



An Overview of the Bible

*"At that moment, open-eyed, wide-eyed, they recognized him.
And then he disappeared. Back and forth they talked.
"Didn't we feel on fire as he conversed with us on the road,
as he opened up the Scriptures for us?"*

Luke 24:31, 32 The Message

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Resources used for this study include:

- Explore the Book - J. Sidlow Baxter, Volumes 1-6, ©1960, Zondervan
- Route 66 - A Spiritual Road Trip through the Whole Bible - Gretchen Riedel, Margo Cook
- Opening the Book - Hans Finzel ©1997 SP Publications
- The Dore Bible Illustrations - ©1974 Dover Publications
- Reproducible Maps, Charts, Timelines and Illustrations - ©1989 Gospel Light Publications

Each of the eight study sections will include an overview of a key section of Scripture to give you insight into the breadth of God's redemptive story while always seeking to recognize the Christ. The hope is that through this study you will acquire a sense of the flow of God's message for the ages and develop skills to study any part of the Bible. This then will give you the foundational tools to become a man or woman whose lifelong goal is to become a Master of the Scriptures.



Introduction



In the days, following the crucifixion of Christ, the followers of Jesus were in deep mourning. The loss of their beloved leader who they believed was the long awaited Jewish Messiah was a crushing defeat. All the hopes, dreams and desires that had swelled in their hearts since they had met Jesus and become his followers were now cruelly dashed and lay as rubble in their hearts. They were overcome with despair as they contemplated what this could mean. There was pain, confusion and deep grief. They also feared for their own safety.

On the third day after Jesus' death, Cleopas and another disciple were walking along discussing what had happened to the Master and Jesus himself, risen from the dead, came and walked along with them. But their eyes were closed to his identity. He asked what they were talking about and they were surprised that this "stranger" had not heard about Jesus and all that had happened to him in Jerusalem in the last few days.

Jesus then gave them the ultimate Bible lesson. "He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself." (Luke 24:27 NIV) Oh, how I have longed to be one of those disciples! What a blessing to have the Master explain to me all the Scriptures and how they ultimately point to Him. As Cleopas and his friend went on their way, they asked the stranger to stay with them. As they were breaking bread together they recognized him and he disappeared from their sight. All at once it all came together and they asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked to us on the road and opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24:32 NIV)

It was in the unfolding of the Word of God by Christ Himself that these disciples got what I would call "holy heart burn". In the preparation for this study, as I went through the Scriptures over and over again I had to echo the testimony of Jacob in Genesis when he said "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it." (Genesis 28:16) Like Cleopas and his friend, I have recognized the Lord and He has lit a new fire in my heart.

It is my prayer that as you do this study individually and discuss it with the disciples you walk with that your eyes will be opened wide to see the Christ throughout the pages of His Word and your hearts will be set ablaze in a new found love for your Savior.

Bob Walz • May, June 2005

Table of Contents

The diagram illustrates the structure of the Bible, organized into four main sections, each with a central title and a list of books. Some books are grouped into categories indicated by colored boxes.

- Chapters 1 & 2 - The Law**
 - GENESIS
 - EXODUS
 - LEVITICUS
 - NUMBERS
 - DEUTERONOMY
- Chapter 3 & 4 - The History**
 - JOSHUA
 - JUDGES
 - RUTH
 - 1 SAMUEL
 - 2 SAMUEL
 - 1 KINGS
 - 2 KINGS
 - 1 CHRONICLES
 - 2 CHRONICLES
 - EZRA
 - NEHEMIAH
 - ESTHER
- Chapter 5 - The Poetry & Prophecy**
 - Poetical**
 - JOB
 - PSALMS
 - PROVERBS
 - ECCLESIASTES
 - SONG OF SOLOMON
 - Prophetical**
 - HOSEA
 - JOEL
 - AMOS
 - OBADIAH
 - JONAH
 - MICAH
 - NAHUM
 - HABAKKUK
 - ZEPHANIAH
 - HAGGAI
 - ZECHARIAH
 - MALACHI
- Chapter 6 - The Gospels & Acts**
 - Historical**
 - MATTHEW
 - MARK
 - LUKE
 - JOHN
 - ACTS
- Chapter 7 - The Gentile Epistles**
 - Paul's Letters**
 - ROMANS
 - 1 CORINTHIANS
 - 2 CORINTHIANS
 - GALATIANS
 - EPHESIANS
 - PHILIPPIANS
 - COLOSSIANS
 - 1 THESSALONIANS
 - 2 THESSALONIANS
 - 1 TIMOTHY
 - 2 TIMOTHY
 - TITUS
 - PHILEMON
- Chapter 8 - The Hebrew Epistles**
 - General Letters**
 - HEBREWS
 - JAMES
 - 1 PETER
 - 2 PETER
 - 1 JOHN
 - 2 JOHN
 - 3 JOHN
 - JUDE
 - Prophetical**
 - REVELATION

The Law Genesis - Exodus

I. The Big Picture

1. As you overview the Bible looking at its grand scheme with the telescope of this study its important to begin with an overall view of the arrangement of the Scriptures as a whole. Look at the back of this study in the appendix at the chart called “The Structure of the Bible” (page A-1). Look at the diagrams of the sixty-six books of the Bible and read the descriptions for both the Old and New Testaments. Do you discover anything you didn’t know?

(Optional: Go to the Table of Contents in your bible and put brackets around the key groups of books and put labels on each key section, e.g. from Genesis to Esther, Historical, from Job to Song of Solomon, Poetical, etc.)

2. Turn to the second page in the appendix titled “The Historical Highway of the Old Testament” (page A-2). Note the three divisions in the Old Testament, the Historical (in white), the Poetical (in gray) and the Prophetical (in black). The books in the large white rectangles in the center of the diagram tell the main storyline of the Old Testament. The other books give historical information (like Leviticus or Deuteronomy) poetical expression (like Job or Psalms) or prophetical direction (like Isaiah or Daniel) to the main storyline. They are poems, prayers, sermons, songs and laments written by Biblical authors in response to their real life experience in the main storyline. How does this chart help you understand the historical order in which the Old Testament was written? What further questions do you have? Look at the third appendix page (page A-3) for information on dates in history when the events in the Old Testament occurred.

II. The Beginnings - Genesis

"The roots of all subsequent revelation are planted in Genesis, and whoever would truly comprehend that revelation would begin here." J. Sidlow Baxter



1. Read Genesis 1 & 2. These are not two different creation stories. Genesis 2 is an inside story on the high point of creation, the creation of man and woman. What stands out to you about the miracle of creation?

Look through Genesis 1 & 2. what purposes and commands does God give the man and the woman that He has created?

Genesis 1:1

"In the beginning **God**" - that denies Atheism with its doctrine of *no* God.

"In the beginning **God**" - that denies Polytheism with its doctrine of *many* gods.

"In the beginning God **created**" - that denies Fatalism with its doctrine of *chance*.

"In the beginning God **created**" - that denies Evolution with its doctrine of *infinite becoming*.

"God created **heaven and earth**" - that denies Pantheism which makes God and the universe identical.

"God created **heaven and earth**" - that denies Materialism which asserts the eternity of matter.

J. Sidlow Baxter • Explore the Book

II. The Beginnings - Genesis (cont)

2. Read Genesis 3. How does Satan the enemy of God turn the man and the woman away from God's purposes for them? What is the result?

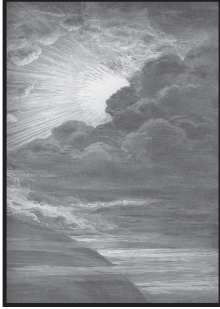


3. Look at Genesis 3:15. In pronouncing judgment on the serpent God promises a coming deliverer. How is he described? What will he do?

As the Bible story progresses continue to recognize this longing for a deliverer in the people of God. The longing begins in the promised seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15. God makes a promise recorded in this verse that will take the whole of Scripture to fulfill. The book of Revelation is the reaping of that which is sown in Genesis.

II. The Beginnings - Genesis (cont)

4. The book of Genesis covers four key events and four key people. Fill out the following chart to investigate these key events in Genesis 1-11. Put the name of the event in the oval and in the box describe what happened.



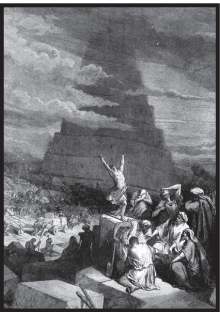
Genesis 1,2



Genesis 3



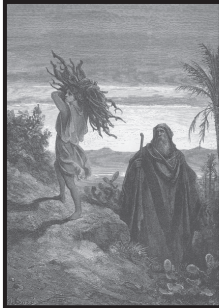
Genesis 6-8



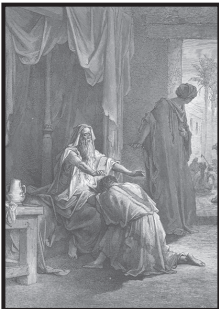
Genesis 11:1-19

II. The Beginnings - Genesis (cont)

5. Fill out this chart with what you discover about the four key people in Genesis 12-50. Put the name of the person in the oval and in the box state why they are important.



Genesis 12:1-19; 17:1-27; 22:1-19



Genesis 25:19-34; 26:1-6



Genesis 27; 28:10-22; 32:22-32



Genesis 37-45, 49-50 (fill in the box and look at the next question for further study on this person.)

II. The Beginnings - Genesis (cont)

6. The purpose of this portion of the study is to teach you how to study a key character in Scripture. You will be looking at Joseph from Genesis 37-45 and 49-50. A large part of the Old Testament is biography and knowing how to do a character study is fundamental to understanding the Old Testament. You will be looking for the MESSAGE in their life.



Meaning of his name

Joseph's name in Hebrew means "May He add."

- What is the significance of Joseph's name? In what ways does Joseph live up to the meaning of his name?

Experience

- What was Joseph's life experience? Who were his father, mother, tribe, nation? What times did he live in? What are the significant periods of his life? What about his occupation, contemporaries or associates?

Spiritual life

- What do you observe about Joseph's prayer life, obedience, suffering, personal lessons from God, attitudes, responses and reactions? What growth or maturity do you see in his life?

Shortcomings

- Do you observe any weaknesses in Joseph's life? What reasons would you give for the presence of these weaknesses?

II. The Beginnings - Genesis (cont)

6. (continue looking for the MESSAGE in Joseph's life.)

Accomplishments

- What strengths do you see in Joseph's life and character? Are there any key or unique phrases used in describing him?

Glory to God

- How is God honored through Joseph's life? Are there any particular attributes of God that are especially revealed through Joseph's life? What is Joseph's concept of God and how does he relate to Him?

Essential truth

- What do you see as the key character qualities in Joseph's life?

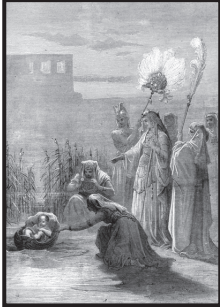
Life application

- How does Joseph's life impact your life?

II. The Redemption - Exodus

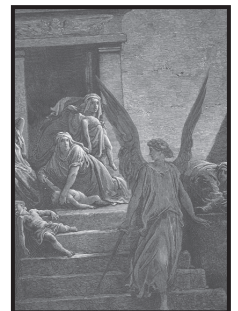
1. Read Exodus 1- What has happened to the people of Israel?

2. In Exodus 2-5 the LORD sends a deliverer to rescue his people from bondage. Who is he and what is his story?



3. Read Exodus 6:1-12 and 7:1-7. What does the LORD promise he will do for Israel and to Egypt?

4. Through a series of plagues (all corresponding to the gods of the Egyptians) the LORD gets the attention of Pharaoh and Egypt. Read Exodus 11:1-12:42. What does God do through the miracle of the Passover?



II. The Redemption - Exodus (cont)

5. Pharoh finally allows the children of Israel to go but he changes his mind again. What final deliverance does God give Israel as they flee Egypt? (see Exodus 13:17-15:21)



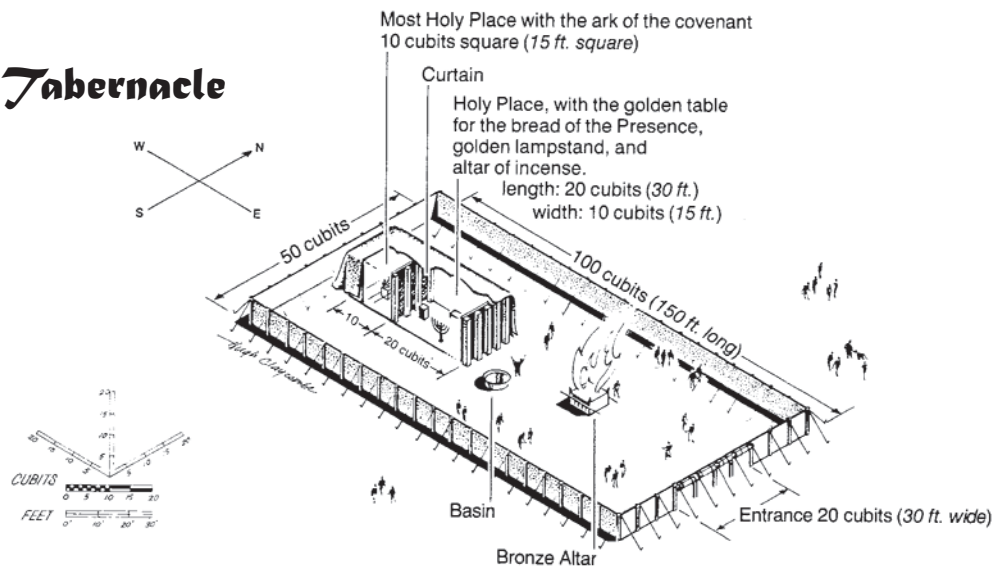
6. It has been said that it only took 40 days to get Israel out of Egypt but it took 40 years to get Egypt out of Israel. Read Exodus 19:1-20:21. God met Moses at Mt. Sinai and gave His people his law. List the ten commandments below. What do the first four commandments tell us about loving God? What do the second six tell us about loving our neighbor? How do the commandments reveal to us the holy character of God? How do they contrast with what they learned from the Egyptians?



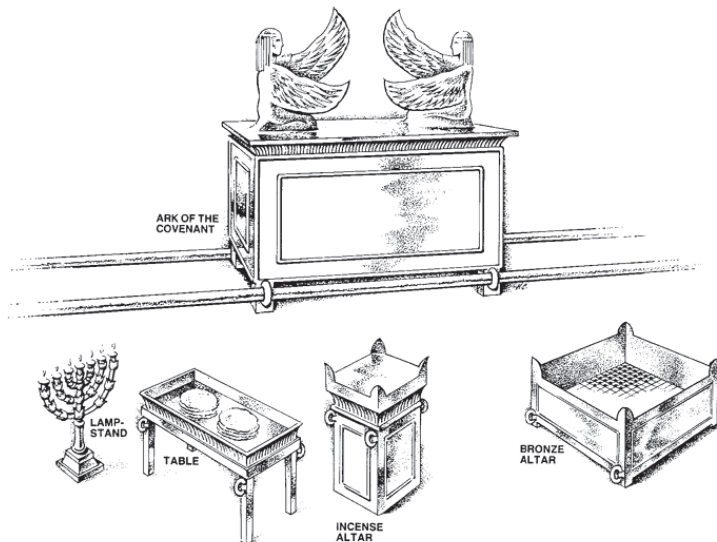
II. The Redemption - Exodus (cont)

7. In Exodus 26:1-30:38, Moses records God's directions for the building and proper procedures for use of the tabernacle and for the priesthood that will minister there. Read through those passages and look at the pictures below. J. Sidlow Baxter says "The Scriptures devote more room to the description of the tabernacle and its furnishings than any other single subject." Why is the tabernacle so important? What does it tell us about God and about people?

The Tabernacle



The Tabernacle Furnishings



II. The Redemption - Exodus (cont)

8. Read Exodus 32:1-34:33. What do the people do as get impatient waiting for Moses to come down from Mt. Sinai? How do they reveal that they do not know the law of God? (Contrast what they do at the bottom of Mt. Sinai with what God told them to do in His Ten Commandments.) What does Moses do?

Look in particular at Exodus 33:12-23; 34:29-35. What is the passion of Moses' life?

III. The Burning Question

1. Look back at each of the questions or passages that have a box around the question number. (like this question) Consider the information covered in each question with a box around its number and ask yourself "Do I see any connection to Christ in the passage of Scripture covered by this question?"

Appendix



The Structure of the Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

HISTORY (17)										EXPERIENCE							PROPHECY (17)																				
BASIC LAW 5					PRE-EXILE RECORDS 9					POST- EXILE 3		INNER LIFE 5			BASIC PROPHECY 5				PRE-EXILE PROPHETS 9					POST- EXILE 3													
M	O	S	E	S	C	A	N	A	N	A	N	N	A	L	S	H	E	A	R	T	M	A	J	O	R	&	T	W	E	L	V	E	M	I	N	O	R

The first five books called the Pentateuch (Greek for 'five books') or "the Law" were written by Moses. They are historical and tell about the beginning of the earth and in particular the beginning of the Jewish people. The next 12 books of history tell the further story of the Jews. The first 9 tell of the Jews before they were exiled and last 3 after the exile. The next 5 books are experiential and are personal accounts poetically written to reveal the hearts of God's people. The next 17 books are prophetic. The first five of these are the major prophets. They are larger in size and the major source of Messianic prediction. The twelve minor prophets follow them. There are 9 written before the Jews go into exile and there are 3 written after they return from exile.

So then in the Old Testament there are 17 Historical Books (5- Law and 12- History), 5 Poetical Books and 17 Prophetic Books (5- Major and 12- Minor).

NEW TESTAMENT

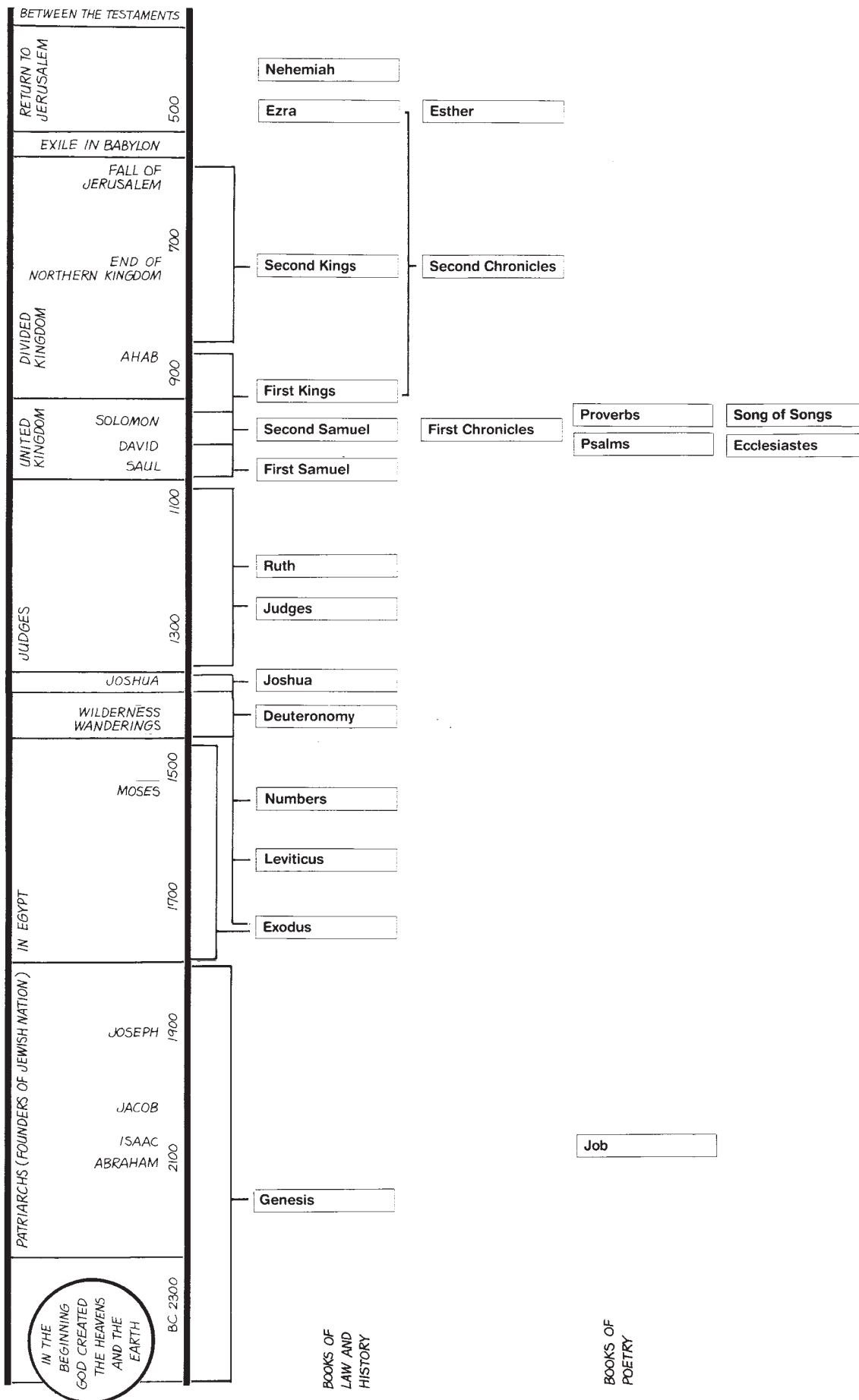
HISTORY (5)					EXPERIENCE • DOCTRINE (22)			
THE LIFE OF JESUS AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH (5)					CHRISTIAN CHURCH EPISTLES (9)	PASTORAL AND PERSONAL (4)	HEBREW CHRISTIAN EPISTLES (9)	
MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN	ACTS	ROMANS to II THESS	1,2 TIM, TITUS, PHLMN	HEBREWS to REVEL	

In the New Testament like the Old, the first five books are historical. They are followed by nine letters written by the apostle Paul to Gentile churches. The next four also authored by Paul are written to church leaders. The last nine are written to churches that were primarily made up of Jewish believers. Each of the nine sets of letters (those to Gentile churches and those to Hebrew churches) begins with a letter explaining the gospel. In Romans, Christ is the only way and in Hebrews Christ is the better way. Both groups of 9 letters end with a letter instructing believers about the second coming of Christ.



WHEN OLD TESTAMENT EVENTS HAPPENED

APPROXIMATE TIMES WHEN EVENTS IN EACH BIBLE BOOK HAPPENED



EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF JOSEPH THAT PARALLEL THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Explore the Book – J. Sidlow Baxter -Volume I pages 60-62

The Beloved Son

1. **Pre-eminent in the love of the father** – See Genesis 38:3 “Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons.” So is Christ the well-beloved son in whom the Divine Father especially delights. See Matthew 3:17; Colossians 1:13
2. **Pre-eminent in honor** - See Genesis 37:3 The tunic of distinction and heirship was the outward attestation of the father’s regard. See John 3:35; 5:36,37
3. **Pre-eminent in the Divine purposes** - This is clearly revealed in Joseph’s dreams which were prophetic, as Jacob himself perceived (Genesis 37:5-11). So it is with Christ. In Him God “made the universe” (Hebrews 1:2) Also Ephesians 1:9-10.
4. **Pre-eminent as the father’s messenger** – See Genesis 37:13-14. So is Christ the pre-eminent Messenger of the Father. See Isaiah 43:1; Luke 4:18; Heb 1:1,2

The Rejected Servant

5. **Hated.** Joseph was hated by his brethren. Alas, this is also true of Christ. Almost the same words are used of both. Compare Genesis 37:4 with John 15:24; Genesis 37:8 with Luke 19:14; Genesis 37:18 with Matthew 26:3-4; Genesis 37:19-20 with Matthew 21:38; and Genesis 37:11 with Matt 27:18.
6. **Sold.** Joseph was sold by his brethren for twenty pieces of silver. Genesis 37:27-28 to Gentiles. Christ was sold for thirty pieces of silver Matt 27:9 and delivered to the Gentiles. Joseph was stripped of his “coat.” (See Matt 27:28)
7. **Suffering.** How Joseph must have suffered! Compare Genesis 37:23-24 with Genesis 43:2. See Joseph in the slave market, then under temptation (Gen 39:7-12), in further adversity (Gen 39:20). All this has its counterpart in the sufferings of Christ.
8. **Dead (in intent and figure)** About twenty years elapsed between the selling of Joseph and the re-union. He was accounted dead. (Genesis 27:31-34; 43:13, 38; 44:20). So Christ, in actuality, suffered death for our sakes.

The Exalted Savior

9. **Exalted as the source of salvation.** See Genesis 41:38-39, and Joseph’s new name (Gen 41:45). Becomes the world’s bread supplier (Gen 41:57) Administrator of affairs (Gen 41:40 with 47:14-26). So Christ (I Cor 1:24; Acts 5:31; John 6:51; 5:22)
10. **Exalted to the right hand of the throne.** See Gen 41:39-44. So is Christ exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high (Eph 1:20-21)
11. **Exalted among his own brethren.** See Gen 42:6; 43:26. Revealed to penitent brethren after sin brought home to them (Gen 45). Becomes special representative of Israel (Gen 47:11-12). Consummates wonderful Divine plan (Gen 45:5-9). Becomes (virtually) resurrected (Gen 45:28). All this is paralleled in Christ (see Rev 1:7; Eph 1:9-10; Rev 1:18)
12. **Exalted to an everlasting pre-eminence** See Gen 49:26. He was “separate from his brethren” in character, as records show. Scripture levels not one charge against Joseph, although more space is given to him than any other in Genesis. His exaltation was both a vindication and a reward. So with Christ. “He humbled Himself... and God has highly exalted Him (Phil 1:5-11).

The Law

Leviticus - Deuteronomy

I. The Separation - Leviticus

"A relationship with a holy God demands holiness." J. Sidlow Baxter

1. Read Leviticus 9. How is the ministry of Aaron and his sons described? What are their duties? What is the purpose of their ministry?

2. In Leviticus 10:1-7, what do Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu do that was forbidden? What happened to them? Why were they judged so strictly?

"Leviticus was written to show Israel how to live as a holy nation in fellowship with God, and thus to prepare the nation for the high service of mediating the redemption of God to all the nations." J. Sidlow Baxter

3. Look back at the pictures of the tabernacle on page 12. Read Leviticus 16. Why must Aaron follow so many rules to be allowed entrance to the Most Holy Place? What does this tell you about God? Why was the day of Atonement so important?

I. The Separation - Leviticus (cont)

“Every offering was an execution of the sentence of the law upon a substitute for the offender and every such offering pointed forward to that substitutional death of Christ which alone vindicated the righteousness of God in passing over the sins of those who offered the typical (here meaning representative) sacrifices.”

J. Sidlow Baxter

4. Read Leviticus 18:1-5. Who are the Israelites not to be like? What reason(s) are they given to be holy (Leviticus 19:1,2)? Why should the holiness of God motivate us to holiness?

LEVITICUS					
Chapters 1-12	Worship	Tabernacle	Way to God	Ceremonial & Physical Defilement	Cleansing
Chapters 13-27	Practice	Character	Walk w/ God	Moral & Spiritual Defilement	Clean Living

II. The Wandering - Numbers

1. Read Numbers 1:1-4 What is Moses commanded to do? How do Moses actions in chapter 1 give the book its name? Why do you think it was important to count the Israelites?

II. The Wandering - Numbers (cont)

2. Read Numbers 9:1-5. What was Israel commanded to do? Why were they commanded to do this annually?

3. How were the children of Israel led by God? (see Numbers 9:15-23) What would have made this difficult?

NUMBERS 1-4	NUMBERS 5-10
Outward Formation of the Camp	Inward Formation of the Camp

4. Read Numbers 13:1-14:43. How did Israel fail at Kadesh Barnea? What was the source of their failure? What was unique about Caleb and Joshua?



II. The Wandering - Numbers (cont)

5. Read Numbers 20:1-13. What happens to Moses in this situation? Why is Moses' punishment so strict? (see James 3:1)

Does Moses ever set foot in the Promised Land? (see Matthew 9:2-4)

6. After Israel has wandered in the wilderness for 40 years there is a new numbering and Moses prepares a new generation to enter Canaan.

NUMBERS 10-14	NUMBERS 15-20	NUMBERS 21-36
Murmuring	Wandering	The New Generation

Like every generation, your generation must choose to be champions for God. In Numbers, the 10 spies looked at the size of their enemies, Caleb and Joshua looked at the size of their God. Have you ever like Caleb and Joshua, chosen to be a man or woman in your generation who will believe God? (Note that the 10 who did not believe were not from some pagan nation, they professed to believe in same God that Joshua and Caleb did.) How did the ten spies view themselves (Numbers 13:33) and how did Joshua and Caleb view the people of God (Numbers 14:7-9)? Write out your commitment to believe God in and for your generation.

III. The Remembering - Deuteronomy

1. Read Deuteronomy 1:1-2:15. What happened between leaving Egypt and coming to the border of Canaan this second time?

Deuteronomy means “second law”. In Deuteronomy, Moses teaches this new generation God’s law and precepts. It is not so much a historical retelling but rather the record of a sermon to God’s people. Loving obedience to the faithful God with whom they are in covenant relationship is the key theme.

2. Read Deuteronomy 4:1-13:18, keep track of all the verses which mention loving or obeying God. From these passages, why does God want us to obey Him? Just like the word ‘obey’, the words ‘remember’ and ‘forget’ are key words in this section. What are they to remember and not forget? (see 4:9, 10, 23, 31; 5:15; 6:12; 7:18; 8:2, 11, 14, 18, 19; 9:7; 11:2-7)
3. Read Deuteronomy 17:14-20. What commands does God give for kings? In Deuteronomy 18:14-22, the Lord defines the ministry of a prophet. Why does God send prophets? How do you recognize them?

III. The Remembering - Deuteronomy (cont)

6. Read Deuteronomy 32:44-47. What does God command Israel to do through Moses? Look back at Numbers 20:1-13. How had Moses himself treated God's word as an idle word? How did it affect his life? What warning is there for us in this example?

At the end of Deuteronomy (chapters 33-34) Moses blesses the tribes and he is led by God to the top of Mount Nebo and the shown the promised land and then Moses dies.

IV. The Burning Question

1. Look back at each of the questions or passages that have a box around the question number. (see further instructions below) Consider the information covered in each question with a box around its number and ask yourself “Do I see any connection to Christ in the passage of Scripture covered by this question?”

Look at question 2 on page 16. Now read Matthew 14:12-25. Consider the meaning of the Passover and that the Jews celebrated it for hundreds of years. Consider how Jesus was making clear the fulness of its meaning on the week of his death to His disciples. Imagine what was going through the disciples’ minds. What do you think they were thinking as they heard Jesus explain the Passover in this way?

Look at question 2 on page 18. Now read Matthew 4:1-11. Jesus quotes from the same passage when He is being tempted by the devil. Why are the truths of this passage so foundational to Christ when He is being tempted to disobey God?

The History Joshua – 2 Samuel

I. The Conquest- Joshua

"The five books of Moses lead Israel up to Canaan; and Joshua complements these by leading Israel into Canaan. The further 11 books cover Israel's history inside Canaan... It (Joshua) is the link between the two historical groups in the Old Testament... The occupation of this small strip of territory scarcely larger than Wales (8000 square miles, New Jersey is 8722 square miles, 47th in size in the U.S.) though it led to no further results in the way of conquest, has nevertheless to a great extent moulded the moral and religious history of the world." J. Sidlow Baxter

1. Read Joshua 1:1-9. What commands and encouragements does the Lord give Joshua? Read Joshua 1:10-11, 16-18. What do the people want from Joshua? Why are strength and courage important for God's leaders?

2. Read Joshua 2. Two spies are sent into Canaan and find refuge in the home of a woman named Rahab. What is her story and how does she demonstrate faith?

3. How does this new generation see God's miraculous power and why was it important for them to see it personally instead of just hearing the stories of previous generations? (see Joshua 3) What other preparations were made before they conquered the land?

