent survey and outline of the Old Testament.)
- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1982.  
(Highly recommended.)



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**Notes & Outlines**

# **EZEKIEL**

J. Vernon McGee

## EZEKIEL

### **WRITER:** Ezekiel

Ezekiel was a priest (Ezekiel 1:3) but never served in that office, as he was still a young man when he was taken captive during the reign of Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:10-16). Daniel was taken captive in the first captivity during Jehoiakim's reign, about eight years before Ezekiel was taken captive.

Ezekiel was contemporary with Jeremiah and Daniel. Jeremiah was an old man who spoke to the remnant that remained in the land; Daniel spoke in the court of the king of Babylon; Ezekiel spoke to the captives who had been brought to the rivers of Babylon. While the other captives wept when they remembered Zion, Ezekiel exulted in the greatest visions ever given to any prophet.

### **HIS MESSAGE:**

His message was the most spiritual of the prophets, as he dealt more with the person of God. Someone has said, "Ezekiel is the prophet of the Spirit, as Isaiah is the prophet of the Son, and Jeremiah the prophet of the Father."

During the first years of the captivity, the false prophets said that the people would be returned to Jerusalem and that the city would not be destroyed. It was not until the final deportation, during Zedekiah's reign, that the city was destroyed — some eleven years after Ezekiel was taken captive.

Jeremiah had sent a message to Babylon (Jeremiah 29) saying that the city would be destroyed. Ezekiel confirmed this message and warned the people that they must turn to God before they could return to Jerusalem.

Ezekiel began his ministry five years after his captivity, when he was about 30 years old.

### **HIS METHOD:**

In many ways he spoke in the darkest days of the nation. He stood at the bottom of the valley in the darkest corner. He had to meet the false hope given by the false prophets and the indifference and the despondency begotten in the days of sin and disaster. The people would not listen to him or his message. Therefore, he resorted to a new method. Instead of *speaking* in parables, he acted them out (Ezekiel 24:24). We have had "flagpole sitters" and "walkathons" in our day, which attract the attention of the public. This sort of thing was the method of Ezekiel and is indicative of a day of decay.

## **HIS MEANING:**

Ezekiel was the prophet of the glory of the Lord. Three prophets of Israel spoke when they were out of the land: Ezekiel, Daniel, and John. Each wrote an apocalypse. Although they used highly symbolic language, they saw the brightest light and held the highest hope. Ezekiel saw the Shekinah glory of the Lord leave Solomon's temple, and he saw the return of the glory of the Lord which was projected into the future during the kingdom.

The meaning of Ezekiel is seen in the coming glory during the kingdom. Ezekiel looked beyond the sufferings of Christ to "the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1:11).

## **OUTLINE**

- I. Glory of the Lord; commission of the prophet, Chapters 1 — 7**
  - A. Display of the glory, Chapter 1
  - B. Prophet's call and enduement with power for the office, Chapter 2
  - C. Prophet's preparation; office as watchman, Chapter 3
  - D. Judgment of Jerusalem, Chapter 4
  - E. Sign of prophet shaving hair, Chapter 5
  - F. Sword to fall upon Jerusalem; remnant to be saved, Chapter 6
  - G. Prophecy of final destruction of Jerusalem, Chapter 7
- II. Glory of the Lord; complete captivity of Jerusalem and Israel; departure of the glory, Chapters 8 — 24**
  - A. Vision of the glory; temple defilement by idolatry explains its destruction, Chapter 8
  - B. Shekinah glory prepares to leave temple, Chapter 9
  - C. Shekinah glory fills holy place; leaves the temple, Chapter 10
  - D. Prophecy against rulers of Jerusalem, Chapter 11
  - E. Ezekiel enacts destruction of Jerusalem, Chapter 12
  - F. Prophecy against pseudo-prophets and prophetesses, Chapter 13
  - G. Prophecy against idolatry of elders; certain destruction of Jerusalem, Chapter 14
  - H. Vision of the vine, Chapter 15
  - I. Jerusalem likened to abandoned baby adopted by God, Chapter 16

- J. Riddle of two eagles, Chapter 17
- K. Wages of sin is death; Jerusalem is the awful example, Chapter 18
- L. Elegy of Jehovah over princes of Israel, Chapter 19
- M. Review of Israel's long history of sins; future judgment and restoration, Chapter 20
- N. King of Babylon to remove last king of Davidic line until Messiah comes, Chapter 21
- O. Review of abominations of Jerusalem, Chapter 22
- P. Parable of two sisters — Oholah (Samaria) and Oholibah (Jerusalem), Chapter 23
- Q. Parable of the boiling pot, Chapter 24

### III. **Glory of the Lord; judgment of nations**, Chapters 25 — 32

- A. Against Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Chapter 25
- B. Against Tyre, Chapters 26 — 28
- C. Against Egypt, Chapters 29 — 32

### IV. **Glory of the Lord and coming kingdom**, Chapters 33 — 48

- A. Recommission of the prophet, Chapters 33, 34
- B. Restoration of Israel, Chapters 35, 36
- C. Resurrection of Israel, Chapter 37
- D. Repudiation of Gog and Magog, Chapters 38, 39
- E. Rebuilt temple, Chapters 40 — 42
- F. Return of the glory of the Lord, Chapters 43 — 48

## COMMENT:

### I. **Glory of the Lord; commission of the prophet**, Chapters 1 — 7

#### A. **Display of the glory**, Chapter 1

v. 1 — “I saw visions of God” — compare Ezekiel to the other captives who said, “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion” (Psalm 137:1). What a contrast — visions and weeping!

vv. 3-28 — Ezekiel has the most profound vision of the glory of God. “If anyone asks whether the vision is lucid, I confess its obscurity, and that I can scarcely understand it” (Calvin).

It is not a vision of this mechanical age — this is not the airplane or the missile. It is not a vision of the *person* of God — He is not seen here. It is a vision of the *presence* of God; it is a theophany. The God



of glory is riding triumphantly in His own chariot, unseen by mortal man. Several striking features are observable:

1. Flashing light (vv. 4, 13, 14), brighter than the sun, similar to an atomic explosion: “Our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:29); “God is light” (1 John 1:5); when Christ confronted Paul on the road to Damascus, he saw “a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun” (Acts 26:13).
2. The glory of God (v. 28). His presence is there. “No man hath seen God at any time” (John 1:18). Ezekiel saw more than did Moses, David, Isaiah, or Daniel.
3. Vision of cherubim (vv. 5-12, 15-25). These living creatures resemble the description of cherubim.
4. Wheels (vv. 15, 16) — ceaseless activity and energy of divine power. It is God moving forward; His providence.
5. Intelligent purpose — “face of a man” (v. 10) and “eyes” (v. 18) are anthropomorphic terms, ascribing to God bodily attributes. “Appearance of a man” is prophetic of incarnation (v. 26).
6. Four faces (v. 10, cf. Revelation 4:6-8) remind us of the four Gospels in which Christ is revealed in four aspects: in His kingship — symbolized by the lion (Matthew); as a servant — symbolized by the ox (Mark); in His perfect humanity — symbolized by the face of a man (Luke); in His deity — symbolized by the flying eagle (John).

### **B. Prophet’s call and enduement with power for the office, Chapter 2**

**vv. 1, 2** — The Holy Spirit comes upon Ezekiel in preparation for his office.

**vv. 3-5** — The prophet’s call — he is to speak for God, but will not be heard or obeyed.

### **C. Prophet’s preparation; office as watchman, Chapter 3**

**vv. 7, 8** — God warns of the reaction to and the reception of the message of Ezekiel.

**vv. 9-14** — God prepares Ezekiel for the resistance of his people.

**v. 15** — He is a prophet to the captives.

**vv. 17-19** — As the watchman on the city walls, Ezekiel is responsible for giving God’s warning.

**D. Judgment of Jerusalem, Chapter 4**

*(Jerusalem is not destroyed at this time.)*

**v. 1** — Sign of the tile.

**vv. 4, 5** — In symbolic action, the prophet lies 390 days on his left side and eats defiled bread.

**v. 6** — The prophet lies forty days on his right side (one day equals one year), depicting the coming siege.

**E. Sign of prophet shaving hair, Chapter 5**

**vv. 1-5** — The shaved off hair, divided into three parts, depicts the three judgments of Jerusalem.

**vv. 12, 17** — The judgments are spelled out.

**F. Sword to fall upon Jerusalem; remnant to be saved, Chapter 6**

**v. 8** — The remnant.

**G. Prophecy of final destruction of Jerusalem, Chapter 7**

**v. 12** — “The time is come.”

**II. Glory of the Lord; complete captivity of Jerusalem and Israel; departure of the glory, Chapters 8 — 24**

**A. Vision of the glory; temple defilement by idolatry explains its destruction, Chapter 8**

**vv. 2-4** — The vision transports Ezekiel back to Jerusalem. God’s glory appears in the temple at Jerusalem.

**vv. 16-18** — The exposure of the idolatry practiced in the temple explains why God will destroy it.

**B. Shekinah glory prepares to leave temple, Chapter 9**

**v. 2** — Six men (angels) execute judgment.

**v. 3** — The Shekinah glory leaves the cherubim and moves to the threshold of the temple.

**v. 4** — A remnant is to be spared.

**vv. 5-11** — Frightful judgment is to be executed.

**C. Shekinah glory fills holy place; leaves the temple, Chapter 10**

**v. 4** — The glory fills the temple for the last time.

**vv. 19-22** — The glory lifts up from the temple and stands at the east gate.

#### **D. Prophecy against rulers of Jerusalem, Chapter 11**

**vv. 1-7** — Sins of the rulers are labeled.

**vv. 8-13** — Judgment of the rulers.

**vv. 16-20** — A remnant shall be preserved and returned to the land.

**vv. 22, 23** — Shekinah glory departs from Jerusalem and stands over the Mount of Olives.

#### **E. Ezekiel enacts destruction of Jerusalem, Chapter 12**

**vv. 1-6** — Because the people will not hear the prophet, he is to adopt a sensational and strange method.

**vv. 7-16** — He locks himself in this house, digs through the wall, and takes his possessions out through the excavation.

**vv. 17-28** — Then he is to announce the full captivity of Jerusalem.

#### **F. Prophecy against pseudo-prophets and prophetesses, Chapter 13**

**v. 16** — These false prophets predict peace for Jerusalem. Since Nebuchadnezzar had besieged the city twice and had not destroyed it, they assume he will not.

**vv. 17-23** — God condemns the lying prophetesses.

#### **G. Prophecy against idolatry of elders; certain destruction of Jerusalem, Chapter 14**

**vv. 1-3** — The elders are idolatrous.

**vv. 12-20** — Even Noah, Daniel, and Job could not deliver Jerusalem. (Daniel was prime minister at this time in the court of Nebuchadnezzar.)

#### **H. Vision of the vine, Chapter 15**

The vine is the symbol of the nation Israel (Isaiah 5:7).

**vv. 2-5** — A vine is not good for lumber or for fuel.

**vv. 6-8** — Neither is Israel in her sin of any value, but is fit only for destruction.

#### **I. Jerusalem likened to abandoned baby adopted by God, Chapter 16**

*(This is God's estimate of every sinner that He saves.  
Read this chapter carefully. )*

The origin of Jerusalem is likened to an abandoned baby, deserted, dirty, repulsive, and obviously illegitimate. Jehovah adopted this baby,

cleaned her up, raised and trained her with loving care and concern. Then this baby girl grew up to play the harlot and deny the only One who befriended, loved, and nurtured her. Jehovah must judge, discipline, and purify her — but He has not forsaken her. He made a covenant with her and He will yet fulfill it (v. 53).

**J. Riddle of two eagles, Chapter 17**

**vv. 12-24** — The answer to the riddle: The king of Babylon will besiege Jerusalem again. He will destroy the city and the temple and will take Zedekiah and all but a small remnant of the people into captivity.

**K. Wages of sin is death; Jerusalem is the awful example, Chapter 18**

*(Read this chapter carefully.)*

Life and death are set before Israel. (This is true of every person.) *Live* or *alive* occur thirteen times in this chapter. *Die*, *dieth*, or *death* occur fourteen times.

**v. 4** — “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” omits no one.

**v. 9** — God offers life.

**vv. 31, 32** — God is righteous in all that He does.

**L. Elegy of Jehovah over princes of Israel, Chapter 19**

This is a sad song depicting the sordid history of the nation.

**M. Review of Israel’s long history of sins; future judgment and restoration, Chapter 20**

Over the black background of their failure (from Egypt to the Babylonian captivity), God writes in letters of light His redeeming promise and prophecy to judge and restore them to the land in full blessing.

**vv. 33-38** — Israel, regathered from all nations, will enter into the Great Tribulation. The judgment will determine who of Israel will enter the Millennium.

**vv. 42-44** — A glorious millennial prophecy.

**N. King of Babylon to remove last king of Davidic line until Messiah comes, Chapter 21**

**v. 2** — Ezekiel is still prophesying against Jerusalem and Israel.

**v. 9** — A sword is sharpened to judge the people and the land.

**v. 25** — This is a judgment against Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and

Zedekiah. It also looks forward to the coming of the willful king.

**v. 26** — Crown and scepter are removed from the house of David.

**v. 27** — Crown and scepter will be returned to the Messiah (see Matthew 1:1; 2:2-6). This is a remarkable prophecy.

### **O. Review of abominations of Jerusalem, Chapter 22**

The leaders were involved in apostasy and gross sins — princes (vv. 6, 27), prophets (v. 25), and priests (v. 26). There was not a man to be found who would stand in the gap (v. 30).

### **P. Parable of two sisters — Oholah (Samaria) and Oholibah (Jerusalem), Chapter 23**

Both the northern and southern kingdoms were playing the harlot (spiritual adultery is idolatry).

### **Q. Parable of the boiling pot, Chapter 24**

Jerusalem is to be burned. Ezekiel's wife dies and he is forbidden to mourn. Ezekiel is a sign to the captives in this, as Jerusalem is to be destroyed and there is to be no mourning.

## **III. Glory of the Lord; judgment of nations, Chapters 25 — 32**

### **A. Against Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Chapter 25**

**v. 3** — Ammonites applauded the enemy that destroyed Israel. They were allies.

**v. 4** — The same enemy destroyed Ammon (see Jeremiah 49:6).

**vv. 8-11** — The prophecy against Moab (see Jeremiah 48:47).

**vv. 12-14** — The prophecy against Edom (see Ezekiel 35:9).

**vv. 15-17** — The prophecy against the Philistines.

### **B. Against Tyre, Chapters 26 — 28**

*(Marvelous example of the exactness of the literal fulfillment of prophecy.)*

### **Chapter 26**

**v. 3** — Because God is against Tyre, there will be many nations that will come against her.

**vv. 4, 5** — This prophecy waited centuries for fulfillment. Nebuchadnezzar first came against Tyre and destroyed it according to vv. 7-11 (read these verses).

Tyre was the great city of Phoenicians (called a "strong city" in Joshua 19:29). Hiram, king of Tyre, was a friend of David and gave

him and Solomon valuable assistance in getting materials for the temple and other buildings in Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:11; 1 Kings 5). See other references to Tyre: 1 Kings 7:13, 14; 9:27, 28; 2 Chronicles 2:3, 11; Isaiah 23; Jeremiah 27:2-6; 47:4; Joel 3:4-6; Amos 1:9, 10.

Nebuchadnezzar's invasion did not go so far as to "scrape her dust from her" (v. 4) nor perform the prophecy of vv. 12-14. It was about 300 years later that Alexander the Great came and fulfilled this portion. After the return of Tyrians from Babylonian captivity, they decided to rebuild their city on an island and forget all about the mainland. Since they were a seafaring power, they could better protect themselves on an island. To conquer this island city, Alexander made a causeway to the island by using the debris of the old city — thus fulfilling literally the prophecy (v. 12).

**v. 14** — The author saw nets spread along the ruins of ancient Tyre.

**vv. 15-21** — Lamentation over Tyre — the nations all did business with Tyre and mourned its passing (cf. Revelation 18).

**Chapter 27** — Lamentation for Tyre. Tyre is compared to a great ship that is wrecked.

**Chapter 28** — Judgment of the prince and king of Tyre and Sidon. The prophecy looks beyond the local ruler to the one who is behind the kingdoms of the world — Satan.

**vv. 1-10** — Prince of Tyrus is a type of the "man of sin" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-10). Is he an Israelite? Notice "uncircumcised" in v. 10.

**vv. 11-19** — This section gives the best description in all Scripture on the origin of Satan (see Isaiah 14:12-17). Both passages look beyond the local ruler.

**v. 12** — Satan was Lucifer, son of the morning, the highest creature God ever created. He was wiser than all other creatures, and the most beautiful.

**v. 13** — He was a musical instrument.

**v. 14** — He was "the anointed cherub" next to the throne of God.

**v. 15** — "Iniquity was found in thee" (see Isaiah 14:12-17). He set his will over the will of God.

**v. 16** — He will be judged. He is only a creature.

**vv. 20-24** — Judgment is pronounced on Sidon, but not complete destruction. Today Tyre is gone; Sidon lives on.

**vv. 25, 26** — Israel will be restored to the land in peace.

## C. **Against Egypt**, Chapters 29 — 32

**Chapter 29** — This proudest of all nations, that had never been destroyed, is to be reduced to the lowest level.

**vv. 14, 15** — These are conditions of Egypt today.

### **Chapter 30**

**vv. 4, 5** — Egypt is to be destroyed.

**vv. 13-19** — Great cities are to become ruins and rubble. Noph (KJV) is Memphis; No is Thebes; Sin is Pelusium; Aven is Heliopolis.

**Chapter 31** — Against Pharaoh personally.

**Chapter 32** — Lamentation for Pharaoh and Egypt.

## IV. **Glory of the Lord and coming kingdom**, Chapters 33 — 48

### A. **Recommission of the prophet**, Chapters 33, 34

#### **Chapter 33**

**vv. 2-20** — Now, since the temple is destroyed, Ezekiel is to tell the captives how to live in captivity.

**v. 21** — The shocking announcement comes that Jerusalem is destroyed — after the false hope given by the pseudo-prophets. (In 587 B.C., Jerusalem was destroyed.)

**v. 33** — They know now that Ezekiel is a prophet of God.

**Chapter 34** — The false shepherds have failed, but God will send the true Shepherd.

**vv. 1-10** — Description of false shepherds.

**vv. 11-31** — The true Shepherd will gather the scattered flock, restore them to the land, and feed them.

**vv. 23, 24** — The true Shepherd, who is Christ, will feed them. During His earthly ministry, Jesus was the greatest teacher. He will be the greatest teacher in the future kingdom.

### B. **Restoration of Israel**, Chapters 35, 36

**Chapter 35** — Mount Seir is Edom (the people of Esau). It must be judged and removed before Israel can be restored to the land in peace. The reason is given in v. 5.

**vv. 3, 4** — Desolation of Edom.

**v. 9** — It is to be perpetual desolation.

**Chapter 36** — Past sins must be judged and forgiven.

**vv. 22-38** — Promise of a glorious future for Israel: Israel shall be restored, redeemed, and the land shall become like the Garden of Eden. “A new heart” (v. 26) is equivalent to being “born again.”

### **C. Resurrection of Israel, Chapter 37**

**vv. 1-4** — In a vision, Ezekiel is taken to a valley of dry bones. The bones are identified — “the whole house of Israel” (v. 11).

**vv. 5-10** — Note the three stages of development of the bones.

- (1) Scattered and very dry (v. 2).
- (2) Come together and covered with flesh (v. 8) — without life, only corpses.
- (3) Life comes into the dead bodies (vv. 9, 10).

In Ezekiel’s day, Israel was scattered and dry. In our day, Israel has become a nation (1948) — with no spiritual life, but a national entity. In the future, Israel will turn back to God. Also the Old Testament saints will be raised for the Millennium.

**vv. 15-28** — The two sticks typify the northern and southern kingdoms which will again become one nation. David will be raised to rule over it (v. 24).

### **D. Repudiation of Gog and Magog, Chapters 38, 39**

**Chapter 38** — That Gog and Magog may be identified with Russia is supported by a threefold reason:

**1. Linguistic phenomenon** — (vv. 2, 3) “Gog” is a word for ruler, meaning “roof” (the man on the top). Dean Stanley, in his exhaustive *History of the Eastern Church*, published a half century ago, has a note, founded on Gesenius, to the effect that the name “Russ” (Hebrew “Rosh”) occurs in v. 3, mistranslated “chief” in the English version. Thus, says Stanley, it is the only name of a modern nation found in the Old Testament. Bishop Lowther says, “Rosh, taken as a proper name, in Ezekiel signifies the inhabitants of Scythia, from whom the modern Russians derived their name.”

Josephus said that Magog (Genesis 10:1, 2) “founded those that from him were named Magogites, but who by the Greeks were called Scythians.” Russia was called Muscovy, derived from Meshech, until Ivan the Terrible (1530-84) assumed title of “Czar of Russia.”

**2. Geographic phenomenon** — (v. 6) “North quarters” means north of Israel. Directions in Scripture are in relationship to the land of Israel. Russia is north of Israel and fills the entire area. Assyria



in ancient times is a type of Russia (as Babylon is a type of the restored Roman Empire) in the “latter days.”

**3. Philosophical or ideological phenomenon** — God’s mercy was extended to all nations of the past which were polytheistic: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, etc. But here it is stated from the beginning, “I am against thee, O Gog” (v. 3). Russia is the first nation of the world to adopt an atheistic philosophy of life and government. “It is possible,” said Plutarch, “to find cities without walls, without kings, without wealth, without letters, without theaters, but a city without a temple or that practiceth not worship no man ever saw.”

Stalin boasted, “We have deposed the czars of the earth, we shall now dethrone the Lord of Heaven.” Also from Moscow has come this: “Our rocket has bypassed the moon. It is nearing the sun, and we have not discovered God. We have turned out lights in heaven that no man will be able to put on again. We are breaking the yoke of the Gospel, the opium of the masses. Let us go forth and Christ shall be relegated to mythology.”

**v. 4** — “Put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth” indicates that God will bring Russia down into Israel at the proper time. He is baiting hooks for them. Several are evident today:

1. Russia needs a warm water entrance into the waterways of the world. Israel offers that.
2. The oil deposits of the Near East are essential for the survival of modern nations.
3. The mineral deposits in the Dead Sea are so great that they cannot be evaluated on today’s market.

**vv. 5, 6** — There are many allies with Russia — Ethiopia, Asian Cush, Gomer (in the Talmud, Gomer is stated to be the Germani, the Germans), Togarmah (Turkey). “And many peoples with thee” indicates that this is not an exhaustive list.

### **When will Russia come down?**

**v. 8** — “In the latter years” and “in the latter days” (v. 16) places the time of this event in the Great Tribulation period. Probably in the midst of the 7-year period (Daniel’s 70th week, cf. Daniel 9:20-27), Russia will trigger the Great Tribulation by invading Israel and thereby breaking the false peace made by Antichrist.

### **What will be the results?**

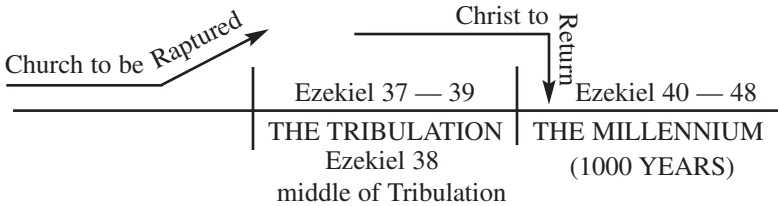
The defeat of Gog is described in great detail in Ezekiel 38 and 39. The slaughter is graphically given in Ezekiel 39:1-24.

## **Chapter 39**

v. 2 — “Leave but the sixth part of thee” is literally “I will six thee” or, better still, “I will afflict thee with six plagues.” These plagues are listed in Ezekiel 38:22 as pestilence, blood, overflowing rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. This is the way God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. These are warnings (see Luke 17:29, 30; Jude 7).

### **What is the reason for the judgment on Gog?**

He has denied and blasphemed God. God will get glory to His name (Ezekiel 38:16, 23; 39:22).



### **E. Rebuilt temple, Chapters 40 — 42**

Ezekiel returns to the land in a vision and sees the millennial temple. The Mosaic system is restored (Ezekiel 40:39-42) in reinstating the Levitical liturgy, the burnt offering, sin offering, and trespass offering.

### **F. Return of the glory of the Lord, Chapters 43 — 48**

## **Chapter 43**

vv. 1-5 — The glory of God comes from the east and fills the temple. This is the return of Christ to the earth.

vv. 18-27 — The sacrifices offered will be memorial in character. They will look back to the work of Christ on the cross, as the offerings of the Old Testament anticipated His sacrifice.

## **Chapter 44**

vv. 2, 3 — Some consider that the closing of the east gate in the wall surrounding present-day Jerusalem is a fulfillment of this prophecy.

v. 4 — Glory fills the house.

## **Chapter 45**

vv. 18-22 — The Passover is kept.

**Chapter 46** — Offerings and feasts are restored.

**Chapter 47** — River of life that flows from the temple.

vv. 1, 2 — Notice the source of the river — water is a type of the

Holy Spirit.

**vv. 3-12** — Notice the course of the river. Many spiritual lessons may be drawn from this passage. “The waters were to the ankles” (v. 3) — the walk of the believer in the Spirit. “To the knees” (v. 4) speaks of prayer. “To the loins” (v. 4) speaks of service (“gird up your loins”). “Waters to swim in” (v. 5) indicates fullness in the blessing in the Millennium.

**vv. 13-23** — Borders of the promised land are redefined for the Millennium.

**Chapter 48** — Division of the land among the twelve tribes.

**vv. 1, 2** — The tribe of Dan is present in the Millennium, although it is absent from those sealed in the Great Tribulation (Revelation 7:4-8). Danites do not serve in the Great Tribulation, but the grace of God brings them into the Millennium.

We, too, are saved by grace but rewarded for service. The prophet closes on a high note, *The LORD is there*.

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Alexander, Ralph. *Ezekiel*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1976.  
(Fine, inexpensive survey.)
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(Two volumes cover the Old Testament. Highly recommended.)



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**Notes & Outlines**

# **DANIEL**

J. Vernon McGee

## DANIEL

### BACKGROUND:

The Book of Daniel has been the battlefield between conservative and liberal scholars for years. The heat of battle is now past — with each side claiming a major victory. However, the very fact that the Book of Daniel remains intact in Scripture and that the early dating of this book (the 6th century B.C.) has been maintained successfully by conservative scholars against the massed onslaught of arrogant liberalism, is in itself a valid argument for the original and conservative position.

Porphyry, a heretic in the 3rd century A.D., declared that the Book of Daniel was a forgery, written during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabees (170 B.C.) — almost 400 years after Daniel had lived. The German critics seized upon this hypothesis and, along with Dr. S. R. Driver, developed it. These critics, as well as present-day unbelievers, assume the premise that the supernatural does not exist, hence there can be no foretelling since foreknowledge is supernatural.

However, the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament written prior to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, contains the Book of Daniel! Also, Josephus records an incident during the time of Alexander the Great which supports the early authorship. When Alexander's invasion reached the Near East, Jaddua, the high priest, went out to meet him and showed to him a copy of the Book of Daniel in which he was clearly mentioned. Alexander was so impressed by this that instead of destroying Jerusalem, he entered the city peaceably and worshipped at the temple.

It is not in the purview of these brief notes to enter into useless argument and fight again about that which has been already won. We accept the findings of conservative scholarship — that the man Daniel was not a deceiver and that his book was not a forgery. We feel that the statement of Edward B. Pusey is apropos here: "The rest which has been said is mostly mere insolent assumptions against Scripture, grounded on unbelief." Sir Isaac Newton declared, "To reject Daniel is to reject the Christian religion."

Our Lord called the Pharisees "hypocrites," but He called Daniel "the prophet." He has never reversed this arrangement, and the

endorsement of the Lord Jesus Christ is valid and sufficient for every believer whether or not he has examined the arguments of the critics. It satisfies the sincere saint without his having studied the answers of conservative scholarship (see Hebrews 11:33).

### **WRITER:**

We know more of Daniel the man than we do of any other prophet. He gave us a personal account of his life from the time he was carried captive to Babylon in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, which was about 606 B.C. (Daniel 1:1), until the first year of King Cyrus, which was about 536 B.C. (Daniel 1:21 and also 9:2). Daniel's life and ministry bridged the entire 70 years of captivity. At the beginning of the book he is a boy in his teens, and at the end he is an old man of fourscore or more years.

Here is God's estimate of the man: "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved" (Daniel 10:11).

There are three words that characterize Daniel's life: purpose, prayer, and prophecy.

(1) Daniel was a man of *purpose* (Daniel 1:8; 6:10). He determined that he would not be defiled by the immorality of paganism or be involved in the degradation of idolatry. This is the practical teaching of prophecy.

The study of prophecy should not lead to fanaticism or sensationalism. Rather, it should lead to a life of holiness and fear of the Lord.

*And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure.* (1 John 3:3)

(2) Daniel was a man of *prayer* (Daniel 2:17-23; 6:10; 9:3-19; 10). His total life and his every decision in a pagan court were paved by prayer.

The study of prophecy should not be engaged in for the satisfaction of curiosity or to be grist for polemic argumentation. Instead, it should inspire us to spiritual living and an earnest study of the Word of God.

(3) Daniel was a man of *prophecy*. The bulk of his book relates to prophetic themes. Our Lord labeled him, "Daniel the prophet" (Matthew 24:15).

***Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.*** (2 Peter 1:20)

Daniel gave us the skeleton of prophecy on which all prophecy is placed. The image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (chapter 2) and the beasts (chapter 7) are the backbone of prophecy; the seventy weeks (chapter 9) are the ribs which fit into their proper place.

The study of prophecy should not lead to idle speculation or wild theories. On the contrary, it produces a practical, profitable, plenary, and purposeful life.

***All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.***  
(2 Timothy 3:16, 17)

#### **DATE:**

As previously indicated, we hold to the early date of the Book of Daniel — between the third year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, about 606 B.C. and the first year of Cyrus, about 536 B.C.

#### **HIS MESSAGE:**

Daniel was the prophet of “the times of the Gentiles” (see Luke 21:24). The major portion of his prophecies were directly concerned with the gentile nations. The notable exception is Daniel 9, which concerns the seventy weeks, but here the emphasis is upon the interval after the cutting off of the Messiah between the 69th week and the 70th week. It is during this period that the city and sanctuary are destroyed, and “the times of the Gentiles” are identified as the time when “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24). Evidently, the “wise men from the east” knew the prophecy of Daniel. A portion of the Book of Daniel was written in Aramaic, the language of the Gentiles of that day. All this does not imply that the Book of Daniel was not written for the nation Israel; on the contrary, Israel was acquainted with the prophecies of Daniel in his day. Ezekiel, who was with the captives, made reference to the character of Daniel and to his office as a prophet (Ezekiel 14:14, 20; 28:3). By the way, this reference to



Daniel by Ezekiel, who was Daniel's contemporary, is conclusive evidence against the theory that this book belongs to the Maccabean period.

### **THEME:**

*And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.* (Daniel 2:44)

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan gave this theme: "Persistent Government of God in the Government of the World." This is the book of the universal sovereignty of God. Prophecy is interwoven with history to show that God is overruling the idolatry, blasphemy, self-will, and intolerance of the Gentiles.

*But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.* (Daniel 12:4)

More specifically, Daniel 12:4 brings together "the times of the Gentiles" and "the time of the end" for the nation Israel in the Great Tribulation. This coming crisis eventuates in Christ setting up the Millennial Kingdom.

Daniel dealt with political issues apart from ecclesiastical matters. His book gives the final outcome of events and issues that are at work in the world today and answers the question, "Who will rule the world?" — not "How will the world be converted?"

Our Lord, in the Olivet Discourse, quoted only from the Book of Daniel. The Book of Revelation is largely an enigma without the Book of Daniel. Paul's revelation concerning "the man of sin" needs Daniel's account for amplification and clarification.

### **OUTLINE:**

- I. The historic night with prophetic light, Chapters 1—6**
  - A. Decline of Judah; fall of Jerusalem; Daniel taken**

captive to Babylon; his decision to be true to God, Chapter 1

- B. Dream of Nebuchadnezzar about a multimetallic image; interpretation by Daniel concerning the four kingdoms of “the times of the Gentiles,” Chapter 2
  - C. Decree of Nebuchadnezzar to enforce universal idolatry; three Hebrews cast into the furnace for refusal to bow to image of gold, Chapter 3
  - D. Dream of Nebuchadnezzar about a great tree hewn down to a stump; fulfilled in subsequent period of madness of the king, Chapter 4
  - E. Downfall of Babylon foretold by Daniel as he read the handwriting on the wall at the feast of Belshazzar, Chapter 5
  - F. Decree of Darius, the Median, to enforce worship of himself; Daniel cast into den of lions for praying to the God of heaven, Chapter 6
- II. The prophetic light in the historic night, Chapters 7—12**
- A. Daniel’s vision of four beasts concerning four kingdoms of “the times of the Gentiles,” Chapter 7
  - B. Daniel’s vision of ram and he goat and another little horn, Chapter 8
  - C. Daniel’s vision of seventy weeks concerning the nation Israel, Chapter 9
  - D. Daniel’s vision relating to Israel in immediate future and latter days; historical little horn and little horn of the latter days, Chapters 10—12
    - 1. Preparation for vision by prayer of Daniel; appearance of a heavenly messenger, Chapter 10
    - 2. Prophecy concerning Persia and Grecia, historical “little horn”; eschatological “little horn,” Chapter 11
    - 3. Preview of Israel in latter days; Great Tribulation; resurrections; rewards; final word about the end times, Chapter 12

The Old Testament is written in the Hebrew language, with

but one exception—a portion of the Book of Daniel. From chapter 2, verse 4, through chapter 7, Daniel is in Aramaic, the Gentile and diplomatic language of Daniel’s day. This section deals exclusively with “the times of the Gentiles.” The remainder of the book correlates the nation Israel with this program. The Book of Daniel deals with Gentiles and Jews — the church is totally excluded. This book is first to the Gentiles but also to the Jews.

**COMMENT:**

**Chapter 1** — Daniel was given a heathen name, but he refused to adopt heathen customs. He lived during the entire period of the seventy years of Babylonian captivity (compare vv. 1, 2 with v. 21). He bridged the gap of the entire period. He was God’s prophet in a pagan court. Part of the Book of Daniel is written in Aramaic (2:4 to 7:28). The Book of Daniel probably should be divided at three God-given breaks:

1. Personal history of Daniel, Chapters 1:1 — 2:3
2. Prophetic history of Daniel relating to gentile nations, Chapters 2:4 — 7:28
3. Prophecies relating to the nation Israel, Chapters 8:1 — 12:13

**Chapters 2 and 7** — These two chapters cover the same chronological period, “the times of the Gentiles,” and the identical subjects — the four nations which are the only world powers during this period. These are identified as Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

Image (Chapter 2)	Beasts (Chapter 7)	Nations Designated
Head of gold	Lion	Babylon
Arms of silver	Bear	Media-Persia
Sides of brass	Panther (Leopard)	Greece (Graeco-Macedonian)
Legs of iron and feet of iron and clay	Composite beast	Rome

More attention is given to the last metal and the last beast than all the others put together. It is still of chief concern in our day.

The first three metals and beasts are historical. They have been poured into the mold of the deep freeze of history. The Roman Empire is to continue until the time it is destroyed by the stone cut out without hands (2:34).

There is no fifth beast. Nothing follows Rome. Rome is in existence in the present day. It did not die or disappear. Rome, like Humpty Dumpty, had a great fall. All the king's horses and king's men could not put it back together again. All it needs is a leader capable of bringing together all of its divergent parts. There is coming a little horn, the man of sin, Satan's masterpiece, who will accomplish this Herculean task.

**Chapter 3** — The excessive pride of Nebuchadnezzar is discovered here, which was one of the symptoms of his insanity. The three Hebrew children refused to worship the image in keeping with the 1st and 2nd commandments:

*Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I, the LORD thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.* (Exodus 20:3-6)

This image is evidently a picture of the abomination of desolation which will appear in the midst of the Great Tribulation Period.

*When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whosoever readeth, let him understand).*  
(Matthew 24:15)

Note the emphasis on worldly music accompanying the worship (Daniel 3:15), which appeals to the natural man. The deliverance of the children of Israel from the fiery furnace is a picture of God's

deliverance of Israel in the Great Tribulation Period.

**Chapter 4** — The insanity of Nebuchadnezzar was evidently what modern psychology labels hysteria. This runs in cycles. This chapter reveals the character of gentile rulership of this world (v. 17).

**Chapter 5** — The banquet of Belshazzar is a foregleam of the manner in which the times of the Gentiles will end. They go out in a blaze of human glory. Daniel's interpretation of the handwriting on the wall is God's estimation of the entire period of the Gentiles and their final judgment (Matthew 25:31-46).

**Chapter 6** — Daniel cast in the den of lions and his subsequent deliverance and exaltation is another premier of God's preservation of the remnant during the Great Tribulation when they shall be hated by all nations (Matthew 24:9) and persecuted by the devil who will seek to destroy them (Revelation 12:13-17). But they will be miraculously preserved by God (Revelation 7:4-8).

**Chapter 7** — Daniel's vision of four beasts concerning four kingdoms of the "times of the Gentiles" (see Chapter 2).

**Chapter 8** — This prophecy of the ram with two unmatched horns and the he-goat with one horn places a microscope down on the conflict between the 2nd and 3rd world empires in the struggle of East and West, Orient and Occident, Asia and Europe. This struggle had tremendous repercussions in the nation Israel, and there is given here a "little horn" which was fulfilled in Antiochus Epiphanes (170 B.C.), the great persecutor of the Jews, called "the Nero of Jewish history." He slaughtered Israelites like animals and offered a sow on the altar in the temple and poured the broth on the holy places. He is known as "the great profaner."

**Chapter 9** — The 70-year captivity predicted by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 25:11-12) was coming to an end (from 606 B.C. to the Decree of Cyrus in 536 B.C. — Ezra 1:1-4). Daniel was moved to prayer. Consider carefully his prayer, as it is one of the greatest in the Old Testament. It was revealed to Daniel that the kingdom of heaven would not be set up at the end of the 70 years but that 70 weeks more were to pass in respect to the nation Israel (v. 24). The

70 weeks are weeks of years.

1 week = 7 years

70 weeks = 490 years

70 weeks divided into 3 periods:

7 weeks — 62 weeks — 1 week

*(See chart on opposite page)*

Things accomplished in 70 weeks (v. 24):

1. “To finish the transgression” of Israel.
2. “To make an end of sins,” Ezekiel 37:23, Zechariah 12:10—13:1.
3. “To make reconciliation for iniquity.”
4. “To bring in everlasting righteousness,” Jeremiah 33:14-16, 31:31-34, Isaiah 1:26.
5. “Seal up the vision and prophecy.” Vindicate the truth of this vision.
6. “To anoint the Most Holy” in the millennial temple, Ezekiel 40 — 48, Acts 15:16.

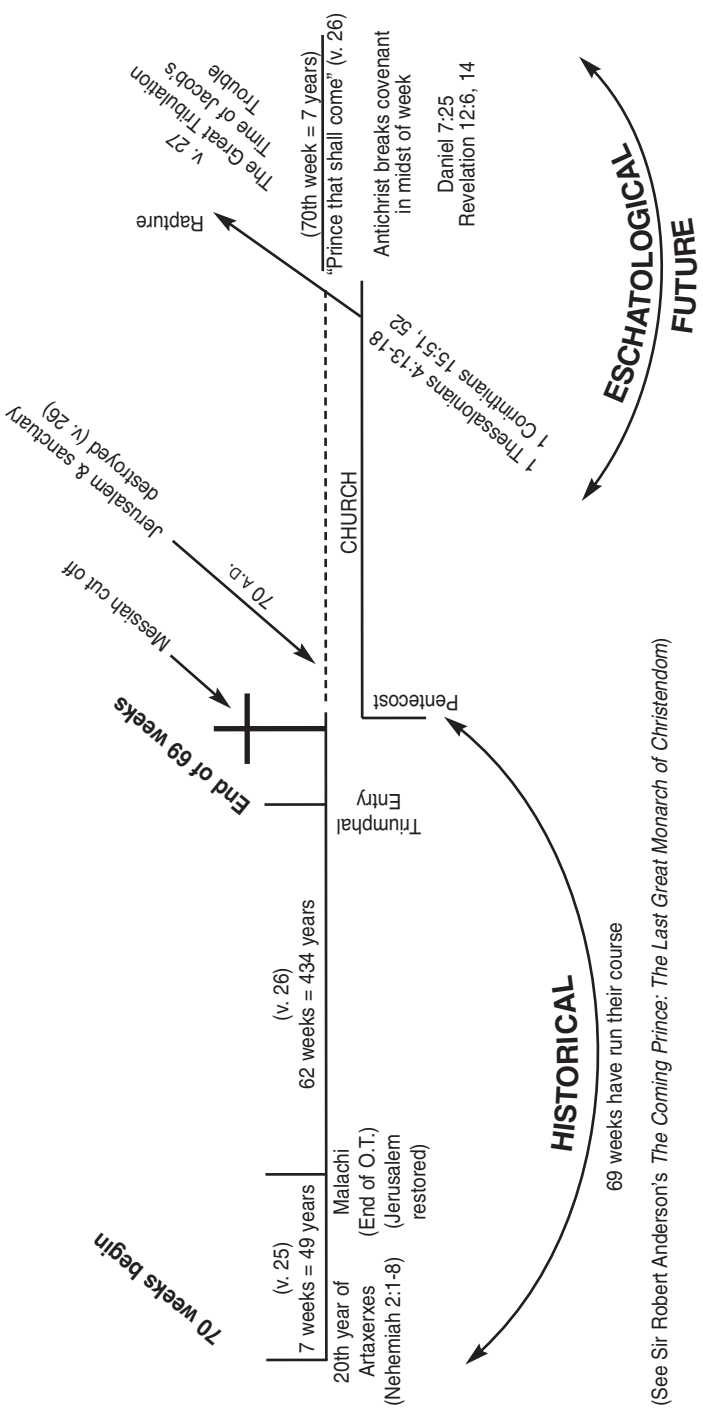
**Chapters 10 — 12** — These three chapters constitute one vision. Some Bible scholars count this last vision as the most important in the Book of Daniel. This section is remarkable from several viewpoints.

**Chapter 10** — The seriousness and sincerity of Daniel is obvious here. For three weeks he observed a time of fasting. Fasting is not a rule for believers today, but it has its merits and rewards for those willing to pay the price.

The delay in the answer to Daniel’s prayer was caused by a satanic hindrance. The angel sent to answer his prayer was blocked by one of Satan’s emissaries of higher rank and greater power labeled “the prince of the kingdom of Persia” (v. 13). The angel had to go for reinforcements. Michael, the archangel, came to remove the blockade. This reveals the spiritual warfare in which we all are engaged (see Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6). There are different ranks of both good and bad angels.

Daniel needed to be strengthened by his contact with the supernatural.

# THE 70 WEEKS OF DANIEL 9



(See Sir Robert Anderson's *The Coming Prince: The Last Great Monarch of Christendom*)

**Chapter 11** — This chapter is a prophetic preview of the period between the Testaments. This gives an accurate account of the warfare between two divisions of the Grecian Empire — Syria and Egypt. The “vile person” (little horn) of v. 21 is Antiochus Epiphanes of the Syrian kingdom, the eschatological section (future) begins at v. 36 — this little horn appears in the latter days and is the little horn of Daniel 7 (the Antichrist), see Gaebelien’s *The Prophet Daniel*.

## **Chapter 12**

**v. 1** — This is a prophecy concerning the Great Tribulation to which the Lord referred in Matthew 24:21, 22:

*For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.*

**v. 2** — The resurrections referred to here are of the people of the Old Testament. Those “to everlasting life” evidently are the Old Testament saints who are raised at the end of the Great Tribulation in order to participate in the Millennium. The lost are raised at the Great White Throne. The Old Testament saints are not raised with the church, as they were not baptized with the Holy Spirit and are not in the body of believers (1 Corinthians 12:13).

**v. 4** — These are signs that are in our day.

**vv. 5-9** — The period designated “the time of the end” is not the end of time but refers to the Great Tribulation. Many of the features of this book will not be unfolded until then.

**v. 11** — Evidently this is what our Lord had reference to in Matthew 24:15, and the number of days here and in v. 13 project time beyond the actual Tribulation Period when adjustments will have to be made which will usher in the millennial day — then “shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings” (Malachi 4:2).



## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Anderson, Sir Robert. *The Coming Prince: The Last Great Monarch of Christendom*. London, England: Hodder and Stoughton, 1881.
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(Especially good for young Christians.)
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(Excellent, comprehensive interpretation.)
- Wood, Leon J. *Daniel: A Study Guide Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975.  
(Excellent for individual and group study.)

## SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER

1. Theme of chapter —
2. Most important verse —
3. Most prominent word —
4. Teaching about Christ —
5. Command to obey —
6. Promise to claim —
7. New truth learned —

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*

## NOTES



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**Notes & Outlines**

**HOSEA**  
**JOEL**

J. Vernon McGee

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## HOSEA

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Beginning with Hosea and concluding with Malachi, there are twelve short prophecies called the Minor Prophets. They are so called because of the size of the books and not because of their content. The Minor Prophets all deal with the same major issues of the Major Prophets. They are actually quoted by the Major Prophets (Jeremiah 26:18). The writers of the Minor Prophets were exceedingly nationalistic, but they were not isolationists. There were to be no godless alliances with other nations, but they were warned of an isolationism from God. They were extremely patriotic and denounced political and moral corruption. This has given rise to the modern emphasis on the social message of the prophets.

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It is a striking fact that there is scant material on the Minor Prophets. A cursory inspection of any religious library will corroborate this. There is a wealth of material on most of the books of the Bible, but when you leave Daniel and pass over to Hosea, it is like going from a fertile valley to a sterile desert.

**WRITER:** Hosea

All that is known of him is what he reveals in his prophecy.

**TIME:**

*The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel. (Hosea 1:1)*

In spite of the fact that Hosea mentions the four kings of Judah first and the one king of Israel last, he was a prophet to the northern kingdom, as the content of the book reveals. He was contemporary with Amos, another prophet to Israel, and also contemporary with Micah and Isaiah, prophets to Judah. His ministry extended over half a century, and he lived to see the fulfillment of his prophecy in the captivity of Israel.

**THEME:** “Return unto the LORD.”

*Come, and let us return unto the LORD; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. (Hosea 6:1)*

“Return” occurs fifteen times.

“Ephraim” occurs thirty-six times.

“Backsliding” occurs three times. Hosea and Jeremiah are the two prophets who talk about backsliding and the cure for it.

What Jeremiah was to Judah at the time of the captivity of the southern kingdom, Hosea was to Israel, over a century before, at the time of the captivity of the northern kingdom. Both spoke out of a heartbreaking personal experience.

## **PERSONAL EXPERIENCE:**

Hosea’s experience was in the home; Jeremiah’s was in the nation. Jeremiah was commanded not to marry; Hosea was commanded to marry a harlot or, as he brutally stated the case, “a wife of whoredoms” (Hosea 1:2, KJV). He married Gomer, and she bore him two sons and a daughter. Afterward she played the harlot again, and Hosea put her out of his home. But God commanded him to take again this unfaithful harlot, to bring her back into his home, and to love her again. In effect, God said to Hosea, “Now you are prepared to speak for Me to Israel — Israel has played the harlot, but I love her and will yet bring her back into her homeland.”

## **OUTLINE:**

- I. PERSONAL — The prophet and his faithless wife, Gomer, Chapters 1 — 3**
  - A. Marriage of Hosea and Gomer, the harlot, Chapter 1**
  - B. Gomer proves faithless; Israel proves faithless; God proves faithful, Chapter 2**
  - C. Hosea commanded to take Gomer again, Chapter 3**
- II. PROPHETIC — The Lord and the faithless nation Israel, Chapters 4 — 14**
  - A. Israel plays the harlot, Chapters 4, 5**
    1. Israel guilty of lawlessness, immorality, ignorance of God’s Word, and idolatry, Chapter 4
    2. Israel turns from God; God turns from Israel; deterioration within follows, Chapter 5
  - B. Israel (Ephraim) will return in the last days; presently to be judged for current sins, Chapter 6**

**C. Israel (Ephraim) could escape judgment by turning to God who loves her (key, 11:8), Chapters 7 — 12**

1. Israel (silly dove) turns to Egypt and Assyria, Chapter 7
2. Israel turns to golden calves and altars of sin, Chapter 8
3. Israel (backsliding heifer) turns to land productivity; will be driven from the land, Chapters 9, 10
4. Israel turns from God — must be judged; God will not give her up, Chapters 11, 12

**D. Israel (Ephraim) will turn from idols to God in the last days, Chapters 13, 14**

1. Israel will be judged in the present, Chapter 13
2. Israel will be saved in the future, Chapter 14

**COMMENT:**

(Also see author's booklet, "The Greatest Sin in All the World.")

**I. PERSONAL — The prophet and his faithless wife, Gomer, Chapters 1 — 3**

**A. Marriage of Hosea and Gomer, the harlot, Chapter 1**

**v. 1** — See TIME, first page.

**vv. 2, 3** — Hosea gives us more of his personal and intimate experiences than does any other of the prophets. Most are reluctant to intrude their own personal experience into their prophecies, but the experience of Hosea parallels the experience of the nation Israel. He will know how God feels when the nation plays the harlot by departing from the Lord.

**vv. 4, 5** — Jezreel is the name of a city and also of a famous plain, the plain of Armageddon where the last war will end. It has an infamous history. Read 2 Kings 10 for the historical background.

**vv. 6-9** — Three children are born to Hosea and Gomer:

- (1) Jezreel (a son), meaning *God will scatter* — God will avenge the blood of Jezreel.
- (2) Lo-ruhamah (a daughter), meaning *unpitied* — God will



no longer show mercy upon the house of Israel.

- (3) Lo-ammi (a son), meaning *not my people* — Israel was called “my people.” At this time God had repudiated the northern kingdom but not the southern kingdom.

**vv. 10, 11** — The ten tribes in the north are not utterly and finally repudiated because God promises that He will regather both the northern and southern kingdoms under one head.

### **B. Gomer proves faithless; Israel proves faithless; God proves faithful, Chapter 2**

**vv. 1-3** — Hosea loves Gomer, and when she plays the harlot again, he sends their son and daughter to plead with her to return.

**vv. 4-7** — Hosea even threatens her if she will not return.

**vv. 8-23** — Here the record merges into God’s love for the nation Israel. God will judge Israel, but ultimately He will restore her, and she will give up the worship of Baal. Hosea understands the attitude and action of God because of his own love for Gomer.

### **C. Hosea commanded to take Gomer again, Chapter 3**

**vv. 1-3** — God commands Hosea to break the Mosaic Law:

*And the man who committeth adultery with another man’s wife, even he who committeth adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.* (Leviticus 20:10)

Gomer should be stoned, not restored. Hosea loves her and hesitates to go that far. Note what the New Testament says:

*What? Know ye not that he who is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh.*  
(1 Corinthians 6:16)

**vv. 4, 5** — The application is for the nation Israel. Israel is to be restored, though she is no better than a harlot.

This (v. 4) is one prophecy that has had continual fulfillment for over 1900 years:

“Without a king” since the Davidic line ended with Zedekiah

(2500 years). They rejected Jesus as king.

“Without a prince” — they have no one to succeed to the throne. If the Lord Jesus Christ is not their Messiah, they have none and have no prospect for one.

“Without a sacrifice” — the temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, and there has been no sacrifice since then.

“Without an image” means “without pillars.”

“Without an ephod” — the ephod was the sacred garment worn by the high priest.

“Without teraphim” — teraphim were small images or good luck charms.

The people of Israel will not only return to the land, but they will seek the Lord their God (v. 5). This they have not yet done.

“Latter days” refer to the latter days of Israel, after the church has been removed by the Rapture.

## **II. PROPHETIC — The Lord and the faithless nation Israel, Chapters 4 — 14**

### **A. Israel plays the harlot, Chapters 4, 5**

#### **1. Israel guilty of lawlessness, immorality, ignorance of God’s Word, and idolatry, Chapter 4**

Now the private life of Hosea fades into the background, and the emphasis is upon the Lord and Israel.

**v. 1** — The Lord confronts Israel with the fact that they have no knowledge of God.

**v. 2** — The Lord spells out their specific sins; they are breaking the Ten Commandments.

**vv. 3-5** — Judgment will be meted out to the people and the land.

**vv. 6-11** — Israel’s ignorance of the Word of God leads to their destruction. They turn from God to sin, which He must judge.

“Either the Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible.”

**vv. 12-15** — They turn to idolatry, which God must judge. Idolatry leads to immorality.

**v. 16** — Israel is guilty of backsliding. It is mentioned three times

in the remainder of the book. Jeremiah and Hosea are the two prophets who emphasize the backsliding of God's people. Hosea was the prophet to the northern kingdom at the time of captivity, as Jeremiah was the prophet to the southern kingdom at the time of its captivity.

v. 17 — “Ephraim” occurs thirty-six times and refers to the northern kingdom of Israel — a part of the kingdom represents the whole. Israel has gone into idolatry. God says to keep hands off.

## **2. Israel turns from God; God turns from Israel; deterioration within follows, Chapter 5**

v. 1 — God condemns the leadership — priest and king.

vv. 5, 6 — When the nation falls, they will cry to God, but He will not respond.

vv. 7-15 — Israel turns in desperation to her enemies for help, but there is no help. Judah is in the same plight. Assyria could not and would not assist.

## **B. Israel (Ephraim) will return in the last days; presently to be judged for current sins, Chapter 6**

vv. 1-3 — Hosea looks to the last days when Israel will return to the Lord. The Lord has judged; He will save them (v. 1).

“In the third day he will raise us up” (v. 2) is interesting in light of the resurrection of Christ on the third day. He “was raised for our justification” (Romans 4:25) will be applicable to the nation Israel in the last days.

“Rain” (v. 3) could be literal rain (see Leviticus 26:4; Deuteronomy 11:14; Joel 2:23; Amos 4:7), or it could be figurative (see Hosea 10:12; Job 20:23).

Knowledge leads to spiritual growth.

v. 4 — “Ephraim” at times seems to be a term of endearment, again it seems to be used in biting sarcasm. Here the Lord expresses His deep love for His people by His reluctance to judge them. He seems frustrated as to the course of action to pursue — shall He drive them out of the land or restore them? Their goodness is like the morning mist on the mountainside: it is temporary and soon disappears.

v. 5 — God uses strong language in warning them.

v. 6 — God is more concerned with the heart relationship with Himself than with the externalities of religion (see 1 Samuel 15:22, 23).

vv. 9-11 — The priesthood is corrupt.

**C. Israel (Ephraim) could escape judgment by turning to God who loves her (key, 11:8), Chapters 7 — 12**

**1. Israel (silly dove) turns to Egypt and Assyria, Chapter 7**

v. 1 — The Lord would forgive their iniquity, but they persist in their wickedness.

vv. 2-7 — Their gross immorality is approved by the king.

v. 8 — Ephraim is like a pancake fried on top of the stove — burned on one side and raw on the other. The people blow hot and cold toward God.

v. 11 — Ephraim is like a silly dove that endangers its own life by pretending to be wounded in order to draw an intruder from its nest. Also, it walks into a trap. Ephraim turns to Egypt and Assyria for help — these destroyers of their nation.

**2. Israel turns to golden calves and altars of sin, Chapter 8**

vv. 1-4 — Having turned from God, they look to their king and their wealth to deliver them.

v. 5 — The golden calf that Jeroboam had set up had not helped them.

v. 9 — Assyria will finally take them into captivity, yet they turn foolishly to their enemy. They try to buy off Assyria.

v. 11 — An altar was a place of worship and a place to find forgiveness for sin. Altars became sin to Israel. Religion can be a curse and not a blessing.

**3. Israel (backsliding heifer) turns to land productivity; will be driven from the land, Chapters 9, 10**

## Chapter 9

**vv. 1, 2** — Prosperity had blinded them.

**v. 3** — The land is the Lord's, and He demands a return.

**v. 8** — The prophets deceive them.

**vv. 11-13** — Although the people and the land look good, all is passing away.

## Chapter 10

**v. 1** — Israel will become an empty vine (cf. John 15:1).

**v. 6** — Assyrian captivity is announced.

**v. 11** — A heifer stiffens her front feet and refuses to budge. Then she begins to slip backward. God will judge the nation.

**4. Israel turns from God — must be judged; God will not give her up, Chapters 11, 12**

## Chapter 11

**v. 1** — God loves Israel (see v. 8). Verse 1 is quoted in connection with the birth of Christ (see Matthew 2:15).

**v. 7** — This is the second occurrence of “backsliding” (see Hosea 4:16).

**v. 8** — This explains the seeming frustration, indecision, and vacillation in attitude and action toward Israel. Although God loves them, He must judge them. God seems to be on the horns of a dilemma.

## Chapter 12

**v. 1** — Ephraim is trusting the word of Assyria and doubting God.

**v. 8** — God seems to be judging Israel with prosperity. Riches deceive them, for they think they can buy peace. (What a lesson for the United States!)

**D. Israel (Ephraim) will turn from idols to God in the last**

**days**, Chapters 13, 14

**1. Israel will be judged in the present**, Chapter 13

**vv. 7, 8** — Judgment is inevitable. God will come upon them like a lion, leopard, and bear.

**v. 11** — This is a reference to Saul.

**v. 13** — Judgment is coming.

**v. 14** — This is quoted by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:55.

**2. Israel will be saved in the future**, Chapter 14

**v. 4** — God's love for them cannot be changed. He will heal their backsliding. This is the third mention of backsliding (see Hosea 4:16 and 11:7).

**v. 8** — Love will triumph. Ephraim was joined to idols, and God let her alone. But there will come a day when Ephraim will turn from idolatry. God's love will prevail.

Any sinner may turn to God. God always will receive sinners — because He loves them.

# JOEL

**WRITER:** Joel

Nothing is known of this prophet except what is given in the opening verse. His name means *Jehovah is God*.

**TIME:**

Considered by many to be the earliest of the writing prophets, he was a prophet to Judah probably about the time of the reign of Joash, king of Judah. He probably knew Elijah and Elisha. The critical school, adopting their usual custom, have placed this book at the other extreme, even after the captivity.

**THEME:**

“The day of the LORD” (Joel 1:15; 2:1, 2, 10, 11, 30, 31; 3:14-16)

**FEATURES:**

1. “The day of the LORD” or “the day of Jehovah” is an expression introduced by Joel (if he is the first of the writing prophets — there are about fifty prophets in all). From the mountaintop of the beginning of written prophecy, he saw the farthest into the future. “The day of the LORD” is an expression that is fraught with meaning. It seems to include not only the coming Millennial Kingdom, but also to include all the judgments which precede the setting up of the Kingdom and the return of Christ.

2. His description of a literal plague of locusts and its comparison with future judgments is a dramatic and literary gem.

3. He is the prophet who mentioned the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which was referred to by Peter on the Day of Pentecost.

**OUTLINE:**

**I. Literal and local plague of locusts, Chapter 1:1-14**

**II. Looking to the day of the LORD (prelude), Chapters 1:15 — 2:32**

**III. Looking at the day of the LORD (postlude), Chapter 3**

**A. The Great Tribulation, vv. 1-15**

**B. The Millennial Kingdom, vv. 16-21**

## COMMENT:

### I. Literal and local plague of locusts, Chapter 1:1-14

**vv. 1, 2** — There is nothing like this locust plague in the memory of man.

**v. 3** — There is nothing like the locust plague in the future. It is unprecedented and will be remembered as something that cannot be compared to any other similar experience in the history of the nation.

The Great Tribulation is just such an experience according to the Lord Jesus (see Matthew 24:21).

- v. 4** — “Palmer worm” (*gazam*) means *to gnaw off*.
- “Locust” (*arbeh*) means *to be many; migratory*.
- “Cankerworm” (*yeleq*) means *to lick off*.
- “Caterpillar” (*chasil*) means *to devour; consume*.

Some expositors interpret these words as describing four stages of the development of the caterpillar, while others consider them to be four different kinds of insects. On many occasions, locusts devastated large portions of the earth. The island of Cyprus was stripped by locusts for 250 years. The Israelite was permitted to eat locusts (Leviticus 11:22). Locusts were sent as a judgment from God (see Deuteronomy 28:38-42; 1 Kings 8:37). In Revelation 9:1-12 is the final fulfillment of locusts.

**v. 5** — “Drunkards” — drunkenness is the national sin which prophets condemn (especially Isaiah, Hosea, and Amos). The drunkards are addressed because the locusts had destroyed the vine that produces the grapes from which the wine is made.

**vv. 6, 7** — Locusts are compared to an invading army — indeed they were just as destructive.

**v. 8** — The drunkard is to mourn like a young bride for a departed husband. This is the first group called to mourn.

**v. 9** — The priests are to mourn because no longer will there be meal and wine for the offerings.

Evidently Joel is a prophet to Judah, as he makes several references to the house of the Lord (see also vv. 13, 14).



**v. 10** — This total devastation of the land is the result of the plague of locusts. The nation has become a disaster area. The Lord calls ten times upon different segments of the population to mourn and repent (vv. 8, 11, 13, 14) by doing ten things.

**vv. 11, 12** — Second group called to mourn — the farmers.  
Third group called to mourn — the fruitgrowers.

**v. 13** — Fourth group called to mourn — the priests.  
Fifth group called to mourn — ministers of the altar (to lie all night in sackcloth).  
Sixth group called to mourn — ministers of God (to lie all night in sackcloth).

**v. 14** — Seventh group — sanctify a fast.  
Eighth group — call a solemn assembly.  
Ninth group — gather elders together in the Lord's house.  
Tenth group — elders and inhabitants to cry aloud to God.

## **II. Looking to the day of the LORD (prelude), Chapters 1:15 — 2:32**

### **Chapter 1**

**v. 15** — “The day of the LORD” is first mentioned. (This is not the Lord's day. There is a vast difference of meaning, and they are no more alike than a chestnut horse and a horse chestnut.) Simply stated, the day of the LORD is in contrast to man's day or Satan's day. The day of the LORD begins with the Great Tribulation and extends through the Millennial Kingdom (see FEATURES in introduction).

The plague of locusts was in a real sense a miniature day of the LORD. The plague was an adumbration of the Great Tribulation.

**vv. 16-20** — These are the results of the locust plague.

### **Chapter 2**

**v. 1** — See Numbers 10:9 for the sounding of an alarm with the trumpet.

The prophet now looks to the Great Tribulation Period. The coming invasion of the Assyrian army is a foretaste of it.

**v. 2** — The Hebrew day begins with sundown — the evening and morning are the day. The day of the LORD opens with the Great Tribulation, not with the coming of Christ to set up the Kingdom (see Amos 5:18).

**vv. 2-10** — This is a description of the Great Tribulation.

**v. 11** — This is the coming of Christ to establish His Kingdom.

**vv. 12-17** — His last call to repent reveals the Lord's graciousness even in judgment. A remnant will repent and return to God (see Ezekiel 20:37, 38).

**vv. 18, 19** — “Then” is a great prophetic word (see Matthew 24:9, 16, 21, 23, 30). Up to this point there is judgment, disaster, and tragedy. From this point through chapter 2 there are blessings and benefits. These prophecies have not been fulfilled.

**v. 20** — The northern army of Assyria will be driven back, but there is coming another great army from the north (see Ezekiel 38, 39).

**v. 23** — Literal rain is referred to here. The “former rain” came in October, the “latter rain” in April. See other references to literal rain (Leviticus 26:3, 4; Deuteronomy 11:14-17; 1 Kings 8:35, 36; Jeremiah 3:3; Hosea 6:3). These references make it clear that this passage cannot be spiritualized, but refers to literal rain.

**v. 25** — This could have been a beautiful application to men today, but it also is literal — a literal reference to the restoration of the land to plenty and blessing.

**vv. 26, 27** — These verses continue to make clear the literal interpretation of this entire section which has not yet been fulfilled.

**vv. 28-32** — Peter quoted this on the Day of Pentecost as an explanation for the conduct of the believers. They were filled with the Spirit, not filled with wine. Peter did not say that the experience was a fulfillment of Joel. He did not say, “*That it might be fulfilled* which was spoken through the prophet Joel,” but rather, “*This is that* which was spoken through the prophet, Joel.” (See Acts 2:15-21 and author's notes on Acts.) Joel's prophecy was not fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. The Spirit filled only the believers, not “all flesh” (v. 28) as Joel predicts. The “wonders” (v. 30) that Joel said would appear in the heavens were not in evidence on the Day of

Pentecost. The prophecy of Joel awaits “the great and the terrible day of the LORD” (v. 31) which is yet future (see Joel 3:2 and Zechariah 2:10, 11).

### **III. Looking at the day of the LORD (postlude), Chapter 3**

#### **A. The Great Tribulation, vv. 1-15**

**v. 1** — The regathering of Israel in the land will probably take place in the first part of the Great Tribulation Period (the first 3 1/2 years). See Ezekiel 37:12-18 and Acts 15:15-18.

**v. 2** — Gentile nations will come against the little nation of Israel (Daniel 11:40-45). This is the campaign of Armageddon, which ends with the coming of Christ to deliver His people and establish His Kingdom.

**vv. 3-8** — The nations will be judged because of their unjust treatment of Israel in the past.

**vv. 9-15** — This is a picture of the Great Tribulation Period. Joel, the first of the writing prophets, projects himself into the future and looks back upon the Great Tribulation Period, “the day of the LORD.”

#### **B. The Millennial Kingdom, vv. 16-21**

Neither today nor during the Great Tribulation is the time to beat swords into ploughshares; rather the opposite is true (v. 10).

**vv. 16-21** — The coming of Christ ends the Great Tribulation Period and brings in the Kingdom.

**v. 17** — The Lord Jesus Christ shall reign in person.

**v. 18** — The land will become the land of milk and honey.

**v. 19** — Judgment of the lands of Egypt and Assyria continues into the Kingdom Age (see Isaiah 19:22-25).

**v. 20** — Note the permanency of the land of Israel.

**v. 21** — See Zechariah 12:10; 13:1.

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Cohen, Gary C. and H. Ronald Vandervev. *Hosea and Amos*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1981.
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- Jensen, Irving L. *Minor Prophets of Judah*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1975. (Obadiah, Joel, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk)
- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 2. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1982.

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**Notes & Outlines**

**AMOS  
OBADIAH**

J. Vernon McGee

# AMOS

## **WRITER:** Amos

Amos was not a graduate of the school of the prophets but was a layman. He was a herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit (Amos 1:1; 7:14, 15). He was a native of Tekoa (Amos 1:1), a village about twelve miles south of Jerusalem. Although born in Judea, his messages were to the northern kingdom of Israel primarily, and to the world in general, as the text indicates.

## **TIME:**

His ministry was during the reign of Jeroboam II, king of Israel, and Uzziah, king of Judah. He was a contemporary of Hosea in Israel and of Isaiah and Micah in Judah. The exact time was “two years before the earthquake” (Amos 1:1). This earthquake was of such proportions that Zechariah mentioned it 200 years later (Zechariah 14:5) and identified it as having come during the reign of Uzziah.

## **THEME:**

Amos presented God as the ruler of the world and declared that all nations were responsible to Him. The measure of responsibility is created by the light which a nation has. The final test for any nation (or individual) is found in Amos 3:3: “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” In a day of prosperity, he pronounced punishment. Judgment of God awaited nations living in luxury and lolling in immorality.

## **OUTLINE:**

- I. Judgment on surrounding nations, Chapters 1:1 — 2:3**
  - A.** Introduction, Chapter 1:1, 2
  - B.** Judgment against Syria for cruelty, Chapter 1:3-5
  - C.** Judgment against Philistia for making slaves, Chapter 1:6-8
  - D.** Judgment against Phoenicia for breaking treaty (selling slaves), Chapter 1:9, 10
  - E.** Judgment against Edom for revengeful spirit, Chapter 1:11, 12

- F. Judgment against Ammon for violent crimes, Chapter 1:13-15
- G. Judgment against Moab for injustice, Chapter 2:1-3

## II. Judgment on Judah and Israel, Chapters 2:4 — 6:14

- A. Judgment against Judah for despising the Law, Chapter 2:4, 5
- B. Judgment against Israel for immorality and blasphemy, Chapter 2:6-16
- C. God's charge against whole house of Israel (12 tribes), Chapter 3  
*(Privilege creates responsibility; the higher the blessing, the greater the punishment.)*
- D. Israel punished in past for iniquity, Chapter 4
- E. Israel will be punished in future for iniquity, Chapter 5
- F. Israel admonished in present to depart from iniquity, Chapter 6

## III. Visions of the future, Chapters 7 — 9

- A. Vision of grasshoppers, Chapter 7:1-3
- B. Vision of fire, Chapter 7:4-6
- C. Vision of plumbline, Chapter 7:7-9
- D. Historic interlude, Chapter 7:10-17  
*(Personal experience of prophet)*
- E. Vision of basket of summer fruit, Chapter 8
- F. Vision of worldwide dispersion, Chapter 9:1-10
- G. Vision of worldwide regathering and restoration of kingdom, 9:11-15

### COMMENT:

#### I. Judgment on surrounding nations, Chapters 1:1 — 2:3

##### A. Introduction, Chapter 1:1, 2

v. 1 — Amos does not identify himself as a prophet, but as a herdsman (see Amos 7:14).

v. 2 — “The LORD will roar from Zion” (also Joel 3:16) suggests

the roar of a lion as it pounces upon its prey. This speaks of the near judgment of God upon the nations.

**B. Judgment against Syria for cruelty, Chapter 1:3-5**

**v. 3** — “Three transgressions” means ungodliness in its worst form, according to Luther.

Damascus was and is the capital of Syria (see 2 Kings 10:32, 33 for the fulfillment).

**v. 5** — Kir was in Moab.

**C. Judgment against Philistia for making slaves, Chapter 1:6-8**

**v. 6** — Gaza is a city of Philistia.

**v. 7** — See fulfillment (2 Kings 18:8).

**v. 8** — All these were cities of Philistia.

**D. Judgment against Phoenicia for breaking treaty (selling slaves), Chapter 1:9, 10**

**v. 9** — Tyre was the chief city of Phoenicia. Her commercial merchants did business with all nations.

**v. 10** — This was fulfilled by both Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander the Great.

**E. Judgment against Edom for revengeful spirit, Chapter 1:11, 12**

**v. 11** — “For three transgressions” (see vv. 3, 6). Edom came from Esau, the brother of Jacob.

**F. Judgment against Ammon for violent crimes, Chapter 1:13-15**

See 2 Kings 8:12, 13 for the crimes of Ammon.

**G. Judgment against Moab for injustice, Chapter 2:1-3**



**v. 1** — The incident is not recorded, but it reveals the spirit of injustice that goes beyond death.

**vv. 2, 3** — This proud nation was brought to extinction by Nebuchadnezzar.

## **II. Judgment on Judah and Israel, Chapters 2:4 — 6:14**

### **A. Judgment against Judah for despising the Law, Chapter 2:4, 5**

Judah had the Law of God and despised it. God judged them according to the Law. The other nations did not have God's Law and were therefore not judged according to it.

### **B. Judgment against Israel for immorality and blasphemy, Chapter 2:6-16**

Israel (ten tribes) likewise had the Law, but they were committing the same sins as the Amorites. God had put the Amorites out of the land. Israel will go into captivity before Judah.

### **C. God's charge against whole house of Israel (12 tribes), Chapter 3**

*(Privilege creates responsibility; the higher the blessing, the greater the punishment.)*

**vv. 1, 2** — The nation Israel occupied a unique relationship to God; she was chosen for a definite purpose. This privilege created a greater responsibility than any other nation had.

**v. 3** — This is a great principle by which God must judge all nations and individuals. Israel knew God's way. They disagreed with it and departed from it. By this they will be judged.

**vv. 4-15** — Judgment upon the entire nation will be severe. The northern kingdom will be judged first (vv. 14, 15).

### **D. Israel punished in past for iniquity, Chapter 4**

**vv. 1-3** — Amos directs his scathing judgment against the northern kingdom.

**vv. 4, 5** — With biting sarcasm he invited the people to transgress. They called it worship of the golden calf.

**vv. 6-13** — They had been judged by scant harvests, plagues of insects, pestilences, war, and destruction. None of these had deterred them from sin.

### **E. Israel will be punished in future for iniquity, Chapter 5**

**vv. 1-15** — God pleads with them to seek Him so that judgment could be averted (see vv. 4-6, 8, 14, 15).

**vv. 16-20** — Warning of approaching judgment — “the day of the LORD.” The day of the LORD opens with the Great Tribulation (not light, but darkness — vv. 18, 20).

**vv. 21-26** — The people were going through the forms of religion. They also worshiped other gods — idols.

**v. 27** — They must go into captivity (Assyrian).

### **F. Israel admonished in present to depart from iniquity, Chapter 6**

**v. 1** — Israel was taking it easy, sitting in the lap of luxury in a day of affluence.

**v. 3** — There were three national sins:

**v. 4** — Gluttony

**v. 5** — Heathen music

**v. 6** — Drunkenness

} They were engaging in all of this apart from God.

**v. 8** — God hated all of this. They had become a godless nation.

**v. 14** — This is another warning of the coming captivity for both nations.

## **III. Visions of the future, Chapters 7 — 9**

### **A. Vision of grasshoppers, Chapter 7:1-3**

**vv. 1, 2** — Grasshoppers were a judgment from God.

**v. 3** — God withdrew this judgment because of His tender mercy.

**B. Vision of fire**, Chapter 7:4-6

**v. 4** — Fire was a judgment from God.

**vv. 5-6** — God put out the fire because of His tender mercy.

**C. Vision of plumbline**, Chapter 7:7-9

**vv. 7, 8** — When God begins to measure with a plumbline, action is imminent (Isaiah 28:17; Jeremiah 31:38, 39; Zechariah 2:1, 2).

**v. 9** — Jeroboam is marked out for judgment.

**D. Historic interlude**, Chapter 7:10-17  
*(Personal experience of prophet)*

**v. 10** — Amaziah, priest of Baal at Bethel, goes to King Jeroboam with a charge against Amos.

**v. 11** — This is the charge.

**v. 12** — Now Amaziah has the king on his side, and he goes to Amos to order him to leave. He is sarcastic. He says in effect, “Get lost. You are a country preacher; go back to the country.”

**v. 13** — He continues his sarcastic tirade, reminding Amos that Bethel is where the king worships and that Amos is no longer welcome there. Amos is not a preacherette with sweet talk; he is not a mealy-mouth giving out saccharine sweetness in little meaningless verbiage.

**v. 14** — Amos’ answer is reasonable. He confesses he is a herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit (wild figs).

**v. 15** — But he was called of God.

**vv. 16, 17** — Amos turns on Amaziah with a fearful prophecy.

Apparently Amos did not leave town.

**E. Vision of basket of summer fruit, Chapter 8**

The goodness of Israel was like the summer fruit. It was perishable and soon deteriorated. God must judge them now.

**v. 10** — Dark days would come.

**v. 11** — God would withdraw His Word from them.

**v. 12** — They would become “the wandering Jew.”

**F. Vision of worldwide dispersion, Chapter 9:1-10**

**v. 8** — Israel would not be utterly destroyed.

**v. 9** — Israel would be dispersed throughout the world.

**v. 10** — The wicked would be judged by the sword at that time. This has been and is being literally fulfilled.

**G. Vision of worldwide regathering and restoration of kingdom, Chapter 9:11-15**

**v. 11** — This was quoted by James at the council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:16, 17). This is yet to be fulfilled.

**vv. 12-15** — This is the setting up of the millennial kingdom.

**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter —
  
2. Most important verse —
  
3. Most prominent word —
  
4. Teaching about Christ —
  
5. Command to obey —
  
6. Promise to claim —
  
7. New truth learned —

## OBADIAH

**WRITER:** Obadiah

Obadiah means *Servant of Jehovah*. He is one of four prophets about whom we know absolutely nothing, except that he wrote prophecy. The other three prophets are Habakkuk, Haggai, and Malachi. Obadiah is like a ghostwriter — he is there, but we do not know him. He lived up to his name. A servant boasts of no genealogy, neither exploits nor experiences. Dr. Edward Pusey said, “God has willed that his name alone and this brief prophecy should be known to the world.”

**DATE:**

There is a great difference of opinion as to the date of this prophet. There are some who give the date of 887 B.C., which fixes the time during the reign of Jehoram and the bloody Athaliah (cp. 2 Kings 8:18 with 11:1-16). Dr. Pusey placed him during the reign of Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 17:7). If this is accurate, we have one isolated reference to Obadiah in history. Nevertheless, this name was as common in that day as the name John is today. Canon Farrar gave the date as 587 B.C. Dr. William Moorehead concurred in this, as he suggested that Obadiah was probably a contemporary of Jeremiah. The whole question seems to hinge on verse 11. Is this verse historical or prophetic? The natural interpretation is the historic one, which would give it the late date. Most likely it was written subsequent to the Babylonian captivity.

**KEY:** Edom

*How are the things of Esau searched out! How are his hidden things sought out!* (Obadiah 1:6)

## **FEATURES:**

Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament — only twenty-one verses. But the brevity of the message does not render it less important or less significant for us today. Like the other Minor Prophets, the message is primary, it is pertinent, it is practical, and it is poignant. It is a message that can be geared into this day in which we are living.

Obadiah tells us immediately, bluntly, and to the point, “Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom....” It is the prophecy of judgment against Edom.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Edomites were those who were descended from Esau, just as the Israelites are those who are descended from Jacob.

The story of Esau and Jacob is that of twin brothers, sons of Isaac and Rebekah. They were not identical twins; actually they were opposites (see Genesis 25:24-34).

Esau despised his birthright. The man who had the birthright was in contact with God — he was the priest of his family, he was the man who had a covenant from God, the man who had a relationship with God. In effect Esau said, “I would rather have a bowl of soup than have a relationship with God.”

Having seen Esau in the first book of the Old Testament, look now at the last book of the Old Testament and read this strange language:

*I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, In what way hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD; yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau....* (Malachi 1:2, 3)

This is a strange thing for God to say — “I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau.” The explanation is in the little Book of Obadiah.

## COMMENT:

Verse six is translated by Ginsburg, the Hebrew scholar, thus: “How are the things of Esau stripped bare!” They are laid out in the open for us to look at for the first time. Obadiah puts the microscope down on Esau; and when we look through the eyepiece, we see Edom. As we inflate a tire tube to find a leak and cannot find that leak until it is inflated, just so Obadiah presents Esau inflated so that we can see the flaw in his life. What was small in Esau is now magnified 100,000 times in the nation. God did not say at the beginning that He hated Esau — it was not until he became a nation and revealed the thing that caused God to hate him:

*The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou who dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high, who saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? (v. 3)*

It was pride. “Pride hath deceived you,” God says to Edom.

Esau, like Jacob, had become a great nation. The children of Israel had come into the promised land; the children of Esau had gone to the south and east, in the rocky fastness, where in 1812 archaeologists discovered a city, Petra, actually hewn out of solid cliffs of rose-colored rock. It was an impregnable fortress, so safe from attack that Egypt, Babylon, and Assyria deposited money there. Just a handful of men could guard the narrow canyons which form its approaches.

They were living in a false security. In their pride they felt that they did not need God anymore, and they bowed Him out of their civilization. When a mere man, a little creature down here, gets to the place where he says, “I don’t need God,” God says, “That’s what I hate.”



## OUTLINE:

### I. Edom — destruction, vv. 1-16

- A. Charge against Edom, vv. 1-9
- B. Crime of Edom, vv. 10-14
- C. Catastrophe to Edom, vv. 15, 16  
(Poetic justice — *lex talionis* — law of retaliation)

### II. Israel — restoration, vv. 17-21

- A. Condition of Israel, v. 17
- B. Calling of Israel, v. 18
- C. Consummation of all things, vv. 19-21  
(“And the kingdom shall be the Lord’s.”)

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**Notes & Outlines**

# **JONAH**

J. Vernon McGee

## JONAH

Is the Book of Jonah the Achilles' heel of the Bible? It is, if we are to accept the ridiculous explanations of the critics. The translators of the Septuagint were the first to question its reasonableness. They set the pattern for the avalanche of criticism which was to follow. The ancient method of modernism is to allegorize the book and to classify it with *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels*.

Some of the extravagant theories of the critics are more far-fetched and fantastic than they even concede the Book of Jonah to be. For example:

1. It is held (without a scrap of evidence) that Jonah was the son of the widow of Zarephath.

2. There is a theory that Jonah fell asleep during the storm, had a dream, and that the Book of Jonah is the account of that dream.

3. There are those who relate the Book of Jonah to the Phoenician myth of Hercules and the sea monster.

4. It is claimed that Jonah was picked up after the storm and shipwreck by a boat that had a fish for a figurehead — which gave support for the record in the Book of Jonah.

5. Others resort to the wild claim that a dead fish was floating around and that Jonah took refuge in it during the storm.

The producers of these speculations claim that the Book of Jonah is unreasonable, and they bring forth these theories to give credence to the story! We must dismiss them all as having no basis of fact, no vestige of proof from an historical standpoint, and are only in existence in the imagination of the critics.

**WRITER:** Jonah

Jonah was a historical character. The historical record of the kings of Israel and Judah is accepted as reliable. No one denies that David, Josiah, and Hezekiah were real kings, and it is among the records of these kings that we find the mention of Jonah. Speaking of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, the historian writes:

***He restored the border of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spoke by the hand of his servant, Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher. (2 Kings 14:25)***

Jeroboam was a real person; Israel was a real nation; Hamath was a real place. It is unlikely that Jonah, the son of Amittai, was a figment of the imagination.

It is begging the point to say that this is another Jonah. It is not reasonable to believe that there were two Jonahs whose fathers were named Amittai and whose offices were prophets. This is especially evident when it is observed that the name is not a common one (it occurs only in this reference in 2 Kings, in the Book of Jonah, and in two references in the New Testament).

Obviously the Lord Jesus Christ considered Jonah a real person, and He accepted the record of the Book of Jonah as true. Listen to Him:

***For as Jonah was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation. (Luke 11:30)***

And again,

***But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet, Jonah; for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here. (Matthew 12:39-41)***

If you reject the Book of Jonah, you are not merely saying that you cannot accept the record as reasonable, but that you do not believe that Jesus was acquainted with the facts of the case. You break with Jesus when you deny the Book of Jonah.

The fact that the question has been raised concerning the authen-

ticity of Jonah's record is all the more startling when a contrast is made with one of the other minor prophets. For instance, there is no reference to Habakkuk in any historical book, and he is never mentioned by name in the New Testament. In spite of this, there is no concerted effort to classify him as a mythological character. Of course, the real reason for getting rid of Jonah is to get rid of the miraculous experience which he records concerning himself.

### **DATE:**

Conservative scholars place the writing of this book before 745 B.C. The incidents took place about that time. Some even place it as early as 860 B.C. It seems best to place it between 800 and 750 B.C. Students of history will recognize this as the period when Nineveh was in its heyday. The nation of Assyria was at its zenith at this time, also. It was destroyed by 606 B.C. By the time of Herodotus, Nineveh, the city of Nimrod, had ceased to exist. When Xenophon passed the city, it was deserted, but he testified that the walls still stood and they were 150 feet high. Historians now estimate they were at least 100 feet high and 40 feet thick.

### **COMMENTS:**

(See author's booklet, "Jonah, Dead or Alive?")

### **The Book of Jonah is Experience, Not Prophecy**

In examining the Book of Jonah, we find that it contains the personal record of an experience which Jonah had, and he evidently was the writer. Properly speaking, the brief brochure is not a prophecy and seems to be out of step among the Minor Prophets. It contains no prophecy, although Jonah was a prophet. It is the personal account of a major event in the life of Jonah. As the narrator, he told of his experience which was a sign of the greatest event in the history of the world — *the resurrection of Jesus Christ*.

The Book of Jonah is not a fish story that disturbs a gainsaying world, but it is a throne in the midst of which "stood a Lamb as though it had been slain" (Revelation 5:6). This Lamb is a resurrected Lamb, and a Christ-rejecting world will someday cry out, "Hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" (Revelation 6:16).

## The Fish Is Not the Hero of the Story

There is another salient point to keep before us as we study this book: The fish is not the hero of the story, neither is it the villain. The book is not even about a fish. The chief difficulty is in keeping a correct perspective. The fish is among the props and does not occupy the star's dressing room. Let us distinguish between the essentials and the incidentals. The incidentals are the fish, the gourd, the east wind, the boat, and Nineveh. The essentials are Jehovah and Jonah — God and man.

### SIGNIFICANT SUBJECTS:

**1.** This is the one book of the Old Testament which sets forth the **Resurrection**. Those who assert that the resurrection is not found in the Old Testament surely are not versed in the magnificent message of Jonah. When a wicked and adulterous generation was seeking after a sign, Jesus referred them to the Book of Jonah for the message: "As Jonah...so Jesus" is the fine comparison made by our Lord.

**2. Salvation is not by works.** Salvation is by faith, which leads to repentance. The Book of Jonah is read by the Orthodox Jews on the Great Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). One great self-evident truth from the ritual of this day is that the way to God was not by "works of righteousness which we have done" (Titus 3:5), but by the blood of a substitutionary sacrifice provided by God. The most significant statement in the Book of Jonah is in 2:9 — "Salvation is of the LORD."

**3. God's purpose of grace cannot be frustrated.** If Jonah had refused to go to Nineveh the second time, would God have destroyed the city? God would not have been limited by Jonah's refusal. He would have raised up another instrument, or, more likely, He would have had another fish ready to give Jonah the green light toward Nineveh. The book shows God's determination to get His message of salvation to a people who will hear and accept it.

**4. God will not cast us aside for faithlessness.** When Jonah failed the first time, God did not give him up. The most encouraging words that a faltering and failing child of God can hear are, "And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time" (Jonah 3:1).



**5. God is good and gracious.** The most penetrating picture of God in the entire Bible is in Jonah 4:2. It is wrong to say that the Old Testament reveals a God of wrath and the New Testament reveals a God of love. He is no vengeful deity in the Book of Jonah.

**6. God is the God of the Gentiles.** It has been suggested that Romans 3:29 be written over this book: "Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also." The Book of Jonah is the answer to those critics who claim that the Old Testament presents a local and limited deity, a tribal deity. The Book of Jonah is a great book on missions and has a world vision.

### **APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF JONAH:**

**1. Striking resemblance between Jonah and Paul.** Both were missionaries to the Gentiles; both were shipwrecked; both were witnesses to the sailors on board the ship, and both were used to deliver these sailors from death. There are other striking comparisons which a careful study will reveal. Paul made three missionary journeys, and with his trip to Rome, there were four. The four chapters of the Book of Jonah may be divided into four missionary journeys of Jonah: (1) into the fish, (2) out onto dry land, (3) to Nineveh, and (4) to the heart of God.

**2. Timetable approach.** When you consult a timetable in a railroad station or airport, there are three important factors you note: (1) destination, (2) departure time, and (3) arrival time. It is possible to construct the four brief chapters of Jonah into the form of a timetable.

<b>Timetable of the Book of Jonah</b>			
<b>DEPARTURE</b>	<b>DESTINATION</b>	<b>ARRIVAL</b>	<b>CHAPTER</b>
Israel (Samaria or Gath-hepher)	Nineveh	Fish	1
Fish	Nineveh	Dry Land	2
Dry Land	Nineveh	Nineveh	3
Nineveh	Gourd Vine	Heart of God	4

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**Notes & Outlines**

# **MICAH**

**J. Vernon McGee**

## MICAH

### **WRITER:** Micah

His name means *Who is like Jehovah?* The word has the same derivation as Michael, which means *Who is like God?* There are many Micahs in Scripture, but this one is identified as a Morasthite (Micah 1:1) since he was an inhabitant of Moresheth-gath (Micah 1:14), a place about twenty miles southwest of Jerusalem, near Lachish. He is not to be confused with any other Micah of Scripture.

### **TIME:**

Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah and prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Micah 1:1). He was younger than Isaiah, and his prophecy might be called a miniature Isaiah or Isaiah in shorthand, since there are striking similarities. Ewald and Wellhausen attacked the unity of this book. It is the same attack that has been made against Isaiah.

The ministry of Micah was directed to both Jerusalem and Samaria (Micah 1:1), and he evidently saw the captivity of the Northern Kingdom.

### **THEME:**

The judgment and redemption of God, Micah 7:18.

*Who is a God like unto thee, who pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy.*

God hates sin, but He loves the souls of the sinners.

### **STYLE:**

For many this is the favorite of the Minor Prophets. The writing is pungent and personal. Micah was trenchant, touching, and tender. He was realistic and reportorial — he would have made a good war correspondent. There is an exquisite beauty about this brochure, which combines God's infinite tenderness with His judgments. There are several famous passages that are familiar to the average Christian. Through the gloom of impending judgment, Micah saw clearly the coming glory of the redemption of Israel.

## **STRIKING STATEMENTS:**

**1:6-16** — Assyria destroyed Samaria, a miniature of the great destruction of the last days (Micah 4:11-13).

**2:12** — The future regathering of the remnant.

**3:6, 7** — The end of prophecy.

**3:12; 4:9, 10** — Coming destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon and not by Assyria. Jeremiah's life was preserved because of Micah 3:12 (cf. Jeremiah 26:18).

**4:1-8** — The coming kingdom over the entire earth (one world).

**5:2** — The birth of Christ (quoted in Matthew 2:5, 6).

**5:7, 8** — The future ministry of the remnant.

**6:6-8** — “One of the most sublime and impassioned declarations of spiritual religion that the Old Testament contains” (Dean Stanley).

**7:18, 19** — Micah lived up to his name in exalting God. Dr. Pierson calls it, “A little poem of twelve lines in the Hebrew.... One of the most exquisite things to be found in the entire Old Testament.”

## **COMMENTS:**

Micah pronounced judgment on the cities of Israel and on Jerusalem in Judah. These centers influenced the people of the nation. Micah condemns urban problems that sound very much like our present-day problems: violence, corruption, robbery, covetousness, gross materialism, and spiritual bankruptcy. He could well be labeled “the prophet of the city.”

## **OUTLINE:**

The more natural division of the prophecy is to note that Micah gave three messages, each beginning with the injunction, “Hear” (1:2, 3:1, 6:1).

The first was addressed to “all people”; the second was addressed specifically to the leaders of Israel; the third was a personal word of pleading to Israel to repent and return to God.

### **“WHO IS A GOD LIKE UNTO THEE” IN:**

#### **I. Proclaiming future judgment for past sins, Chapters 1—3**

- A. Prophet's first message, directed against Samaria, reaches to Jerusalem, Chapter 1
- B. Prophet's second message describes specific sins, Chapter 2
- C. Prophet's third message denounces leaders for sins, Chapter 3

## **II. Prophesying future glory because of past promises, Chapters 4, 5**

- A. Prophecies of last days, Chapter 4
- B. Prophecy of first coming of Christ before second coming and kingdom, Chapter 5

## **III. Pleading present repentance because of past redemption, Chapter 6**

## **IV. Pardoning all iniquity because of who God is and what He does, Chapter 7**

### **COMMENT:**

#### **I. Proclaiming future judgment for past sins, Chapters 1 — 3**

- A. **Prophet's first message, directed against Samaria, reaches to Jerusalem, Chapter 1**

v. 1 — Samaria is the capital of the Northern Kingdom. One of the golden calves is there. Micah prophesies to both kingdoms, but primarily to the Northern Kingdom.

v. 2 — “All ye people” is a call to all the world to hear how God is going to judge Samaria.

v. 3 — The Assyrian is God's instrument of judgment.

v. 4 — This prophecy, as well as the remaining prophecies, look beyond the local fulfillment to the personal return of Christ to the earth in judgment.

v. 5 — Jerusalem, with its temple and service, is the appointed place of worship, but now it has become just another high place of heathen worship. Even today going to church can become an evil.

v. 6 — The remainder of the chapter describes prophetically the

destruction of Samaria by Assyria, as recorded historically in 2 Kings 17:3-18.

**vv. 8-16** — A lamentation of Micah. The meaning of names reveals a play upon words:

Gath (v. 10) — weep-town (“Weep not in weep-town,”  
cp. 2 Samuel 1:20)

Aphrah — dust-town

Saphir (v. 11) — beauty-town

Zaanan — march-town

Maroth (v. 12) — bitterness

Lachish (v. 13) — horse-town

Achzib (v. 14) — lie-town

The Assyrian came to the gate of Jerusalem but did not enter (v. 12).

### **B. Prophet’s second message describes specific sins, Chapter 2**

**v. 1** — They spend their time in bed plotting and planning to do evil the next day.

**v. 2** — Covetousness, violence, and oppression are the sins of Samaria, also of Jerusalem.

**vv. 3-6** — The Lord responds by stating that He, too, is plotting evil (i.e., what *they* would call evil, because it is judgment against them).

**v. 7** — God’s word will be received by His people who obey Him, and it will be rejected when they do not obey.

**v. 8** — They oppress the poor.

**v. 9** — They have problems of the slums. The landlords are heartless.

**v. 11** — They want to hear false prophets approve and applaud drunkenness.

**vv. 12, 13** — The Lord will ultimately regather the remnant.

### **C. Prophet’s third message denounces leaders for sins, Chapter 3**

**vv. 1-4** — (a) Sins of princes: Injustice — they love evil and hate good.



**vv. 5-8** — (b) Sins of prophets: They declare peace — cause people to err. Micah is declaring God’s word by the power of the Spirit (v. 8).

**vv. 9-12** — (c) Sins of leaders of Jerusalem: Injustice of rulers and love of money of prophets. Frightful judgment coming to Jerusalem (v. 12).

## **II. Prophecy future glory because of past promises, Chapters 4, 5**

### **A. Prophecies of last days, Chapter 4**

**vv. 1-3** — This is a prediction of the millennial kingdom, with Jerusalem as the center of worship and government. At that time swords will be beaten into plowshares (v. 3).

**v. 4** — This is the millennial kingdom (see Zechariah 3:10) and pictures the security of Israel.

**v. 5** — The American Standard Version gives a better understanding of this verse:

*For all the peoples walk every one in the name of his god; and we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God for ever and ever.*

**vv. 6-8** — Israel is to be regathered.

**vv. 9, 10** — The Babylonian captivity was also in the future at the time of this writing and would intervene before the regathering of Israel.

**v. 11** — This part of the prophecy looks beyond to the time of Armageddon, which ends the Great Tribulation in the coming of Christ to the earth.

### **B. Prophecy of first coming of Christ, before second coming and kingdom, Chapter 5**

**v. 1** — This verse probably belongs to the last chapter, as it is in the Hebrew text, and awaits future fulfillment. Or it could apply to King Zedekiah (2 Kings 25:7).

**v. 2** — This was quoted by the scribes to Herod when the wise men came, looking for “he that is born King of the Jews” (Matthew 2:2; see

also Matthew 2:5, 6).

*In His humanity Christ came from Bethlehem;  
In His deity Christ came from eternity.*

**vv. 3-15** — Christ is a shepherd to both Israel and the church.

This bridges the gap between the first and second comings of Christ — and beyond the second coming. It covers both the period of the church and the kingdom.

### **III. Pleading present repentance because of past redemption,** Chapter 6

**vv. 1, 2** — This is the beginning of the third and final message of Micah to the nations of the world and to Israel in particular. Jehovah has a contention with His people, Israel.

**v. 3** — Jehovah pleads with His people to bring a charge against Him.

**v. 4** — He recites their past history — how He redeemed them out of Egypt.

**v. 5** — God did not permit Balaam to curse His people.

**vv. 6, 7** — These were the things that Israel was doing that displeased (not pleased) God.

**v. 8** — The condition of the heart and its relation to God are the primary considerations in the Old Testament religion. The externalities of religion were only of value in ratio to the condition of the heart (see Matthew 7:21-23; 23:25, 26; Romans 10:9, 10).

**vv. 9-12** — God cannot overlook dishonesty, violence, crookedness, lying, and deceit.

**vv. 13-15** — God would judge them then and now.

**v. 16** — They follow in the way of Omri and Ahab. These two kings, father and son, were set aside and judged severely.

### **IV. Pardoning all iniquity because of who God is and what He does,** Chapter 7

**vv. 1-9** — The prophet confesses that God is accurate in His complaint against Israel.

**vv. 10-17** — Judgment is coming in spite of past and future blessings. The land shall also be judged. It shall be desolate.

**vv. 18, 19** — There is no one or no thing to which God can be compared. He has no equal. He is greatest when He pardons sins. He alone can forgive sin (Mark 2:7). He made the supreme sacrifice so He could forgive sin. John 3:16 belongs with this section.

He delights and yearns to forgive sins. Sinners must come His way (John 14:6).

**v. 20** — God will perform His promises to Abraham and Jacob because He is the truth, and He can show mercy.

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**Notes & Outlines**

**NAHUM**  
**HABAKKUK**

**J. Vernon McGee**

# NAHUM

**WRITER:** Nahum

“Nahum” means *comforter*. He is identified (Nahum 1:1) as an Elkoshite. This is all that is known of the writer of this book. Elkosh was a city in Assyria, a few miles north of the ruins of Nineveh. Nahum could well have lived there and have prophesied to Nineveh, as Daniel did to Babylon later on. The most likely explanation, however, is that there was a village by this name in Galilee. Jerome recorded that a guide pointed out to him such a village as the birthplace of Nahum — but this was a millennium after Nahum lived. Dr. John D. Davis gives the meaning for “Capernaum” as *the village of Nahum*. If “Capernaum” is a Hebrew word, then this is the evident origin.

**TIME:**

There are many dates assigned to this book and this prophet. Dates are given anywhere from 720 to 636 B.C. by conservative scholars. It seems reasonable to locate him about 100 years after Jonah and about 100 years before the destruction of Nineveh — between 660 and 612 B.C. He probably lived during the reign of Hezekiah and saw the destruction of the Northern Kingdom.

**THEME:** The burden (judgment) of Nineveh (Nahum 1:1).

**MESSAGE:**

Nahum sounds the death-knell of Nineveh and pronounces judgment, by total destruction, on Assyria. God was just in doing this. Jonah, almost a century before, had brought a message from God, and Nineveh had repented. However, the repentance was transitory, and God patiently gave this new generation opportunity to repent (Nahum 1:3). The day of grace ends, and the moment of doom comes (Nahum 3:19). Assyria had served God’s purpose (Isaiah 10:5) and would be destroyed. The destruction of Nineveh, according to the details which are given in this written prophecy, is almost breathtaking.

This is a message of comfort to a people who live in fear of a powerful and godless nation. God will destroy any godless nation.

Some folk think *Nahum* should be called *Ho-hum!* However,

Nahum is a thrilling book to study. It reveals the other side of the attributes of God. God is love, but God is holy and righteous and good.

## **OUTLINE:**

- I. Justice and goodness of God, Chapter 1:1-8**
- II. Justice and goodness of God demonstrated in decision to destroy Nineveh and to give the gospel, Chapter 1:9-15**
- III. Justice and goodness of God exhibited in execution of His decision to destroy Nineveh, Chapters 2, 3**
  - A. Annihilation of Assyria, Chapter 2
  - B. Avenging action of God justified, Chapter 3

## **COMMENT:**

### **I. Justice and goodness of God, Chapter 1:1-8**

**v. 1** — Nineveh was the capital of ancient Assyria. About 100 years before Nahum, Jonah preached in Nineveh, and the city turned to God. In Nahum's day the city had turned again from God, but Nahum did not go there. Jonah reveals the love of God; Nahum reveals the justice of God. Nahum issues the sentence of God upon a godless and sinful civilization (see notes on Jonah).

“Burden” is *judgment* (see Isaiah 13).

**v. 2** — “Jealous,” according to Webster, means *exacting exclusive devotion*. God demands that His people worship Him alone (Exodus 20:3-6).

“Revengeth” (KJV) is rightly translated *avengeth* in the New Scofield Reference Bible.

**v. 3** — The goodness of God is seen in His judgment. He is “slow to anger.” He was over 100 years in executing the judgment He had announced through Jonah. Although the repentance under Jonah delayed the judgment of God for more than a century, He cannot “at all acquit the wicked,” for He is just and righteous.

**vv. 4, 5** — The entire world must be judged on the basis of verse 3.

v. 6 — There is only one place of safety and security (Acts 4:12).

v. 7 — The Lord is good, and He will save.

v. 8 — The Lord is just, and He must judge.

Nineveh experienced the salvation of God before the judgment of God.

## **II. Justice and goodness of God demonstrated in decision to destroy Nineveh and to give the gospel, Chapter 1:9-15**

v. 9 — Nineveh is to be totally destroyed.

v. 11 — Some identify this “wicked counselor” as Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:13-16; Isaiah 37:14-38).

v. 14 — “Grave” — God said, in substance, “I’ll bury you.” The Assyrian has disappeared from the stage of history.

v. 15 — This speaks of deliverance from Assyria. (See Isaiah 52:7 — here the deliverance is from Babylon. See Romans 10:15 — here the deliverance is from sin for the sinner, salvation.)

## **III. Justice and goodness of God exhibited in execution of His decision to destroy Nineveh, Chapters 2, 3**

### **A. Annihilation of Assyria, Chapter 2**

v. 1 — The picture is of a hammer, the handle of which is held by God. Total destruction of Assyria was accomplished by the Medes and Babylonians.

vv. 2-13 — This is a detailed prophecy which is today an accurate historical record.

“Chariots” (vv. 3, 4) is not a prediction of the automobile. To say that it is reveals a woeful ignorance of this prophecy.

God is justified in saying He is against Assyria (v. 13) because of her crimes. In Ezekiel (Ezekiel 38:3; 39:1), Russia had not yet appeared when the prophecy was given, yet God is still just because of antagonistic atheism.

### **B. Avenging action of God justified, Chapter 3**

**vv. 1, 2** — This describes the internal condition of the city. Lies mark the total culture. They make slaves.

**vv. 3, 4** — This characterizes the external condition of the city. They were a brutal and cruel enemy. They sold slaves.

**v. 5** — God opposes this (see Nahum 2:13).

**v. 7** — They are hated and dreaded by other nations.

**v. 8** — “No-amon,” or Thebes, capital of Upper Egypt, had been destroyed by Sargon of Assyria and should have been an example to Assyria.

**v. 9** — Thebes had been protected by buffer states — Ethiopia at the south, Egypt at the north — and by desert on both ends.

**v. 10** — Thebes was destroyed.

**vv. 11-18** — This is a detailed description of the destruction of Nineveh.

**v. 19** — There is now no healing, no turning to God. God had been slow to anger, but He does not clear the guilty.

God will save today (cp. Jonah).

God will destroy tomorrow (cp. Nahum).

God does not change; men do.



**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter —
  
2. Most important verse —
  
3. Most prominent word —
  
4. Teaching about Christ —
  
5. Command to obey —
  
6. Promise to claim —
  
7. New truth learned —

# HABAKKUK

**WRITER:** Habakkuk

His name means *love's embrace*. Martin Luther gave a striking definition of his name, which cannot be improved upon: "Habakkuk signifies an embracer, or one who embraces another, takes him into his arms. He embraces his people and takes them to his arms, i.e., he comforts them and holds them up, as one embraces a weeping child, to quiet it with the assurance that, if God wills, it shall soon be better."

This is all that is known of the writer, except that he was the doubting Thomas of the Old Testament. He had a question mark for a brain.

**TIME:**

Probably written during the reign of Josiah, about the time of the destruction of Nineveh and the rise of Babylon to power. Habakkuk appeared in the twilight, just before the darkness of the captivity.

**FORM:**

The closing statement, "For the chief musician on my stringed instrument" (ARV), reveals that this is a song. The last chapter is a psalm. The entire prophecy is a gem of beauty. It has been translated into a metric version by Dr. Gaebelein. Delitzsch wrote, "His language is classical throughout, full of rare and select turns and words." Moorehouse wrote, "It is distinguished for its magnificent poetry."

**MESSAGE:**

The book opens in gloom and closes in glory. It begins with an interrogation mark and closes with an exclamation point. Habakkuk is a big WHY? Why God permits evil is a question that every thoughtful mind has faced. The book is the answer to the question: Will God straighten out the injustice of the world? This book answers the question: Is God doing anything about the wrongs of the world? This book says that He is. The book is the personal experience of the prophet told in poetry, as Jonah's was told in prose.

**THEME:** Faith

Habakkuk has been called "the prophet of faith." The great statement

of Habakkuk 2:4, “The just shall live by faith,” has been quoted three times in the New Testament: Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38.

## **OUTLINE:**

### **I. Perplexity of the prophet, Chapter 1**

#### **A. First problem of the prophet, vv. 1-4**

*Why does God permit evil?*

#### **B. God’s answer, vv. 5-11**

*God was raising up Chaldeans to punish Judah (v. 6).*

#### **C. Second problem of the prophet (greater than first), vv. 12-17**

*Why would God permit His people to be punished by a nation more wicked than they? Why did He not destroy the Chaldeans?*

### **II. Perspicuity of the prophet, Chapter 2**

#### **A. Practice of the prophet, v. 1**

*He took the secret problem to the secret place.*

#### **B. Patience of the prophet, vv. 2, 3**

*He waited for the vision.*

#### **C. Pageant for the prophet, v. 4**

*The great divide in humanity: One group, which is crooked, is flowing toward destruction; the other group, by faith, is moving toward God. This is inevitable.*

#### **D. Parable to the prophet, vv. 5-20**

*The application is self-evident from the vision. The Chaldeans, in turn, would be destroyed. God was moving among the nations.*

### **III. Pleasure of the prophet, Chapter 3**

#### **A. Prayer of the prophet, vv. 1, 2**

*The prophet, who thought God was doing nothing about evil, now asks Him to remember to be merciful. Was he afraid that God was doing too much?*

**B. Program of God, vv. 3-15**

*God rides majestically in His own chariot of salvation (v. 8).*

**C. Position of the prophet, vv. 16-19**

*He will rejoice (v. 18). He has come from pain to pleasure.*

**COMMENT:**

**I. Perplexity of the prophet, Chapter 1**

**A. First problem of the prophet, vv. 1-4**

Habakkuk is a man with problems.

**v. 1** — “Burden” is the judgment of God upon His people and also upon the Babylonians.

**v. 2** — Habakkuk feels that God is refusing to answer his prayer. He cries out in a night of despair as he sees violence, and God is doing nothing about it and, apparently, saying nothing. This is the elegy of Habakkuk. (Note the final verse of the book [Habakkuk 3:19]. It is the paean of praise with a note of joy.)

**v. 3** — This is his first problem: Why does God permit His people to continue and increase in iniquity, injustice, strife, contention, and violence and do nothing about it? This is a capital WHY?

**v. 4** — God’s law is ignored and spurned. There is no justice. The wicked are in control, and the righteous are in trouble.

**B. God’s answer, vv. 5-11**

**v. 5** — God is doing something. He is working on this problem. Habakkuk would not believe it, for it would be contrary to what he wanted done.

**v. 6** — God is preparing the Chaldeans (Babylonians) to come and

take Judah captive.

**v. 7** — They make their own laws.

**v. 8** — They use the cavalry in the campaigns.

**vv. 9, 10** — They are conquerors.

**v. 11** — They give their idols credit for their victories. At the battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C., the Chaldeans won over Egypt and became the first great world power.

### **C. Second problem of the prophet (greater than first), vv. 12-17**

**v. 12** — Habakkuk is sure God will judge the Chaldeans.

**v. 13** — This is the problem: Although Israel is wicked, the Chaldeans are more wicked. Since God is holy, He should judge the Chaldeans first. Surely He could not permit the Chaldeans to chastise His people. Logically, the opposite should be true.

**vv. 14-17** — Since the Chaldeans are so wicked, will they escape and God's people be judged?

## **II. Perspicuity of the prophet, Chapter 2**

### **A. Practice of the prophet, v. 1**

He takes the secret problem to the secret place. He does not publish his doubts. He knows God has the answer to his problem.

### **B. Patience of the prophet, vv. 2, 3**

He will wait for the answer, for he knows it will be forthcoming.

### **C. Pageant for the prophet, v. 4**

This is one of the most important verses in Scripture (see THEME). There is a sharp contrast here between the two groups of humanity. One group, the “lifted up” soul or the “puffed up” soul, is flowing like a river down to the sea of destruction. The other group,

saved by faith, is flowing toward the city of God and full knowledge — “*Then shall I know*” (1 Corinthians 13:12). Between the moment of salvation and the “then,” the one saved by faith will walk by faith. He may not have the answer now, but he will have it then.

#### **D. Parable to the prophet, vv. 5-20**

**vv. 5-13** — The “puffed up” soul must be judged for these glaring sins:

Drunkenness, pride (v. 5)

Arrogance, ambition, rebelliousness (vv. 6-8)

Covetousness (v. 9)

Murder, iniquity, persecution (vv. 10-13)

**v. 14** — This is the far-off goal toward which God is moving. This will be fulfilled when Christ returns to the earth (see Isaiah 11:9).

**vv. 15, 16** — These are the sins that God judges here and now: drunkenness and immorality.

**v. 17** — Violence.

**vv. 18, 19** — False religion.

**v. 20** — God is not yet in His holy temple. The earth is not silent today (see Psalm 2:1, 2).

### **III. Pleasure of the prophet, Chapter 3**

#### **A. Prayer of the prophet, vv. 1, 2**

Notice the changed attitude of the prophet. At first he looked about and thought God was doing nothing. God took him to the watchtower of vision and let him see that He was not only judging His own people for their sins, but also the nations of the world. God was moving forward uncompromisingly to the day when the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. Now Habakkuk pleads with God to remember to be merciful in the midst of His judgment.

#### **B. Program of God, vv. 3-15**

This is a poetic description of the past history of the nation. There is a casual reference to the following:

Abraham (vv. 3-6)

Moses (vv. 7-10)

Joshua (vv. 11-15)

### **C. Position of the prophet, vv. 16-19**

**vv. 17, 18** — Regardless of the circumstances in which he finds himself, he will rejoice in God. This is faith in action. This is saving faith. This is the message of Job and Paul.

**v. 19** — This is a psalm of praise set to instrumental and vocal music to be used in the temple.

**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter —
  
2. Most important verse —
  
3. Most prominent word —
  
4. Teaching about Christ —
  
5. Command to obey —
  
6. Promise to claim —
  
7. New truth learned —



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**Notes & Outlines**

**ZEPHANIAH  
HAGGAI**

**J. Vernon McGee**

## ZEPHANIAH

### **WRITER:** Zephaniah

Zephaniah identified himself better than any of the other minor prophets. As Habakkuk concealed himself in silence, Zephaniah went to the opposite extreme more than is ordinary. He traced his lineage back to his great-great-grandfather, who was Hizkiah, whom we know as Hezekiah, king of Judah. Zephaniah was of the royal line (Zephaniah 1:1).

### **TIME:**

He located the time of his writing just as clearly as he did his identification — “In the days of Josiah, the son of Amon, king of Judah” (Zephaniah 1:1). According to the arrangement of the Hebrew Scriptures, Zephaniah was the last of the prophets before the captivity. He was contemporary with Jeremiah and probably with Micah. His was the swan song of the Davidic kingdom. He is credited with giving impetus to the revival during the reign of Josiah.

### **THEME:** The dark side of love

Sweetness and light are associated with love on every level, and rightly so, but this aspect does not exhaust the full import of love. Love expresses itself always for the good of the one who is loved. This is the reason that it is difficult to associate love with the judgment of God. The popular notion of God is that He is a super Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. One nature of His is expressed by love, and the other nature is expressed in wrath by judgment. These two attributes appear to contradict one another to the extent that they seem to be describing two different gods. Zephaniah is filled with the wrath and judgment of God (Zephaniah 1:15; 3:8), but there is the undertone of the love of God (Zephaniah 3:17). It is love which prompts a parent to take the child out of the home to a hospital and to deliver him to the surgeon who endangers the life by pressing a scalpel into the vitals. This act is as much an expression of love as are the candies that are brought to the bedside the next week.

## **TWO THOUGHTS:**

Two thoughts stand out in this brief book:

(1) “The day of the LORD” occurs seven times. Obadiah and Joel, the first of the writing prophets, were the first to use this expression; Zephaniah, the last, brings it to our attention again. This has particular application to the Great Tribulation, which precedes the kingdom and is included in the day of the Lord. It is a time of wrath.

(2) “Jealousy” occurs twice. It is not on the same level as human jealousy, but reveals the love of God for His people who have failed.

## **OUTLINE:**

**I. Judgment of Judah and Jerusalem,** Chapter 1

**II. Judgment of the earth and of all nations,** Chapters 2:1 — 3:8

**III. Judgments removed; kingdom established,** Chapter 3:9-20

## **COMMENT:**

**I. Judgment of Judah and Jerusalem,** Chapter 1

**v. 1** — Zephaniah completely identifies himself and his time (see WRITER and TIME).

**v. 2** — Worldwide devastation is predicted. The Book of the Revelation confirms this and places the time as the Great Tribulation.

**v. 3** — All living creatures are included in the judgment.

**v. 4** — Judah and Jerusalem are singled out for judgment.

**v. 5** — The reason for the judgment is idolatry — three types of idolatry are mentioned.

**v. 6** — Also they have turned completely from God. Two classes are mentioned: backsliders and those who were never saved.

v. 7 — “The day of the LORD” is judgment (see TWO

THOUGHTS, also notes on Joel 1:15). Here the coming of Nebuchadnezzar is treated as a picture of the day of the LORD.

“Hold thy peace” means to hush; to keep still.

v. 8 — The “sacrifice” is the judgment of Judah.

v. 10 — “That day” is the day of the LORD.

v. 12 — Evidently this is one of the first groups that said that God was dead. They were the self-sufficient of an affluent society.

v. 13 — This marks the end of prosperity and the beginning of a depression.

vv. 14, 15 — This is a doleful, dreary, and dreadful picture of the Great Tribulation.

v. 16 — It is a day of fear.

v. 17 — Sin of man brings the judgment.

v. 18 — There will be no deliverance. Silver and gold are their gods, and they are powerless to save.

## **II. Judgment of the earth and of all nations, Chapters 2:1 — 3:8**

### **Chapter 2**

v. 1 — A call to Israel to come together to plead for deliverance from the wrath of the day of the LORD.

“Not desired” means that they were insensible to the shame of their sinful condition.

v. 2 — This is a brief but vivid description of the day of the LORD.

v. 3 — The call is extended to the inhabitants of the earth who in

meekness seek the Lord.

**vv. 4-11** — This is judgment upon surrounding enemy nations and their idols.

**v. 12** — Judgment on Ethiopia.

**vv. 13-15** — Judgment on Assyria (literally fulfilled).

### **Chapter 3**

**vv. 1-5** — Judgment on Jerusalem. Judgment is in ratio to her privilege.

**vv. 6-8** — Judgment on all nations — this is Armageddon, which ends with the return of Christ to the earth.

### **III. Judgments removed; kingdom established, Chapter 3:9-20**

**v. 9** — This does not mean there will be one language for the entire world, although there may be only one language — perhaps the language on the other side of the Tower of Babel. The thought here is “pure” in the sense of the removal of the filthy, profane, and nasty language. The “four letter words” will disappear.

**vv. 10-12** — These are kingdom conditions.

**vv. 13-16** — The remnant of Israel enters the kingdom. Their attitude and speech are changed. Fear is removed. The Lord Jesus Christ reigns over them personally. This refers to the second coming of Christ.

**v. 17** — This verse is the key of the book. This is the white light in a black background. The purpose of judgment is not vindictive, but to cleanse and purify in order that blessing and goodness might ensue from the ordeal. (See author’s booklet, “The Dark Side of Love.”)

**vv. 18-20** — This describes kingdom conditions.

## HAGGAI

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Prophets to the returned remnant were Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

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### **WRITER:** Haggai

Haggai is mentioned in Ezra 5:1, 2 and 6:14 as one of the two prophets who encouraged the remnant (that returned after the Babylonian captivity) to rebuild the temple in spite of the difficulties that beset them on every hand. From this and the brief references that he made to himself in his prophecy, four things become apparent: (1) he was self-effacing — he exalted the Lord; (2) he was God's messenger — "Thus saith the LORD"; (3) he not only rebuked, he cheered and encouraged; (4) he not only preached, he practiced.

### **TIME:** 520 B.C.

"The second year of Darius" enables the historian to pinpoint the time of this prophet in profane history. Hystaspis (Darius mentioned here) began to reign in 521 B.C. At this same time in China, Confucius was living.

### **THEME:** The temple

The reconstruction and refurbishing of the temple were the supreme passion of this prophet. He not only rebuked the people for their delay in rebuilding the temple, but he encouraged them and helped them in this enterprise.

### **MESSAGE:**

Haggai constantly referred to the "word of the LORD" as the supreme authority. He willingly humbled himself that the Lord might be exalted. His message was practical. It was as simple and factual as  $2 + 2 = 4$ . The prophecy of Haggai and the epistle of James have much in common. Both put the emphasis upon the daily grind. Action is spiritual; a "do nothing" attitude is wicked. Both placed this yardstick down upon life. Work is the measure of life.

Haggai's contemporary, Zechariah, was visionary and had his head in the clouds, but pragmatic Haggai had both feet on the ground. The man of action and the dreamer need to walk together. First Corinthians 15:58 can appropriately be written over this book.

For the background of his message, read Ezra 3:8-13, also chapters 4 through 6.



**KEY VERSES:** Haggai 1:8, 14

**THE CALENDAR:**

The compass of this book is three months and twenty-four days, according to the calendar. There are five messages in the book, and each was given on a specific date. The calendar furnishes the clue for the contents.

**OUTLINE:**

- I. A challenge to the people, Chapter 1:1-11**  
September 1, 520 B.C.
  - A. A charge of conflict of interest, vv. 1-4
  - B. A call to consider their ways, vv. 5-7
  - C. A command to construct the temple, vv. 8-11
  
- II. The response to the challenge, Chapter 1:12-15**  
September 24, 520 B.C.
  - A. Construction of the temple; people obeyed, v. 12
  - B. Confirmation from God, vv. 13-15
  
- III. The discouragement of the people; the encouragement of the Lord, Chapter 2:1-9**  
October 21, 520 B.C.  
*(The inferiority of the second temple to the first temple became a cause of discouragement, but God responded.)*
  
- IV. An appeal to the Law; the explanation of the principle, Chapter 2:10-19**  
December 24, 520 B.C.
  
- V. A revelation of God's program; an expectation for the future, Chapter 2:20-23**  
December 24, 520 B.C.

## COMMENT:

### I. A challenge to the people, Chapter 1:1-11

#### A. A charge of conflict of interest, vv. 1-4

v. 1 — For “the second year of Darius” see TIME.

“The sixth month” is September.

“Haggai” means *my feast*.

“Zerubbabel” means *sown in Babylon*.

“Shealtiel” means *asking of God in prayer*.

“Joshua” — see Zechariah 3:1-5.

“Word of the LORD” — Haggai is the spokesman for God, and he speaks with authority (v. 3).

v. 2 — When the people first returned to the land after the Babylonian captivity, enthusiasm ran high. They met gigantic obstacles which required Herculean effort and hardships. They became discouraged when they began to build the temple. The difficulties seemed insurmountable. They rationalized that it was just not the time to build. This was their pseudo-consolation. They decided to maintain the status quo. The foundation of the temple was laid, but the opposition of the Samaritans was so intense that they simply stopped the building.

v. 3 — Again Haggai makes it clear that he is giving God’s Word. His is a “Thus saith the LORD” — thirteen times this phrase, or one that is similar, occurs that makes it clear Haggai is speaking God’s words. This is the authority that must be in an effective ministry today.

v. 4 — The difficulties did not prevent the people from building their own houses. It was high time for them to build houses — so they rationalized. Lovely homes and an unlovely, poor church building are as bad as poverty hovels and an ornate, rich church building.

#### B. A call to consider their ways, vv. 5-7

v. 5 — “Consider your ways” is *set your heart upon it*.

v. 6 — God had judged them in material things. There had been

crop failure, famine, no money to buy clothes, and no savings account.

**v. 7** — They were asked to seek for the logical and true explanation. It was obvious that God was withholding blessing because of their lack of obedience.

### **C. A command to construct the temple, vv. 8-11**

**v. 8** — The solution was very simple:

1. “Go up to the mountain” (cut down trees);
2. “Bring wood” (make lumber);
3. “Build the house” (temple).

The results would be great:

1. God would be pleased;
2. God would be glorified.

**v. 9** — He reviews their condition and clearly states the reason for it — they failed to build the temple.

**vv. 10, 11** — Material blessings had been withheld.

## **II. The response to the challenge, Chapter 1:12-15**

### **A. Construction of the temple; people obeyed, v. 12**

They “obeyed the voice of the LORD, their God.”

### **B. Confirmation from God, vv. 13-15**

**v. 13** — “I am with you, saith the LORD.”

**v. 14** — Leaders enter enthusiastically into the work:

1. Zerubbabel (governor),
2. Joshua (high priest),
3. Remnant of people.

### III. The discouragement of the people; the encouragement of the Lord, Chapter 2:1-9

v. 1 — October 21, 520 B.C. is the date of the third message.

v. 2 — This message is directed to the same leaders and people as in 1:14.

v. 3 — This is the second hurdle that Haggai had to clear. Many of those who had returned from the Babylonian captivity remembered (even though they had been very young when taken captive) the beauty and richness of Solomon's temple. In comparison, this temple looked like a tenant farmer's barn in Georgia.

*But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers' houses, who were old men, who had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people; for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.* (Ezra 3:12, 13)

This internal criticism was like a wet blanket on the celebration of the construction of the new temple. It dulled the edge of the zeal to rebuild the temple. It poured cold water on the enthusiasm generated by the prodding of Haggai.

v. 4 — God's challenge was twofold: (a) be strong; (b) "I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts," which was better than outward adornment. The Shekinah glory had departed from Solomon's temple; the presence of God far outshone the glory of Solomon's temple.

v. 5 — God gives a further challenge, "Fear not."

v. 6 — This looks forward to the final days — the millennial kingdom. They were to see the present temple with the perspective of the ultimate purpose of God.

v. 7 — “Desire of all nations” is not Christ. The proper word is *treasures* of all nations. There will be the outward adornment of the future temple, also the Shekinah glory will be present in the person of Christ.

v. 8 — “Silver...gold” makes it clear that he is speaking of material treasures.

v. 9 — “The glory of this latter house” should read, *The latter glory of this house*. God looks upon the series of temples as one house.

“Peace” is the final aim.

#### **IV. An appeal to the Law; the explanation of the principle,** Chapter 2:10-19

v. 10 — The date is December 24, 520 B.C.

v. 11 — “The” law should be *a* law. The Mosaic Law did not cover all the details of the life in Israel. When a matter arose that was not covered, they were to appeal to the priests (see Deuteronomy 17:8-11).

v. 12 — Is holiness communicated by contact? No. The holy cannot make the unholy holy by contact. Holiness is non-communicable.

v. 13 — Is unholiness communicated by contact? Yes. Uncleaness is communicated to the clean by contact. When holy and unholy come in contact, both are unholy. In therapeutics, measles is communicated by contact. In the physical realm, dirty water will discolor clean water — not the opposite. In the moral realm, the evil heart of man cannot perform good deeds. In the religious realm, a ceremony cannot cleanse a sinner.

v. 14 — Haggai makes the application to Israel. Although they had returned to the land, performed the ritual and rebuilt the temple, their hearts were far from God.

vv. 15-17 — They wondered why God had not blessed them. He

had judged them because their hearts were not changed.

**vv. 18, 19** — “Consider” — God would bless them now because they had obeyed. He would bless because of His grace.

**V. A revelation of God’s program; an expectation for the future, Chapter 2:20-23**

**v. 20** — The date is December 24, 520 B.C., the same date as the former message.

**v. 21** — The message is directed to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah.

**v. 22** — This is the far-off and final purpose of God. Gentile power will come to an end, and all instruments of warfare will be destroyed.

**v. 23** — “In that day” is the day of the LORD. God’s purpose will prevail. Zerubbabel is of the posterity of David, according to the historian Josephus. This was a promise that God’s purpose in the line of David would not be defeated.

Zerubbabel will be a “signet” — but the line of Jeconiah would be a signet plucked from the hand of God (see Jeremiah 22:24-30; Matthew 1:11).

This last message reveals the persistent purpose of God in bringing the Lord Jesus Christ to the throne of David.

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Barker, Harold P. *Christ in the Minor Prophets*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.
- Coates, C. A. *An Outline of Some of the Minor Prophets*. Kingston-on-Thames, England: Stow Hill Bible and Tract Depot, n.d.
- Feinberg, Charles L. *The Minor Prophets*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1976. (Excellent.)
- Gaebelein, Arno C. *Annotated Bible*. 1917. Reprint. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1971. (Excellent.)
- Gaebelein, Frank C. *Four Minor Prophets*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1970. (Haggai.)
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- Jensen, Irving L. *Minor Prophets*. 2 vols. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, n.d. (Self-study guide.)
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- Morgan, F. Crossley. *Haggai, A Prophet of Correction and Comfort*. London, England: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 1935.
- Wolff, Richard. *Haggai*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1967.

**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter —
  
2. Most important verse —
  
3. Most prominent word —
  
4. Teaching about Christ —
  
5. Command to obey —
  
6. Promise to claim —
  
7. New truth learned —

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*



## NOTES

# NOTES



THRU THE BIBLE RADIO NETWORK  
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**Notes & Outlines**

# **ZECHARIAH**

**J. Vernon McGee**

## ZECHARIAH

### **WRITER:** Zechariah

Zechariah, whose name means *whom Jehovah remembers*, is identified (1:1) as the son of Berechiah, which means *Jehovah blesses*, and his father was the son of Iddo, which means *the appointed time*. Certainly this cluster of names with such rich meanings is suggestive of the encouragement given to the remnant — God remembers and blesses in the appointed time. The Jewish Targum states that Zechariah was slain in the sanctuary and that this Zechariah was both prophet and priest. In Nehemiah 12:4 Iddo is mentioned as one of the heads of a priestly family. Josephus states that Zechariah, the son of Baruchus, was slain at the temple. There are those who identify Zechariah as the one mentioned by our Lord as having been martyred (Matthew 23:35).

### **DATE:** About 520 B.C.

Zechariah was contemporary with Haggai (Ezra 5:1, 6:14), although he was younger (Zechariah 2:4).

### **CHARACTERISTICS:**

This book has the characteristics of an apocalypse. The visions resemble those in the Books of Daniel and Revelation. Daniel was born in the land of Israel but wrote his apocalypse outside of it. Zechariah was born outside of the land but wrote his within the land. Daniel, Ezekiel, and John all wrote outside the land. Only Zechariah was in Israel when he wrote his apocalypse. In the dark day of discouragement which blanketed the remnant, he saw the glory in all of the rapture and vision of hope. He has more messianic prophecies than any of the other minor prophets.

### **OUTLINE:**

#### **I. APOCALYPTIC VISIONS (messianic and millennial), Chapters 1 — 6**

##### **A. Introduction and message of warning, Chapter 1:1-6**

##### **B. Ten visions (all in one night), Chapters 1:7 — 6:15**

1. Riders under myrtle trees, 1:7-17
2. Four horns, 1:18, 19
3. Four smiths, 1:20, 21
4. Man with measuring line, 2
5. Joshua and Satan, 3:1-7
6. The Branch, 3:8-10
7. Lampstand and two olive trees, 4
8. Flying scroll, 5:1-4
9. Woman in the ephah, 5:5-11
10. Four chariots, 6

## **II. HISTORIC INTERLUDE, Chapters 7, 8**

**A. Question concerning a religious ritual (fasting),**  
Chapter 7:1-3

**B. Threefold answer, Chapters 7:4 — 8:23**

1. When the heart is right, the ritual is right, 7:4-7
2. When the heart is wrong, the ritual is wrong, 7:8-14
3. God's purpose concerning Jerusalem unchanged by any ritual, 8

## **III. PROPHETIC BURDENS, Chapters 9 — 14**

**A. First burden: Prophetic aspects connected with first coming of Christ, Chapters 9 — 11**

**B. Second burden: Prophetic aspects connected with second coming of Christ, Chapters 12 — 14**

### **COMMENT:**

**I. APOCALYPTIC VISIONS (messianic and millennial),**  
Chapters 1 — 6

**A. Introduction and message of warning, Chapter 1:1-6**

v. 1 — (See WRITER.) The date was November 520 B.C. He was contemporary with Haggai.

v. 2 — The returned remnant is warned not to follow in the footsteps of the pre-captivity fathers.

v. 3 —“LORD of hosts” occurs 52 times. “Hosts” is the Hebrew *tsaba* (Sabaoth), meaning *service, strength, warfare*. “It implies the boundless resources at His command for His people’s good” (Fauset).

v. 4 — Their fathers had not heeded the former prophets.

v. 5 — Where were their fathers? Buried in Babylon.

v. 6 — “Take hold” means *overtake*. The prophet’s words were accurately fulfilled.

## **B. Ten visions (all in one night), Chapters 1:7 — 6:15**

### **1. Riders under myrtle trees, 1:7-17**

v. 7 — Date: February 24, 520 B.C. (the Hebrew year begins in the April of our year).

vv. 8-11 — In the vision Zechariah sees a man on a red horse with other red horses behind him. They were speckled because they were in the shadow of myrtle trees. The “man riding upon a red horse” is “the angel of the LORD” in vv. 9 and 11. “A red horse” is a picture of war. These red horses are the gentile nations that have ruled the world by warfare for 2500 years. They were at peace (v. 11) in Zechariah’s day, and it was a right time to build the temple. They had no concern for the desperate plight of God’s people — neither then nor now.

vv. 12-17 — God is displeased with the nations who are at peace and ignore Jerusalem’s plight. God is jealous for Jerusalem; the nations are indifferent to her. God had returned to Jerusalem (v. 16) with mercies, and the nations have a responsibility also.

*Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also.* (Romans 3:29)

The promise of v. 17 looks forward to the future kingdom age.

## **2. Four horns, 1:18, 19**

**v. 18** — A horn represents a gentile ruler (cp. Daniel 7:24; Revelation 17:12).

**v. 19** — The 4 gentile world powers: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

## **3. Four smiths, 1:20, 21**

**v. 20** — “Artisan” is a craftsman or smith.

**v. 21** — These 4 smiths perhaps represent the judgment of Ezekiel 14:21 —

*For thus saith the Lord GOD, How much more when I send my four severe judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the evil beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast?*

Compare with the 4 horsemen of the Apocalypse of Revelation 6.

## **4. Man with measuring line, 2**

**v. 1** — See Jeremiah 31:38, 39; Ezekiel 40:3-5; Revelation 11:1, 2. When God begins to measure the temple and Jerusalem, He is getting ready to move again in behalf of both.

**v. 2** — Jerusalem is to be rebuilt in Zechariah’s day.

**v. 10** — Jerusalem is to be rebuilt and restored in the kingdom, and the Lord Jesus Christ will reign there in person.

**v. 11** — The nations will come there to worship (see 14:16; Isaiah 2:1-5).

## **5. Joshua and Satan, 3:1-7**

**v. 1** — Joshua is representative of the nation Israel. Satan seeks to destroy the nation (Revelation 12:1-6).

**v. 2** — “A brand plucked out of the fire” means they are rescued for future service.

**vv. 3-7** — Neither Joshua nor Israel were contenders with Satan while clothed in their own righteousness. They must be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. Even a new patch on the old garment will not avail.

## **6. The Branch, 3:8-10**

**v. 8** — “The Branch” is a familiar figure of Christ in His many offices. Here He is the servant. Israel rejected Him the first time because they trusted their own righteousness (see Romans 10:3, 4).

**v. 10** — This refers to the kingdom age.

## **7. Lampstand and two olive trees, 4**

**v. 2** — The lampstand is identical to the one that was in the tabernacle and has the same meaning. It is a perfect type of Christ, the Light of the world (see author’s book, *The Tabernacle, God’s Portrait of Christ*).

**v. 3** — The 2 olive trees are the “something new has been added.” The olive trees (vv. 11-14) are obviously Zerubbabel and Joshua at that time. The final fulfillment is in Revelation 11:3-12.

**v. 6** — The interpretation for Zechariah’s day, for the future, and also for our day is a great principle — “Not by brawn nor by brain, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord” (my paraphrase). God’s work is done only in the power of the Holy Spirit. The oil represents the Holy Spirit. The 2 olive trees speak of witnessing. Effective witnessing is done only in the power of the Holy Spirit.



v. 7 — “The headstone” is Christ.

vv. 8-10 — The present and practical application is that Zerubbabel will be given power to finish the temple. It will be an occasion for joy, for “who hath despised the day of small things?”

## 8. Flying scroll, 5:1-4

v. 1 — “A scroll” speaks of the Word of God (cp. Ezekiel 2:9, 3:1-4).

v. 3 — The scroll represents the Ten Commandments.

“Curse” — God will judge according to law. There is judgment, not blessing.

On one side are the commandments that have to do with a man’s relationship to God — “every one that sweareth” represents the first 4 commandments. On the other side are the commandments that have to do with a man’s relationship to his fellowman — “for every one that stealeth” represents the last 6 commandments.

## 9. Woman in the ephah, 5:5-11

vv. 5, 6 — The ephah corresponds to our bushel. This means that sin has filled up the measure and must be judged.

v. 7 — A woman in an ephah is a type of that which is evil (Matthew 13:33; Revelation 2:20). The lead weight means that iniquity is sealed within the measure.

v. 8 — “Wickedness” is the *wicked one*, the *man of sin*.

vv. 9-11 — Two winged women carry the measure (with the woman in it) to Babylon.

Israel’s great sin was idolatry. Babylon is the fountainhead of idolatry. This sin is to be forsaken and returned to Babylon. Babylon is

to be judged (see Revelation 17, 18).

## **10. Four chariots, 6**

**vv. 1-5** — These 4 multicolored chariots are the angels who execute the judgment of God on the gentile nations (see Revelation 7:1-3; 9:14, 15).

**vv. 9-15** — After the judgment of the nations comes the glory of Christ in the setting up of His kingdom (Daniel 2:44, 45).

**v. 10** — “Heldai” means *robust*;  
“Tobijah” means *God’s goodness*;  
“Jedaiah” means *God knows*.

**v. 11** — Joshua is a type of Christ.

**v. 12** — “The Branch” here reveals Christ in His glory, the second coming of Christ.

## **II. HISTORIC INTERLUDE, Chapters 7, 8**

### **A. Question concerning a religious ritual (fasting), Chapter 7:1-3**

**v. 1** — The date here is December 4, 518 B.C.

**v. 2** — A delegation had come to Jerusalem from Babylon.

**v. 3** — They bring a problem to the priests: Should they continue to fast?

### **B. Threefold answer, Chapters 7:4 — 8:23**

#### **1. When the heart is right, the ritual is right, 7:4-7**

**v. 4** — God will answer their question.

**v. 5** — God never gave fast days; He gave feast days. It was their own idea to fast. They never fasted unto the Lord.

**v. 6** — Before the 70-year captivity, their feasting was not unto God either, and He sent them into captivity.

**v. 7** — Before the captivity, God judged Jerusalem when the heart of the people was far from Him — though they went through the rituals. A ritual is right when the heart is right.

Lange wrote, “God’s eye of grace and our eye of faith meet in the sacraments [rituals].”

## **2. When the heart is wrong, the ritual is wrong, 7:8-14**

**v. 8** — This is God’s answer.

**vv. 9, 10** — Conduct denies confession. It is not our hymn singing on Sunday but our action on Monday that is the real test.

**vv. 11-14** — The people before the captivity went through the ritual, but their lives were wrong.

## **3. God’s purpose concerning Jerusalem unchanged by any ritual, 8**

Certain words are emphasized by repetition:

“LORD of hosts” 18 times in this chapter;

“Jerusalem” 6 times;

“Zion” twice;

“Jealous” 3 times;

“Remnant” twice;

“Thus saith the LORD” 10 times.

Some Bible students see in this chapter the restatement of the Ten Commandments.

**vv. 1-8** — God’s ultimate purpose is not changed concerning His people, the land, and Jerusalem.

**v. 3** — Jerusalem will be the world capital (Isaiah 2:1-5).

**vv. 4-8** — His people will dwell in Jerusalem.

**vv. 9-19** — The remnant from Babylon are to hear the prophets Haggai and Zechariah in view of the perspective of the glorious future (note v. 9). Also they are to keep the Commandments (see vv. 16, 17).

Fasts will be turned back into feast days (vv. 18, 19).

**vv. 20-23** — Jerusalem will become the religious capital as well as the center of God’s government (note again Isaiah 2:1-5).

### **III. PROPHETIC burdens, Chapters 9 — 14**

#### **A. First Burden: Prophetic aspects connected with first coming of Christ, Chapters 9 — 11**

#### **Chapter 9**

**vv. 1-8** — Judgment came upon:

Hadrach and Damascus (v. 1)

(Hadrach was north of Damascus)

Tyre, Sidon and Hamath (vv. 2-4)

(Hamath is inland and north of Sidon)

The Philistines (vv. 5-8)

**v. 9** — This is quoted in connection with the so-called triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem (cp. Matthew 21:5; John 12:15). The parts omitted by Matthew are: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout...he is just, and having salvation [victory].” This part of the verse will be fulfilled at His second coming. The rest of the verse was fulfilled at His first coming.

**v. 10** — Peace can come to the earth only when Christ comes the second time.

**vv. 11-17** — The Lord will at that time deliver His people.

**Chapter 10** — Judah and Israel are to be scattered again, but they will be finally regathered.

**v. 1** — “Rain” is literal rain. The rainfall is to be restored to the land when God regathers them.

**vv. 2, 3** — This is a condemnation of the sweet-talking false prophets.

**v. 4** — This is a reference to Christ in both His first and second comings.

**v. 6** — By His mercy the Lord will regather them.

**vv. 9-12** — The Lord will not only scatter them (v. 9), but He will regather them.

**Chapter 11** — The Lord Jesus Christ is to be rejected as the King at His first coming.

**vv. 1-6** — False shepherds deceived the people. Possibly this is a reference to Rome as the conqueror.

**vv. 7-14** — The true Shepherd with 2 staves:

“Beauty” is literally *grace* — He is the Savior and will save His people.

“Bands” is literally *union* — He will unite Judah and Israel.

He rejects false shepherds (vv. 8, 9).

**vv. 12, 13** — This is a reference to the betrayal of Christ by Judas.

See Matthew 26:15; 27:3-10; Acts 1:17-20.

**vv. 15-17** — The Antichrist is a false shepherd.

## **B. Second burden: Prophetic aspects connected with second coming of Christ, Chapters 12 — 14**

**Chapter 12** — The final siege of Jerusalem and the lifting of the siege. “Jerusalem” is mentioned 10 times. “In that day” is mentioned 7 times and is a reference to the day of the LORD, specifically the Great Tribulation Period.

**vv. 1-3** — Jerusalem is to be a constant irritant to all the nations that presume to make decisions that affect it. God’s policy for the nations is “hands off” Israel (too bad the United Nations is not aware of this). All the nations in the Great Tribulation will march against Jerusalem — and be destroyed.

**vv. 4-9** — Jerusalem will be delivered in the final siege by the coming of the Lord personally.

**vv. 10-14** — They will know Him by the print of the nails in His hands. This is the One they rejected and delivered to be crucified. This will be a real day of atonement.

## **Chapter 13** — What will the return of Christ mean to Israel?

**v. 1** — The remnant will turn to the redemption of Christ for their salvation.

**vv. 2-5** — The false prophet and his followers will be taken (see Revelation 19:20). This is the end of all false religion.

**vv. 6, 7** — The nail-scarred Christ will be present. His followers will not desert Him but will rally around Him.

**vv. 8, 9** — These are those who come out of the Great Tribulation and have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.

**Chapter 14** — Features and facts connected with the coming of Christ to the earth.

**vv. 1-7** — This is the consummation of the campaign of Armageddon and the return of Christ.

When Christ returns to this earth, He will touch down on the Mount of Olives (v. 4). This is the same place from which He ascended into heaven. There will be great physical changes in the topography of the land. There will be a great earthquake at His coming (v. 5). There will be changes in the lighting of the earth (vv. 6, 7).

**v. 8** — There will be a new waterway through Jerusalem, making it a seaport city.

**v. 9** — The Lord Jesus Christ will reign over the earth.

**vv. 10, 11** — The land will become the land of milk and honey.

**v. 12** — This is a living death against the enemies of God.

**vv. 16-21** — The people of the earth, both Jew and Gentile, will go to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. This feast will mean that every man is dwelling safely under his own vine and fig tree.

True holiness will be on the earth. Every pot and pan will be holy.

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Baron, David. *The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah*. London, England: Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel, 1918.
- Feinberg, Charles L. *The Minor Prophets*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1976.
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**Notes & Outlines**

# **MALACHI**

**J. Vernon McGee**

## MALACHI

**WRITER:** Malachi

“Malachi” means *my messenger*. The Septuagint gives its meaning as *angel*. An angel was a messenger and could be either human or spiritual. There are some who conclude, therefore, that Malachi is only a title and that the name of this prophet is not known. Surely our information of him is as limited as it is regarding the angels. Others have suggested that he was a spiritual angel, but there are no grounds for this.

The message, not the messenger, is the important issue. The Western Union boy is not as important to you as the message he delivers. You want his message, not his name or to visit with him.

**TIME:** Probably 397 B.C.

He concluded the prophets, as Nehemiah concluded the historians. He prophesied either during the latter period of Nehemiah’s governorship or immediately after it.

**MESSAGE:**

This one, who was the messenger of the Lord, delighted in using his own name when referring to other messengers. He made 3 mighty references:

(1) He referred to Levi as “the messenger of the LORD of hosts” (2:7). This suggests that every witness of God is an *angel* of the Lord.

(2) He announced the coming of John the Baptist as “my messenger” (3:1). John the Baptist was the Malachi of the New Testament and began where Malachi of the Old Testament left off. Malachi was the first radio announcer who said, “The next voice you hear will be that of the Lord’s messenger.”

(3) He also made the definite reference to Christ as “the messenger of the covenant” (3:1). The angel of the Lord of the Old Testament is the pre-incarnate Christ.

The method adopted by Malachi is first to quote a declaration or interrogation God makes to Israel. Then he gives Israel's answer, which is supercilious and sophisticated sarcasm. Finally, he gives God's telling reply, which is equally biting sarcasm.

Malachi's prophecy reveals an age deadened to sin. They were drugged to an unconsciousness of sin. They were in a spiritual stupor with no conviction, which is the lowest state of sin. They mouthed surprise that God would find fault. They were peevish and petulant children who affected ignorance. They pretended to know everything but were woefully lacking in a knowledge of essentials.

### **OUTLINE:**

- I. The love of God for Israel, Chapter 1:1-5**
- II. The priests reproved for profanity, Chapters 1:6 — 2:9**
- III. The people rebuked for social sins, Chapter 2:10-17**
- IV. The prediction of the two messengers, Chapter 3:1-6**
- V. The people rebuked for religious sins, Chapter 3:7-18**
- VI. The prediction of the day of the Lord and of the Sun of Righteousness who ushers it in, Chapter 4**

### **COMMENT:**

#### **I. The love of God for Israel, Chapter 1:1-5**

**vv. 2-5** — God's declaration: "I have loved you, saith the LORD."

People's interrogation: "In what way hast thou loved us?"

God's answer: "I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau."

The people were questioning and doubting the love of God, so God reminds them of the origin of the nation. Back when Jacob and Esau were twins in their mother's womb, God noted a distinction between the two (Genesis 25:22, 23). But that was about 1500 years before He stated it as He does here. This presents a problem: Why would God say that He loved Jacob and hated Esau? The real problem is not with God hating Esau but with God loving Jacob. It had to be of love and grace (see Romans 9:10-13). Their subsequent history demonstrates that God was right in loving Jacob over Esau (see notes on Obadiah).

**vv. 4, 5** — God's dealing with Edom (Esau) in contrast to His

dealing with Israel (Jacob) is like comparing hate with love.

## **II. The priests reproved for profanity, Chapters 1:6 — 2:9**

### **Chapter 1**

**v. 6** — God’s interrogation: “If, then, I be a father, where is mine honor?”

God’s declaration: “O priests, that despise my name.”

People’s interrogation: “In what way have we despised thy name?”

**v. 7** — God’s double declaration: “Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar.”

People’s interrogation: “In what way have we polluted thee?” To pollute God was a serious charge if true. They dismissed the charge with an indifferent nod of the head and a pretended ignorance.

God’s answer: “In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible.”

**v. 8** — This explains how they made the table of the Lord contemptible. God required all offerings of animals to be without spot or blemish. When an old cow got sick or injured, they rushed her to the temple as a sacrifice. God suggested, in a vein of sarcasm, to try offering the sick cow for taxes. They were making that which was holy a commonplace thing.

**v. 9** — Their hearts are polluted, and the bread, therefore, is polluted.

**v. 11** — They are giving a wrong witness to the Gentiles, and God intends His name to be great among the Gentiles.

**v. 12** — The Gentiles profaned the name of God because of the lives and actions of God’s people. Their hearts are polluted, and their ritual is contemptible.

**v. 13** — “Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it!” This further aggravated their backslidden condition. People were actually saying that God bored them. In any endeavor, when the heart is not

in it, it becomes an awful bore. Why do you think men adopted a ritual, wore robes, chanted and marched? They were tired of spiritual worship. The people thought that something was wrong with God. It never occurred to them that something was wrong with them: “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it” (2 Timothy 3:5).

**v. 14** — This sorry condition caused them to offer to God the corrupt, the lame, and the sick.

## **Chapter 2**

**vv. 1-9** — The priests will be judged severely for permitting this sordid condition to exist. God had given them “the law of truth.”

**v. 7** — Levi was a messenger of the Lord (see MESSAGE).

**v. 8** — The Levites had caused the people to sin.

### **III. The people rebuked for social sins, Chapter 2:10-17**

**v. 10** — Although God is not the Father of each individual Israelite, He is the Father of the nation. Therefore, the individuals enjoy a brother relationship which makes the sin of dealing treacherously with each other more heinous and glaring. (A church fight is a disgrace to the cause of Christ.)

**vv. 11, 12** — The second social sin is that of men who had divorced their wives to marry heathen and pagan women. Again the sons of God looked upon the daughters of men as in Genesis 6:2. This is a grievous sin which will cause God to amputate this diseased member from the nation.

**vv. 13, 14** — This is the fourth sarcastic question of the people to God’s charge of hypocrisy. They had exchanged reality in religion for emotion and weeping. They put on a good show. They brought their offerings. God refused to accept it or them. Their question is of injured innocence: “Why...?” God spells it out for them: D-I-V-O-R-C-E.

**vv. 15, 16** — This is God’s estimate of divorce.

**v. 17** — This is the fifth sarcastic question of the people to God’s charge of phony and pseudo-worship. If they are bored with religion,

so is God. His reaction is, “You make Me tired.” But the people respond, “In what way have we wearied him?” Contemptuously and impudently they contradict God. God lays it on the line, and He tells it as it is: “When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of justice?” They introduced a “new morality.” They thought it was new, just as men today think it is new. They contradict God’s standard and cover it with pious platitudes. They also say that there is no hell. However, God is not dead — He is weary and bored.

#### **IV. The prediction of the two messengers, Chapter 3:1-6** *(A parenthesis)*

**v. 1** — The first part of this verse is quoted in Matthew 11:10, Mark 1:2, and Luke 7:27 as fulfilled by John the Baptist.

The last part of the verse can refer only to Christ, but it was not fulfilled at His first coming (see notes on Habakkuk 2:20).

**vv. 2-6** — This is a clear reference to the second coming of Christ. John the Baptist is the messenger who announced the first coming of Christ. Christ will need no messenger to announce His second coming — He Himself is that Messenger.

#### **V. The people rebuked for religious sins, Chapter 3:7-18**

**v. 7** — This is the sixth sarcastic question that the people give to God’s penetrating charge. God calls upon them to repent: “Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts” (see Zechariah 1:3). “But ye said, In what way shall we return?” They are not aware that they are no longer having fellowship with God — because the temple is crowded, and the people are going through the ritual.

**v. 8** — This is the seventh sarcastic question that the people raise to God’s charge: “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me.” This is a shocking charge. “But ye say, How have we robbed thee?” As usual, they deny the charge. God is direct and spells it out loud and clear: “In tithes and offerings.”

1. Tithes — some scholars think there were 3 or 4 tithes.
2. Offerings — above the tithes.



Of Israel, under Law, God demanded tithes. God is not a shylock of the sky — He was blessing them materially, and they were to recognize that.

**v. 9** — The withholding of blessing was due to the fact that they had robbed God.

**v. 10** — For the church today, this is not the basis for giving. Believers are not under the Law.

**vv. 11, 12** — Honesty with God would make them a blessing to all nations.

**v. 13** — This is the eighth and last sarcastic question that the people raised to God's charge: "Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD."

**vv. 14, 15** — They were blaming God for their apathetic and pathetic condition.

**vv. 16-18** — There was always a remnant that served God. The remnant in that day will be among the jewels of the Lord when He arranges them for display.

## **VI. The prediction of the day of the Lord and of the Sun of Righteousness who ushers it in, Chapter 4**

**v. 1** — This is a vivid description of the Great Tribulation Period.

**v. 2** — Christ will return to the earth as the Sun of Righteousness. He ushers in a new day, brings light and healing, lifts the curse, and brings life to a dying world.

For believers today He is "the bright and morning star." The morning star appears before the sunrise.

**v. 3** — Wickedness will be put down as soon as it appears during the Millennium.

**v. 4** — The Law will be the rule of the kingdom.

**vv. 5, 6** — Elijah will evidently be one of the witnesses during the Great Tribulation (see Revelation 11:3-12).

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- Feinberg, Charles L. *The Minor Prophets*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1976.
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*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*



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**Notes & Outlines**

# **MATTHEW**

**J. Vernon McGee**

## GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Although it is not alleged that the arrangement of the books of the Bible is inspired, it is a historical fact that spiritual and scholarly men supervised the arrangement of the books of the New Testament canon. Therefore, it is no accident that the Gospel of Matthew is first. Even Renan, the French skeptic, said of this Gospel, "...the most important book in Christendom — the most important book that ever has been written." This Gospel stands like a swinging door between the two Testaments. It swings back into the Old Testament and gathers up prophecies fulfilled at the first coming of Christ, and it swings into the New Testament and speaks of the "new creation" of God, "Upon this rock *I will build my church*" (Matthew 16:18).

### WRITER:

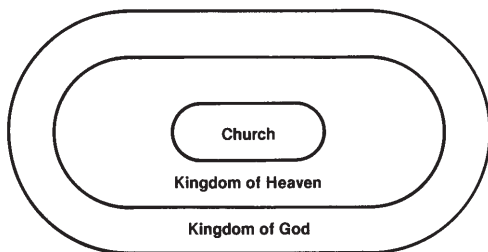
Matthew was a converted publican (Matthew 9:9) who was chosen to write to the Jews concerning their Messiah.

### KEY:

Matthew presents the program of God. The "kingdom of heaven" is an expression which is peculiar to this Gospel. It occurs 32 times. The word "kingdom" occurs 50 times. A proper understanding of the phrase "kingdom of heaven" is essential to any interpretation of the Bible. *The kingdom of heaven and the church are not the same.* John the Baptist was the first to use the expression "the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 3:2). He began his ministry with the bold and startling announcement, "Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." When the Lord Jesus Christ began His ministry, He likewise began with this very announcement (Matthew 4:17). Neither John nor Jesus attempted to explain the meaning of the term. It is reasonable to assume that the people to whom the message was given had some conception of its meaning. The Jews of the first century in Palestine had a clearer understanding of the term than the average church member in Christendom today. They were not confused by the theologians of 19 centuries who have attempted to fit the term into some system of theology. In this they were fortunate. They understood the term to be the sum total of all the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the coming of the King from heaven to set up a kingdom on this earth with heaven's standard. The concept is not new (Daniel 2:44; 7:14, 27).

To read into this expression the history since John and Jesus made the first announcement is a presumption which the Scriptures will not countenance. The kingdom was near in the person of the King. The kingdom has not been postponed, as God still intends to carry out His earthly purpose on schedule — "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion" (Psalm 2:6). God's dealing with

men since the rejection and crucifixion of the King has been in the framework of the kingdom of heaven. He is carrying out a heavenly purpose today “bringing many sons unto glory” (Hebrews 2:10). The calling out of the church is not synonymous with the kingdom of heaven, though the church is in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 13). Neither is the term “kingdom of God” synonymous with “kingdom of heaven.” The “kingdom of God” is a broader term that encompasses all of God’s creation, including angels. The following chart may be helpful in thinking of these terms with the proper distinction.



The church is in the kingdom of heaven, but it is not the same; likewise it is in the kingdom of God. Los Angeles is in the state of California, but it is not the same. California is in the United States and is part of it, but it is not identical to the whole country — in spite of what the Chamber of Commerce claims.

It will be seen that the term “kingdom of heaven” is a progressive term in the Gospel of Matthew. It assumes the mystery form during the days of the rejection of the King, but the King becomes a sower in the world (Matthew 13). The kingdom will be established on this earth at the return of the King (Matthew 24, 25).

The four Gospels constitute a modern newspaper: Matthew contains the announcements and advertising, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand”; Mark carries the flaming headlines, “Behold my servant” (we need to know the headlines, at least, of God’s program); Luke has the special features — he alone records the songs connected with the birth of Christ, the stories of the Good Samaritan and of the Prodigal Son; John has the editorial section — he has written on the bread of life, the water of life, the true vine, and the Christian life.

**OUTLINE: “Behold Your King”** — Matthew presents the Lord Jesus Christ as the King.

- I. Person** of the King, Chapters 1, 2
- II. Preparation** of the King, Chapters 3:1 — 4:16
- III. Propaganda** of the King, Chapters 4:17 — 9:35

- IV. **Program** of the King, Chapters 9:36 — 16:20
- V. **Passion** of the King, Chapters 16:21 — 27:66
- VI. **Power** of the King, Chapter 28

There is a movement in Matthew. Learn to think your way through the entire Gospel from the first chapter through the twenty-eighth. *You must know Matthew to understand the Bible.* You can no more understand the Bible without understanding the Gospel of Matthew than you can write without an alphabet.

### Moving Through Matthew

#### CHAPTER

- 1 Genealogy and record of virgin birth of Jesus
- 2 Visit of wise men — flight to Egypt — return to Nazareth
- 3 John the Baptist, forerunner of King, announces kingdom and baptizes Jesus, the King
- 4 Testing of the King in wilderness — begins public ministry at Capernaum — calls disciples
- 5, 6, 7 Sermon on the Mount
  - (1) Relationship of subjects of kingdom to self, 5:1-16
  - (2) Relationship of subjects of kingdom to Law, 5:17-48
  - (3) Relationship of subjects of kingdom to God, 6
  - (4) Relationship of children of King to each other, 7
- 8 Six miracles of King demonstrate His dynamic to enforce ethics of Sermon on the Mount
- 9 Performs six more miracles — calls Matthew — contends with Pharisees
- 10 Jesus commissions twelve to preach gospel of the kingdom to nation Israel
- 11 Quizzed by disciples of John — rejects unrepentant cities — issues new invitation to individuals
- 12 Conflict and final break of Jesus with religious rulers
- 13 Mystery parables of kingdom of heaven
- 14 John the Baptist beheaded — Jesus feeds 5,000 — sends disciples into storm at sea — walks on water to them
- 15 Jesus denounces scribes and Pharisees — heals daughter of Syrophenician woman and multitudes — feeds 4,000
- 16 Conflict with Pharisees and Sadducees — confession from disciples, Peter spokesman — Jesus first confronts them with church, His death and resurrection
- 17 Transfiguration — demon-possessed boy — tax money provided by miracle

- 18 Little child — lost sheep — conduct in coming church — parable on forgiveness
- 19 God's standard for marriage and divorce — little children blessed — rich young ruler — apostles' position in coming kingdom
- 20 Parable of laborers in vineyard — Jesus makes 4th and 5th announcements of His approaching death — mother requests places of honor for James and John — Jesus restores sight to two men
- 21 King offers Himself publicly and finally to nation — cleanses temple — curses fig tree — condemns religious rulers with parables of two sons and householder
- 22 Parable of marriage feast for king's son — Jesus answers and silences Herodians, Sadducees, Pharisees
- 23 Jesus warns against and pronounces woes upon scribes and Pharisees — weeps over Jerusalem
- 24, 25 Olivet Discourse:  
Jesus answers questions about sign of end of age and sign of His coming — parable of ten virgins — parable of eight talents — judgment of sheep and goat nations
- 26 Jesus plotted against — anointed by Mary of Bethany — sold by Judas — observes last Passover and first Lord's Supper — agonizes in Gethsemane — arrested and tried by religious rulers — disowned by Peter
- 27 Trial, death and burial of the King
- 28 Resurrection of the King — His great commission

### **THE BRIDGE BETWEEN THE OLD & NEW TESTAMENTS**

There are approximately 400 years which take place between the days of Nehemiah and Malachi and the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem. This is a great yawning chasm of silence as far as Scripture is concerned. Nevertheless, this period was a thrilling time when momentous and world-shaking events were transpiring. A brief understanding of these days is at least essential to a right appreciation of the New Testament.

World history made rapid strokes in this interval. The internal condition of Judah experienced a radical transformation. A new culture, different institutions, and unfamiliar organizations arose in this period which appear in the New Testament.

The Old Testament closed with the Medio-Persian Empire being the dominant power. Also, Egypt was still a power to be reckoned with in world politics. During the interval between the Testaments both faded from the scene as

outstanding nations. World power shifted from the East to the West, from the Orient to the Occident, from Asia to Europe, and from Medio-Persia to Greece. When the New Testament opens, a new power, Rome, is the world ruler. A consideration of some important, approximate dates will give a rapid succession of major events which mark the transition.

- 480 B.C. Xerxes, the Persian, was victorious against the Greeks at Thermopylae, but he was defeated at the battle of Salamis. This was the last bid of the East for world dominion.
- 333 B.C. Alexander the Great led the united Greek forces to victory over the Persians at Issus.
- 332 B.C. Alexander the Great visited Jerusalem. He was shown the prophecy of Daniel which spoke of him; therefore he spared Jerusalem.
- 323 B.C. Alexander died, and the world empire of both East and West was divided among his four generals.
- 320 B.C. Judea was annexed to Egypt by Ptolemy Soter.
- 312 B.C. Selucius founded the kingdom of the Selucidae. Judea became the battleground between Syria and Egypt as a buffer state.
- 203 B.C. Antiochus the Great took Jerusalem, and Judea passed under the influence of Syria.
- 170 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes took Jerusalem and defiled the temple. He had been mentioned in Daniel as the little horn (Daniel 8:9). He has been called the “Nero of Jewish history.”
- 166 B.C. Mattathias, the priest of Judea, raised a revolt against Syria. This is the beginning of the Maccabean period. The Jews have never suffered more than during this era, and never were they more heroic than in this interval. Judas Maccabaeus, “the hammer,” was the leader who organized the revolt.
- 63 B.C. Pompey, the Roman, took Jerusalem, and this people passed under the rulership of a new world power, where they were at the time of the birth of Jesus.
- 40 B.C. Roman Senate appointed Herod to be King of Judea.
- 37 B.C. Herod took Jerusalem and slew Antigonus, the last of the Maccabean king-priests.
- 27 B.C. Caesar Augustus became emperor of Rome.
- 19 B.C. The rebuilding of the Herodian temple was begun.
- 4 B.C. Anno Domini — “in the year of the Lord” — Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

The experiences of the nation of Judea during the inter-testament period



affected its internal life. In fact, a radical change took place. After the Babylonian captivity, they turned from idolatry to a frantic striving for legal holiness. The Law became an idol to them. The classic Hebrew gave way to the Aramaic in their everyday speech, but the Hebrew was retained for their synagogues. The synagogue, which seemed to have come in right after the Captivity, became the center of their life in Judea and also everywhere they went into the world.

Many parties appeared among them. In Judea there were several prominent ones. They were:

1. *Pharisees* — The Pharisees arose to defend the Jewish way of life against all foreign influences. They were strict legalists who believed in the Old Testament and who were nationalists in politics.

2. *Sadducees* — The Sadducees were made up of the wealthy and social minded who wanted to get rid of tradition. They rejected the supernatural and were opposed to the Pharisees who accepted it. The Sadducees were closely akin to the Greek Epicureans.

3. *Scribes* — The scribes were a group of professional expounders of the Law which stemmed from the days of Ezra. They became “hair-splitters” and were more concerned with the “letter of the law” than with the “spirit of the law.”

4. *Herodians* — The Herodians were a party in the days of Jesus who arose as political opportunists seeking to maintain the Herods on the throne.

There was great literary activity during this period in spite of the fact that there was no revelation from God. The Old Testament was translated into Greek in Alexandria in Egypt during the period 285-247 B.C. It was made by six members from each of the 12 tribes; hence, the name given to this translation was “Septuagint,” meaning seventy.

The Apocrypha of the Old Testament was written in this era. These are 14 books which bear no marks of inspiration. They are as follows: 1 and 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, 2 Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Song of the Three Holy Children, History of Susannah, Bel and the Dragon, Prayer of Manasses, and 1 and 2 Maccabees. There are two books which are classified as the Pseudepigrapha because they bear the names of two characters of the Old Testament, but there is no evidence that these two were the writers. These two books are the Psalter of Solomon and the Book of Enoch.

Although this is a period marked by the silence of God, it is, nevertheless, evident that God was preparing the world for the coming of Christ. The Jewish people, the Greek civilization, the Roman Empire, and the seething multitudes of the Orient were all being prepared for the coming of a Savior, insomuch that these events produced the scene which Paul labeled “the fulness of time.”

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Frank, Harry Thomas, editor. *Hammond's Atlas of the Bible Lands*. Maplewood, New Jersey: Hammond Inc., 1977. (Excellent and inexpensive.)
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**Notes & Outlines**

**MARK**

**J. Vernon McGee**

## GOSPEL OF MARK

**WRITER:** John Mark — John was his Jewish name, while Mark was his Latin surname (Acts 12:12). This is the first historical reference to him in Scripture. His mother was a wealthy and prominent Christian in the Jerusalem church. He was a nephew of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10). He evidently was the spiritual son of Simon Peter (1 Peter 5:13). The Gospel of Mark has long been considered Peter’s Gospel, as Mark evidently got much of the material in the Gospel record from him. In view of the fact that Simon Peter brought him to a saving knowledge of Christ, it is natural to suppose that he had great influence in Mark’s life.

Mark joined Paul and Barnabas before the first missionary journey (Acts 13:5), but he turned back at Perga in Pamphylia (Acts 13:13). There is neither need to defend John Mark for turning back nor to explain or excuse his conduct. It is obvious that he failed in the eyes of Paul. Paul’s refusal to permit him to accompany them on the second missionary journey is witness enough (Acts 15:37, 38). It severed the combination of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:39). Let us hasten to assure you that John Mark made good later on — even Paul acknowledged him as a profitable servant of the Lord (2 Timothy 4:11; also note another reference made by Paul to Mark in Philemon 24).

**DATE:** Since this was the earliest of the Gospels written, the date of its writing was probably prior to A.D. 63. It is quite likely that it was written from Rome to the Romans. No doubt Mark was with Paul in Rome at the time. The Epistle of Paul to the Romans had preceded him and was in circulation there, so Mark had access to the epistle. It is well to keep in mind that Mark had the *facts* of his Gospel from Peter and the *explanation* of his Gospel from Paul.

**THEME:** There are two phrases in the first chapter that set before the reader the theme of this Gospel:

“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ” — verse 1

“Jesus came” — verses 9 and 14

Mark presents the beginning of the gospel. It is not the beginning of Jesus Christ, but the beginning of the gospel.

“JESUS CAME” — Mark roots this phrase in the prophecy of Isaiah and the proclamation of John the Baptist, and not in Bethlehem or in Jerusalem as we find in John’s Gospel. He begins with Jesus at His baptism, temptation, and His ministry in Galilee. Mark is the Gospel of miracles. Jesus is presented as the Servant of Jehovah (Isaiah 42:1, 2).

Jesus came, in the winsomeness of His humanity and the fullness of His deity, doing good. This was only the beginning of the gospel. He died and rose again. Then He said to His own, “Go.” The gospel was then completed. This is the gospel today.

**KEY VERSE:** Mark 10:45

**PECULIAR CHARACTERISTICS:** The style of Mark is brief and blunt, pertinent and pithy, short and sweet. Mark is stripped of excess verbiage and goes right to the point. This is the Gospel of action and accomplishment. Here Jesus is not adorned with words and narrative, but He is stripped and girded for action.

Mark is written in a simple style. It is designed for the masses of the street. It is interesting to note that the connective *and* occurs more than any other word in the Gospel. It occurs 1,331 times. It will reward the reader to thumb through the Gospel and note the chapters and verses where this is true. Modern rhetoric might consider it a breach of good grammar, yet there is no word that conveys action as does this word. *And* always leads to further action.

Mark wrote this Gospel in Rome, evidently for Romans. They were a busy people and believed in power and action. This Gospel was brief enough for a busy man to read and would appeal to the Roman mind. Few Old Testament Scriptures are quoted and Jewish customs are explained, which gives additional proof that it was written for foreigners. Mark was written by a busy man for busy people about a busy Person.

## **OUTLINE:**

### **The Credentials of Christ**

- I. John INTRODUCES the Servant**, Chapter 1:1-8  
(Death of John, 6:14-29)
- II. God the Father IDENTIFIES the Servant**, Chapter 1:9-11  
(Transfiguration, 9:1-8)
- III. The temptation INITIATES the Servant**, Chapter 1:12, 13
- IV. Work and words ILLUSTRATE (illumine) the Servant**, Chapters 1:14 — 13:37
  - A. Miracles**
    - 1. Healing (physical)**
      - a. Peter's wife's mother (fever) and others, 1:29-34
      - b. Leper, 1:40-45
      - c. Palsied man let down through roof, 2:1-12
      - d. Man with withered hand, 3:1-5
      - e. Many healed beside Sea of Galilee, 3:6-10
      - f. Woman with issue of blood, 5:21-34
      - g. Sick at Nazareth, 6:5
      - h. Disciples heal, 6:13
      - i. Sick in land of Gennesaret, 6:53-56

- j. Deaf and dumb of Decapolis, 7:31-37
- k. Blind man of Bethsaida, 8:22-26
- l. Blind Bartimaeus, 10:46-52

## **2. Nature (natural)**

- a. Stills the storm, 4:35-41
- b. Five thousand fed, 6:32-44
- c. Walks on sea, 6:45-52
- d. Four thousand fed, 8:1-9
- e. Fig tree cursed, 11:12-14

## **3. Demons (spiritual)**

- a. Man in synagogue, 1:21-27
- b. Many demons in Capernaum, 1:32-34
- c. Demons in Galilee, 1:39
- d. Unclean spirits by Sea of Galilee, 3:11, 12
- e. Scribes charge that He casts out demons by Beelzebub, 3:22-30
- f. Demoniac of Gadara, 5:1-20
- g. Syrophenician's demon-possessed daughter, 7:24-30
- h. Demon-possessed boy, 9:14-27

## **4. Raised from dead (supernatural); daughter of Jairus, 5:35-43**

# **B. Parables and teachings**

## **1. Parables**

- a. Fasting with the Bridegroom present, 2:19, 20
- b. New cloth on old garment, 2:21
- c. New wine in old bottles, 2:22
- d. Sower, 4:1-20
- e. Candle and bushel, 4:21-25
- f. Seed growing, 4:26-29
- g. Mustard seed, 4:30-34
- h. Man demanding fruit from vineyard, 12:1-12
- i. Fig tree, 13:28-33
- j. Man on trip, 13:34-37

## **2. Miscellaneous teachings**

- a. Preaching the gospel of the kingdom, 1:14, 15
- b. Preaching in Galilee, 1:28, 35-39
- c. Sabbath, 2:23-28
- d. New relationship, 3:31-35
- e. Synagogue in Nazareth, 6:1-6

- f. The twelve sent out, 6:7-13
- g. The twelve return, 6:30-31
- h. Pharisees denounced, 7:1-23
- i. Leaven explained, 8:10-21
- j. Death of Christ, 8:27-38; 9:30-32; 10:32-34
- k. Mark of greatness, 9:33-37
- l. Rebuke of sectarianism, 9:38-41
- m. Hell, 9:42-50
- n. Marriage, 10:1-16
- o. Riches, 10:23-31
- p. Prayer, 11:22-26
- q. Authority of Jesus, 11:27-33
- r. Taxes, 12:13-17
- s. Resurrection, 12:18-27
- t. The great commandment, 12:28-34
- u. Messiah, 12:35-40
- v. Olivet Discourse, 13:1-27

### **3. Incidents**

- a. Call of disciples, 1:16-20; 2:13-18; 3:13-21
- b. Death of John the Baptist, 6:14-29
- c. Transfiguration, 9:1-13
- d. Rich young ruler, 10:17-22
- e. Ambition of James and John, 10:35-45
- f. Triumphal entry, 11:1-11
- g. Jesus cleanses temple, 11:15-18
- h. Fig tree withered, 11:19-21
- i. Widow's mite, 12:41-44

## **V. Death, burial, and resurrection INSURE the Servant, Chapters 14:1 — 16:20**

- A. Plot to put Jesus to death, 14:1, 2**
- B. Jesus at supper in Bethany, 14:3-9**
- C. Judas bargains to betray Jesus, 14:10, 11**
- D. The Passover, 14:12-26**
- E. The Garden of Gethsemane, 14:27-42**
- F. The arrest of Jesus, 14:43-52**
- G. The trial of Jesus, 14:53 — 15:15**
- H. The crucifixion of Jesus, 15:16-41**
- I. The burial, 15:42-47**
- J. The resurrection, 16:1-20**

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Alexander, J. A. *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*. Carlisle, Pennsylvania: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1858.
- Earle, Ralph. *Mark: Gospel of Action*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, n.d.
- English, E. Schuyler. *Studies in Mark's Gospel*. New York, New York: Our Hope Publishers, 1943.
- Hendriksen, William. *Exposition of the Gospel According to Mark*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1975. (Comprehensive for advanced study.)
- Hiebert, D. Edmond. *Mark: A Portrait of a Servant*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1974. (An excellent comprehensive treatment.)
- Ironside, H. A. *Addresses on the Gospel of Mark*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d. (Especially good for young Christians.)
- McGee, J. Vernon. *Marching thru Mark*. Pasadena, California: Thru the Bible Books, n.d.
- Morgan, G. Campbell. *The Gospel According to Mark*. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1927.
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**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter —
2. Most important verse —
3. Most prominent word —
4. Teaching about Christ —
5. Command to obey —
6. Promise to claim —
7. New truth learned —

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THRU THE BIBLE RADIO NETWORK  
Pasadena, California 91109-7100



**Notes & Outlines**

**LUKE**

**J. Vernon McGee**

## GOSPEL OF LUKE

### WRITER:

Luke was the “beloved physician” of Colossians 4:14. He used more medical terms than Hippocrates, the father of medicine. The choice of Luke by the Holy Spirit to write the third Gospel reveals that there are no accidental writers of Scripture. There was a supernatural selection of Luke. There were “not many wise” called, but Luke belongs to that category. He and Paul were evidently on a very high intellectual level as well as a spiritual level. This partially explains why they traveled together and obviously became fast friends in the Lord.

Dr. Luke would rank as a scientist of his day. He wrote the best Greek of any of the New Testament writers, including Paul. He was also an accurate historian. According to Sir William Ramsay, Dr. Luke was a careful historian of remarkable ability.

A great deal of tradition surrounds the life of Dr. Luke, which is needless for us to examine in a brief analysis. He writes his Gospel from Mary’s viewpoint, which confirms the tradition that he got his information for his Gospel from her. Surely he conferred with her. Also there is every reason to believe that he was a Gentile. Most scholars concur in this position. Paul, in Colossians, distinguishes between those “who are of the circumcision” (Colossians 4:11) and the others who are obviously Gentiles. Luke is in the list of Gentiles (Colossians 4:14). Sir William Ramsay and J. M. Stifler affirm without reservation that Luke was a Gentile.

References to Luke: Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24; also the “we” section of Acts — Acts 16:10-17; 20:6; 21:18; 27:1; 28:16.

### THEME: “Behold the Man”

Jesus is the *second* man but the *last* Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45, 47). God is making men like Jesus (1 John 3:2), therefore Jesus is the *second* man — for there will be the third and even the millionth. He is the *last* Adam, as there will *not* be another head of the human family. Jesus was “made like his brethren” (Hebrews 2:17) that His brethren might be made like Him.

## **THE SCIENTIFIC APPROACH:**

Each Gospel presents Jesus from a different viewpoint. Matthew emphasizes that Jesus was born the Messiah. Mark emphasizes that Jesus was the Servant of Jehovah. Luke stresses the fact that Jesus was the perfect Man. John presents the fact that God became a man, but not from the scientific approach.

Dr. Luke states that he examined Jesus of Nazareth, and his findings are that Jesus is God. He came to the same conclusion as John, but his procedure and technique were different.

## **SPECIAL FEATURES:**

Although the Gospel of Luke is one of the synoptic Gospels, it contains many features omitted by Matthew and Mark.

- Dr. Luke gives us the songs of Christmas.
- Dr. Luke has the longest account of the virgin birth of Jesus of any of the Gospels. In the first two chapters he gives us an unabashed record of obstetrics, and a clear and candid statement of the virgin birth is given. All the way from Dr. Luke to Dr. Howard Kelly, gynecologist of Johns Hopkins, there is a mighty affirmation of the virgin birth, which makes the statements of pseudo-theologians seem rather puerile when they unblushingly state that the virgin birth is a biological impossibility.
- Dr. Luke gives us 20 miracles, and 6 of them are recorded in no other Gospel.
- He likewise gives us 23 parables, and 18 of them are found nowhere else. The parables of the prodigal son and the good Samaritan are peculiar to the third Gospel.
- He also gives us the very human account of the walk to Emmaus of our resurrected Lord. This proves that Jesus was still human after His resurrection. Dr. Luke demonstrates that the resurrection was not of the spirit but of the body. Jesus was “sown a natural body...raised a spiritual *body*” (1 Corinthians 15:44). A definite human sympathy pervades this Gospel, which reveals the truly human nature of Jesus as well as the big-hearted sympathy of this physician of the first century who knew firsthand a great deal about the suffering of humanity.

## COMMENT:

**Chapter 1** — Historically, Dr. Luke begins his Gospel before the other synoptic Gospels. Heaven had been silent for over 400 years when the angel Gabriel broke through the blue at the golden altar of prayer to announce the birth of John the Baptist. Luke gives us the background as well as the births of John and Jesus. Neither Joseph nor Mary was God's accidental choice. They both possessed certain noble human character traits. Joseph was an unselfish, humble and dependable man of high ideals. Mary possessed the same character traits. She was obedient and uncomplaining, with a definite knowledge of the Old Testament. Long before medical science gave any attention to heredity, Dr. Luke placed a great emphasis upon it.

Dr. Luke makes it abundantly clear that Jesus is virgin born. No other conclusion can be drawn from the definite, direct, and dogmatic statements of the angel Gabriel to Mary. Until man knows more about the origin of life, he is in no position, scientifically, to refute dogmatically the statement of Dr. Luke. A true scientific approach is that of humble inquiry and patience.

Three songs are in this chapter:

- (1) Elisabeth's greeting of Mary, vv. 42-45;
- (2) The magnificat of Mary, vv. 46-55;
- (3) The prophecy of Zacharias, vv. 67-79.

**Chapter 2** — This is the careful historical record of the birth of Jesus tied into the record of the Roman government. The simple record of the visit of the shepherds is tied into the sublime record of the visit of the heavenly host.

Jesus was brought to the temple when 8 days old to be circumcised according to Mosaic Law:

*But, when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Galatians 4:4, 5)*

As a result of this visit to Jerusalem, we have the songs of Simeon and Anna.

The one isolated incident from the boyhood of Jesus is recorded by

Dr. Luke to let us know that Jesus had a normal human childhood (see vs. 52).

- (1) Jesus increased in wisdom (mental),
- (2) in stature (physical),
- (3) in favor with God and man (spiritual).

**Chapter 3** — Luke, with a true historian's approach, dates the ministry of John the Baptist with secular history (see vv. 1, 2).

Luke places the emphasis upon John's message of repentance as the condition for the coming of the Messiah. From the Mosaic system of washing in water, which was a common custom of immersion in that day, John baptized those who came to him as merely a preparation — a moral reformation — for the coming of Christ. Jesus would baptize by the Holy Spirit — a real transformation.

The genealogy in this chapter is Mary's, which reveals two facts. First, it goes back to Adam, the father of the human family. Jesus was truly human. Matthew, in presenting Jesus as king, traces the genealogy back only as far as Abraham. Luke, in presenting Jesus as man, goes back to Adam. In the second place, Mary was descended from David through another than Solomon; that is, from David's son Nathan (v. 31; compare 1 Chronicles 3:5).

**Chapter 4** — Jesus is tempted as a man by Satan. They were human temptations such as come to all of us. They cover the entire spectrum of human temptations, and are threefold:

(1) Make stones into bread to satisfy needs of the body. There is nothing wrong with bread; it is the staff of life. The body has need of bread and Jesus was starving. What is wrong? To use His great powers to minister to Himself would be selfish. He must demonstrate the truth of the great principle, "Man shall not live by bread alone" (Matthew 4:4). This is contrary to the thinking of this crass materialistic age that lives only to satisfy the whims of the body. Modern man in our secular society says, "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." And as far as man is concerned, that ends it all. Selfishness is the curse of a creedless secular society. Our Lord, in meeting this temptation, refuted the popular philosophy of the world.

(2) The nations of the world derive their power through brute force and political intrigue. War is a way of life. Hate and fear are the whips that motivate the mob. This is satanic, and Satan offers the

kingdoms of the world on these terms. Men must be changed to enter God's kingdom: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). The answer of Jesus has a note of finality, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Luke 4:8; see Deuteronomy 6:13).

***For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds), casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*** (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

(3) The temptation to cast Himself down from the temple seemed a logical procedure for Jesus to impress the crowd as to His person and mission. But Jesus followed no easy way to the throne. He had to wear the crown of thorns before He wore the crown of glory. Stifler states succinctly, "There are two ways of despising God, one is to ignore His power, the other is to presume upon it." Both are sin. It is easy to do nothing and then mouth pious platitudes about God providing for the sparrows and that He will take care of us. But God says, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Genesis 3:19). The missionary to a foreign land will have to study to learn the language, and then God will help him. We are partners of God, not puppets.

Dr. Edward Judson, after considering what his father, Adoniram Judson, suffered in Burma, said, "If we succeed without suffering, it is because others have suffered before us. If we suffer without success, it is that others may succeed after us." Jesus rejected a false and phony spiritual stance. His answer was devastating: "Ye shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as ye tested him in Massah" (Deuteronomy 6:16).

Actually, Jesus began His public ministry in His hometown of Nazareth where He was rejected and ejected. It was in the synagogue where He announced the fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1, 2. He broke off the reading before He came to "the day of vengeance of our God" (compare Isaiah 61:1, 2 with Luke 4:18-20).



**Chapter 5** — Dr. Luke carefully records the cleansing of the leper and the healing of the paralytic.

**Chapter 6** — He records in detail the healing on the sabbath of the man with the paralyzed hand. He repeats the so-called Sermon on the Mount down on the plain (see v. 17). Jesus must have repeated His most important teachings again and again.

**Chapter 7** — This chapter opens with another meticulous record of healing. In this case it is the centurion's servant. Although Jesus had no personal contact with the servant, he was made well.

Dr. Luke alone records the raising from the dead of the son of the widow of Nain. He is the only Gospel writer who records Jesus' raising of two persons from the dead, the other being Jairus' daughter (8:54, 55).

Also in this chapter is the first of 18 parables that Luke alone records. It grew out of Jesus' visit to the home of a Pharisee where a woman anointed His feet with ointment. The simple parable of the two debtors reveals that this woman of the street was better in God's sight than Simon, the Pharisee.

**Chapter 8** — This chapter records events that are in the other synoptic Gospels.

**Chapter 9** — This chapter also records events found in Matthew and Mark. All three record the transfiguration. John does not record it, as the transfiguration sets forth the perfect *humanity* of Jesus rather than adding proof to His deity, and John emphasizes the *deity* of Jesus. Verse 29 may give the impression that the light was shining upon Him as a spotlight, but that is not Luke's intention. Mark 9:3 reads, "And his raiment became shining, exceedingly white like snow, as no fuller on earth can whiten them." The light came from within. This was probably the original condition of Adam and Eve. The word for transfigured is from the Greek *metamorphoom*. The English derivation is metamorphosis. Metamorphosis can be upward or downward:

- (1) Upward — the ugly larva in the cocoon that became a beautiful butterfly,
- (2) Downward — death.

In the transfiguration it is upward.

There are three steps in the life of Jesus:

- (1) Innocent and holy — born without sin;
- (2) Holy in the sense that He met temptation and overcame it (Adam did not meet this test);
- (3) Transfigured — this is the goal for humanity. In the transfiguration of Jesus we see the hope of humanity.

Dr. Luke alone elaborates upon this detail, as he does upon the contrasting condition — the demon-possessed boy at the foot of the mountain (vv. 37-43). What a contrast!

Dr. Luke also gives much attention to demon possession. In chapter 8 he records Jesus' visit to Gadara and the man in the tombs possessed with demons. This man and the boy at the foot of the mount are extreme cases. He also records other cases, and from these we can draw certain conclusions:

- Casting out a demon is the first miracle recorded by Luke (4:31-35).
- Demons recognized Jesus (4:41).
- Demonism is distinguished from diseases (4:40, 41).
- Demonism is a reality, as real as cancer or fever.
- Demons disturb men physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.
- They destroy the lives of men and bring about inevitable eternal doom.
- Demonism is synonymous with unclean spirits.
- They control the lives of those whom they possess. Victims do not abide by rules and customs of society.
- A demon-possessed person cannot discipline himself — the will is destroyed, leading to strange conduct (e.g., nudity).
- He is abnormal but not necessarily insane.
- The personality is degraded and debased. Ultimately he will be caused to do frightful and terrifying acts (8:27-29; 9:39, 42).
- Demons belong to the spiritual world, not the physical.
- They are behind false religion (1 Corinthians 10:20).
- Demons desire to inhabit persons. Many occupy one person.
- They dread the bottomless pit — would rather go into pigs — pigs would rather die.
- Only Christ can deliver from the power of demons, as it is the power of Satan (8:28; 9:42, 43).

There is evidence of demon possession today. After World War II,

with its bloodbath and atrocities in which the finer sensibilities of men had been degraded and deadened, demonism moved into this vacuum. Dr. Kurt Koch, who made a special study, gives many case histories.

Verse 51 is the turning point in the ministry of Jesus. He begins His march to Jerusalem and the cross.

**Chapter 10** — Luke alone records the familiar parable of the good Samaritan. The final interpretation is that Jesus is the Good Samaritan who found mankind wounded by sin on the side of life's highway where religion and the Law went by, indifferent and incapable of helping.

**Chapter 11** — The two parables on prayer are recorded only by Luke. Most parables illustrate by comparison. These illustrate by contrast. The insistent friend and the sleepy neighbor who would not answer his door at midnight certainly do not illustrate the reluctance of God to answer prayer. God is willing to answer, and He is not asleep; it is we who are not insistent and persistent in prayer. In the second parable, a human father never gives his son a stone as substitute for bread, and surely God is as good as a human father. He is much better! These parables illustrate by contrast.

**Chapter 12** — Luke alone gives us the parable of the rich fool who built bigger barns in this life but made no provisions for his soul in the next life.

The parable of the steward, who abused his servants because his lord seemed to delay his return, also is unique in this Gospel.

**Chapter 13** — Luke alone records the incident of Jesus healing the crippled woman in the synagogue on the sabbath.

**Chapter 14** — Luke alone records the delightful occasion of Jesus going to dinner at the home of one of the chief Pharisees. He gave His host and guests a lesson in etiquette in the devastating parable of the ambitious guest. There are two other parables in this chapter that are in no other Gospel — the building of a tower and a king preparing to make war.

**Chapter 15** — Luke alone records the most famous parable of all, labeled the prodigal son. Actually, there are three parables in one:

- The parable of the lost sheep — the work of God the Son in restoring a sinning son;
- the parable of the lost coin — the work of God the Holy Spirit; and
- the parable of the lost son — the work of the Father in restoring a sinning son.

**Chapter 16** — There are 2 parables here that are not found elsewhere. The parable of the steward who used his position to further his selfish ends is another parable by contrast. The children of this world are clever and crooked in the use of money. They do it for their own selfish purposes. In contrast, the children of light do not exercise the same wisdom in the use of money for the cause of Christ in the world.

The story of the rich man and Lazarus is not a parable but an actual happening. The name of the poor man is given here, and it is highly unlikely that our Lord would have made up a name and then, in the same account, introduced Abraham by name. Perhaps all His parables are actual incidents. Our Lord follows these two men from this life through the doorway of death and gives a record from the other side — after death.

**Chapter 17** — Luke alone records the two parables here: the brief story of dedicated service that belongs to the master, and the healing of the 10 lepers with the attendant thanklessness of the 9.

**Chapter 18** — The parable of the unjust judge is another teaching on prayer by contrast. God is not an unjust judge who has to be prodded into action by the insistent pleadings of a widow who makes herself a nuisance.

The parable of the Pharisee and publican who went up to the temple to pray shows the different attitudes of people when they pray.

**Chapter 19** — Jesus detours through Jericho to reach a man in a sycamore tree. Luke alone records this account of Zacchaeus, the publican of Jericho. (See author's booklet, *The Fruit of the Sycamore Tree*.)

**Chapter 20** — Luke records the incident (as do Matthew and Mark) of the encounter of Jesus with the religious rulers in the temple area in Jerusalem.

**Chapter 21** — Luke records the answer to the first of the three questions asked by the disciples, “When shall these things be?” (v. 7).

*And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that its desolation is near.* (Luke 21:20)

This section was fulfilled when Titus, the Roman, besieged and destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

**Chapter 22** — Luke records the Passover, Garden of Gethsemane betrayal, arrest and trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin, and the denial of Simon Peter. (See notes on Matthew and Mark regarding these events.)

**Chapter 23** — Luke follows the other synoptic Gospels in giving the account of Jesus before Pilate, the crucifixion and burial of Jesus (see notes on Matthew and Mark). Luke alone includes the record of Jesus being sent to Herod by Pilate. Jesus’ silence before Herod is startling. Jesus is the final issue of Jacob; Herod is the final issue of Esau. Jesus had no word for Herod. He formerly had called him “that old fox” (see Luke 13:32).

**Chapter 24** — Luke records the resurrection of Jesus as Matthew, Mark, and John do.

Luke alone records the journey of the resurrected Jesus down the Emmaus road and His encounter with two disciples. Although Jesus is in a glorified body, He is still human. He walked with these two down a dusty road and ate with them.

Jesus also appears to His disciples in an upper room and eats with them. He is still human, though glorified.

*Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.... And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them.* (Luke 24:39, 42, 43)

The most important highlight in both instances is His reference to the Scriptures to substantiate His death and resurrection.

## OUTLINE:

### I. Birth of the Perfect Man and His family, Chapters 1 — 3

- A. Announcement of the births of John and Jesus; the birth of John, Chapter 1
  - 1. Purpose of Gospel, vv. 1-4  
(*Periodic sentence*)
  - 2. Gabriel appears to Zacharias and announces the birth of John, vv. 5-25
  - 3. Gabriel appears to Mary and announces the virgin birth of Jesus, vv. 26-38
  - 4. Mary visits Elisabeth, vv. 39-56  
(*Hail Mary and Magnificat*)
  - 5. Birth of John (Zacharias' *Benedictus*), vv. 57-80
- B. Birth of Jesus; His reception; His circumcision; His journey to Jerusalem at twelve years of age, Chapter 2
  - 1. Birth of Jesus at Bethlehem in a stable, vv. 1-7
  - 2. Reception of Jesus: angels announce His birth to shepherds; shepherds visit stable, vv. 8-20
  - 3. Circumcision of Jesus and purification of Mary, vv. 21-24
  - 4. Incident in temple concerning Simeon, vv. 25-35  
(*Nunc Dimittis*, vv. 29-32)
  - 5. Incident in temple concerning Anna; return to Nazareth, vv. 36-40
  - 6. Visit of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus to Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve, vv. 41-52  
(*Dr. Luke says He was growing normally in body, mind, and spirit — v. 52*)
- C. Ministry of John the Baptist; baptism of Jesus; genealogy of Mary, Chapter 3
  - 1. Ministry of John, vv. 1-20
  - 2. Baptism of Jesus, vv. 21, 22  
(*Trinity — v. 22*)
  - 3. Genealogy of Mary, vv. 23-38  
(*Mary was also descended from David, v. 31 — see Matthew 1*)

- II. Testing of the Perfect Man; rejection by His hometown, Chapter 4** (“Tempted like as we are,” Hebrews 4:15)
  - A. Temptation of Jesus, vv. 1-13
  - B. Jesus returns to Galilee and Nazareth; rejected by His hometown, vv. 14-30  
*(Jesus quotes from Isaiah 61:1-2 in v. 18)*
  - C. Jesus moves His headquarters to Capernaum; continues His ministry, vv. 31-44
  
- III. Ministry of the Perfect Man in area of Galilee, Chapters 5 — 9**
  - A. Jesus calls disciples for the second time; cleanses lepers; heals man with palsy; calls Matthew; gives parables on new garment and wine skins, Chapter 5
  - B. Jesus defends disciples for plucking grain on sabbath; heals paralyzed man on sabbath; chooses twelve; gives Sermon on the Plain, Chapter 6
  - C. Jesus heals centurion’s servant; restores to life son of widow of Nain; commends John the Baptist; goes to dinner at Pharisee’s house; gives parable of two debtors, Chapter 7
  - D. Jesus gives parables: sower, lighted candle, personal relationships; stills storm; casts out demons at Gadara; heals woman with issue of blood; restores to life daughter of Jairus, Chapter 8
  - E. Jesus commissions and sends forth the twelve; feeds 5000; announces death and resurrection; transfigured; casts out demons from an only son; sets His face toward Jerusalem; puts down test for discipleship, Chapter 9
  
- IV. Ministry of the Perfect Man on way to Jerusalem, Chapters 10 — 18**
  - A. Jesus sends forth the seventy; pronounces judgment on Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum; gives parable of Good Samaritan; enters home of Mary and Martha, Chapter 10
  - B. Jesus teaches disciples to pray by using parables of the persistent friend and a good father; accused of casting out demons by Beelzebul; gives parables — unclean spirit

leaving a man, sign of Jonah, lighted candle; denounces Pharisees, Chapter 11

- C. Jesus warns of leaven of Pharisees; gives parables of rich fool, return from wedding, testing of servants in light of coming of Christ; states He is a divider of men, Chapter 12
- D. Jesus teaches men not to judge but repent; gives parable of fig tree; heals woman with infirmity; gives parables of mustard seed and leaven; continues to teach as He goes toward Jerusalem; weeps over Jerusalem, Chapter 13
- E. Jesus goes to dinner at home of Pharisee; gives parables of impolite guests, the great supper, building a tower, king going to war, salt that loses its tang, Chapter 14
- F. Jesus gives parable of lost sheep, lost coin, two lost sons (prodigal son), Chapter 15  
*(The obedient Son is the One giving the parable.)*
- G. Jesus gives parable about unjust steward; answers covetous Pharisees; speaks on divorce; recounts incident of rich man and Lazarus (poor man), Chapter 16
- H. Jesus instructs His disciples on forgiveness, faithful service; heals ten lepers (one Samaritan returns to give thanks); speaks on spiritual nature of kingdom and His coming again, Chapter 17
- I. Jesus gives two parables on prayer; blesses little children; confronts rich young ruler with five of Ten Commandments; heals blind man on entering Jericho, Chapter 18

**V. Ministry of the Perfect Man in Jericho and Jerusalem, Chapters 19 — 21**

- A. Jesus enters Jericho and home of Zacchaeus; conversion of Zacchaeus; gives parable of ten pounds; enters Jerusalem; weeps over city; cleanses temple, Chapter 19
- B. Jesus' authority challenged; gives parable of vineyard; questioned about paying tribute to Caesar; silences Sadducees about resurrection; questions scribes, Chapter 20
- C. Jesus notes how people give, commends widow; answers question in Olivet Discourse, "When shall these things be?" Chapter 21



**VI. Betrayal, trial, and death of the Perfect Man, Chapters 22, 23**  
*(Our Kinsman-Redeemer)*

**A.** Judas plots with chief priests to betray Jesus; Jesus plans for last Passover and institutes Lord's Supper; announces His betrayal, position of apostles in future kingdom; Peter's denial; warns disciples of future; goes to Gethsemane; betrayed by Judas; arrested and led to high priest's house; denied by Peter; mocked, beaten, brought before Sanhedrin, Chapter 22

**B.** Jesus brought before Pilate and Herod; Barabbas released; Jesus foretells destruction of Jerusalem and prays for His enemies; Jesus crucified; mocked by rulers, soldiers, one thief; other thief turns to Jesus and is accepted by Him; dismisses His spirit; placed in new tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea, Chapter 23

**VII. Resurrection of the Perfect Man, Chapter 24:1-48**

**A.** Jesus raised from the dead; leaves Joseph's tomb, vv. 1-12

**B.** Jesus goes down road to Emmaus, reveals Himself to two disciples, vv. 13-34

**C.** Jesus goes to the assembled disciples, reveals Himself to the eleven; gives commission to go, vv. 35-48

*(He is still a man; emphasizes the importance of the Word of God)*

**VIII. Ascension of the Perfect Man, Chapter 24:49-53**

Jesus promises to send Holy Spirit; ascends to heaven in attitude of blessing His own

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## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Goldenhuyts, Norval. *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951.
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**Notes & Outlines**

# **JOHN**

**J. Vernon McGee**

# GOSPEL OF JOHN

## WRITER:

John, the apostle, son of Zebedee and Salome, and brother of James (Mark 1:19, 20; Matthew 20:20; John 21:20-24). His authorship has been seriously questioned by the Tubingen school of critics; however, the objections have been fully answered by the Dead Sea scrolls and also by the dating of carbon 14, and the Johannine authorship is received by competent Bible scholarship.

It is interesting to note that the following early church fathers ascribe the fourth Gospel to John: Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch — A.D. 180; Irenaeus — A.D. 190, pupil of Polycarp, who in turn was pupil of John; Clement of Alexandria — A.D. 200; and the Muratorium fragment says the fourth Gospel is by John.

## DATE: A.D. 90-100

Some suppose that this is the last book of the New Testament to be written. However, it seems appropriate to consider the writings of John in sequence: namely, the Gospel of John, the three Epistles, and the Revelation. All were written evidently during the last ten years of the life of the “beloved apostle.”

## STRUCTURE:

There are several striking features about the structure:

1. The first 3 Gospels are called the Synoptic Gospels because they are written from the same viewpoint. The fourth Gospel is different.
  - (a) Matthew and Mark emphasize the miracles of Jesus, and Luke gives attention to the parables; John does neither.
  - (b) The miracles in John are given as signs and were chosen with a great deal of discrimination in order to interpret certain great truths (e.g., Jesus fed the 5000, and following it is His discourse on the Bread of Life). There are eleven specific signs in John.
  - (c) There are no parables in the fourth Gospel. The word “parable” occurs one time (John 10:6), but is not the regular Greek word *parabole* but *paroimia*. The story of the Good Shepherd is not a parable but a discourse. The record of the lost sheep in Luke 15 is a parable. In John, the figures that Jesus used are in the nature of metaphors.

2. The simplicity of language has caused some to label John's record as the "simple Gospel." The fact that so many monosyllabic and disyllabic words occur has deceived many. This is the most profound Gospel, and the most difficult to fathom its meaning. Consider this simple statement and then try to probe its depths: "...ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:20).
3. John gives a chronological order which is well to note (e.g., "the next day," John 1:29, 35, 43). He presents a logical and chronological sequence of events. He also gives attention to places and cities (e.g., "Bethabara beyond the Jordan," John 1:28; "Cana, of Galilee," John 2:1).
4. Although the deity of Christ is in the foreground, the humanity of Christ is peculiarly emphasized (e.g., "Jesus...being wearied with his journey," John 4:6).
5. The name *Jesus* is used almost entirely to the exclusion of *Christ*. This seems strange in a Gospel that sets forth His deity.
6. The word *Jew* occurs over 60 times.

### **WHY JOHN WROTE:**

Several explanations have been offered as the reasons why John wrote his Gospel:

1. To correct Synoptic Gospels (invalid since he did not deal with their material);
2. To correct a wrong view concerning John the Baptist;
3. To refute errors of Cerinthus;
4. John's own reason — John 20:30, 31.

### **ESTIMATION:**

During the entire life of the church there have been many glowing tributes paid to the fourth Gospel. Some have called this "the heart of Christ," the "spiritual Gospel," and in Europe it is called "the bosom of Christ."

Origen said, "The Gospel [of John] is the consummation of the Gospels as the Gospels are of the Scriptures."

Jerome said, "John excels in the depths of divine mysteries."

Culross said, "I believe the writings of John have been blotted by more penitents' tears and have won more hearts for the Redeemer than all the rest put together."

Dr. A. T. Pierson said, “It touches the heart of Christ. If Matthew corresponds to the court of the Gentiles, John leads us past the veil into the Holy of Holies.”

D. A. Hayes said, “As we read we are assured that here at last is the worthy and adequate picture of the life of Jesus among men.”

**THEME:**

The deity of Jesus is the paramount purpose. The Messianic character also holds priority. This is succinctly stated in John 20:31 — “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

There is a mighty movement stated in John 16:28 — “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.” God became a man; this is the simple statement of the sublime fact. John Wesley expressed it, “God contracted to a span.”

These things are recorded to beget faith in the heart of man. *Believe* is used over 100 times in John’s Gospel. It occurs fewer than 40 times in the Synoptic Gospels. The noun *faith* does not occur in John but is used in the other Gospels. *Eternal life* occurs 35 times in John, but only 12 times in the Synoptic Gospels.

**COMMENT:**

**Chapter 1** — There are 3 great building blocks of the prologue, and the other verses are the cement that holds them together. In each building block there are three great statements:

THE WORD (v. 1) Identification  
(3 statements)

THE WORD (v. 14) Explanation  
(3 statements)

THE WORD (v. 18) Declaration  
(3 statements)

The contrast between Jesus and John the Baptist is sharp. Their relationship is set forth in the contrast:

CHRIST	JOHN THE BAPTIST
Was from eternity	Came
Word	Man
He, Himself, God	Sent from God
He is the Light	Testified concerning the Light
Object of trust	Agent to point men to Christ

**Chapter 2** — Jesus came from heaven’s glory, yet He walks over a hill to Cana to attend a wedding. (He would like to come to your wedding also, and bless it.) Here He performs His first miracle (v. 11) and manifests His glory so that His disciples believe on Him.

**Chapter 3** — Nicodemus was probably sent by the Sanhedrin to align Jesus on their side, but he found Jesus to be concerned with him personally. Jesus said, “You *must* be born again, and therefore the Son of man *must* be lifted up” (see vv. 7, 14). The necessity of being born again makes imperative the lifting up of Christ on the cross. Jesus did not mean a second beginning, as Nicodemus interpreted it, but a different beginning — being born anew (2 Corinthians 5:17).

**Chapter 4** — Samaritans were despised by the Jews because they were the result of intermarriage of the poorest class of Jews with the hated Assyrian conquerors. This woman is not only a Samaritan, she is dissolute, rude, and stupid. That the God of eternity would stop to have an interview with her ought to tell us something about God! Notice how gently He deals with her, appealing first to her sympathy and then to her curiosity.

The period known as His great Galilean ministry begins with verse 46, dated December A.D. 27. The miracle (v. 50) is not so much the healing of the boy, but it is the faith of the father. Most of us would have said, “When I get home and see my boy running around, then I’ll believe.”

**Chapter 5** — The last of verse 3 and all of verse 4 is omitted in the best manuscripts. It has been inserted in the King James Version to let us know why that crowd of sick people were there. Today many folk are waiting for some mysterious moving. Notice Jesus did not offer to put him in the water, but said, “Get up. Pick up your mat. Walk!” (see v. 8). Because this was done on the Sabbath, it occasioned the final break with the religious rulers (v. 16). They understood perfectly that He was making Himself equal with God (v. 18).

**Chapter 6** — Mathematics of a Miracle

5 loaves	5,000 men
1 loaf	1,000 men
1 fish	2,500 men
1/2 loaf	500 men (about 1/2 a hamburger bun for 500 men)

Naturally this would remind them of Moses and the manna in the wilderness (Exodus 16). But manna did not give them life — they are dead. The true Bread is the Lord Jesus Christ; He gives life. Notice that the work of God (v. 29) is not that which is commanded by God, but that which is wrought by God.

**Chapter 7** — Notice that our Lord has become a controversial figure. The enmity against Him is beginning to break out like wildfire. At the feast of tabernacles they built booths and lived in them throughout the feast, symbolic of the wilderness journey. Every day there was the pouring out of water in the temple and a double portion on the last day, reminding them that God gave them water from the rock in the wilderness (Exodus 17). Using this symbolism, Jesus gives His invitation (v. 37). Drinking and believing are the same thing (v. 38).

**Chapter 8** — Obviously the scribes and Pharisees did not want to stone her; they wanted to stone *Him* (v. 6). If they had been sincere about following the Law, why didn't they bring the man also (Leviticus 20:10)? Notice the requirement for judging another — sinlessness. Jesus is putting His cross between the woman and her sin. He did not come to judge. He came to save (John 3:17).

“I...came from God” (v. 42 — cf. John 3:17, 34; 5:36, 37; 8:18, 26, 29; 10:36; 11:42; 12:49; 14:10; 17:3, 8). “Ye are of your father the devil” (v. 44) — (see Matthew 13:38; 23:15; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 12:9). Notice the 7 “I AMs” in John 6:35; 8:12; 10:9, 11; 11:25; 14:6; and 15:5.

**Chapter 9** — The question in v. 2 was due to current beliefs in: (1) reincarnation; (2) heredity (Exodus 20:5); (3) sin of Adam; (4) a child in the womb could sin (cf. Jacob and Esau).

The condition of the blind man parallels our condition before we were saved:

- (1) Outside the temple, shut out from God
- (2) Blind, unable to see the Savior
- (3) Blind from birth — we were born in sin
- (4) Beyond human help
- (5) Beggar — salvation is not for sale; it is a gift

Notice the syllogistic method of arguing (v. 16): Major premise — all people from God keep the Sabbath; minor premise — Jesus does not keep the Sabbath; conclusion — Jesus is not from God.

The blind man knew he was blind, received the light that was given to him, believed, and was saved. The Pharisees did not admit their blindness — the Light revealed their blindness.

**Chapter 10** — “Door” is used in 3 ways:

1. “Door into the sheepfold” (v. 1) — Sheepfold is the nation Israel. Jesus will lead His sheep out of Judaism, out from under the Law.
2. “Door of the sheep” (v. 7) — Jesus is the door for those coming out of Judaism (cf. blind man had no place to go after excommunication).



3. “The door” (v. 9) — He is the door of salvation for both Jew and Gentile (cf. John 14:6). He is the way *in*.

Jesus came into the fold the right way (v. 2), made under the Law, in David’s line. The porter (the Holy Spirit) opened the way for Him. “Fold” (v. 16) means Israel. For over 2000 years He has been calling out Jew and Gentile. We are now one flock, the church.

Good Shepherd — Psalm 22 (John 10:11)

Great Shepherd — Psalm 23 (Hebrews 13:20)

Chief Shepherd — Psalm 24 (1 Peter 5:4)

**Chapter 11** — Here is God’s answer to the Jews’ question to Jesus, “Who are You?” He is the resurrection and the life!

Is illness in the will of God? Is it a sign that He doesn’t love you (vv. 3, 4)? “Sleep” (v. 11) always refers to the body. The believer’s body is put to sleep, to be awakened (in a new body) by our Lord. Science is helpless in the presence of death — Jesus began where man leaves off (vv. 14, 15). “...I am the resurrection, and the life; [How?] he that believeth in [*trusts into or upon*] me, though he were dead [in trespasses and sins], yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die [a penal death for his sin]” (vv. 25, 26). “Jesus wept” (v. 35) — this is how He feels at the funeral of your loved one; He weeps.

Notice how the enemy bears testimony to Him (v. 47). They are frightened of Him now (v. 48). Their only solution is murder (v. 53).

**Chapter 12** — While they were plotting His death in Jerusalem, those who loved Him made Him a dinner at Bethany. Mary expresses her devotion and adoration with this costly gift that is worth, according to Judas, 300 pence — the annual wage of a laboring man. It revealed her spiritual insight (v. 7), which none of the disciples had at this time.

Having presented His miracles (and they rejected Him), He now makes a definite claim to Messiahship and rides publicly into Jerusalem. It is to fulfill the Word of God (Genesis 49:8-12, “Shiloh” in verse 10 is the Messiah; Zechariah 9:9) and to fulfill the will of God.

**Chapter 13** — Evidently there is a meaning here not seen on the surface (v. 12). “He that is washed [bathed (*louo*), which is regeneration] needeth not except to wash [*nipito*] his feet” (v. 10). The spiritual meaning is that He is cleansing His own from the defilement of the world (1 John 1:9) in order to restore them to fellowship. He is sending them out to do the same thing (v. 14, cf. Galatians 6:1).

He is now warning His own and preparing them, since He would soon go to the cross.

**Chapter 14** — When man sinned back in the Garden of Eden, 3 things happened to him: (1) dead to God; (2) no communion with God; (3) no longer had knowledge of God. Christ restores these — “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (v. 6) — reconciliation, illumination, and regeneration.

Verse 17 reveals the great truth of this age. The Holy Spirit was *with* them in the Old Testament; He is *in* believers today.

Judas represents the devil, for the devil entered into him and overcame him.

Simon Peter was overcome by the flesh.

Thomas was overcome by the world — spiritual truth was dim and unreal to him.

**Chapter 15** — Everyone He is speaking to here is a believer. The prophets spoke of the nation Israel as the vine — Psalm 80:8, 9; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 2:21; Hosea 10:1. It was a degenerate vine, and Jesus now presents Himself as the genuine vine. Salvation is not by being *in* Israel (or being *in* a church), but being *in* Christ. A grapevine will never break at the place where the branch goes into the vine. “Abide” (v. 4) means constant communion with Christ — isn’t that what a branch is doing in the vine? “Fruit” (v. 5) is produced by the Holy Spirit in such a life (Galatians 5:22, 23). The fruit of soul-winning is a by-product. The fire in verse 6 is not hell, but being taken away from the place of fruitbearing (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

**Chapter 16** — “He will guide you into all truth” (v. 13) is the ministry of the Holy Spirit completing the teaching of Jesus. We find this in the Epistles. “And he will show you things to come” (v. 13) is revelation. “He shall glorify me” (v. 14) — all of this is the unfolding of Christ’s person and His ministry.

I consider verse 28 to be the key to this Gospel. The eternal Son came to the earth for one purpose — to redeem man. When the mission is accomplished, He will return to the Father. This is the movement in the Gospel of John. Though they believe He is the Messiah, they still don’t comprehend His death, resurrection, and ascension. He has painted a black picture in this chapter; persecution is coming — “They have hated me and they will hate you; it will be rough going in the world — but be of good cheer! I have overcome the world” (see v. 33). His victory is our victory.

**Chapter 17** — Believers and the world:

- (1) Given to Christ out of the world (v. 6)
- (2) Left in the world (v. 11)
- (3) Not of the world (v. 14)
- (4) Hated by the world (v. 14)

- (5) Kept from the evil one (v. 15)
- (6) Sent into the world (v. 18)
- (7) Manifested in unity before the world (v. 23)

Christ prays this for His own:

- (1) preservation (v. 11)
- (2) joy — fullness of the Spirit (v. 13)
- (3) deliverance — from evil (v. 15)
- (4) set apart — “sanctify” (v. 17)
- (5) unity, “be one” — not union (v. 21)
- (6) fellowship — “be with me” (v. 24)
- (7) satisfaction — “behold my glory” (v. 24)

Are you finding it rough going down here? Are you having problems in this world? He said you would. But He has prayed for you, and the Father always answers His prayers.

**Chapter 18** — Notice the majesty and meekness of Jesus. Apparently He spent His nights under the open sky — born in a stable; arrested, not in a fine home, but in a garden. For a brief moment He revealed His glory (v. 6), showing that there could have been no arrest without His cooperation. Jesus is in complete charge (vv. 8, 9), even telling them whom to arrest and whom not to arrest.

Why did Peter lop off Malchus’ ear? Because he was a fisherman and not a swordsman — he was aiming for his head. Why was Peter not arrested? Because our Lord was in command.

“The cup” is the cross; Jesus came to die (v. 11).

Annas (v. 13), father-in-law of the high priest, was formerly high priest. Clever and satanic, he knew how to handle Rome. It was he who plotted the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus. The trial was a mockery; they had already decided that He was going to die (v. 14).

If they had entered the home of a Gentile, they would have been polluted (v. 28) and unable to eat the Passover. In the name of religion they were plotting the death of the very One who is the fulfillment of Passover! Are you religious, or are you really joined to Christ?

Only Rome executed by crucifixion (v. 32, cf. Psalm 22).

He is not saying (v. 36) that His kingdom will not be established on this earth. “Of” means that it is not built on power structure and politics as are the kingdoms of this world.

**Chapter 19** — If Jesus was innocent, Pilate should have released Him; if He was guilty, he should have crucified Him — beating Him was a miscarriage of justice (v. 1). He thought it would satisfy Jesus’ accusers (vv. 4, 5).

If you had seen Jesus it would have broken your heart — He was beaten beyond recognition. He did not even look human (Isaiah 52:14).

Hebrew was the language of religion; Greek was the language of culture, philosophy, and learning; Latin was the language of law and power. The superscription was written in the 3 languages for the 3 great sections of humanity (v. 20). Here is a man who was a carpenter, unheard of beyond the boundaries of that little land out in the hinterlands of the Empire. He dies on a cross as a criminal. And His gospel, the fact that He died for others, is to be preached throughout the world. More than 2000 years later, in a world of turmoil, this is still the hope of the world, the only hope for humanity.

Notice it is “when” they had crucified Jesus (v. 23), past tense. Not one of the Gospel writers gives the details. And God pulled down a veil of darkness for 3 hours while the transaction was taking place between the Father and the Son.

They shot dice for His garment (v. 24) to fulfill a little detail of prophecy (Psalm 22:18). That day while He was hanging on the cross, 28 prophecies were fulfilled. What was finished (v. 30)? Your redemption and mine was finished. By crucifying their own Savior, trying to observe the Passover that speaks of Him, they are fulfilling prophecy. Compare John 19:36 with Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Psalm 34:20; and John 19:37 with Zechariah 12:10 and Revelation 1:7.

**Chapter 20** — Jesus came back from the dead on Sunday (v. 1), and from then on believers have met together on the first day of the week. Apparently Mary Magdalene came out ahead of the other women. When she saw the sepulchre open, she turned and left. When the other women arrived, she was probably halfway to the home of John. Notice that Peter is staying with John. After Peter’s base denial, John had taken him in. What was remarkable about seeing “the linen clothes lying” (v. 5)? Remember that Joseph and Nicodemus had prepared the body for burial (John 19:40). They sealed in the body with 100 pounds of ointment, wrapped it with strips of linen cloth, and prepared it like a mummy. Each finger was wrapped separately, then the hand, then the arms were strapped to the body and the body was wound. John and Peter knew that He could not have gotten out of that encasement. It would have been physically impossible to get that body out of grave-clothes without unwinding them. “He saw” is a prolonged inspection (v. 8) which convinced John — he “believed.” Resurrection was the only answer. Mary did not recognize Him (v. 14), not because He was so changed, but she wasn’t expecting to see Him at all. She had great love and concern, but no faith.

“Touch me not” (v. 17) is “do not cling to me,” and He gives the reason — “I am not yet ascended.” Like the high priest on the Day of Atonement,

He was on His way to present His sacrifice in heaven. I believe His blood will be in heaven throughout eternity to remind us of the price that was paid.

The disciples knew Him (v. 20) even before He showed His wounds. It is amazing that His wounds are still there in His glorified body. He will bear the scars of sin for eternity so that you and I can be presented blameless and without blemish (Ephesians 5:27).

During the interval between His ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, these disciples needed help. So our Lord “breathed” into them eternal life by giving them the Spirit of God (v. 22).

What will remit sin (v. 23)? The gospel. The gospel must be preached before sin can be remitted.

Thomas needlessly spent a miserable week of doubt and darkness (vv. 24, 25), but then he gives the highest testimony to the Lord Jesus (v. 28).

There are 11 recorded appearances of Jesus before His ascension, but these are recorded that we might believe (v. 31). John gives a very clear reason for his purpose in writing his Gospel.

**Chapter 21** — After breakfast is over and they are sitting around, Jesus asks 3 questions of Simon Peter, gets 3 affirmations, and gives 3 exhortations. His first question (v. 15) is, “Do you love me?” using the Greek word *agapao*, meaning “love with all your heart.” Peter’s answer is, “I have an affection (*phileo* in the Greek) for you.” Peter, who had insisted that he would die for Him and that same night denied that he even knew Him, is not boasting anymore. Keenly conscious of his own failure, he is being completely honest and is grieved that he cannot come up to the level of *agapao*. Notice that on the basis of his love — so weak that he is ashamed of it — Christ commissions him, “Feed my lambs.”

I. Interrogation

1. *agapao*
2. *agapao*
3. *phileo*

II. Affirmation

1. *phileo*
2. *phileo*
3. *phileo*

III. Exhortation

1. Feed my little lambs
2. Discipline my lambs
3. Feed my lambs

You and I must pass through that gate of affirmation before we can serve Him!

## OUTLINE:

- I. Prologue — incarnation, Chapter 1:1-18**
  - A. Word is God, vv. 1-3**
  - B. Word became flesh, v. 14**
  - C. Word revealed God, v. 18**
  
- II. Introduction, Chapter 1:19-51**
  - A. Witness of John the Baptist, vv. 19-36**  
*Jesus is Revealer of God (v. 36); Redeemer of man (v. 29)*
  - B. Witness of Andrew, vv. 37-42**  
*Jesus is the Messiah [Christ] (v. 41)*
  - C. Witness of Philip, vv. 43-46**  
*Jesus is fulfillment of Old Testament (v. 45)*
  - D. Witness of Nathanael, vv. 47-51**  
*Jesus is Son of God, King of Israel (v. 49)*
  
- III. Witness of works and words (“signs” 20:30, 31), Chapters 2 — 12**
  - A. Jesus at marriage in Cana (1st work), Chapter 2:1-12**
  - B. Jesus cleanses temple during Passover in Jerusalem (1st word), Chapter 2:13-22**  
*Jesus is Resurrection (v. 22)*
  - C. Jesus interviews Nicodemus in Jerusalem (2nd word), Chapters 2:23 — 3:36**  
*Jesus must die for sins of world (3:15)*
  - D. Jesus interviews woman at well in Sychar (3rd word), Chapter 4:1-45**  
*Jesus is giver of Water of Life*
  - E. Jesus heals nobleman’s son in Capernaum (2nd work), Chapter 4:46-54**
  - F. Jesus heals man at pool of Bethesda (3rd work), Chapter 5**  
*Jesus is equal with God*
  - G. Jesus feeds 5,000 on east of Sea of Galilee (4th work & word), Chapter 6**  
*Jesus is Bread of Life*
  - H. Jesus teaches at Feast of Tabernacles in temple (5th word), Chapter 7**  
*Jesus is Water of Life; promises the Holy Spirit*
  - I. Jesus in temple forgives woman taken in adultery (6th word), Chapter 8**  
*Jesus is Light of World*
  - J. Jesus opens eyes of man born blind in Jerusalem (5th work), Chapter 9**
    - 1. Record of miracle, vv. 1-7**

- 2. Reaction to miracle, vv. 8-41
- K. Jesus is Good Shepherd (7th word), Chapter 10**
  - 1. Humanity — Christ in form of servant, vv. 1-21
  - 2. Deity — Christ equal with God, vv. 22-42
- L. Jesus raises Lazarus from dead in Bethany (6th work), Chapter 11**
- M. Witness of Jew and Gentile to Jesus, Chapter 12**
  - 1. Jesus comes to Bethany for supper, vv. 1-11
  - 2. Jesus comes to Jerusalem — tearful entry, vv. 12-19
  - 3. Jesus comes to Greeks, vv. 20-26
  - 4. Jesus comes to His hour, vv. 27-36
  - 5. Jesus comes to end of public ministry, vv. 37-50
- IV. Witness of Jesus to His witnesses, Chapters 13 — 17**
  - Upper Room Discourse*
  - A. Jesus washes feet of disciples, Chapter 13**  
*Picture of His present ministry*
  - B. Jesus comforts His disciples, Chapter 14**  
*Announces His second coming*
  - C. Jesus is genuine vine; disciples are branches, Chapter 15**  
*New relationship*
  - D. Jesus will send Holy Spirit during His absence, Chapter 16**  
*New ministry of Holy Spirit*
  - E. The Lord's prayer, Chapter 17**
    - 1. Jesus prays for Himself, vv. 1-5
    - 2. Jesus prays for disciples, vv. 6-19
    - 3. Jesus prays for His church, vv. 20-26
- V. Witness to world, Chapters 18 — 20**
  - A. Arrest and trial of Jesus, Chapter 18**
    - 1. Arrest in Gethsemane; trial before Annas, vv. 1-14
    - 2. First denial by Simon Peter, vv. 15-18
    - 3. Trial before high priest, vv. 19-24
    - 4. Second denial by Simon Peter, vv. 25-27
    - 5. Trial before Pilate, vv. 28-40
  - B. Death of Jesus at Golgotha; burial in tomb of Joseph, Chapter 19**
  - C. Resurrection of Jesus; appearances to Mary, disciples, Thomas, Chapter 20**
- VI. Epilogue — glorification, Chapter 21**
  - The resurrected Jesus is still God
    - Lord of our wills — directs our service (v. 6)*
    - Lord of our hearts — motive for service (vv. 15-17)*
    - Lord of our minds — lack of knowledge no excuse from service (v. 22)*

Another division of the Gospel of John:

John 1 — 12	LIGHT
John 13 — 17	LOVE
John 18 — 21	LIFE

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*



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**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter—
2. Most important verse—
3. Most prominent word—
4. Teaching about Christ—
5. Command to obey—
6. Promise to claim—
7. New truth learned—



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**Notes & Outlines**

# **ACTS**

J. Vernon McGee

## ACTS

(Sometimes called the 5th Gospel, it is a continuation of the Gospel of Luke.)

Last recorded fact about Jesus in the Gospels:

Matthew	— Resurrection	} Acts 1 brings all 4 together.
Mark	— Ascension	
Luke	— Promise of the Holy Spirit	
John	— Promise of the Second Coming	

The great missionary commission given in the 4 Gospels is confirmed in Acts.

Acts furnishes a ladder on which to place the Epistles.  
Acts is a bridge between the Gospels and the Epistles.

The New Testament without Acts leaves a great, yawning gap. “If the Book of Acts were gone, there would be nothing to replace it” (Howson).

**WRITER:** Dr. Luke, who also wrote the third Gospel (Acts 1:1). Sir William Ramsay says that Luke is the greatest of all historians, ancient or modern (*The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170; St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*).

**DATE:** About A.D. 63

Acts covers a period of approximately 30 years. This is the inspired record of the beginnings of the church. While Genesis records the origin of the physical universe, Acts records the origin of the spiritual body.

**KEY VERSE:**

*But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.* (Acts 1:8)

## **SPECIAL FEATURES:**

1. Prominence of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Prominence of the Holy Spirit.  
Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39; John 14:16, 17; John 20:22; Acts 1:8). This is the age of the Holy Spirit. The great fact of this age is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19).
3. Power of the church.
4. Prominence of the church, visible and invisible (a new institution).
5. Prominence of places — begins in Jerusalem, ends in Rome. (Ramsay checked the many places referred to.)
6. Prominence of persons — Dr. Luke mentions 110 persons by name.
7. Prominence of the resurrection, the center of gospel preaching.
8. Prominence of Peter in the first section, and Paul in the last section. (There is a strange omission of the other apostles.)

## **TITLE:**

The proper title for this historical book is the supreme problem.

“The Acts of the Apostles” — Authorized and Revised Versions

“The Acts of the Apostles” — Codex Vaticanus (MSS)

“The Acts of the Ascended and Glorified Lord” — Robert Lee

“Words Concerning Deeds” — Bantu title

Acts 1:1, 2 gives the key to the problem: “*The Lord Jesus Christ at work by the Holy Spirit through the apostles*” (human instrumentalities).

## **OUTLINE:**

- I. The Lord Jesus Christ at work by the Holy Spirit through the apostles in Jerusalem, Chapters 1 — 7**
  - A. Preparation for the coming of the Spirit, Chapter 1**
    1. Introduction, vv. 1, 2
    2. 40 days post-resurrection ministry of Jesus, vv. 3-9
    3. Ascension and promise of the return of Jesus, vv. 10, 11
    4. Waiting for the Spirit, vv. 12-14
    5. Appointment of an apostle, vv. 15-26
  - B. Day of Pentecost (Bethlehem of the Holy Spirit), Chapter 2**
    1. Coming of the Holy Spirit, vv. 1-13
    2. 1st sermon in the church age by Peter, vv. 14-47
  - C. 1st miracle of the church; Peter’s 2nd sermon, Chapter 3**
    1. Healing of lame man, vv. 1-11
    2. Appealing and revealing address of Peter, vv. 12-26
    3. Believing 5000 men (results), 4:4

- D. 1st persecution of the church; power of the Holy Spirit, Chapter 4
  - E. Death of Ananias and Sapphira; 2nd persecution, Chapter 5  
(*Discipline within and persecution without*)
  - F. Appointment of deacons; witness of Stephen, a deacon, Chapter 6
  - G. Stephen's address and martyrdom (1st martyr), Chapter 7
- II. The Lord Jesus Christ at work by the Holy Spirit through the apostles in Judæa and Samaria, Chapters 8 — 12**
- A. Conversion of Ethiopian Eunuch (son of Ham), Chapter 8
  - B. Conversion of Saul of Tarsus (son of Shem), Chapter 9
  - C. Conversion of Cornelius, Roman centurion (son of Japheth), Chapter 10
  - D. Peter defends his ministry; gospel goes to Antioch, Chapter 11
  - E. Death of James; arrest of Peter, Chapter 12
- III. The Lord Jesus Christ at work by the Holy Spirit through the apostles to the uttermost part of the earth, Chapters 13 — 28**
- A. 1st missionary journey of Paul, Chapters 13, 14
  - B. Council at Jerusalem, Chapter 15
  - C. 2nd missionary journey of Paul, Chapters 15:36 — 16:40
  - D. 2nd missionary journey (continued)  
Paul in Thessalonica, Athens, Chapter 17
  - E. 2nd missionary journey (concluded)  
Paul in Corinth; Apollos in Ephesus, Chapter 18
  - F. 3rd missionary journey, Chapters 18:23 — 21:14  
Paul in Ephesus, Chapter 19
  - G. 3rd missionary journey of Paul (continued), Chapter 20
  - H. Paul goes to Jerusalem and is arrested, Chapter 21
  - I. Paul's defense before the mob at Jerusalem, Chapter 22
  - J. Paul's defense before the Sanhedrin, Chapter 23
  - K. Paul before Felix, Chapter 24
  - L. Paul before Festus, Chapter 25
  - M. Paul before Agrippa, Chapter 26

N. Paul goes to Rome via storm and shipwreck, Chapter 27

O. Paul arrives in Rome, Chapter 28  
(*Last seen preaching to Gentiles*)

## COMMENT:

### I. The Lord Jesus Christ at work by the Holy Spirit through the apostles in Jerusalem, Chapters 1 — 7

**Chapter 1** — Gives the **post-resurrection** ministry and **ascension** of Jesus, and the **10-day interval** before the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

**vv. 1, 2** — Theophilus, the one addressed, is one of the unknown disciples in the early church whose name means “lover of God” or “loved of God.” Luke’s primary objective is to show that Jesus continued His work and ministry after His resurrection but from a different position (see Acts 2:33).

**v. 3** — There are 10 recorded appearances of Jesus after His resurrection. This ministry has a more important bearing on the lives of Christians today than the 3-year ministry recorded in the 4 Gospels (see author’s book, *The Empty Tomb*). “The kingdom of God” includes not only His purpose in the church but reaches beyond to the re-establishment of the house of David (see Acts 15:14-17).

**v. 4** — “The promise of the Father” is the Holy Spirit (see John 16:7-15).

**v. 5** — Water baptism is ritual baptism; the Holy Spirit is real baptism.

**v. 6** — This is not a foolish question. The kingdom will be restored to Israel.

**v. 7** — Jesus does not rebuke them. He merely says that the times and seasons for the establishment of the kingdom are not available to man.

**v. 8** — This is not a corporate commission given to the church as a body, but a private and personal command given to each believer.

**v. 9** — The ascension is an important and significant miracle in the ministry of Jesus. This is especially true in the space age with eyes turned aloft. “Cloud” means the Shekinah Glory cloud that filled the tabernacle (see Exodus 40:38). He is surrounded with the glory He had before Bethlehem (John 17:5).

**vv. 10, 11** — Note the witness of the two angels who appeared as men. “This same Jesus” (v. 11) means that in His glorified body He will return to earth to the same place (Zechariah 14:4).

**vv. 12-14** — This is the 10-day interval between His ascension and Pentecost. The attitude of the apostles and believers is that of oneness, prayer, and waiting. This period cannot be duplicated today, for the Holy Spirit has already come.

**vv. 15-26** — The election to choose a successor to Judas Iscariot is conducted by Peter without the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit — the Holy Spirit had not yet come. Matthias was evidently a good man who met the requirements of an apostle and apparently was an apostle. The Holy Spirit, however, ignored him, for he never is mentioned again in the Scriptures. The successor, we believe, to Judas Iscariot was Saul of Tarsus, chosen personally by the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:1).

**Chapter 2** — Records the fulfillment of **Pentecost, Peter’s sermon, and the primary church.**

**v. 1** — Pentecost took place 50 days after the Feast of Firstfruits (see author’s book, *Learning Through Leviticus*, Vol. 2, on Leviticus 23:15-22). “Fully come” means that this was the fulfillment of the meaning and purpose for which it was given. As the Feast of Passover depicts the death of Christ and the Feast of Firstfruits depicts the resurrection of Christ, the Feast of Pentecost depicts the beginning and origin of the church. (Five minutes before the Day of Pentecost there was no church; five minutes after the Day of Pentecost there was the church.) What Bethlehem was to the birth of Christ, Pentecost and Jerusalem were to the coming of the Holy Spirit. He began to baptize believers, which means He placed them in the body of Christ — identifying them with Christ as His body on earth (see 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13).

**v. 2** — It was not a wind but there was a sound “like a” wind. “Rushing mighty wind” means that it had the sound of a tornado so that all of Jerusalem evidently heard it. The sound of a tornado has been likened to that of a thousand freight trains. It was an appeal to the ear gate.

**v. 3** — “As of fire” means that it was not fire but looked like fire, appealing to the eye gate. This was not the baptism of fire, which is judgment yet to come, but the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

**v. 4** — “All filled with the Holy Spirit” indicates that all the other ministries of the Holy Spirit to believers in this age had already been performed, as they occur in this order:



1. Regenerating (John 3:5);
2. Indwelling (Romans 8:9);
3. Sealing (Ephesians 4:30);
4. Baptizing (Acts 1:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13).

The experience of Pentecost came from the filling of the Spirit — not the baptizing of the Spirit. The baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit placed them in the church, the new body that came into existence here for the first time. “Other tongues” were not unknown tongues, but the polyglot languages of the Roman Empire spoken by the worshipers who had come from the different areas of the Roman Empire (vv. 5-11). (See author’s booklet, *Talking in Tongues*.)

**v. 12** — Some of the multitude that come together are startled and impressed, but not convinced because they do not understand.

**v. 13** — Others are cynical and mock. They offer a natural explanation for the phenomenon.

**vv. 14, 15** — Peter addresses himself to the skeptics and ignorant.

**vv. 16-21** — Peter does not use Joel’s prophecy to show that Pentecost is the fulfillment of it, but “this is that” (v. 16) — it is similar to and like that which is yet to come (see Joel 2:28-32; 3:1, 2). Peter is saying that Pentecost is not contrary to the Old Testament. It is obvious that Joel’s prophecy was not fulfilled at Pentecost. God said, “I will pour out of my Spirit upon *all* flesh” (v. 17), yet there were only 3,000 converted at Pentecost. The signs in the heavens did not appear at that time. The age of *grace* began, not the “great and notable day of the Lord” (v. 20). Neither did all nations assemble in “the valley of Jehoshaphat” (Joel 3:2, 12).

**vv. 22-24** — The emphasis is not upon tongues or even on the coming of the Holy Spirit, but rather on the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and His resurrection (see John 16:13, 14). Notice that the passport of Jesus was the miracles, wonders, and signs.

**vv. 25-31** — David in Psalm 16 spoke of the Messiah (not of himself, for his grave was in Jerusalem) who must be raised from the dead to sit on David’s throne.

**v. 32** — Peter and the others there are witnesses that Jesus was raised from the dead.

**v. 33** — We know that Jesus arrived at the right hand of God because the Holy Spirit arrived here.

vv. 34, 35 — This is a fulfillment of Psalm 110.

v. 36 — The explanation of all that had occurred is the fact that Jesus died, rose again, ascended, and had taken His place at the right hand of God.

vv. 37-41 — Peter puts down the conditions of salvation for these men of Judæa and all other Israelites who are in Jerusalem.

v. 42 — These are the visible marks of the local church.

vv. 43-47 — The first church had very little organization, but great power and much love and joy.

**Chapter 3** — Peter and John perform the **first miracle** of the church and **Peter preaches** again. This is God's last call to the nation to turn to Him as a corporate body. Jesus will return to set up His kingdom as predicted by the prophets (vv. 24-26). The suffering of Christ had been fulfilled (vv. 18, 19).

**Chapter 4** — **5000 are saved** at the preaching of Peter's second sermon, but the apostles are **arrested** and **imprisoned**. The reason given for their arrest is that they preached the resurrection (v. 2). The apostles are brought to trial before the Sanhedrin to explain the power or name they used in healing the lame man. Peter answers by the power of the Holy Spirit and presents Jesus as the only way of salvation and His name as the name of power and salvation. The apostles are reprimanded by the Sanhedrin and commanded to desist from preaching in the name of Jesus. The apostles return to the company of the early church. The church went to prayer, quoting Psalm 2:1 and 2. They did not pray for cessation of persecution, but for courage to speak the Word of God (v. 29). Notice the power of prayer (vv. 30, 31), also the high plane of spirituality of the early church.

**Chapter 5** — Introduces the **defection** in the church, followed by the **death** of **Ananias** and **Sapphira**. These Christians were not living on the high spiritual level of the early church, although they were saved. When they lied to the Holy Spirit, they were removed from the company of believers. They committed the sin unto death (1 John 5:16). The amazing thing is that this sin could not exist in the early church. There was holiness of life in the church. Peter was probably as much surprised as anyone when Ananias died (v. 5). Power continues in the church (vv. 12-14); multitudes are saved. The apostles exercise the apostolic gifts. The apostles are arrested the second time and put in prison (vv. 17, 18). Gamaliel counsels restraint and moderation in dealing with them. They are beaten, forbidden to speak in the name of Jesus, and continue to preach in His name.

**Chapter 6** — Gives the selection of **deacons** due to the defection, and the account of Stephen — framed, arrested, tried.

**v. 1** — The Grecians were Hebrews with a background of Greek culture, while the Hebrews were those who still followed the Mosaic Law. The high plane to which the Spirit had brought the church was interrupted by the intrusion of satanic division and confusion. The sharing of material substance, which first characterized the church (Acts 2:44-46), gave way to the selfishness of the old nature. The Grecians (evidently a minority group) felt neglected and demanded that their widows be given equal consideration with the Hebrews.

**v. 2** — The apostles do not feel that they should have the burden of this detail, as it would take them from the study of the Word of God, prayer, and the ministry of the Word (v. 4).

**v. 3** — Certain qualified men are chosen to assume the burden of handling the material substance. Notice their qualifications:

1. men of honest report
2. full of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18)
3. men of wisdom — application of scriptural truth
4. men of conviction (v. 10)
5. full of faith — not only saving faith, but serving faith and witnessing faith (not amount, but object of faith)

**v. 5** — Of the list of the first 7 deacons, we have only the record of 2 — Stephen and Philip.

**v. 6** — Laying on of hands merely designates these men for the office, denoting their fellowship in the things of Christ and representation for the corporate body of believers.

**v. 7** — The church continues to grow in spite of the internal condition.

**vv. 8-15** — Stephen, a strong witness to the gospel, incurs the hatred of certain sects. False witnesses are brought before the council to accuse Stephen.

**Chapter 7** — **Stephen's** defense before the council is a recitation of the **history of the nation Israel** and their resistance and rebellion to God. Stephen charges the council of being betrayers and murderers of Jesus, which engenders their bitterest hatred and leads to the **stoning** of Stephen.

**vv. 2-8** — He begins with Abraham, who believed and obeyed God.

**vv. 9-16** — He goes on to the Patriarchal period. The brethren of Joseph, motivated by envy and hatred, sold Joseph into Egypt. God overruled and used Joseph to save them.

**vv. 17-29** — He reviews the Egyptian bondage period. Moses was born in this period and was brought up in the palace of Pharaoh. The wisdom of the Egyptians was advanced beyond that for which we have given them credit. Mathematics, chemistry, engineering, architecture, and astronomy were highly developed fields of study. All this wisdom did not prepare Moses to deliver his people (v. 25).

**vv. 30-36** — He reminds them of the deliverance out of Egypt. God made Moses the deliverer (v. 35), whom the children of Israel first refused to accept.

**vv. 37-44** — He refers to the wilderness experience. A series of rebellions against God were brought to a climax in the making of a golden calf. This plague of idolatry broke out again in the land (v. 43) and resulted in the Babylonian captivity.

**vv. 45-53** — Stephen concludes with Joshua, who led them into the land, and Jesus who made a way to heaven. Note the strong charge of Stephen (vv. 51, 52). The Law was given to them supernaturally by the ministry of angels — they did not keep it (v. 53). Jesus came by the announcement of an angel, but they rejected Him.

**vv. 54-60** — Stephen is stoned to death. Stephen, a Spirit-filled believer, beholds the glory of God and the seated Savior *standing* to receive him as the first martyr. The Savior has stood up to receive multitudes since then. Another young man standing there (v. 58), Saul of Tarsus, who led in the stoning of Stephen, also looks into the heavens but does not see Jesus. However, this prepared him to see Him later on the Damascus road. “He fell asleep” (v. 60) means that Jesus put his body to sleep to await the Rapture. Stephen and Saul were on opposite sides of the cross at first, as were the two thieves. Stephen was a tremendous witness to Saul. Both were young men. The witness to the gospel became a youth movement.

## **II. The Lord Jesus Christ at work by the Holy Spirit through the apostles in Judæa and Samaria, Chapters 8 — 12**

**Chapter 8** — Saul continues his persecution of the church, and the witnesses scatter. Philip becomes the chief missionary. The Ethiopian eunuch is converted.

**vv. 1-4** — Saul becomes the chief persecutor of the church, and the church is scattered.

**vv. 5-8** — Philip becomes the chief witness abroad after the death of Stephen.

**vv. 9-25** — Philip has an experience with Simon the sorcerer, who was the first religious racketeer in the church, but not the last. Note that Simon professes to be a believer during the sweeping revival of Philip in Samaria. He goes through all the outward ritual — he believes (but it is not saving faith), is baptized, and becomes a friend of Philip (v. 13). He is exposed to Christianity and is impressed, though not converted. Notice that the professing believers (vv. 15-17) had not been born again, for they were not baptized into the church by the Holy Spirit — they were baptized by water. Simon was not baptized by the Holy Spirit but was impressed by it and wanted this gift. Notice that he is willing to pay for the gift (vv. 18, 19) that he might use it in turn for profit and publicity. There is no record that he ever was converted; he is a member of the “mixed multitude” that has been following the church for more than 1900 years.

**vv. 26-40** — In contrast to Simon the sorcerer is the Ethiopian eunuch. Philip is led by the Holy Spirit from the revival in Samaria to the desert on the way to Gaza (vv. 26-28). The Ethiopian was traveling from Jerusalem in state. He had a chauffeur who drove the chariot while he was reading. Evidently, he had a retinue of servants. He was a proselyte who had been to Jerusalem, the religious capital, but he was leaving with a mind and heart unsatisfied. The Spirit directed Philip to join him by hitchhiking (v. 29). Philip explains to him that Isaiah 53 is all about the crucifixion of Jesus (vv. 30-35). The Ethiopian believes in his heart and is baptized.

**Chapter 9** — **Saul of Tarsus is converted** on the road to Damascus; he is filled with the Spirit and baptized. He begins to preach, returns to Jerusalem, then visits his hometown of Tarsus. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus was the greatest event from the Day of Pentecost to the Reformation. **Peter** visits Lydda and **heals** Æneas, goes on to Joppa and **raises** Tabitha from the **dead** (vv. 32-34).

**vv. 1, 2** — The zeal of Saul in persecuting the church leads him to go beyond the borders of Jerusalem and Judæa. Having secured papers from the high priest, he goes to Syria.

**vv. 3-6** — Saul meets the living Christ. “Who art thou, Lord?” (v. 5) reveals that he did not know Jesus, whom to know is life. “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (v. 6) reveals that he yields in obedience to Jesus. He is converted — faith with works.

**v. 7** — The men with him see the light but do not hear the voice. Only Saul understands the message (see Acts 22:9; 26:14).

**vv. 8-16** — Blinded, Saul is led into Damascus and Ananias, a believer, is sent to him. Ananias is dumbfounded and fearful of Saul. Jesus explains His purpose in calling Saul (vv. 15, 16):

1. To witness to the Gentiles, and
2. To suffer more than any other saint.

**vv. 17-25** — After he receives his sight and is baptized, he begins to witness in the synagogue to the person of Jesus. The Jews plot to kill him, and the disciples let him over the wall in a basket.

**vv. 26-29** — Saul returns to Jerusalem after his conversion (see Galatians 1:18, 19), but the church is reluctant to receive him until Barnabas sponsors him.

**vv. 30, 31** — When a plot is discovered to slay Saul, he is taken to Cæsarea from which he returns to his hometown of Tarsus.

**vv. 32, 33** — Peter goes to Lydda where he heals Æneas, a palsied patient bedfast for 8 years. This leads to many conversions.

**vv. 34-43** — In Joppa, Tabitha (or Dorcas), a believer who used her gift as a dress-maker, died and Peter, who is still in Lydda, is sent for. He comes and raises her from the dead.

### **Chapter 10 — Cornelius, the Roman centurion, is converted.**

**vv. 1-8** — Cornelius is a soldier, but a deeply religious man — devout, fearing God, giving generously to the people, and praying much. With all these good marks to his credit, he is not saved and these works do not make him a Christian. The Spirit of God directs him to send for Simon Peter in Joppa.

**vv. 9-22** — The Holy Spirit prepares Peter for this missionary journey. In prayer on the housetop he becomes very hungry, and is placed in a trance. A sheet let down from heaven contains every kind of unclean beast, bird, and bug. Peter is instructed to slay and eat. He calls the Holy Spirit “Lord,” but contradicts his address by refusing to eat (v. 14). As a Jew, he had never eaten any unclean thing even after Pentecost. Peter wonders about the dream until the knock at the door and the messengers from Cornelius explain their mission. The Holy Spirit instructs Peter to go with them.

**vv. 23-43** — Peter reluctantly enters the home of Cornelius. He does not permit Cornelius to bow before him, saying that he, too, is only a man. Peter preaches the death and resurrection of Jesus and he gives the invitation to accept Jesus (v. 43).

**vv. 44-48** — This has been labeled the Gentile Pentecost. Peter is astonished that Gentiles too have the Holy Spirit poured out upon them — it is made audible by their speaking in tongues (v. 46). The tongues were more

of an evidence to Peter and the other apostles that God would save Gentiles (see Acts 11:1-18; 15:7-11). Then were the Gentiles in Cornelius' house baptized.

### The Three Representative Conversions

Acts 8 — Ethiopian eunuch — Son of Ham

Acts 9 — Saul of Tarsus — Son of Shem

Acts 10 — Cornelius, Roman centurion — Son of Japheth

There must be 3 factors that come into focus before there can be a conversion. All 3 are evident in these representative conversions:

The HOLY SPIRIT (Holy Spirit takes the things of Christ)	The WORD of GOD (Faith cometh by hearing the Word of God)	The MAN of GOD (Instrument)
Ethiopian — Holy Spirit directed Philip	Isaiah 53	Philip
Saul — Holy Spirit led him down Damascus road; Jesus dealt with him directly	Was grounded in the Old Testament	Stephen
Cornelius — Holy Spirit supervised every detail; prepared Peter and Cornelius	Peter preached Christ	Peter

**Chapter 11** — Peter recounts the events in connection with the **conversion of Gentiles** in the house of Cornelius. Antioch becomes the center of the Gentile church.

**vv. 1-3** — The news of the Gentiles receiving the Word of God did not seem to bring any joy to the church in Jerusalem. They demand of Peter an explanation of his conduct.

**vv. 4-18** — Peter reviews his conduct in detail with the apostles in Jerusalem. He is half apologetic (v. 17). *He* had not envisioned Gentiles in the church, and he explains that he moved only at the prompting of the Holy Spirit. The church in Jerusalem then accepts the fact that Gentiles are to be incorporated into the body of believers with them (v. 18).

**vv. 19-21** — Antioch becomes the center of evangelism as many different races are converted and a strong church is formed.

**vv. 22-24** — Barnabas is sent to Antioch by the Jerusalem church. He ministers the Word to them.

**vv. 25, 26** — Barnabas needs a helper and he knows that Saul would make a good one. He goes to Tarsus to find him. “Christian” was the name given to believers in Antioch (v. 26). It may have been given in derision, but more likely it simply implied a follower of Christ.

**vv. 27-30** — A prophet by the name of Agabus predicted a famine which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Tacitus confirms the fact of the famine. It motivated the church in Antioch to send relief to the church in Jerusalem.

**Chapter 12** — **Persecution strikes** through Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great. **Peter** in prison is miraculously **delivered**. The death of Herod is a judgment from God.

**vv. 2, 3** — James, brother of John, is executed by Herod. Peter is imprisoned. God, by His sovereign will and purpose, permits James to be executed, but He delivers Peter.

**v. 4** — “Easter” should be “the Passover.”

**v. 5** — The church in Jerusalem prays for Peter.

**v. 6** — Peter could sleep in prison!

**vv. 7-11** — “The angel” should be “*an* angel,” as Christ was *the* angel of the Lord in the Old Testament. *An* angel delivers Peter, and the prayer of the church is answered.

**v. 12** — The church met in homes, as there were no church buildings at this time. Note the home in which they were meeting — Mary’s, the mother of Mark.

**vv. 13-15** — Although the church prayed, their faith was small — they thought he had been executed. “It is his angel” should be “It is his spirit” (v. 15) — they couldn’t believe their prayers were answered.

**v. 19** — Note the cold-blooded and hard-hearted attitude of Herod toward human life.

**vv. 20-23** — Herod, like Nebuchadnezzar, is lifted up by pride. Herod tried to act like a god (v. 22). His death is God’s judgment upon him. God is jealous of His glory (v. 23).



**vv. 24, 25** — In the midst of persecution and opposition, the church grows and prospers.

### **III. The Lord Jesus Christ at work by the Holy Spirit through the apostles to the uttermost part of the earth, Chapters 13 — 28**

As the final surge of the gospel beyond the boundaries of Israel begins, Paul becomes the dominant leader and Peter disappears from the scene.

**Chapters 13, 14** — The **first missionary journey** of the apostle Paul is begun with Barnabas. The first stop is the Island of Cyprus, the home of Barnabas. They cross the island to Paphos. From there they sail to Perga in Pamphylia, then enter the interior of Asia Minor (now Turkey) into the Galatian country.

#### **Chapter 13**

**vv. 1, 2** — The church in Antioch was the missionary church, not the church in Jerusalem. Notice that the Holy Spirit chose Saul and Barnabas. It is “Barnabas and Saul” at first, but Saul becomes the leader, changes his name to Paul, and the team becomes “Paul and Barnabas.”

**v. 4** — They are led by the Holy Spirit.

**v. 5** — They begin at Salamis on the Island of Cyprus, but there are no conspicuous conversions here.

**vv. 6-12** — They cross the island to Paphos where Paul encounters Elymas, the sorcerer, who influences Sergius Paulus, a Roman deputy in the country. Elymas is routed and Sergius Paulus becomes a believer. Saul’s name is changed (v. 9) to Paul (Paulus means “little”) and could be taken after Sergius Paulus.

**v. 13** — They arrive at Perga and John Mark turns back.

**vv. 14-42** — In Antioch of Pisidia Paul preaches in the synagogue on the sabbath day one of his greatest sermons. Notice that after the reading of the Law, Paul was permitted to speak. He recounts their history as a nation, as Stephen had done. Then he presents Jesus as the Savior (v. 23). He recounts His history, and then presents the death and resurrection of Jesus as the means of salvation (vv. 29-39). Paul gives a final warning (vv. 40-42).

**vv. 43-49** — The next sabbath they preach to the Gentiles.

**vv. 50-52** — Paul and Barnabas are forced to flee to Iconium.

## Chapter 14

**vv. 5, 6** — Paul and Barnabas are forced to flee to Lystra and Derbe.

**vv. 8-28** — In Lystra Paul heals a man who had no strength in his feet. The Galatians were a fickle people (see notes on Galatians). They want to perform a religious sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas as gods (vv. 11-13). Paul and Barnabas have to protest vigorously to prevent this (vv. 14-18). The next moment they stone Paul (v. 19). It is our judgment that Paul was dead after the stoning and that God raised him from the dead. During this time he had the experience of 2 Corinthians 12:1-9. Paul and Barnabas retrace their steps (vv. 21-28), return to Antioch, and make their report.

**Chapter 15** — The **council of Jerusalem** convened to consider **law vs. grace**, or law vs. liberty. The question before the council: Must Gentiles come under the Mosaic Law to become Christians? The Jerusalem church followed the Mosaic Law to a great extent. Judaizers insisted that Gentiles come under the Law and wear the badge and outward mark, which was circumcision (v. 1).

**vv. 2-4** — The church in Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to confer with the church there on this disturbing matter. On the way, in Phenice and Samaria, they report to the churches concerning the conversion of Gentiles, causing many of the brethren to rejoice.

**vv. 5, 6** — A sect of the Pharisees who are believers insist that Gentiles be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses. (The sacrificial section of the Mosaic system was not an issue.)

**vv. 7-11** — Peter is the first to speak to the issue. He recounts again his experience in the home of Cornelius where Gentiles had the same experience that the apostles did on the Day of Pentecost. The Gentiles did not have any connection with the Law. Peter makes it abundantly clear that Israel had never kept the Law (v. 10).

**v. 12** — Barnabas and Paul then report what God has done among the Gentiles apart from the Law. Their messages are not recorded.

**vv. 13-18** — James, leader of the church in Jerusalem, summarizes the mind of the council. He fits the church into the program of the prophets although the church is not a subject of prophecy. God is taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name today (v. 14). The program of the prophets will follow.

**v. 16** — “After this” means after the church is taken out of the world. “I

will return” is the second coming of Christ, described in Revelation 19. He “will build again [the] ruins” of the house of David that today has fallen down.

**v. 17** — When Christ returns there will be a way for the remainder of men to seek after the Lord. Then *all* the Gentiles will be in the kingdom in that day. The contrast is between “out of them” (Gentiles, v. 14) and “all the nations” (Gentiles).

**vv. 19-29** — The decision is that the Gentiles not be required to meet any of the demands of the Mosaic system, but that they exercise courtesy to those who do — especially in the area of meats offered to idols and fornication.

**vv. 30-41** — After the council Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch and make preparations for a **second missionary journey**. Since they disagree about John Mark going with them again, they part company (vv. 37-39). The division is sharp. Paul takes Silas while Barnabas takes his nephew John Mark. Paul starts out through Syria and Cilicia.

**Chapter 16** — Paul revisits the churches of Galatia. Having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to go south to the province of Asia or north to Bithynia, he proceeds to Europe after receiving the vision of the man of Macedonia. Paul arrives in **Philippi** where he ends up in the local jail. At midnight Paul and Silas pray and sing praises! An earthquake shakes the jail, the doors are opened and the jailer opens his heart to receive Christ as Savior.

**vv. 1-5** — Paul finds a young disciple by the name of Timothy who evidently had been converted on his first missionary journey (1 Timothy 1:2). Timothy travels with Paul and becomes his companion and helper in his missionary efforts.

**vv. 6-13** — Paul obviously intended to enlarge the circumference of his missionary journeys in Asia Minor, but the Spirit moves him out of Asia. When Paul reaches Troas he apparently has no leading as to where to go next until he is given the vision of the man of Macedonia. He accepts this as the Holy Spirit’s moving him into Europe. Dr. Luke joins the party at Troas. Note the change from “they” (v. 8) to “we” (v. 10). They proceed inland to Philippi. The conversion of Lydia, a businesswoman from Thyatira, was the opening of Europe to the gospel (vv. 14, 15).

**vv. 16-40** — The incident of the demon-possessed girl following Paul and finally being freed from the demon caused her owners to have Paul and Silas arrested. After being beaten, they are pushed into the dungeon. At midnight their prayer meeting brings an earthquake that opens the prison doors. When

the jailer sees the doors open, he assumes that all the prisoners have escaped. His life would be forfeited according to Roman law. On the verge of suicide, Paul deters him and assures him that none had escaped. Having stood on the brink of eternity, the guard sees himself as a lost soul. When he cries out asking how to be saved, Paul gives him the gospel in a sentence. “Thy house” (v. 31) means that his household would have to believe separately as he would. The jailer and his household believe and are saved. These form a part of the church in Philippi that Paul loved and which seemed closer to Paul than any other (see his Epistle to the Philippians).

**Chapter 17** — Paul’s second missionary journey continues to **Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens.**

**vv. 1-9** — Paul is in Thessalonica for 3 sabbaths, and there are some converts. Opposition forces him to leave.

**vv. 10-14** — Paul goes to Berea where he has a better reception and many believe (v. 11).

**vv. 15-34** — Paul proceeds to Athens, having left Silas and Timothy in Berea. Paul observes the idolatry of Athens. He disputes with the Jews in the synagogue and the philosophers in the marketplace daily. Finally he is given a public hearing on Mars’ Hill. Paul’s address is a masterpiece adjusted to his audience, as was his sermon in Pisidia. Paul’s point of contact is the altar to the unknown god (vv. 22-29). He presents the true God as Creator (past) and the true God as Redeemer (present) (vv. 27-29); he asks men to turn to Him. Light creates responsibility. Paul presents the true God as Judge (v. 31) (future). Paul was not a failure in Athens, as some insist. There *were* converts (v. 34).

**Chapter 18** — The second missionary journey concludes with Paul in **Corinth.** Corinth was the sin-city of the Roman Empire, a city of corruption. (See notes on 1 Corinthians for a pen-picture of Corinth). Apollos comes to Ephesus.

**vv. 1-3** — Paul meets Aquila and Priscilla who had escaped from an anti-Semitic campaign in Rome. They were tentmakers as was Paul, and he stayed with them. They were apparently his first converts in Corinth.

**vv. 4-17** — Paul begins his public ministry in the synagogue. Silas and Timothy join him in Corinth. Many believe, including Crispus who was the chief ruler of the synagogue. The Lord encourages Paul to speak boldly. For 18 months he ministers the Word. An insurrection is made against Paul, and he is brought before Gallio. Gallio is not careless, but refuses to handle a case that has to do with religious liberty.

**vv. 18-22** — Paul sails for Antioch but goes by Ephesus. He takes Priscilla and Aquila with him as far as Ephesus. Paul makes a vow and shaves his head. Under grace, this was an exercise in Christian liberty. He had a *right* to do this, not an obligation.

**vv. 24-28** — Apollos from Alexandria, an eloquent preacher and one who knew the Old Testament, came to Ephesus. He was fervent in the spirit and taught zealously the things of the Old Testament up through the ministry of John the Baptist. He knew nothing beyond the baptism of John. Aquila and Priscilla had the privilege of bringing him up to date and also to conversion. He went to Achaia (visiting the churches in Greece, including Corinth and Athens) and began to preach Jesus as the Messiah and Savior.

**Chapter 19** — Paul's **third missionary journey**. Paul returns to **Ephesus** after retracing part of his first and second missionary journeys. He spends 2 years here where he speaks daily in the school of Tyrannus. Paul performs miracles which lead to the march against him led by Demetrius and his fellow silversmiths. The mob is quieted by the town clerk who urges them to appeal to the law and not resort to violence.

**vv. 1, 2** — The proper translation of verse 2 should be “Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?” They had heard only the preaching of Apollos which went no farther than the baptism of John.

**vv. 3, 4** — Paul explains to them that they must believe on Jesus to be saved.

**vv. 5-7** — These men respond to the preaching of Paul, and when they believe they receive the Holy Spirit.

**vv. 8-10** — Paul withdraws from the synagogue under the fire of opposition but continues his ministry in the school of Tyrannus for a period of 2 years.

**vv. 11-16** — Paul performs special miracles which lead to the 7 sons of Sceva attempting to duplicate the miracles of Paul. This attempt backfires to their humiliation and hurt.

**vv. 17-22** — As a result, many who had traffic with demons believe in Christ. So great are the results that Paul postpones his trip to Corinth and continues to minister in Ephesus — “But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door, and effectual, is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries” (1 Corinthians 16:8, 9).

**vv. 23-41** — The uproar of the silversmiths led by Demetrius centered

about their bread and butter — they made little images of Diana and sold them. The temple of Diana in Ephesus was one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world (see notes on Ephesians). The meeting ends in confusion with the mob crying incessantly, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians” (v. 28), until the town clerk brings order. He explains that they need not worry about the worship of Diana and that a legal charge should be made. The uproar ceases and the crowd goes home, but now the work of Paul in Ephesus is ended.

**Chapter 20** — The third missionary journey concludes. Paul continues on to Macedonia to Philippi, back to Troas, and to Miletus.

**vv. 1-5** — This brief section covers the visit of Paul to Thessalonica, Berea, and Philippi in Macedonia and also to Corinth and Athens in Greece.

**vv. 6-12** — This section records the visit of Paul to Troas and the episode of the young man, Eutychus, who goes to sleep in a window while Paul is preaching and falls down 3 floors to his death. Paul raises him from the dead.

**vv. 13-38** — Paul goes by Miletus, the port of Ephesus, so he can visit the Ephesians and still be in Jerusalem for Pentecost. The elders of the church meet him and they have a tender reunion. Paul knows he will encounter danger in Jerusalem, but he is determined to go. He gives a report of his stewardship of the gospel in Ephesus. He had been faithful. He knows that the church in Ephesus will be subjected to false teaching (v. 29). Note the tender farewell (vv. 37, 38).

**Chapter 21** — The third missionary journey ends in Jerusalem with Paul’s arrest.

**vv. 1-3** — Paul takes a ship from Miletus to Patara where he changes to one going to Tyre.

**vv. 4-17** — Paul spends 7 days in Tyre with disciples who warn him that he should not go to Jerusalem. Paul already had this information (see Acts 20:22-24) and he is willing to make the sacrifice in order to bring the gift for the church in Jerusalem. Paul takes the ship to Ptolemais, greets the brethren, spends one day, and then proceeds to Cæsarea. There he stays in the home of Philip, the evangelist. A prophet from Judæa, Agabus by name, came down from Judæa and takes Paul’s girdle and binds him, telling him that this is what the Jews will do to him in Jerusalem. Paul explains that he knows this but is willing to die in Jerusalem if need be (v. 13). When the friends of Paul see that they are not persuading him, they say, “The will of the Lord be done” (v. 14). We believe that Paul was in the will of God when he went to Jerusalem. Paul continues on to Jerusalem where the church receives him gladly.

**vv. 18-26** — The fact that good Bible expositors offer different explanations of this passage is evidence that there is a difficulty here. Was Paul out of or in the will of God when he went to Jerusalem and took a Jewish vow that evidently involved a sacrifice? We believe that Paul was in the will of God when he did this. Those who insist that the grace of God did not force the Gentiles to keep the Mosaic Law seem to forget that the same grace permits the Jew to continue in its precepts if he feels it is the will of God. We need to remember that Peter had eaten nothing contrary to Mosaic Law until he visited Paul in Antioch. The Jewish believers had an abhorrence of eating anything sacrificed to idols. Paul made it abundantly clear that meat does not commend us to God — therefore you can eat or refrain from eating. Paul is the man who also wrote:

*But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. Is any man called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised.* (1 Corinthians 7:17, 18)

*For though I am free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker of it with you.* (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)

Grace permitted Paul to take a Jewish vow to win the Jews. If he had been a Gentile it would have been questionable to adopt a foreign custom.

Finally, this is the man who could say at the end of his life when he wrote his own epitaph, “I have finished my course” (see 2 Timothy 4:6-8). Paul touched all the bases God had wanted him to touch. It is our considered judgment that Paul was in the will of God in following this procedure. Nowhere did the Holy Spirit forbid him to do this. He did keep Paul out of Bithynia (see Acts 16:7). We trust we are not out of the will of God in taking this position.

The church in Jerusalem rejoices in the ministry of Paul to the Gentiles but calls his attention to the fact that God is still saving Jews (v. 20). These Jewish converts had not forsaken the Law. We insist that under grace they were not required to do this, but neither could they insist that Gentiles come under the Law. Gentiles, therefore, could not insist they forsake the practices

of the Law — provided following the Law was not trusted for salvation.

**vv. 27-40** — Paul is mobbed and beaten in the temple. He would have been killed had not the chief captain and soldiers rescued him from the angry mob. Actually the arrest of Paul saves him from death. The chief captain knew nothing about Paul and was mistaken as to his actual identity (vv. 37, 38). Paul identifies himself to the chief captain who grants him permission to address the mob (vv. 39, 40).

**Chapter 22** — Paul recounts his encounter with Christ and his subsequent experience which brought him to Jerusalem. Paul appeals to his Roman citizenship to deliver himself from the awful whipping of a prisoner.

**vv. 1-3** — Notice that Paul speaks to the chief captain in Greek (21:37), but he addresses the Jewish mob in his and their native tongue (Hebrew). He gives his background — born a Jew in Tarsus of Cilicia, taught by Gamaliel in Jerusalem. He makes it abundantly clear that he is a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

**vv. 4-24** — He then recounts his persecution of the church and his experience on the Damascus road as he was prosecuting his hatred of Christ beyond the pale of Jerusalem. He explains briefly his conversion. Also he makes it clear why he had not remained in Jerusalem but had gone to the Gentiles. Paul can proceed no further. The mob drowns out his voice, and the chief captain rescues him again but is puzzled at the rage of the mob.

**vv. 25-30** — The chief captain intends to scourge Paul to get a confession from him, as he is puzzled at the strange hatred against Paul. The hatred of the crowd was evidently satanic. Paul declares his Roman citizenship which will spare him the ordeal. This further perplexes the chief captain, for he recognizes now that he has no ordinary prisoner on his hands.

Notice that Paul had many assets which made him suitable to be the missionary to the Roman Empire. He had a world view. Greek training had prepared him as the cosmic Christian. He was trained in the Mosaic system, which prepared him to interpret it in the light of the coming of Christ and His redemptive death and resurrection. Not the least of his assets was his Roman citizenship which finally opened the door for him to visit Rome.

The chief captain, who now wants to know the exact charge against Paul, is determined that he appear before the Sanhedrin to hear their charge.

**Chapter 23** — **Paul** makes a futile attempt to explain his position and conduct to the **Sanhedrin**. The Lord encourages Paul, and the plot to murder Paul leads to his being sent to Cæsarea for trial before Felix.

**vv. 2, 3** — Paul rebukes the high priest for having him smitten on the mouth contrary to the Law. Paul uses strong language, “Thou whited wall” (v. 3).



**vv. 4, 5** — Paul obviously had eye trouble since he did not recognize the high priest. He would have shown proper respect for him had he done so.

**vv. 6-10** — The Sanhedrin was divided between Pharisees and Sadducees. The Pharisees were fundamental in doctrine. They believed in the integrity of the Old Testament. The Sadducees were liberal and rejected the supernatural. Paul, knowing this, makes it clear that the real issue is concerning the resurrection of the dead. Notice that this causes a division in the council that leads to confusion and turmoil. The chief captain rescues Paul again without learning the real nature of the hatred against Paul.

**v. 11** — The Lord appears to Paul at night to encourage him. This verse indicates that Paul is not out of the will of God in coming to Jerusalem.

**vv. 12-15** — A plot of more than 40 fanatics vow not to eat or drink until they have killed Paul.

**v. 16** — The plot is discovered by a nephew of Paul who reveals it to him.

**vv. 17-35** — Paul makes it known to the chief captain who determines now to send Paul under guard, secretly, to Caesarea where he is to appear before Felix the governor.

**Chapter 24 — Paul testifies before Felix.** The high priest, Ananias, and the elders come down from Jerusalem to accuse Paul before Felix. Paul is accused of sedition, rebellion, and profaning the temple.

**vv. 10-21** — Paul offers an explanation of his conduct and states that the way he worships God centers about the resurrection.

**vv. 22, 23** — Felix asks for more evidence before he makes a judgment.

**vv. 24-26** — Felix has Paul in for a private audience with him and his wife Drusilla, a Jewess. Paul witnesses to them concerning Christ.

Paul reasons of (1) righteousness — of Christ (Philippians 3:9)  
(2) temperance (self-control)  
(3) judgment to come (great white throne —  
(Revelation 20:11-15)

Felix is convicted, but he expects a bribe that is not forthcoming (v. 26).

**v. 27** — Paul is kept in prison for 2 years without any further hearing.

**Chapter 25 — Festus succeeds Felix and Paul appears before Festus.**

**vv. 1-3** — When Festus goes to Jerusalem, the high priest renews his charges against Paul and asks that he be brought to Jerusalem for trial.

**vv. 4-9** — Festus refuses this request but agrees to examine him in Cæsarea. Many false charges are made against Paul, which he denies.

**vv. 10-12** — Paul, as a Roman citizen, exercises his right and appeals to Caesar. This, Festus is forced to grant.

**vv. 13-22** — King Agrippa and Bernice come to visit Festus. Festus tells them of Paul's case and that he has appealed to Caesar. Agrippa asks to hear Paul and a meeting is scheduled.

**vv. 23-27** — A hearing with great pomp and ceremony is arranged. The setting is dramatic. Paul in chains appears before this august company of rulers and kings. Festus requests Agrippa to help him frame a charge against Paul to send to Caesar.

**Chapter 26** — **Paul's testimony before Agrippa** is not a defense of himself, but a declaration of the gospel with the evident purpose of winning Agrippa and the others present to Christ. This is a dramatic scene, and this chapter is one of the greatest literary pieces either secular or inspired.

**vv. 1-3** — Paul's introduction flatters Agrippa and engages his attention.

**vv. 4-7** — Paul reviews his life as a Jew under Law.

**v. 8** — Paul appeals to Agrippa personally.

**vv. 9-11** — Paul reviews his life as a Pharisee who persecuted the church.

**vv. 12-23** — Paul reviews his experience on the Damascus road, his encounter with Christ, and his response to the call of Christ. Paul declares the gospel clearly to the royal audience (v. 23).

**v. 24** — The reaction of Festus — Paul is insane.

**v. 25** — Note Paul's gentle answer to Festus. (Who was mad — Paul or Festus?)

**vv. 26, 27** — Paul attempts to win Agrippa to Christ.

**v. 28** — Agrippa is almost persuaded. This is the closest to conversion that any member of the house of Herod came.

**v. 29** — Paul gives an invitation to the assembled crowd there to turn to Christ.

**vv. 30-32** — Paul was cleared of all charges and could have been freed if he had not appealed to Caesar. He had not made a single convert as far as we know, but he had been faithful — which is all Christ requires.

**Chapter 27 — Paul’s prosperous journey to Rome** (Romans 1:10).

**vv. 1-6** — Paul is sent by ship with other prisoners to Myra of Lycia. There they board a ship going to Italy.

**vv. 7-9** — The journey is very slow.

**vv. 10-13** — Paul warns of coming danger, but the centurion in charge of the prisoners listens to the master of the ship.

**vv. 14-44** — The ship encounters a severe storm that leads to the wrecking of the ship but no loss of life. The crew, passengers, and prisoners all escape to the Island of Melita (Malta).

**Chapter 28 — From Melita to Rome.** Paul arrives in Rome and ministers first to Jews and then to Gentiles. The narrative is not concluded but breaks off with Paul preaching in Rome. The Acts of the Holy Spirit have not been finished even in our day. The Book of Acts will end with the Rapture.

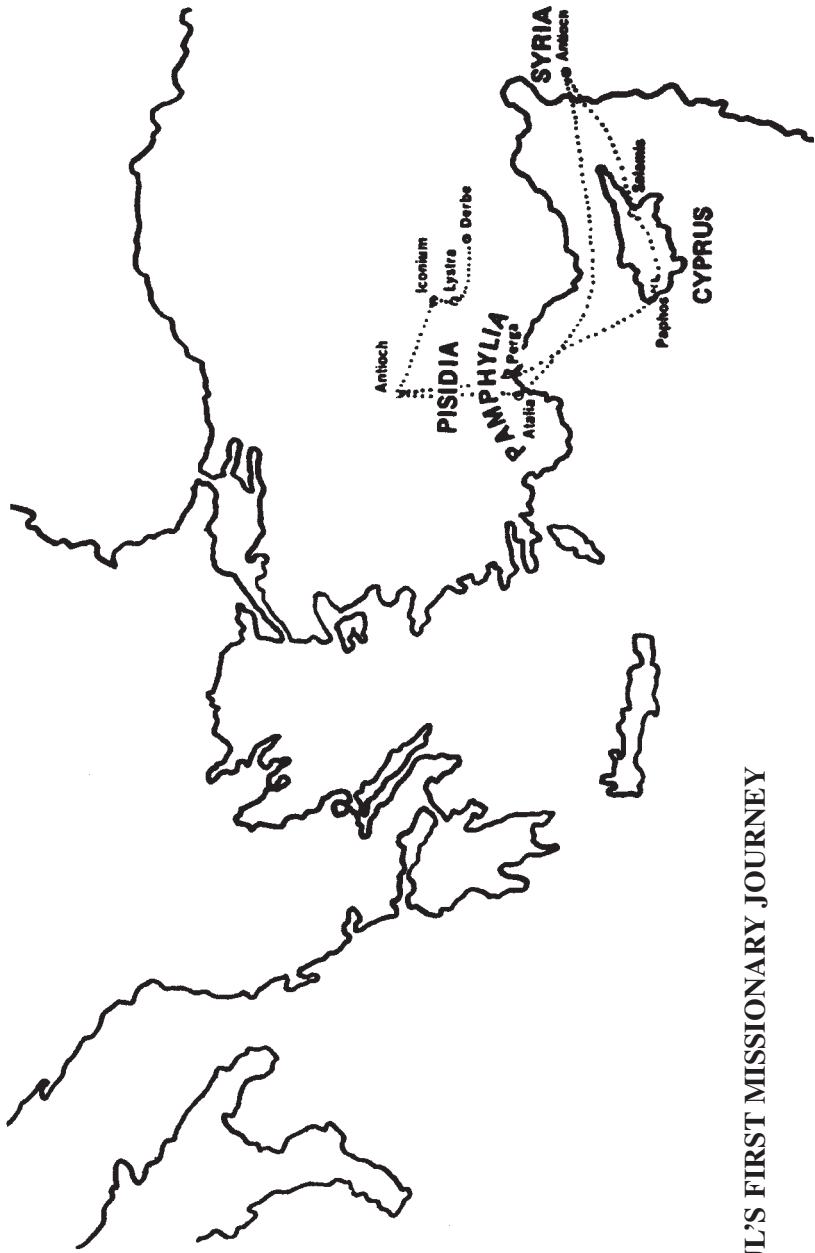
**vv. 1-6** — Paul is bitten by a viper on the Island of Malta. Obviously he could not see the poisonous snake, as he did not deliberately pick it up.

**vv. 7-10** — Paul has a ministry on the island in healing the father of a prominent man by the name of Publius.

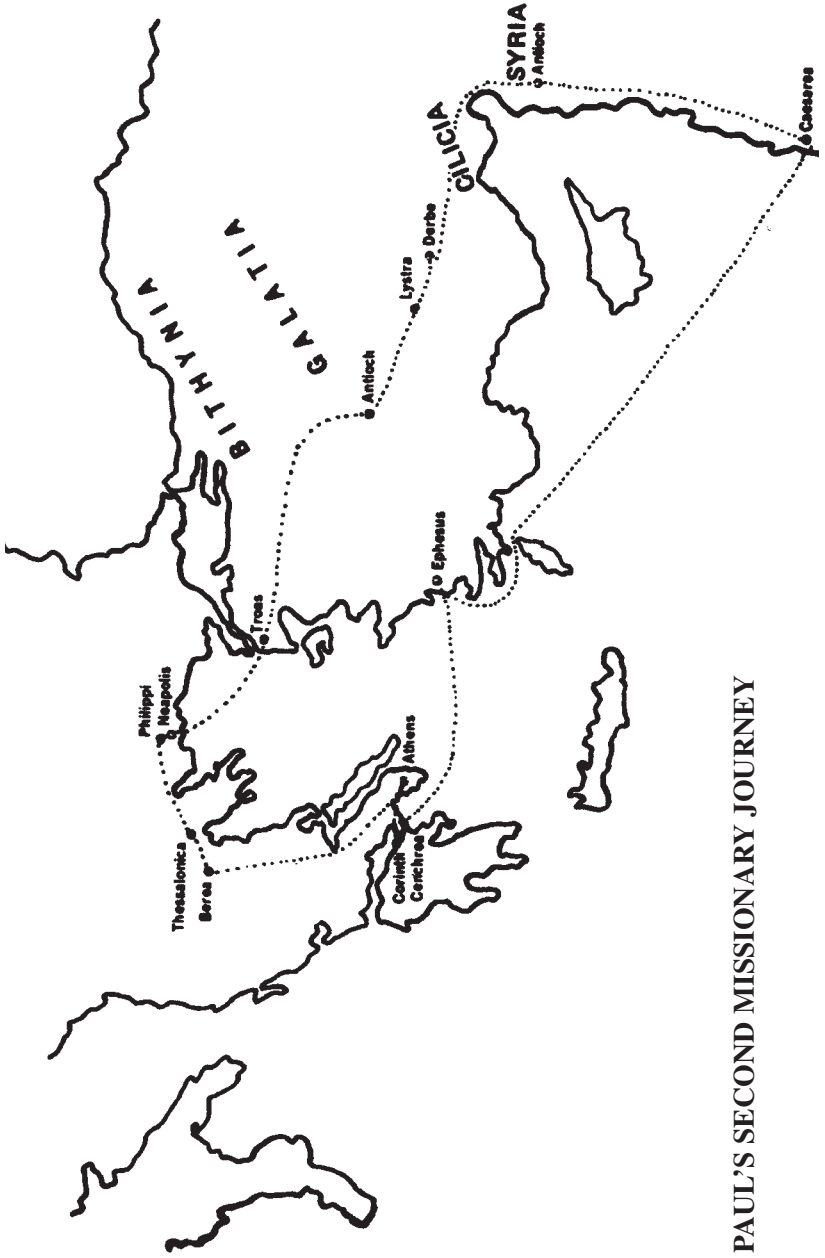
**vv. 11-16** — Paul goes to Rome.

**vv. 17-24** — Paul is visited by many Jews and preaches to them. Some believe.

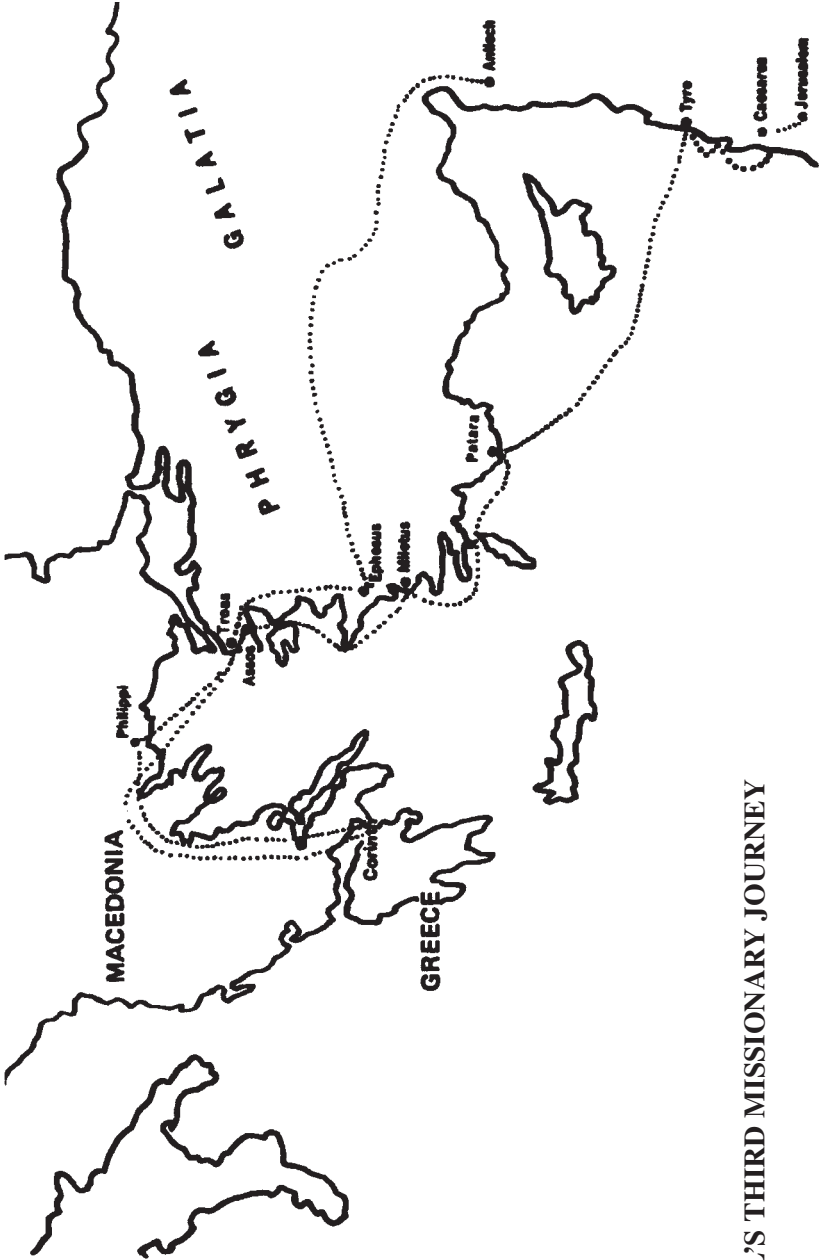
**vv. 25-31** — Paul turns from the Jews when controversy arises and preaches to the Gentiles the kingdom of God. The record is not concluded, for the Holy Spirit continues to work today. There are still Acts of the Holy Spirit. They will be concluded at the coming of Christ for His church.



PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY



PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY



PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Alexander, J. A. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Carlisle, Pennsylvania: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1875.
- Conybeare, W. J. and Howson, J. S. *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1855.  
(A classic work.)
- Eims, Leroy. *Disciples in Action*. Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1981
- Frank, Harry Thomas, editor. *Hammond's Atlas of the Bible Lands*. Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, 1977.  
(Inexpensive atlas with splendid maps.)
- Gaebelein, Arno C. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1912.  
(A fine interpretation.)
- Heading, John. *Acts: A Study in New Testament Christianity*. Kansas City, Kansas: Walterick Publishers, n.d.
- Hiebert, D. Edmond. *Personalities Around Paul*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1973.  
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- Ironside, H. A. *Lectures on the Book of Acts*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1943.  
(Especially good for young Christians.)
- Jensen, Irving L. *Acts: An Inductive Study*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1968.
- Kelly, William. *An Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*. Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, 1890.
- Kent, Homer A., Jr. *Jerusalem to Rome: Studies in the Book of Acts*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1974.  
(A splendid work for individual or group study.)
- Morgan, G. Campbell. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1924.
- Rackham, R. B. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1901.  
(A detailed study.)
- Robertson, A. T. *Epochs in the Life of Paul*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1909.
- Ryrie, Charles D. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1961.  
(A fine, inexpensive survey.)
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(Splendid outlines.)

- Thomas, W. H. Griffith. *Outline Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956.
- Vaughan, Curtis. *Acts*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974.
- Vos, Howard F. *Beginnings in Bible Archaeology*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1973.



## SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER (for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter —
  
2. Most important verse —
  
3. Most prominent word —
  
4. Teaching about Christ —
  
5. Command to obey —
  
6. Promise to claim —
  
7. New truth learned —

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**Notes & Outlines**

# **ROMANS**

J. Vernon McGee

## ROMANS

**WRITER:** Paul

Just a word concerning the apostle Paul. Paul made this statement:

*Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:15, 16)*

Paul made it very clear that he was the apostle to the Gentiles. He also made it clear that Simon Peter was the apostle to the nation Israel. For instance, in Galatians 2:8, 9 he said:

*(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles) — and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision.*

Therefore, you see that Paul was peculiarly the apostle to the Gentiles. When you read the last chapter of Romans and see all those people that Paul knew, you will find that most of them were Gentiles. The church in Rome was largely a gentile church.

He was fully qualified for this office by background, training, and experience. Dr. Griffith Thomas has succinctly stated:

His antecedents formed quite a striking combination. His Jewish birth, his Hebrew language, his Roman citizenship, His Jewish training, and his Greek culture, all helped to make him the man he was.

Paul possessed a giant intellect, having been trained in the Jewish faith, Greek culture, and Roman ways. He is the Moses of the New Testament.

**DATE:** A.D. 57-58

**PLACE:** Corinth

This epistle was written during Paul's 3rd missionary journey, at Corinth where he spent 3 months (January to March, A.D. 57). He had just come from Ephesus where he had spent 3 strenuous years.

Dr. Griffith Thomas makes an interesting observation: "Certain names point clearly to Corinth as the place whence this Epistle was written." The picture of the gross immorality of the Gentiles in Rome is a picture drawn from the Corinth of Paul's day.

**OCCASION:** This letter was brought forth by natural reason. Paul wished to visit Rome on his way to Spain. The letter was taken by Phoebe, deaconess of Cenchrea (Romans 16:1).

**FOUNDER OF THE CHURCH AT ROME:** Paul had not visited Rome when he wrote this epistle. In this respect it is different from all others, with the possible exception of the Epistle to the Colossians. No apostle had preceded Paul to Rome; obviously, Simon Peter had not. The Roman church was largely a gentile church, and Peter was not the apostle to the Gentiles (Galatians 2:7). Paul's method was not to follow another apostle, and it is not likely he would have gone to Rome had another apostle preceded him.

*Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation.* (Romans 15:20)

In a very definite sense, Paul was the founder of the church at Rome. This great metropolis drew men to its streets and market-places from all over the empire as if it were a magnet. Many whom Paul had led to Christ in other places made their way to Rome and witnessed there. The church in Rome was the assembly of these folk. This is not mere speculation, as Priscilla and Aquila are examples.

*Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus.*  
(Romans 16:3)

Paul had first met them in Corinth and led them to Christ (Acts 18:1-3). Later they returned to Rome.

Paul mentions 35 individuals by name in chapter 16. Of these,

27 were living in Rome at this time. These he must have met elsewhere in the Roman Empire. Paul established the church in Rome by “long distance” and used the “remote control” of an apostle to write and guide its course.

As Christians congregated in this great metropolis, a visible church came into existence. Probably no man established a church in Rome. Converts of Paul and the other apostles from the fringe of the empire went to Rome, and a local church was organized by them.

Certainly, Peter did not establish the church or have anything to do with it, as his sermon on Pentecost and following sermons were directed to Israelites only. Not until the conversion of Cornelius was Peter convinced that Gentiles were included in the body of believers.

Paul knew Rome although he had not been inside her city limits at the time of the writing of Romans. Rome was like a great ship passing in the night, casting up waves that broke on distant shores; her influence was like a radio broadcast, penetrating every corner and crevice of the empire. Paul had visited Roman colonies such as Philippi and Thessalonica and had seen in those places Roman customs, laws, language, styles, and culture on exhibit. He had walked on Roman roads, had met Roman soldiers on the highways and in the marketplaces, and had slept in Roman jails. Paul had gone before Roman magistrates and had enjoyed the benefits of Roman citizenship. You see, Paul knew all about Rome although he was yet to visit there. From the vantage point of the world’s capital he was to preach the global gospel to a lost world — that God loved so much that He gave His son to die, that whosoever believed on Him might not perish, but have eternal life (see John 3:16).

**SUBJECT:** The righteousness of God

Deissmann, in his study of the Greek papyri found at Oxyrhynchus, makes a distinction between literary and non-literary documents. He places the epistles of Paul in the latter, including the Epistle to the Romans, thereby making them letters rather than epistles. There is a personal note running through all the epistles of Paul, including Romans. Nevertheless, Romans contains the great gospel manifesto for the world. To Paul, the gospel was the great ecu-

menical movement and Rome was the center of that world for which Christ died. Sir William Ramsay said:

St. Paul had early grasped the importance of the Roman Empire as a vehicle for the dissemination of the Gospel.

Let me state in subdued language that Romans is an eloquent and passionate declaration of the gospel of Jesus Christ by a man who made an arduous but productive journey to die for Christ, the One who died for him. Romans is more than cold logic; it is the gospel stated in warm love.

**KEY VERSES:**

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For in it is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*  
(Romans 1:16, 17)

These verses set before us the subject of the epistle. Although each word in the epistle is important, these are significant in their marvelous unfolding of the entire epistle. These words are keys on a mighty organ which, if played, give forth the music of the whole masterpiece. These are the high notes:

- |               |                     |               |
|---------------|---------------------|---------------|
| (1) gospel    | (6) everyone        | (11) revealed |
| (2) Christ    | (7) believeth       | (12) faith    |
| (3) power     | (8) Jew             | (13) just     |
| (4) God       | (9) Greek (Gentile) | (14) live     |
| (5) salvation | (10) righteousness  |               |

These words form the subject matter of the epistle. Perhaps some might want to add:

- |                 |                    |                 |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| (1) Holy Spirit | (5) identification | (9) service     |
| (2) sin         | (6) sanctification | (10) separation |
| (3) imputation  | (7) security       |                 |
| (4) law         | (8) predestination |                 |

However, all of these are included in the first list found in the key verses of the book. The righteousness from God is the major theme.

Dr. Griffith Thomas has given us a fitting word:

We must never forget that the term “righteousness” is much wider than justification, though this is, of course, included. Righteousness really covers all that is necessary to reinstate a sinner as right with God, and therefore includes his position, his character, his privileges, and his prospects. It embraces the past, present, and future, and it means “the state of being right.”

On this thesis he gives the following outline of the epistle:

- (a) Righteousness needed by sinful men (1:17 — 3:20)
- (b) Righteousness provided by God (3:21-26)
- (c) Righteousness received through faith (3:27 — 4:25)
- (d) Righteousness experienced in the soul (5:1 — 8:17)
- (e) Righteousness guaranteed as permanent blessing (8:18-39)
- (f) Righteousness rejected by the Jewish nation (9 — 11)
- (g) Righteousness manifested in practical life (12 — 16)

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

Cunninghame:

Under law God required righteousness *from* man; under grace He gives righteousness *to* man. The righteousness of God is that righteousness which God’s righteousness requires Him to require.

Hodge:

That righteousness of which God is the Author; which is of avail before God; which meets and secures His approval.

Brooks:

That righteousness which the Father requires, the Son became, the Holy Spirit convinces of, and faith secures.

Moorehead:

The sum total of all that God commands, demands, approves, and Himself provides.

The righteousness of God is secured by FAITH not WORKS.



## **ESTIMATION:**

The reading of Romans is one of the most rewarding experiences in the life of a Christian. This is not to say that it should be read as a magazine article that is put aside and dismissed from the mind. The continual reading of this epistle brings a stream of benefits to the believer. The investment of a great amount of time pays handsome dividends on the spiritual market. Griffith Thomas wrote:

The Epistle should be studied with all possible intellectual attention and concentration. It is important that the whole Epistle should be read right through in the Revised Version at one sitting, and that this should be done, if possible, day by day for a month...the advantage will soon be immense. It should be studied with earnest prayer and personal trust. Intellectual attention alone is insufficient. The Epistle should be regarded as a personal letter to ourselves.

This is the epistle that changed Martin Luther and brought to pass the Protestant Reformation. It is not strange that Luther expressed his mind in such strong language:

It is the true masterpiece of the New Testament, and the very purest Gospel, which is well worthy and deserving that a Christian man should not only learn it by heart, word for word, but also that he should daily deal with it as the daily bread of men's souls. For it can never be too much or too well read or studied; and the more it is handled the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes.

Romans requires all the mental make-up we have, and then it must be bathed in prayer and supplication before the Holy Spirit can teach us.

This epistle is the greatest document on our salvation! William Newell says that Romans *is* the gospel. Every Christian should make an effort to know Romans, for this book will ground the believer in the faith.

**READ ROMANS REGULARLY — REALLY READ ROMANS**

These 3 features will become dominant in the life of one who constantly reads Romans:

UNDERSTANDING of the basic facts of salvation;

UNUSUAL CONVICTION about matters pertaining to the faith;

USEFULNESS in practical Christian service.

**OUTLINE** (in brief):

- |     |                      |             |
|-----|----------------------|-------------|
| 1.  | Salutation           | 1:1-17      |
| 2.  | Sin                  | 1:18 — 3:20 |
| 3.  | Salvation            | 3:21 — 5:11 |
| 4.  | Sanctification       | 5:12 — 6:23 |
| 5.  | Struggle             | 7           |
| 6.  | Spirit-filled living | 8:1-27      |
| 7.  | Security             | 8:28-39     |
| 8.  | Segregation          | 9 — 11      |
| 9.  | Sacrifice & service  | 12, 13      |
| 10. | Separation           | 14, 15      |
| 11. | Salutation           | 16          |

**OUTLINE:**

**I. Doctrinal, “Faith,”** Chapters 1 — 8

**A. Justification of the sinner,** Chapters 1:1 — 5:11

**1. Introduction,** 1:1-17

- a. Paul’s personal greeting, 1:1-7
- b. Paul’s personal purpose, 1:8-13
- c. Paul’s three “I am’s,” 1:14-17

*Key verses 16, 17 — the revelation of the righteousness of God.*

**2. Revelation of the sin of man,** 1:18 — 3:20

*This is “Sinnerama.” Universal fact: Man is a sinner. Ecumenical movement is away from God. Axiom: World is guilty before God — all need righteousness.*

- a. Revelation of the wrath of God against sin of man, 1:18-32
  - 1) Natural revelation of God (original version), vv. 18-20

- 2) Subnatural response of man (reversion), vv. 21-23
  - 3) Unnatural retrogression of man (perversion), vv. 4-27
  - 4) Supernatural requital of God (inversion), vv. 28-32
- b. Revelation of the sin of good people, 2:1-16  
*Respectable people need righteousness.*
  - c. Revelation of the sin of Israel under the Law, 2:17 — 3:8
  - d. Revelation of the universality of sin, 3:9-20
    - 1) Judge's verdict of guilty against mankind, vv. 9-12  
*Man cannot remove guilt.*
    - 2) Great Physician's diagnosis of mankind, vv. 13-18  
*Man cannot change his nature. Man has an incurable disease.*
    - 3) Purpose of the Law, vv. 19, 20  
*Law reveals sin, not salvation. Last word is "sin" (v. 20).*

### **3. Revelation of the righteousness of God, 3:21 — 5:11**

Righteousness provided.

*Righteousness of God defined — not the character of God nor self-righteousness of man.*

- a. Justification by faith explained, 3:21-31

*DEFINITION: Justification is the act of God that declares a sinner righteous by faith on the merit of Christ's sacrifice. It is the addition of the righteousness of Christ as well as the subtraction of sins.*

*Propitiation — "mercy seat" (Hebrews 9:5)*

*Redemption — to pay a price for deliverance*

*Propitiation is toward God.*

*Redemption is toward sin.*

- b. Justification by faith *illustrated*, 4:1-25  
(Demonstration — Abraham and David)

c. Justification by faith — *results derived*, 5:1-11

Eight benefits:

- 1) Peace, v. 1
- 2) Access, v. 2
- 3) Hope, v. 2
- 4) Patience — fruit of tribulations, v. 3
- 5) Love, v. 5
- 6) Holy Spirit, v. 5
- 7) Deliverance from the Great Tribulation, v. 9
- 8) Joy, v. 11

*Reconciliation is toward man. Definition: Change from enmity to friendship. Justification by faith is an act of God which is permanent.*

**B. Sanctification of the saint, Chapters 5:12 — 8:39**

**1. Potential sanctification, 5:12-21**

Federal headship of Adam and Christ

a. Headship of Adam, vv. 12-14

Death — sin

b. Headship of Christ, vv. 15-17

Life — righteousness

c. Offense of Adam vs. righteousness of Christ, vv. 18-21

Disobedience vs. Obedience

Judgment vs. Free Gift

Sin vs. Grace

Condemnation vs. Justification

**2. Positional sanctification, 6:1-10**

*Union with Christ in His death and resurrection is the basis of deliverance from sin.*

**3. Practical sanctification, 6:11-23**

*Obedience to God leads to the experience of deliverance from sin.*

**4. Powerless sanctification, 7:1-25**

a. Shackles of a saved soul, vv. 1-14

*Spiritual emancipation*

b. Struggle of a saved soul, vv. 15-25

*Civil war (No good in old nature, no power in new nature)*

**5. God's new provision for sanctification, 8:1-39**

*(Powerful sanctification)*

- a. New law: Holy Spirit vs. Law, vv. 1-4
- b. New struggle: Holy Spirit vs. flesh, vv. 5-13
- c. New man, son of God: Holy Spirit and spirit of man, vv. 14-17
- d. New creation: old vs. new, bondage vs. liberty, vv. 18-22
- e. New body: groaning vs. redeemed body, vv. 23-27  
*Holy Spirit helps us in our present bodies.*
- f. New purpose of God, vv. 28-34  
*God's purpose guarantees the salvation of sinners.*
- g. New security of the believer, vv. 35-39  
*God's love guarantees the security of the believer.*

**II. Dispensational, "Hope," Chapters 9 — 11**

**A. God's past dealings with Israel, Chapter 9**

1. Israel defined, vv. 1-5
2. Israel identified, vv. 6-13
3. Choice of Israel in the sovereign purpose of God, vv. 14-24
4. Choice of Gentiles in the scriptural prophecies of God, vv. 25-33

**B. God's present purpose with Israel, Chapter 10**

1. Present state of Israel — lost, vv. 1-4  
*Reason: Christ is the end of the law for righteousness.*
2. Present standing of Israel — same as Gentiles, vv. 5-12  
*"For there is no difference."*
3. Present salvation for both Jew and Gentile — hear and believe the gospel, vv. 13-21

**C. God's future purpose with Israel, Chapter 11**

*Remnant regathered as a nation and redeemed.*

1. Remnant of Israel finding salvation, vv. 1-6
2. Remainder of Israel blinded, vv. 7-12
3. Reason for setting aside the nation Israel — salvation of the Gentiles, vv. 13-21

4. Restoration of nation Israel — greater blessing, vv. 22-32
5. Reason for restoring the nation Israel, vv. 33-36  
*Locked in the riches of the wisdom of God.*

### III. Duty, “Love,” Chapters 12 — 16

#### A. Service of “the sons of God,” Chapters 12, 13

1. Relationship to God (“present — yield”), 12:1-2
2. Relationship to gifts of the Spirit, 12:3-8
3. Relationship to other believers, 12:9-16
4. Relationship to unbelievers, 12:17-21
5. Relationship to government, 13:1-7
6. Relationship to neighbors, 13:8-14

#### B. Separation of “the sons of God,” Chapters 14 — 16

1. Relationship to weak believers, 14:1 — 15:3  
Three principles of conduct for Christians
  - a. Conviction, 14:5
  - b. Conscience, 14:22
  - c. Consideration, 15:1-3
2. Relationship of Jews and Gentiles as believers, 15:4-13  
(Racial relationships)
3. Relationship of Paul to Romans and Gentiles generally, 15:14-33  
(The gospel and Gentiles, v. 16)
4. Relationship of Christians to one another demonstrated, 16:1-27  
*Thirty-five individuals mentioned by name — mutual love and tender affection.*

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Barnhouse, Donald Grey. *Romans*. 4 volumes. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952-1960.  
(Expositions of Bible doctrines, taking the Epistle to the Romans as a point of departure.)
- DeHaan, Richard W. *The World on Trial: Studies in Romans*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970.
- Epp, Theodore H. *How God Makes Bad Men Good: Studies in Romans*. Lincoln, Nebraska: Back to the Bible Broadcast, 1978.
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- Hodge, Charles. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1886.
- Hoyt, Herman A. *The First Christian Theology: Studies in Romans*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1977.  
(Good for group study.)
- Ironside, H. A. *Lectures on Romans*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.  
(Especially fine for young Christians.)
- Jensen, Irving R. *Romans: Self-Study Guide*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, n.d.
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- Kelly, William. *Notes on Romans*. Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, 1873.
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- McGee, J. Vernon. *Reasoning Through Romans*. Pasadena, California: Thru the Bible Books, 1959.
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(See note below.)
- Moule, Handley C. G. *Studies in Romans*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1892.  
(Originally appeared in the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges. These two books by Moule complement each other and are both excellent.)
- Murray, John. *Romans*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965.  
(For advanced students.)
- Newell, William R. *Romans Verse by Verse*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1938.  
(An excellent study.)
- Philips, John. *Exploring Romans*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1969.
- Stifler, James. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1897.
- Thomas, W. H. Griffith. *The Book of Romans*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1946.  
(Fine interpretation.)
- Vine, W. E. *Romans*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1950.
- Wiersbe, Warren W. *Be Right. (Romans)*. Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1977.
- Wuest, Kenneth S. *Romans in the Greek New Testament for English Readers*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1955.



**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter —
  
2. Most important verse —
  
3. Most prominent word —
  
4. Teaching about Christ —
  
5. Command to obey —
  
6. Promise to claim —
  
7. New truth learned —

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Thru the Bible Radio Network  
Pasadena, CA 91109



**Notes & Outlines**

# **1 CORINTHIANS**

J. Vernon McGee

# 1 CORINTHIANS

**WRITER:** Paul

**DATE:** A.D. 55-57 (more likely 57)

**PLACE:** Ephesus

**SUBJECT:** The Lordship of Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:2, 3, 7-10)

## **BACKGROUND:**

Carnal Corinth was the sin center of the Roman Empire in Paul's day. It was labeled "Vanity Fair." Its location was about 40 miles west of Athens on a narrow isthmus between Peloponnesus and the mainland. It was the great commercial center of the Roman Empire with 3 harbors, of which two were important — Lechaeum, about 1 1/2 miles to the west, and Cenchreae, about 8 1/2 miles to the east.

196 B.C. Rome declared it a free city.

146 B.C. It rebelled and was totally destroyed by Mummius, the consul.

46 B.C. Julius Caesar rebuilt the city in great elegance, restoring it to its former prominence.

However, even its ruins were lost to history for many years, and a fishing village was built over them. In 1928, an earthquake uncovered them, and now much of the city has been excavated.

The temple of Aphrodite, built on the Acrocorinthus, was attended by 1,000 priestesses of vice, actually nothing more than prostitutes.

The city was given over to licentiousness and pleasure. The Isthmian games were conducted here.

Against this corrupt background, Paul preached the gospel in Corinth, founded the church, and wrote two epistles to the church at Corinth: 1 and 2 Corinthians.

Read Acts 18:1-18 for the account of Paul's visit to Corinth.

## **OUTLINE:**

- I. Salutation and thanksgiving, Chapter 1:1-9**
- II. Concerning conditions in the Corinthian church, Chapters 1:10 — 16:9**
  - A. Concerning DIVISIONS and party spirit, Chapters 1:10 — 4:21**
    - 1. Centrality of Christ crucified**  
**Corrects divisions, 1:10-31**
    - 2. Clarity of Holy Spirit**  
**Corrects human wisdom, 2**
    - 3. Correct conception of God**  
**Clarifies Christian service, 3**
    - 4. Conditions of Christ's servants**  
**Constrain Christian conduct, 4**
  - B. Concerning SCANDALS in the Corinthian church, Chapters 5, 6**
    - 1. Impurity, 5**
    - 2. Lawsuits among members, 6**
  - C. Concerning MARRIAGE, Chapter 7**
  - D. Concerning CHRISTIAN LIBERTY, Chapters 8:1 — 11:1**
    - 1. Liberty of the minister, 9**
    - 2. Liberty is not license, 10:1 — 11:1**
  - E. Concerning WOMAN'S DRESS, Chapter 11:2-16**
  - F. Concerning the LORD'S TABLE, Chapter 11:17-34**
  - G. Concerning SPIRITUAL GIFTS, Chapters 12 — 14**
    - 1. Endowment of gifts, 12**
      - a. Gifts are given to maintain unity in diversity, vv. 1-11

b. Members of human body compared to gifts of Holy Spirit, vv. 12-31

**2. Energy** of gifts — Love, 13

**3. Exercise** of gifts, 14

a. Gift of prophecy is superior to gift of tongues, vv. 1-22

b. Order in local church for exercise of any gift, vv. 23-40

#### **H. Concerning the GOSPEL, Chapter 15**

**1. Prominence** of resurrection in the gospel, vv. 1-4

**2. Proofs** of resurrection, vv. 5-19

**3. Parade** of resurrection, vv. 20-28

a. Christ, the firstfruits

b. Those who are Christ's (the church)

c. Old Testament saints, Tribulation saints

d. Kingdom set up, Christ reigning

e. Death destroyed

f. Christ returns to His place in the Trinity

**4. Program** and pattern of resurrection, vv. 29-50

**5. Power** of resurrection, vv. 51-58

#### **I. Concerning COLLECTIONS, Chapter 16:1-9**

### **III. Closing exhortations and benediction, Chapter 16:10-24**

#### **COMMENT:**

First Corinthians is obviously Paul's answer to a previous letter that he had written to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 5:9). They sent a delegation with a letter (1 Corinthians 7:1; 16:17) and 1 Corinthians is Paul's reply concerning the conditions in the Corinthian church. It is a letter of correction of errors and confirmation of truth.

#### **I. Salutation and thanksgiving, Chapter 1:1-9**

In these first 9 verses of the introduction, the Lord Jesus Christ is mentioned 6 times. This is a Christ-centered epistle of which v. 9 is the very heart:

“God is faithful” — although men, including believers, are not.

“Ye were called” is the “high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14).

“Fellowship” (*koinonian*) is one of the most important and versatile words of Christian faith. It means anything that believers share together concerning the things of Christ.

*Koinonia* is { fellowship — Acts 2:42-44  
contribution — Romans 15:26  
communion (Lord’s Supper) — 1 Corinthians 10:16  
partnership — 1 Corinthians 1:9

“His Son” — He is God the Son; here it is His relationship to the Father.

“Jesus” — His human name.

“Christ” — His title (Messiah, Anointed).

“Our Lord” — He is our Lord; this is our relationship to Him.

“Fellowship” — “Fellowship” (*koinonia*) can also mean “partnership,” which is how I believe it is used here. There is partnership in business, in love, and in marriage. This is a combination of:

- 1) Mutual concern — Christ is interested in us; we are interested in Him.
- 2) Mutual commitment — His resources are ours. We are committed to Him; He to us.
- 3) Mutual compassion — He accommodates Himself to our weakness. His power is ours. (This is reflected in Isaiah 63:9, a verse that I believe has been mistranslated. It should be: “In all their affliction He was *not* afflicted.”)

When I am weak and weary, He waits.

When I stumble and fall, He picks me up.

In view of this, all the rest of 1 Corinthians is a parenthesis until we come to 15:58:

***Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmov-***

*able, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*

## **II. Concerning conditions in the Corinthian church, Chapters 1:10 — 16:9**

### **A. Concerning DIVISIONS and party spirit, Chapters 1:10 — 4:21**

#### **1. Centrality of Christ crucified corrects divisions, 1:10-31**

Divisions were being caused by believers following different leaders of the church. They formed cliques around certain men:

Paul — Proud pupils

Cephas — Chummy cult

Apollos — Adoring admirers

They were exalting the wisdom of the world, which is contrary to the wisdom of God. The gospel of the cross is the wisdom of God. (See author's booklet, "The Cross Divides Men.")

"Them who are called" (v. 24) are those Jews who do not find the cross a stumbling block and those Gentiles who do not find it foolishness but see in it the power and wisdom of God. They are "the called" for they hear and respond to the gospel.

Christ is the wisdom of the believer as well as his righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (v. 30).

- 1) Positional sanctification (in Christ), vv. 2, 30  
(the Corinthians were sanctified)
- 2) Practical sanctification (by the Holy Spirit), 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Romans 15:16
- 3) Permanent (eternal) sanctification, 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 10:10, 14

#### **2. Clarity of Holy Spirit corrects human wisdom, 2**

**vv. 1-5** — Paul's approach to sophisticated and sinful Corinth is not by the wisdom of the world, but is the unvarnished declaration of Jesus Christ (His person) and Him crucified (His work). See 1 Cor-



inthians 15:1-4. Paul personally is weak and afraid (v. 3). The faith of the Corinthian Christians stands in the power of God (v. 5).

**vv. 6-8** — Paul’s message is the wisdom of God, not the wisdom of the world.

**v. 9** — Wisdom of the world comes through the eye gate, the ear gate, and through human reasoning (see Isaiah 64:4).

**v. 10** — The wisdom of God comes through the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

**v. 11** — No man can understand the things of God until the Holy Spirit teaches him.

**v. 12** — The believer has the Holy Spirit of God to teach him.

**vv. 13, 14** — The unbeliever is unprepared to receive the things of God, for he does not have the Holy Spirit to teach him. Therefore, his conclusion is that the wisdom of God is foolishness.

**v. 15** — The spiritual man is in contrast to the natural man. He understands divine truth but is misunderstood by the natural man.

### **3. Correct conception of God clarifies Christian service, 3**

**vv. 1-10** — Carnality of the Corinthian Christians is evident by the divisions among them. Proof of their carnality is “envying, strife and divisions.”

Paul designates the human family thus:

- 1) Natural man
  - a) Jew
  - b) Gentile
- 2) Believer (“called one”; Christian)
  - a) Carnal
  - b) Spiritual

Paul and Apollos were not divided.

**vv. 11-23** — Conditions on which rewards are given.

**v. 11** — Salvation is the foundation that is already put down. Therefore, no man can work for salvation.

**v. 12** — The believer can work for a reward. There are 6 materials with which he can build on the foundation.

**v. 13** — Fire tests every man's work. Gold, silver, and precious stones are purified by fire. Wood, hay, and stubble are consumed by fire.

**v. 14** — When works survive the fire, rewards are given.

**v. 15** — When works are consumed by fire, the believer is saved, but he receives no reward.

**vv. 16-20** — The believer's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

**vv. 21-23** — All things and all believers are the possession of every other believer. We rob ourselves when we limit ourselves to one individual or a narrow circle.

#### **4. Conditions of Christ's servants constrain Christian conduct, 4**

**vv. 1-5** — Faithfulness is the supreme virtue of a servant. All believers are judged in 3 courts:

- 1) Others (lower court) — my paraphrase of v. 3 is: "But, as a matter of fact, it matters very little to me what you, or any man, thinks of me."
- 2) One's conscience (higher court) — Paul did not even judge himself, but that did not justify him before God.
- 3) One and only Master (supreme court) — see 2 Corinthians 5:10 and Romans 14:12. Believers, as stewards, are judged for faithfulness. Christ will find something to praise in each believer.

**vv. 6-21** — Suffering of apostles is a spectacle to the world and angels, also an incentive to other believers.

Note (v. 17) the personal esteem Paul had for Timothy.

#### **B. Concerning SCANDALS in the Corinthian church, Chapters 5, 6**

## 1. Impurity, 5

**v. 1** — “Commonly” means “actually; factually” and not a matter of gossip. It was a sordid story of a man who took his father’s wife, his stepmother. The church in Corinth had ignored it and were “puffed up” (v. 2).

Paul commands them to do two things:

- 1) Deliver the guilty party unto Satan (v. 5). (Job and Peter were delivered over to Satan for different reasons. See also 1 Timothy 1:20.)
- 2) Refuse fellowship with the guilty (vv. 11, 13). For the result, see 2 Corinthians 2:4-11; 7:12.

## 2. Lawsuits among members, 6

**v. 1** — Differences between believers should be settled by other believers. The basis for this is 3-fold:

- 1) Saints will judge the world (v. 2);
- 2) Saints will judge angels (v. 3);
- 3) Unrighteousness is not in the kingdom (v. 9).

**vv. 19, 20** — The human body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

### C. Concerning MARRIAGE, Chapter 7

**v. 1** — They had written to Paul concerning this problem.

**vv. 2-6** — Paul is not commending the single above the married state. In the Roman world, a wife was a chattel, a workhorse. Generally, a man had several wives — one had charge of the kitchen, another of the living area, and perhaps another was in charge of the clothing. The man went to the temple of Aphrodite for sex. Paul says that a man must have one wife whom he loves. Paul lifts the slave state of womanhood to that of a partner with man in love.

**v. 7** — We assume Paul was unmarried.

**v. 8** — However, Paul was not a bachelor; he was a widower. We know that he had been a member of the Sanhedrin (Acts 26:10) and that all members were required to be married.

F. W. Farrar writes in his *Life and Work of St. Paul*:

“The other question which arises is, Was Saul married? Had he the support of some loving heart during the fiery struggles of his youth? Amid the to-and-fro contentions of spirit which resulted from an imperfect and unsatisfying creed, was there in the troubled sea of his life one little island home where he could find refuge from incessant thoughts?

“Little as we know of his domestic relations, little as he cared to mingle mere private interests with the great spiritual truths which occupy his soul, it seems to me that we must answer this question in the affirmative.”

“A Jew, who has no wife is not a man” (Genesis 5:2, *Yebhamoth*, f. 63,1).

**vv. 8, 9** — There is no reason why the unmarried and widowers should not marry. Paul was a widower who had not married again.

**vv. 10-40** — Paul discusses husband-wife relationships. If a husband has an unbelieving wife, or vice versa, and the unbeliever departs, the believer is not bound. Some interpret this as grounds for divorce. It at least is the grounds for a legal separation (v. 15). The ideal and practical is for them to continue living together as man and wife.

**vv. 20-24** — A person is to begin a new life with God the day he is born again. The mistakes and sins of the past are forgiven. If he is divorced, he is the same as an unmarried person. It is best to remain single if the person can be happy in that state.

#### **D. Concerning CHRISTIAN LIBERTY, Chapters 8:1 — 11:1**

The Bible condemns certain practices as wrong — Proverbs 6:16-19; Galatians 5:19-21. The Bible commends certain practices as right — prayer, teaching, doing good, etc. There is a thin grey line concerning doubtful and questionable practices about which the Bible has nothing to say either way.

**Chapter 8** — The eating of meat was a questionable practice.

**v. 1** — Knowledge — blows up  
Love — builds up

**v. 4** — Meat offered to idols was repugnant and wrong to a Jew. Meat offered to idols was later placed for sale in heathen temples. In fact, the best meat could be bought there. The Gentile was not offended in eating this meat; the Jew was. Should the Gentile believer serve meat offered to idols to his Jewish guest? The answer is no (v. 13), although there is nothing wrong with meat (vv. 4, 8). The reason: a Christian is motivated by love (vv. 9, 11, 12).

### **1. Liberty of the minister, 9**

**vv. 1-6** — Liberty in personal matters.

**vv. 7-18** — Liberty in public ministry. (Live by the gospel, v. 14.)

**vv. 19-22** — Liberty to become a servant of all. (Relationship to others for the gospel's sake, vv. 20-23.)

**vv. 23-27** — Liberty to strive for a reward. (Running and boxing to receive a crown.)

### **2. Liberty is not license, 10:1 — 11:1**

**vv. 1-15** — A warning: Israel delivered from bondage (vv. 1-5); Israel abused their liberty (vv. 6-10); Israel is an example for us (vv. 11-15); Israel was redeemed by power at the Red Sea and preserved in the wilderness by miracle, yet they sinned and were destroyed. "Baptized unto Moses" (v. 2) means *identified with* Moses.

**vv. 16-22** — A lesson: The Lord's table requires strict separation.

**vv. 23-33** — An example: A believer is to be guided in his conduct by the effect it has upon others (cp. 6:12). He is to be guided by 3 considerations:

- 1) His actions should glorify God (v. 31);
- 2) His actions should not offend others (v. 32);
- 3) His actions should follow Christ (11:1).

### **E. Concerning WOMAN'S DRESS, Chapter 11:2-16**

**v. 2** — Notice the new approach of Paul — he has had no praise for the Corinthians until this verse, but here it is: "I praise you."

**v. 3** — Principle stated: Authority for the sake of order. To eliminate confusion there are 3 headships:

- 1) Head of every man is Christ — normal. Until a man is mastered by Christ, he is not a man.
- 2) Head of woman is man. It is normal for woman to respond to man. A woman should not marry a man unless she can look up to him.
- 3) Head of Christ is God. Jesus said, “I and the Father are one” — yet in His work of redemption He took a lower place (see Philippians 2:5-8).

**vv. 4-6** — Application of the principle to Corinth. An unveiled woman in Corinth was a prostitute. Your town may be different from Corinth.

**vv. 7-16** — Interpretation of the principle concerning woman’s dress for public ministry. She should never use sex appeal in approaching God (v. 13). Note that it mentions not only woman’s wear, but men’s hair (vv. 7, 14).

#### **F. Concerning the LORD’S TABLE, Chapter 11:17-34**

The Lord’s Supper is the highest expression and holiest exercise of Christian worship. All four Gospels record in detail the institution of the Lord’s Supper.

**vv. 17-22** — The early church enjoyed a meal together before celebrating the Lord’s Supper. The meal was called an *agape*, a love feast. Disorders had arisen and now Paul commands that the *agape* be discontinued.

**vv. 23-26** — Paul, not present in the Upper Room, was given these instructions directly. Here is the simplicity, sublimity, and sanity of the Lord’s Supper.

**vv. 27-34** — A believer can judge himself in respect to his sins. Failure to do so brings judgment and chastening from the Lord.

#### **G. Concerning SPIRITUAL GIFTS, Chapters 12 — 14**

Problem in Corinth — divisions.

Solution — the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:3).

## **1. Endowment of gifts, 12**

### **a. Gifts are given to maintain unity in diversity,**

vv. 1-11

**v. 1** — “Spiritual gifts” is *pneumatikos*, spirituals. The word occurs 26 times in the New Testament; translated “gifts” 3 times (Romans 1:11; 1 Corinthians 14:1). He turns from carnalities in the first section to spiritualities. Gifts are one of the spiritualities.

**v. 3** — The lordship of Jesus is the central truth of the Christian life (sovereignty of Jesus Christ — Acts 2:36).

**vv. 4-6** — “Diversities” (*diairesis*) is difference in unity. “Gifts” is a capacity for service; function.

Holy Spirit bestows gifts;

Jesus Christ administers gifts (directs);

God the Father supplies power (energizes).

**v. 8** — “Wisdom” is insight into truth. “Knowledge” is investigation of truth.

**v. 9** — “Faith” is the “substance of things hoped for” (Hebrews 11:1). “Healing,” not by laying on of hands — none of this “if you have faith” business.

**v. 10** — “Working of miracles” is to do supernatural things. “Prophecy” is declaring the will of Christ. “Discerning of spirits” is distinguishing between false and true. “Tongues” is not unknown tongues (see chapter 14; also author’s booklet, “Talking in Tongues”).

### **b. Members of human body compared to gifts of Holy Spirit, vv. 12-31**

All function in one body.

**v. 12** — The church is the body of Christ.

**v. 13** — The baptism of the Holy Spirit places each believer into the body of Christ to function in a particular fashion.

**vv. 14-31** — There is one body but many members. Members of the body of Christ function in the body of Christ.

## 2. Energy of gifts — Love, 13

**vv. 1-3** — Preeminence of love — value. All gifts are a string of zeros. Love placed before them is a figure that gives value.

Eloquence	-0	} 1,000,000
Prophecy	-0	
Knowledge	-0	
Faith	-0	
Sacrifice	-0	
Martyrdom	-0	
Love	-1	

**vv. 4-7** — Prerogative of love — virtue. “Love” is an abstract noun. It must be translated into life and action. Love expresses itself in patience, kindness, absence of envy or boastfulness, etc.

**vv. 8-13** — Permanence of love — victory.

“Love never faileth” (v. 8), negative;

“Love abideth” (v. 13), positive.

“Prophecies” will be fulfilled; “tongues” will end; “knowledge” progresses (the science of 10 years ago is outmoded). “Faith, hope, and love” are the high words of the Christian vocabulary. Love is dominant. Love is superior to all gifts, and all gifts are valueless without love.

This chapter is a biography of Christ.

## 3. Exercise of gifts, 14

**a. Gift of prophecy is superior to gift of tongues,**  
vv. 1-22

**v. 1** — All gifts are to be exercised in love. The believer should desire spiritual gifts, but especially the gift of prophecy (v. 39; 12:31).

**v. 2** — Notice that “unknown” is italicized in many Bibles, which means it was not in the original text. There is no such thing as an *unknown* tongue. “Tongues” are existing languages, but unknown to



the speaker. The ability to speak in another tongue not previously learned was a phenomenon of the apostolic church.

“This whole passage is very obscure; but the obscurity arises from our ignorance of the facts described, which, though familiar to those to whom the apostle wrote, have ceased to occur.”

— Chrysostom

“Tongues seem to have ceased first of all gifts.”

— Robertson

Jesus never spoke in tongues; the apostles after Pentecost did not speak in tongues. There is no record of Paul speaking in tongues publicly, although he had the gift of tongues (v. 18). Paul, caught up to the third heaven, “heard unspeakable words.”

Only 3 gifts are mentioned in this chapter:

- 1) prophecy,
- 2) tongues, and
- 3) interpretation of tongues.

Compare 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.

Besides chapters 12 — 14, there are only 4 other references to tongues in the Scriptures: Mark 16:17; Acts 2; Acts 10; Acts 19.

**v. 5** — Paul is attempting to get the Corinthians off “the kick” of speaking in tongues (v. 9). Obviously, he is discouraging the use of tongues. (See author’s booklet, “Talking in Tongues.”)

**b. Order in local church for exercise of any gift,**  
vv. 23-40

Note vv. 26, 33, 40. Women are forbidden to speak in tongues in the local church (v. 34).

## **H. Concerning the GOSPEL, Chapter 15**

### **1. Prominence of resurrection in the gospel, vv. 1-4**

It is part of the *gospel* — in fact, there is no gospel without the resurrection (v. 4). The gospel is not the Sermon on the Mount or the Ten

Commandments.

Machen said, “Christianity does not rest on a set of ideas or creeds, but on facts.”

“Ye are saved” (v. 2) — the church is the evidence of the resurrection.

“According to the scriptures” (v. 4) — the resurrection fulfilled Scripture; it was the expectation of the Old Testament.

## 2. Proofs of resurrection, vv. 5-19

There are witnesses (vv. 5-11): Cephas, the twelve, over 500, James, all the apostles, Paul.

If Christ were not raised from the dead, certain things would be true which are not true.

## 3. Parade of resurrection, vv. 20-28

- a. Christ, the firstfruits
- b. Those who are Christ’s (the church)
- c. Old Testament saints, Tribulation saints
- d. Kingdom set up, Christ reigning
- e. Death destroyed
- f. Christ returns to His place in the Trinity (v. 28)

## 4. Program and pattern of resurrection, vv. 29-50

“Baptized” (v. 29) means *identified*. Paul took the place of a dead man in relationship to the world (see Galatians 6:14).

Resurrection refers only to the body (v. 44). In Greek, it is *anastasis nekron*, standing up of the body. The soul cannot stand up.

**“It is sown a natural (*psuchikon*) body (*soma*); it is raised a spiritual (*pneumatikon*) body (*soma*).”**

It is the body that is carried over in resurrection.

The first heresy in the church was the denial of bodily resurrection. In Paul’s day, there were three philosophies:

Stoicism — soul merged into Deity at death;  
destruction of personality.

Epicureanism — no existence beyond death;  
materialistic.

Platonism — immortality of the soul;  
denied bodily resurrection.

### **5. Power of resurrection, vv. 51-58**

**v. 51** — Not all believers will die.

**v. 52** — All believers will be changed in less than a moment of time at the Rapture of the church.

**vv. 53, 54** — Believers will receive a new body, not subject to corruption.

**v. 55** — Death and the grave will no longer triumph over man. Man is the victor, not the victim.

**v. 57** — Victory comes through Christ.

**v. 58** — See 1 Corinthians 1:9.

### **I. Concerning COLLECTIONS, Chapter 16:1-9**

**v. 2** — Collections are to be taken on the first day of the week — “Every first day.” How much? “As God hath prospered him.”

**vv. 6, 7** — Personal.

**vv. 8, 9** — A great door is open in Ephesus, but there are great adversaries — opportunities and opposition.

### **III. Closing exhortations and benediction, Chapter 16:10-24**

Sundry matters regarding personalities:

**vv. 10, 11** — Receive Timothy.

**v. 12** — Apollos will come later.

v. 13 — Watch and pray.

v. 14 — Christian action motivated by love.

vv. 21-24 — Benediction. “Anathema” is *accursed*. “Maranatha” is *our Lord cometh*.

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Boyer, James L. *For a World Like Ours: Studies in I Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1971.

DeHaan, M. R. *Studies in First Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1956.

Gromacki, Robert G. *Called to be Saints*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1977.

Ironside, H. A. *Addresses on First Corinthians*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1938.

Kelly, William. *Notes on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, 1878.

Luck, G. Coleman. *First Corinthians*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1958.

Morgan, G. Campbell. *The Corinthian Letters of Paul*. Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1946.

Morris, Leon. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1958.

Vine, W. E. *First Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1951.

## HOW TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

1. Begin with prayer.  
1 Corinthians 2:9-14; John 16:12-15; John 14:26;  
Psalm 119:18
2. Read the Bible.  
Nehemiah 8:1-3
3. Study the Bible.  
Nehemiah 8:8
4. Meditate upon the Bible.  
Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Psalm 1
5. Pass the Bible on to others.  
Hebrews 5:12; Romans 12:7

**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter—
  
2. Most important verse—
  
3. Most prominent word—
  
4. Teaching about Christ—
  
5. Command to obey—
  
6. Promise to claim—
  
7. New truth learned—

## NOTES



## NOTES



Thru the Bible Radio Network  
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**Notes & Outlines**

# **2 CORINTHIANS**

J. Vernon McGee

## 2 CORINTHIANS

### OUTLINE

- I. COMFORT of God**, Chapters 1—7  
(*Christian living*)
  - A. Introduction, Chapter 1:1, 2
  - B. God's comfort for life's plans, Chapter 1:3-24
  - C. God's comfort in restoring a sinning saint, Chapter 2
  - D. God's comfort in the glorious ministry of Christ, Chapter 3
  - E. God's comfort in the ministry of suffering for Christ, Chapter 4
  - F. God's comfort in the ministry of martyrdom for Christ, Chapter 5
  - G. God's comfort in all circumstances of the ministry of Christ, Chapter 6
  - H. God's comfort in the heart of Paul, Chapter 7
- II. COLLECTION for poor saints at Jerusalem**, Chapters 8, 9  
(*Christian giving*)
  - A. **Example** of Christian giving, Chapter 8:1-6
  - B. **Exhortation** to Christian giving, Chapter 8:7-15
  - C. **Explanation** of Christian giving, Chapters 8:16 — 9:5
  - D. **Encouragement** to Christian giving, Chapter 9:6-15
- III. CALLING of the apostle Paul**, Chapters 10 — 13  
(*Christian guarding*)
  - A. **Authentication** of Paul's apostleship, Chapter 10
  - B. **Vindication** of Paul's apostleship, Chapter 11
  - C. **Revelation** of Paul's apostleship, Chapter 12
  - D. **Execution** of Paul's apostleship, Chapter 13:1-10
  - E. **Conclusion** of Paul's apostleship, Chapter 13:11-14

### COMMENT:

Shortly after Paul had written 1 Corinthians from Ephesus, where he was in grave danger (2 Corinthians 1:8), he wrote 2 Corinthians from Philippi. Paul was in Ephesus approximately three years. He had sent Titus to Corinth because he could not personally go there at that time. Timothy was with Paul in Ephesus, and these two proceeded to Troas to wait for Titus to bring word from Corinth (2 Corinthians 2:12, 13). When Titus did not come, Paul and Timothy went on to Philippi where Titus brought good news from Corinth (2 Corinthians 7:5-11). Any breach between Paul and the Corinthian church was healed.

This epistle is difficult to outline, as it is less organized than any of Paul's other letters — but it contains more personal details. In each chapter there

is always a minor theme developed (which sometimes seems to take the place of the major theme) and generally expressed in some striking verse. This may explain the seeming difficulty in outlining and organizing this epistle. We will note this as we consider each chapter.

First Corinthians deals with conditions and *corrections* in the church. Second Corinthians deals with conditions of the *ministry* within the church.

## **I. COMFORT of God, Chapters 1—7**

(*Christian living*)

### **A. Introduction, Chapter 1:1, 2**

### **B. God's comfort for life's plans, Chapter 1:3-24**

**vv. 3-7** — “Comfort” and “consolation” are used nine times in five verses. Comfort does not imply the sentimental, but rather sustains and helps. It is the same word used for the Holy Spirit — the Comforter. He comes to the side of a child of God to dispel darkness and relieve loneliness.

**vv. 8-14** — Paul had experienced the comfort of God through some crisis in Ephesus — probably sickness unto death (v. 9). God comforted Paul so that he could comfort others. This is a great Christian principle.

**vv. 15-20** — Paul reveals his desire and plan to come to Corinth, and then his change of plan.

**vv. 21-24** — This is the second theme introduced. Paul equates the Holy Spirit with God (v. 21). The Holy Spirit anoints the believer to understand divine truth (1 Corinthians 2:9, 10; 1 John 2:27):

God the Father is true (v. 18).

God the Son is absolute and positive (v. 19).

God the Holy Spirit is dwelling within (v. 22).

(1) The Holy Spirit *confirms* (“establisheth”) the believer (v. 21);

(2) The Holy Spirit *anoints* the believer (v. 21);

(3) The Holy Spirit *seals* the believer (v. 22; Ephesians 4:30);

(4) The Holy Spirit is the earnest — the pledge that there is more to come (v. 22).

### **C. God's comfort in restoring a sinning saint, Chapter 2**

**v. 4** — Paul's motive and method in writing.

**vv. 5-13** — This is a reference to the sinning saint (1 Corinthians 5) for whom Paul had commanded immediate discipline. The believer had repented, and now Paul urges the church to restore him to fellowship.

Refusal to restore the believer would give Satan an advantage (v. 11). Are we ignorant of his devices?

**v. 12** — This is the only report Paul ever made of his ministry in Troas (Acts 20:6-12).

**vv. 14-17**— Again Paul introduces a second theme which is very important. How does God always cause us to triumph (v. 14) when so often we feel defeated? The believer is a “sweet savor” (v. 15) to both lost and saved. Our business is to declare the gospel. The responsibility then rests on the hearer. Our responsibility is to give the gospel, not get results. Our care is that we are faithful in declaring the gospel accurately.

#### **D. God’s comfort in the glorious ministry of Christ, Chapter 3**

**vv. 1-3** — Those who accept the gospel and are converted become, in turn, the gospel to the unsaved.

The gospel is written a chapter a day  
By deeds that you do and words that you say.  
Men read what you say, whether faithless or true.  
Say, what is the gospel according to you?

—*Author unknown*

**vv. 6-17** — The ministry of the gospel is more glorious than the ministry of Moses, for the glory of Christ does not pass away. Moses placed a veil over his face because the glory was passing away (v. 13). The veil now is over the hearts of those who follow the Law (vv. 14, 15). “It” (v. 16) means *heart* (see v. 15). Those who are led by the Spirit are not under the Law (v. 17).

**v. 18** — Here is another great theme. Only the Spirit of God can develop Christian character. It is something solid that must be developed, like the putting down of a sturdy and stable foundation of a building and the growing of a great tree like an oak or redwood. The word for “changed” is from the Greek *metamorphosis*, which is the same word used in speaking of the transfiguration of Christ. The ultimate goal of humanity is seen in the transfiguration of Christ.

#### **E. God’s comfort in the ministry of suffering for Christ, Chapter 4**

**vv. 1, 2** — Suffering tests the genuineness of the ministry. Paul presents a series of contrasts to show that the suffering of the ministry is not the defeat of the ministry.

**vv. 3, 4** — There are two secondary themes in this chapter. Satan is the god of this world who tries to blind men at only one point — the gospel. The lost world is like a prison house of sin. There is only one way out. Christ is the way (John 14:6). At this point Satan blinds men.

**v. 7** — “Earthen vessels” is the Greek word *ostrakinos* — “clay pitchers,” reminding us of Gideon’s 300 (Judges 7). The vessels must be broken for the light to shine out.

**v. 8** — “Troubled” is *pressed for room*. “Not distressed” is *still having*

room. “Perplexed” is *unable to find a way out*.

**vv. 9** — “Persecuted” is *pursued by an enemy*. “Not forsaken” is *not overpowered by the enemy*.

**vv. 17, 18** — Suffering in this life is light in weight compared to the eternal weight of glory. Unseen things are real, for they are eternal. Things that are seen are temporary.

#### **F. God’s comfort in the ministry of martyrdom for Christ,** Chapter 5

**v. 1** — Physical death means the departure from the body, labeled a tent (“tabernacle”) by Paul.

**vv. 2-5** — These bodies are suffering bodies and temporary.

**vv. 6-8** — Death means to leave these fragile bodies and go home to be with the Lord.

**vv. 9-13** — Believers appear before the judgment seat (*bema*) of Christ to see if they receive a reward or not. The works of believers are judged.

**vv. 14-21** — The secondary subject seems to be the major subject in this chapter. The theme is reconciliation. Believers are joined to the glorified Christ at God’s right hand (vv. 14-17). They are there because of Christ’s work of reconciliation. God is reconciled by what Christ has done. We can do nothing to reconcile God, for He is already reconciled to us in Christ. The message of the gospel is not asking us to do something to reconcile God, but to accept God’s message and method of reconciliation (vv. 20, 21).

#### **G. God’s comfort in all circumstances of the ministry of Christ,** Chapter 6

**vv. 4-7** — Paul lists nineteen trying experiences of the ministry.

**vv. 8-10** — He lists nine contrasts which cover the total life.

**vv. 11-18** — The minor theme here is a personal appeal of Paul. He calls upon the Corinthian Christians to make a clean break with idolatry.

#### **H. God’s comfort in the heart of Paul,** Chapter 7

Paul refers to his personal relationship to the Corinthian Christians. He refers to the comfort of God again (vv. 4, 6, 7, 13).

**v. 10** — This is God’s definition of repentance. It means a change of mind. In turning to Christ by faith, sinners turn from their sin. This is repentance for salvation (the secondary theme).

## **II. COLLECTION for poor saints at Jerusalem,** Chapters 8, 9 (*Christian giving*)

### **A. Example of Christian giving,** Chapter 8:1-6

Giving is a grace. God wants the person before He asks for his gift. The Macedonian Christians first gave themselves (v. 5).

**B. Exhortation to Christian giving**, Chapter 8:7-15

These are *principles* for Christian giving — not rules. The tithe is not demanded. Giving is a grace (vv. 7, 8). Christ gave all — not a tenth (v. 9).

**C. Explanation of Christian giving**, Chapters 8:16 — 9:5

- (1) They were to give to a specific cause — poor saints in Jerusalem;
- (2) They were to give to reputable messengers — Titus and those with him;
- (3) They were to give in reality and not merely promise.

**D. Encouragement to Christian giving**, Chapter 9:6-15

**v. 6** — Give generously.

**v. 7** — Do not give grudgingly; give hilariously!

**v. 8** — God gives the grace to give.

**vv. 9-11** — Give bountifully, probably more than a tithe.

**vv. 12-14** — Give according to the need.

**v. 15** — We can never out-give God.

**III. CALLING of the apostle Paul**, Chapters 10 — 13

*(Christian guarding)*

**A. Authentication of Paul's apostleship**, Chapter 10

**v. 3** — Our warfare is spiritual. We don't measure success by numbers, money, or outward growth.

**v. 4** — Our weapons are secret, so secret that they are not mentioned here. They are mighty. The Word of God is the hush-hush weapon. The Holy Spirit is the General. Prayer is the ammunition.

**v. 5** — The warriors are successful, not victorious. The victory is Christ's, and we enter into it (2:14).

**B. Vindication of Paul's apostleship**, Chapter 11

*(Very personal)*

**v. 9** — Paul pays his own way.

**vv. 13-15** — This is the secondary subject. Ministers of Satan are attractive and winsome. They teach false doctrine for material benefit.

**vv. 16-33** — Paul's life vindicates his ministry.

**C. Revelation of Paul's apostleship**, Chapter 12

**vv. 1-3** — This is Paul's experience (see v. 7). He was stoned to death at



Lystra (see Acts 14:19). Paul was caught up into the presence of God.

1st heaven — where are the “birds of heaven.”

2nd heaven — where are the “stars of heaven.”

3rd heaven — where is the abode of God.

v. 7 — God put a zipper on the mouth of Paul. He was given a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble.

v. 10 — The man who went to heaven and returned is going to Corinth for the third time in weakness — also in dread (v. 20). This is the subsidiary subject.

#### **D. Execution of Paul’s apostleship, Chapter 13:1-10**

Paul is going to Corinth for the third time to exercise his office as an apostle. They will see the proof of his apostleship through the power of Christ working in Paul’s weakness (vv. 3, 4). Believers should take a regular inventory to see if they are in the faith (v. 5). We should declare the Word of God, not defend it (v. 8 — this is a great verse for today).

#### **E. Conclusion of Paul’s apostleship, Chapter 13:11-14**

Paul returns where he began — to the comfort of God.

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Gromacki, Robert G. *Stand Firm in the Faith*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1978.
- Hodge, Charles. *An Exposition of First and Second Corinthians*. Carlisle, Pennsylvania: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1869. (For advanced students.)
- Hughes, Philip E. *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962. (A comprehensive study.)
- Ironside, H. A. *Addresses on Second Corinthians*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1939. (A fine survey.)
- Kelly, William. *Notes on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, 1882.
- Kent, Homer A., Jr. *The Epistle of Second Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1981. (Excellent.)
- Luck, G. Coleman. *Second Corinthians*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1960. (Good survey.)
- Morgan, G. Campbell. *The Corinthian Letters of Paul*. Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1946.
- Moule, Handley C. G. *The Epistle of Second Corinthians*. Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, n.d.
- Robertson, A. T. *The Glory of the Ministry*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1911. (Deals with 2 Corinthians 2:12 — 6:10 and should be read by every Christian worker.)
- Tasker, R. V. G. *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1958.



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**Notes & Outlines**

# **GALATIANS**

J. Vernon McGee

## GALATIANS

**WRITER:** Paul (Galatians 1:1)

**DATE:** About A.D. 57

This epistle was probably written on the third missionary journey from Ephesus, during Paul's two years of residence there. There is substantial basis, however, for the claim that it was written from Corinth, shortly before Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans. Dr. Lenski advances the theory that it was written from Corinth on the second missionary journey, about April, A.D. 53.

### **OCCASION:**

Paul visited the Galatian churches on each of his three missionary journeys. There is no mention in the epistle of another visit to the churches. The epistle was evidently Paul's last word to these churches, written after he had visited them on the third missionary journey.

### **GALATIANS — The people:**

The destination of this epistle has given rise to what is known as the North Galatian and the South Galatian theories. It seems more reasonable to suppose that it was sent to the churches in the area Paul visited on his first missionary journey, but this does not preclude the possibility that it had a wider circulation, even as far north as Pessinus, Ancyra, and Tavium. The word "Galatians" could be used in either an ethnographic sense, which would refer to the nationality of the people, or it could be used in a geographic sense, which would refer to the Roman province by that name. Regardless of the position taken, there is a common blood strain which identified people in that area where there was a mixture of population. The people for whom the province was named were Gauls, a Celtic tribe from the same stock which inhabited France. In the 4th century B.C. they invaded the Roman Empire and sacked Rome. Later they crossed into Greece and captured Delphi in 280 B.C. At the invitation of Nikomedes I, King of Bithynia, they crossed over into Asia Minor to help him in a civil war. They were warlike people and soon established themselves in Asia Minor. They were blond orientals. In 189 B.C. they were made subjects of the Roman Empire and became a province. Their boundaries varied, and for many years they retained their customs and language. The

churches Paul established on his first missionary journey were included at one time in the territory of Galatia, and this is the name which Paul would normally give to these churches.

These Gallic Celts had much of the same temperament and characteristics of the American population. Caesar had this to say: “The infirmity of the Gauls is that they are fickle in their resolves, fond of change, and not to be trusted.” Another described them as “frank, impetuous, impressible, eminently intelligent, fond of show, but extremely inconstant, the fruit of excessive vanity.” Remember that they wanted to make Paul a god one day, and the next day they stoned him (see Acts 14).

Surely the Epistle to the Galatians has a message for us of like temper, who are beset on every hand by cults and isms innumerable that would take us, likewise, from our moorings in the gospel of grace.

### **GALATIANS — The epistle:**

1. It is a stern, **severe**, and solemn message (Galatians 1:6-9; 3:1-5). It does not correct conduct, as the Corinthian letters do, but it is corrective — the Galatian believers were in grave peril. Because the foundations were being attacked, everything was threatened.

The epistle contains no word of commendation, praise, or thanksgiving. There is no request for prayer, and there is no mention of their standing in Christ. No one with him is mentioned by name (Galatians 1:2). Compare this with the other epistles of Paul.

2. The heart of Paul the apostle is laid bare, there is deep emotion and strong feeling. This is his **fighting epistle** — he has on his war paint. He has no toleration for legalism. Someone has said that Romans comes from the head of Paul while Galatians comes from the heart of Paul. “Galatians takes up controversially what Romans puts systematically.”

3. It is the **declaration of emancipation** from legalism of any type. This was Martin Luther’s favorite epistle, and it was on the masthead of the Reformation. It has been called the Magna Charta of the early church, the manifesto of Christian liberty, the impregnable citadel, and a veritable Gibraltar against any attack on the heart of the gospel. “Immortal victory is set upon its brow.”

4. It is the strongest declaration and defense of the doctrine of **jus-**

**tification by faith** in or out of Scripture. It is God's polemic on behalf of the most vital truth of the Christian faith against any attack.

Not only is a sinner saved by grace through faith, but the saved sinner lives by grace. Grace is a way *to* life and a way *of* life.

## OUTLINE:

### I. Introduction, Chapter 1:1-10

A. Salutation — **cool greeting**, vv. 1-5

B. Subject stated — **warm declamation**, vv. 6-10

### II. Personal, Chapters 1:11— 2:14

*Authority of the apostle and glory of the gospel*

A. **Experience of Paul in Arabia**, Chapter 1:11-24

B. **Experience of Paul with apostles in Jerusalem**, Chapter 2:1-10

C. **Experience of Paul in Antioch with Peter**, Chapter 2:11-14

### III. Doctrinal, Chapters 2:15 — 4:31

*Justification by Faith*

*Faith vs. Works, Liberty vs. Bondage*

A. Justification by faith — **doctrine** stated, Chapter 2:15-21

B. Justification by faith — **experience** of Galatians, Chapter 3:1-5

C. Justification by faith — **illustration** of Abraham, Chapter 3:6 — 4:18

D. Justification by faith — **allegory** of Hagar and Sarai, Chapter 4:19-31

### IV. Practical, Chapters 5:1 — 6:10

*Sanctification by the Spirit*

*Spirit vs. Flesh, Liberty vs. Bondage*

A. Saved by faith and **living by law** perpetrates **falling from grace**, Chapter 5:1-15

B. Saved by faith and **walking in the Spirit** produces **fruit of the Spirit**, Chapter 5:16-26

C. Saved by faith and **fruit of the Spirit** presents **Christian character**, Chapter 6:1-10

## V. **Autographed conclusion**, Chapter 6:11-18

A. Paul's own **handwriting**, v. 11

B. Paul's own **testimony**, vv. 12-18

1. Cross of Christ vs. circumcision, vv. 12-15

2. Christ's handwriting on Paul's body, vv. 16-18

*(The new circumcision of the new creation)*

### COMMENT:

Galatians is God's polemic against legalism of every and any description. The Law is not discredited, despised, nor disregarded. Its majesty, perfection, demands, fullness, and purpose are maintained. Yet these very qualities make it utterly impossible for man to come this route to God. Another way is opened — which entirely bypasses law — for man to be justified before God. The new route is by faith. Justification by faith is the theme, with the emphasis upon faith.

Three epistles in the New Testament quote Habakkuk 2:4, "The just shall live by his faith."

Romans 1:17 emphasizes *the just*;

Hebrews 10:38 emphasizes *shall live*;

Galatians 3:11 emphasizes *by faith*.

In Romans, the emphasis is upon the fact that man apart from the Law is justified before God. In Galatians, Paul is defending the gospel from those who would add law to justification by faith.

Faith plus law was the thrust of Judaism;

Faith plus nothing was the answer of Paul.

The Judaizers questioned Paul's authority as an apostle and his teaching that simple faith was adequate for salvation. Paul defends his apostleship and demonstrates the sufficiency of the gospel of grace to save.

## I. **Introduction**, Chapter 1:1-10

A. **Salutation — cool greeting**, vv. 1-5

v. 1 — Paul is this kind of apostle — no parenthesis is necessary here. *Apostle* is used in a twofold sense:

1. One of the Twelve (Acts 1:21-26):

a. With Jesus during His 3-year ministry (Acts 1:21);

b. Witness of His post-resurrection ministry (Acts 1:22);

c. Chosen by Christ (Acts 1:22, 9:15, 26:17).

2. One sent forth, used in a wider sense. Paul, in our judgment, took Judas' place (Acts 14:4, 14; cp. notes on Acts 1).

“Not of men” — the preposition *apo* conveys the meaning of “not from men”; that is, not legalistic, not by appointment or commission after having attended a school or taken a prescribed course.

“Neither by man” — the preposition *dia* indicates that it was not through man; that is, not ritualistic by means of laying on of hands, as by a bishop or church court. For example, marriage involves both the legal (license from the state) and the ritual (ceremony).

“But by Jesus Christ” — Jesus laid His hand upon Paul, called him, and set him apart for the office (Acts 9:15, 16).

v. 2 — The greeting is very cool, brief, formal, and terse. No one is mentioned personally by name.

“Churches” — a local church is in view, not the corporate body of believers as seen in Ephesians.

v. 3 — This is Paul's formal greeting in most of his epistles (see notes on Ephesians for explanation).

v. 4 — “Gave himself” — at the mention of the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul gives the germ of the subject. Nothing can be added to the value of His sacrifice.

“Deliver us from this present evil [age]” — there is a present value of the gospel which proves its power and genuineness.

“According to the will of God” — He can deliver us, *not* according to law, but according to the will of God.

v. 5 — God gets more from the salvation by grace of a sinner than the sinner does. It is to God's glory.

## **B. Subject stated — warm declamation, vv. 6-10**

v. 6 — The gospel concerns “the grace of Christ.” Two aspects of the gospel (used in two senses):

1. Facts — death, burial, resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
2. Interpretation of facts — received by faith plus nothing (Galatians 2:16).

The facts were not challenged by the Judaizers, but they sought to add



law to grace (faith + law).

v. 7 — There is only one gospel — one in fact and interpretation.

“Pervert” (Greek: *metastrepho*) is a strong word, as in “sun...turned into darkness” (Acts 2:20); “laughter...turned to mourning” (James 4:9). Attempting to change the gospel has the effect of making it the very opposite of what it really is.

v. 8 — If an angel dared to declare any other message than the gospel, he would be dismissed with a strong invective.

v. 9 — If any message is received other than the gospel, it is spurious and counterfeit.

“Accursed” (Greek: *anathema*) is “be damned.” The gospel shuts out all works.

***But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*** (Romans 4:5)

God saves only one class of humanity — the ungodly. The reason is that this is the *only* class — even the righteousness of man is as filthy rags in God’s sight. Law condemns us and it must make us speechless before grace can save us.

***Now we know that whatever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*** (Romans 3:19)

The real difficulty is not that people should be “good enough” to be saved, but that they are not “bad enough” to be saved. Humanity refuses to recognize its lost condition before God. This is the human predicament.

The Judaizers did not deny the facts of the gospel; they perverted it and therefore were anathema. The “gospel” of law plus grace is a mixture that has no power, no growth, no victory.

It robs grace of its blessing, beauty and glory;  
It robs the Law of its majesty and authority.

v. 10 — “Persuade” (KJV) is “to make a friend of.” The New Scofield Bible translates it “seek the favor of.” In 1 Thessalonians 2:4 and 4:1 it is “please God” in contrast to self or others. The preaching

of the gospel is not pleasing to lost man. No man can please both God and man.

## **II. Personal, Chapters 1:11—2:14**

### ***Authority of the apostle and glory of the gospel***

#### **A. Experience of Paul in Arabia, Chapter 1:11-24**

##### ***Origin of the gospel and conversion of Paul***

**v. 11** — “Certify” (κῑν) is “remind.” “After man” is “according to man.” The Judaizers also questioned Paul’s apostleship. He was not one of the original 12, but a Johnny-come-lately. They cast a shadow upon the validity of Paul’s authority as an apostle.

**v. 12** — Paul’s gospel came directly by a revelation (*apokalupsis*) of Jesus Christ.

**vv. 13, 14** — Paul now calls the religion in which he was brought up “the Jews’ religion.” Paul was saved, not *in* Judaism, not *by* Judaism, but *FROM* Judaism.

**vv. 15-17** — After his conversion, Paul went into the desert of Arabia before conferring with other apostles.

**vv. 18, 19** — Paul then went up to Jerusalem (see Acts 9:26-29). He spent less than three years in the desert.

**v. 20** — Either we believe Paul or we make him a liar.

**vv. 21-24** — Paul outlines his first years after conversion.

#### **B. Experience of Paul with apostles in Jerusalem, Chapter 2:1-10**

##### ***Oneness of the gospel and communication between Paul and other apostles***

**v. 1** — More likely this is a reference to the council of Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 15 than when Paul and Barnabas took relief to the church in Jerusalem, as recorded in Acts 11:30 and 12:25.

**vv. 2-5** — The church in Jerusalem approved Paul’s gospel. Paul took Titus, a Greek, as a living example of a Gentile who was saved by faith apart from the Law.

**vv. 6-10** — The apostles accepted Paul’s apostleship. “Fellowship” (v. 9) is *koinonia*, one of the great words of the gospel and the high-

est expression of a personal relationship. It means sharing the things of Christ.

**C. Experience of Paul in Antioch with Peter, Chapter 2:11-14**  
*Opposition to the gospel and conviction concerning conduct*

**v. 11** — Paul actually rebuked Peter.

**vv. 12-14** — In the apostolic church they had a love feast that all shared. When Gentiles came into the church, it posed a problem, for they ate meat which had been sacrificed to idols and meat forbidden by the Mosaic Law. Two tables were set up. Peter ate with the Gentiles until the elders came up from Jerusalem. Then he beat a retreat back to the kosher table. His conduct indicated that he condemned the Gentile table. While he was free to eat at either table, he had no right to eat at the Gentile table and then withdraw as if it were wrong. He was, by his conduct, putting the Gentiles under law.

**III. Doctrinal, Chapters 2:15 — 4:31**

*Justification by Faith*

*Faith vs. Works, Liberty vs. Bondage*

**A. Justification by faith — doctrine stated, Chapter 2:15-21**

**v. 15** — “We”: Paul identifies himself with the Jews. The Jews of that day considered the Gentile a sinner in contrast to himself under the Law.

**v. 16** — This is a clear-cut and simple statement of justification by faith. “Man” (Greek: *anthropos*) is the generic term, meaning both Jews and Gentiles.

“Justified” (Greek: *dikaioo*) is to have “declared a person right” — not *make* him right. A sinner, who is guilty before God and is under condemnation, is declared right with God on the basis of his faith in the redemption in Christ. It is not just forgiveness of sins, a subtraction, but the addition of the righteousness of Christ. He is declared righteous. The Jew had to forsake the Law and take his place as a sinner in order to be saved by faith in Christ. No statement could be more dogmatic and crystal-clear than “by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

**v. 17** — The sense of this verse seems to be that since the Jew had to forsake the Law in order to be justified by Christ and therefore take

his place as a sinner, is Christ the one who makes him a sinner? No, the Jew, like the Gentile, was a sinner by nature and could not be justified by the Law, as he had demonstrated.

*Now, therefore, why put God to the test, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.* (Acts 15:10, 11)

**v. 19** — This is the great principle that Paul states here and in Romans. We were executed as sinners in Christ. “He was made sin for us” (see 2 Corinthians 5:21). We are now called to live unto God by a new principle stated in the next verse.

**v. 20** — We were crucified when Christ was crucified — almost 2000 years ago. The new life of the believer is the life of Christ lived through him, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**v. 21** — “Righteousness” is “justification.” “In vain” means “without a cause” (e.g. Christ said in John 15:25, “They hated me without a cause” [same word]).

**B. Justification by faith — experience of Galatians, Chapter 3:1-5**

**v. 1** — This begins a series of 6 questions which Paul puts to the Galatians. “Who hath bewitched” — they were not using their minds (Greek: *nous*). It can be paraphrased, “You are foolish. What has gotten into you?”

“Set forth” means literally “placarded” or “painted.”

**v. 2** — They never received the Spirit by the Law. The Holy Spirit is evidence of conversion.

*But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* (Romans 8:9)

*In whom ye also trusted, after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.* (Ephesians 1:13)

The gospel is true irrespective of experience. The gospel is objective. Experience corroborates the gospel.

*And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him.* (Acts 5:32)

**vv. 3-5** — The gospel is sufficient — experience confirms this.

**C. Justification by faith — illustration of Abraham,** Chapters 3:6 — 4:18

### **Chapter 3**

**v. 6** — This quotation is from Genesis 15:6. The incident referred to is after Abraham's encounter with the kings of the East in his rescue of Lot and his refusal to accept anything from the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah. God appeared to Abraham to assure him that he had done right in turning down the booty, saying, "I am thy shield, and thy exceedingly great reward" (Genesis 15:1). Abraham reminded God that he did not have a son. God led Abraham out to behold the night sky and asked him to number the stars. God promised numberless offspring to Abraham. It was then that Abraham believed God; he said amen to God. Abraham's faith was counted for righteousness. Abraham's works, since the Law was not yet given, could not have anything to contribute to Abraham's salvation. It was faith plus nothing.

**v. 8** — When did God preach the gospel to Abraham? See Genesis 22:17, 18. It was at the time of the offering of Isaac upon the altar as a human sacrifice. The offering of Isaac is one of the finest pictures of the offering of Christ. Although God spared Abraham's son, God "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all" (Romans 8:32). (See author's book, *Going Through Genesis*.) James wrote in his epistle:

*Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works, when he had offered Isaac, his son, upon the altar?* (James 2:21)

This was toward the end of Abraham's life and refers to the offering of Isaac. His act of offering his son was the work of faith, not works of the Law. Paul said that Abraham was justified by faith before there were any works — before Isaac was even born. This makes it evident

that the writings of Paul and James do not conflict.

**v. 9** — “Faithful” is “believing.” God saves the sinner on the same basis that He saved Abraham — *faith*.

**v. 10** — The important word here is “continueth.” No one ever kept the Law day and night, 24 hours every day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks out of the year, in thought, word, and deed. The Law could only condemn; faith justifies.

**v. 11** — Even the Old Testament made it very clear that “the just shall live by faith” (see Habakkuk 2:4).

**v. 12** — Faith and law are contrary principles for salvation and for living. One cancels out the other. The Law required that a man live by the Law. Any righteousness he might accumulate would be inferior to the righteousness of God. Man’s righteousness is forever labeled “filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6).

**v. 13** — This quotation is from Deuteronomy 21:23. This was a very strange law, since the method of capital punishment under the Law was by stoning. If the crime was aggravated and atrocious, the body of the criminal was taken after death and hung up to display the seriousness of the crime (see Deuteronomy 21:22, 23). “Cursed [of God] is everyone that hangeth on a tree.” The cross is called a tree (*xulon*) in Acts 5:30; 10:39; and 1 Peter 2:24 — the cross is the tree of life. We are not under law because Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law.

**v. 14** — Christ took our place that we might receive what the Law could never do. The Spirit is the peculiar gift in this age of grace.

**vv. 15-18** — The sense of this section is that the Law, which came 430 years after God’s promise to Abraham, cannot alter or disannul it. When two men make a contract, one member of the agreement cannot alter it later to suit his personal wish. The original must stand inviolate. God’s promise to Abraham cannot be abrogated. Actually, God confirmed it in Christ.

“Seed” (v. 16) refers specifically to Christ (see Genesis 22:18). Christ said:

*Your father, Abraham, rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.* (John 8:56)

**v. 19** — Why was the Law given? It was added for the sake of

transgression.

“Till” indicates it was temporary. The Law reveals sin — sin had already come.

Man is not a sophisticated, refined and trained sinner; he is a sinner by nature — in the raw a primitive and savage sinner. The Law is a mirror to show the smudge spot. You do not wash it off with the mirror. God has provided a wash basin with the mirror:

There is a fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins;  
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.

Law proves that man is a sinner and that he is never able to make himself a saint.

**v. 21** — Law could not give life. Man is already dead in trespasses and sins. Man needs life — only faith in Christ can give life.

**v. 22** — Man is in the state of sin, and the only help is by faith in Christ. The Law is inexorable and unchanging. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:20).

**vv. 23-25** — The key word here is “schoolmaster” (Greek: *paidagogos*) and has nothing to do with a school teacher in present-day context. The term designated a slave or servant in a Roman home who had charge of any child born in the home. He fed, dressed, bathed, wiped the nose of, and paddled the son born in the home. When the little fellow reached school age, he took him by the hand and led him to school. This is where he got the name of *paidagogos*. The Law took mankind by the hand, led him to the cross of Christ, and said, “Little man, you need a Savior.” The Law turns us over to Christ. We are under Christ now and not under the Law.

**v. 26** — “Children” (KJV) is rather “sons” (Greek: *huios*). Only faith in Christ can make us legitimate sons of God. An individual Israelite was never a son, only a servant. Although David was a man after God’s own heart, the Scripture calls him “my servant.” Nicodemus was a legalist and religious to his fingertips, but he was not a son of God. Jesus said, “Ye must be born again” (John 3:7).

***He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But***

*as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name; who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* (John 1:11-13)

The most damnable heresy today is the “universal Fatherhood of God and universal brotherhood of man.” Jesus said to the religious rulers, “Ye are of your father the devil” (John 8:44). The Law could never bring a sinner to the place of sonship.

**v. 27** — “Baptized into Christ” — the baptism of the Spirit puts us into the body of Christ, and we are identified with Him.

**v. 28** — There were 3 great divisions in the Roman world:

1. Racial and religious — Jew and Greek.
2. Social and class — bond and free: 1/2 of the population of the Roman Empire was slave; 60 million were slaves, 60 million were free.
3. Male and female — man’s world and woman’s world.

**v. 29** — All in Christ belong to the same family and all share in the inheritance.

## **Chapter 4**

**vv. 1-5** — This section teaches the doctrine of **adoption**. Adoption does not have the same connotation here as it does in our thinking. A couple see a lovely little child in an orphanage and take legal steps to make the child their own. This is adoption in our contemporary society. However, the thinking here follows the practice of Roman society in the first century A.D.

**v. 1** — “Child” (Greek: *nepios*): a minor child in a Roman home was placed in the hands of a servant or slave. He plays with the slave children and is disciplined by the adult slaves.

**v. 2** — “Time appointed of the father” is the important phrase. This points to the day when the boy becomes a full-grown adult with all the legal rights and privileges pertaining thereto.

**v. 3** — Israel under law was like a child under the discipline of a master.



**v. 4** — At the time determined by God, God the Father sent forth God the Son, born of a woman, born under the Law. He kept the Law *in toto*.

**v. 5** — Christ did this for a twofold purpose:

1. To redeem those under the Law, which means they are no longer under the Law;
2. That they might receive the adoption of sons.

“Adoption” (Greek: *huiiothesia*) means literally placing as a son. Now let’s return to the Roman custom. One day the child’s father notes that his son is growing up. He invites all the relatives in for the ceremony of the *toga virilis*. The father places a robe on the boy and a ring on his finger. That ring, a signet, is the father’s signature. The boy is now a full-grown son. No slave better touch him now! He has the authority of maturity. God brings us into His family as full-grown sons, capable of understanding divine truth (see 1 Corinthians 2:9, 10, 13, 14; 1 John 2:20, 27). The mature saint and the babe in Christ are equally dependent on the Holy Spirit to teach them divine truth. The Law never did this for man.

**v. 6** — This is another accomplishment of the grace of God which the Law did not dare to offer. *Abba* is an intimate word that denotes the close and dear relationship between a child of God and the Father. It is during the time of testing and trial that God makes Himself real to the heart of the believer (see author’s book, *Reasoning Through Romans*, vol. 1, comment on Romans 8:15, 16).

**v. 7** — This does not mean that a child of God reaches the plane of sinless perfection. He still retains his old nature.

**v. 8** — Paul describes idols as vanities — “nothings.”

**vv. 9-11** — To turn to the Law now that they are saved by grace is the same as returning to their former idolatry. “Ye have known God” (v. 9) not by law, but by faith in Christ.

**vv. 12-18** — This is a personal and polite word injected in this section. Obviously Paul’s thorn in the flesh was eye trouble (vv. 14, 15). They would not be willing to pluck out their *eyes* for him if Paul’s thorn was *foot* trouble. Verses 17 and 18 are more easily understood in the American Standard version:

*They zealously seek you in no good way; nay, they desire to shut you out, that ye may seek them. But it is good to be zealously sought in a good matter at all times, and not only when I am present with you.*

**D. Justification by faith — allegory of Hagar and Sarai,**  
Chapter 4:19-31

All is contrast in this section between Hagar and Sarai. Hagar, and every reference to her under other figures of speech, represents the Law. Sarai, and every reference to her under other figures of speech, represents faith in Christ.

**v. 21** — They had not actually heard the Law. The giving of the Law was not beautiful and cozy, but terrifying (see Exodus 19:16-18; 20:18, 19).

**v. 24** — Not “are” an allegory, but *contain* an allegory. It is an historical event that contains an allegory.

A child born to a bond woman was a slave.

**vv. 30, 31** — Abraham could not have both the son of Hagar and the son of Sarai. He had to make a choice. Paul is saying that you cannot be saved by law and grace. You have to make a choice. If you try to be saved by Christ and also law, you are not saved.

*Behold, I, Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.* (Galatians 5:2)

**IV. Practical, Chapters 5:1 — 6:10**

***Sanctification by the Spirit***

*Spirit vs. Flesh, Liberty vs. Bondage*

**A. Saved by faith and living by law perpetrates falling from grace, Chapter 5:1-15**

We enter now a new section of this letter. Paul follows his regular pattern. After giving doctrine, he concludes with a practical application. Paul always puts doctrine in shoe leather.

**v. 1** — Paul challenges the believer to *stand* first of all in the liberty of grace before beginning to walk by faith in the power of the Spirit. The Law is not the rule of faith for the believer.

**v. 2** — This is one of the most startling verses in the Scripture.

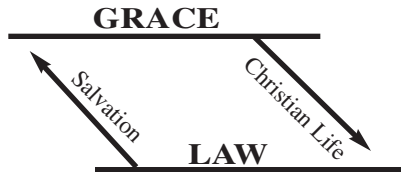
Paul is not saying that to trust something other than Christ means you are not saved — he has said that before. He is saying that if you trust Christ *and also* trust something else, you are not saved.

v. 3 — Even to put on the badge of the Law, which is circumcision, means that you are indebted to do the whole Law. James gave the negative side:

***For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*** (James 2:10)

It is faith plus nothing that saves the sinner. God will not let salvation become a complicated matter. Nothing can enter in to rob Christ of His glory. Imagine a person sending in a testimonial about Geritol saying, “After taking 254 bottles, I feel good. I also made up my own formula, and I have been taking it along with Geritol.” You can see that such a testimonial would be of no value. The home remedy might have been the cure.

v. 4 — “Fallen from grace” does not mean to fall out of salvation or lose it. It means to try to be saved by some other means. You fall from the high plane of grace down to the low level of legality. To be saved by grace and then to try to live the Christian life by law is to fall from grace.



v. 5 — “Hope of righteousness” is the only prophetic reference in the entire epistle. The only hope is the blessed hope. Christ is made unto us “righteousness” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

v. 6 — No legal apparatus will produce a Christian life. The formula is a simple simile: “faith which worketh by love.”

v. 7 — Paul chides the Galatians. They were doing excellently until the Judaizers came along.

v. 9 — In Scripture, leaven is always used as a principle of evil.

v. 10 — Paul believed that the Galatians would ultimately reject

the teaching of the Judaizers.

**v. 11** — See author’s booklet, “The Offense of the Cross.”

**v. 13** — Paul presents 3 methods for trying to live the Christian life, of which 2 will not work:

1. Life of liberty (vv. 1, 4);
2. Life of legalism (vv. 2, 3, 14);
3. Life of license (v. 13).

Paul gives, in the remainder of this chapter, the *modus operandi* of living by liberty. The life of legalism not only includes the Ten Commandments, but a set of regulations that Bible believers follow. They can keep all these and still not live the Christian life! There are the antinomians who think they can do as they please and live the Christian life. These are as extreme as the legalists.

**v. 14** — Here the Law is reduced to the lowest common denominator. This is the acid test of those who think they are living by law.

**v. 15** — A sermon entitled “Christian Cannibals” should be preached from this text.

### **B. Saved by faith and walking in the Spirit produces fruit of the Spirit, Chapter 5:16-26**

**v. 16** — Here is stated the great principle of Christian living — *walk by means of the Spirit*. The word for “walk” is *peripateo*, which refers to the direction and purpose of the life.

“Lust of the flesh” refers to desires of the flesh, many of which are not immoral but are of the flesh (music, art, and works of do-gooders, etc.).

**v. 17** — A transliteration of this verse will help convey the meaning:

*For the flesh warreth against the Spirit, and the Spirit warreth against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

The believer has a new nature and an old nature. Christ clarified this in a dialogue with Nicodemus (see John 3:3-16).

**v. 18** — Walking by the Spirit is the antithesis of living by law (see Romans 8:1-13).

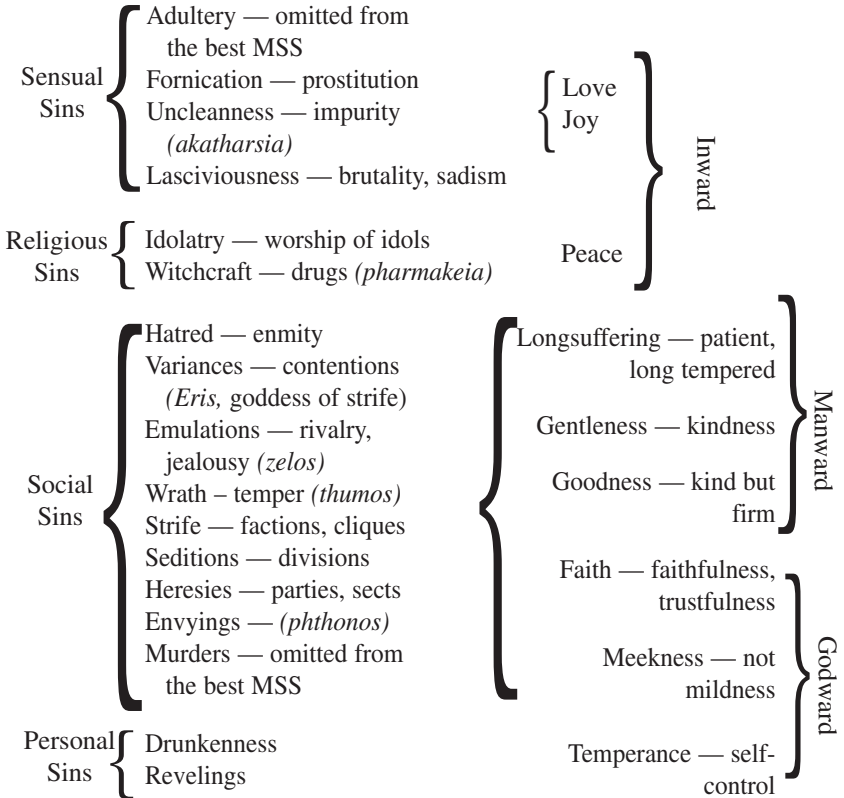
**vv. 19-21** — The old nature can do but one thing: “the works of the

flesh” (v. 19). These are labeled so that there can be no mistaking whether or not a person is living by the flesh (see chart).

“Do” (v. 21) is “practice” (see 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

**vv. 22, 23** — The new nature is the instrument through which the Spirit produces the “fruit of the Spirit” (v. 22). This is not human effort or “our best.” It is strictly the fruit of the Spirit (see chart).

**WORKS OF THE FLESH (Antithesis) FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**



The Law attempted to require love, but failed. The Spirit alone can produce love.

Law restrains — flesh;  
 Spirit constrains — new nature.

What God required under law, the Spirit produces. The Christian life

is not moral rectitude, which is negative. It is the fruit of the Spirit, which is positive.

Law made a slave — fear;  
Grace makes a son — love.

Grace frees the believer to do right.

**v. 24** — (Compare to Colossians 3:3, Galatians 2:20) In all of these passages the thought is that when Christ was crucified, the believer was crucified at the same time. The believer is now joined to the living Christ, and the victory is not by struggling but by surrendering to Christ. The scriptural word is “yield;” it is an act of the will (Romans 6:13).

**v. 25** — “Walk” (Greek: *stoichomen*) means that which is basic and elemental, proceed or step in order. (This is different from the word for “walk” in v. 16.) It means to learn to walk. Just as we learned to walk physically by the trial-and-error method, so we are to begin to walk by the Spirit. This is a learning process. There will be failure and a fall, again and again. The important thing is to begin and then keep trying. This is realistic and not idealistic.

### **C. Saved by faith and fruit of the Spirit presents Christian character, Chapter 6:1-10**

**v. 1** — “Fault” is “trespass, fall beside.” The believer does not lose his salvation when he sins.

“Restore” is as to set a bone. “In the spirit of meekness” is required.

**v. 2** — “Burdens” (Greek: *baros*) is “weight.” Bear one another up in frailty, weakness, grief, tension or pressure. “A load is half a load when two are carrying it.”

**v. 3** — This is one of Paul’s sledgehammer blows against pride.

**v. 4** — This is also a characteristic statement of Paul, that a man needs to keep close tab on his own life’s work (see 1 Corinthians 16:13; 2 Corinthians 13:5).

**v. 5** — “Burden” (Greek: *phortion*) is something to be borne, as a ship’s cargo; a child in the womb; a responsibility. Dr. Phillips has a good interpretation: “Shoulder his own pack.”

There are burdens you can share; there are burdens you must bear alone. We are born alone, become sick alone, suffer alone, face problems alone, and go through the valley of the shadow of death alone. We go before the judgment seat of Christ alone (see Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

**v. 6** — This simply and bluntly means to pay your preacher. If someone ministers to you spiritual benefits, minister to him of material benefits.

**v. 7** — *Principle stated:* This is an immutable law that operates in every sphere of life. In agriculture and horticulture if you sow corn, you get corn; if you sow cotton, you reap cotton. In the moral sphere you reap what you sow. Jacob, who deceived his father, was deceived by his uncle in the same manner. Pharaoh, who slew male children, had his own son slain. We see this law at work in the lives of Ahab and Jezebel, and also in Paul's life.

**v. 8** — *Practice suffered:* Paul applies this law to the believer. He says that the believer can sow to the flesh or to the Spirit. Sowing to the flesh leads to a harvest of corruption. Sowing to the Spirit leads to a harvest of life everlasting.

**v. 9** — *Patience satisfied:* This is an encouragement to a child of God who has patiently taught the Word of God and served the Lord. Such a one will reap a harvest of blessing eventually. For example, Jochebed taught Moses, although Egypt was against her. Then came the day when she reaped.

## **V. Autographed conclusion, Chapter 6:11-18**

### **A. Paul's own handwriting, v. 11**

The true sense is, "I have written with large letters." This is an indication that Paul's thorn in the flesh was eye trouble (see Galatians 4:14, 15). Characteristically, the handwriting of a person who does not see well is with large letters.

### **B. Paul's own testimony, vv. 12-18**

#### **1. Cross of Christ vs. circumcision, vv. 12-15**

**v. 14** — A cross stood between Paul and the world. Paul stood on this side of the cross. Christ's death and resurrection had brought him

out of the world into a new relationship with God.

**v. 15** — Circumcision was the handwriting of religion and the Law. Outward badges are not acceptable with God — only a new creation (see 2 Corinthians 5:17).

**2.** Christ's handwriting on Paul's body, vv. 16-18  
*(The new circumcision of the new creation)*

**v. 17** — “The marks” (Greek: *stigma*) were the personal handwriting of Christ. In the Roman world, “marks” were used in 3 ways:

1. Runaway slaves were branded on the forehead when captured;
2. Soldiers had the names of their commanders tattooed on their foreheads;
3. Devotees of a pagan goddess in a mystery religion had her name branded on their foreheads.

Paul had physical scars, “brand marks of the Lord Jesus,” all over his body (see 2 Corinthians 11:23-27).

**v. 18** — Paul concludes this marvelous epistle by commending the brethren to the grace of God.

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## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Cole, R. Alan. *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965.
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**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter—
2. Most important verse—
3. Most prominent word—
4. Teaching about Christ—
5. Command to obey—
6. Promise to claim—
7. New truth learned—



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**Notes & Outlines**

# **EPHESIANS**

J. Vernon McGee

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## THE PRISON EPISTLES

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A quartet of men left Rome in the year A.D. 62, bound for the province of Asia, which was located in what was designated as Asia Minor and is currently called Turkey. These men had on their persons four of the most sublime compositions of the Christian faith. These precious documents would be invaluable if the originals were in existence today. Rome did not comprehend the significance of the writings by an unknown prisoner. If she had, these men would have been apprehended and the documents seized.

When they bade farewell to the apostle Paul, each was given an epistle to bear to his particular constituency. These four letters are designated the “prison epistles of Paul,” since he wrote them while imprisoned in Rome. He was awaiting a hearing before Nero who was the Caesar at that time. Paul, as a Roman citizen, had appealed his case to the emperor, and he was waiting to be heard.

- (1) Epaphroditus from Philippi (Philippians 4:18) had the Epistle to the Philippians.
- (2) Tychicus from Ephesus (Ephesians 6:21) had the Epistle to the Ephesians.
- (3) Epaphras from Colosse (Colossians 4:12) had the Epistle to the Colossians.
- (4) Onesimus (Philemon’s slave) from Colosse (Philemon 10) had the Epistle to Philemon.

These epistles present a composite picture of Christ, the church, the Christian life, and the interrelationship and functioning of all three. These different facets present the Christian life on the highest plane.

EPHESIANS presents “the church, which is his body” (Ephesians 1:22, 23) — this is the invisible church, of which Christ is the head.

COLOSSIANS presents Christ who is “the head of the body, the church” (Colossians 1:18). The emphasis is upon Christ rather than on the church.

PHILIPPIANS presents Christian living, with Christ as the dynamic: “I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13).

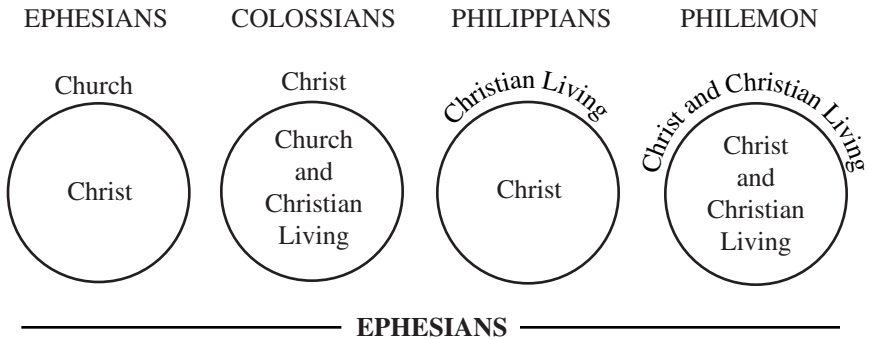
PHILEMON presents Christian living in action in a pagan society. “If thou count me, therefore, a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee anything, put that on mine account” (Philemon 17, 18). The gospel walked in shoe leather in the first century — it worked.

In EPHESIANS, Christ is exalted above all things, God having “put all things under his feet” (Ephesians 1:22). Christ is the center of the circle of which the church is the periphery.

In COLOSSIANS, Christ is the fullness of God (*pleroma*). He is the periphery of the circle of which Christian living is the center (Colossians 2:9, 10).

In PHILIPPIANS, Christ is the center of the circle; Christian living is the periphery. The *kenosis* (emptying) is given (Philippians 2:5-8).

In PHILEMON, Christ is both the center and circumference: “Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints” (Philemon 5).



**WRITER:** Paul (1:1)

**DATE:** About A.D. 62

Paul arrived in Rome in A.D. 61 as a prisoner, and for 2 years he lived in his own hired house where he received those who came to him (Acts 28:16, 30).

**THEME:**

**Ephesians reveals the church as God’s masterpiece** (*poema* — see Ephesians 2:10), a mystery not revealed in the Old Testament. It is more wonderful than any temple made with hands, because it is constructed of living stones and indwelt by the Holy Spirit (2:20-22). It is the body of Christ in the world — to walk as He would walk and to wrestle against the wiles of the devil (1:22, 23; 4:1; 6:11, 12). Someday the church will leave the world and be presented to Christ as a bride (5:25-32).

Dr. Pierson called Ephesians “Paul’s third-heaven epistle.” Another has called it “the Alps of the New Testament.” It is the Mt. Whitney of the High Sierras of all Scripture. This is the *Church Epistle*.

**TITLE:**

The inscription (*en Epheso*) is omitted from the better manuscripts. It is thought that the Epistle to the Ephesians was a circular epistle, which included Ephesus and thereby explains the insertion of its name in some manuscripts. It is likewise thought that this epistle is the one to the Laodiceans

referred to in Colossians 4:16. This could correspond to the last of the seven letters to the churches in Revelation 2 and 3 rather than to the first church. The contents of the Ephesian letter correspond more to the condition of the Ephesian church than to the one in Laodicea.

John Eadie concludes that this epistle is Paul's message to the church in Ephesus. He quotes from the testimony of the early church to sustain this thesis (Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian).

Ephesians is the great church epistle, intended for all churches irrespective of geography, for the church is "one body" and its location is "in the heavenlies."

### **PAUL AND EPHEBUS:**

The Holy Spirit forbade Paul, on his second missionary journey, to enter the province of Asia — where Ephesus was the prominent center.

*Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. (Acts 16:6)*

He traveled west until he came to the sea, where it was necessary for God, by means of a vision, to direct him to Macedonia. He was led by the Spirit into Europe as far as Corinth, after which he returned by way of Ephesus.

*And he came to Ephesus, and left them there, but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. (Acts 18:19)*

Being favorably impressed by the opportunities for missionary work, he promised to return. This he did on the third missionary journey. He discovered that another, by the name of Apollos, had been there in the interval between his second and third missionary journeys; but Apollos had preached only the baptism of John — not the gospel of grace. Paul began a ministry there that was far-reaching. For two years he spoke in the school of Tyrannus, and the gospel penetrated into every center of the province of Asia. Evidently, it was at this time that the churches addressed in Revelation 2 and 3 were founded as a result of this ministry of Paul.

*And he went into the synagogue, and spoke boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened, and believed not, but spoke evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one, Tyrannus. And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. (Acts 19:8-10)*

This was probably the “high water mark” in the missionary labors of Paul. He considered Ephesus his great opportunity and stayed there longer than in any other place. The people of Ephesus heard more Bible teaching from Paul than did any other people, which is the reason he could write to them the deep truths contained in this epistle.

***But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door, and effectual, is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.*** (1 Corinthians 16:8, 9)

He met great opposition, but God marvelously preserved him, which encouraged him to continue (see Acts 19:23-41). Paul loved this church in Ephesus. His last meeting with the Ephesian elders was a tender farewell (see Acts 20:17-38).

Ephesus was the principal city of Asia Minor — and probably of the entire eastern section of the Roman Empire. It was virile and aggressive at this time, while the culture of Athens was decadent, and the commercialism of Corinth was corroded with immorality.

The Temple of Diana was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, being the largest Greek temple ever constructed (418 by 239 feet). It was built over a marsh on an artificial foundation of skins and charcoal so that it was not affected by earthquakes.

The quarries of Mount Prion had supplied the marble; the art and wealth of Ephesian citizens and the jewellery of Ephesian ladies had been plentifully contributed for its adornment; its hundred and twenty-seven graceful columns, some of them richly carved and colored, were each the gift of a king; its doors, ceiling, and staircase were formed respectively of cypress, cedar, and vine-wood; it had an altar by Praxiteles and a picture by Apelles; and in its coffered reposed no little of the opulence of Western Asia. Thus Xenophon deposited in it the tithe...which had been set apart at Athens from the sale of slaves at Cerasus...a many-breasted idol of wood, rude as an African fetish, was worshipped in its shrine, in some portion of which a meteoric stone may have been inserted, the token of its being “the image that fell from Jupiter”...still further, a flourishing trade was carried on in the manufacture of silver shrines...or models of a portion of the temple. These are often referred to by ancient writers, and as few strangers seem to have left Ephesus without such a memorial of their visit, this artistic “business brought no small gain to the craftsmen.” But the spread of Christianity was fast destroying such gross and material superstition and idolatry, for one of its first lessons was, as Demetrius

rightly declared — “they be no gods which are made with hands.” (John Eadie, *A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians*)

## OUTLINE:

### I. **Doctrinal**, Chapters 1 — 3

The **heavenly calling** of the church (vocalization)

#### A. **The church is a BODY**, Chapter 1

1. Introduction, vv. 1, 2
2. God the Father **planned** the church, vv. 3-6  
*“A body hast thou prepared me” (Hebrews 10:5)*
3. God the Son **paid** the price for the church, vv. 7-12  
*“Redemption through his blood” (v. 7)*
4. God the Holy Spirit **protects** the church, vv. 13, 14  
*“By one Spirit were we all baptized into one body” (1 Corinthians 12:13)*
5. **Prayer** for knowledge and power, vv. 15-23

#### B. **The church is a TEMPLE**, Chapter 2

1. The **material** for construction, vv. 1-10  
*Those “dead in trespasses” (v. 1) are made into a living temple*
2. The **method** of construction, vv. 11-18
3. The **meaning** of the construction (*quo animo*), vv. 19-22  
*“Groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord” (v. 21)*

#### C. **The church is a MYSTERY**, Chapter 3

1. The **explanation** of the mystery, vv. 1-4  
*Not revealed in the Old Testament*
2. The **definition** of the mystery, vv. 5-13  
*Jews and Gentiles are partakers of the same body — the church*
3. **Prayer** for power and knowledge, vv. 14-21  
*“Strengthened with might” (v. 16) and “to know the love of Christ” (v. 19)*

### II. **Practical**, Chapters 4 — 6

The **earthly conduct** of the church (vocation)

#### A. **The church is a NEW MAN**, Chapter 4

1. The **exhibition** of the new man, vv. 1-6  
*“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit” (v. 3)*



2. The **inhibition** of the new man, vv. 7-16  
*“No more children”*(v. 14); *“grow up into him”*(v. 15); *“perfect man”* (v. 13)
3. The **prohibition** of the new man, vv. 17-32  
*“Walk not as other Gentiles walk”* (v. 17); *“be ye kind one to another”* (v. 32)

**B. The church will be a BRIDE, Chapter 5**

1. The **engagement** of the church, vv. 1-17  
*“For I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ”* (2 Corinthians 11:2)
2. The **experience** of the church, vv. 18-24  
*“Be filled with the Spirit”* (v. 18)
3. The **expectation** of the church, vv. 25-33  
*“That he might present it to himself a glorious church”* (v. 27)

**C. The church is a SOLDIER, Chapter 6**

1. The soldier’s **relationships**, vv. 1-9  
*“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life”* (2 Timothy 2:4)
2. The soldier’s **enemy**, vv. 10-12  
*“The wiles of the devil”* (v. 11)
3. The soldier’s **protection**, vv. 13-18  
*“The whole armor of God”* (v. 13)
4. The soldier’s **example** — Paul, a good soldier of Jesus Christ, vv. 19-22
5. The soldier’s **benediction**, vv. 23, 24

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**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter—
2. Most important verse—
3. Most prominent word—
4. Teaching about Christ—
5. Command to obey—
6. Promise to claim—
7. New truth learned—

**NOTES**

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**Notes & Outlines**

# **PHILIPPIANS**

J. Vernon McGee

## PHILIPPIANS

*“The Earthly Walk of a Heavenly People”*

**WRITER:** Paul (Philippians 1:1)

**DATE:** A.D. 62

Written at the same time as Ephesians, it is one of the prison epistles.

### **CITY OF PHILIPPI:**

Philippi was a Roman colony. Although it was a miniature of Rome and imitated and aped Rome in every way, it was nonetheless a city which had a higher cultural level than other cities visited by Paul.

### **CHURCH OF PHILIPPI:**

1. It was less Jewish and more Gentile than were all others (the names of individuals mentioned are Greek and Roman). This was the first church established in Europe (Acts 16:6-40), which gives special meaning to Gentiles.
2. Women occupied a prominent place in this church. Paul attended, first of all, not the synagogue, but a prayer meeting of women (Acts 16:12-15). A woman named Lydia was the first convert in Europe. Two women were prominent in the church (Philippians 4:2), and there were others who labored in the church (Philippians 4:3).
3. It was generous in its gifts to the Lord's work (Philippians 4:10-16). Paul cited them as examples to others in giving (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).

### **OCCASION FOR EPISTLE:**

There were two specific circumstances that occasioned the writing of this epistle:

1. The church at Philippi had been generous in support of Paul, and he wrote this letter to thank them. When he was in prison in Rome, they sent help by the hands of Epaphroditus. Epaphroditus became ill in Rome, and when he recovered, Paul wrote this letter and sent it by the messenger who had brought him help.
2. A deeper reason was evidently the division that was arising because of the misunderstanding between two of the women (Philippians 4:2). One of the phrases that Paul used again and again is “you all,” speaking to and of all the believers in the church.

**KEY:**

The epistle is practical; its key thought is *joy*. It has been labeled “The Secret of Joy.” Some form of the word occurs 19 times. It answers the question, “How may I have joy in my heart?” The man who wrote, “Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice” (Philippians 4:4), was in the Mamertine prison in Rome. Joy does not depend upon circumstances.

**REMARKS:**

After Paul and Barnabas had completed their first missionary journey, they determined to visit again the Galatian churches to see their progress. A sharp division arose over the feasibility of taking John Mark along again.

The result was that Paul took Silas and departed for the Galatian country. After visiting the churches, Paul was evidently planning to extend the circumference of his missionary activity by taking the gospel to Asia (the province of Asia, of which Ephesus was the leading city). This was a very prominent, populous, and prosperous region at that time. The Spirit of God put up a roadblock, however, and they “were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia” (Acts 16:6). Then Paul attempted to go north into Bithynia, along the coast of the Black Sea, where there was a very large population. Again the Spirit put up a roadblock — “but the Spirit allowed them not” (Acts 16:7). They had come from the east, they could go neither south nor north, so there was only one way to go — west. It was not Horace Greeley of the *New York Tribune* who first said, “Go west, young man, go west,” it was the Spirit of God speaking to Paul.

Paul proceeded then to Troas where he waited for orders. He was given the vision of a man of Macedonia beseeching him to come over to Europe. The party of Paul crossed over to Samothracia, went on to Neapolis, and to Philippi. Luke joined the party at this juncture (Acts 16:10). Silas and Timothy were already with Paul.

When Paul arrived in Philippi, he discovered that the man of Macedonia was actually a woman by the name of Lydia, holding a prayer meeting by the riverside (Acts 16:13-15). Paul got rough treatment in the city because he cast the demon out of a girl who, by the spirit of divination, was making money for her owners. Paul and Silas were imprisoned. When they sang praises to God at midnight, the prison was shaken, and this led to the conversion of the jailer (read Acts 16). He and his family were some of the converts in this church who were especially drawn to the apostle Paul in the bonds of Christian love.



Paul visited Philippi at least one other time, possibly more. The church in Philippi kept in close touch with the apostle (Philippians 4:15) but apparently lost track of him when he was arrested in Jerusalem, and for two years there was no communication. They finally heard he was in prison in Rome and immediately dispatched their pastor, Epaphroditus, to Rome with words of sympathy, a gift, and many expressions of love.

The Epistle to the Philippians is the answer of Paul to their communication and the coming of Epaphroditus. It is his thank-you letter.

## **OUTLINE:**

### **I. PHILOSOPHY for Christian living, Chapter 1**

- A. Introduction, vv. 1, 2
- B. Paul's tender feeling for the Philippians, vv. 3-11
- C. Bonds and afflictions further the gospel, vv. 12-20
- D. In life or death — Christ, vv. 21-30

### **II. PATTERN for Christian living, Chapter 2**

*(Key verses: 5-11)*

- A. Others, vv. 1-4
- B. Mind of Christ — humble, vv. 5-8
- C. Mind of God — exaltation of Christ, vv. 9-11
- D. Mind of Paul — things of Christ, vv. 12-18
- E. Mind of Timothy — like-minded with Paul, vv. 19-24
- F. Mind of Epaphroditus — the work of Christ, vv. 25-30

### **III. PRIZE for Christian living, Chapter 3**

*(Key verses: 10-14)*

- A. Paul changed his bookkeeping system of the past, vv. 1-9
- B. Paul changed his purpose for the present, vv. 10-19
- C. Paul changed his hope for the future, vv. 20, 21

### **IV. POWER for Christian living, Chapter 4**

*(Key verse: 13)*

- A. Joy — the source of power, vv. 1-4
- B. Prayer — the secret of power, vv. 5-7
- C. Contemplation of Christ — the sanctuary of power, vv. 8, 9
- D. In Christ — the satisfaction of power, vv. 10-23

## COMMENT:

### I. PHILOSOPHY for Christian living, Chapter 1

#### A. Introduction, vv. 1, 2

v. 1 — In ascribing this epistle to himself, Paul links his name with that of Timothy. Since there is no doctrine to correct or conduct to condemn, Paul does not assert his apostleship, but identifies himself with Timothy as “servants [bond slaves] of Jesus Christ.”

“All the saints” — apparently there is one ripple on the surface of the church: two women, Syntyche and Euodia, are not of the same mind (Philippians 4:2). Paul is careful not to address either one or the leader of a group.

The saints are “*in*” Christ, but they are “*at*” Philippi.

He is addressing a local church with officers:

bishops	—	the office	}	the same
elders	—	the individuals		
deacons	—	spiritual men performing a secular service (Acts 6)		

v. 2 — “Grace” (*charis*) is the Greek form of greeting; “peace” (*shalom*) is the Hebrew greeting. We must know the grace of God before we can experience the peace of God. Grace is love in action.

#### B. Paul’s tender feeling for the Philippians, vv. 3-11

v. 3 — It is a lovely and delightful relationship.

v. 4 — Paul prays for the Philippians in every prayer. “You all” is not only a good Southern idiom, but it includes all the saints in Philippi — none are left out.

“Joy” — this is the first of 19 occurrences of this word or its cognates. Joy is the fruit of the Spirit, and it was not turned off when Paul went to prison.

v. 5 — “Fellowship” is *koinonia*. Anything that believers can share together is *koinonia* — fellowship. Prayer, Bible reading, celebrating the Lord’s Supper, and giving are all areas of fellowship that can be shared.

v. 6 — “Being confident” is causative, meaning “since I am confident,” implying certainty.

“Perform” (perfect) is translated “will finish it up” (Lenski) or “carry through” (Vincent).

“Day of Jesus Christ” is the Rapture.

If God has brought you up to the present hour, He will consummate His work in you. He will not let you down. You can count on Him. (This has been my personal life verse from the day I graduated from college.)

v. 7 — “Meet” (KJV) is *right*. “You all” — here it is again.

“In my heart” is a good place to carry friends.

“Partakers” (*sugkoinonous*) is fellowship compounded. This speaks of the close relationship between the Philippians and Paul. There is no credibility gap.

v. 8 — “You all” includes all believers in the church, not just one segment.

“Bowels” (KJV) means tender feelings. This has definite reference to the emotions and drives. Here is where many decisions are made — not in the mind.

v. 9 — Love of the believer is to be exercised in knowledge. He is not to express his love and help to any and every person in sight. He should know the individual and then exercise judgment. He does not love indiscriminately.

v. 10 — “That ye may approve things that are excellent” may rather be expressed, “That ye may try the things that differ.”

“Without offense” is blameless.

### **C. Bonds and afflictions further the gospel, vv. 12-20**

v. 12 — Obviously, the Philippians had sent their sympathy to Paul, expressing their distress that his imprisonment had ended the preaching of the gospel. Paul makes it clear that, rather, the gospel is being extended by his imprisonment. He mentions two areas, and we see another, also:

v. 13 — (1) Paul is now able to witness to the Praetorian guard of Caesar’s palace. These soldiers, representing the elite of Roman patricians, were guarding the apostle (Acts 28:16).

v. 14 — (2) Many believers who felt inadequate as long as Paul was out witnessing now feel free to go. I suppose literally hundreds

of believers took to the Roman roads with the gospel.

(3) Paul does not mention it, but with the perspective of history we see that the Spirit of God was giving Paul the time to write these prison epistles.

**vv. 15-18** — Some brethren who preached Christ were of goodwill, but others, motivated by envy and jealousy, were giving Paul a rough time. In either case, he rejoiced that Christ was being preached.

**v. 19** — “Salvation” evidently refers here to Paul’s physical deliverance.

**v. 20** — Paul’s motivation is that Christ shall be magnified in his body either in life or death.

#### **D. In life or death — Christ, vv. 21-30**

**v. 21** — This is Paul’s philosophy of life:

To live — Christ;

To die — gain (more of the same thing).

**vv. 22-26** — Paul recognizes that to be with Christ is far better, but for the Philippians’ sake it is better to continue on with them.

**v. 27** — Regardless of his presence, Paul urges them to continue living in a manner that is honoring to Christ.

**v. 28** — He also urges them not to be terrified by their enemies.

**v. 29** — Suffering is the badge of the child of God. (With the use of a concordance, look up the Scripture references to the suffering of the saints, beginning with John 16:33).

## **II. PATTERN for Christian living, Chapter 2**

*(Key verses: 5-11)*

### **A. Others, vv. 1-4**

**v. 1** — “If” is not conditional, but argumentative. It could be translated, “Since there is consolation in Christ....”

Again, “bowels” is tender mercies.

**v. 3** — “Strife” and “vainglory” are the causes of most church divisions.

“Lowliness of mind” and consideration of others will produce harmonious relationships.

**v. 4** — “Others” is the key to the entire passage as the motivation

of Christian conduct.

### **B. Mind of Christ — humble, vv. 5-8**

**v. 5** — This is not the imitation of Christ, but it is the impartation of the mind of Christ which only the Holy Spirit can accomplish.

This gives the humiliation of Christ. There are 7 steps down:

**v. 6** — (1) He was not in danger of losing His place in the God-head because of any lack on His part or because of the ability and ambition of a contender. He was God without effort.

**v. 7** — (2) This is the *kenosis*. He emptied Himself. He did *not* empty Himself of His deity — He was very God of very God and very man of very man. He *did* empty Himself of His glory (John 17:5).

(3) He was a root out of Jesse. Jesse, David's father, was a peasant in Bethlehem. Although Jesus was of the royal seed of David, the line had long since become merely a vassal of Rome.

(4) To become a man was a humiliation for Him, as God. To comprehend something of this, we might imagine the humiliation it would be for you or me to become an ant.

**v. 8** — (5) He was not humbled by others, but He willingly and gladly humbled Himself. Real humility is not a Mr. Milquetoast, nor is it a false front like Uriah Heep in *David Copperfield*. Pride is the opposite of humility (1 Peter 5:6).

(6) Death is the result of sin. It is a judgment upon man. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). He bore the penalty of our sin.

(7) The cross was the method of execution used by Rome for criminals. It was a badge of ignominy and shame.

### **C. Mind of God — exaltation of Christ, vv. 9-11**

There are 7 steps upward:

**v. 9** — (1) God has highly exalted Him and  
(2) given Him a name above every name.

**v. 10** — (3) The name of Jesus.  
(4) Every knee in heaven shall bow.  
(5) Every knee in earth shall bow.  
(6) Every knee under the earth shall bow.

v. 11 — (7) Every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

#### **D. Mind of Paul — things of Christ, vv. 12-18**

v. 12 — To “work out your own salvation” is to work out what God has worked in.

v. 13 — God works out what He works in.

v. 15 — The believer shines like a light in the darkness as God looks upon the world.

v. 16 — “Holding forth the word of life” is an appropriate motto for a Bible-teaching church.

“Day of Christ” is the Rapture of the church.

v. 17 — Paul thought of himself as a drink offering offered upon the sacrifice of Christ. The drink offering (Genesis 35:14; Exodus 29:40; Leviticus 23:13; etc.) was poured upon the other offerings, and it ascended in steam. (See Colossians 1:24.)

“Joy, and rejoice” — note the repeated resurgence of joy.

v. 18 — Paul calls upon the Philippians to “joy, and rejoice” with him.

#### **E. Mind of Timothy — like-minded with Paul, vv. 19-24**

v. 19 — Paul plans to send Timothy to Philippi.

v. 20 — Timothy is of the same mind as Paul. “Naturally” is truly.

vv. 21-23 — Timothy is contrasted to others. He seeks the things of Christ. Others seek their own interests.

v. 24 — Paul was planning to return to Philippi if released.

#### **F. Mind of Epaphroditus — the work of Christ, vv. 25-30**

v. 25 — Epaphroditus was the pastor of the church in Philippi. Notice that Paul has a way of saying something complimentary of the local pastor. He identifies himself with Epaphroditus — “brother... companion...fellow soldier.”

vv. 26, 27 — Epaphroditus had been sick, very sick.

v. 28 — Paul is sending him back to Philippi.

v. 30 — Epaphroditus has the mind of Christ — “for the work of Christ, he was near unto death.”

### III. PRIZE for Christian living, Chapter 3

(Key verses: 10-14)

#### A. Paul changed his bookkeeping system of the past, vv. 1-9

v. 1 — “Finally” indicates that Paul intended to bring this epistle to an end at this point. However, the Spirit of God prompted him to continue. He calls upon the Philippians to rejoice. Paul’s letter to the Philippians is not a burden to him as the Galatian and Corinthian epistles had been.

v. 2 — “Beware of dogs” — dogs in the Old Testament were false shepherds and prophets who did not warn the people nor feed the flock.

“Concision” is a slur on the word “circumcision.”

v. 3 — Paul declares that the true circumcisions are those who are new creations in Christ (Galatians 6:15), rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh.

v. 4 — There are those who might say that Paul had nothing according to the flesh in which he could place confidence. However, Paul is going to present a very impressive list of assets in which he once had confidence:

v. 5 — (1) “Circumcised the eighth day” means that he had godly parents who reared him according to the Mosaic Law.

(2) He was a full-blooded Israelite, not a half-breed.

(3) Benjamin was a son of Jacob by Rachel, who died after she had given him birth. Jacob called him the son of his right hand. He was something special, and so was the tribe that came from Benjamin. The first king of the nation, Saul, came from Benjamin. (Paul may have been named for King Saul.)

(4) “Hebrew of the Hebrews” means that Paul was in the highest strata of the religious circle.

(5) As a Pharisee, he represented the best in Israel. The Pharisees were a religio-politico party. As a religious party, they were fundamental. As a political party, they were extremely nationalistic.

v. 6 — (6) Paul led in persecuting the Christians.

(7) Paul does not mean that he kept the Ten Commandments; he means that he offered the proper sacrifice when he broke the Law.

*...I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not*

***known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*** (Romans 7:7)

**v. 7** — Paul changed his bookkeeping system when he came to Christ. This was the great revolution that took place in his own life. It was as radical as if the entire economy of the nation changed to the extent that credits became debits and debits, credits. This would upset the economy of the nation and the world. Paul was turned upside down and right-side up on the Damascus road when he met Christ. All that he had as “confidence in the flesh” (v. 4) became garbage.

**v. 8** — This describes the marvelous transformation that took place in the life of Paul.

**v. 9** — This is the theological explanation of the conversion of Paul.

“Mine own righteousness” was legal righteousness — it was filthy rags in God’s sight. He had given up all claim to his righteousness in order to receive the grace righteousness of Christ (which he had received by faith). Faith was the only *modus operandi* of receiving grace righteousness.

### **B. Paul changed his purpose for the present, vv. 10-19**

**v. 10** — Being saved by faith may give the impression that there is no motivation for conduct and works. Paul dissipates that notion in this section. He exhibits an effort and energy derived from the Holy Spirit which is far greater than any legal effort. Under the Law, he would go to Damascus to stamp out the followers of Christ. Under the grace-faith system, he will go to the end of the earth to make followers of Christ and to witness for Him (v. 14).

At the end of his life, his ambition is still to know Christ — His person, the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings. To know Christ and His work of redemption will engage our attention for eternity.

**v. 11** — Paul is not expressing a doubt about his participation in the Rapture. Rather, he is affirming that he will have part in it with great joy. Paul does not expect to attain perfection in this life.

**v. 12** — The knowledge that he will not attain perfection here does not deter him from moving in that direction.

**v. 13** — This expresses the *modus operandi* of the life of Paul.

The past — he is leaving it behind, with all its mistakes, not letting it be a handicap for the present.



The future — he lives in the present in anticipation of the future when he will grow and develop. This is his practical sanctification.

**v. 14** — This is the prize for Christian living. Paul’s future is so absorbed by Christ that it motivates everything he says and does in the present. He likens himself to a track star running for a prize. His prize is not some earthly award, but Christ Himself.

**vv. 15, 16** — Paul calls upon the Philippians to make this their goal also.

**v. 17** — Paul’s life is an example to other believers, not for imitation, but to share the power of Christ in the body of Christ — the church.

**vv. 18, 19** — There are some who profess Christ yet contradict all of this by their lives. Their god is their belly.

*Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works; show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.* (James 2:17, 18)

John Calvin put it this way, “Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone.”

### **C. Paul changed his hope for the future, vv. 20, 21**

**v. 20** — “Conversation” (KJV) is citizenship, meaning the total way of living. Mrs. Montgomery translated it, “Our city home is in heaven.”

Paul’s hope is the imminent coming of Christ from heaven to receive the church.

**v. 21** — “Lowly body” is perhaps better translated “body of humiliation”; “body of corruption” is an acceptable translation.

“Like his glorious body” is the goal toward which Paul is moving.

*Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality....Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.* (1 Corinthians 15:51-54)

*Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* (1 John 3:2)

#### **IV. POWER for Christian living, Chapter 4** (Key verse: 13)

This is the program for power. Paul gives us the formula for power in Christian living, which must be met before we can quote verse 13.

##### **A. Joy — the source of power, vv. 1-4**

**v. 1** — The Philippian believers were a joy to Paul in this life and his crown for the next. Paul calls upon them to “stand fast in the Lord” (see Ephesians 6:10-14).

**v. 2** — Evidently, two women in the church, Euodia and Syntyche, had a misunderstanding that ruptured the close fellowship of the believers in Philippi. These women needed the mind of Christ (Philippians 2).

**v. 3** — This reveals the prominence of women in the leadership of the apostolic church.

**v. 4** — Joy is not an option for the believer, it is a command of Christ. Without joy, a believer is powerless (Nehemiah 8:10).

##### **B. Prayer — the secret of power, vv. 5-7**

**v. 5** — “Moderation” is called by Matthew Arnold “sweet reasonableness”

**v. 6** — Worry about nothing; pray about everything. Paul places two indefinite pronouns in opposition. A believer is to worry about nothing because he is to pray about everything. There is nothing in a believer’s life that should not be made an object of prayer. The answer of a famous preacher to a woman who asked if we were to pray about the small things in our lives is noteworthy: “Madam,” he said, “can you mention anything in your life that is big to God?”

“With thanksgiving” means that the believer is to thank God for answering his prayer even while he prays. God always hears and answers the prayers of His children — but His answer is often *no*.

**v. 7** — This is an indescribable peace of God, for it passes understanding. It guards the heart and mind. It is a peace that must encompass all others.

Peace *with* God — sins forgiven  
Peace *of* God — tranquility

You enter this passage in worry — you come out in peace. The storm is still blowing, the waves are still rolling high, the night is still dark. *Things* have not changed, but the believer who prays has.

**C. Contemplation of Christ — the sanctuary of power,**  
vv. 8, 9

**v. 8** — “Lovely” is *gracious*.

This has been called the briefest biography of Christ. The believer must contemplate Christ as well as communicate with Him for power. Purity is essential to power. In fact, purity is synonymous with power. We live in a dirty world. We need to retire to the sanctuary of the soul — the throne of God where Christ sits on the right hand of God. He will cleanse us by the washing of His Word.

**v. 9** — “Do” is *practice*. Paul is an example here also.

**D. In Christ — the satisfaction of power,** vv. 10-23

**v. 10** — The Philippian believers had sent Paul a gift, and this is his thank-you note.

**vv. 11, 12** — Paul knew how to be content, regardless of his circumstances. (As I write these notes, I am about 35 miles northwest of Boston, Massachusetts, in a place called Ayer. A snowstorm has paralyzed this area. It is impossible to get into Boston. I have not even been able to make telephone contact to see if I have reservations out of here. I am stranded and find it difficult to be content.)

**v. 13** — “Through Christ” is *in Christ*. This is the high point of the epistle. It is well to note that “all things” is modified by “in Christ.” For example, a train can do “all things” between departure and destination when it is “in” the tracks made for it. When it leaves the track, it is a wreck and can do nothing.

**vv. 14-19** — Paul speaks of the past generosity of the Philippian believers and assures them that God will meet their every need (not luxury items).

**vv. 20-23** — Paul concludes this epistle as he began it — on a personal, warm and friendly basis of Christian love and fellowship.

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**Notes & Outlines**

# **COLOSSIANS**

J. Vernon McGee

# COLOSSIANS

**WRITER:** Paul (Colossians 1:1)

**DATE:** About A.D. 62

## CHURCH AT COLOSSE:

Paul had never been to Colosse when he wrote this epistle (Colossians 2:1). He was in Ephesus for about two years where he had his most fruitful ministry (Acts 19:8-19). Colosse was 75 to 100 miles east of Ephesus, and visitors from Colosse had heard Paul and had come to know Christ. Apparently Philemon was one of these. A church came into existence in Colosse (Philemon 2). Epaphras was the minister of the Colossian church (Colossians 1:4-8; 4:12, 13). Paul intended to visit there when he was released from prison (Philemon 22). Paul wrote to this church as though it were his own.

## PROBLEM AT COLOSSE:

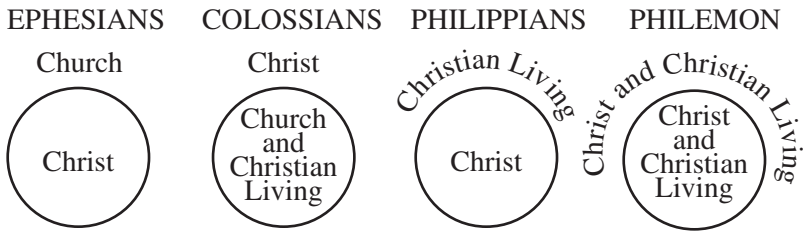
Colosse, located in southwest Phrygia in Asia Minor, near Laodicea, was beset with oriental mysticism. Gnosticism had evidently intruded with its Greek pantheistic philosophy of the demiurge.

GNOSTICISM	PAUL'S ANSWER
(1) They had an exclusive spirit (were aristocratic in wisdom).	Col. 1:28
(2) They held speculative tenets on creation — that God did not create the universe directly, but created a creature who in turn created another creature, until one finally created the physical universe. Christ was considered a creature in this long series of creations.	Col. 1:15-19; 2:18
(3) Their ethical practice was asceticism (influenced by Greek Stoicism) and unrestrained licentiousness (from Greek Epicureanism).	Col. 2:16, 23 Col. 3:5-9

## MESSAGE OF COLOSSIANS:

Colossians is the chart and compass that enable the believer to sail between the ever-present Scylla and Charybdis. “Pure Christianity lives between two dangers ever present: the danger that it will evaporate into a philosophy — philosophies of the atonement...and the danger that it will freeze into a form” (Dr. Scofield). Jesus said that He is the water of life. He did not say that He was the ice of life; He did not say that He was the steam of life. We are not told to add something to Christ nor to subtract from Him.

The message of this epistle can best be seen by comparing it with other prison epistles.



**Subject:** Ephesians — the body of believers, called the church, of which Christ is the Head

Colossians — the Head of the body who is Christ; the body is only secondary (Colossians 1:18)

**Theme:** Philippians — Christian living is the theme and the periphery of the circle where Christ is the center.

Colossians — Christ is the theme and the periphery of the circle where Christian living is the center.

Philippians emphasizes the *kenosis* — Christ became a Servant (Philippians 2:7).

Colossians emphasizes the *pleroma* — Christ is the fullness of God (Colossians 2:9).

“Thou, O Christ, art all I want; more than all in Thee I find” (Charles Wesley).



## OUTLINE:

### I. **DOCTRINAL**, Chapters 1, 2

*In Christ, the fullness (pleroma) of God, we are made full.*

**A. Introduction**, Chapter 1:1-8

**B. Paul's prayer**, Chapter 1:9-14

**C. Person of Christ**, Chapter 1:15-19

**D. Objective work of Christ for sinners**, Chapter 1:20-23

**E. Subjective work of Christ for saints**, Chapter 1:24-29

**F. Christ, the answer to philosophy**, Chapter 2:1-15

*(for the HEAD)*

**G. Christ, the answer to ritual**, Chapter 2:16-23

*(for the HEART)*

### II. **PRACTICAL**, Chapters 3, 4

*Christ, the fullness of God, poured out in life through believers.*

*(Breaking the alabaster box of ointment in the world.)*

**A. Thoughts and affections of believers are heavenly**,  
Chapter 3:1-4

*(The believer's heart should be in heaven where his Head is.)*

**B. Living of believers is holy**, Chapters 3:5 — 4:6

*(In all relationships — personal, social, marital, parental, capital and labor — the believer should manifest Christ.)*

**C. Fellowship of believers is hearty**, Chapter 4:7-18

*(Roster of faithful workers similar to Romans 16 and Hebrews 11.)*

## COMMENT:

### I. **DOCTRINAL**, Chapters 1, 2

*In Christ, the fullness (pleroma) of God, we are made full.*

**A. Introduction**, Chapter 1:1-8

**v. 1** — Paul's standard opening associates his name with that of Timothy, who may have visited Colosse.

**v. 2** — He does not mean to differentiate between the saints and the faithful. They are the same people.

**v. 3** — Paul gives thanks directly to "God...the Father." This is His redemptive provision (John 3:16). Gnosticism did not believe one could go directly to God, but rather through the emanations of God.

**vv. 4, 5** — Paul links the trinity of graces for believers:

Faith — past  
Love — present  
Hope — future

**v. 6** — “World” is *kosmos*, meaning the Roman world. Vincent considers this hyperbole. Gospel preaching had already far-reaching results. It reveals the universal character of the gospel.

“Fruit” is produced in those who believe.

**v. 7** — Epaphras may have been the founder of the church, as some suppose.

**v. 8** — “Love” is the fruit of the Spirit.

### **B. Paul’s prayer, Chapter 1:9-14**

**v. 9** — Paul put the Colossians on his prayer list.

“Knowledge” is *epignosis*, superknowledge. The Gnostics boasted that they had superknowledge. Here Paul confines it to the will of God, which is expressed in the Word of God. It gives “wisdom and spiritual understanding.” “Wisdom,” in all its forms occurs forty times in this epistle.

**v. 10** — “Worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing” means that they would not be obsequious to man.

“Increasing in the knowledge of God” — a Christian should not be static but alive and growing in the Word of God.

**v. 11** — Strength and power come from God and are produced by the Holy Spirit in patience, longsuffering, and joyfulness.

**v. 12** — God, by His grace, has given us an inheritance with the saints in light.

**v. 13** — We have been delivered from the kingdom of Satan (Ephesians 2:2) into the kingdom of “the Son of his love” (ASV). This is the present aspect of the kingdom of God.

**v. 14** — Forgiveness is always associated with the blood of Christ. God does not arbitrarily or sentimentally forgive sin. “Redemption” is *apolutrosin*, meaning to set free an enslaved people.

### **C. Person of Christ, Chapter 1:15-19**

This section on the person of Christ is the answer to all heresy con-

cerning His person. One of the first heresies was Arianism. Arius of Alexandria said that the Lord Jesus Christ was a creature. The Council of Nicaea, A.D. 325, answered this heresy: “The Son is very man of very man, and very God of very God.” Later Socinus propagated this heresy that Jesus was not God. This is the basis of Unitarianism and some of the cults, including Jehovah’s Witnesses.

There are nine marks of identification of Christ that make Him different and superior:

**v. 15 — (1)** “Image” (*eikon*; Hebrews 1:3; John 1:18). He could not be the image of God unless He *was* God.

**(2)** “The first-born of all creation” (*prototokos*; John 1:14, 18; 3:16). God is the everlasting Father; the Son is the everlasting Son. His position in the Trinity is that of Son. “First-born” indicates His priority before all creation. His headship of all creation does not necessarily mean He was born first (Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 1:5; Romans 8:29). In incarnation He is the Son of God in a new sense. The angel’s announcement to Mary was, “...That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). Christ is the same in substance, equal in power and glory with the Father.

**v. 16 — (3)** “By him were all things created” clears up any question about Christ being the Creator or a creature in verse 15 (cp. John 1:3; Hebrews 1:2).

There are two kinds of creation — “visible and invisible.” There are different gradations of rank in spiritual intelligences: “thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers.”

**(4)** He not only created all things, they were created *for* Him.

**v. 17 — (5)** “He is before all things” — in the preincarnate Christ, all fullness dwells. In the incarnate Christ, all fullness dwells.

**(6)** He holds all things together. He maintains creation. He directs it. “Consist” (*sunesteken*) is to hold together (cp. Hebrews 1:3).

**v. 18 — (7)** “He is the head of the body, the church” (cp. Ephesians 1:22). He is the firstborn from the dead. He is the only One who has been raised in a glorified body (cp. Psalm 2:7; Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5, 5:5; Revelation 1:5).

**(8)** “That in all things he might have the pre-eminence” — the will of Christ must prevail throughout all of God’s creation.

**v. 19 — (9)** The fullness (*pleroma*) was at home, the full-fullness. Jesus was 100% God — not 99.44%.

Relationship to the Father, v. 15

Relationship to creation, vv. 16, 17

Relationship to the church, vv. 18, 19

Relationship to the cross, v. 20

#### **D. Objective work of Christ for sinners, Chapter 1:20-23**

**v. 20** — Christ “made peace through the blood of his cross” (cp. Romans 5:1). God is not a big policeman waiting around the corner ready to pounce on the sinner. God has His arms outstretched and is saying to the sinner, “Come, and I will give you redemption rest.” Reconciliation is toward man. God is reconciled by the cross of Christ. He is asking man to be reconciled to Him (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

“All things” is limited to all things appointed for reconciliation (in just such a way as “the loss of all things” is limited to what things Paul had to lose [Philippians 3:8]).

“Things in heaven” indicate that not only must we be made ready for heaven, but heaven must be made ready to receive us. The Lord Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2). By the incarnation, God came down to man; by the blood of Jesus, man is brought up to God. Notice that it does not add, “things under the earth” (cp. Philippians 2:10).

**v. 21** — “Enemies in your mind” reminds us that there is mental alienation from God as well as moral alienation. This explains the fierce antagonism to God on the part of some so-called intellectuals.

**v. 22** — “Body of his flesh” is an explicit declaration, as Docetic Gnosticism stated that Christ suffered in appearance but not in a real body.

“Unblamable” means *without blemish*. This was the requirement for a sacrificial animal.

“Unreprovable” means *unaccusable; unchargeable*. “It is God that justifies.”

**v. 23** — This is not conditional, based on the future. It is not something that shall be if something else is. Rather, this is the “if” of argument, often used by Paul. It could be translated, “*Since ye continue in the faith...*”

## E. Subjective work of Christ for saints, Chapter 1:24-29

v. 24 — A free translation could be, “Now I, Paul, rejoice in the midst of my sufferings for you, and I am filling up in my flesh that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ for His body’s sake, which is the church.” It was necessary to fill up that which was lacking of the suffering of Christ.

- (1) There are sufferings of Christ that we cannot share:
  - (a) Human suffering;
  - (b) Suffering as the Son of God;
  - (c) Suffering as the sacrifice for the sins of the world.
- (2) There are sufferings of Christ that we can share:
  - (a) Suffering for righteousness’ sake;
  - (b) Suffering in the measure we identify ourselves with Christ for the proclamation of the gospel. (See author’s tape, “The Unfinished Sufferings of Christ.”)

v. 25 — “Dispensation” is *economy*; *stewardship*.

vv. 26, 27 — “Mystery” is a *sacred secret*. This looks forward to the day when we shall be like Him (1 John 3:2). We are in Christ down here at present.

vv. 28, 29 — “Perfect in Christ Jesus” means *complete*. This was the goal of Paul.

## F. Christ, the answer to philosophy, Chapter 2:1-15 (for the HEAD)

There were five errors that endangered the Colossian church:

- (1) Enticing words, vv. 4-7
- (2) Philosophy, vv. 8-13
- (3) Legality, vv. 14-17
- (4) Mysticism, vv. 18, 19
- (5) Asceticism, vv. 20-23

v. 1 — “Conflict” is *agony* — called *prayer agony* by MacPhail.

Laodicea was located on the river Lycos, next to Colosse. It was much more prominent than Colosse. Before 250 B.C. it was called Diosopolis. Here, in 364 A.D., the council to determine the canon of Scripture met (Revelation 3:14-22).

“As many as have not seen my face in the flesh” makes it obvious that Paul had not been to Colosse.

**v. 2** — “Heart” indicates the entire man, the whole propulsive nature of man. “Knit together” is *compacted* (with the thought of instruction).

“Full assurance” is *under full sail*.

“Mystery of God” is *Christ in His incarnation*. “He was very God of very God and very man of very man.”

**v. 3** — We may go to Christ for wisdom and knowledge. “Next to knowledge is knowing where to find out.”

**v. 4** — “Beguile you” means to *victimize you*. “Enticing words” are *oratory* or *sweet talk*.

**v. 5** — “Order” is a military term, meaning *to stand shoulder to shoulder*.

“Steadfastness” is a *solid front; immovable*. Paul is commending them for their faithfulness in the face of overwhelming odds against them.

**v. 6** — “Received” a person, Jesus Christ.

**v. 7** — “Rooted” as a tree, a living thing.

“Built up” as a house

“In the faith” is *by your faith*.

**v. 8** — “Beware” is *look out!*

“Lest any man” — notice that Paul mentions no names.

“Spoil” is *booty* in a Roman victory parade.

“Philosophy” — a true philosopher is a seeker after the truth. Christ is the answer. False philosophy is like a blind man looking in a dark room for a black cat that isn’t there.

“Tradition of men” — Christ condemned religious rulers for this.

“Rudiments” (*stoicheion*), the ABCs.

**v. 9** — “Fullness” is *pleroma*. This is a clear-cut statement of the deity of Christ.

v. 10 — “Complete in him” may be translated, “Ye are ready for the voyage of life in Him,” picturing a sailing ship out on a voyage.

v. 11 — The real circumcision for today is the new birth (cp. Galatians 6:15; John 3:3).

v. 12 — Identification with Christ is the meaning of being “buried with him in baptism” (see notes on Romans 6:1-5).

“Risen with him” — Lord Lyndhurst, lord chancellor of Great Britain and one of the sharpest legal minds of all time, said: “I know pretty well what evidence is; and I tell you, such evidence as that for the resurrection has never broken down yet.”

v. 13 — It is not the improvement of the old nature, but the impartation of a new nature.

v. 14 — Since the Law was given to discipline the old nature, and the believer is given a new nature, the Law as a way of life was removed *per se* by the cross of Christ.

v. 15 — The spiritual victory that Christ won for the believer is of inestimable value.

### **G. Christ, the answer to ritual, Chapter 2:16-23** (for the HEART)

v. 16 — A believer is not to observe ordinances that are only ritual and liturgical, as they have no present value (cp. 1 Corinthians 8:8-13).

v. 17 — “Shadow” is *picture; a photograph*. All of the rituals of the Law were pictures of Christ. Now that Christ has come, we have the reality, the person of Christ, and we no longer need pictures.

v. 18 — Paul is here condemning the Gnostics who made a pretense of wisdom.

“Intruding into those things which he hath not seen” is a pretense. The American Standard Version translates it, “Dwelling in the things which he hath seen.”

v. 19 — “Not holding the Head” indicates a loose relationship to Christ. Therefore they do not grow spiritually.

v. 20 — “If ye be dead” might better be translated, “Since ye have

died (when Christ died), do not return to pre-cross living.”

“Ordinances” are *fads*.

**v. 21** — This is separation, according to many. Actually this is monkey business — the three little monkeys see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.

**v. 22** — These are part of the passing fashions of the world.

**v. 23** — This is “the pride that apes humility” (Juvenal).

“Not in any honor” means it is not of any value.

## **II. PRACTICAL, Chapters 3, 4**

*Christ, the fullness of God, poured out in life through believers.  
(Breaking the alabaster box of ointment in the world.)*

**A. Thoughts and affections of believers are heavenly, Chapter 3:1-4**

*(The believer’s heart should be in heaven where his Head is.)*

**v. 1** — “Be risen” is *were raised* — when Christ was raised, we were raised (Romans 6:4, 5).

**v. 2** — “Affection” is *mind* — think about things above.

**v. 3** — “For ye are dead” is *for ye have died*— when Christ died, we died.

**v. 4** — This is the guarantee for the future. We have died with Him; we have been raised with Him. We are in Christ. When He appears, we appear.

**B. Living of believers is holy, Chapters 3:5 — 4:6**

*(In all relationships — personal, social, marital, parental, capital and labor — the believer should manifest Christ.)*

### **Chapter 3**

**v. 5** — “Mortify” is *put to death; put in the place of death*.

“Members” refers to the energies and activities of the old man (Romans 8:6-8). Paul deals with specific sins:

“Fornication” refers to physical and spiritual fornication.

“Uncleanness” includes thoughts, words, looks, gestures.



“Inordinate affection” is *passion* (ASV); *lust*.

“Evil concupiscence” is *evil desire* (ASV).

“Covetousness” is *must-have-more-ness*.

**v. 6** — God judges sinners for these sins, and God must judge believers for committing them.

**v. 7** — This is the condition of believers before they were saved.

**v. 8** — “Put off” as a garment.

“Malice” is *congealed anger*.

“Filthy communication” is *foul* communication — both abusive and filthy.

**v. 9** — “Put off the old man” — the old man is not to control the life of the believer. Garments in Scripture are habits. We use the same expression today when we speak of riding habits or walking habits. The old man is to be put off, taken off as a garment.

**v. 10** — “Put on the new” garment or habit. Nature abhors a vacuum. Putting off is not enough; we must live in the new man by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**v. 11** — Christ is all in all. He is a catalyst that brings together individuals and groups who are separate and makes them one in Christ. A catalyst is a substance that is placed with elements that are opposed and brings them together in a new compound.

**v. 12** — As he labeled the things of the old man that were to be put off, here he labels the specifics that go with the wardrobe of the new man. “Tender mercies” may be translated *a heart of compassion*. These all are the fruit of the Holy Spirit (cp. Galatians 5:22, 23).

**v. 13** — This is the basis on which the believer is to forgive, rather than the legal basis given in the so-called Lord’s Prayer (cp. Ephesians 4:32).

**vv. 14, 15** — “Love” and “peace” are both fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

**v. 16** — “The word of Christ” — “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (John 15:3).

“Dwell” is *be at home* — be given the run of the house. Many folk praise the Bible but do not study it. Juvenal said, “Virtue is praised and left to starve.” This verse is fulfilled only in a Spirit-filled heart (see Ephesians 5:18-20). Of 2nd century believers, Pliny wrote to the Emperor in A.D. 112: “They meet together before day to sing a hymn to Christ as God.”

**v. 17** — This is the Christian life, the *summum bonum* of life.

**vv. 18-22** — See notes on Ephesians 5:22 — 6:9.

**v. 23** — Christian service is that which is done to please Christ rather than men.

**v. 24** — For this he will receive a reward.

**v. 25** — If the believer attempts to please men, there is no reward.

#### **Chapter 4**

**v. 1** — Both masters and servants must give an account to the Master in heaven (Ephesians 6:9). “Just and equal” is not to level down, but to level up.

**vv. 2-6** — Here are three more areas of Christian conduct which are important:

(1) “Prayer” (vv. 2-4). Persevere in prayer. Like breathing, inhale (prayer), exhale (thanksgiving). Pray for the preaching of the gospel.

(2) “Walk in wisdom” (v. 5). The public walk is another important factor.

(3) “Speech” (v. 6). We should not be boring, but enthusiastic!

#### **C. Fellowship of believers is hearty, Chapter 4:7-18**

*(Roster of faithful workers similar to Romans 16 and Hebrews 11.)*

This section is similar to Romans 16. It is a roster of believers who lived, moved, and had their being in the pagan culture of the Roman Empire. They lived for God in a heathen society.

**vv. 7, 8** — Tychicus was evidently the pastor of the church in Ephesus (Ephesians 6:21; Acts 20:4; 2 Timothy 4:12).

**v. 9** — Onesimus was a slave of Philemon in Colosse. He had run away to Rome. Paul led him to Christ and had returned him to Philemon as a brother (see Epistle to Philemon).

**v. 10** — Aristarchus (Acts 19:29) was a friend of Paul. Mark (Acts 15:37) made good (2 Timothy 4:11).

**vv. 12, 13** — Epaphras was the minister at Colosse, but at this time was in prison. He had now a ministry of prayer.

**v. 14** — Luke was the beloved physician.

**vv. 15-18** — Personal greetings and injunctions.

**v. 18** — “Remember my bonds” was evidently the motto of many believers who began to witness after Paul was imprisoned.

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Harrison, Everett F. *Colossians: Christ All-Sufficient*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1971.
- Hendrickson, William. *Exposition of Colossians and Philemon*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1965.
- Ironside, H. A. *Lectures on the Epistle to the Colossians*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1929.
- Kelly, William. *Lectures on the Epistle to the Philippians and Colossians*. Oak Park, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, n.d.
- Kent, Homer A., Jr. *Treasures of Wisdom: Studies in Colossians and Philemon*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1978. (Excellent.)
- King, Guy H. *Crossing the Border*. Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, 1957. (Devotional.)
- Moule, Handley C. G. *Colossians and Philemon*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1893. (This is a reprint from *The Cambridge University Bible for Schools and Colleges*. This helpful series also covers Romans, Ephesians, and Philippians.)
- Nicholson, William. *Oneness with Christ*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1903. (Devotional.)
- Robertson, A. T. *Paul and the Intellectuals*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1928.
- Thomas, W. H. Griffith. *Studies in Colossians and Philemon*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1973. (Excellent.)
- Vine, W. E. *Philippians and Colossians*. London: Oliphants, 1955. (This is an excellent treatment.)
- Wiersbe, Warren W. *Be Complete*. Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1981.
- Wuest, Kenneth S. *Ephesians and Colossians in the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953.

**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter—
2. Most important verse—
3. Most prominent word—
4. Teaching about Christ—
5. Command to obey—
6. Promise to claim—
7. New truth learned—



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**Notes & Outlines**

# **1 & 2 THESSALONIANS**

J. Vernon McGee

# 1 THESSALONIANS

**WRITER:** Paul

**DATE:** A.D. 52-53

**PLACE:**

Thessalonica was a Roman colony and very important in the life of the Roman Empire. It was located 100 miles west of Philippi and about 200 miles north of Athens. It was the chief city of Macedonia. Cicero said, "Thessalonica is in the bosom of the Empire."

It was first named Therma because of hot springs in that area. In 316 B.C. Cassander (who succeeded Alexander the Great) named it in memory of his wife, Thessalonike, a half sister of Alexander the Great. Thessalonica is still in existence, and the present-day name is Salonika.

The church in Thessalonica was a model church. Paul cited it to the Corinthians as an example (see 1 Thessalonians 1:7; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5).

**OCCASION:**

This was the earliest epistle written by Paul. It was written from Athens or, more likely, Corinth on his second missionary journey. Paul had to leave Thessalonica "posthaste" due to the great opposition to the gospel. The enemy pursued him to Berea, and again Paul was forced to leave. He left Silas and Timothy at Berea and went on to Athens. It was evidently there that Timothy brought him word from the church in Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 3:6), together with some questions that they had raised. Paul wrote his first epistle in response to their overture.

**THEME:**

Although Paul was in Thessalonica less than a month (Acts 17:2), he touched on many of the great doctrines of the church. Among them was the second coming of Christ. This theme was not above the heads of the new converts, according to the great apostle. The particular phase in the second coming of Christ which he emphasized was Christ's coming for believers. The second coming of Christ in relationship to believers is a comfort (1 Thessalonians 4:18). This aspect

is quite different from His catastrophic and cataclysmic coming in glory to establish His kingdom by putting down all unrighteousness (Revelation 19:11-16).

**PURPOSE:**

1. To *confirm* young converts in the elementary truth of the gospel.
2. To *condition* them to go on unto holy living.
3. To *comfort* them regarding the return of Christ.

A heathen inscription in Thessalonica read:  
“After death no reviving, after the grave no meeting again.”

**OUTLINE:**

- I. The Christian’s ATTITUDE toward the return of Christ,** Chapter 1  
(to serve...to wait..., vv. 9, 10)
- II. The Christian’s REWARD at the return of Christ,** Chapter 2
- III. The Christian’s LIFE and the return of Christ,** Chapters 3:1 — 4:12
- IV. The Christian’s DEATH and the return of Christ,** Chapter 4:13-18
- V. The Christian’s ACTIONS in view of the return of Christ,** Chapter 5  
(Note 22 specific commands to Christians, beginning at v. 11.)

For this book I suggest two outlines. Each gives a needed emphasis that is not in the other.

- I. Coming of Christ is an INSPIRING HOPE,** Chapter 1
  - A. Introduction, vv. 1-4
  - B. Gospel received in much assurance and much affliction, vv. 5-7
  - C. Gospel results, vv. 8-10
- II. Coming of Christ is a WORKING HOPE,** Chapter 2
  - A. Motive and method of a true witness for Christ, vv. 1-6
  - B. Mother side of the apostle’s ministry (comfort), vv. 7-9



- C. Father side of the apostle's ministry (charge), vv. 10-13
- D. Brother side of the apostle's ministry (challenge), vv. 14-16
- E. Reward of a true witness for Christ, vv. 17-20

**III. Coming of Christ is a PURIFYING HOPE, Chapters 3:1 — 4:12**

- A. Timothy brings a good report of Thessalonians, Chapter 3:1-8
- B. Paul urges Thessalonians to continue to grow in faith, Chapter 3:9-13
- C. How believers are to walk, Chapter 4:1-12

**IV. Coming of Christ is a COMFORTING HOPE, Chapter 4:13-18**

*(What death means to a Christian; what the Rapture means to the church.)*

**V. Coming of Christ is a ROUSING HOPE (leads to action), Chapter 5**

*(Dead believers are asleep in Jesus; living believers are awake for Jesus.)*

- A. Call to be awake and alert in view of Christ's coming, vv. 1-10
- B. Commandments for Christians, vv. 11-28

**COMMENT:**

**I. Coming of Christ is an INSPIRING HOPE, Chapter 1**

**A. Introduction, vv. 1-4**

v. 1 — Silas and Timothy had recently returned from Thessalonica with a good report and some questions for Paul to answer. The greeting is Paul's usual friendly greeting to a church that is spiritually sound.

“Grace” (*charis*) is the Greek form of greeting.

“Peace” (*shalom*) is the Hebrew greeting.

We must know the grace of God before we can experience the peace of God. Grace is love in action.

v. 2 — This is the same expression he directs to the Philippians (1:3), couched in different verbiage.

v. 3 — Paul always associates these three Christian graces together: faith, love, hope (see 1 Corinthians 13).

Faith seems to be in opposition to work;

Faith produces works.

Love seems to be in opposition to labor;

Love produces labor.

Hope seems to be in opposition to patience;

Hope produces patience.

v. 4 — “Election” — no one who was not running has ever been elected — God has no write-in candidates. Election is God’s side of salvation. Our side is still “whosoever will” may come. God gives a legitimate and sincere offer of salvation. “Ho, every one that thirsteth...” (Isaiah 55:1). (See author’s book, *Exploring Through Ephesians*, pp. 14, 15.)

### **B. Gospel received in much assurance and much affliction,**

vv. 5-7

v. 5 — Paul makes it clear that the gospel was given not only in word but in power and the Holy Spirit. Our Lord confirmed this method in John 16:7-11. Without the Holy Spirit, the gospel is mere words.

v. 6 — Paul could cite Silas, Timothy and himself as examples. Paul puts together two experiences that the world cannot link together — *affliction* and *joy*.

v. 7 — The Thessalonians were examples to all in Macedonia, and Paul cited them to the Corinthians.

### **C. Gospel results, vv. 8-10**

v. 8 — The example of the Thessalonians spread south to Greece.

v. 9 — (1) “How ye turned to God from idols” is the “work of faith” (v. 3). Paul did not preach against idolatry. He presented Christ. When the Thessalonians turned to Christ, they automatically turned from idols. Their turning from idols was repentance. You cannot turn to Christ without turning from something.

(2) “To serve the living and true God” is the “labor of love” (v. 3). The relationship between the heavenly Father and the

believer who is a son of God is a love relationship. “We love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

**v. 10** — (3) “To wait for his Son from heaven” is the patience of hope. All of this rests upon the resurrection of Jesus, and it delivers us from “the wrath to come” — which is the Great Tribulation. The patience of hope is to wait, not for wrath, but for Christ.

## **II. Coming of Christ is a WORKING HOPE, Chapter 2**

### **A. Motive and method of a true witness for Christ, vv. 1-6**

**v. 1** — “In vain” means *empty* — without results.

Paul was salt in Thessalonica — salt irritates;  
Paul was light in Thessalonica.

He was there less than one month (see Acts 17:1-3). This, written up in any modern Christian publication, would bear one of these captions: “Paul Does It Again” or “What One Christian Did in Three Weeks” or “Paul Opens New Work in Thessalonica” or “Paul Turns World Upside Down.”

**v. 2** — “Gospel of God” — note Paul’s use of the word “gospel” (vv. 4, 8, 9). The commentary on this verse is found in Acts 17:5-10.

- v. 3** — (1) “Deceit” means *error* — the content of the exhortation was not adulterated.  
(2) “Uncleanness” is sensuality; the intent was not motivated by greed.  
(3) “Guile” — his method was not wrong.

Paul did not lower his standards to accommodate the prejudices and passions of the old nature.

**v. 4** — “Allowed” is *approved* — he had been tested, he was no novice. Paul was not a man-pleaser; he never sought popularity.

**v. 5** — He never flattered a prominent person; he did not play up to the rich; he did not butter up anyone.

“Cloak of covetousness” is a cloak of many colors. It could be money, but more likely honor, fame or position.

**v. 6** — Paul never sought position or honors. Preachers can be bought by the dozen with honorary degrees.

**B. Mother side of the apostle's ministry (comfort), vv. 7-9**

v. 7 — “Nurse” is *nursing mother*, the word used for a mother bird.

v. 8 — “Dear” is *beloved* — Paul had a genuine love for believers. He was willing to die for the Thessalonian believers.

v. 9 — “Laboring night and day” — he was not a paid nurse who worked by the hour; he did not belong to the union.

**C. Father side of the apostle's ministry (charge), vv. 10-13**

v. 10 — (1) “Holily” — careful discharge of duty to God.  
(2) “Justly” — careful discharge of duty to man.  
(3) “Unblamably” — no charge can be maintained against the apostle and his companions. A holy life does count.

v. 11 — (1) “Exhorted” (Greek *parakaleo*): came to the side of; helped, entreated, convicted (the same word is used for the Holy Spirit).  
(2) “Comforted” (KJV) is *persuaded*.  
(3) “Charged” has a note of severity, discipline; it is a virile, robust, firm, masculine word.

“Father” indicates that this is the father side of his ministry.

v. 12 — “Walk worthy” (see Ephesians 4:1).

“Kingdom” refers to the millennial kingdom.

“Glory” refers to the eternal kingdom.

v. 13 — Note the supernatural character of the Word of God in two aspects:

- (1) How it is preached — minister;
- (2) How it is received — hearers.

**D. Brother side of the apostle's ministry (challenge), vv. 14-16**

v. 14 — Churches in Judea had likewise suffered. Suffering is the glue that holds believers together. Today the church is coming unglued. Many are praying for revival, and it may take some great time of testing before revival can come.

v. 15 — Paul holds his own people responsible for the death of Jesus. He himself may have participated in the events that led to the

crucifixion. The tables were turned when he became a believer.

**v. 16** — God permits sin to run its full course. The cup of iniquity must be filled up to the brim.

### **E. Reward of a true witness for Christ, vv. 17-20**

**v. 17** — Paul had a great desire to see the Thessalonians again.

**v. 18** — Paul had spiritual discernment to see that it was Satan's strategy that kept him from returning to Thessalonica. "Satan" means *adversary*.

**v. 19** — "Crown of rejoicing" is a victor's crown given to those who witness for Christ and win others. At the coming of Christ, the very presence of those who have been won by a witness will be in itself the crown of rejoicing.

**v. 20** — Paul's joy here (and hereafter) is the Thessalonian believers he had won.

## **III. Coming of Christ is a PURIFYING HOPE, Chapters 3:1 — 4:12**

### **A. Timothy brings a good report of Thessalonians, Chapter 3:1-8**

**vv. 1, 2** — Paul had to leave Thessalonica so quickly that there were many unfinished teachings he was not able to develop. He not only longs to return but wonders about the future of the believers. Paul longs to comfort them. He demonstrates a labor of love. Love is not affection; love seeks the welfare of another.

**v. 3** — Paul wants the Thessalonians to stand for the Lord in the midst of afflictions. A believer will not escape trouble. He is actually appointed to suffer (John 16:33; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12-19).

**v. 4** — "Tribulation" is *affliction*.

Since this epistle is eschatological in content, it might be well to note that this is an example of fulfilled prophecy. Paul predicts that the Thessalonians would endure afflictions. They had. The purpose of afflictions is to promote sanctification in the life of the believer.

**v. 5** — Afflictions also test the genuineness of the coin of belief. Paul recognizes that all professions of faith are not genuine. Afflictions reveal the genuine believer, and this is the occasion of his rejoicing.

**v. 6** — Timothy brings a good report from the Thessalonians and that they were enduring afflictions.

**v. 7** — Paul likewise is enduring afflictions, and the good report causes him to be comforted.

**v. 8** — “We live” means that, as believers, we *enjoy life*. “If” is *since*. It could be translated, “While ye are standing fast in the Lord we are happy.”

### **B. Paul urges Thessalonians to continue to grow in faith,** Chapter 3:9-13

**v. 9** — “Joy” occurs twice in this verse. “Affliction” or “tribulation” occur three times in this chapter. Affliction increases the capacity of the heart for joy.

**v. 10** — “Lacking” — Paul’s labor in Thessalonica had been suddenly and rudely interrupted. Paul longs to finish his work among them.

“Faith” is *doctrine*.

**v. 11** — Paul is praying for a return visit to Thessalonica.

**v. 12** — “Abound” is *exceed*. “Love” is the Greek *agape*. Love is seen only in action in this epistle — “labor of love” (1:3). Again, love is not affection; love seeks the welfare of another.

**v. 13** — “To the end” — love is not an end in itself. Holiness is the end result in the life of a believer, which will not be fully attained until the return of Christ — “at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.”

“Unblamable” (see also 2:10) means that no charge can be made. On a bulletin board outside a church was this question: “If you were tried in court as a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” A believer must one day appear before the judgment (Greek *bema*) seat of Christ, who will judge his works to see if there is to be a reward. Also, He judges character to see if there is something that must be corrected (1 John 2:28).

### **C. How believers are to walk,** Chapter 4:1-12

**vv. 1, 2** — The Ten Commandments have no part in a sinner’s salvation. The Ten Commandments are not the standard for Christian

conduct. There are commandments for believers (see 22 commandments in chapter 5). If man could not keep the Ten Commandments (Acts 15:10), how can he keep higher commandments? This can be attained only by an outside power (the Holy Spirit, v. 8). See also Romans 8:3, 4; Galatians 5:22, 23.

“Walk” — the walk of the believer is all important; he mentions it again in v. 12. The walk is a parenthesis around this section. A believer cannot do as he pleases; he does as Christ pleases.

**v. 3** — Chastity is the subject in vv. 3-8. Immorality (see ASV) is condemned. A child of God cannot live an immoral life.

**vv. 4-6** — A child of God cannot be sanctified when his relationship is immoral with the opposite sex — or dishonest with the same sex.

**v. 7** — A child of God cannot continue in sin (the prodigal son may get into the pig pen, but he cannot *live* in the pig pen).

**v. 8** — A child of God is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5; 8:9; Galatians 5:5; Ephesians 2:22).

**v. 9** — Charity is the subject in vv. 9, 10. A believer must have love for the brethren — it comes supernaturally (Galatians 5:22).

**v. 10** — This is the area of growth and development.

**v. 11** — Calmness is the subject here. “Study to be quiet” — only the Spirit of God conducts this type of school. (Man teaches how to speak.) *Be ambitious to keep still* is one translation. “[Tend to] your own business” is also a Christian virtue. “Work with your own hands” is a commandment for believers.

**v. 12** — “Walk honestly” is to gain the respect and confidence of mankind, as in v. 1 where the walk is to please God.

#### **IV. Coming of Christ is a COMFORTING HOPE, Chapter 4:13-18**

*(What death means to a Christian; what the Rapture means to the church)*

This section has been labeled one of the most important prophetic passages in the Scriptures — and it surely is that. Actually, the primary consideration is not the Rapture, though this passage clearly teaches it. The question that Paul is answering is about believers who

die before the Rapture. Paul had taught the young church in Thessalonica the truth of the imminent coming of Christ for His own. After Paul left Thessalonica there was evidently a time of lapse for several months, as he had gone to Berea, Athens, and then to Corinth. During this interval some of the believers had died. Had they missed the Rapture? Paul had not dealt with this aspect of the subject while he was with them. He now answers their specific question.

v. 13 — “I would not have you to be ignorant” is Paul’s diplomatic method of dealing with the ignorance of believers. He meant they were ignorant, but he does not speak that bluntly.

“Who are asleep” is *who are sleeping*.

“Sleeping” (Greek *koimaomai*) means lying sleep. This word is used for natural sleep also (see Luke 22:45; Acts 12:6). The same word is used for the death of the body — never the soul. The very nature of the word prevents use of the term “soul sleep.”

The death of a believer’s body is called sleep because:

(1) A sleeping body and a dead body are similar. The sleeper does not cease to exist — the inference is that a dead person does not cease to exist. Sleep is temporary — death is also. Sleep has its waking; death has its resurrection.

(2) The word comes from the Greek *keimai*, which means to lie down. Only a body can lie down — certainly not a soul. By the same token, only the body is spoken of in resurrection. The word for “resurrection” is the Greek *anastasis* which means *to stand up*. A soul can neither lie down nor stand up!

(3) God created man (his body) out of the dust of the earth and breathed into him the breath (soul or spirit) of life; and man became a living soul (see Genesis 2:7). When man sinned, God pronounced this judgment:

***In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*** (Genesis 3:19)

The body returns to the dust, but the spirit returns to God who gave it.

***Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God, who gave it.*** (Ecclesiastes 12:7)



For a Christian, death means to be absent from the body and to be present or at home with the Lord. The body is merely a frail tent that is laid aside temporarily (see 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; 2 Corinthians 5:1-9; Philippians 1:23; 1 Thessalonians 5:23).

(4) Early Christians called the burying place for bodies a cemetery, derived from the Greek *koimeterion*, which means *rest house for strangers; sleeping place*. We call such a place a hotel or motel where we spend the night and rise up in the morning to continue our journey.

“Even as others who have no hope” is *even as the rest who have no hope*. The pagan philosophy concerning death was dark and hopeless. Theocritus, a Greek poet of the third century B.C., wrote: “Hopes are among the living, the dead are without hope.” Moschus, his contemporary, speaking of the plants that perish in the garden: “Alas! alas!...these live and spring again in another year; but we...when we die, deaf to all sound in the hollow earth, sleep a long, long endless sleep that knows no waking.”

**v. 14** — “Jesus died” — not *is sleeping*. Jesus died a substitutionary, redemptive death in which He bore the penalty of sin. He cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46). Death means separation.

In the Scriptures, the word “death” is used in three ways:

(1) **Physical death**, which is separation of the physical from the spiritual. Adam died physically 930 years after the fall.

(2) **Spiritual death** — Adam died spiritually the day he rebelled against God. He was then separated from God — without hope and without God in the world.

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life.* (John 5:24)

*Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.* (John 11:25)

*For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually*

*minded is life and peace.* (Romans 8:6)

*And you hath he made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.* (Ephesians 2:1)

(3) **Eternal death** — separation from God. This is the “second death” referred to in Revelation 20:14.

“Sleep in Jesus” is *fallen asleep in Jesus* (physical death).

**v. 15** — “By the word of the Lord” indicates that it is a direct revelation from the Lord.

“Prevent” (KJV) means *to go before*.

**v. 16** — “Shout” is a word of command.

“Voice” — the voice of the shout is like that of an archangel, referring to the quality of the voice of the Son of God. It speaks of majesty and authority.

“Trump of God” has no reference to the ridiculous thought that Gabriel blows a trumpet. Rather, the voice of the Lord Jesus is like a trumpet:

*I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.* (Revelation 1:10)

This is not a trio but the solo voice of the Son of God. This was His method when He raised the dead — He spoke directly to them. He did not need an archangel or a trumpet to assist Him in raising the dead.

**v. 17** — Those who are living will not precede the dead, but the dead in Christ will go first.

“Caught up” (Greek *harpazo*) means *grasped hastily; snatched up; raptured; lifted and transported*.

To argue that the Scriptures do not teach the Rapture is merely to indulge in the subtle game of semantics. The Bible teaches the Rapture.

**v. 18** — This is a comfort to believers. The Tribulation is a terror to the world and would be for believers if we had to go through it.

**V. Coming of Christ is a ROUSING HOPE (leads to action),**  
Chapter 5

*(Dead believers are asleep in Jesus; living believers are awake for Jesus.)*

**A. Call to be awake and alert in view of Christ's coming,**  
vv. 1-10

v. 1 — “Times and the seasons” are not the property of the church. The church is looking for a person, not times and seasons.

v. 2 — “Day of the Lord” is a period of time that begins with the Great Tribulation and continues through the Millennium. It relates to the nation Israel (Isaiah 2:11, 12; Joel 2:1, 2).

v. 3 — The world will think it is entering the Millennium, but in reality it will be entering the Great Tribulation. This is the false peace of Antichrist.

v. 4 — The Lord does not come to the church as a thief in the night.

v. 5 — The church is made up of children of light (Philippians 2:15).

vv. 6, 7 — This is for the children of light. It is a call to be awake.

v. 8 — A call to soldier duty (see author's book, *Exploring Through Ephesians*, pp. 76-79).

v. 9 — “Wrath” evidently refers to the Great Tribulation, the “great day of his wrath” (Revelation 6:17). Believers are promised deliverance from it by the Lord Jesus Christ.

**B. Commandments for Christians,** vv. 11-28  
*(There are 22.)*

v. 11 — Encourage one another.

(1) “Comfort [encourage] yourselves.”

(2) “Edify [build up] one another.”

v. 12 — (3) Understand those who teach the Word — duty to pastor. If you can't support the pastor, leave the church.

v. 13 — (4) “Esteem” (respect) the teacher.

(5) “Be at peace” — there should be peace among believers.

v. 14 — (6) “Warn them that are unruly” (those out of step).

(7) “Encourage the fainthearted” — help them to get in step.

- (8) “Support the weak” — they cannot get in step.
- (9) “Be patient toward all men” — don’t lose your temper.
- v. 15** — (10) Don’t fight one another.  
(11) Follow Captain Good.
- v. 16** — (12) “Rejoice evermore [always]” (“happy” is not a New Testament word).
- v. 17** — (13) “Pray without ceasing [constantly]” — this is more than an attitude.
- v. 18** — (14) Give thanks in all circumstances — not once a year on Thanksgiving Day.
- v. 19** — (15) The Holy Spirit is likened to a fire. To quench the Spirit means to refuse to do the will of God, refuse to let the Holy Spirit have His way.
- v. 20** — (16) Do not look down upon Bible study as something beneath you. Do not be indifferent to the Word of God.
- v. 21** — (17) Do not be credulous, taken in by flattery (2 John 7, 10, 11).  
(18) Hold to that which is true and genuine.
- v. 22** — (19) This is the answer for the questionable pastime.
- v. 23** — Man is a triune being — body, soul (mind), and spirit.
- v. 24** — You can depend upon God.
- v. 25** — (20) Pray for those who labor in the gospel.
- v. 26** — (21) A handshake will do.
- v. 27** — (22) This epistle is to be read in the church.
- v. 28** — Paul is brief and to the point.

This section is practical. We need to watch our step as we look up for the coming of Christ.

## 2 THESSALONIANS

**WRITER:** Paul

**DATE:** A.D. 52-53 (The second epistle followed shortly after the first)

**OCCASION:**

The first letter to the Thessalonians gave rise to further questions, and Paul is attempting to answer these. There was circulating in the Thessalonian church a letter or report, purported to have come from Paul, which was inclined to disturb the Christians. This false report claimed that Christ had already come and had already gathered out the church to Himself and that the world was then living in the judgments of the “day of the Lord.” Their present persecutions confirmed this false report. Paul attempts to allay their fears by stating definitely that “our gathering together unto him” is yet future (2 Thessalonians 2:1) and that “the day of the Lord” has certain forerunners which must first come. The apostasy and the “man of sin” must come first; the removal of the remnant of believers at “our gathering together unto him” makes the apostasy in the professing church 100% (Luke 18:8).

Every era of persecution or trouble has given rise to the false impression that the church is going through the time of judgment which Christ identified as the “great tribulation” (Matthew 24:21). This period has been so clearly identified by Christ that there is no reason for getting panicky or being stampeded into an unwarranted position. Christ said that there is coming a small interval which will be blocked off by “such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21). Nothing like it has taken place before, and nothing like it will ever take place afterward. Has there ever been such a period of unparalleled trouble? The answer is obvious.

**THEME:**

The first epistle to the Thessalonians deals with the Rapture, Christ’s coming for believers. The second epistle relates the return of Christ to that phase where He returns to the earth in judgment and where one of the accomplishments is in connection with the “man of sin,” whom He “shall destroy with the brightness of his coming”

(2 Thessalonians 2:8). These two aspects are clearly delineated. The interval between these two phases is the Great Tribulation, which can be further identified with the 70th week of Daniel 9 as a period of seven years.

### **THE DAY OF THE LORD:**

This is the phrase which occurs in 2 Thessalonians 2:2 (incorrectly translated “the day of Christ” in the Authorized Version). It is an Old Testament phrase with definite connotations. It occurs in the writings of the Old Testament prophets where it relates to the future kingdom promised in the Old Testament. The day of Christ is a New Testament expression (1 Corinthians 1:8); it relates here to the future of the church. The day of the Lord is connected with the coming of Christ as it relates to the setting up of the kingdom. The day of Christ is connected with the coming of Christ for the church. Whatever else is implied in these two statements, certainly this is basic.

The teaching in 1 Thessalonians is that the saints who have died will have part in Christ’s coming for His living saints; in 2 Thessalonians it is that the saints who are alive will not have part in the Great Tribulation. The return of Christ has a peculiar and precious meaning for His saints.

### **OUTLINE:**

- I. PERSECUTION of believers now; judgment of unbelievers hereafter (at coming of Christ), Chapter 1**
  - A. Introduction, vv. 1, 2
  - B. Persecution of believers and fruits of it, vv. 3-7
  - C. Judgment of wicked at coming of Christ, vv. 8-12
- II. PROGRAM for world in connection with coming of Christ, Chapter 2:1-12**
  - A. Rapture occurs first, v. 1
  - B. Day of the Lord follows; introduced by total apostasy and appearance of man of sin, vv. 2-5
  - C. Mystery of lawlessness working today; lawless one restrained by Holy Spirit, vv. 6-8
  - D. Lawless one to appear in Great Tribulation period, vv. 9-12

### **III. PRACTICALITY of coming of Christ, Chapters 2:13 — 3:18**

**A.** Believers should be established in the WORD, Chapter 2:13-17

**B.** Believers should be established in their WALK, Chapter 3:1-7

**C.** Believers should be established in their WORK, Chapter 3:8-18

#### **COMMENT:**

#### **I. PERSECUTION of believers now; judgment of unbelievers hereafter (at coming of Christ, Chapter 1**

##### **A. Introduction, vv. 1, 2**

The greeting is Paul's usual friendly greeting to a church that is spiritually sound.

##### **B. Persecution of believers and fruits of it, vv. 3-7**

**v. 3** — In the midst of severe persecution that the church in Thessalonica was enduring, they were growing and abounding, increasing in faith and love. Paul will encourage them in the hope of believers.

**v. 4** — The Thessalonian believers were an example to other churches in patience and faith. Persecution produced these fruits. "Tribulation [trouble] worketh patience" (Romans 5:3). See also Romans 12:12.

**v. 5** — See Romans 8:17; 2 Corinthians 4:8; 7:5.

**v. 6** — God is righteous in sending the Great Tribulation. It is a judgment of sinners.

**v. 7** — "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

##### **C. Judgment of wicked at coming of Christ, vv. 8-12**

**v. 8** — Very little is said in the Scriptures about the condition of the lost — nothing to satisfy a morbid curiosity or to incite revenge. Christ said more about hell than did anyone else. There is a restrained reticence in Scripture.

The lost are those who:

(1) “Know not God.” Jesus said,

*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

(John 17:3)

(2) “Obey not the gospel.”

*Jesus answered, and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* (John

6:29)

**v. 9** — Countless numbers of folk are plunging into an awful eternity. Soft music, colorful flowers, and eulogistic words cannot destroy the rough reality of hell.

**v. 10** — The coming of Christ to the earth in judgment will justify the believers and glorify the Savior.

**v. 11** — God had a purpose and plan in the lives of the Thessalonian believers.

**v. 12** — The coming of Christ to the earth will bring glory both to Christ and to the church.

## **II. PROGRAM for world in connection with coming of Christ,**

Chapter 2:1-12

### **A. Rapture occurs first, v. 1**

**v. 1** — “The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” and “our gathering together unto him” is the Rapture.

### **B. Day of the Lord follows; introduced by total apostasy and appearance of man of sin, vv. 2-5**

**v. 2** — “Day of Christ” (KJV) is an unfortunate translation — it should be “day of the Lord.” The “day of Christ” is this present age of grace, the church age (see 1 Corinthians 1:8; Philippians 1:6, 10; 2:16). “The day of the Lord” is a technical phrase that speaks of the period beginning with the Great Tribulation and continuing through the Millennium (see Acts 2:20; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 6:17).

*The day of the Lord begins when the day of Christ ends.*

*The day of the Lord begins after the Rapture.*



The Thessalonians had a false report (which supposedly had originated with Paul) that the day of the Lord had already come, which would have meant, of course, that they had missed the Rapture.

**v. 3** — Paul puts down two signs of the day of the Lord:

- (1) “A falling away” which is apostasy (Hebrews 3:12);
- (2) The revelation of the “man of sin” (the lawless one, v. 8).

*The sin of man leads to the man of sin.*

**v. 4** — The lawless one is the final representative of man in his open opposition and rebellion against God. He himself actually assumes the place of God (Isaiah 14:12-15; Revelation 13:5, 6, 15-18). This is the “little horn” of Daniel 7.

**v. 5** — Paul had taught the Thessalonian believers these eschatological truths in the brief interval covering 3 sabbaths that he was with them.

### **C. Mystery of lawlessness working today; lawless one restrained by Holy Spirit, vv. 6-8**

**v. 6** — The one who “restraineth” we believe to be the Holy Spirit.

**v. 7** — “Let” (KJV) means *hinder*. The Holy Spirit alone can hinder the development of evil since it is satanic and supernatural.

**v. 8** — “Wicked” is more accurately *lawless*. The lawless one will be revealed in the Great Tribulation. Christ will destroy him when He comes to the earth (Revelation 19:20).

### **D. Lawless one to appear in Great Tribulation period, vv. 9-12**

**v. 9** — The lawless one will be a miracle worker.

“Power” is *dunamis* — physical power whose source is supernatural.

“Signs” — tokens, the purpose of which is to appeal to the understanding.

“Lying wonders” produce an effect upon observers.

**vv. 10, 11** — God sends strong delusion to believe a lie only to those who heard but would not have the truth.

v. 12 — These will be judged because they rejected the truth.

### **III. PRACTICALITY of coming of Christ, Chapters 2:13 —3:18**

In light of the knowledge of future events, the believer should live a life that demonstrates that he believes in the coming of Christ.

#### **A. Believers should be established in the WORD, Chapter 2:13-17**

vv. 13, 14 — The total spectrum of salvation is in these two verses:

- (1) “Chosen...to salvation,”
- (2) “Sanctification of the Spirit,”
- (3) “Belief of the truth” — growth is through the study of the Word,
- (4) “Glory” (Colossians 1:27) — this refers to the Rapture (1 John 3:2).

vv. 15-17 — The Word enables a believer to stand and be stable. The Word brings consolation and comfort. The Word and work are interrelated. The study of the Word leads to the work of the Lord.

#### **B. Believers should be established in their WALK, Chapter 3:1-7**

vv. 1-4 — The Word enables the believer to walk before the wicked. The Word establishes a believer in his walk.

v. 5 — The believer is to walk in the love of God and in a patient waiting for the coming of Christ.

v. 6 — The believer is not to walk with the disorderly.

v. 7 — The believer is to walk as a follower of the apostle.

#### **C. Believers should be established in their WORK, Chapter 3:8-18**

v. 8 — Christian workers earned their own bread and paid their own way.

v. 9 — They did this as an example to the believers in Thessalonica.

v. 10 — A believer who is looking for the Lord to come is not a dreamer, but a worker. “No work — no food” is the rule laid down by the apostle.

v. 11 — Some are working in the wrong way — they are busybodies.

**v. 12** — They are commanded to work for their own bread.

**v. 13** — A believer who holds the blessed hope should not grow weary in working for the Lord.

**v. 14** — A believer who holds the blessed hope is obedient to the Word. If he is not, he is to be avoided.

**v. 15** — An attempt should be made to win the wayward brother.

**vv. 16-18** — Paul's benediction. The study of prophecy brings peace to the heart. It does not lead to fanaticism or laziness.

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*

## **RECOMMENDED BOOKS ON 1 & 2 THESSALONIANS:**

- Hiebert, D. Edmond. *The Thessalonian Epistles, A Call to Readiness*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1971.  
(An excellent, comprehensive treatment.)
- Hogg, C. F. and Vine, W. E. *The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1914.  
(An excellent, comprehensive treatment.)
- Ironside, H. A. *Addresses on I and II Thessalonians*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.
- Kelly, William. *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*. Oak Park, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, 1893.
- MacDonald, William. *Letters to the Thessalonians*. Kansas City, Missouri: Walterick Publishers, 1969.
- Ryrie, Charles C. *First and Second Thessalonians*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1959.  
(Fine, inexpensive survey.)
- Walvoord, John F. *The Thessalonian Epistles*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1955.

## **HELPFUL BOOKS ON BIBLE PROPHECY:**

- Hoyt, Herman A. *The End Times*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1969.
- Pentecost, J. Dwight. *Prophecy For Today*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1961.
- Pentecost, J. Dwight. *Things to Come*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958.
- Ryrie, Charles C. *The Basis of the Premillennial Faith*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1953.
- Ryrie, Charles C. *The Best is Yet to Come*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1976.
- Ryrie, Charles C. *The Bible and Tomorrow's News*. Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, 1969.

- Sauer, Erich. *From Eternity to Eternity*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1954.
- Tatford, Frederick A. *God's Program of the Ages*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, n.d.
- Walvoord, John F. *Armageddon, Oil, and the Middle East Crisis*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974.
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- Wood, Leon J. *The Bible and Future Events*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973.



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**Notes & Outlines**

**1 & 2 TIMOTHY  
TITUS  
PHILEMON**

J. Vernon McGee

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## PASTORAL EPISTLES

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The two letters to Timothy and the one to Titus are labeled Pastoral Epistles. The contents of the letters reveal the obvious reason for this. They were written by Paul to two of his young converts (1 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4) who had followed him on many of his missionary journeys and whom he had established as pastors of churches at the time of the writing of these epistles. Although they were addressed by Paul to his young friends in the ministry, the message is for churches. He gave instructions for the orderly procedure of local and visible churches. These letters have a particular message to young pastors, and they have pertinent instructions for the present-day church.

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### 1 TIMOTHY

**WRITER:** Paul

**DATE:** About A.D. 64

Probably Paul was released from prison at Rome between A.D. 64 and 67. If this is accurate, it was during this interval that he wrote this first letter to Timothy. He wrote to Titus at this same time. Some authorities think that Paul wrote from Macedonia. Apparently he had left Timothy in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3), and he wrote this letter to encourage and assist him (1 Timothy 6:20).

**THEME:** Government and order in the local church. This is in contrast to the Epistle to the Ephesians where the church is the body of Christ, the invisible church. Here it is a local assembly of believers organized for a common purpose.

**KEY VERSES:**

*As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.* (1 Timothy 1:3)

*But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.* (1 Timothy 3:15)

Sound doctrine and correct conduct identify the local church.

*Doctrine* occurs 8 times;

*Godliness* occurs 8 times;

*Teach* and *teacher* occur 7 times;

*Good* occurs 22 times.

## **OUTLINE:**

### **I. Faith of the church, Chapter 1**

**A.** Introduction, vv. 1, 2

**B.** Warning against unsound doctrine, vv. 3-10

**C.** Personal testimony of Paul, vv. 11-17

**D.** Charge to Timothy, vv. 18-20

### **II. Public prayer and woman's place in the churches, Chapter 2**

**A.** Public prayer for the public and public officials, vv. 1-7

**B.** How men are to pray, v. 8

**C.** How women are to pray, vv. 9-15

### **III. Officers in the churches, Chapter 3**

**A.** Requirements for elders, vv. 1-7

**B.** Requirements for deacons, vv. 8-13

**C.** Report of Paul to Timothy, vv. 14-16

### **IV. Apostasy in the churches, Chapter 4**

**A.** How to recognize the apostates, vv. 1-5

**B.** What the "good minister" can do in times of apostasy, vv. 6-16

### **V. Duties of officers of the churches, Chapters 5, 6**

**A.** Relationship of ministers to different groups in the local church, Chapter 5

**B.** Relationship of believers to others, Chapter 6

## **COMMENT:**

### **I. Faith of the church, Chapter 1**

This is not a doctrinal statement but is a warning against false teachers. The gospel of the grace of God is central in doctrine. It concerns the person of Christ.

**A. Introduction, vv. 1, 2**



v. 1 — Paul declares that he is an apostle of Jesus Christ by commandment of God. “Our Savior” occurs six times in the Pastoral Epistles — used of both God and Christ. (*Will of God and the work of Christ* — it is the will of God to save sinners; it is the work of Christ that saves sinners.) “Our hope” looks to the future.

v. 2 — “My own son” would be better translated “my true child.” Both Timothy and Titus were brought to Christ through the ministry of Paul. “Mercy” occurs in 2 Timothy and Titus and is peculiar to the Pastoral Epistles.

### **B. Warning against unsound doctrine, vv. 3-10**

v. 3 — “Teach no other doctrine” should be “not to teach a different doctrine.”

v. 4 — “Fables” are myths. “Endless genealogies” refer to the demiurge basic to Gnosticism, which believed in emanations from the divine center. It could also refer to Old Testament genealogies.

v. 5 — The purpose of sound doctrine is to produce love in Christian living.

v. 6 — “Vain jangling” is empty chatter.

v. 7 — “About which they affirm” means that they teach error with assurance.

v. 8 — “The law is good” means that it is morally excellent. It is good for moral conduct but not for salvation. Law cannot save a sinner — it should correct a sinner.

v. 9 — “Disobedient” is to be unruly.

v. 10 — The local church should teach sound doctrine to insure correct conduct. Man must think right to act right.

### **C. Personal testimony of Paul, vv. 11-17**

v. 11 — “Glorious gospel” is the gospel of glory. “Was committed to my trust” means with which I was entrusted.

v. 12 — “He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” should read “He counted me faithful in that He appointed me to His service.”

v. 13 — This is Paul’s statement of his life before the Damascus road experience. “Mercy” is what a sinner needs — not justice.

v. 14 — Faith, love, grace, and mercy are the great realities of the Christian faith.

v. 15 — Paul is not being academic or forensic when he states that he was the chief of sinners. He was just that. This is not hyperbole.

v. 16 — Paul would be an example and encouragement to sinners of how God saved him and of the fact that He does save sinners. “Pattern” is an example.

v. 17 — “King eternal” means King of the ages. Christ is *Lord* of the church, not King. This is a doxology.

#### **D. Charge to Timothy, vv. 18-20**

v. 18 — This is Paul’s personal charge to Timothy.

v. 19 — Apostates had already appeared among the believers in the local churches.

v. 20 — Paul calls by name two of them who had blasphemed (see 2 Timothy 2:17). “Delivered unto Satan” was evidently an apostolic ministry. “May learn not to blaspheme” means being disciplined not to blaspheme.

## **II. Public prayer and woman’s place in the churches, Chapter 2**

### **A. Public prayer for the public and public officials, vv. 1-7**

v. 1 — “Supplications” are petitions. “Intercession” is to intercede on their behalf as if they did not pray.

v. 2 — “All that are in authority” means those in an office who could affect or influence the spread of the gospel. Pray that there might be freedom to live as believers should and freedom to witness to the lost.

v. 3 — This is the will of God.

v. 4 — God’s desire is the salvation of all. Praying for rulers so that the gospel can be preached is in the will of God. Also, He wants all believers to advance to full maturation by studying the Word of God.

v. 5 — Prayer is made only through Christ, for no man can come immediately into the presence of God — only mediately through Christ. He is the mediator because He is both man (Jesus) and God (Christ).

v. 6 — Christ is a propitiation (mercy seat) for the whole world. Mercy must be appropriated to be effective (just as a gift

must be accepted).

v. 7 — “I am ordained” is to be appointed.

### **B. How men are to pray, v. 8**

“I will” is desire. “Everywhere” means in every place where believers meet. “Lifting up holy hands” was a custom in that day, practiced by the early church. It revealed the dedication and lives of those praying. “Without wrath” means that sins have been confessed. “Without...doubting” (see Hebrews 11:6).

### **C. How women are to pray, vv. 9-15**

v. 9, 10 — As in v. 8, “I desire” is understood. Women are not to dress with the idea of attracting the opposite sex when they pray to God (see 1 Corinthians 11:5).

v. 11 — Women were leaders in the mystery religions of Paul’s day (see notes on Ephesians), which were largely sex orgies. Here Paul cautions that women are not to speak in tongues publicly (see 1 Corinthians 14:34).

v. 12 — The woman is not to be over the man in spiritual matters — for the sake of order and headship. This should be an incentive to a man to be the *spiritual* leader rather than asserting authority as a dictator.

vv. 13-15 — It was the sin of Eve that brought sin into the world, and only sinners are produced through the childbearing. It was the birth of Jesus to Mary that brought the Savior into the world. No *man* provided a Savior — a *woman* did. However, a woman is saved by faith the same as a man is saved by faith, and she is to grow in love and holiness the same as a man.

## **III. Officers in the churches, Chapter 3**

### **A. Requirements for elders, vv. 1-7**

v. 1 — “True saying” is better translated “faithful saying.” “Desire” — a better word is “seeks.” “Bishop” is an overseer or superintendent. Elder and bishop are the same person (some good men disagree with this position). “Elder” (Greek *presbuteros*) is the word applied to the person; “bishop” (Greek *episkopos*) is applied to the office.

v. 2 — Positive qualifications: “one wife” — not guilty of immorality, polygamy, or an un-scriptural divorce; “temperate”

(in KJV, “vigilant”) — a better translation would be “cool, calm or not credulous”; “sober-minded” — a better word is “serious”; “of good behavior” — a better word is “orderly”; “apt to teach” means an ability and love of teaching.

v. 3 — Negative qualifications: “not given to wine” means no drunken conduct; “not violent” (in KJV, “no striker”) is not pugnacious; “not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient” means “not covetous, but reasonable”; “not a brawler” — a better translation is “not contentious”; “not covetous” means to not be a money lover.

v. 4 — In his own home, an elder should be the authority without being the dictator.

v. 5 — He will be the same man in the church that he is in his home. No dictator nor Mr. Milquetoast need apply.

v. 6 — “Novice” is better translated as “new convert.” “Lifted up with pride” is blinded with pride. “Condemnation” is judgment. Satan will be his accuser.

v. 7 — “Good report” is a good testimony.

#### **B. Requirements for deacons, vv. 8-13**

v. 8 — Paul and Apollos are called deacons; in 1 Corinthians 3:5 they are called ministers. Others who are called ministers:

Christ (Galatians 2:17),

Government officials (Romans 13:4), and

Ministers of Satan (2 Corinthians 11:15).

“Minister” is a general term for a servant and worker. “Grave” is calm and cool. “Double-tongued” in our idiom is to be two-faced. “Not given to much wine” — the Bible teaches temperance, not total abstinence. “Greedy of filthy lucre” means having an insatiable love of money, obtained by any means.

v. 9 — “Mystery of the faith” means the revelation of the gospel in Christ. “The faith” is the content of the gospel. “In a pure conscience” is a vessel that holds the gospel.

v. 10 — A deacon should be tested before he is placed in office. “Blameless” means they are not to be guilty if accused.

v. 11 — Wives of deacons must measure up to certain standards. “Slanderers” are gossips.

v. 12 — Same as elders.

v. 13 — A deacon who serves well will become a man to be trusted. “Boldness” is confidence and courage in witnessing.

### C. Report of Paul to Timothy, vv. 14-16

v. 14 — Paul sent this letter ahead to Timothy to guide him until he himself could come.

v. 15 — This letter would be the book of church order for the local church in the absence of Paul.

v. 16 — “Mystery of godliness” — the purpose of God is to make a man with God-likeness (1 John 3:2). “God was manifest in the flesh” — the flesh that revealed God to man at the same time concealed Him, for God is Spirit. “Justified in the Spirit” is better read as “vindicated in the Spirit.” “Seen of angels” is better translated “appeared unto angels.” “Gentiles” (κτιν) is more accurately “nations.” “Received up into glory” is more accurately “taken up in glory.”

This was probably one of the primitive creeds of the early church. It is in contrast to what follows in the next chapter.

## IV. Apostasy in the churches, Chapter 4

### A. How to recognize the apostates, vv. 1-5

v. 1 — “Now” should be “but” and should be joined to the brief primitive creed in 3:16. It is in contrast to it. “Latter times” refers to the last days of the church on earth. “Depart” (Greek *apostesontai*) means to stand away from. Apostates are those who once believed the Scriptures and the great truths of the Scriptures but have come to the place where they reject them entirely. “The faith” is the body of truth in the Scriptures. “Seducing” is wandering. “Doctrines of demons” is teachings of demons. Evidently the evil spirits lead the false teachers in giving satanic error.

v. 2 — “Speaking lies in hypocrisy” would be better translated “through the hypocrisy of men who speak lies.” “Having their conscience seared with a hot iron” is more accurately “branded in their own consciences with a hot iron.”

v. 3 — These errors were taught by the Essenes, an ascetic group down by the Dead Sea where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. They were not Christian but were in existence during the lifetime of our Lord.

**vv. 4, 5** — This should settle the question about diet and especially about meats. “By the word of God” means to return thanks.

**B. What the “good minister” can do in times of apostasy,**  
vv. 6-16

**v. 6** — The minister should warn believers about the apostasy and false teachers by teaching the words of the faith.

**v. 7** — Avoid old women’s myths. Practice godliness.

**v. 8** — “Bodily exercise” means bodily gymnastics. Obviously, Paul exercised physically, for he walked over most of the Roman Empire. (He did not need to jog.) He is saying here that physical exercise is only for this life.

**v. 10** — Christ is the Savior of all men, but only those who believe are saved (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2).

**v. 12** — Timothy was young, probably in his 30s.

**v. 13** — The minister is to read the Scriptures publicly, to comfort and to teach.

**v. 14** — Timothy had a gift of the Spirit to do this, as every minister should have. Timothy was an ordained teacher by the laying on of the hands of the elders.

**v. 15** — “Meditate” means to be diligent in study.

**v. 16** — Timothy is warned to be faithful in his teaching.

**V. Duties of officers of the churches, Chapters 5, 6**

**A. Relationship of ministers to different groups in the local church, Chapter 5**

**v. 1** — An elder is not to be rebuked publicly but is to be entreated privately.

**v. 2** — He is to have a chaste relationship with the opposite sex.

**vv. 3-13** — This is a section given over to instruction about widows. Evidently widows were supported by the local church (v. 3). Family responsibility comes first in a Christian’s life (v. 8). A widow could occupy an official place in the church — evidently this has to do with the office of deaconess (vv. 9, 10). Idleness and gossip are condemned (v. 13).

**v. 14** — Woman is the homemaker.

**v. 15** — Some had gone into mystery religions.

**v. 16** — Each family is to support its own widows.

**vv. 17-19** — Elders are to be honored. A man who brings a charge against an elder must do it before witnesses.

**v. 20** — Does this mean to call the offending elder by name? Probably so.

**v. 21** — The minister must not show partiality.

**v. 22** — “Lay hands suddenly on no man” is a caution not to be hasty in returning a sinning elder to office.

**v. 23** — Wine here is a medicine. Timothy, though young, had a physical infirmity.

**vv. 24, 25** — God does not always judge a believer’s sins here in this life. Sometimes judgment does not come until a believer stands before the judgment seat of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 11:31, 32).

### **B. Relationship of believers to others, Chapter 6**

**vv. 1, 2** — This is capital and labor relations.

**vv. 3-5** — Have nothing to do with proud men who want to argue.

**vv. 6-16** — This is a list of precious gems for the believer. A believer should find satisfaction with his position in life (v. 6). A true axiom (v. 7). Riches do not bring satisfaction (v. 9). Money is not evil in itself (v. 10); it is amoral. “The love of money” is a root of all kinds of evil. The man of God should pursue these virtues (v. 11). This fight (v. 12) may be outward or inward, physical or spiritual. Jesus is the only One who has been raised from the dead in a glorified body (v. 16).

**v. 17** — This is a warning to the rich.

**v. 18** — “Distribute” is to sympathize.

**v. 19** — “Lay hold on eternal life” is the life which is life indeed.

**v. 20** — “That which is committed to thy trust” (see 2 Timothy 1:12). “Knowledge falsely so called” should be “the falsely-named knowledge.” Paul is speaking of the Gnostic heresy.

## 2 TIMOTHY

**WRITER:** Paul

**DATE:** A.D. 67

The following is a probable calendar of the events of Paul's life during his last years:

- A.D. 58 Paul's arrest in Jerusalem.
- A.D. 61 His arrival in Rome.
- A.D. 61-63 His first Roman imprisonment.
- A.D. 64-67 His release. He writes 1 Timothy and Titus, probably from Macedonia.
- A.D. 67-68 His arrest and death. He writes 2 Timothy prior to his death in Rome.

### KEY VERSES:

*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* (2 Timothy 2:15)

*Preach the word; be diligent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.* (2 Timothy 4:2)

Key words are "ashamed" (1:8, 12) and "endure" (2:3).

**THEME:** Loyalty in days of apostasy.

1. Loyalty in suffering (Chapter 1)
2. Loyalty in service (Chapter 2)
3. Loyalty in apostasy (Chapters 3:1 — 4:5)
4. Loyalty of the Lord to His servants in desertion (Chapter 4:6-22)

### REMARKS:

Webster's definition of apostasy is: total desertion of principles of faith. Apostasy is not due to ignorance; it is a heresy. Apostasy is deliberate error; it is intentional departure from the faith. An apostate is one who knows the truth of the gospel (doctrines of the faith).

In 2 Timothy, Paul speaks of the ultimate outcome of gospel preaching. The final fruition will not be the total conversion of mankind, nor will it usher in the Millennium. On the contrary, there



will come about an apostasy which will well-nigh blot out “the faith” from the earth. This is in complete harmony with the startling word of Christ, “When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8). This is not in keeping, of course, with a social gospel which expects to transform the world by tinkering with the social system. These vain optimists have no patience with the doleful words of 2 Timothy. Nevertheless, the cold and hard facts of history and the events of the present hour demonstrate the accuracy of Paul. We are now in the midst of an apostasy which is cut to the pattern of Paul’s words in remarkable detail.

Although the visible church has entered the orbit of awful apostasy, the invisible church is on its way to the epiphany of glory.

**SPECIAL FEATURE:** “Swan Song” of the Apostle

The deathbed statement of any individual has an importance that is not attached to other remarks. This is what lends significance to 2 Timothy. It is the deathbed communication of Paul; it is his final message. It has a note of sadness that is not detected in his other epistles. Nevertheless, there is the overtone of triumph, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course....” Paul writes his own epitaph in 4:6-8. The epistle is very personal — there are twenty-five references to individuals.

**OUTLINE:**

- I. Afflictions of the gospel, Chapter 1**
  - A. Introduction, vv. 1-7
  - B. Not ashamed, but a partaker of affliction, vv. 8-11
  - C. Not ashamed, but assured, vv. 12-18
- II. Active in service, Chapter 2**
  - A. A son, vv. 1, 2
  - B. A good soldier, vv. 3, 4
  - C. An athlete, v. 5
  - D. A farmer, vv. 6-14
  - E. A workman, vv. 15-19
  - F. A vessel, vv. 20-23
  - G. A servant, vv. 24-26
- III. Apostasy coming; authority of the Scriptures, Chapters 3:1 — 4:5**

- A. Conditions in the last days, Chapter 3:1-9
- B. Authority of Scriptures in the last days, Chapter 3:10-17
- C. Instructions for the last days, Chapter 4:1-5

#### IV. Allegiance to the Lord and of the Lord, Chapter 4:6-22

- A. Deathbed testimony of Paul, vv. 6-8
- B. Last words, vv. 9-22  
(*“The Lord stood with me.”*)

#### COMMENT:

##### I. Afflictions of the gospel, Chapter 1

###### A. Introduction, vv. 1-7

vv. 1, 2 — See notes on 1 Timothy 1:1, 2.

v. 3 — This is another name to add to the prayer list of the apostle Paul.

v. 4 — “Greatly desiring” is longing. Paul had a deep affection for Timothy, his son in the faith.

v. 5 — Timothy had a godly grandmother, Lois, and a godly mother, Eunice. His father was a Greek, and it is not known whether or not he was in the faith.

v. 6 — See 1 Timothy 4:14.

v. 7 — “Fear” is cowardice. “Power” is strength to overcome in the believer’s life. “Sound mind” is discipline. God does not intend that defeat should be the norm in Christian living.

###### B. Not ashamed, but a partaker of affliction, vv. 8-11

v. 8 — It takes courage to stand for Christ. Paul speaks of himself as a prisoner of Christ in reality — not of the Roman government.

v. 10 — “Who hath abolished death” is “since He has made of none effect death.” “Immortality” is incorruption.

v. 11 — Paul was a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher. “Of the Gentiles” does not appear in the better manuscripts.

###### C. Not ashamed, but assured, vv. 12-18

v. 12 — Paul was not ashamed of the gospel (Romans 1:16), and he urges Timothy not to be ashamed of it (v. 8). “That which I have committed unto him” should be “that which has been committed unto me.” Paul’s salvation and apostleship was a sacred trust that God

could keep though He had committed it to Paul.

v. 13 — “Form” is example or type — content of sound words.

v. 14 — “Good thing” means honorable trust.

v. 15 — These two, Phygelus and Hermogenes, probably apostates, were evidently ashamed of Paul.

v. 16 — Onesiphorus was the opposite (4:19).

v. 17 — He was not ashamed of the bonds of Paul.

v. 18 — Onesiphorus was a special saint who receives special mention in the Word of God.

## II. Active in service, Chapter 2

In seven figures of speech, Paul describes the duty and activity of a believer.

### A. A son, vv. 1, 2

v. 1 — As a believer, he is called “my son” — because he is born from above.

*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.* (1 Peter 1:23)

As a son, he is to be strong.

v. 2 — As a son he is to instruct others so that they in turn may pass the gospel on to others.

### B. A good soldier, vv. 3, 4

v. 3 — “Endure hardness” is to suffer hardness with him.

v. 4 — This verse has been used as an argument for clerical celibacy. However, Paul’s argument is that the emphasis should not be upon this life but on the life to come.

### C. An athlete, v. 5

“A man” means an athlete. “Strive” refers to contending in the games.

### D. A farmer, vv. 6-14

v. 8 — “Remember Jesus Christ of the seed of David, raised from the dead” is more accurate.

v. 9 — “Evildoer” is a malefactor. While Paul is bound, the gospel is not.

v. 10 — Paul travailed that others might be born into the family

of God.

v. 11 — “It is a faithful saying” is “faithful is the saying.”

v. 12 — This is strong language, but it reveals that Paul also believed that faith without works is dead.

v. 13 — According to the nature of Christ, He cannot accept as true one who is false. That would be tantamount to denying Himself.

v. 14 — “Strive not about words” is disputes. “To no profit” is, literally, to “nothing useful.” “Subverting” (Greek *katastrophe*) is a catastrophe for the hearers.

#### **E. A workman, vv. 15-19**

v. 15 — “To show thyself” is to present thyself. “A workman” evidently means a teacher (see 1 Timothy 5:18). “Not to be ashamed” — a worker should know the Word. “Rightly dividing” is to handle rightly.

v. 17 — Here are the names of two more apostates: Hymenaeus and Philetus.

#### **F. A vessel, vv. 20-23**

vv. 20, 21 — There are different types of vessels for different uses (see Jeremiah 18). The clay can decide if it will be a vessel of honor. A vessel must be clean to be usable.

v. 22 — “Follow” is to pursue.

v. 23 — “Foolish” means stupid. “Unlearned” is ignorant. “Avoid” is better translated as “refuse.”

#### **G. A servant, vv. 24-26**

v. 24 — The believer is also called a servant (bondslave). “Must not” is a moral obligation, a spiritual necessity. “Strive” — see verse 5.

v. 25 — Attempting to teach those who oppose or are antagonistic to him. “The acknowledging” is more correctly “the knowledge.”

v. 26 — “Who are taken captive” have been held captive.

### **III. Apostasy coming; authority of the Scriptures, Chapters 3:1 — 4:5**

#### **A. Conditions in the last days, Chapter 3:1-9**

**v. 1** — “In the last days” means the last days of the church (see 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Peter 3:3; Jude 18; James 5:3). “Perilous times” means grievous or hard times.

**vv. 2-5** — There are nineteen words or phrases used to describe the last days:

1. “Lovers of their own selves” are lovers of self.
2. “Covetous” is better “lovers of money.”
3. “Boasters” are swaggerers.
4. “Proud” is haughty.
5. “Blasphemers” is better “railers.”
6. “Disobedient.”
7. “Unthankful.”
8. “Unholy” is profane or common.
9. “Without natural affection” means abnormal relationships.
10. “Trucebreakers” means irreconcilable.
11. “False accusers.”
12. “Incontinent” means without self-control.
13. “Fierce” is savage.
14. “Despisers of those that are good” is better “haters of good.”
15. “Traitors” are betrayers.
16. “Heady” means reckless.
17. “High-minded” means blinded by or drunk with pride.
18. “Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” means pleasure-lovers rather than God-lovers.
19. These go through the rituals of religion but lack life and reality. “From such turn away” means to avoid them.

**vv. 6, 7** — Some folk have been going to Bible classes (so-called) for years, listening to everyone who will teach them, but they never reach the age of maturation. Their lives are not changed.

**v. 8** — Jannes and Jambres are the traditional names of the chief magicians of Pharaoh who opposed Moses. They duplicated the first three miracles of Moses. “Reprobate” is castaway. They have discarded the faith.

**v. 9** — “Folly” means that their teaching is senseless and immoral.

**B. Authority of Scriptures in the last days**, Chapter 3:10-17

**v. 10** — “Fully known” is better “thou didst follow.” “Manner of life” is conduct. Paul’s life is an open book.

v. 11 — This is the area where Timothy was reared and where Paul stopped on three of his missionary journeys. Here is where he was stoned to death.

v. 12 — “Godly” is according to godliness. That godliness and persecution go together is an axiom of the Christian life. There is no escaping.

v. 13 — “Seducers” is better “sorcerers” or “impostors.” “Deceiving” is leading astray.

vv. 14, 15 — Over against this dark background the believer has recourse to a knowledge of the Scriptures. The Scriptures are the only source of help for believers in days of apostasy.

“Unto salvation” does not mean particularly “getting saved” or the moment of salvation. Timothy is saved. This has a wider meaning and includes the life that issues from being saved. This is Christian living. The Scriptures give the *modus operandi* and the *modus vivendi* for Christian living.

v. 16 — “All scripture” means every passage of Scripture is given by inspiration of God — it is *God-breathed*. Not only is Scripture God-breathed, it is profitable. “Doctrine” is teaching. “Reproof” is conviction. “Correction” is setting right. “Instruction” is discipline.

v. 17 — “Perfect” is complete, full maturation. “Thoroughly furnished” is fitted out for a life of every good work.

### C. Instructions for the last days, Chapter 4:1-5

v. 1 — “At his appearing” is by His appearing (epiphany), the Rapture of the church. “His kingdom” is the revelation, the return of Christ to the earth to establish His kingdom.

v. 2 — “Preach the word” is the rallying cry for believers in the last days of the church. The church is to give out the Word of God. “Be diligent” is to be ready. “Reprove” is, rather, convict. “Rebuke” carries the thought of threaten. “Exhort” is comfort. “Doctrine” is teaching.

v. 3 — “Shall they heap to themselves teachers”:

Shall invite teachers *en masse*. In periods of unsettled faith, scepticism, and mere curious speculation in matters of religion, teachers of all kinds swarm like the flies in Egypt. The

demand creates the supply. The hearers invite and shape their own preachers. If the people desire a calf to worship, a ministerial calf-maker is readily found.\*

“Having itching ears”:

Clement of Alexandria describes certain teachers as “scratching and tickling, in no human way, the ears of those who eagerly desire to be scratched.” Seneca says, “Some come to *hear*, not to *learn*, just as we go to the theatre, for pleasure, to delight our ears with the speaking or the voice or the plays.”\*

**v. 4** — Church members will turn from the truth to fables (cults, isms, and sensational showmanship).

**v. 5** — “Afflictions” are hardships. It will cost something to preach the Word of God in the last days. “Evangelist” is a traveling teacher, a missionary. “Make full proof of thy ministry” means to fulfill or fully perform your service.

#### **IV. Allegiance to the Lord and of the Lord, Chapter 4:6-22**

##### **A. Deathbed testimony of Paul, vv. 6-8**

Paul writes his own epitaph.

**v. 6** — “Ready to be offered” means poured out as a libation, a drink offering. “Departure” is the Greek *analuseos*, a nautical term used of a ship ready to put out of the harbor for a sea voyage.

**v. 7** — “A good fight” is rather *the* good fight, as a soldier. “Finished my course” (race course) as an athlete. “I have kept the faith” as a steward.

**v. 8** — “Crown of righteousness” is the reward of a righteous life. (For crowns, see 1 Corinthians 9:25; Philippians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; James 1:12; Revelation 3:11). To “love his appearing” is different from holding the doctrine of the coming of Christ. This verse refers to the Rapture.

##### **B. Last words, vv. 9-22**

(“*The Lord stood with me.*”)

Here follows a list of believers in the first century.

**v. 9** — Paul urges Timothy to make every effort to come to him

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\*Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1946, pp. 320, 321.

in Rome.

**v. 10** — “Demas” is a short form of “Demetrius.” His name appears with Luke, the beloved physician, in Colossians 4:14, but only his name is there. He probably showed early in his profession the signs of an apostate.

**v. 11** — Luke is faithful to the end. Mark made good, and Paul acknowledges it.

**v. 12** — Tychicus is evidently the minister at Ephesus.

**v. 13** — The cloak was to keep his body warm in the damp Mamertine prison; the books and parchments were for his mind.

**vv. 14, 15** — I would hate to be Alexander the coppersmith! (See 1 Timothy 1:20; Acts 19:33.)

**vv. 16-18** — “At my first defense” means his first trial. “The Lord stood with me” — something for the spirit of Paul.

Present purpose: “That all the Gentiles might hear.”

Future goal: “The Lord...will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom.”

**vv. 19-21** — This is an exchange of personal greetings and news.

**v. 22** — This is Paul’s final benediction.



# TITUS

**WRITER:** Paul

**DATE:** A.D. 64-67 (See notes on 1 Timothy.)

## **CONTRAST:**

While little is known of either Timothy or Titus, there seems to have been quite a contrast between them. Titus seems to have been a stronger man, both physically and spiritually, since Paul expresses less concern for his welfare. Titus was probably more mature and possessed a virile personality. Timothy was a Jew who was circumcised by Paul, but Titus was a Gentile, and Paul seems to have refused to circumcise him (Galatians 2:3). Paul circumcised one young preacher and refused to circumcise the other. Surely there is no rule that can be drawn from this other than “in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (Galatians 6:15).

## **THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH:**

Here is a fine picture of the New Testament church in its full-orbed realization in the community as an organization. Many boast today that they belong to a New Testament church. In this epistle is found the measuring rod. The ideal church is one that has an orderly organization, is sound in doctrine, pure in life, and “ready to every good work” (Titus 3:1).

## **THE RETURN OF CHRIST:**

In the first two epistles that Paul wrote (1 and 2 Thessalonians), the return of Christ is a great pulsing hope. This has led some critics to say that Paul believed this only when he was young and that he changed when he became more mature. However, in this epistle to Titus, one of his last, the blessed hope still possesses the soul of this intrepid pioneer of faith, “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). The word for “looking” has the root meaning of *enter-taining*. This is the hope that occupied the guest chamber in the heart of Paul during all of his life, beginning at the Damascus Road and going on to the Appian Way.

## OUTLINE:

- I. The church is an organization, Chapter 1**  
(*As such, it should be orderly [v. 5].*)
  - A. Introduction, vv. 1-4
  - B. An orderly church must have ordained elders who meet prescribed requirements, vv. 5-9
  - C. The bad reputation of the Cretans, vv. 10-16
- II. The church is to teach and preach the Word of God, Chapter 2**
  - A. The church must teach sound doctrine, vv. 1-10
  - B. The church must preach the grace of God, vv. 11-15
- III. The church is to perform good works, Chapter 3**  
(*To do this, it should be eager, anxious, and learning to perform good works [vv. 1, 8, 14].*)
  - A. Good works are evidence of salvation, vv. 1-7  
(*The work of the Holy Spirit in contrast to the old life.*)
  - B. Good works are profitable for the present and future, vv. 8-15

## COMMENT:

- I. The church is an organization, Chapter 1**
  - A. Introduction, vv. 1-4**
    - v. 1** — Paul uses an unusual designation for himself in the Pastoral Epistles (see 1, 2 Timothy). “A servant of God” is a bondslave of God. “Apostle of Jesus Christ” is one called directly of Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:1, 12). “According to the faith of God’s elect” — *the faith* is the body of truth in the New Testament, the apostles’ doctrine (Acts 2:42). “Acknowledging” is better translated “*knowledge of the truth according to true piety.*”
    - v. 2** — “In hope” is resting upon hope. “Which God, who cannot lie” — see Romans 3:4.
    - v. 3** — “In due times” is in His own seasons. “Through preaching” is in a proclamation. “Which is committed unto me” is where-with I was entrusted. Paul puts down a solid basis for his authority as he gives instruction to Titus for the local church.
    - v. 4** — Titus is another spiritual son of Paul (see CONTRAST in the introductory remarks).

## **B. An orderly church must have ordained elders who meet prescribed requirements, vv. 5-9**

**v. 5** — Paul had left Titus in Crete to organize local churches with elders as spiritual leaders. The elders are representatives of the congregations (there was to be more than one). They have spiritual oversight of the churches as well as being teachers of the Word.

**vv. 6-9** — “Elder” and “bishop” seem to be synonymous terms. There are some additions and some omissions when compared to the requirements in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 (see notes). An elder (v. 7) must not be self-willed, for he is a steward of God as well as a representative of the people. He is in the church to find and to do God’s will. This is a better rendering of v. 9:

*Holding fast the trustworthy word according to the teaching, that he may be able to exhort in the sound teaching and to convict the gainsayers (heretics).*

## **C. The bad reputation of the Cretans, vv. 10-16**

**v. 10** — “Vain talkers” are empty chatterers.

**v. 11** — “Subvert whole houses” is to overthrow whole families.

**v. 12** — “One of themselves” refers to Epimenides. To speak like a Cretan meant to lie. “Evil beasts” means that they were rude and cruel. Found in another poem about Crete are these lines:

Crete, which a hundred cities doth maintain,  
Cannot deny this, though to lying given.

**vv. 13, 14** — Because of their background, Titus was to deal with them severely so they would not turn from the truth to fables.

**v. 15** — Ceremonies and rituals cannot change the evil heart of man. Only the Word of God can change a human heart — then a ritual is acceptable.

**v. 16** — Paul is saying that faith without works is dead.

## **II. The church is to teach and preach the Word of God, Chapter 2**

### **A. The church must teach sound doctrine, vv. 1-10**

**v. 1** — The local church should be conspicuous by the teaching of sound doctrine (the Word of God).

**vv. 2-5** — This is for senior citizens. Aged men, among other things, must be sound in the faith. Aged women, among other

things, must be teachers of good things. By their experience they are able to instruct the young women, which includes “to love their husbands” and to be “obedient to their own husbands” (which means they are to teach them how to respond to the love of the husband).

v. 5 — “Keepers at home” are workers at home. “Good” is kindly.

v. 6 — Does Paul mean that Titus or the old men are to teach the young men?

vv. 7, 8 — Probably he means Titus, for he, as a young man, is to be an example in many things.

vv. 9, 10 — These are instructions for servants. “Purloining” is to appropriate to one’s own use. The reason that servants are to please their masters is not fundamentally to please their masters, but to adorn the doctrine of God. To please God we must please those to whom we are responsible. The word for “adorn” is *kosmosin* from which we get the word *cosmetic*.

### **B. The church must preach the grace of God, vv. 11-15**

(See author’s booklet, “Grace in Three Time Zones.”)

v. 11 — Past tense: The grace of God hath appeared (epiphany). Over 2000 years ago, He came into human history to establish a space-time relationship with mankind. He intruded into the stream of humanity — He died and rose again. This is what the grace of God is all about.

v. 12 — Present tense: This is the teaching ministry of Christ that continues through the work of the Holy Spirit (see John 16:12-15). This is practical sanctification.

v. 13 — Future tense: “Looking for” is a continuing expectancy. This is the Rapture, which means the redemption of our bodies. This completes salvation. “The great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ” — this is a clear-cut statement of the deity of Christ.

v. 15 — Titus is to preach these things with authority.

### **III. The church is to perform good works, Chapter 3**

(*To do this, it should be eager, anxious, and learning to perform good works [vv. 1, 8, 14].*)

#### **A. Good works are evidence of salvation, vv. 1-7**

(*The work of the Holy Spirit in contrast to the old life.*)

v. 1 — The church must have members who are law-abiding. A believer should obey the laws of the land in which he lives — if they do not conflict or contradict his duty and relationship to God. “Ready to every good work” means a preparation and eagerness to perform every good work.

v. 2 — “To speak evil of no man” evidently means evil that is without proof, for Paul calls many evil men by name (see 2 Timothy 1:15; 2:17; 4:14). “Brawlers” means those who start a fight.

v. 3 — This is what the unsaved are and do.

v. 4 — The kindness and love of God provided a Savior for man (John 3:16).

v. 5 — “Works of righteousness” do not save a sinner — because he has none (they are as filthy rags according to Isaiah 64:6). “According to his mercy” — God does not save by mercy or love. Love provided a Savior to pay the penalty for sin; now God, who is rich in mercy, can save according to His mercy. He saves by grace which is love in action (Ephesians 2:4-9). “Washing of regeneration” is laver of regeneration (1 John 1:7; 2:2; 4:10). “Renewing” is making new, the new birth.

v. 6 — “Shed” or poured forth — salvation comes through Christ.

v. 7 — Justification comes first and comes through Jesus Christ.

**B. Good works are profitable for the present and future,**  
vv. 8-15

v. 8 — Believers should be consistently reminded to perform good works, for it is profitable.

v. 9 — These are the things to be avoided, for they are not profitable.

v. 10 — Heretics in doctrine and conduct are to be avoided also.

v. 11 — “Subverted” is turned aside. “Sinneth” is to trespass. “Condemned of himself” is to be self-condemned.

vv. 12, 13 — Personal greetings and admonitions.

v. 14 — Paul’s final word concerns good works.

v. 15 — Paul concludes his letter with a benediction.

## PHILEMON

**WRITER:** Paul

**DATE:** Probably A.D. 62 (See outline of Ephesians and the Prison Epistles introduction.)

**FORM:**

The Epistles present a different style in revelation. God used law, history, poetry, prophecy, and the Gospels heretofore, but in the Epistles He adopted a more personal and direct method. In this intimate way, He looks back to the Cross and talks about the church. Someone has said that the Epistles are the love letters of Christ to us. Dr. Deissmann divided them into two classifications: Epistles and letters. The Epistles are general, while the letters are more personal and individual. Under this division, the Epistle of Philemon would be classified as a letter, for it is individual and intimate. There is reason to believe that Paul did not expect its contents to be divulged (at other times he knew that he was writing Scripture). This does not detract from the inspiration and value of Philemon, but rather enhances its value and message.

**BACKGROUND:**

The story behind the Epistle to Philemon was enacted on the black background of slavery. There were approximately 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire, where the total population did not exceed 120 million. A slave was a chattel. He was treated worse than an enemy and was subject to the whim of his master.

The story can be briefly reconstructed. Onesimus was a slave belonging to Philemon, a Christian of Colosse. This slave had opportunity to run away and seized on it. He made his way to Rome where he expected his identity and past life to be swallowed up by the great metropolis. One day he chanced upon a gathering where Paul was preaching. There he heard the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit regenerated him, making him a new creature in Christ. He told his story to Paul, and Paul sent him back to Philemon with this accompanying letter.

**PURPOSE:**

The **primary** purpose of this epistle is to reveal Christ's love for us

in what He did for us before God in pleading our case. This is the finest illustration of substitution: “If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee anything, put that on mine account” (Philemon 18). We can hear Christ agreeing to take our place and to have all our sin imputed to Him — “For he hath made him...to be sin for us...” (2 Corinthians 5:21). He took our place in death, but He gives us His place in life: “If thou count me, therefore, a partner, receive him as myself” (Philemon 17). We have the standing of Christ before God, or we have none at all. He took our hell, and He gives us His heaven “that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Onesimus, an unprofitable runaway slave, was to be received as Paul, the great apostle, would have been received in the home of Philemon.

The **practical** purpose is to teach brotherly love. Paul spoke of the new relationship between master and servant in the other Prison Epistles. Here he demonstrates how it should work. These men, belonging to two different classes in the Roman Empire, hating each other and hurting each other, are now brothers in Christ — and they are to act like it. This is the only solution to the problem of capital and labor.

## **OUTLINE:**

- I. Genial greeting to Philemon and his family, vv. 1-3**
- II. Good reputation of Philemon, vv. 4-7**
- III. Gracious plea for Onesimus, vv. 8-16**
- IV. Guiltless substitutes for guilty, v. 17**
- V. Glorious illustration of imputation, v. 18**
- VI. General and personal items and requests, vv. 19-25**

## **COMMENT:**

- I. Genial greeting to Philemon and his family, vv. 1-3**

**v. 1** — “A prisoner of Jesus Christ” — later, Paul makes his plea on the basis that he is a prisoner (v. 9). He was not in prison because of the cleverness of the Jerusalem religious leaders or the power of Roman officials. He was in prison because Jesus Christ willed it. Note that Timothy is with Paul. “Philemon” (see **BACKGROUND**). “Fellow-worker” — Philemon is not only dearly beloved, but is associated with Paul and Timothy in proclaiming the gospel.

v. 2 — “Apphia” is the wife of Philemon. “Archippus” is the son of Philemon. He is a young man who is a fellow soldier, enduring hardness for the gospel. “Church in thy house” — there were no church buildings in the apostolic period. The church assembled in homes.

v. 3 — This is the usual greeting of Paul (see other Prison Epistles).

## **II. Good reputation of Philemon, vv. 4-7**

v. 4 — Paul had made Philemon a subject of prayer. This would seem to denote a special and close relationship between them.

v. 5 — Philemon had a good reputation as a believer. His “love” was toward the Lord Jesus and toward the other believers. His “faith” was toward the Lord Jesus, and he was faithful to other believers.

v. 6 — The life of Philemon was a testimony. “Every good thing” was the result of the fact that “it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).

v. 7 — Paul had joy and consolation in the love of Philemon for other believers. “Bowels,” or heart, implies the entire psychological nature. It means that by him the inner life of the believers had great satisfaction.

## **III. Gracious plea for Onesimus, vv. 8-16**

v. 8 — Paul now comes to the purpose of the letter and approaches his subject diplomatically and cautiously.

v. 9 — Paul gives three reasons as the basis for his plea:

1. “For love’s sake” — probably Philemon’s love for Paul.
2. “Paul, the aged” — though Paul is not too old in years, his suffering and persecution as a missionary for Christ have aged him.
3. He is a prisoner of Jesus Christ, in bonds in Rome, and could not come in person (see v. 1).

v. 10 — “Onesimus” means profitable.

v. 11 — “Unprofitable” — Paul is making a play upon words. “Profitable” (v. 10) was unprofitable; but now that he is a believer, he is profitable. He is now truly Onesimus — profitable to both Philemon and Paul. This is a subtle suggestion that while in prison



Paul could use him.

**v. 12** — But Paul is returning him to Philemon.

**v. 13** — Paul very candidly speaks his mind. This is very personal. Perhaps Paul did not intend us to read it.

**v. 14** — Again he makes a subtle suggestion: Philemon could return Onesimus to him to minister to him in prison. Did Philemon send him back to Paul? I don't know, but I think he did.

**vv. 15, 16** — Since Onesimus has become a believer, his status and relationship to Philemon are different. He is still a slave according to the Roman law, but he is more than that — he is a beloved brother. He is now really profitable. He can live up to his name for the first time.

#### **IV. Guiltless substitutes for guilty, v. 17**

This is one of the grandest illustrations of plenary substitution and imputation. Behind Paul's plea is Christ's plea to the Father on behalf of the sinner who trusts Christ as the Savior. That sinner is received on the same standing that Christ is received. In other words, the saved sinner has as much right in heaven as Christ has, for he has *His* right — "accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6).

#### **V. Glorious illustration of imputation, v. 18**

The reason the saved sinner is accepted in heaven is that Christ took his place down here. The sins of the sinner were put on Christ, and He paid the penalty.

#### **VI. General and personal items and requests, vv. 19-25**

**v. 19** — Paul agrees to pay the entire debt of Onesimus. Philemon is to receive him as he would receive Paul. "I will repay it" (see Hebrews 10:5-10).

**v. 20** — Paul pleads for Onesimus.

**v. 21** — Paul feels that Philemon will do more than he requests.

**v. 22** — Paul expects to be released from prison. He requests prayer in that direction.

**vv. 23-25** — These are personal greetings to mutual friends.

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## SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER

1. Theme of chapter —
2. Most important verse —
3. Most prominent word —
4. Teaching about Christ —
5. Command to obey —
6. Promise to claim —
7. New truth learned —

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*



Thru the Bible Radio Network  
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**Notes & Outlines**

# **HEBREWS**

J. Vernon McGee

## HEBREWS

**WRITER:** Paul (?)

Although the Authorized Version has the heading, “Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews,” there is still a question as to authorship. The American Revised Version corrects this and gives the heading, “The Epistle to the Hebrews.” In spite of the fact that the Pauline authorship cannot be confirmed in a dogmatic fashion, there is abundant evidence that Paul was the author. Both internal and external evidence support the authorship of Paul. The writer had been in bonds (10:34); he wrote from Italy (13:24); his companion was Timothy (13:23). The writing is Pauline and, in my opinion, Peter identifies Paul as the writer (2 Peter 3:15, 16; cf. 1 Peter 1:1).

**DATE:** Before A.D. 70.

Hebrews 10:11 reveals that it was written before the destruction of the temple by Titus in A.D. 70.

**THEME:**

Coleridge said that Romans revealed the *necessity* of the Christian faith, but that Hebrews revealed the *superiority* of the Christian faith. This thought is expressed in the use of the comparative word “better,” which occurs 13 times. Here are some other words which express the theme:

“Perfect” — occurs 15 times (cognate words);

“Let us” — occurs 13 times;

“Let” — occurs 5 times.

Two verses, likewise, convey this “better” way:

*Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.* (Hebrews 3:1)

*For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.* (Hebrews 12:3)

## OUTLINE:

### **I. Christ better than Old Testament economy, Chapters 1— 10** *(Doctrinal)*

- A. Christ is superior to prophets, Chapter 1:1-3**
- B. Christ is superior to angels, Chapters 1:4 — 2:18**
  - 1. Deity of Christ, Chapter 1:4-14
  - 2. Humanity of Christ, Chapter 2

*1st Danger Signal: Peril of drifting, Chapter 2:1-4*

### **C. Christ is superior to Moses, Chapters 3:1 — 4:2**

*2nd Danger Signal: Peril of doubting, Chapters 3:7 — 4:2*

### **D. Christ is superior to Joshua, Chapter 4:3-13**

### **E. Christ is superior to the Levitical priesthood, Chapters 4:14 — 7:28**

- 1. Our great High Priest, Chapter 4:14-16
- 2. Definition of a priest, Chapter 5:1-10

*3rd Danger Signal: Peril of dull hearing, Chapter 5:11-14*

### **3. 4th Danger Signal: Peril of departing, Chapter 6**

- 4. Christ our High Priest after order of Melchizedek, Chapter 7
  - a. Christ is perpetual Priest, vv. 1-3
  - b. Christ is perfect Priest, vv. 4-22
  - c. Christ in His Person is perpetual and perfect Priest, vv. 23-28

### **F. Christ as our High Priest ministers in superior sanctuary by better covenant built upon better promises, Chapters 8 — 10**

- 1. True tabernacle, Chapter 8:1-5
- 2. New covenant better than the old, Chapter 8:6-13
- 3. New sanctuary better than the old, Chapter 9:1-10
- 4. Superior sacrifice, Chapters 9:11 — 10:18
- 5. Encouragement, Chapter 10:19-25



*5th Danger Signal: Peril of despising, Chapter 10:26-39*

**II. Christ brings better benefits and duties, Chapters 11 — 13**  
(*Practical*)

**A. Faith, Chapter 11**

**B. Hope, Chapter 12**

1. The Christian race, vv. 1, 2
2. Believers are now in contest and conflict, vv. 3-14

*6th Danger Signal: Peril of denying, Chapter 12:15-29*

**C. Love, Chapter 13**

1. Secret life of believers, vv. 1-6
2. Social life of believers, vv. 7-14
3. Spiritual life of believers, vv. 15-19
4. Special and personal benediction, vv. 20-25

**COMMENT:**

**I. Christ better than Old Testament economy, Chapters 1—10**  
(*Doctrinal*)

**A. Christ is superior to prophets, Chapter 1:1-3**

vv. 1, 2 — There is no introduction. Sir Robert Anderson suggests a reason why Paul did not open with the phrase, “Paul, an apostle to the Gentiles.” He was not an apostle to the nation of Israel (Hebrews), but they were “his brethren according to the flesh.” The principal reason that Paul omitted his name was that he was not popular among Hebrew believers or non-believers after he met the Lord Jesus Christ on the Damascus road. His name was like waving a red flag in front of a bull. Eusebius, in the 4th century, was the first to question the Pauline authorship.

Note series of contrasts:

“Sundry times” — (not a time word) rather, *many utterances; many separate revelations; diversity*

“Divers manners” — (through promises, law, ritual, dreams, visions, history, poetry, prophecy) *many ways, processes*

“In time past” — dispensation of Law  
“In these last days” — dispensation of grace  
Diversity vs. Unity (Person of Christ)  
Processes vs. Finality (“This is My beloved Son, hear Him”)  
Prophets vs. The Son

“Spoken unto us by his Son” is literally, *To us God spoke in Son*. “God spoke to us in One who has the character that He is a Son” (Bishop Westcott).

“The fathers” (see Romans 9:5). Who are the fathers? Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, et al.

“Prophets” — Israel had great regard for the prophets, built monuments to them. They were agencies of revelation. (The Bible does not argue the existence of God. Neither does it argue the fact of revelation.)

“In Son” — identified in 3:1 and also by seven inexhaustible statements that follow:

(1) **Program** for the future — “heir of all things.”

“Heir” (Luke 20:14) — although the world did not accept Christ, He is the predestined Lord of the universe.

(2) **Purpose** in everything — “by whom also he made the worlds [ages].” This gives purpose, optimism, and meaning to everything. This is the answer to the futility of Schopenhauer, the pessimism and meaninglessness of life in modern philosophy.

v. 3 —

(3) **Person** of God — “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.”

“Brightness” is *outshining; effulgence*.

“Express image” is *steel engraving, the very image of His person*. God has said everything He has to say in Christ. He has no P.S. “For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9).

(4) **Preserver** of all things — “upholding all things by the word of his power.” He not only created all things by His word, but He holds everything together. The universe would come unglued without His constant supervision. He is not an Atlas holding up the earth passively or a little Dutch boy with his finger in the dike. He is actively engaged in maintaining all of creation.

(5) **Pardon** for our sins — “when he had by himself purged our sins.” We have at this point only arrived at Bethlehem, His incarnation. He was born to die.

(6) **Provision** for the present — “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” This is the message of Hebrews (see 4:14-16 — “we have a great high priest”).

## **B. Christ is superior to angels, Chapters 1:4 — 2:18**

### **1. Deity of Christ, Chapter 1:4-14**

(7) **Praise** for the future — “so much better than the angels” (v. 4). Angels were prominent in their ministry to Israel in the Old Testament. The Law was given by the agency of angels (Psalm 68:17; Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19). Cherubim were woven into the veil of the tabernacle, and cherubim were fashioned of gold for the mercy seat. There was no representation of God in the tabernacle. There are 273 references to angels in the Bible. They were messengers, identified with the very throne of God.

Following are eight quotations from the Old Testament (six are from Psalms) that the writer uses to show that they teach the superiority of the Son over angels:

**v. 5** — Psalm 2:7; 2 Samuel 7:14

**v. 6** — Psalm 97:7; Deuteronomy 32:43 (Septuagint)

**v. 7** — Psalm 104:4

**vv. 8, 9** — Psalm 45:6, 7

**vv. 10-12** — Psalm 102:25-27

**v. 13** — Psalm 110:1 (quoted in the New Testament more than any psalm)

Psalms teach the deity of Christ. There is a more complete picture of Christ in the Psalms than in the Gospels.

**vv. 4-7** — Christ is Son — angels are servants.

**vv. 8, 9** — Christ is King — angels are subjects.

**vv. 10-13** — Christ is Creator — angels are creatures.

A fivefold superiority:

(1) Sonship, v. 5

- (2) Worship, v. 6
- (3) Heirship, vv. 7-9
- (4) Kingship, vv. 10-12
- (5) Rulership, v. 13

## 2. Humanity of Christ, Chapter 2

### *1st Danger Signal: Peril of drifting, Chapter 2:1-4*

There are six danger signals in Hebrews, which are warnings to the people of Israel that they fail not to enter into the full blessings that God has provided through Christ. God warned the nation at Kadesh-barnea if they failed to enter into the land of Canaan. (This is the first of six highway markers to warn the reader.)

**v. 1** — Because the revelation they had received was superior to the Old Testament dispensation and came from One superior to angels, they were to pay particular attention, as their responsibility was greater.

“Let them slip” is *should drift past them*, indicating neglect — that is all. Neglect in any area of life is tragic. In a higher realm — hearing the gospel message and doing nothing about it — is infinitely more tragic. What must I do to be lost? Nothing.

**v. 2** — Angels brought important messages both of judgment and of good news: to Lot, a message of the impending doom of Sodom and Gomorrah; to Moses, a call at the burning bush. An angel executed the judgment on the night of the Passover in Egypt. The Law was given by the disposition of angels. An angel spoke to Balaam. Hezekiah was given a message by an angel concerning Assyria. In the New Testament, the angel Gabriel came both to Zacharias and to Mary.

**v. 3** — “How shall we escape?” The Welsh preacher began his sermon, “Friends, I have a question to ask. I cannot answer it, you cannot answer it, even God cannot answer it.” Then he gave this as his text.

“At the first began to be spoken by the Lord” — the Lord said, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10; see also Matthew 16:21; 20:28).

“Them that heard him” were apostles.

v. 4 — These were the apostolic gifts that confirmed the message at the beginning.

Chapter 1 — *Exaltation of Christ, higher than angels* } angels  
Chapter 2 — *Humiliation of Christ, lower than angels* } are the  
norm

Christ is the revealer of God — the representative of man.

vv. 5-9 — Person of the man Christ Jesus: Christ will subdue the world (v. 5). Christ was humiliated when He became man (Philippians 2:6-8). Man lost his dominion at the fall; Christ regained it at the cross.

This is God's original purpose with man (vv. 6-8); cf. Psalm 8:4-6.

v. 9 — (Key of chapter 2):

***But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.***

“Taste” — not only the fact of death but the experience of what death is.

Humanity of Jesus { Not a man in whom God did something.  
Not a religious genius.  
Not a martyr to a cause.  
Not a good example.

Christ's humiliation accomplished 2 things:

- (1) Got glory and honor to the person of Christ;
- (2) Procured man's salvation; made man's salvation possible.

Christ took humanity to heaven. There is a *man* in the glory.

v. 10 — God's heavenly purpose: “Bringing many sons unto glory.” “Perfect” (Greek *teleiosai*) is to carry to the goal; consummate.

v. 11 — “Sanctified” in Hebrews is not associated with the work of the Holy Spirit but with Christ. It is not purification but consecration; not condition but position.

v. 12 — Psalm 22 is the psalm of the cross (see v. 22).

v. 13 — See Isaiah 8:17, 18.

v. 14 — His incarnation is real and genuine — “children of men.”

v. 15 — He brought salvation and deliverance from death.

v. 16 — Christ left heaven, came past the angels, to fallen man.

v. 17 — “In the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:7). It was a real likeness to men, “closest where the traces of the curse of sin were more apparent — in poverty, temptation, and violent and unmerited death” (Vincent).

He is without sin. He became a High Priest that He might make propitiation (reconciliation; a mercy seat) for the sins of the people. Christ as High Priest is the subject of this epistle.

v. 18 — He is able to have compassion and help those who are tested, for He endured the same.

### C. Christ is superior to Moses, Chapters 3:1 — 4:2

#### Chapter 3

v. 1 — Subject of this epistle.

“Holy” is *set apart*.

“Brethren” refers to the Hebrews, those to whom the epistle is addressed (see Romans 9:3).

“Partakers” are companions (“fellows” of 1:9).

“Heavenly” — the Hebrews were an earthly people.

“Apostle and High Priest” — Christ came to this earth as an Apostle; He went back to heaven a High Priest.

*Apostle* ↘

↗ *High Priest*

v. 2 — Moses was faithful (see Hebrews 11:24-29).

vv. 3, 4 — Christ is better than Moses. After showing His superiority to angels, it must be shown that Christ was better than Moses. Several years ago, the president of a conference of Jewish rabbis said that Moses was the greatest Jew who had ever lived. Since undoubtedly this was also in the minds of the Hebrews to whom Paul was writing, he shows the superiority of Christ:

The Builder of the house has more glory than the house.

Christ is the Creator; Moses is a creature.

**vv. 5, 6** — Christ is a Son; Moses is a servant.

Christ is Apostle and High Priest; Moses was called to be both an apostle and high priest, but Aaron was made high priest (Exodus 4:14).

Moses was faithful as a servant in the house; Christ was faithful as a Son over the house.

***2nd Danger Signal: Peril of doubting, Chapters 3:7 — 4:2***

**vv. 7-11** — This is a quotation from Psalm 95:7-11. Israel in the wilderness is the warning. Because they doubted God, they never entered the land of Canaan.

“As the Holy Spirit saith” (v. 7) — the Holy Spirit is the Author of the psalm. David may have been the human author.

“Wilderness” (v. 8) is the place of death, unrest, aimlessness, and dissatisfaction.

“Heart” (vv. 8, 10, 12) — their problem was not intellectual; it was heart trouble.

“Rest” (v. 11) — Scripture presents a fivefold rest:

- (1) creation rest;
- (2) entrance into Canaan;
- (3) rest of salvation (Matthew 11:28);
- (4) rest of consecration (Matthew 11:29, 30); and
- (5) heaven.

**vv. 12-19** — This is a warning against unbelief. Lack of faith can rob a believer of the enjoyment and satisfaction of salvation. He can even die a wilderness Christian (v. 19). The secret of the Christian life is *trust and obey*.

Types in the Old Testament: (1) Egypt — sin; (2) Wilderness (Red Sea) — salvation; (3) Promised Land (Canaan) — satisfaction.

## **Chapter 4**

**v. 1** — “Let us” is one of the key expressions. There is a great deal of “let us” in Hebrews, but this is no mere “salad” epistle. The rest of Canaan is still available.

“Should seem to come short” is *lest anyone of you think he has come too late for it*.

v. 2 — The message was heard but not believed.

#### **D. Christ is superior to Joshua, Chapter 4:3-13**

vv. 3-11 — “Rest” occurs eight times in this section. This rest is compared to the sabbath rest of creation. God’s rest was the satisfaction of looking upon a creation and seeing that it was good, complete, and perfect. We are to rest in the perfect work of salvation that belongs to the new creation. This is the work of Christ for the sinner. God is satisfied with what Jesus did for the sinner — we are to enter into this satisfaction (v. 10).

v. 8 — “Jesus” (KJV) is Joshua. Joshua led them into the land of Canaan, but he could not give rest.

v. 9 — Key verse of this section — sabbath rest.

vv. 12, 13 — Some expositors consider the “word” here to be Christ. We believe it is primarily the written Word.

“Quick” (KJV) (Greek *zon*) is *living*.

“Powerful” (Greek *energes*) is *energizing*.

“Two-edged” means that it cuts inward and outward; penetrating.

“Soul and spirit” — soul and spirit are sometimes used synonymously (see 1 Corinthians 2:9-12).

“Joints and marrow” (see Psalm 32:3).

“Discerner” is *critic*.

v. 13 — Isaiah cried, “Woe is me! For I am undone...” (Isaiah 6:5); and the publican cried, “God be merciful...” (Luke 18:13), meaning, *Provide a mercy seat for me*.

#### **E. Christ is superior to the Levitical priesthood, Chapters 4:14 — 7:28**

##### **1. Our great High Priest, Chapter 4:14-16**

Christ is our High Priest (3:1). The pagan notion of priesthood colors our thinking. A pagan priest bars the approach to God, claiming mystical powers, and denies the finished work of Christ and the priesthood of all believers. All of us need a Priest — we have a lack



and we need help. All have “hang-ups.” Christ is that Priest. Job cried for a daysman.

v. 14 — “We have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens” — Christ was not a priest on earth. He became a priest when He ascended to heaven. He died down here to save us; He lives to keep us saved.

“Profession” is *confession*.

v. 15 — “Touched with the feeling of our infirmities” is better translated, *touched with the experience of our weaknesses*.

“Like as we are” is literally *according to likeness*.

“Yet without sin” is *sin apart*.

v. 16 — “Boldly” is with liberty, frankness, and perfect ease.

“Throne of grace” is mercy seat, formerly the throne of judgment.

(1) “Mercy” is negative (past);

(2) “Help” is positive (future).

In 1 John it is communion between Father and sons (sin breaks communion). Here it is a son needing help.

## 2. Definition of a priest, Chapter 5:1-10

This is the subject of Hebrews. The Jew would find it difficult to accept Christ as priest.

Threefold office of Christ:  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} (1) \text{ Prophet — past,} \\ (2) \text{ Priest — present,} \\ (3) \text{ King — future.} \end{array} \right.$

v. 1 — Definition of a priest:

“Taken *from among men*”;

“Ordained *for men*” (on behalf of men);

“*To God*.”

A priest goes from men to God; a prophet comes from God to men (see Exodus 7:1). The priesthood is not for *lost* sinners but for *saved* sinners. Aaron was not a priest until after Sinai. (Redemption took place at the Red Sea.)

“For sins” (plural, not singular) — He keeps the way open for men.

v. 2 — “Compassion on the ignorant” refers to sins of ignorance

(see Leviticus 4:2). “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man . . .” (Proverbs 14:12). “All we like sheep have gone astray...” (Isaiah 53:6). Aaron was compassed with infirmity; Christ was touched with the feeling of our infirmity. He is a perfect Mediator. Aaron might condone those who had committed the sins that he also had committed; he might condemn those who committed sins that he himself did not commit. Christ can show mercy — not condone or condemn.

**v. 3** — There is no counterpart of this in Christ.

**v. 4** — This is the second requirement for a priest. He must be acceptable to God.

**v. 5** — When Christ was here on earth, He never intruded into the Holy of Holies. The quotation here is from Psalm 2:7 and refers to Christ’s resurrection.

Christ is a Son; Aaron is a servant.

**v. 6** — Melchizedek: Genesis 14 — history of Melchizedek  
Psalm 110 — prophecy of Melchizedek  
Hebrews — interpretation of Melchizedek

In Genesis, the book of genealogies, there is no genealogy of Melchizedek. Nowhere is Christ said to be superior to him. Who was Melchizedek? Both G. Campbell Morgan and Lewis Sperry Chafer said that he was the pre-incarnate Christ.

Christ’s priesthood is after Melchizedek, not after the Aaronic priesthood (Psalm 110:4).

**v. 7** — It is recorded that Christ wept on three occasions: (1) At the grave of Lazarus; (2) over Jerusalem; (3) in the Garden of Gethsemane. Why? Apparently, in the Garden of Gethsemane Satan attempted to slay Him before He went to the cross — in an effort to refute the Old Testament prophecy as to the manner of His death.

“And was heard in that he feared” is rendered *was heard on account of his godly fear*. Fear in itself is not a sin.

**v. 8** — He did not have to learn to obey (John 8:29). He was not disciplined by suffering, but it was as a human experience to help Him sympathize with other human beings.

“Became obedient unto death” (Philippians 2:8).

v. 9 — “Perfect” — He reached the goal: attained full maturation.

v. 10 — “Called” is *saluted* and refers back to Melchizedek.

Before discussing Melchizedek further, he must put up another warning signal.

### ***3rd Danger Signal: Peril of dull hearing, Chapter 5:11-14***

v. 11 — Christ as a priest after Melchizedek is a difficult subject that requires sharp spiritual perception. His readers had a low SQ (spiritual quotient).

“Hard to be uttered” means that it was difficult to make them understand; literally, *hard of interpretation to speak*.

v. 12 — “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers (*by reason of the time you have been under instruction*), ye have need.”

“First principles” (Greek *stoikeia*, atoms) means *primary elements*.

vv. 13, 14 — “Full age” is full grown, maturation (see 1 Corinthians 3:1, 2; 1 Peter 2:1, 2). A baby cannot eat meat, but an adult can enjoy milk.

### ***3. 4th Danger Signal: Peril of departing, Chapter 6***

v. 1 — *Leaving the word of the beginning concerning Christ* is the literal translation. It means for a builder to leave the foundation and go up with the scaffolding; or for a child in school to depart from ABCs to work on his A.B. or Ph.D. It is preparing believers for a trip up to the throne of God.

“Let us go on” — not horizontal but perpendicular.

“Perfection” is *maturity; full age* (5:14).

There are six foundational facts in the Old Testament which pre-figured Christ in ritual, symbol, and ceremony:

(1) “Repentance from dead works” — “Not by works of righteousness which we have done” (Titus 3:5).

(2) “Faith toward God” — Old Testament ritual presented a faith in God by approaching Him through the temple sacrifices, not through Christ as High Priest.

**v. 2** —

(3) “Doctrine of baptisms” — there were many washings in the Old Testament ritual.

(4) “Laying on of hands” was an Old Testament ritual.

(5) “Resurrection of the dead” as taught by the rabbis — in contrast to the resurrection of believers.

(6) “Eternal judgment” as taught by the Old Testament.

**vv. 4, 5** — These are genuine believers — dull but not dead. They need milk — the unsaved need life.

“Impossible” for men, not for God.

The following are marks of the saved, not of the lost:

(1) “Once enlightened,”

(2) “Tasted of the heavenly gift,”

(3) “Partakers of the Holy Spirit,”

(4) “Tasted the good word of God,”

(5) “[Tasted] the powers of the age to come.”

**v. 6** — “Fall away” (Greek *parapesontas*) is not apostasy. It means to fall down, stumble, err. Literally it is *and having fallen away*, a participle (there is no “if”). Peter fell down, but he was not lost — neither was John Mark.

“Repentance” has to do with fruit-bearing — “Bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of repentance” (Luke 3:8).

“Crucify...afresh” refers to Jewish believers returning to the Old Testament sacrifices.

**vv. 7-9** — Fruit-bearing refers to the same fruit as in John 15:5, 6. “Rejected” — see 1 Corinthians 9:27.

**v. 9** — This is the key verse to the entire passage — “things that accompany salvation” — *things that are connected with salvation* (Vincent).

**vv. 10-12** — “Work and labor of love” is not salvation, but the fruit of salvation. (See author’s detailed exposition of this in “Is It Possible for a Saved Person Ever to be Lost?”)

**v. 13** — “For” closely relates this verse to the preceding passage. Abraham is our example. God made promises many times but

“swore” only one time.

**v. 14** — See Genesis 22:15-18 and Hebrews 11:19.

**v. 15** — “Patiently endured” — a new assurance came through trusting God (“full assurance of hope” [v. 11]).

**v. 16** — Men take an oath on something greater than they are. God did not swear by sun, moon, or stars.

**v. 17** — God wants His own to have a fresh and renewed assurance about the Word of God.

**v. 18** — “Two immutable things” — (1) the death and resurrection of Christ; (2) His ascension and intercession.

**v. 19** — “Anchor” refers to “the hope set before us” (v. 18).

**v. 20** — “Forerunner” — Aaron represented the nation Israel before God, but he was not a forerunner. Christ leads us into the very presence of God (see 1 Corinthians 3:20-23; 2 Corinthians 4:15-18).

#### **4. Christ our High Priest after order of Melchizedek, Chapter 7**

##### **a. Christ is perpetual Priest, vv. 1-3**

**v. 1** — “For” refers us back to 6:20. Melchizedek is a type of Christ. In the historical record he is called “king of Salem” and “priest of the most high God” (Genesis 14:17-24).

**v. 2** — The name “Melchizedek” means *my king is righteous*. He was king of Salem (Jerusalem), which means *peace*. (See Psalm 85:10; Jeremiah 23:6; Ephesians 2:14.) He was not a priest according to the Mosaic Law, but was priest of the “most high God” (see Deuteronomy 32:8). He was king — Adam had been given dominion but lost it. Notice that he brought forth bread and wine (Genesis 14:18), which are symbols of the Lord’s Supper and also of God’s goodness in creation.

**v. 3** — “Without father, without mother” means that there is no record of his parentage in the Genesis genealogies.

“Without descent” is without genealogy or pedigree. It is an

inspired omission. In the Mosaic system, no one could serve as a priest unless he was descended from Aaron (Ezra 2:61, 62). The Aaronic priesthood was bound by death (Numbers 20:23-29).

“Continually” (this is the key word) — there is no historical record of the end of Melchizedek’s priesthood.

**b. Christ is perfect Priest, vv. 4-22**

**v. 4** — Abraham had given Melchizedek a tenth of the spoil (Genesis 14:20). This was before the Mosaic Law.

**vv. 5-10** — Levi was in the loins of Abraham because he was descended from Abraham. This shows that Melchizedek is greater than the Levitical priesthood.

*You and I are in Adam* (Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:22).

*You and I are in Christ* (Romans 8:1; Ephesians 1:1).

**vv. 11, 12** — Aaron’s priesthood belonged to the Mosaic Law. Christ has delivered us from the Law. The purpose of the priesthood is to bring perfection— to restore and continue the relationship to God. The Levitical priesthood was powerless.

**vv. 13, 14** — The priesthood had to be changed since Christ did not come from Levi.

**v. 15** — See v. 11 and Psalm 110.

**vv. 16-19** — Contrasts of two priesthoods:

Law vs. Power (*Law restrains — power enables*)

Commandment (*external*) vs. Life (*internal*)

Carnal (*flesh*) vs. Endless (*eternal life*)

Changing vs. Unchanging

Weakness and unprofitableness vs. Nigh to God

Nothing perfect vs. Better hope

**vv. 20, 21** — See Psalm 110.

**v. 22** — “Better testament” is *new covenant*.

**c. Christ in His Person is perpetual and perfect Priest, vv. 23-28**

**v. 23** — Death interrupted the Levitical priesthood.

v. 24 — “This man” is Christ.

v. 25 — This is the key verse of this section and the center of the gospel. Christ is not dead, but living. Emphasize the death and resurrection of Christ — but go on from there (see Romans 8:34; Revelation 1:18). He died down here to save us; He lives up there to keep us saved. He is able to keep on saving us.

“To the uttermost” is *all the way through; completely; perfectly*.

“Intercession” is *intervention*. “We shall be saved by his life” (Romans 5:10).

v. 26 — “Became us” (KJV) is the essential fitness to meet our need — Christ is just what we needed.

“Holy” in relation to God.

“Harmless” is *free from malice, craftiness, or cleverness*.

“Undefiled” is *free from moral impurity*.

“Separate from sinners” — He is like us, yet He is unlike us.

v. 27 — This underlines the value of the sacrifice.

v. 28 — Christ is the final word in priesthood.

## **F. Christ as our High Priest ministers in superior sanctuary by better covenant built upon better promises, Chapters 8 — 10**

### **1. True tabernacle, Chapter 8:1-5**

v. 1 — A near literal translation is: *In consideration of the things which are spoken, this is the focal (chief) point. We have such (7:26) an high priest who sat down in the heavens (10:11, 12) on the right hand of the majesty. This is the high-water mark in Hebrews.*

v. 2 — “True” — true in the sense of original, *genuine*. In His person, Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. In His ministry, Christ is a priest after the order of Aaron.

v. 3 — A priest must offer gifts and sacrifices; Christ must offer gifts and sacrifices.

v. 4 — Christ was not a priest on earth. He did not belong to the tribe of Levi which served in the earthly tabernacle. Christ did not offer gifts and sacrifices on earth. *He* was the sacrifice (the Lamb of God).

v. 5 — The tabernacle on earth was a “shadowy outline” (Moffatt). The wilderness tabernacle was a picture of the tabernacle in heaven. Christ serves in the real tabernacle. In this epistle, stress is placed upon the ascension of Christ rather than the resurrection. Here we have a better sacrifice, a better priest, and a better tabernacle. He died down here to save us; He lives above to keep us saved.

## 2. New covenant better than the old, Chapter 8:6-13

v. 6 — There are two covenants. Christ is the Mediator of the better covenant because it contains better promises.

v. 7 — The first covenant was not adequate, which created a necessity for a better covenant.

v. 8 — There was nothing wrong with the covenant — the people were to blame. “Finding fault with them,” not *it*.

“New covenant” (see Jeremiah 31:31-34).

v. 9 — The people broke the first covenant. It did not enable them to perform what it demanded.

v. 10 — The new covenant will be written upon their hearts — not upon tables of stone — so that they will be able to obey it.

v. 11 — It will be a global covenant, known worldwide.

v. 12 — There will be full forgiveness of sin, complete pardon.

v. 13 — The old covenant is outmoded. It will be supplanted by a new covenant with Israel in the future (Jeremiah 31:31-37). The church is a beneficiary of the new covenant.

## 3. New sanctuary better than the old, Chapter 9:1-10

v. 1 — “Earthly sanctuary” is *sanctuary of this world* — literal and visible, in contrast to the sanctuary in heaven.

v. 2 — The tabernacle, not the temple, is used to present the spiritual. The floor plan of the tabernacle is given with the furniture (see author’s book, “The Tabernacle: God’s Portrait of Christ”).

vv. 3, 4 — “Golden censer” is altar of incense. This was in the holy place in the tabernacle. The veil had been rent in two, and Christ, our intercessor, had passed into the heavens. The altar of



incense, which speaks of prayer, belongs properly in the Holy of Holies. The three items in the ark are listed also.

**v. 5** — The writer cannot dwell upon the tabernacle because it is not the subject — the priesthood is the subject.

**vv. 6-10** — The way to God was actually blocked by the three entrances and compartments. Only the high priest could enter into the Holy of Holies. It was a temporary, makeshift arrangement. The service of ritual and ordinances was given for a brief time. Now Christ can bring us to God, but only *He* can bring us there (John 14:6).

#### **4. Superior sacrifice, Chapters 9:11—10:18**

##### **Chapter 9**

**v. 11** — “Good things to come” should be *that have come to pass*.

“More perfect tabernacle” — not of this creation. The better tabernacle does not belong to this natural creation as to materials or builders.

Is there a literal and real tabernacle in heaven? The tabernacle in heaven is spiritual but real (8:2); it is literal but real (9:9). (Compare v. 23, “patterns” are *types*. See also Revelation 11:19 and 15:5.)

**v. 12** — This is a superior sacrifice for the genuine tabernacle. Did Christ present His blood in heaven? I think that He did.

**vv. 13, 14** — If the blood of animals could remove ceremonial defilement, surely the blood of Christ can take away the guilt of sin.

“Heifer” (see Numbers 19:9) — the blood of Christ cleanses the conscience, not the flesh.

**v. 15** — Christ is now the Mediator of the new covenant.

**vv. 16, 17** — Here the reference is to a will that was made by a man who has died. It was no good as long as he lived.

**vv. 18-22** — “Blood” occurs six times in this section. This reveals the place and power of the blood in the Old Testament ritual. “Without shedding of blood is no remission” is the axiom of the Old Testament. The blood is important in the New Testament. “There is power in the blood of the Lamb.”

**v. 23** — “These” (see v. 19) — heavenly things needed cleansing because sin originated in heaven. (See v. 11.)

v. 24 — Christ has not entered into a handmade and man-made sanctuary. It is spiritual but real. He lives in heaven to keep us saved. He is there for us. He died on earth to save us.

v. 25 — The high priest entered with blood not his own. He entered often.

v. 26 — Christ appeared once in the end of the age and offered Himself.

v. 27 — If Christ had failed to save in His death at His first coming, there would be nothing afterward but judgment. He is not coming back to die. Christ died but was not judged. Rather, He took our judgment here, and He will be Judge there.

v. 28 — This is not the Rapture, but His coming as Sovereign to judge the earth. Believers will not come into judgment.

## **Chapter 10**

v. 1 — “For” — the writer continues the theme of the superior sacrifice.

“Shadow” (Greek *skian*) is *hazy outline*.

“Image” (Greek *eikona*) is *likeness*.

Old sacrifices were shadow, not substance. (You cannot live in the shadow of a house, you need the house.)

v. 2 — Old sacrifices required repetition. They never accomplished remission of sins. “He who is obliged to take a medicine every hour to keep life in him cannot be said to be cured” (Govett). “Consciousness of sins” — not cleansing.

vv. 3, 4 — “Remembrance” — each sacrifice was a *calling to mind* of sin, not a removal. Christ said, in instituting the Lord’s Supper, “This do in remembrance of me.” When we “remember” Him, we are recalling the One who has blotted out our sins and remembers them no more (8:12).

vv. 5-8 — This is a quotation from Psalm 40:6-8; cf. Isaiah 50:4, 5. “A body hast thou prepared me” is in the Old Testament, “Mine ears hast thou opened” (Psalm 40:6; see also Exodus 21:1-6). A slave had his earlobe pierced if he had married a woman in slavery and chose to stay in slavery with her. Christ was crucified in a body

that He might redeem the church.

**v. 9** — It is God’s will to remove the animal sacrifices and to sacrifice Himself.

**v. 10** — By the will of God we are consecrated through the offering of Christ. This is positional sanctification.

**v. 11** — The priests stood (servile attitude). It was a constant repetition of daily offerings, never completed.

**v. 12** — Jesus sat down; His work was finished — “*one sacrifice for sins forever.*”

**v. 13** — Psalm 110:1 — this is the second coming of Christ to the earth.

**v. 14** — One offering does what many offerings could not do. If Christ cannot save you and keep you, then God has no way to save and keep you.

**vv. 15, 16** — The Holy Spirit is God (Lord, v. 16). This is a repetition of 8:10-12 from Jeremiah 31:33, 34 — Jeremiah spoke by inspiration.

**v. 17** — This is the essential part of the quotation.

**v. 18** — “Now” — the sacrificial system began with Abel and ended with the death of Christ.

This concludes the doctrinal section.

## **5. Encouragement, Chapter 10:19-25**

Practical — Privilege — Responsibility

**v. 19** — This is an invitation to the unsaved and believers to enter and enjoy the benefits.

“Having” (v. 21) is the present tense of the blessed life.

**v. 20** — “New” is *freshly slain* — the sacrifice of Christ never becomes old. Luther said, “It seems but yesterday that Jesus died on the cross.”

“Through the veil” — when Christ dismissed His spirit, the veil of the temple was torn in two (Mark 15:24-38).

**v. 21** — We have a High Priest.

**v. 22** — “Full assurance” rests upon having our (1) “hearts sprinkled” (with blood) — the applied sacrifice of Christ; (2) “bodies washed with pure water” — the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit. In three verses, “let us” occurs three times:

- (1) Draw near in faith (God)
- v. 23** — (2) Draw near in hope (self)
- vv. 24, 25** — (3) Draw near in love (others)

“Provoke” (Greek *paroxusmon*) is literally *with a view to incitement*. “Privileges perceived and not practiced become paralysis” (Dr. Morgan). We are sanctified with other Christians.

“Saint” is not used in the singular, always in the plural — *communion of saints*.

“The day approaching” refers to the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D.

### **5th Danger Signal: Peril of despising, Chapter 10:26-39**

(Most solemn warning of all [v. 14 is the key].)

**v. 26** — “Sin wilfully” is to go back to the sacrifices after Christ had come, acting as if He had not died for sins or attaching no value to His death (2 Peter 2:21). Unbelief is willful sin (1 John 3:9). These are not Christians.

**v. 27** — There is nothing between the sacrifice of Christ and His coming but judgment. He is not coming to die again.

**v. 28** — The Mosaic Law exacted the death penalty (see Numbers 15:30, 31; Deuteronomy 17:2-7). Sins then were not as great or extensive as rejecting God’s provision of salvation through Christ. There is no comparison.

**v. 29** — “With which he was sanctified” refers to Christ, the Son of God. “Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh” (6:6). To treat the death of Christ as inadequate to settle the sin question and to go on as if He had not died is to treat the blood of Christ as a despised thing. Privilege creates responsibility.

**v. 30** — God has a sovereign right to judge — which He has not surrendered. (See v. 23; cf. 1 Peter 4:17, 18.)

v. 31 — This is for Christians (see 2 Corinthians 5:11).

vv. 32, 33 — This is a personal word to Hebrews.

v. 34 — “Compassion on me in my bonds” should be *compassion on the prisoners*.

“Substance” is *possession*. The writer refers them to their own past experiences.

v. 35 — “Confidence” is *boldness* (see v. 19).

v. 36 — “Patience” — “Tribulation worketh patience...” (Romans 5:3, 4).

v. 37 — Scripture says that the Lord will not tarry, He will surely come.

v. 38 — This is a quotation from Habakkuk 2:3, 4, quoted also in Romans and Galatians.

Romans — “The just”

Hebrews — “shall live” (faith and patience go together [6:12])

Galatians — “by faith”

v. 39 — “Draw back” is *take in sail*. The believer is like a sailor who should let out the sail — “Let us go on.” Here the thought is that a believer could reef the sails — become stranded because of discouragement, depression, or some other stumbling block.

## II. Christ brings better benefits and duties, Chapters 11 — 13 (Practical)

### A. Faith, Chapter 11

v. 1 — “Substance” (Greek *hupostasis*) is a scientific term, opposite of hypothesis or theory; it is a chemical that settles at the bottom of a test tube. Dr. A. T. Robertson translates it *title deed*. It is the foundation, the Word of God.

“Evidence” (Greek *elegchos*) is a legal term; it is evidence that is accepted for conviction.

v. 2 — “Elders” has three meanings: (1) old men; (2) New Testament officers in the church; (3) Old Testament saints — heads of house or tribe. Another rendering is: *For by such faith as this the*

*forefathers received witness.*

**v. 3** — “Worlds” (Greek *aionas*), literally *the ages*, is a period of time of significant character (see 1:2). It is a time-space period with a fourth dimension of purpose.

“By the word of God” — God spoke (energy), creating matter. Matter is not indestructible but is changed back into energy.

**v. 4** — Abel represents the worship of faith (Genesis 4:1-5). He was the first martyr to faith. Abel’s sacrifice signified that without shedding of blood is no remission of sin.

**v. 5** — Enoch represents the walk of faith (Genesis 5:21-24).

**v. 6** — We come to God only by faith. (“Come” occurs seven times in Hebrews.) Believe two things: (1) God exists; (2) God is available.

**v. 7** — Noah represents the witness of faith.

**vv. 8-10** — Abraham represents the obedience of faith. “Obeyed” is the key word.

**vv. 11, 12** — Sarah represents the power (strength) of faith.

**vv. 13-16** — This is the optimism and expectancy of faith.

**vv. 17-19** — Isaac represents the willingness of faith; Isaac was a grown man, not a baby boy, when Abraham offered him on the altar. Abraham believed in the resurrection.

**vv. 20, 21** — Isaac and Jacob represent the future of faith.

**v. 22** — Joseph represents the fulfillment of the promises of God.

**vv. 23-28** — Moses represents the sacrifices of faith.

**v. 29** — Crossing the Red Sea was by the faith of Moses.

**v. 30** — Joshua represents the foolishness of faith — it seemed absurd to march around Jericho.

**v. 31** — Rahab represents the unlikely place of faith.

**vv. 32-38** — Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, and Samuel represent faith in action.

**vv. 39, 40** — These are not necessarily heroes of faith, but this is what faith has done in the history of man under different circumstances in different periods through different individuals. Faith has no merit in itself; merit is in the object of faith — “He that cometh to God must believe that he is” (v. 6).

## **B. Hope, Chapter 12**

### **1. The Christian race, vv. 1, 2**

**v. 1** — “Wherefore” — this connective welds together what has preceded in chapter 11.

“Witnesses” are not spectators, but they witness by their lives (in their day and way) that to live by faith is practical and real.

The Christian life is likened to a Greek race. (Christ is the way to God. Along the way, the Christian as a soldier is to stand, as a believer he is to walk, and as an athlete he is to run. One day he will fly — space travel to the New Jerusalem.) There is the negative aspect of the race — “lay aside.”

“Every weight” may not be wrong in themselves, but a Christian must sacrifice them because they are unnecessary weights. “He...that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33; see also Matthew 10:37, 38).

“And sin which doth so easily beset us” is a *specific encumbrance* (Vincent). Here it is unbelief, the opposite of faith.

“Patience” is endurance combined with an eagerness to win.

**v. 2** — There is the positive aspect to the race — this epistle was written to keep the believer “looking unto Jesus.” He is the chief and all-important witness.

“Author” is *leader* or *captain*.

“Finisher” is *perfecter of faith* — even of the Old Testament saints. Jesus is at the right hand of God, having finished redemption.

### **2. Believers are now in contest and conflict, vv. 3-14**

**v. 3** — “Consider him” (see 3:1). Jesus had been on the same race course of life that we are on, and He knows the hurdles and experiences. He knows and understands the struggle against evil men (“contradiction of sinners”).

v. 4 — The temple had not been destroyed at this time. It was destroyed in A.D. 70 — and then there were martyrs.

vv. 5, 6 — God chastens His children:

- (1) despise not,
  - (2) faint not — God disciplines as an act of love,
- v. 7 — (3) endure chastening.

v. 8 — An undisciplined person is not a genuine believer — he is illegitimate.

v. 9 — A natural father should discipline his children for their good, and the child will respond.

v. 11 — Chastening is not pleasant at the time.

vv. 12-14 — Be encouraged; go on following a straight path.

***6th Danger Signal: Peril of denying, Chapter 12:15-29***

v. 15 — “Looking diligently” has to do with the direction. A believer must keep his eyes on Jesus, not on men. Otherwise there is danger of bitterness which affects others also.

v. 16 — “Profane” — not in the abuse of language but, rather, against God (*pro* is *before* or *against*; *fanus* is *temple*). It means against the temple; *godless*. Esau despised his birthright, counting it only worth a pittance.

vv. 18-21 — Mt. Sinai represents the old covenant. A believer is not brought back to the legal system of the old covenant (see Exodus 19).

vv. 22-24 — “Ye are come” indicates position. A believer is brought to the new covenant:

- (1) “Mt. Zion,” the heavenly city
  - (2) “city of the living God”
  - (3) “heavenly Jerusalem”
  - (4) “angels”
  - (5) “general assembly and church of the first-born” — New
- } New Jerusalem



Testament church

- (6) “God, the Judge” — the Lord Jesus Christ
- (7) “spirits of just men made perfect” — evidently a reference to Old Testament saints
- (8) “Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant”
- (9) blood of Jesus — better than Abel’s blood

**v. 25** — This is a warning against refusing to hear the voice of Jesus through the Holy Spirit (see John 16:7-15).

**vv. 26, 27** — Privilege creates responsibility. God has nothing more to say. The Word of Jesus is final. There is danger of not hearing Him. He is shaking the world that men might see some things unshakeable.

**v. 28** — This is an exhortation based on the privileges we have. We are identified with a kingdom that cannot be moved. We have grace to serve God in an acceptable manner.

**v. 29** — This is a solemn reminder.

### **C. Love, Chapter 13**

#### **1. Secret life of believers, vv. 1-6**

**v. 1** — “Brotherly love” is *brother-love* — not love like brothers, but because they are brothers.

**v. 2** — “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers” — stranger-love; *hospitality*.

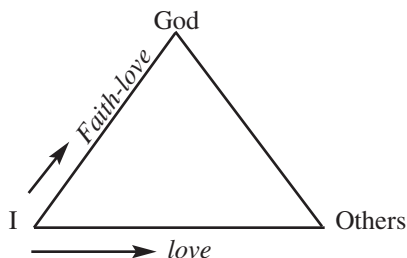
“Some” is a reference to Abraham (Genesis 18).

**v. 3** — Remember the needy and those in trouble. Show love to those in need. The church is a body; when one member suffers, all suffer.

**v. 4** — Asceticism is condemned; lust and laxity are condemned. Sex is to be exercised in the marriage relationship.

**v. 5** — “Conversation” (KJV) is *manner of life*. This is the basis of real contentment. Response of faith to the Word of God (Genesis 28:15; Deuteronomy 31:6; Joshua 1:5; Isaiah 41:17).

**v. 6** — See Psalm 118:6.



This is the secret of a happy life.

## 2. Social life of believers, vv. 7-14

**v. 7** — Spiritual leaders are to be obeyed. Be loyal to teachers of the Word.

**v. 8** — Jesus Christ is the same in His character (Person). He is not the same in place and performance — 2000 years ago, He was a babe in Bethlehem. He performed miracles in Capernaum then, but not today.

**v. 9** — Believers are not to be taken in by every new teaching. Diet and ceremonies do not establish believers.

**v. 10** — Here is a comparison between what Israel had under the old covenant in contrast to the better things of the new. Believers have an altar, not the Lord's Supper, not a material altar with a local address.

**v. 11** — “Burned” is *consumed* — this is a sin offering.

**v. 12** — Jesus died outside the city — He was the sin offering.

**vv. 13, 14** — We are to go to Him. We are on the way to the heavenly Jerusalem. This is real separation. “Let us” go to Him.

Hebrew — one who has crossed over.

- (1) Euphrates — old life gone,
- (2) Red Sea — new life possible,
- (3) Jordan — new life to be lived,
- (4) going to Jesus — new life, new living, new hope.

## 3. Spiritual life of believers, vv. 15-19

v. 15 — Sacrifices of a believer:

- (1) Person (Romans 12:1),
- (2) Purse (2 Corinthians 8:1-5),
- (3) Praise — sacrifice costs something,

v. 16 — (4) Performance — doing good.

v. 17 — (See v. 7.) The teaching of the Word of God is to be obeyed.

vv. 18, 19 — Evidently the readers knew the writer.

#### 4. Special and personal benediction, vv. 20-25

vv. 20, 21 — A glorious benediction.

v. 22 — A gentle word if it is from Paul.

v. 23 — Could this be Paul? I think so.

v. 24 — The writer was in Italy. So was Paul.

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*

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Thru the Bible Radio  
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**Notes & Outlines**

# **JAMES**

J. Vernon McGee

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## GENERAL EPISTLES

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James; 1 and 2 Peter; 1, 2 and 3 John; and Jude are designated as “catholic” epistles in the sense of “universal” because they are not addressed to a particular individual or church, but to the church as a whole.

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### JAMES

**WRITER:** James

The problem of authorship is a major one. Some find at least four men by the name of James in the New Testament. At least three are clearly identified:

1. James, brother of John, son of Zebedee, called by our Lord “son of thunder” (Mark 3:17). He was slain by Herod (Acts 12:1, 2).
2. James, son of Alphaeus, called “James the less” (Mark 15:40). He is mentioned in the list of apostles, but very little is known concerning him.
3. James, the Lord’s brother (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3), in reality a half-brother according to the flesh. He became head of the church at Jerusalem (Acts 15:13). This James is evidently the writer of this epistle (Galatians 2:9).

**DATE:** A.D. 45-50

This was the first book of the New Testament to be written. Some have taken the position that James wrote to combat the writings of Paul. It is obvious that this is an erroneous position, since none of Paul’s epistles were in existence at the time of this writing.

### JAMES AND PAUL:

The seeming contradiction between James and Paul can be easily explained when the message of James is considered. James takes the position, as does Paul, that we are justified by faith but that the faith which justifies produces good works. Calvin said, “Faith alone

saves, but the faith that saves is not alone.” Justification is shown by works — not justified *by*, but *for*, good works. James and Paul present the two aspects of justification by faith.

Paul emphasized both phases:

**Faith** — not justified *by* works:

*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us....* (Titus 3:5)

*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God — not of works, lest any man should boast.* (Ephesians 2:8, 9)

**Works** — justified *for* works:

*...these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works....* (Titus 3:8)

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* (Ephesians 2:10)

Faith is the root of salvation — works are the fruit of salvation.  
Faith is the cause of salvation — works are the result of salvation.

### **KEY VERSES:**

*But be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.* (James 1:22)

*But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?* (James 2:20)

**THEME:** Ethics of Christianity, not doctrine

The Epistle of James has been compared to the Book of Proverbs in the Old Testament. Both emphasize the practical. In both there is the learning experience for the child of God.

Justification by faith is demonstrated by works. Justification by faith is poured into the test tube of:



Works — Chapters 1, 2  
Words — Chapter 3  
Worldliness — Chapter 4  
Warning to the rich — Chapter 5

## OUTLINE:

- I. Verification of genuine faith, Chapters 1 — 3**
  - A. God tests faith by trials, Chapter 1:1-12**  
*(Twofold result: development of patience here, v. 3; reward hereafter, v. 12)*
  - B. God does not test faith with evil, Chapter 1:13-21**  
*(Evil comes from within — the flesh, v. 14)*
  - C. God tests faith by the Word, not by man's words, Chapter 1:22-27**  
*(Doing, not doctrine, is the final test of faith; knowing is not enough.)*
  - D. God tests faith by attitude and action in respect of persons, Chapter 2:1-13**
  - E. God tests faith by good works, Chapter 2:14-26**  
*(Abraham is an illustration of works, v. 21)*
  - F. God tests faith by the tongue, Chapter 3**  
*(“What is in the well of the heart will come up through the bucket of the mouth.”)*
- II. Vacuity and vapidness of worldliness, Chapter 4**  
*(Worldliness is identified with fighting and the spirit of dissension, vv. 1, 2)*
- III. Vexation of the rich; value of the imminent coming of Christ, Chapter 5**  
*(The soon coming of Christ produces patience, vv. 7, 8, and prayer; vv. 13-18)*

**A. Riches are a care (rich warned), vv. 1-6**

**B. Coming of Christ is a comfort, vv. 7-12**

**C. Prayer of the righteous is a power, vv. 13-20**

**COMMENT:**

**I. Verification of genuine faith, Chapters 1 — 3**

**A. God tests faith by trials, Chapter 1:1-12**

**v. 1** — “Servant” is *bond slave* (he was a half-brother of our Lord, according to the flesh). James does not get familiar with the Lord — notice that he uses the full name, Lord Jesus Christ.

“Scattered abroad” (Greek *diaspora*). The Jews were scattered throughout the Roman Empire in principal cities.

“Greeting” is *rejoice*, a warm word.

**v. 2** — “Temptations” (KJV) are *testings*. The joy is the result of trials. There is a purpose in trials, they are not trivial or meaningless. The joy follows (see Hebrews 12:11).

**v. 3** — When faith is poured into the test tube of trials, the result is patience. This is proof positive. “Acid of grief tests the coin of belief.” See John 2:23-25 and 6:64-66; Romans 5:3-5; Galatians 6:17; Psalm 131:2.

**v. 4** — “Perfect” is *full maturation*.

“Entire” is *soundness*, not crippled. This is the normal Christian.

**v. 5** — If any lack wisdom in attaining to Christian normality, let him ask of God wisdom in this direction.

“Liberally” is *simply*.

“Upbraideth not” — it is “pure, simple, giving of good, without admixture of evil or bitterness” (Vincent).

**v. 6** — He is to ask without hesitation, with bold faith.

“Wave” is *surge*.

**v. 7** — This is emphatic.

v. 8 — “Double-minded” is *undecided*.

“Unstable” is *confused*.

v. 9 — “Low degree” is the poor, in contrast to the rich.

“Rejoice” is *glory* or *boast*.

v. 10 — “Made low” is *humiliation*. Riches will not keep him alive or give him eternal life.

v. 11 — As the sun scorching the grass causes it to wither away, so the rich will fade from the earth.

v. 12 — The thought here is that there is a reward for the man who endures testing and is approved (tried) afterward.

### **B. God does not test faith with evil, Chapter 1:13-21**

v. 13 — No man is tempted with evil from God. God is incapable of being tempted with evil, and He Himself tempts no man.

v. 14 — A man is tempted with evil when he is trapped and hooked by his own lust (flesh).

v. 15 — Desires of the flesh lead to sin, and sin to death. Sin gives birth to death in an unholy union.

v. 16 — This is a warning.

v. 17 — God never sends evil. He is good and He gives good gifts for He is the Creator. There is no variation, as the laws of creation reveal.

“Neither shadow of turning” means that there is no shadow cast by turning, like the dark side of the moon.

v. 18 — The Word of God gave birth to a son of God (1 Peter 1:23).

v. 19 — “Wherefore” is *know ye*.

v. 20 — The anger of man is contrary to the will and work of God.

v. 21 — “Filthiness” (of the flesh).

“Superfluity of naughtiness” (KJV) is *abundance of wickedness*. The implanted Word is a preventative against the sins of the flesh. “Save your souls” — see Romans 1:16.

**C. God tests faith by the Word, not by man’s words,**  
Chapter 1:22-27

v. 22 — “Doers” — see Matthew 7:21. The Word demands decision and action. To give only a mental assent to it is to rationalize, which leads to self-deception.

v. 23 — The Word reveals the natural man in reality.

v. 24 — To ignore the Word leads to tragedy. To ignore the x-ray that reveals a cancer leads to death.

v. 25 — “Looketh” means to look attentively, penetratingly. To obey the Word leads to blessing and life.

v. 26 — “Religious” means to go through the ritual and forms of religion. The tongue is the true index of the reality of religion. Psalm singing on Sunday and filthy stories on Monday identify a heretic.

v. 27 — “Pure” is the positive side. “Unfiled” is the negative side.

Positive: “Visit” — contact with the sorrow of the world and problems of people.

Negative: “Unspotted” — contact with the world does not mean to be implicated in the things of the world.

**D. God tests faith by attitude and action in respect of persons,** Chapter 2:1-13

v. 1 — “Have” is *hold* — “Hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.” Don’t be a spiritual snob.

v. 2 — “Assembly” is *synagogue*, meaning a coming together. The Jewish Christians evidently used the word “synagogue” even

if they did not meet in an actual synagogue building.

“With a gold ring” means not a single ring, but a man loaded down with gold rings, which was an evidence of wealth.

“Goodly apparel” (KJV) is *fine clothing*, contrasted to the clothing of a poor man.

v. 3 — This is discrimination made in favor of the rich.

v. 4 — “Are ye not then partial in yourselves?” should be, *Are ye not divided in your own mind?* This means that they revealed a doubt concerning their faith by these actions.

v. 5 — Poor by the world’s standards, but heirs of the kingdom.

v. 6 — James is rough on the rich (see Proverbs 22).

v. 7 — “Worthy” is better *honorable*.

v. 8 — The law is summed up in this statement, even as the Lord Jesus Christ stated.

v. 9 — To discriminate between rich and poor is sin, and it makes a person a transgressor of the law.

v. 10 — To break the law in one point makes one a lawbreaker.

v. 11 — To break one law makes a lawbreaker as if he had broken any other law.

v. 12 — “The law of liberty” is the Word of God.

v. 13 — The lawbreaker will be judged without mercy, as he showed no mercy in breaking the law.

### **E. God tests faith by good works, Chapter 2:14-26**

v. 14 — Works follow saving faith. Calvin said, “Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone.”

v. 15 — This is a practical illustration.

v. 16 — Pious clichés and Christian verbiage are not the evidence of saving faith. There must be a vocation to go along with

the vocabulary.

**v. 17** — James is speaking about saving faith. He is not speaking of the works of the law, but of faith (see Romans 3:20).

**v. 18** — Faith is demonstrated to a skeptical world by works.

**v. 19** — Lip service is not the evidence of saving faith — even the demons believe.

**v. 20** — Faith without the fruit of faith is empty and futile as far as the world is concerned.

**v. 21** — Abraham is an illustration of saving faith. By offering his son, he demonstrated his faith.

**v. 22** — Abraham's faith was made real.

**v. 23** — Abraham proved he had saving faith.

**v. 24** — Saving faith can stand the test of life.

**v. 25** — Rahab is another example of saving faith (see Hebrews 11:31).

**v. 26** — Faith without works is like a dead body in a morgue.

### **F. God tests faith by the tongue, Chapter 3**

**v. 1** — Teachers have a greater responsibility.

**v. 2** — “Offend” (KJV) is *stumble*. The tongue is the index to the body.

**vv. 3, 4** — The horse is controlled by a bit (bridle). A ship is directed by a small helm (rudder).

**v. 5** — The tongue is a little member, but it needs to be controlled.

**v. 6** — The uncontrolled tongue is a forest fire, a world of iniquity, and it is set on fire of hell. (See author's booklet, “Tongues on Fire.”)

**vv. 7, 8** — Beasts can be tamed — but not the tongue.

**vv. 9, 10** — The tongue is capable of praising God or blaspheming Him. The tongue lifts man above the animal world. Man is not a jibbering ape nor an aping parrot. Man is not a mockingbird. Man can communicate with man and with God.

**vv. 11, 12** — Man can be two-faced, double-minded, and forked-tongued; that is, he can say good and bad. No fountain gives forth sweet and bitter water, nor does a tree bear figs and olives.

**v. 13** — The tongue reveals genuine faith.

**v. 14** — Strife and bitterness are not the fruits of faith.

**v. 15** — “Knowledge is proud that she has learned so much, Wisdom is humble that she knows no more.”

**v. 16** — An uncontrolled tongue produces envying and strife, which lead to confusion and evil work.

**v. 17** — True wisdom comes from above and produces fruit: purity, peaceableness, gentleness, etc.

“Without partiality” is *without doubting*.

**v. 18** — These are the fruits of faith.

## **II. Vacuity and vapidness of worldliness, Chapter 4**

**v. 1** — “Lusts” is *sensual passion*.

“War in your members” — strife and turmoil are created by conflicts and overweening demands of the members of the body for satisfaction.

**v. 2** — Selfish desires lead to war. This spirit of strife is worldliness. This is not the Christian approach. The desires should be taken in prayer to the Lord to have them satisfied, denied, or refined.

**v. 3** — Requests are denied because they are selfish.

v. 4 — This spirit of trying to *get* more rather than to *give* more is the spirit of the world and is the enemy of God. God says, “Love not the world.”

v. 5 — Or, it may be translated, *Does the Spirit desire in an envious manner?*

v. 6 — This is one of many references that show God’s hatred of pride and His love of humility.

v. 7 — The child of God must first of all be subject to God. Then he is in a position to resist the devil.

v. 8 — The door to God is always open.

*But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.* (Psalm 73:28).

There must be confession of sin.

“Double-minded” — see James 1:8.

v. 9 — Certain conditions call for mourning, not for joy. Sin is never to be treated lightly.

vv. 10-12 — This is an exceedingly practical section (see Matthew 7:1, 2).

“Who art thou that judgest another?” (v. 12) is *Who do you think you are?*

v. 13 — “Go to now” (KJV) is *come now*, a phrase for calling attention. James reminds us of the uncertainty of life.

v. 14 — Life is like a mist on a mountainside — uncertain, transient, and temporary.

v. 15 — Our lives are in the hand of God.

v. 16 — Man cannot boast — if he does, it is sin.

v. 17 — This is another definition of sin: refusing to do the right



thing. Doing nothing is sin.

### **III. Vexation of the rich; value of the imminent coming of Christ, Chapter 5**

#### **A. Riches are a care (rich warned), vv. 1-6**

**v. 1** — “Go to now” (KJV) is *come now*.

“Howl” is a descriptive Greek word, *ol-ol-uz-o*. This is strong language.

**v. 2** — No radical ever spoke more strongly against the rich than does this section. This is clear-cut condemnation of the rich. Money is not evil, but the love of money is.

**v. 3** — It is not the making of money, but the accumulation and abuse of riches that is condemned. The condemnation is of the rich with a big bank account in the last days; a big bank balance, when the Lord comes, will be a sin. (See Ecclesiastes 10:19; Proverbs 11:4; Jeremiah 17:11.)

**v. 4** — Here he condemns the way in which riches are made.

**v. 5** — God condemns the riotous living of the rich in pleasure and in the satisfying of selfish lusts.

**v. 6** — God is doing nothing about the injustice of the world now, but He will straighten out everything at His coming.

#### **B. Coming of Christ is a comfort, vv. 7-12**

**v. 7** — The coming of Christ will correct the wrongs of the world (see Psalm 45:3-7; Isaiah 11:3-5; Matthew 6:19-24). Waiting for the fruit to ripen should be the attitude of the child of God.

**v. 8** — We are to be patient in view of the coming of Christ.

**v. 9** — Set your house in order; get your affairs straightened out before He comes and straightens them out Himself.

**v. 10** — The prophets are an example. They suffered.

**v. 11** — Job is an example of one who suffered. He doesn't seem very patient. Look at the end of his trial (Job 42:1-6).

**v. 12** — Be the kind of person who needs not to be under an oath to tell the truth. A believer's word should be as good as his bond.

### **C. Prayer of the righteous is a power, vv. 13-20**

**v. 13** — The afflicted are to pray. The merry are to sing psalms.

**v. 14** — The sick are to do two things:

(1) Call for the elders (officers) to pray;

(2) Anoint with oil — anointing can be either ceremonial or medicinal. Here it is medicinal; oil is to be applied as medicine for healing (see Isaiah 38:21). In effect, James says to call the elders to pray and to call the doctor to apply the medicine.

**v. 15** — Man is to use every means that God has provided, but it is the prayer of faith that will save the sick. Sins must be forgiven, that means confessed (1 John 1:9).

**v. 16** — Confess faults to one another, but confess sins to God.

**vv. 17, 18** — Elijah was the same sort of human being that we are, and God heard and answered his prayer. He controlled the weather for three years.

**vv. 19, 20** — I used to hold the view that this referred to a child of God who has gone astray. But now I believe it is an unsaved person who is converted. His sins will be covered (see Psalm 32:1; Proverbs 10:12).

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

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- Ironside, H. A. *Notes on James and Peter*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.
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- Luck, G. Coleman. *James, Faith in Action*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1954. (A fine, inexpensive survey.)
- McGee, J. Vernon. *James*. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991.
- Neibor, J. *Practical Exposition of James*. Erie, Pennsylvania: Our Daily Walk Publishers, 1950.
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- Tasker, R. V. G. *The General Epistle of James*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957. (Tyndale Commentary Series.)
- Zodhiates, Spiro. *The Behavior of Belief*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970. (Comprehensive.)

## SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER

1. Theme of chapter —
2. Most important verse —
3. Most prominent word —
4. Teaching about Christ —
5. Command to obey —
6. Promise to claim —
7. New truth learned —

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*



THRU THE BIBLE RADIO NETWORK  
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**Notes & Outlines**

# **1 PETER**

J. Vernon McGee

## 1 PETER

**WRITER:** Simon Peter (1 Peter 1:1)

Peter has been called the ignorant fisherman, but no man who had spent three years in the school of Jesus could be called ignorant, and the epistles of Peter confirm this.

A great change is seen in the life of Peter from these epistles. He had been impetuous, but now he is patient. The transforming power of the gospel has wrought this change in his life.

**DATE:** A.D. 64-67

Peter wrote his two epistles and was put to death sometime during this period. First Peter was written, evidently, around A.D. 64 and 2 Peter a short time later.

**PLACE:** Babylon

Although the place from which it was written has been the preeminent problem of this epistle, it is given as Babylon (1 Peter 5:13). Many treat this in a metaphorical sense as meaning Rome. However, the legend that Peter was in Rome for 25 years preceding his martyrdom is grounded in the apocryphal writings of the heretical Ebionites.

The list of countries in 1 Peter 1:1 is from east to west, which suggests that the writer was in the East at the time of writing. Furthermore, Babylon is directly mentioned as the origin, and this epistle was written before Rome was called Babylon in a symbolic way in the Book of Revelation. Also, the direct manner of Peter's writing, to the extent of bluntness, contradicts the theory that he used Babylon in a symbolic way. If Peter had meant Rome, the chances are that he would have said *Rome*. There was at this time a large colony of Jews in ancient Babylon who had fled Rome due to severe persecution under Claudius, and at the time of writing bloody Nero was on the throne. This is in harmony with the theme of the epistle. In spite of the fact that Papias mentions the death of Peter as occurring in Rome, there is no substantial historical basis for this supposition.

**THEME:** Christian hope in the time of trial

Peter deals with doctrine and handles weighty subjects. This is seen in his treatment of the great words of the gospel, many of which are gathered together at the outset (1 Peter 1:2) — elect, foreknowledge, sanctification, obedience, blood, and the Trinity. He used some of these words several times. Added to these are: salvation (used three times), revelation (with cognate words, used five times), glory (with cognate words, used sixteen times), faith (five times), and hope (four times).

Peter has been called the *apostle of hope*; Paul, the *apostle of faith*; John, the *apostle of love*.

The word that conveys the theme, however, is *suffering* (which, with cognate words, occurs sixteen times). The word *hope* is tied to it — the Christian hope in the time of trial.

## **OUTLINE:**

- I. Suffering and the security of believers produces joy,** Chapter 1:1-9
- II. Suffering and the Scriptures produces holiness,** Chapter 1:10-25
- III. Suffering and the suffering of Christ,** Chapters 2 — 4
  - A. Produces separation,** Chapter 2
  - B. Produces Christian conduct,** Chapter 3
    1. Conduct in the home, vv. 1-7
    2. Conduct in the church, vv. 8-17
    3. Christ's suffering preached by the Spirit in Noah's day, vv. 18-22
  - C. Produces obedience to the will of God,** Chapter 4
- IV. Suffering and the Second Coming of Christ,** Chapter 5
  - A. Produces service and hope,** vv. 1-4
  - B. Produces humility and patience,** vv. 5-14



## COMMENT:

### I. Suffering and the security of believers produces joy, Chapter 1:1-9

v. 1 — “Peter”— his name was Simon, but the Lord gave him a new name. It is appropriate that he use it. (Also, Saul of Tarsus became Paul.)

“Sojourners scattered” is properly *elect who are sojourners*. This epistle is directed to Jews out of Palestine, located in Asia Minor.

v. 2 — “Elect ”— John 6:37 is the test of your election.

“Foreknowledge” is God’s side of salvation. Here we have the work of the Trinity in salvation:

- “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God” — God the Father;
- “Sanctification of the Spirit” (practical sanctification) — God the Holy Spirit;
- “Blood of Jesus Christ” (proof of election), “obedience” — God the Son.

“Sprinkling” is a picture of Passover when blood was sprinkled on doorposts.

“Grace” and “peace” — same formula as used by Paul.

v. 3 — *Looks to past.*

“Blessed” — a paean of praise. Only believers have a songbook.

“Begotten” refers to the new birth (see v. 23).

“Living hope” — Jesus Christ is alive because He arose from the dead. Peter was sure of resurrection (Luke 24:34).

v. 4 — *Looks to the future.*

Israel was journeying to the Promised Land. The church is journeying to the New Jerusalem. Each believer has an inheritance.

“Incorruptible” is *non-destructible* — no germ, rust, moth, or enemy can destroy it.

It will always be new, it will never decay.  
No night ever comes, it will always be day.  
How it gladdens my heart with a joy that's untold  
To think of that land where nothing grows old.

“Undeiled” is *not stained* or *not defiled*. Our inheritance is not received illegally.

“Fadeth not away” is *not withered*. The loveliness of our inheritance is not withered; no season, change of weather, nor drought affects it; it is in perpetual spring.

“Reserved in heaven” is *guarded* (John 17:11, 12).

**v. 5** — *Looks to present*.

“Kept” — a Scotsman who was economical had this one word placed on his tombstone. It was enough.

“By the power of God” (see John 10:27, 28).

**v. 6** — This is the key verse of the epistle.

Rejoicing in trials (or “temptations in the KJV) and suffering is a strange combination. Testing produces joy — it is the end result (Hebrews 12:11). *Suffering* occurs sixteen times in this epistle. Another outline of 1 Peter is:

- (1) Suffering and rejoicing — 1:1-13
- (2) Suffering and holiness — 1:14 — 3:22
- (3) Suffering and fellowship — 4
- (4) Suffering and glory — 5:1-4
- (5) Suffering and others — 5:5-14

**v. 7** — “Precious” occurs seven times — the big fisherman uses this word.

As metal is subjected to the furnace in order to draw off the dross and refine it, the child of God is permitted to suffer for the purpose of refinement.

**vv. 8, 9** — Simon Peter had seen Christ personally, but most of the believers had not. The Holy Spirit had made Him real to them, and they loved Him. Think what it will be when we do see Him!

## II. Suffering and the Scriptures produces holiness, Chapter 1:10-25

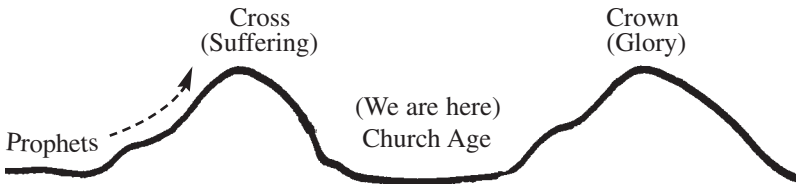
**v. 10** — Salvation was a subject of prophecy. Prophets and apostles bore witness.

**v. 11** — Prophets did not distinguish between the first and second comings of Christ.

Grace — suffering (v. 10; Isaiah 53; Psalm 22)

Glory — sovereignty (v. 11; Isaiah 11; Psalm 45)

The prophets saw these as two great mountain peaks. They did not see the valley between. We live in that valley. We can look backward and forward.



**v. 12** — The apostles delivered the gospel. Although angels desired to, they were not permitted to preach the gospel.

**v. 13** — “Hope” — Peter is the apostle of hope. The Scriptures give hope.

**v. 14** — The Scriptures also lead to obedience (see v. 2).

**v. 15** — Holiness is to the spiritual life what health is to the body. Be mature. Grow up.

**v. 16** — The only holiness we have is in Christ. God wants us to grow that we may be like Him. This is the ideal.

**v. 17** — The second reason to be holy is that the Lord Jesus Christ is also the Judge.

**vv. 18, 19** — Is the life I am living worth the price He paid for my redemption?

v. 20 — “Foreordained” is *foreknown*.

“The sovereign choice of God in foreordination, election, and predestination logically originated in the divine decision based on His eternal omniscience of all possible plans of action. The order logically, not chronologically, is omniscience, divine decision (foreordination, election, predestination), and foreknowledge. As God’s decision is eternal, however, so also His foreknowledge is eternal. As foreknowledge extends to all events, it includes all that is embraced in election, foreordination, and predestination. Election is, therefore, according to foreknowledge, and foreknowledge is according to election, meaning that both are in perfect agreement.” (*The New Scofield Reference Bible*, Oxford University Press, 1967)

v. 21 — “Hope” — the resurrection of Christ is the basis of hope.

v. 22 — Transforming hope leads to obedience of the Scriptures and love of the brethren.

v. 23 — “Being born again” is *having been begotten again*. The Word of God is the instrument of God for producing the new birth. The Word of God is not sterile; it is living and powerful.

vv. 24, 25 — Man’s feebleness and frailty is compared to the grass in contrast to the Word of God that is life-giving and eternal (Psalm 119:89).

### III. Suffering and the suffering of Christ, Chapters 2 — 4

#### A. Produces separation, Chapter 2

v. 1 — “Malice” is *congealed anger*. It is an unforgiving spirit. “Guile” is the spirit of using cleverness to get even. Real separation is from the works of the flesh.

v. 2 — “Pure milk” is *spiritual milk*. Just as a hungry baby reaches for the bottle, a believer is to desire the Word.

v. 3 — At the moment of salvation a person is born with an appetite for the Word.

**v. 4** — The living stone is Christ (Matthew 21:42-44). Peter identifies the stone as Christ:

*This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.* (Acts 4:11)

**v. 5** — Believers are living stones that are built on Christ (Ephesians 2:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 3:11). They constitute a living temple in which spiritual sacrifices of praise, possessions, and one's person are presented.

**v. 6** — This is a quotation from Isaiah 28:16 (see also Romans 9:33).

**v. 7** — A better translation is “For you therefore which believe is the preciousness.”

“Disallowed” is *rejected*. It refers to a tradition at the time of building Solomon's temple (see Psalm 118:22; Matthew 21:42; Exodus 17:6).

**v. 8** — Christ is either a stepping-stone or a stumbling stone. Christ in the Word of God is a stumbling stone to many.

**v. 9** — A Christian is to live a life commensurate with his position in Christ. This is normal Christian living.

“Chosen generation”— these are believers who belong to a chosen generation because of the new birth. If you want to know if you belong to the elect, the real test is: Have you come? (John 6:37).

“Royal priesthood”— believers are priests (see notes on Hebrews). Israel *had* a priesthood; the church *is* a priesthood.

“Holy nation”— believers are *holy* because of their position in Christ. They are a *nation* because they are a new entity in the world (1 Corinthians 10:32).

“Peculiar people” (KJV) — not oddballs or weird. It literally means *a people for acquisition*, a people for God's own possession.

“Show forth the praises” is *publish* or *tell abroad His virtues*.

**v. 10** — The same statement is made concerning the Gentiles in Ephesians 2:11, 12.

**v. 11** — Christians are to publish His praises by not manifesting the works of the flesh.

**v. 12** — Believers who are in business show forth His praises by honesty.

**vv. 13-15** — Believers who submit to governments and those in authority reveal the praises of God.

**vv. 16, 17** — A believer's relationship to others speaks louder than the pulpit. We are to treat all men equally.

**vv. 18-20** — Christians in labor relationships also reveal the praises of God when their attitudes and actions are mild and fair.

**vv. 21-23** — The suffering of Christ is the theme of the remainder of this chapter. Christ suffered vicariously to set us an example as well as for our sins.

**v. 24** — Christ suffered a vicarious, substitutionary death for our sins. "By whose stripes ye were healed" is a quotation from Isaiah 53, which reveals that Isaiah is not speaking of physical healing, but that which is more important and profound — healing from sin.

**v. 25** — Humanity (both lost and saved) is called sheep.

## **B. Produces Christian conduct, Chapter 3**

### **1. Conduct in the home, vv. 1-7**

**v. 1** — "Be in subjection" is *submitting yourselves*. This is a voluntary step, not a command. Obviously this refers to an unsaved husband who will not hear the Word of God, but who might be won by the conduct of the wife. This is real personal evangelism.

v. 2 — “Conversation” (KJV) is *behavior*.

v. 3 — This is a reference to Roman styles of arranging the hair and wearing of jewelry, which is very similar to modern styles. A Christian woman may win a husband by sex appeal, but she can never win him to the Lord by sex appeal.

v. 4 — Inward, not outward, adornment wins the lost husband.

vv. 5, 6 — Sarah and the wives of the other patriarchs did not hold their husbands by sex appeal.

v. 7 — Christian husbands are to love and honor their wives because of their intelligent understanding of the marriage relationship. The apostle indicates that the prayers of a family are not answered when the marriage relationship is not right.

## **2. Conduct in the church, vv. 8-17**

v. 8 — Believers are to be *like-minded, sympathetic, tender-hearted, and courteous* (which means *humble-minded*).

v. 9 — This is turning the other cheek.

vv. 10, 11 — For the one who loves life and really wants to live, here is the key.

v. 12 — God has not guaranteed to hear the prayers of those who do evil, but He has guaranteed to hear the prayers of His own (see Psalm 34:15, 16).

v. 14 — Suffering for the right should bring joy to the child of God.

v. 15 — By our lives and lips we can sanctify God in our hearts. Our lives should bring glory to God. Also, the believer should be able to explain his position in Christ.

v. 16 — Be sure that those who speak evil of you are in error.

v. 17 — Be sure our suffering comes to us because of doing good, not evil.

### **3. Christ's suffering preached by the Spirit in Noah's day, vv. 18-22**

v. 18 — Again, Christ's suffering for our sins is cited as the hope in our suffering.

v. 19 — When did Christ preach to the spirits in prison? In His day or in Noah's day? The next verse answers it.

v. 20 — "When" is the key word. It was in the days of Noah. Noah preached the gospel in his day. In Christ's day, the spirits of those men to whom Noah had preached were in prison, for they had rejected the message of Noah.

v. 21 — "Baptism" is *identification*.

"By the resurrection of Jesus Christ" is salvation — a believer is identified with Him.

v. 22 — We are seated in Christ in heaven.

### **C. Produces obedience to the will of God, Chapter 4**

v. 1 — God permits us to suffer sometimes to keep us from going into sin. A child of God with a new nature longs to please Christ in all things.

v. 2 — The child of God can no longer be satisfied to live in the flesh.

v. 3 — This is the life of the unbeliever.

v. 4 — The unbeliever cannot understand what has happened to a sinner when he is saved.

v. 5 — The believer knows that he must come before the judg-



ment seat of Christ.

v. 6 — These were dead in trespasses and sins (see John 5:24; 11:25; Ephesians 2:1).

v. 7 — The coming of the Lord is an incentive to living in obedience to Christ.

v. 8 — See Proverbs 10:12.

v. 10 — Every believer has a gift.

v. 11 — Gifts are to be administered in the power of the Spirit.

v. 12 — “To try” (KJV) is literally *trying*; “happened” is *were happening*. These believers were already being tested by suffering. Suffering is not accidental, but it is normal Christian experience.

“Fiery trial” is literally *smelted in a furnace*.

v. 13 — The believer is partaking of Christ’s sufferings in his own suffering (see Romans 8:17).

v. 14 — The believer is to rejoice if he is reproved for Christ’s sake.

v. 15 — The believer should not suffer as a sinner.

v. 16 — He is to suffer as a Christian.

v. 17 — Believers are to appear before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10).

v. 18 — The righteous are saved only by their faith in Christ.

v. 19 — This is the comfort of a suffering saint.

#### **IV. Suffering and the Second Coming of Christ, Chapter 5**

##### **A. Produces service and hope, vv. 1-4**

v. 1 — Peter calls himself a fellow elder. He never claimed a superior place above his brethren.

v. 2 — The business of the elder or minister is to feed the flock of God. He is to do this willingly and not for money. The test of any cult or Christian organization is how much money it is spending on itself. Is it a religious racket?

v. 3 — The leader is an example.

v. 4 — The Chief Shepherd will reward His own for service.

**B. Produces humility and patience, vv. 5-14**

vv. 5, 6 — In view of the coming of Christ, humility should be the attitude of the child of God. Christ will establish justice and make things right when He comes.

v. 7 — “Care” is *anxiety* (see Matthew 6:25).

v. 8 — “Be sober” is *be intelligent*. The believer is in an evil and dangerous world.

v. 9 — See James 4:7.

v. 10 — Suffering is on God’s agenda for the believer.

v. 11 — This is a benediction.

v. 12 — This is a personal P.S.

v. 13 — “Babylon,” thought by some to be a figurative name, is, in our judgment, literal Babylon.

v. 14 — This is the final benediction.

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- Barbieri, Louis A. *First and Second Peter*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1977. (Fine, inexpensive survey.)
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**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter—
  
2. Most important verse—
  
3. Most prominent word—
  
4. Teaching about Christ—
  
5. Command to obey—
  
6. Promise to claim—
  
7. New truth learned—

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*



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**Notes & Outlines**

# **2 PETER**

J. Vernon McGee

## 2 PETER

**WRITER:** Simon Peter (2 Peter 1:1)

The Petrine authorship of 2 Peter has been challenged more than the authorship of any other book in the New Testament. Dr. William Moorehead said, "The Second Epistle of Peter comes to us with less historical support of its genuineness than any other book of the New Testament." However, this has caused conservative scholars to give adequate attention to this epistle so that today it is well established that Peter wrote this letter. The autobiographical sections afford internal evidence of the Petrine authorship (see 2 Peter 1:13, 14, 16-18; 3:1).

**DATE:** About A.D. 66

This second epistle was written shortly after his first epistle (2 Peter 3:1) and a short while before his martyrdom (1:13, 14). (See 1 Peter.)

**THEME:**

This is the swan song of Peter, as 2 Timothy is the swan song of Paul. There is a striking similarity. Both epistles put up a warning sign, along the pilgrim pathway the church is traveling, to identify the awful apostasy that was on the way at that time and now in our time has arrived. What was then like a cloud the size of a man's hand today envelops the sky and produces a storm of hurricane proportions. Peter warns of heresy among teachers as Paul warns of heresy among the laity. Both Peter and Paul speak in a joyful manner of their approaching death (2 Peter 1:13, 14; 2 Timothy 4:6-8). Both apostles anchor the church on the Scriptures as the only defense against the coming storm.

The similarity of 2 Peter to Paul's last epistle of 2 Timothy explains the sharp contrast between Peter's first and second letters. The subject has changed, and the difference is as great as that which exists between Paul's letters to the Romans and to Timothy.

Nevertheless, the theme is explained on the basis of the words which Peter uses here as contrasted to his first epistle. The words are different, with the exception of the word *precious*, which occurs in this epistle twice in the first chapter. Likewise, the word *faith* occurs twice in the first chapter.

The characteristic word is *knowledge* (occurring sixteen times with cognate words). The epitome of the epistle is expressed in the injunction contained in the final verse:

*But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.* (2 Peter 3:18)

True gnosticism is not some esoteric information concerning a formula, a rite, or ritual; nor is it some secret order or password. It is to know Jesus Christ as He is revealed to man in the Word of God. This is the secret of life and of Christian living (see John 17:3).

**OUTLINE:**

**I. Addition of Christian graces gives assurance, Chapter 1:1-14**

*“The [full] knowledge of God, and of Jesus, our Lord” is the foundation on which Christian character is built (see v. 2).*

**II. Authority of the Scriptures attested by fulfilled prophecy, Chapter 1:15-21**

*Scriptures give light for obedience in dark days.*

**III. Apostasy brought in by false teachers, Chapter 2**

*Church should beware of false teachers and not false prophets.*

**IV. Attitude toward return of the Lord is a test of apostates, Chapter 3:1-4**

**V. Agenda of God for the world, Chapter 3:5-13**

- A. Past world, vv. 5, 6
- B. Present world, vv. 7-12
- C. Future world, v. 13

**VI. Admonition to believers, Chapter 3:14-18**

*Knowledge of God’s program is an incentive to grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

**COMMENT:**

**I. Addition of Christian graces gives assurance, Chapter 1:1-14**

v. 1 — “Simon Peter” — the name *Simon* appears here, but it does not in 1 Peter 1:1. *Christ* never stands alone in this epistle; *Jesus* is added here, elsewhere *Savior* and *Lord* are also added.



v. 2 — “Knowledge” occurs nine times (with cognates) in this chapter.

v. 3 — His blessings come “through the knowledge of him.” “Virtue” is *excellence*.

v. 4 — “Precious promises” come through the *knowledge of Him* “Partakers of the divine nature” come through the *knowledge of Him* (John 17:3).

vv. 5-7 — These graces are not given in the order of their priority. One does not depend upon the other, but they are placed in orderly sequence.

“And beside this” is *for this very cause*.

“Add” is *supply* — have all the graces.

“Virtue” is *excellence with energy*.

“Brotherly kindness” is *love of the brethren*.

This is enthusiasm for the knowledge of Christ.

v. 8 — “Barren” is *idle*. Paul’s great desire was to know Christ (Philippians 3:10).

v. 9 — Sterility and lack of enthusiasm may lead to the place where the believer will forget he has been saved.

v. 10 — Make your calling and election *more* sure. It is possible to believe in the security of the believer but lack the assurance of salvation.

Security of the believer is objective;

Assurance of salvation is subjective.

vv. 11-13 — Peter felt called to stir up these saints to grow in grace lest spiritual senility set in.

v. 14 — Tradition tells us that Peter was crucified with his head down because he was not worthy to die as Christ did (John 21:18, 19).

## II. Authority of the Scriptures attested by fulfilled prophecy, Chapter 1:15-21

v. 15 — “Decease” is *exodus*. In light of his approaching death, Peter calls attention to that which should be remembered.

v. 16 — “Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses” — when did this take place? The next verse explains.

**vv. 17, 18** — This is a reference to the Transfiguration and offers the explanation for Matthew’s strange statement (see Matthew 16:28). Matthew follows this with an account of the Transfiguration.

**v. 19** — Something more reliable and trustworthy than being an eyewitness to the Transfiguration is “a more sure word of prophecy.” Scripture is a light that is focused on the appearing of the “day star.”

**v. 20** — No prophecy of the Scripture is to be interpreted apart from other references to the same subject.

**v. 21** — “Holy men” were men set apart for the task of writing Scripture. They were carried along by the Holy Spirit like a sailboat is carried by the wind.

### **III. Apostasy brought in by false teachers, Chapter 2**

**v. 1** — “False prophets” brought in heresy to the nation Israel. “False teachers” are the bearers of heresy and apostasy into the church. One of the marks of identification is that they deny Christ’s work of redemption for them.

**v. 2** — False followers will go after false teachers. God’s elect cannot be permanently deceived. 1 Corinthians 11:19 explains the reasons why God permits cults.

**v. 3** — “Covetousness” is another mark of a false teacher. The apostle gives a list of three types of apostates in the past who will appear in the future.

**v. 4** — (1) “Angels that sinned” — even some angels rebelled against God. Rebellion against God will appear in the last days (see Psalm 2:1-3).

**v. 5** — (2) The ungodly of Noah’s day left God out of their lives, even in eating and drinking and in marriage (Matthew 24:37-39).

**v. 6** — (3) Gross immorality characterized Sodom and Gomorrah (see Romans 1:24-32).

**vv. 7, 8** — This is enlightening. The record in Genesis does not make it clear that Lot was a righteous man; in fact, it implies the opposite.

**v. 9** — God can and will do two things, of which Lot’s expe-

rience is an illustration:

- (1) “Deliver the godly out of temptations”
- (2) Keep the unjust for judgment

**v. 10** — These are total apostates, hopeless.

**v. 11** — Angels would not presume to do such things.

**v. 12** — These apostates are like animals.

**vv. 14-22** — This is a striking, frightful, and bold description of apostates.

**v. 15** — “Following the way of Balaam” is being covetous, willing to sell his gift for money.

**v. 20** — These apostates have a head knowledge. They know the truth but have not received a love of the truth.

**v. 22** — This is a frightful and awful description of an apostate. This is Peter’s parable of the prodigal pig — “the sow that was washed.” The pig professed to like the father’s house, but he returned to the pigpen of his old man. (See Jude for a more complete description of apostates.)

#### **IV. Attitude toward return of the Lord is a test of apostates,** Chapter 3:1-4

**v. 1** — This indicates that Peter wrote this second letter. “Pure minds” are *sincere minds*.

**v. 2** — “Holy prophets” refer to the Old Testament prophets. “Apostles” are New Testament apostles.

**v. 3** — Both prophets and apostles have warned that scoffers will come in mockery.

**v. 4** — They ridicule the coming of Christ on the false premise that there has been no great cataclysm since the creation.

#### **V. Agenda of God for the world,** Chapter 3:5-13

##### **A. Past world,** vv. 5, 6

“The world that then was” — from creation to Noah. The pre-flood world was destroyed by water.

##### **B. Present world,** vv. 7-12

v. 7 — The world that is — from Noah to the new heaven and new earth. The present world will be destroyed by fire.

vv. 8, 9 — The seeming delay does not mean that the Lord is not coming or that He has had to change or postpone His coming.

v. 10 — “Noise” (Greek *rhoizedon*) is the word used for the swish of an arrow, the rush of wings, the splash of water, the hiss of a serpent.

“Elements” refer to basic material, atoms, the building blocks of the universe.

“Melt” is *dissolve*.

“Fervent heat” is energy. These descriptive words make us think of an atomic explosion (see author’s booklet, “Three Worlds in One”).

v. 11 — In view of these inevitable facts of the future, the lives of believers now should become serious and important.

v. 12 — This is another description of the destruction of the present world that sounds like an atomic explosion.

### C. Future world, v. 13

The world that shall be — the new heaven and the new earth, which will never be destroyed.

## VI. Admonition to believers, Chapter 3:14-18

v. 14 — This leads to holy living.

v. 15 — Patient waiting is mental adjustment to the present world situation. Paul also wrote of these things.

v. 16 — Peter admits that Paul wrote of truth in depth — but so did Peter.

v. 17 — The coming of Christ should make for a stable and steadfast life.

v. 18 — This is the all-important program for the child of God now. Paul said, “Study.” Peter said, “Grow.” Both refer believers to the Bible and the study of it.

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

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**Notes & Outlines**

# **1 JOHN**

J. Vernon McGee

# 1 JOHN

**WRITER:** John the Apostle

**DATE:** A.D. 90-100

John evidently wrote his Gospel first, then his epistles, and finally the Book of Revelation before his death about A.D. 100.

## **PURPOSE:**

John expressed the purpose for his writing in each of the three types of revelation:

His *Gospel* in John 20:30, 31:

*And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

His first *epistle* in 1 John 5:13:

*These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

His *revelation* in Revelation 1:19:

*Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.*

Actually, there is a fivefold purpose expressed in 1 John:

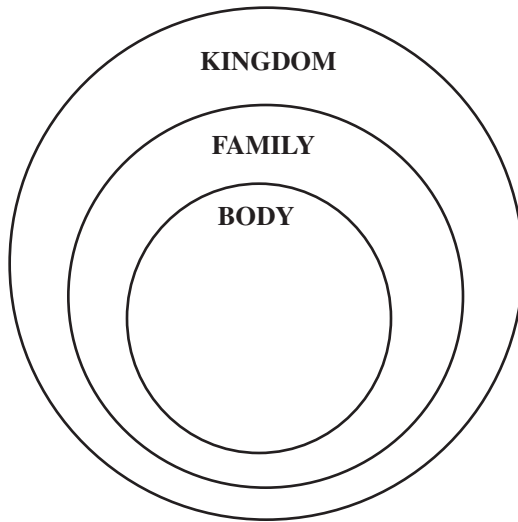
- (1) 1:3 — “That ye also may have fellowship with us [other believers]; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ.”
- (2) 1:4 — “That your joy may be full.”
- (3) 2:1 — “That ye sin not.”
- (4) 5:13 — “That ye may know that ye have eternal life.”
- (5) 5:13 — “That ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

## **THE FAMILY OF GOD:**

This epistle has been called the *sanctum sanctorum* of the New Testament. It takes the child of God across the threshold into the fellowship of the Father’s home. It is the *family* epistle; John is writing here to the family of God. *Father* is used thirteen times and *little children* eleven times.

Paul wrote to the church; John wrote to the family. The church is a body of believers in the position where we are blessed “with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). We are given that position when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. In the family we have a relationship which can be broken, but is restored when “we confess our sins.” Then He “is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

The body of believers who constitute the church are in the family of God, though the family is larger than the church. The church and the family are both in the Kingdom of God but are not synonymous terms.



**KEY WORDS:**

*Light* (used six times); *love* (used thirty-three times); *life* (used fifteen times); *fellowship* (used four times); *know* (used thirty-eight times) — John wrote to meet the first heresy that entered the church. It was Gnosticism, which boasted super-knowledge. It accepted the deity of Jesus, but it denied His humanity. John gives us the true gnosticism — knowledge.

**OUTLINE:**

- I. **God is LIGHT (1:5),** Chapters 1:1 — 2:2
  - A. **Prologue,** Chapter 1:1, 2
  - B. **How the little children may have fellowship with God,** Chapters 1:3 — 2:2



1. By walking in light, 1:3-7
2. By confessing sin, 1:8-10
3. By advocacy of Christ, 2:1, 2

## II. God is LOVE (4:8), Chapters 2:3 — 4:21

- A. **How the dear children may have fellowship with each other by walking in love**, Chapter 2:3-14
- B. **The dear children must not love the world**, Chapter 2:15-28
- C. **How the dear children may know each other and live together**, Chapters 2:29 — 4:21
  1. The Father's love for His children, 2:29 — 3:3
  2. The two natures of the believer in action, 3:4-24
  3. Warning against false teachers, 4:1-6
  4. God is love; little children will love each other, 4:7-21

## III. God is LIFE (5:12), Chapter 5

- A. **Victory over the world**, vv. 1-5
- B. **Assurance of salvation**, vv. 6-21

### COMMENT:

#### I. God is LIGHT (1:5), Chapters 1:1 — 2:2

##### A. Prologue, Chapter 1:1, 2

v. 1 — “From the beginning” is not the beginning of John 1:1 (beyond time in eternity past) nor the beginning in Genesis 1:1 (beginning of creation). This beginning goes back to the incarnation and the earthly life of Jesus.

Gnosticism, the first heresy, denied the reality of the humanity of Jesus. Some said that the Spirit came upon Him at His baptism, and left Him at the cross.

John asserts the reality of the total personality of Jesus:

1. “We have heard” (ear gate) — apostles heard His voice;
2. “We have seen” (eye gate) — apostles saw Him;
3. “Looked upon” is literally *gazed upon*; we get our word *theater* from the original word. To look saves; to gaze sanctifies.

*And, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*  
(John 3:14, 15)

#### 4. “Handled”

*Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.* (Luke 24:39)

John reclined upon the bosom of Jesus in the upper room. He heard the heartbeat of God!

“Word of life” (see notes on John 1:11).

v. 2 — The apostles saw eternal life, Jesus Christ, and they witness to it.

### **B. How the little children may have fellowship with God,** Chapters 1:3 — 2:2

#### **1. By walking in light, 1:3-7**

v. 3 — “Fellowship” is *koinonia*, meaning *having in common* or *sharing with*. Christian fellowship means sharing the things of Christ. Paul used *koinonia* when speaking of praying, teaching the Word of God, the Lord’s Supper, and giving.

v. 4 — Joy for the believer is one of the purposes of this epistle.

v. 5 — “God is light” — not *a* light or *the* light. *Light*, as used here, is moral character. It means the holiness of God that searches out and penetrates the darkness of sin and evil. Sin cannot exist in His presence as darkness cannot exist in the presence of physical light. Light is life giving (John 1:4). Light speaks of the glory, radiance, beauty, purity, and stainless holiness of God.

v. 6 — “Darkness” is more than the opposite of light. It is hostile to God. It is evil and denotes chaos. This refers to an attempt to bring God down to the level of man. A Gnostic sect in that day believed that they were no longer under the moral law of God. This is the same as the so-called “new morality.” Napoleon said that laws were made for ordinary people; he was above them.

v. 7 — Any believer who walks in the light of the Word of God discovers sin in his life. As a believer, he knows that the blood of Christ can cleanse him from sin, as it did when he first came to Christ for salvation.

#### **2. By confessing sin, 1:8-10**

v. 8 — While some try to bring God down to man’s low level, others attempt the opposite. They attempt to lift themselves to God’s level. They say that they have no sin. They claim sinless perfection and total sanctification. These actually deceive themselves. They are guilty of self-deception and lying.

v. 9 — Since God cannot be brought down to man's low level and man cannot attain to God's exalted level, man finds himself on the horns of a dilemma. What can he do? Note the biblical solution: "Confess" (*homologomen*) means to say the same thing that God says. God says they are acts of sin. Tell it to God as it is — the sin should be spelled out.

"He is faithful" — we might deceive ourselves.

"Just" (righteous) — "The blood of Jesus Christ...cleanseth us from all sin" (v. 7). He forgives and cleanses.

v. 10 — We make God a liar when we say we do not sin. He says we do.

### 3. By the advocacy of Christ, 2:1, 2

v. 1 — This is the third factor in having fellowship with God and Christ. God's arrangement for a believer not to sin is perfect, but our entrance into it is imperfect. An advocate is an attorney called to the side of a client in trouble. He is a comforter. The Lord Jesus Christ is in heaven to defend the sinning believer from the charge of the accuser of the brethren.

v. 2 — Without His defense, the sinning saint would be in deep trouble. He is the sacrifice that makes the throne of God a mercy seat. We need mercy — He is rich in mercy.

"Propitiation" is *expiation*, the basis on which God extends mercy; mercy seat.

## II. God is LOVE (4:8), Chapters 2:3 — 4:21

### A. How the dear children may have fellowship with each other by walking in love, Chapter 2:3-14

v. 3 — Obedience to Christ is the basis of assurance.

"We do know" is *we know by experience*, in contrast to the esoteric knowledge of the Gnostics.

v. 4 — Disobedience to Christ is a proof that we do not know Him. This is plain and direct language. Disobedience to Christ on the part of a professing Christian is tantamount to being a liar. The life is a lie.

v. 5 — "Keepeth his word" includes not only His specific commandments but whatever pleases Him (John 14:15-23).

v. 6 — Christ is manifest in the believer when he keeps the word of Christ. Full commitment is to love Christ. The question is not, "Are you committed?" but, "Do you love Christ?"

v. 7 — "Old commandment...from the beginning" is the commandment that the Lord Jesus gave to His apostles when He was with them on earth — which He repeated many times (see John 13:34, 35; 14:21, 23, 24; 15:10, 12).



**B. The dear children must not love the world,** Chapter 2:15-28

**v. 15** — “World” (*kosmos*) means *creation; order; system*. It could have one of three meanings: (1) material creation; earth (Ephesians 1:4); (2) humanity; mankind (John 3:16); (3) world system — satanic (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Ephesians 2:2 — *greed; ambition; pleasure; deceit*). John is speaking here of the last meaning, i.e., two world systems: God’s and Satan’s. Man is subject to one or the other (Galatians 6:14; 2 Peter 2:20).

**v. 16** — “Lust of the flesh” — Eve saw that the tree was good for food. “Lust of the eyes” — Eve saw that the tree was good to look at.

“Pride of life” — Eve saw that the tree was to be desired to make one wise.

**v. 17** — This world system is passing away.

**v. 18** — There is coming a man who will head up the antichrist system. He is Antichrist.

“Antichrist” is *against Christ* (denial) or *imitation of Christ* (pretense). Antichrist is both. Many have appeared in the history of the world. Here is a list of but a few:

Gnostics — “They [the followers of Carpocrates] say that Jesus was the son of Joseph and born after the manner of other men.” (Iraeneus. Only human.) “In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, God came down to Capernaum [not born of any mother], and taught.” (Opening of *Marcion’s Gospel*.)

Muslims — “Verily Christ Jesus the son of Mary is the apostle of God...Say not, There are three Gods...God is but one God. Far be it from Him that He should have a son.” (*Koran*, ch. iv. Sale, p. 80.)

Communists — “Here is a new mystery — that of Divinity dividing itself into two halves...God the Father, seeing from the height of His eternal splendour, that the poor God the Son, flattened out and astounded by His fall, is so plunged and lost in matter, that having reached the human state, He has not yet recovered Himself, decides to come to His aid.” (Bakunin, *God and the State*, p. 31.)

Theosophists — “To identify the Lord with the historical Jesus, maintaining the latter to be very Deity, Jehovah in person, who assumed a fleshly body, and manifested Himself as a man, in order to save men from Hell, and commanded His disciples to call Him Lord, is to fall into a common error.” (*The Perfect Way*, p. 257.)

Atheists — “Jesus was some fine sort of man perhaps, but our Saviour of the Trinity is a dressed-up inconsistent effigy of amiability, a monstrous hybrid of men, an infinity making significant promises of help-

ful miracles for the cheating of simple souls, an ever absent help in times of trouble.” (H. G. Wells, *Outline of History*.)

v. 19 — Pseudo-Christians will not stay under the preaching of the Word of God. Their departure is their identification.

v. 20 — The Holy Spirit is the Teacher of the believer (John 16:12-15).

v. 21 — John’s purpose is not to give them something new. They know the gospel.

v. 22 — This is the mark of Antichrist. He denies both God and Christ.

v. 23 — You cannot deny one without denying the other.

v. 24 — If the Word does not abide in a professing Christian, he will eventually drift from the truth.

vv. 25, 26 — This is a warning against false teachers.

v. 27 — (See v. 20.) The Holy Spirit is the final authority.

v. 28 — It is possible for a believer to be ashamed at the rapture of the church. Obedience and assurance make the coming of Christ a joyful anticipation.

**C. How the dear children may know each other and live together, Chapters 2:29 — 4:21**

**1. The Father’s love for His children, 2:29 — 3:3**

## **Chapter 2**

v. 29 — It is one thing to testify that we know Christ and are in Him; it is quite another to have a life that reveals that He is our righteousness. We recognize other believers by their lives, not their lips. Righteousness is a family characteristic of the Father and His children.

## **Chapter 3**

v. 1 — This is my own literal translation: “Behold ye, of what sort of love the Father hath given to us, that we should be named children of God, and we are: and because of this the world does not begin to understand us, because it did not know begin to understand Him.”

We do not *expect* to be the sons of God — WE ARE! This is a thrilling fact for which every believer can exult, rejoice, and constantly thank Him.

v. 2 — This is not all. We should be like Christ — not identical, but

like Him. We do not know how wonderful that is, for we have not seen Him as He is. God sees us as we shall be some day.

v. 3 — This is an incentive for holy living now.

## 2. The two natures of the believer in action, 3:4-24

v. 4 — Sin is basically that which is contrary to the will of God — insubordination to the will of God.

v. 5 — In John's Gospel, Jesus came to take away the sin of the world; He bore the penalty of sin. Here in John's epistle, He takes away the practice of sin in the life of a believer. He is without sin, as was the sin offering. He removes the guilt of sin and also provides the power to deliver from the habit of sinning.

v. 6 — The believer who abides in Christ does not practice sin. He cannot live a sinful life. Only pigs live in pigpens — sons go home eventually. To continue in sin means the person was never saved in the first place.

v. 7 — The one practicing righteousness is a child of God.

v. 8 — "Committeth sin" is *practices sin*. The prodigal son may get in the pigpen, but he will not live there. The devil sinned from the beginning, and he continues to sin. His is a career of nothing but sin. The Son of God was revealed to unloose the works of the devil. Christ came to make it possible for a believer not to live in sin.

v. 9 — A believer gets a new nature at conversion, but he does not lose the old nature. The new nature never sins because it is born of God. (e.g., I have some fine budded avocado trees in my yard. Each tree has two natures. Below the budded area they produce small bitter avocados; above the budded area they produce luscious fruit. The wild branches below the bud are removed; the branches above the bud are pruned, but they always produce delicious fruit — they cannot produce wild fruit.)

v. 10 — Christ said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:16). The one who practices righteousness produces the fruit of the Spirit. Augustine said, "The devil made no one, he begat no one, he created no one, but whosoever imitates the devil is, as it were, a child of the devil, through imitating, not being from him."

v. 11 — See 1 John 2:7.

v. 12 — Cain's offering was evil, as evidenced from his conduct. He was envious of his brother, and he slew him. Pride was in the heart of Cain (see Genesis 4:1-25).

v. 13 — See John 15:18, 19.

v. 14 — Love of the brethren is proof of salvation.

v. 15 — See Matthew 5:21, 22.

v. 16 — This is proof that God loves us.

v. 17 — Love is not a sentiment; love goes into action.

v. 18 — In domestic relations, love is not made in the parlor, but in the kitchen. The wife cooks for her husband, and the husband goes out to work for his wife — this is love in action.

v. 19 — When we demonstrate our love in this way, we have a confidence in prayer.

v. 20 — If we do not have this assurance, God is greater than our hearts — He still hears our prayer.

vv. 21, 22 — Love in action gives assurance in prayer.

v. 23 — This is the Christian life in a nutshell.

v. 24 — The Holy Spirit verifies these things to our hearts if we have not grieved Him.

### 3. Warning against false teachers, 4:1-6

vv. 1-3 — “Test the spirits” is *prove the spirits*. Love can become rather mushy and sentimental. Paul prayed that “love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment” (Philippians 1:9). The so-called “love” of liberals slops over on all sides. There are many false teachers that the child of God should avoid as he does a rattlesnake. These false teachers are inspired by evil spirits that deny the incarnation of Christ and all His work of redemption that flows from it. The evil spirit denies the Person of Christ and His work. This is the final test. The evil spirit resists and opposes Christ. This is the spirit of Antichrist (see 1 John 2:22).

v. 4 — The Holy Spirit indwells every believer (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19).

v. 5 — This explains the appeal that many ministers have in the world and their popularity with the unsaved.

v. 6 — The supreme encouragement of the ministry is to know that God’s children will hear you. The elect cannot permanently be deceived. Christ said it is not possible to deceive the elect.



#### 4. God is love; little children will love each other, 4:7-21

v. 7 — Having given a warning against false teachers who are not to be loved, he returns to the theme of this section: Believers are to love one another. This is not sentimental, sexual, or social.

v. 8 — The norm is the love of God. Love works for the best interests of the beloved.

God is light; God is love.

v. 9 — This is the historical evidence that God loved us. We were dead; Christ brought us to life through His death. He gave His life that we might live.

v. 10 — God loved us before there was any response on our part. He gave the Son to make expiation for our sins. He turned the throne of God into a mercy seat.

v. 11 — The giving of Christ to die for us is the norm of love. He is the motivation for our love.

v. 12 — God, who is unseen, is revealed today in the lives of believers. He longs to pour out His love through us.

v. 13 — The Holy Spirit indwells every believer (see v. 4).

v. 14 — This is the gospel witness.

v. 15 — No believer can deny the deity of Christ. He is the only meeting place between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5).

v. 16 — Love is the supreme test. Do you believe that God loves you? Then confess Him before men wherever your lot in life is cast. Again John gives us this definition, “God is love.”

v. 17 — This verse could be rendered like this: *In this is* [God’s] *love perfected with us*. The perfect love is not in us. The perfect love is Christ who came down where we are and became the propitiation for our sins. God put our sins on Him; but when Christ went back to heaven, there was no sin on Him — He had settled it down here. This means that we are as secure in the world as Christ is. What security! This gives us boldness in the day of judgment. Today we represent Him in the world.

v. 18 — This removes fear from the saved sinner’s heart. He is “Perfect Love.” His love for us should give us the feeling of belonging to the family of God.

v. 19 — The best texts omit *Him*. Correctly, *We love, because He first loved us*. This widens the meaning. Some saints say they love Him but do not love “His.” Our love for Christ is in the same ratio that it is for

other believers.

**v. 20** — This is direct and pointed and must be taken at face value. This is the test of v. 19.

**v. 21** — This is a commandment of Christ. There are no options.

### **III. God is LIFE (5:12), Chapter 5**

#### **A. Victory over the world, vv. 1-5**

**v. 1** — Faith produces the new birth. The one who is born again will love others who are born again. These cannot be confined to a certain denomination, church, race, clique or group.

**v. 2** — When we love God and keep His commandments, we love other believers because that is one of His commandments. These commandments do not refer here to the Old Testament Law but to the commandments of Christ.

**v. 3** — “Burdensome” does not mean that they are difficult to keep, but rather that they do not impose a burden when they are kept. “In keeping of them there is great reward” (Psalm 19:11). Jesus said, “For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:30). The breaking of them brings misery and heavy burdens. A mother works long hours in taking care of her baby, but it is not burdensome; it is a joy.

**v. 4** — “Victory” — this is the only time the Greek word *nike* occurs in the New Testament. The battle of Jericho is the familiar example. Joshua got the victory over Jericho, not by fighting, but by believing God. The victory was God’s. We cannot overcome the world by fighting it. Conquest depends upon faith (Hebrews 11:30).

**v. 5** — Faith in Christ for salvation in the future;  
Faith in Christ for salvation here and now from the world.

#### **B. Assurance of salvation, vv. 6-21**

**v. 6** — There are three that bear witness to the truth of salvation by faith in Christ:

- (1) Water — the Word of God (see John 19:34, 35);
- (2) Blood — the death of Christ for our sins, resulting in forgiveness (see Ephesians 1:7); and
- (3) Spirit — truth (Acts 1:4, 8).

**v. 7** — This verse is not in the better manuscripts. I do not feel it adds anything to the text.

**v. 8** — The Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost. (Between the

death and resurrection of Christ and the Day of Pentecost, the disciples were not to witness.) The Holy Spirit must work before anyone can be born again. He takes the Word of God and applies the blood of Christ for forgiveness of sins.

**v. 9** — We accept the statement of others. The most erratic rumor spreads like wildfire. Someone has said, “You cannot believe all you hear, but you can repeat it.” Newspapers are the Bible for some. If man can be believed, surely the witness of God must be greater.

**v. 10** — To refuse to believe God is tantamount to making Him a liar. What is the record? Note the next verse.

**v. 11** — This is God’s *carte blanche* statement. Either it is true or it is not true. The One who said it validates the statement.

**v. 12** — Either we have Christ by faith or we do not have Him. There is no middle ground. Do you have Christ by faith? Will you believe God?

**v. 13** — This is the key verse of the epistle. John wrote this epistle that you may believe on Christ and be saved and, having taken this step, that you might know you have eternal life. Do you believe God? It all rests upon whether or not you believe God. This is your surety. Paul said:

*For which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless, I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.* (2 Timothy 1:12)

**v. 14** — This promise hinges on the phrase “according to his will” — then we can have boldness, which is better than assurance. How can we know when prayer is in accordance with the will of God? It must be according to the Word of God. Beyond that, we let God make the judgment.

**v. 15** — Final proof is whether or not we have our petitions answered.

**v. 16** — This refers to physical death. Believers can commit a sin for which the Heavenly Father will call them home. It may be a different sin for each of His children. Ananias and Sapphira committed the sin unto death (Acts 5:1-11). In Corinth there were some (1 Corinthians 11:30). Absalom did (2 Samuel 15-18). Moses and Aaron did (Numbers 20:12).

**v. 17** — Everything that is not right is sin — but not every sin is unto death.

v. 18 — The new nature never sins. Believers living in the flesh (old nature) sin.

v. 19 — “The whole world lieth in wickedness” is *the whole world lieth asleep in the arms of the evil one*. The devil has put the baby to sleep.

v. 20 — The Spirit of God is our Teacher to lead us into all truth.

v. 21 — God’s first statement to us is: “In the beginning God created”; among His last words to us are these, “Keep yourselves from idols.” Anything that stands between Christ and the believer is an idol.

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## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

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THRU THE BIBLE RADIO NETWORK  
Pasadena, California 91109-7100





**Notes & Outlines**

**2 JOHN**

**3 JOHN**

**J. Vernon McGee**

## 2 JOHN

**WRITER:** John the Apostle

**DATE:** A.D. 90 — 100

### **PERSONAL LETTER:**

This epistle is like Philemon in that it is a personal letter written by John to “the elect lady.” Is the Greek word *electa* a title, or does it refer to a Christian lady in the early church by the name of Electa? It would seem that it was addressed to some lady in the church or to a local church that was extending hospitality to all those who claimed to be Christian, though some were heretics. John warns against entertaining such.

**THEME:** For truth’s sake.

Truth is worth contending for, and it is wrong to receive false teachers.

### **OUTLINE:**

- I. Love expressed in the boundary of truth**, vv. 1 — 6  
“Love in truth”
- II. Life is an expression of the doctrine of Christ**, vv. 7 — 11  
(False doctrine leads to evil deeds.)
- III. Personal greeting**, vv. 12, 13  
(False teachers are not to be received by the Christian, but true teachers are to be received with joy.)

### **COMMENT:**

- I. Love expressed in the boundary of truth**, vv. 1 — 6

v. 1 — “The elder” (*presbuteros*) is *presbyter*. It has a twofold meaning: (1) seniority (referring to age), a senior citizen; (2) title (referring to office), minister or teacher. This is an obvious reference to John the apostle. Perhaps John’s life was in jeopardy due to rising persecution so that he withheld his name. John was in his 90s.

“Elect lady” (*electa kyria*), to whom this letter is addressed,



could refer to a prominent lady in the church. However, I have come to the opinion that a local church was in view. One cannot be insistent upon either view.

“Truth” (“the” should be omitted) is the theme of this epistle. It means *truly* or *sincerely*. In these second and third epistles we see the teaching of 1 John in action.

“The truth” is the body of doctrine of the apostles.

v. 2 — “The truth’s sake” is defense of the truth.

“Dwelleth” is *abides*. “To know Him, to be in Him, to abide in Him means knowledge, fellowship, and constancy” (Bengel).

The Truth in v. 7 is Jesus Christ.

The truth in v. 9 is doctrine.

v. 3 — “Grace...mercy, and peace” — *mercy* has been added.

“In truth and love” — is the polarity of the Christian life. We oscillate back and forth between these two. It is difficult to maintain a balance. Extremes are fighting fundamentalists on one hand and the slobbering liberals on the other (see Ephesians 4:15).

v. 4 — Evidently this is an answer to a letter he had received.

“Walking in truth” refers to the manner of life, meaning walking in obedience to commandments from the Father.

v. 5 — See notes on 1 John 2:7.

v. 6 — John’s teaching in his first epistle walked in shoe leather in the first century of the Roman Empire.

## **II. Life is an expression of the doctrine of Christ,**

vv. 7 — 11

v. 7 — Gnosticism denied that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh; it denied the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Cerinthian Gnosticism taught that Jesus was a man on whom the Spirit came at His baptism and left at His crucifixion. Docetic

Gnosticism denied the reality of the manhood of Jesus. It taught that He was just a phantom, a figment of the imagination.

“An antichrist” should be *the* antichrist.

**v. 8** — He warns against the danger of missing a reward, not against losing their salvation.

**v. 9** — Here he has in mind those who are not real believers. To reject the doctrine of Christ means that they were not believers. Doctrine is also a proof of life.

**v. 10** — A better translation would be: *If anyone cometh unto you and brings not His teaching (doctrine), receive him not into your house and give him no greeting.* There were no lovely motels in that day, so itinerant teachers were entertained in homes. Believers were not to support these teachers in any way.

**v. 11** — One who supports a false teacher is a partner in his error. Should not you and I be more careful today?

### **III. Personal greeting, vv. 12, 13**

**v. 12** — John anticipated visiting this person or church to whom he had written.

**v. 13** — The greetings are from another person or church. These simple verses are eloquent testimony from the early church.

### 3 JOHN

**WRITER:** John the Apostle

**DATE:** A.D. 90 — 100

#### **PERSONALITIES:**

This is a letter similar to John's second epistle, in that it is personal in character, and it carries the same theme of *truth*. However, this letter deals with personalities, which will be noted in the outline. In his second epistle, John says that *truth* is worth standing for; in the third epistle that *truth* is worth working for.

#### **OUTLINE:**

- I. Gaius, beloved brother in the early church,** vv. 1 — 8  
(*Gaius, the one to whom the letter is addressed, is urged to extend hospitality to true teachers of the Word.*)
- II. Diotrephes, “who loveth to have the pre-eminence,”**  
vv. 9 — 11  
(*Evil deeds are an expression of false doctrine.*)
- III. Demetrius “hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself,”** vv. 12 — 14  
(*A good life is an expression of true doctrine.*)

#### **COMMENT:**

- I. Gaius, beloved brother in the early church,** vv. 1 — 8
  - v. 1** — “Elder” (see 2 John 1).  
“Gaius the beloved” is a better form of address. John calls him “the beloved” four times (verses 1, 2, 5, 11).  
“In truth” (omit the article) means *genuinely*.
  - v. 2** — John prayed for his physical and material welfare.
  - v. 3** — The first “the truth” is the *doctrine and teaching* of the apostles. Omit the article for the second “truth,” which

means *conduct*.

**v. 4** — “My children” — perhaps Gaius was a convert of John’s.

“Walk in truth” — conduct conforms to doctrine.

**vv. 5-8** — He commends Gaius for having received and entertained the true teachers of the Word. In 2 John, the apostle warns against receiving false teachers. In 3 John, he encourages the believers to receive the true brethren.

## **II. Diotrephes, “who loveth to have the pre-eminence,”**

vv. 9 — 11

The missionaries of the early church were itinerants. They went from place to place. Since the local inn was a wretched and dirty place and there were no Holiday Inns or Howard Johnson Motels, these missionaries were entertained in the homes of believers. Gaius opened his home, for which John congratulates him. Diotrephes opposed this practice, and John censures him for it. Diotrephes’ “hang-up” was that he loved to have recognition, attention, and be the center of attraction. He had to rule or ruin. There is generally one like him in every church who wants to control the church and the preacher. He was guilty on five charges: (1) must occupy the leading place; (2) actually refused to receive John; (3) made malicious statements against the apostles; (4) refused to entertain the missionaries (apparently he wanted to do the teaching); (5) excommunicated those who did entertain the missionaries (he tried to be the first Pope). He was Diotrephes, the dictator.

## **III. Demetrius “hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself,”** vv. 12 — 14

**v. 12** — While there is only one verse about Demetrius, it gives us an insight into the Christian character of this noble saint of God. We cannot identify him with any other of the same name. His name means *belonging to Demeter* (Ceres, god of

agriculture), which identifies him as a convert from paganism. He adorned the doctrine of Christ. Others testified to his character. He was true to the doctrine.

Christianity was on trial in the first century. Three men pass before us in this little epistle. Two were genuine, one was a phony. The gospel walked in shoe leather in pagan Rome.

**vv. 13, 14** — John would have written a longer letter, but he was coming to visit his friend, Gaius.

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**Notes & Outlines**

# **JUDE**

**J. Vernon McGee**

## JUDE

**WRITER:** Judas

Jude (this is the English form of the name Judas) was the brother of James (see notes on Epistle of James) and was also a half brother of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 13:55).

**DATE:** A.D. 66-69

**THEME:** Assurance in days of apostasy.

The word for *keep* occurs 5 times (see verses 1, 6, 21, 24).

### REMARKS:

Jude was intending to write an epistle regarding our “common salvation” when the Spirit detoured him to write concerning the apostasy. It is a graphic and striking description of the apostasy. What was a little cloud the size of a man’s hand in Jude’s day is, in our day, a storm of hurricane proportions — because we are in the apostasy of which he foretold. It is a question now of how much worse it can become before genuine believers are taken out by the Rapture.

Jude gives the only record in the Scriptures of the contention over the body of Moses. Also, only Jude gives the prophecy of Enoch.

Jude affords a fitting introduction to the Book of Revelation.

### OUTLINE:

#### I. OCCASION of the epistle, verses 1-3

A. Assurance for believers, verses 1, 2  
(*Sanctified, kept, called*)

B. Change of theme to apostasy, verse 3

#### II. OCCURRENCES of apostasy, verses 4-16

A. Inception of apostasy, verse 4

B. Israel in wilderness in unbelief destroyed, verse 5

C. Angels rebelled; kept in chains, verse 6

D. Sodom and Gomorrah sinned in sensuality; destroyed by fire,  
verse 7

E. Modern apostate teachers identified, verses 8-10  
(*Despise authority*)



**F. Cain, Balaam, and Korah are examples of apostates,** verse 11

**G. Modern apostate teachers defined and described,** verses 12-16

### **III. OCCUPATION of believers in days of apostasy,** verses 17-25

**A. Believers warned by apostles that these apostates would come,**  
verses 17-19

**B. What believers must do in days of apostasy,** verses 20-25

#### **COMMENT:**

**I. OCCASION of the epistle,** verses 1-3

**A. Assurance for believers,** verses 1, 2

**v. 1** — Jude identifies himself as a servant (bond slave) of Jesus Christ. He was a half brother of our Lord, according to the flesh, and the brother of James (see notes on James 1:1; also Matthew 13:55, Acts 1:14). A servant of Jesus Christ is a higher position and relationship than being a half brother.

“Sanctified by God, the Father” should read *beloved of God the Father* (see John 17:22, 23).

“Preserved” is translated elsewhere *kept* (see John 17:11, 12). Two ways of preserving are by vinegar and by sugar. There are saints today who seem to be preserved in both elements. However, the perseverance of the saints is by His grace, which preserves or keeps them. “They overcame...by the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 12:11).

“Called” — God does not call us because of ability, effort, talent, or character. Whom He calls He keeps (see John 15:16).

**v. 2** — “Mercy” proceeds from His grace.

“Peace” is the result of experiencing the grace and mercy of God.

“Love” is the motivation for all God does.

**B. Change of theme to apostasy,** verse 3

The Holy Spirit detoured Jude from writing on some theme of the faith in order that he might sound a warning of the impending apostasy. Apostasy is a departure from “the faith,” the apostles’ doctrine (Acts 2:42). What was a cloud the size of a man’s hand in Jude’s day is now a storm of hurricane force that fills the land.

## II. OCCURRENCES of apostasy, verses 4-16

### A. Inception of apostasy, verse 4

Jude sounds a warning that already apostates had entered the fold of the church (Acts 20:29-31; 2 Timothy 3:6; 2 Peter 2:1; Galatians 2:4).

“Ordained” is *written beforehand*.

Note the 3 marks of apostates:

- 1) “Ungodly men” are unconverted; leaving God out.
- 2) “Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness” which is *blatant immorality; shameless sin*. They arrogantly and proudly flaunt sin publicly. In Jude’s day Gnosticism taught that the body was essentially evil, that all matter was evil, and the spirit alone was good. As a result, it did not matter what a man did with his body; he was free to satisfy the lusts of the body. It was a perversion of grace. (See Galatians 5:13; Romans 6:2; Acts 20:29; 1 Peter 2:16.)
- 3) “Denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (see 1 John 4:3; 2 John 7).

### B. Israel in wilderness in unbelief destroyed, verse 5

Jude lists 6 examples of apostasy in the past and the judgment of God upon them. There were 3 groups and 3 individuals.

- 1) Israel at Kadesh-barnea refused to enter the promised land. God judges men and nations for their sins (see Jeremiah 32:19). Unbelief is sin (see Romans 14:23).

### C. Angels rebelled; kept in chains, verse 6

- 2) This judgment of angels probably took place in some pre-Adamic age, although many good men identify this with the “sons of God” mentioned in Genesis 6 (see 2 Peter 2:4). The judgment for angels is special and separate. Though it is difficult to be specific here as to details, the important feature is that the sin of angels does not escape the judgment of God.

### D. Sodom and Gomorrah sinned in sensuality; destroyed by fire, verse 7

- 3) Defiled flesh, perversion, sodomy, and gross immorality (“new morality”) have been judged in the past as a warning to modern man.

## **E. Modern apostate teachers identified, verses 8-10**

**v. 8** — Jude identifies apostate teachers:

- 1) “Dreamers” (omit *filthy*) indicates that they live in an unreal world, probably having drug-induced dreams.
- 2) “Defile the flesh” connotes base and abnormal immorality.
- 3) “Despise dominion” is to reject authority.
- 4) “Speak evil of dignities” is protest against rules and those in authority (e.g., revile police).

**v. 9** — This is a most remarkable verse. Satan is a fallen creature and an avowed enemy of God. Yet Michael, when contending about the body of Moses, would not bring a sentence that would impugn the dignity of Satan. Michael even respected the position of Satan. Clement quotes from an apocryphal writing dealing with the funeral of Moses. When Michael was commissioned to bury Moses, Satan opposed it on the grounds that, since he was the master of the material and matter, the body belonged to him. Michael’s only answer was, “The Lord [the Creator] rebuke thee.” Satan also brought the charge of murder against Moses. Also it is suggested that Satan wanted to hinder the later appearance of Moses at the Mount of Transfiguration.

**v. 10** — Two different words are translated “know” here. The thought is that the apostates protest against that about which they do not have absolute mental comprehension; but they follow what they know by instinct, like an animal.

## **F. Cain, Balaam, and Korah are examples of apostates, verse 11**

“Woe” is *ouai*, a wail of sorrow or denunciation.

“Way of Cain” characterizes an apostate who is religious but who denies he is a sinner — yet who could be redeemed only by the sacrifice of life and shedding of blood.

“Error of Balaam” was in that he thought a holy God must punish Israel (see author’s *Reveling Through Revelation*, vol. 1).

“Gainsaying of Korah” was in that he contradicted the authority of Moses and intruded into the office of priest — and died. He was a rebellious man.

## **G. Modern apostate teachers defined and described, verses 12-16**

This is a vivid, graphic, dramatic, frightening description of apostates of the last days.

**v. 12** — “Spots” are *hidden rocks* that wreck a ship — make shipwreck of faith (1 Timothy 1:18, 19).

“Feeding themselves” is *shepherds that feed themselves* — a true shepherd feeds the sheep. Milton aptly described this situation. “The hungry sheep look up and are not fed.”

“Clouds...without water” means that they look as if they are filled with the Word of God, but they are empty and dry.

“Trees...without fruit” — Jesus said, “By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:20).

**v. 13** — “Raging waves” are *wild waves* — unashamed.

“Wandering stars” means *lawless*, following no course.

**vv. 14, 15** — There is no record in the Old Testament of this prophecy by Enoch. This is for the church. True believers will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17); make-believers will be judged. The organized church will go into the Great Tribulation. At the Rapture this apostate church is ruptured — the true believers leave, the make-believers remain.

**v. 16** — Apostates are:

- 1) “Murmurers” — they mutter their complaints.
- 2) “Complainers” is literally *blamers of their lot; discontented*.
- 3) “Walking after their own lusts” means they live to satisfy their craving and overweening desires.
- 4) “Speaketh great swelling words” is addiction to flowery, extravagant, and exaggerated language.
- 5) “Having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage” means that they do not look to God but to men for help and advancement (see James 2:1-4).

### **III. OCCUPATION of believers in days of apostasy, verses 17-25**

#### **A. Believers warned by apostles that these apostates would come, verses 17-19**

**vv. 17, 18** — “Beloved” means *loved of God*.

“Remember” — believers are constantly urged to remember (see author’s book, *Reveling Through Revelation*). Believers should know the Word of God.

“Mockers” live to satisfy their own passionate desires. They cause divisions, live for self, and do not have the Holy Spirit (see Romans 8:9).

**B. What believers must do in days of apostasy, verses 20-25**

- v. 20** — 1) “Building up yourselves on your most holy faith” means to study the Word of God. Both Paul and Peter urged this for the last days (study — 2 Timothy 2:15; know the holy Scriptures — 2 Timothy 3:15; preach the Word — 2 Timothy 4:2; take heed — 2 Peter 1:19).
- 2) “Praying in the Holy Spirit” (see Ephesians 6:18; Romans 8:26, 27).
- v. 21** — 3) “Keep yourselves in the love of God” — God loves the believer with an everlasting love, but the believer can get out of fellowship with the Lord by sinning. We cannot prevent the sun from shining, but we can put up a parasol to keep the sun from shining on us.
- 4) “Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ” means that every believer will be taken out at the Rapture because of the mercy of God and not the merit of the believer.
- v. 22** — 5) “Of some have compassion, making a difference” means to have compassion on some who are in doubt. Some folk are honest doubters and need help and counsel in these days.
- v. 23** — 6) “Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire”(compare Zechariah 3:2). We can only glean in days of apostasy. There is no wholesale turning to God that we can see. A revival is possible, but only the Holy Spirit can bring it.
- 7) “Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” means that while we are pulling some brands out of the fire, we do not adopt their methods or drop down to the level of those who satisfy the flesh.

**vv. 24, 25** — This is one of the great benedictions of Scripture. A literal translation would be: Now unto Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you (make you stand) before the presence of His glory blameless with great rejoicing, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory, majesty, might, and authority before all time, both now and forever. Amen.

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

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**Notes & Outlines**

# **REVELATION**

**J. Vernon McGee**

## REVELATION

**WRITER:** John the apostle

**DATE:** About A.D. 95

### THEORIES OF INTERPRETATION:

There have been many approaches to this book, but these can be divided into four major systems (Broadus lists seven theories of interpretation; Tragelles lists 3):

1. **Preterist theory:** All of Revelation has been fulfilled in the past. It had to do with local references in John's day. It had to do with the days of either Nero or Domitian. The view was held by Renan and most German scholars, also by Elliott.
2. **Historical theory:** Fulfillment of Revelation is going on in history, and Revelation is the prophetic history of the church, according to this theory.
3. **Historical-spiritual theory:** This theory is a refinement of the historical theory and was advanced by Sir William Ramsay. It states that the two beasts are Imperial and Provincial Rome. The point of the book is to encourage Christians. According to this theory, Revelation has been largely fulfilled and there are spiritual lessons for the church today. Amillennialism, for the most part, has adopted this view. It dissipates and defeats the purpose of the book.
4. **Futurist theory:** This theory holds that the Book of Revelation is primarily prophetic and yet future, especially from Revelation 4 on to the end of the book. This is the view of all premillennialists and is the view which we accept and present.

### STRIKING FEATURES:

- It is the only prophetic book in the New Testament (in contrast to 17 prophetic books in the Old Testament).
- John, the writer, reaches farther back into eternity past than any other writer in Scripture (John 1:1-3). He reaches farther on into eternity future in the Book of Revelation.
- Special blessing is promised the readers of this book (Revelation 1:3). Likewise, a warning is issued to those who tamper with its contents (Revelation 22:18, 19).
- Revelation is not a sealed book (Revelation 22:10). Contrast Daniel 12:9. It is a revelation (apocalypse), which is an unveiling.
- It is a series of visions, expressed in symbols.
- This book is like a great Union Station where the great trunk lines of

prophecy come in from other portions of Scripture. Revelation does not originate but consummates. It is imperative to a right understanding of the book to be able to trace each great subject of prophecy from the first reference to the terminal. There are at least 10 great subjects of prophecy which find their consummation here:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 3:15)
2. The church (Matthew 16:18)
3. The resurrection and translation of saints (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52)
4. The Great Tribulation (Deuteronomy 4:30, 31)
5. Satan and evil (Ezekiel 28:11-18)
6. The “man of sin” (Ezekiel 28:1-10)
7. The course and end of apostate Christendom (Daniel 2:31-45; Matthew 13)
8. The beginning, course, and end of the “times of the Gentiles” (Daniel 2:37; Luke 21:24)
9. The second coming of Christ (Jude 14, 15)
10. Israel’s covenants (Genesis 12:1-3), five things promised Israel

**KEY VERSES:** Revelation 1:18, 19

*I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [hades] and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.*

**OUTLINE:**

- I. The PERSON of Jesus Christ — Christ in glory, Chapter 1**
  - A. Title of the Book, v. 1**
  - B. Method of revelation, v. 2**
  - C. Beatitude of Bible study, v. 3**
  - D. Greetings from John the writer, and from Jesus Christ in heaven, vv. 4-8**
  - E. The post-incarnate Christ in a glorified body, judging His church (the great High Priest in the Holy of Holies), vv. 9-18**
  - F. Time division of the contents of the apocalypse, v. 19**
  - G. Interpretation of the seven stars and seven lampstands, v. 20**
- II. The POSSESSION of Jesus Christ — the church in the world, Chapters 2, 3**
  - A. Letter of Christ to the church in Ephesus, 2:1-7**
  - B. Letter of Christ to the church in Smyrna, 2:8-11**
  - C. Letter of Christ to the church in Pergamum, 2:12-17**
  - D. Letter of Christ to the church in Thyatira, 2:18-29**

- E. Letter of Christ to the church in Sardis, 3:1-6
- F. Letter of Christ to the church in Philadelphia, 3:7-13
- G. Letter of Christ to the church in Laodicea, 3:14-22

**III. The PROGRAM of Jesus Christ — the scene in heaven,**  
Chapters 4 — 22

**A. The church in heaven with Christ, Chapters 4, 5**

*...I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.* (John 14:3)

- 1. Throne of God, 4:1-3
- 2. Twenty-four elders, 4:4, 5
- 3. Four living creatures, 4:6-11
- 4. Book with seven seals, 5:1-4
- 5. Christ: the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Lamb which has been slain, 5:5-10
- 6. A myriad of angels of heaven joins the song of praise and redemption, 5:11, 12
- 7. Universal worship of the Savior and Sovereign of the universe, 5:13, 14

**B. The Great Tribulation in the world, Chapters 6 — 18**

- 1. Opening of the **seven-sealed book**, Chapters 6 — 8:1
  - a. Opening of the first seal, 6:1, 2  
(Rider on a white horse)
  - b. Opening of the second seal, 6:3, 4  
(Rider on a red horse)
  - c. Opening of the third seal, 6:5, 6  
(Rider on a black horse)
  - d. Opening of the fourth seal, 6:7, 8  
(Rider on a pale horse)
  - e. Opening of the fifth seal, 6:9-11  
(Prayer of the martyred remnant)
  - f. Opening of the sixth seal, 6:12-17  
(The Day of Wrath has come — beginning of the last half of the Great Tribulation)
  - g. Interlude, Chapter 7
    - (1) Reason for the interlude between the 6th and 7th seals, vv. 1-3
    - (2) Remnant of Israel sealed, vv. 4-8
    - (3) Redeemed multitude of Gentiles, vv. 9-17
  - h. Opening of the seventh seal, 8:1  
(Introduction of seven trumpets)

2. Blowing of the **seven trumpets**, Chapters 8:2 — 11:19
  - a. Angel at the altar with censer of incense, 8:2-6
  - b. First trumpet — trees burnt, 8:7
  - c. Second trumpet — seas become blood, 8:8, 9
  - d. Third trumpet — fresh water becomes bitter, 8:10, 11
  - e. Fourth trumpet — sun, moon, stars smitten, 8:12, 13
  - f. Fifth trumpet — fallen star and plague of locusts, 9:1-12
  - g. Sixth trumpet — angels loosed at river Euphrates, 9:13-21
  - h. Interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets, 10:1 — 11:14
    - (1) The strong angel with the little book, 10:1-7
    - (2) John eats the little book, 10:8-11
    - (3) Date for the ending of “the times of the Gentiles,” 11:1, 2
    - (4) Duration of the prophesying of the two witnesses, 11:3-12
    - (5) Doom of the second woe — great earthquake, 11:13, 14
  - i. Seventh trumpet — end of Great Tribulation and opening of temple in heaven, 11:15-19
3. **Seven performers** during the Great Tribulation, Chapters 12, 13
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  - e. The dragon persecutes the woman, 12:13-16
  - f. Remnant of Israel, 12:17
  - g. Wild beast out of the sea — a political power and a person, 13:1-10
    - (1) Wild beast, description, vv. 1, 2
    - (2) Wild beast, death-dealing stroke, v. 3
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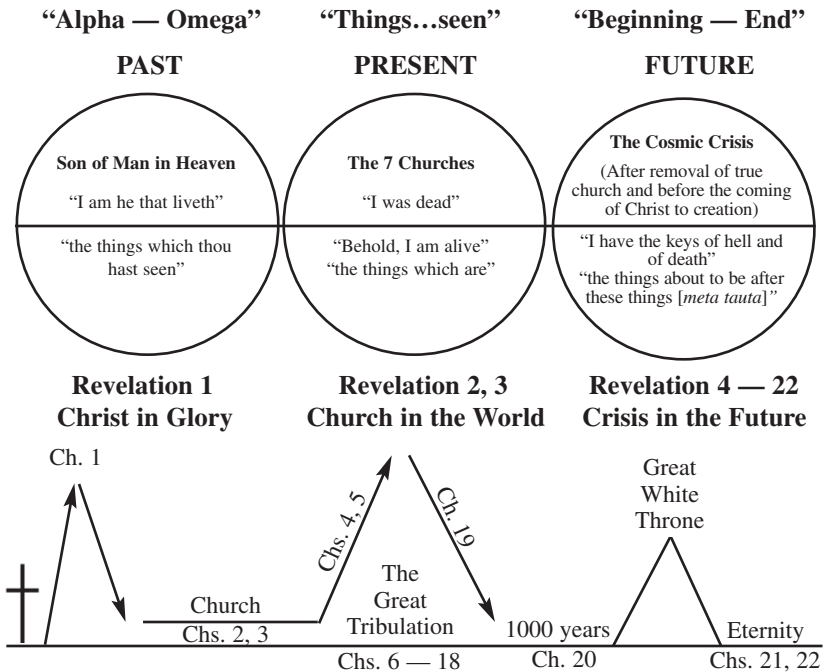
- d. Pronouncement of judgment on those who received mark of the beast, vv. 9-12
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- a. Preparation for final judgment of the Great Tribulation, 15:1 — 16:1
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  - b. Pouring out of the first bowl, 16:2
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    - (2) Wild beast destroys the great harlot, vv. 8-18
  - b. Political and commercial Babylon judged, Chapter 18
    - (1) Announcement of fall of commercial and political Babylon, vv. 1-8
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- C. Marriage of the Lamb and return of Christ in judgment, Chapter 19**
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  - 2. Bride of the Lamb and marriage supper, vv. 7-10
  - 3. Return of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords, vv. 11-16
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**D. Millennium, Chapter 20**

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3. Satan loosed after 1000 years, vv. 7-9
4. Satan cast into lake of fire and brimstone, v. 10
5. Setting of Great White Throne where lost are judged and follow Satan into lake of fire and brimstone, vv. 11-15

**E. Entrance into eternity; eternity unveiled, Chapters 21, 22**

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3. New Jerusalem, description of the eternal abode of the bride, 21:9-21
4. New relationship — God dwelling with man, 21:22, 23
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7. Promise of return of Christ, 22:6-16
8. Final invitation and warning, 22:17-19
9. Final promise and prayer, 22:20, 21





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**SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER**  
(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter —
  
2. Most important verse —
  
3. Most prominent word —
  
4. Teaching about Christ —
  
5. Command to obey —
  
6. Promise to claim —
  
7. New truth learned —







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