



THORNTON

#BIBLE

With Dr. Dav

PART ONE

WHY ARE WE READING THE BIBLE?

I.) We read the Bible because we believe it is the Breath of God

- A. 2 Timothy 3:15-17
- B. 2 Peter 1:20-22

II.) We read the Bible because it is life, wisdom, guidance, and our governing authority

- A. Joshua 1:8
- B. Psalm 1
- C. Psalm 119:11, 105
- D. Matthew 4:4
- E. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

PART TWO

WHAT ARE WE READING?

Introduction to the Bible

I.) What is the Bible?

- A. A collection of small books
 - 1. Written to and about people, for relatively specific audiences – about God's interaction, intervention in their lives.
 - 2. It is the story of creation, redemption, and consummation.
- B. Covers 4000 (est.) years of history
- C. Written over a span of 1400 years
- D. 40 different authors
- E. The Bible is "Inspired"
 - 1. Where does it make that claim in scripture?
 - a. 2 Timothy 3:16
 - b. 2 Peter 1:21
 - 2. What does "inspired" mean? "God Breathed"
 - 3. What do we believe about inspiration?
 - a. Dictation: typewriter (no)
 - b. Dynamic: thoughts, but not the words (no)
 - c. Verbal Plenary: (yes)
 - i. God initiated and prompted the words
 - ii. God preserved the text
 - iii. A perfect God used unique human personality (incarnational)

F. Old Testament Timeline

1. "B.C." (Before Christ)
2. Creation through Post Exile of Jewish people

G. New Testament Timeline

1. "A.D." Anno Domini (In the year of the Lord)
2. Jesus, His followers, and some of theirs (100 AD)

II.) How'd we get the Bible?

A. Testament

1. Covenant, Contract, Agreement
2. Old Testament refers to material that pertained to the First Covenant
3. New Testament refers to material that pertains to the New Covenant in Christ

B. How we got the Old Testament

1. Sacred writings preserved
2. Recognized by leaders
3. In agreement with accepted other texts
4. Able to be applied across generations and places
5. Canonized: (An agreed, standard measure)
6. Old Testament was "canonized" in 70AD
 - a. This was a recognition of what already existed
 - b. The Septuagint (LXX)
 - i. 3rd – 2nd century BC
 - ii. Law, Prophets, Writings and Apocrypha

C. How we got the New Testament

1. As early as 3rd century (200s) same books we have
2. Formal recognition from then forward by different groups.
3. NT criteria
 - a. Apostolic Origin — attributed to and based on the preaching/teaching of the first-generation apostles (or their close companions).
 - b. Universal Acceptance — acknowledged by all major Christian communities in the ancient world (by the end of the 4th century).
 - c. Liturgical Use — read publicly when early Christian communities gathered for the Lord's Supper (their weekly worship services).
 - d. Consistent Message — containing a theological outlook similar or complementary to other accepted Christian writings.

- D. How we got the bible (Basic summary)
 - 1. Inspiration (original)
 - 2. Transmission (copies made)
 - a. Copies of the original text
 - b. Most of the debate in textual criticism here
 - 3. Translation
 - a. Translated into modern languages
 - b. Translation involves moving the meaning of a text in one language (source language) to another language (receptor language)

Introducing the Old Testament

I.) The Book of Genesis

- A. Chapters 1-11 "Worldview"
 - 1. Key Verse: Gen. 1:1
- B. Chapters 12-50 "The Patriarchs"
 - 1. Gen. 12:1-3
 - 2. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob

II.) Exodus: "Exit"

- A. Moses
- B. **3:15**, "I Am"
- C. **5:1**, "Let my people go."
- D. Sinai
 - 1. Ten Commandments
 - 2. Tabernacle

III.) Leviticus

- A. In Exodus at Sinai
- B. Laws and Levites

IV.) Numbers

- A. Census
- B. 12 Spies
- C. Wilderness wanderings and wars

V.) Deuteronomy

- A. Second Law
- B. Deuteronomic History
- C. 30:15-16**

History / Former Prophets

VI.) Joshua

- A. Author
 - 1. Mostly Joshua
 - 2. Then edited together
- B. Theme / message
 - 1. Yahweh keeps His word
 - 2. The surpassing value of obedience
- C. Content
 - 1. Scriptures
 - a. **1:9**
 - b. **24:15**
 - 2. Events
 - a. Jericho
 - b. Conquest
- D. Characters
 - 1. Joshua
 - 2. Rahab
 - 3. Achan

VII.) Judges

- A. Occasion/Theme/Message
 - 1. Downward cycle of sin
 - 2. Moral Crisis
- B. **2:10**, "Arose a generation who knew not the Lord nor the works He had done..."
- C. "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes" **21:25**
- D. Cycle: Sin / Slavery (consequence) / Savior / Sin again
- E. Famous Judges: Deborah, Gideon Samson

VIII.) Ruth

- A. Talmud (Jewish tradition) claims Author was Samuel
- B. Theme / Message / Occasion
 - 1. During the chaos of the time of Judges...
 - 2. Hessed: Loyal love (God's and the characters') – triumphs law

C. Characters

1. Naomi
2. Ruth
3. Boaz
4. Obed * (The Line of David / Messiah)

D. Events

1. "In the days of the judges, a famine...": Into Moab
2. "Your people, my people; your God my God."
3. Ruth 1:16-17
4. Return to the House of Bread
5. Kinsman Redeemer; Boaz
6. Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David

IX.) Samuel (LXX Separates 1 and 2)

A. Authorship

1. Material supplied by Samuel, Nathan and Gad (1 Chron. 29:29)

B. Message / Theme / Occasion

1. Samuel is transitional prophet "judge" between Judges and Monarchy
2. The Monarchy Begins

C. Characters

1. Eli; Hannah
2. Samuel
3. Saul
4. David

D. Outline

1. **(1st Samuel)** Samuel's Ministry
 - a. Eli the High Priest;
 - b. Hannah prays for a child (1:27)
 - c. Speak Lord (3:10)
 - d. Give us a king! (8:5)
2. Saul
 - a. To obey is better than sacrifice (**15:22-23**)

3. David Rises
 - a. Man looks on the outside (**16:7**)
 - b. The Lord has been with me (**17:37**)
 - c. I come at you in the Name of the Lord (17:45-47)
 - d. David has killed his tens of thousands (18:7)
 - e. David on the run from Saul
4. (**2 Samuel**) David's Reign
 - a. David King in Judah (2)
 - b. Civil War I (3)
 - c. David King over all Israel (5)
 - d. The Lord's Promise to David (Davidic Covenant) **2 Sam. 7**
 - e. David's sin (11)
 - f. The Royal Family Drama (13)
 - g. Absalom's Revolt and Civil War II (15-18)
 - h. The Kingdom Restored; David's remaining rule (19-24)
 - i. David's Song and Last Words (**22**)

X.) Kings: Dynasty, Division, Decline, De-End

1. Theme / message
 - a. Deuteronomic Theology / History
 - b. North = Israel, Ten Tribes
 - i. Problem = the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat (idols)
 - c. South = Judah, Two tribes (Judah and Benjamin)
 - i. Problem: the high places (private places of compromise / pagan worship)

2. 1 Kings

- a. Characters
 - i. Solomon's Glory
 - ii. Temple and Palace
 - iii. Idolatry
 - iv. Jeroboam and Rehoboam
 - v. The Kingdom divides
 - vi. Elijah's Ministry

3. 2 Kings

a. Events

- i. The End Begins
- ii. Elisha's ministry
- iii. Fall of Samaria, 722 BC (chapt. 17)
- iv. Assyrian Assimilation!
- v. Hezekiah's revival (18 forward)
- vi. Manasseh's rebellion
- vii. Josiah's revival
- viii. Nebuchadnezzar
- ix. Judah falls to Babylon (586,7 BC)
- x. 70 year Captivity

XI.) Ezekiel

- A. Prophet to Judah
- B. Pre-exile, during exile
- C. The glory is gone
- D. The glory will return

XII.) Daniel

- A. Leader in Babylon
- B. Stories of God's faithfulness
- C. Dreams and visions of the future
- D. Daniel 9 and Jeremiah 29 and Ezra 1

XIII.) 1st and 2nd Chronicles

- A. Post- Exile audience
- B. Similar content, different perspective
- C. Focus on Judah, Jerusalem
- D. Focus on Yahweh's faithfulness and the central role of the temple
- E. David heroic figure, Saul the failed king.

XIV.) Ezra, Nehemiah

- A. 1st and 2nd returns from Exile
- B. National and Spiritual renewal
- C. Rebuilding the temple and the city
- D. Ezra 7:10**
- E. Nehemiah 8:10**

XV.) Esther

- A. 4:14
- B. Between 1st and 2nd return from exile
- C. God's faithfulness
- D. Esther's courage
- E. Preserved a nation

XVI.) Prophets in the Old Testament

- A. Major and Minor
 - 1. Much writing
 - 2. Short writing
- B. Classic and "Non-classic"
 - 1. Writing
 - 2. Non-writing
- C. Covenant callers

D. Isaiah

- 1. The Gospel of the OT
- 2. Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14, Matt. 1:23)
- 3. 6 "Holy, Holy, Holy; The whole earth is full of His glory."
- 4. 6 "Who will go? Here am I, send me."
- 5. 40 "Comfort, Comfort My People"
- 6. 53 "Surely He carried, bore..." Suffering servant
- 7. 60 "Arise, Shine!"
- 8. 61 "The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Me"

E. Jeremiah

- 1. Author: Jeremiah
- 2. Audience: To Judah
- 3. See 1:1-3
- 4. THEME: God's voice to an unhearing people
- 5. Characters/Content
 - a. Faithful ministry to unfaithful people
 - b. The cost of serving God
 - c. Jerusalem's fall
- 6. Jeremiah 29:10-14; Daniel 9:1-3

F. Lamentations

1. Jeremiah or A. Nonymous
2. Audience: Those feeling the profound sorrow of failure and judgement after Jerusalem's fall.
3. Theme: "A Cry of Agony"
4. "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases...hope." Lam. 3:21-2

XVII.) Book of 12

A. PRE Exile

1. Hosea

- a. When: Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14 ff)
- b. Who: Israel, Northern Kingdom
- c. Theme: Sharing God's Heartache
- d. Content
 - i. Spiritual Adultery
 - ii. Gomer
 - iii. Yahweh takes Israel to court

2. Amos

- a. When: Jeroboam II (similar to Hosea)
- b. Who: Israel (from Judah)
- c. Theme: Shepherd of Social Justice
- d. Content: The Plumb Line

3. Jonah

- a. When: Jeroboam II
- b. Who: Nineveh
- c. Theme: Reluctant Prophet Preaches Repentance

4. Micah

- a. When: Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah (2 Kings 15ff) (with Isaiah)
- b. Who: Jerusalem and Samaria
- c. Theme: Judgement is Coming
- d. Content
 - i. The Mountain of the Lord in the Last Days
 - ii. 5:2, "You, Bethlehem...out of you will come One whose origins are from old, from ancient times."

5. **Nahum**

- a. When: Manasseh (near), 100 years +/- after Jonah
- b. Who: Nineveh
- c. Theme: No more Nineveh.

6. **Zephaniah**

- a. When: Josiah (with Jeremiah)
- b. Who: Judah (and overspray)
- c. Theme: Sovereign Judgement

7. **Habakkuk**

- a. When: Jehoiachin (with Jeremiah)
- b. Who: Judah
- c. Theme: What's Going On?
- d. Content
 - i. Judah's last days
 - ii. The Just Shall Live by Faith

8. **Obadiah**

- a. When: Fall of Jerusalem, Zedekiah
- b. Who: Edom
- c. Theme: Hey Big Brother, You're Busted, Too.

9. **Joel**

- a. When: Not certain: could be early or late in Monarchy
- b. Who: Judah
- c. Theme: The Day of the Lord
- d. Content
 - i. The Day of the Lord
 - ii. Locusts / Judgement
 - iii. Renewal
 - iv. 2:28 cf. Acts 2:17

B. Post Exile

1. **Haggai**

- a. When: Ezra part one (1-7)
- b. Who: The apathetic returned
- c. Theme: Get with it

2. **Zechariah**

- a. When: Ezra part one (1-7)
- b. Who: Early Post Exilic Community (same as above)
- c. Theme: Get Ready, The King is Coming

3. **Malachi**

- a. When: Ezra part two, Nehemiah
- b. Who: Developing Post-E Community
- c. Theme: Give God Your Best (a rebuke of specific sin)

WISDOM LITERATURE

A. Psalms

- 1. Author(s)
 - a. David
 - b. Asaph
 - c. Sons of Korah
- 2. Audience: Israel (Beginning with Monarchy of David)
- 3. Theme: Hymns of Worship for Israel

B. Proverbs: Advice on Living in God's World

- 1. Proverbs
 - a. Author: Solomon,
 - b. Audience: National Israel Post Solomonic Era
 - c. Theme: Wisdom

C. Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs: Israelite Faith in Everyday Life

- 1. Ecclesiastes
 - a. Author: Solomon(ish) and A. Nonymous.
 - b. Audience: Same
 - c. Theme
 - i. Life isn't fair
 - ii. Human endeavor is vain
 - iii. The Fear of the Lord is the only foundation.
- 2. Song of Solomon
 - a. Author: Solomon or Solomon-esque clan
 - b. Audience: Post-Solomonic Israel
 - c. Theme: Renewal of Biblical Romantic Love

D. Job

1. Author: A. Nonymous
2. When: We have no idea. Note that Ezekiel 14 references Job, ergo before Ezekiel's time Sometime. (Could be patriarchal due to no reference to covenant, law, prophet or king. Job's lifespan sounds like Genesis)
3. Who (Audience): National Israel
4. Characters
 - a. Job
 - b. Job's wife
 - c. Job's Counselors
 - d. God
5. Events
 - a. Job's happy life
 - b. Job's troubles
 - c. Job's debate over the cause/reason
 - d. God's response
 - e. Job's restoration
6. Theme / Message
 - a. Retribution theology
 - b. Undeserved Suffering
 - c. God is able to work all things together for good (Rom. 8:28)

Between the Testaments

I.) Introduction

- A. If you turn from Malachi to Matthew, do you know what you skip? 400 years! (The amount of time from when the Mayflower landed at Plymouth until today). Understanding what happened between the Testaments will help us as we begin
- B. Look at history from Ezra to Herod (the dates I offer will be approximate...), and then at the religious and cultural elements that framed the world.

II.) History of Israel

- A. Babylonian Captivity
 1. 587 BC
 2. Extremely significant period
 3. This "freed" them from idolatry, and gave them a fiery zeal for God's Word and for Monotheism

B. Persian Rule (536-333 BC)

1. The Persians toppled Babylon, and then ruled Palestine.
2. The decree of the Persian king Cyrus in 536 BC made for the return of the Jewish remnant.
3. Jew = the tribe of Judah was the main tribe left.
4. This lasted for two hundred years
5. At the end of the OT with Ezra and Nehemiah, Palestine was still under Persian rule.

C. Greek Rule – Hellenization (333-323 BC)

1. Persia was huge – and felt invulnerable.
2. But one man from an obscure nation changed everything.
3. Alexander, son of assassinated King Macedon of Macedonia, a young man tutored by Aristotle, was intoxicated with the promise and glory of Greek culture.
4. He dreamed of bringing the whole world together under the unity of Greek culture.
5. In 332 BC he amassed an army to attack Persia.
 - a. It was a small and insignificant army.
 - b. But in ten years, the world from Greece to India, Afghanistan to Egypt was ruled and influenced by Greeks.
6. This meant Greek LANGUAGE and CULTURE was being spread.
7. Adopting Greek culture and language is called Hellenization. (Hellene = Greek).
8. IN Alexander's march on Jerusalem, he not only spared the city, but also offered sacrifice to Yahweh and had the prophecies of Daniel read to him concerning the overthrow of Persian Empire by a King of Grecia – the little horn of Daniel 8.
9. Thereafter he treated the Jews with respect and gave them citizenship in Greek cities. This created a pro-Greek feeling among many Jews... especially those who liked power.

D. The "Egyptian" Period (323-204 BC)

1. When Alexander died, his kingdom was divided into four parts, each ruled by one of his generals.
2. These are commonly seen as the four "notable ones" which take the place of the great horn in Daniel 8:21-22
3. They fought among themselves – but Judea and Syria fell to Ptolemy Soter, the first of the Greek Kings to rule over Egypt.
4. He was harsh at first, but then warmed up to the Jews. His successor, Ptolemy Philadelphus, continued the friendly relations.
5. Hellenization increased all the more.

6. It was in THIS period that the Septuagint was made.
7. Greek was now the language of the vast portion of the civilized world. And now, they all could read God's word! This would be very important as much of the world began to look with interest at the monotheistic religion of the Jews...

E. The "Syrian" Period (204-165 BC)

1. In 204 BC Antiochus the Great (from the north) invaded Egypt, Judea and other places.
2. These were annexed to Syria and under the rule of the Seleucids.
3. You can read Daniel's prophecies about kingdoms of the north and south in constant conflict...
4. It was in this period that Palestine was divided into the sections we read of in the New Testament.
 - a. Judea
 - b. Samaria
 - c. Galilee
 - d. Etc...
5. This was the harshest period for Jews in the inter-testamental period.
6. In 170 BC Antiochus Epiphanes began a reign of terror upon the Jews.
 - a. His goal was complete Hellenism...
 - b. Jerusalem plundered
 - c. Wall torn down
 - d. Temple desecrated
 - e. Sacrifices abolished
 - f. Holy of Holies stripped of its furniture
 - g. Jewish religion banned
 - h. A pig was sacrificed on the altar (the Abomination of Desecration)
 - i. Erected an Altar to Zeus / Jupiter
 - j. People subjected to monstrous cruelties.
7. Then, they "had all they could stand and they could stand no more..."

F. The Maccabean Revolt and Rule (165-63 BC)

1. The excessiveness by Antiochus provoked the Jews to revolt
2. Judas Maccabeus (Hebrew word for Hammer) – The Hammer – gathered a guerilla army and assumed the offensive.
3. Captured Jerusalem
4. Refurnished the temple
5. On December 25th, three years after it was polluted, orthodox sacrifices were re-instated.

6. This is the feast of dedication / feast of lights in John 10 and Hanukah.
7. After more skirmishes... the revolt was a success.
8. Though not without fights, a mostly independent Jewish government existed until about 63 BC...

G. The Roman Rule (63 BC until...)

1. The Maccabean rulers later quarreled for power, and forced others to convert to Judaism...
2. One of them sought help from Roman General Pompey... Big mistake.
3. Pompey decided to just annex Palestine as the Roman province of Judah.
4. Pompey laid siege to Jerusalem for three months, and then took the city.
5. He strolled into the temple and into the Holy of Holies.
6. He thereby ensured resentment of all things Roman.
7. Rome tossed out Pompey in civil war, assisted by a family called the Herods.
8. Julius Caesar then appointed Antipater procurator of Judea in 47 BC.
9. Antipater appointed his son Herod as governor of Galilee when he was 15 yrs old. Later, in about 40 BC, Rome appointed him King of the Jews.
10. He increased the splendor of Jerusalem 11.
11. He built an elaborate temple.
12. He also:
 - a. Murdered all of his wife's brothers
 - b. Murdered his mother in law
 - c. Murdered his wife (the Jewish one)
 - d. Murdered all his sons from that wife.
13. This is Herod the Great – king when Christ was born, and the one who ordered the slaughter of infants for fear of “another king.”

III.) Religious Context

- A. The Jews went into exile with a lust for idolatry. They came out “cured.” They had a new zeal for the scriptures, and the messianic hope that came from those scriptures.
- B. Emerging from Exile came sects and institutions
 1. Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees
 2. Synagogue and Sanhedrin
- C. Scribes
 1. Experts in the law
 2. Lawyers
 3. Explainers and interpreters and appliers of the Law.

D. Pharisees

1. Separatists.
2. Built an Oral Law that explained and applied the Law of Moses.
3. The Mishna and the Talmud – codified Oral Law, tradition of the elders.
4. Very influential with the common people – very pious.
5. Heroes of Judaism – believed in resurrection, Messiah, angels and demons.
6. NOTE: the prevailing theology and literature of the day held that God was transcendent, and that he communicated via Angels. Thus, the Spirit world was dominant their minds.
7. ADDING TO, complicating, and convoluting the simplicity of God's word. Religion is made up of rules to rule others.

E. Sadducees

1. Wealthy and influential people. Ruling priests
2. Sought to preserve power
3. They rejected the Oral law. They claimed to only believe the Torah – but they hardly embraced that.
4. They were skeptics who sought to build political power and the treasury of the temple.
5. TAKING FROM, only that which is seen is valuable. Everything tried at the bar of human reason. Life is lived for advantage and power.

F. The Synagogue

1. Here the scriptures were read and expounded by the scribes
2. The goal was instruction in the scriptures, not worship
3. Gradually, exposition and liturgy evolved into “worship services.”

G. The Sanhedrin

1. The supreme civil and religious tribunal of Jewish Nation.
2. Consisted of 71 members
 - a. The high priest
 - b. 24 chief priests
 - c. 24 elders
 - d. 22 scribes

H. The common people

1. thousands and thousands of people that were none of the above
2. To such as these, the long awaited Messiah would be revealed.
3. In the hour of Israel's degradation, when Herod's kingdom seemed to mock the aspirations of all faithful Israelites with its counterfeit resemblance of Messianic glory, their eyes beheld the Lord's anointed.

IV.) And in the fullness of time... (ca 4 BC) the curtain opened and the King of King's was born.

Introduction to the New Testament

I.) What is the New Testament?

- A. The account of God's Covenant with us in Jesus Christ
- B. The story of Jesus, the early church, and the writings of the apostles.

II.) How many books are in it? What kind of books are these?

- A. 27
- B. Gospels
- C. History
- D. Letters
- E. Apocalypse

III.) Who are the principal authors? 7 that we are confident of.

- A. Matthew, Mark (Peter), Luke, and John
- B. Luke / Acts
- C. Paul
- D. Peter
- E. James
- F. Jude
- G. John (letters and apocalypse)

IV.) About how many years are covered?

- A. The period of time from 3/4BC until about 70 AD
- B. Took less than 70 years to write The Gospels:

The Gospels

I.) What are the Gospels?

- A. Good news
- B. Written accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus.
- C. There are four of them
- D. They are theological documents written:
 - 1. By a person(s)
 - 2. For an occasion
 - 3. To an audience
 - 4. With a purpose

II.) Four Accounts of One Story

- A. Four "According To's"
- B. Three Synoptics
 - 1. Though similar, each unique
 - a. Matthew = Son of David, the fulfillment of OT expectation
 - b. Mark = Son of God, Powerful Action, Heroic figure, suffering servant
 - c. Luke = Son of Man, a man living by the Spirit, a man of prayer, humanity's outcasts included
- C. One different one (John)
 - 1. Same story
 - 2. different agenda
 - 3. seven signs, "Believe! And have life."

III.) Understanding, Appreciating and Applying the Gospels

- A. What was Jesus point (AD 30)
- B. What was the point of Gospel writer? (AD 60-90)
- C. How does / should the principle apply to the modern reader? (AD Now)
- D. OR:
 - 1. What do we learn about Jesus?
 - 2. How can we follow Him? (obey and imitate)

IV.) The Imperatives of Christ

- A. Particulars change, principles remain
 - 1. Matthew 5:41
- B. To many, they seem like LAW
- C. This presents a paradox and leads to extremes.
- D. these imperatives are not law, not in the sense that
 - 1. one must obey them in order to become a Christian
 - 2. or one must obey them in order to remain a Christian
- E. They are descriptions of what a Christian life should be because of God's grace received.
 - 1. not the cause for salvation, but the consequence
 - 2. Matt. 5:38-42

V.) The Kingdom of God

- A. See Matthew 5:17, Mark 1:15, Luke 4:43, John 3:3
- B. Jesus was speaking to a Jewish expectation of end time events rooted in OT scripture.
- C. The early Christians understood the messianic age – The Kingdom of God – “the time of God’s rule.”
- D. Jesus came and announced with his ministry that the kingdom of Heaven was at hand
 - 1. He was crucified...
 - 2. He arose...
 - 3. He poured out His Spirit
- E. With the Spirit coming in fullness and power, with signs and wonders following... the new age had arrived. But the old age hadn’t left yet...
- F. The early Christians began to understand that Jesus had not come to bring the end, but to usher in the beginning of the ending.
 - 1. the blessings and benefits of the future had already come
 - 2. But the end had not yet come.
 - 3. Already / not yet tension.
- G. The early believers learned to become eschatological people
 - 1. lived between the times
 - 2. between the beginning and consummation of the end
 - 3. They celebrated this eschatological existence by proclaiming the Lord's death until he comes...
- H. They had been conditioned, became characterized by the future
 - 1. They knew its benefits
 - 2. They lived by its values
 - 3. But they had to live out those values and benefits in the present world.
 - 4. We pray: Your Kingdome come –
- I. So – when reading the stories and teachings of Jesus
 - 1. We are seeing the Kingdom of God break out
 - 2. We are learning how to respond to power and rule of God'skingdom in our lives.

VI.) Review:

- A. Gospel: the life and teaching of Jesus, in four versions
- B. Each one written with a divine agenda
- C. Each story / statement has a historical and canonical context

- D. Particulars change, but principles remain
- E. The lofty commands of Jesus are not new rules that replace the old, but a description of Kingdom ethics; how we live because of what God has done in and for us.
- F. Christ inaugurated His Kingdom, and will return to bring a final end to this age, and the fullness of the New
- G. We live with the power, values, and ethics of THAT age, in this one.
- H. The Gospels show and tell us how, according to the Life of Jesus.

The Book of Acts

I.) Introduction

- A. Author
 - 1. All evidence allows for Luke
 - 2. No other credible argument for a different author.
 - 3. "We" sections = 97 verses
- B. Date
 - 1. 63 AD
- C. Audience
 - 1. Theophilus
 - 2. Same as Luke's Gospel account

II.) Purposes of ACTS (Why written, why read it) (The purposes appear to be)

- A. To present a history
 - 1. Historical account of Christian origins
 - 2. Founding of the church
 - 3. Spread of the gospel
 - 4. Beginnings of Congregations
 - 5. Evangelistic efforts in the Apostolic pattern
 - 6. The spread of the Church as the result of the work of the Holy Spirit working through the church / apostles.
- B. To provide a guide
 - 1. Luke had no way of knowing how long the church would continue on earth (expectation of persusia)
 - 2. But as long as it remains, the Book of Acts will be one of its major guides.

3. Luke provides basic principles that can be applied in all contexts, and will remain applicable until Christ returns.
 - a. Persecutions
 - b. Problems
 - c. Mission
 - d. Leadership
4. Martin Lloyd-Jones: "Live in that book, I exhort you: it is a tonic, the greatest tonic I know of in the realm of the Spirit."

III.) Characteristics

- A. Unique
 1. Only "sequel" in the NT
 2. Only "history" book in NT (arguable).
 3. Issues of application: what is "normative" in historical account?
- B. The Work of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8)
 1. The issue in Acts (per Pastor Dav)
 2. The Church was begun and maintained by the Person / Power of the Spirit
 3. The followers of Jesus would be empowered by the Spirit to be witnesses of / for Christ – in ever increasing geographic regions.
 4. The person / work of the Spirit pervades every part / person in the story.
 - a. Who is really the central figure in Acts?
 - b. How does today's church compare to Acts in terms of relating with, relying upon, submitting to the Holy Spirit?
 - c. How can we increase our experience, awareness, and expression of the Holy Spirit?
- C. Divided in geographic portions
 1. Following 1:8
 2. Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, Gentiles, Asia, Europe, Rome.
- D. Divided by emphases on Peter, Paul
 1. Peter and early figures; chapters 1-12
 2. Paul and fellow workers; chapters 13-28
- E. Divided by Principle Cities
 1. Jerusalem
 2. Antioch
 3. Arguably: Ephesus, Rome
- F. Speeches:
 1. 33% of Acts is speech
 2. Interspersed through this historical narrative are no less than 24 speeches, totaling 300 of the 1000 vv in Acts.

3. These speeches provide a record of raw theology and preaching emphasis in early church – especially what Luke thought important.

IV.) Outline of Acts

- A. The Good News Begins @ Jerusalem 1:1-6:7
- B. The Good News Spreads to Judea and Samaria 6:8-9:31
- C. The Good News Spreads to Gentiles 9:32-12:24
- D. The Good News Spreads to Asia 12:25-16:5
- E. The Good News Spreads to Europe 16:6-19:20
- F. The Good News (and Paul) Reaches Rome 19:21-28:30

The Letters of Paul

Romans

I.) Introduction

- A. Author
 1. Paul (1:1)
 2. No argument
- B. Paul's Letters
 1. Private letters intended for public use
 2. Longest to shortest
 3. General to specific
- C. Romans
 1. Date: the Spring of A.D. 57
 - a. Third Missionary Journey
 - b. Ready to return to Jerusalem
 - c. Written after 1 / 2 Corinthians
 2. Audience
 - a. Rome... (1:7)
 - b. All in Rome:
 - i. Loved by God
 - ii. Called to be His Holy People
 - c. Their faith was famous (1:8)
 - d. Paul longed to be with them (1:11-12)
 - e. Mostly Gentile Church, but strong Jewish presence
 - f. This led to issues addressed in the text (Jew / Gentile issues)

D. Characteristics

1. Full of Old Testament quotations
2. Arguably most influential book in Christian history, even western history.
3. Some find it theologically dense, and only fancy certain portions.
4. Most systematic of Paul's letters
5. A theological treatise
6. Follows "dox" / "prax" pattern of Paul's letters.
7. Look for the Praxis Axis

II.) Theme / Outline: God's Righteousness

- A. Introduction (1:1-15)
- B. Theme: The Righteousness of God (1:16-17)
- C. The Unrighteousness of All People (1:18-3:20)
 1. Gentiles (1:18-32) {AKA the downward cycle of sin, read vv. 18-32}
 2. Jews (2:1-3:8)
 3. Summary: All People (3:9-20) {Read 3:9}
- D. God's Righteousness Imputed: Justification (3:21-5:21)
 1. Through Christ (3:21-26 Read)
 2. Received by Faith (3:27-4:25)
 - a. Principle Established (3:27-31)
 - b. Principle Illustrated (Chapt. 4 Example of Abraham)
 3. The Fruits of Righteousness (5:1-11 Read 5:1)
 4. Summary: Humanity's Unrighteousness Contrasted with God's Gift of Righteousness (5:12-21) {Death through Adam, Life through Christ}
- E. God's Righteousness Imparted: Sanctification (chapters. 6-8)
 1. Freedom from sin's tyranny (chapt. 6)
 2. Freedom from the Law's condemnation (chapt. 7)
 - a. Debate about this passage
 - b. Is Paul talking about himself?
 - c. Worth noting what is absent from the passage...compared to chapter 8.
 3. Life in the Power of the Holy Spirit (chapt. 8)
 - a. Read 8:1, 5
 - b. 8:12-14
 4. Paul's dependence / theology of the Spirit is often overlooked by Romans readers / writers: However consider:
 - a. 1:4, 11
 - b. 8:15-16; 26-27
 - c. 15:13; 18

- F. God's Righteousness Vindicated: The Justice of His Way with Israel (chaps. 9-11)
 - 1. The Justice of God's Rejection of Israel (9:1-29)
 - 2. The Cause of that Rejection (9:30-10:21)
 - 3. The Rejection is Neither Complete nor Final (chapt. 11)
 - a. Even now there is a remnant (11:1-10)
 - b. The rejection is only temporary (11:11-24)
 - i. Ingrafted branches 11:17
 - c. God's ultimate purpose is mercy (11:25-36)
 - d. The Great Doxology
- G. Righteousness Practiced (12:1-15:13) (Beware! The Praxis Axis!)
 - 1. In the body – the church (chapt. 12)
 - a. Read 12:1a
 - 2. In the world – (chapt. 13)
 - 3. Among the weak and strong Christians (14:1-15:13)
- H. Conclusion (15:14-33)
- I. Commendation, Greetings, and Doxology (chapt. 16)

The Corinthian Correspondence

Paul established the Church at Corinth during his 18 month stay in Corinth (see Acts 18:5)

The two letters to Corinth are believed to be two of more actual letters (at least three). First Corinthians challenges the church at Corinth because Paul had heard several reports from others concerning issues at the church. Further, some at Corinth had sent questions to Paul asking for clarification or instruction.

We may know more about the church at Corinth than any other ancient church. Their errors, their passion, and Paul's responses have proven an invaluable resource to the church through the ages.

I.) The City of Corinth

- A. Population
 - 1. 400,000- 600,00 – 4th largest in the Roman Empire
 - 2. A mix of ethnic groups – the “worst” of each.
 - 3. The vices of east and west met @ Corinth
- B. Corruption
 - 1. To Corinthianize was polite Greek for “go to the devil”
 - 2. The Corinthian Ideals
 - a. Personal and selfish development
 - b. The merchant who cheated and lied but gained his objective...
 - c. The hedonist who indulged in every lust and pleasure
 - d. The athlete who took haughty pride in his body...
 - e. All of these were honored in Corinthian society

3. Center for debased heathen worship
 - a. Aphrodite:
 - b. "Her" temple was high upon a hill
 - c. 1000 priestesses (prostitutes)
 - d. Fees brought as worship
- C. All of this important...
 1. Paul chose this city as a center for evangelism (AD 50)
 2. This city! Sounds just about right.
 3. Acts records this in 18: 1-11
 4. Not just Paul, but Christ who chose this city
 5. Remained there for 18 mos.
 6. Church was of people with largely pagan, comparatively few Jewish adherents – little OT background (or any scripture).
 - a. So they did not know the bible, but Paul still used it.
 - b. They had no concrete or absolute truth or moral authority, but Paul still cited and clung to it.
 - c. They did not have bibles, go to Sunday school or even have a Judeo-Christian heritage. How would Paul reach and teach such a pre-post-modern crowd?
 - d. We'll find out...
 7. Kept in contact with the church: visited and corresponded.
 8. Which is where we get the letter...

II.) The Letter(s) to the Corinthians

- A. Quick review
 1. 18 mo visit
 2. Letter one (lost)
 3. Letter two (1st Corinthians)
 4. Painful visit
 5. The "sorrowful" letter
 6. The "Thankful" letter (2nd Corinthians)
 7. Another 3 mo visit.
- B. The First Letter we have record of
 1. Paul was responding to a letter he had received from them with questions and concerns
 2. Paul was also responding to reports of a disturbing nature he'd received

- a. Disunity
 - i. Hedonists – I am free to do it all! A perversion of Christian freedom
 - ii. Ascetics – Off Limits! Advocated celibacy, no meat from idols, no resurrection of the body, because it is bad.
 - iii. Ecstatics – Those who allowed their charismatic spiritual experiences to lead to disorder.
 - iv. How do these attitudes hurt Christian mission?
 - b. Unholy relationships
 - c. Lack of compassion
 - d. Legal disputes
 - e. Dishonoring the Lord's table
 - f. Lack of order in worship
 - g. False ideas on the resurrection
- C. This Epistle is important for us because
1. It deals with and corrects problems
 2. Also reveals Paul's approach to Gospel ministry and Christian life in a wildly heathen city.
- D. The teaching of the letter
1. Union with Christ
 2. The Cross and its implications
 3. Doctrine saturated
 4. Christ-centered
 - a. Presence, Lordship, power of His cross
 5. Paul's theology powerfully influenced by two things:
 - a. resurrection of Christ, the coming of the Spirit
 6. Paul's understanding of the Gospel and ethical life
 - a. Radical obedience to Christ is the norm of Christian existence
 - b. If Roman and Galatians teach that we are not saved by the law, then Corinthians tells us that we are expected to live out our lives in obedience to the commands of God, the law of Christ. This is the necessary outflow of faith.
 - c. Paul understands Christian ethics as becoming what you are
 - d. The imperative is always based on God's prior action or initiative.
 - e. Behavioral absolutes are not law-based, but based upon the Character of God.

7. Paul's imagery of the Church
 - a. God's Temple at Corinth
 - i. A stark contrast to the temples
 - ii. As opposed to being indistinguishable
 - b. What makes them this is the presence of the Holy Spirit
 - c. So sacred is this temple that those who would destroy it... via quarrels, worldly wisdom, pride and recklessness will themselves be destroyed by God.
8. The Church as the Body of Christ
 - a. Unity
 - b. Necessity
 - c. Diversity

III.) The Big Idea

- A. In Corinth, the spirit of the city had crept into the church – had become secular, even pagan-esque.
- B. This letter is the antibody for the virus of worldly cultural influences.
- C. And a clarion call to be (become) the People of God:
 1. Holy
 2. Loving
 3. Powerful
 4. Unified

Galatians

I.) Galatians

- A. Author – Paul
- B. Date / Destination
 1. South Galatia Theory: AD 46-49
 2. Written by Paul from Syrian Antioch before the Jerusalem council to the churches in south Galatia where he ministered on his first missionary journey.
- C. Purpose
 1. To challenge and correct the influences of Judaizers in Galatian churches. Jewish Christians who tried to convince Gentile Christians that in addition to faith in Christ, they must also follow the rules and rituals of Mosaic Law.
 - a. There was "another Gospel" being preached (1:6-9)
 - b. These people challenged Paul's Apostleship – not with the original group. (1:10)
 - c. Therefore, he is subordinate to the Apostles in Jerusalem.
 - d. Furthermore, Paul has misunderstood his "second hand" understanding of Christianity.

2. They were most likely using Abraham as their example
 - a. Genesis 17:1-22
 - b. Circumcision an everlasting covenant
 - c. Abraham "believed" but was also circumcised.
3. Paul shows their argument is "grace + law = favor with God"
 - a. But adding the + nullifies grace.
 - b. Paul's argument is "grace + nothing = favor with God"
 - c. He argues from their experience as proof (3:1-5)
 - d. He then shows when Abraham was declared righteous – before chapter 17, in 15:6
 - e. The rest of chapters 3 and 4 spell out further implications and illustrations of the argument.
4. Finally – in chapter 5 Paul points out that only the Spirit is sufficient to produce in us righteousness.

II.) Characteristics and Emphases

A. Characteristics

1. More personal biography
2. Lacks the normal initial formalities – Paul launches into them with visceral concern.
3. A Corporate letter – written to groups of churches (see above I:B:2:b)

B. Emphases

1. Christ has brought an end to the labels and demarcations of ethno / religious culture.
2. Righteousness is only received from God by His grace through faith.
3. The Spirit is the worker of righteousness, and the seal of righteousness received.
4. We must give this letter its place as our "charter of freedom." Our understanding of Christian faith would not be the same without Galatians.

Ephesians

I.) Introduction

- A. Prison Letters
- B. Paul in Prison @ Rome (60-62 AD)
 1. Ephesians
 2. Colossians
 3. Philippians
 4. Philemon

II.) Ephesians

A. Author – Paul

1. No challenge until the 19th century
 - a. Style change, slightly different vocabulary
 - b. The first couple of verses suggest that Paul did not know them personally
2. Cf. Acts 19, 20:13-37
3. He may have “heard” of the quantity and quality of the believers' faith and love.
4. Furthermore, this letter was likely to be shared among the 9 churches that resulted from the 1 in Ephesus.

B. Audience

1. Ephesus, in Asia Minor – modern Turkey.
2. And – the surrounding churches.
3. Ephesus
 - a. Most important city in Asia minor
 - b. At an intersection of trade routes, a great commercial center
 - c. Pagan Temple to the Roman goddess Diana (Artemis).
 - d. Paul had early success in Ephesus – Acts 19:11, 20
 - e. Magic arts, sorcery, Pagan worship – “dark powers.” (19:17-19)

C. Characteristics of Ephesians:

1. No apparent enemy or heresy to confront or correct
2. One of the few / only examples of such a letter.
3. Makes it widely applicable; without need of having to explain the arguments or corrections.

D. Themes in Ephesians

1. Expands the horizons of the reader
2. Through it, the reader is to understand, embrace, and live out:
 - a. God's Eternal Purpose
 - i. For Christ
 - ii. For the Church
 - b. God's Grace toward the Church
 - c. God's Power for the Church
 - d. God's Plan for the Church (God's design for living, living out His purpose and power)

3. It is a call to “come up higher,” and to live more fully in accord with the gracious, enabling, transforming call of God.
4. Two prayers of Paul recorded – revealing the Spirit-inspired intentions of the Apostle for the church. (Hint, Hint – praying for God’s will).

E. Overview

1. The letter opens with a long sentence (3-14) about the blessings of God interspersed with expressions regarding God’s wisdom, forethought, and purpose.
2. Paul’s emphasis is that we have been saved not only for our good, but for God’s glory.
3. Having explained God’s great goals for the church, Paul shows the steps toward their fulfillment.
 - a. God has reconciled people to himself as an act of Grace (2:1-10)
 - b. God has reconciled saved individuals to each other (2:11- 22)
4. Paul declares the mystery of the church, the wisdom of God
 - a. The mystery of the body of Christ, revealed by Paul (3:1- 6)
 - b. God’s display of His manifold wisdom (3:7-13)
5. The Christian’s life is “in Christ” – joined with him, lived in His power, receiving meaning and significance from heaven.(chapters 1-3)
6. Remember the Praxis Axis?
7. The Christians’ life in Christ is lived out in the now. The believer continues to work out the purposes of God in his/ her daily life. (chapters 4-6)
8. God has equipped us (by grace-gifts) to minister and mature (4:1-16)
9. Our new life stands in contrast with our old life (4:17-6:9)
10. Living out God’s purpose will require conflict with the powers of this world – but God has resourced us for victory (6:10-20)

Colossians

I.) Introduction

- A. Author: Paul
- B. Date: 60-62 AD
- C. Audience: Church in Colossae (1:2)
 1. By Paul’s day a shadow of its former self
 2. While Paul in Ephesus, Epaphras was converted and carried Gospel to Colossae.
 3. Paul did not plant this church, nor has he likely seen most / any of these people.
 4. The church was “invaded” by false teachers / heresy.
 5. Epaphras told Paul (in Roman Prison) about the situation.
 6. Paul wrote this letter.

D. Purpose / Themes

1. To confront and correct the infection of heresy at Colossae
 - a. Not explicitly stated (audience already knew)
 - b. Must be inferred
2. The problem seems to be syncretism.
3. Some of the elements were:
 - a. Ceremonialism: Strict rules about food and drink, religious festivals, and circumcision.
 - b. Asceticism: (2:21 cf. 23)
 - c. Angel Worship: 2:18
 - d. Depreciation of Christ: Inferred and implied in Paul's
 - e. emphasis on the supremacy of Christ.
 - f. Secret Knowledge
 - g. Reliance on human wisdom and tradition, even elemental spirituality.
4. To confront / combat this heresy, Paul promotes truth and exalts Christ.
 - a. Christ is completely adequate: 2:10
 - b. Fullness of Christ vs. emptiness of human philosophy and elemental principles / spirits of this world.

Philippians

I.) Introduction to Philippians

- A. Author: Paul
- B. Date and Place
 1. Prison (1:13-14)
 2. Rome
 3. Prison = "Rented House" (Acts 28:14-31)
- C. Purpose
 1. A Thank You letter (1:5, 4:16-19)
 2. Report on his circumstances (1:12-16; 4:10-19)
 3. Encouragement and Exhortations
 4. Warning them of false teachers and bad influences (chapter 3)
 - a. Judaizers / legalists
 - b. Antinomians / libertines (no obligation to obey laws or ethics)

D. Recipients

1. Church in Philippi (Acts 16:11-40)
2. Philippi
 - a. Named after father of Alexander the Great
 - b. Prosperous Roman Colony (Acts 16:12)
 - c. Dressed Roman, spoke Latin, PROUD of citizenship
3. Roman ex-military given land to settle.
4. Not significant Jewish presence; no OT quotations.

E. Characteristics

1. No OT
2. "Friendship letter;" very personal "I" used 52 times.
3. Presents "high" Christian living (if we lived this book we'd have healthy, happy churches, families, relationships)
 - a. Humility
 - b. Determination
 - c. Trust
 - d. Prayer
 - e. Excellence
4. The NT letter of Joy – 16 times in various forms.
5. Profoundly Christological
 - a. 2:5-11
 - b. An example, an aside.
 - c. Likely a hymn / oral tradition in the church.

Thessalonians

Read Acts 17:1-9: what do we learn? What were these people like?

I.) Author: Paul

II.) Audience: Thessalonica

A. The City

1. Heavily populated one of largest in Macedonia, approx. 200K
2. Wealthy commercial center
3. Religiously pluralistic – something for everyone
 - a. Greek Philosophy
 - b. Devotion to Emperor cult was evident; minted coins declaring emperor was divine
 - c. Sanctuaries to Egyptian gods
 - d. Jewish community

B. The People

1. Wealthy Greco-Roman Immigrants
2. Poor Indigenous people
3. Small Jewish community

C. The Church

1. Paul began the synagogue (Acts 17)
2. God-fearing Greeks
3. Pagans – with all their various backgrounds (2 Thess. 1:9)

III.) Agenda: (similar in both letters)

- A. Persecution had hit the church
- B. Criticism had hit Paul
- C. Christian standard of holiness needed reemphasizing
- D. Instruction on the second coming was needed
 1. Most in depth teaching on the second coming of Christ in Paul's letters
 2. "Day of the Lord"
 3. Provides good balance re: how to live now in hopes of Christ's return
- E. Instruction on Spiritual Gifts was needed (don't repress them)
- F. ** Longest thanksgiving section in Paul's letters (1 Thess. Is 3/5 thanksgiving)
- G. 2 Thess:
 1. Persecution more intense
 2. Misunderstanding of the day of the Lord
 3. Disruptive behavior of people in the church

Pastoral Letters

Timothy and Titus

I.) Introduction to the Pastoral Letters

- A. Pastor Letters
- B. Post Acts 28
- C. A fourth missionary journey?
- D. Instructions to Timothy and Titus re: their respective assignments
- E. Most specific, to individuals (to be over-heard by church)
- F. Be careful not to make these one-dimensional church manuals—they were specific.

II.) Introduction I Timothy (example)

- A. Author – Paul (debated by some)
- B. Audience
 1. Directly - Timothy
 2. Indirectly – the congregation and elders at Ephesus.

C. Date: 65-66 (ish) from Macedonia

D. Occasion

1. Paul, on the alleged fourth missionary journey, left Timothy in Ephesus in order to protect the church, and promote health.
2. After leaving, he wrote this letter to Timothy, presenting instructions to Timothy as Paul's representative in Ephesus.
3. False teachers arose in Ephesus: a mix of Gnosticism, decadent Judaism, and false asceticism.

E. Purpose

1. Paul urged Timothy to provide firm resistance to false teachers (elders?) in Ephesus. To do this, he identified them and the nature of their teaching. Further, Paul emphasized and insisted upon high standards for Timothy.
2. He urged the Ephesians to live a lifestyle that would counter the false teachers.
3. Therefore, it is incorrect to see I Timothy as a church organization manual. Paul was preparing Timothy and the church to deal with false teachers.

F. Advice for reading I Timothy

1. Note especially what Paul says about false teachers and their teaching—since concern about them appears to lie behind every word in this letter.
2. Paul exposes and indicts these false teachers for their practice of:
 - a. myths and wearisome genealogies that promoted exclusivity as opposed to the openness of the Gospel
 - b. A false asceticism that denied the goodness of creation.
 - c. Controversies, battles over words, and especially for their greed.
3. It is very likely that these false teachers were not outsiders, but insiders—perhaps errant elders, some of whom Paul already put out of the church. This explains why Paul emphasized the necessity and character of good leaders in the church (and how to rebuke and replace them when necessary).
4. If we deduce from 2 Timothy 3:6-7 that some of these insiders were making use of younger widows who apparently opened their home to them, then the letter becomes clearer in relationship to Paul's comments about women / widows. Because of the situation with these younger widows in particular, Paul forbids them to exercise authority. Like Eve, they were being deceived (4:1, 5:15).

General Epistles

Hebrews

I.) Author

- A. We do not know, but the original audience did and received letter with authority.
- B. It was at one time attributed to Paul, but several in-text clues dissuade this, and suggest someone else.
- C. This author had received the gospel from second-hand, not via direct encounter with the Lord (2:3)
- D. The writing style is unique in the NT – entirely different than other letters
- E. The OT quotes are all from the LXX; Paul usually follows the Hebrew
- F. Several solid theories have been proffered
- G. Bottom line: “It is a marvelous word from God and He is the One who really wrote it.” ~ Origen, circa 250 AD

II.) Audience and Agenda

- A. Christians of mostly Jewish heritage, some with connections to more extreme Jewish groups (Essenes)
- B. Agenda
 - 1. Ethical: moral laxity had occurred, along with reluctance to embrace robust discipleship
 - 2. Doctrinal: the writer urges them toward orthodoxy, specifically regarding Christ's deity and humanity . Jesus is the fulfillment of Judaism.
 - 3. More a sermon than a letter
 - 4. Summary: 3:12

James

I.) Author

- A. James, half-brother of Jesus and the leader of the Jerusalem church.
- B. Paul called him a “pillar” in the church
- C. Camel-knees, referring to his calloused knees as a result of so much prayer.
- D. Probably written by James, using a hired-writer help.

II.) Audience: Dispersed early Christians with largely Jewish heritage

III.) Agenda:

- A. How to live a Christian life
- B. Christian conversion is assumed (no teaching on atonement, etc.)
- C. Intensely practical, insists on living the faith, or faith is not real.

1 Peter**I.) Author: Peter****II.) Audience: Largely gentile church, with Jewish presence****III.) Agenda:**

- A. Written to scattered and persecuted believers
 - 1. This is life is not all there is
 - 2. You have a destiny beyond this world
 - 3. Live, in this world, anticipating the world to come
- B. You're saved, live like it
 - 1. Live Holy
 - 2. Live to bless
 - 3. Live with Honor
 - 4. Live with Hope
- C. 2 Peter**
 - 1. To stimulate Christian growth (chapt. 1)
 - 2. To combat false teaching (chapt. 2)
 - 3. To encourage watchfulness for the Lord's certain return (chapt. 3)

Jude**I.) Author: Jude the brother of James****II.) Audience: very general****III.) Agenda**

- A. Jude denounces libertines and apostates and offers guidance on how to contend for the faith
- B. Harsh tone
 - 1. Flashes of indignation at blatant evil.
 - 2. Takes false teachers to task
- C. Tolerance has its limits.

John's Epistles**I.) Author: John****II.) Audience: A circular letter to a number of places****III.) Agenda**

- A. To emphasize Christology
- B. To warn against false teachers
- C. To share the sheer joy of a marvelous experience in Christ

The Revelation**I.) Author: John****II.) Audience: The 7 Churches in Asia Minor****III.) Agenda**

- A. To portray the ultimate victory of Christ and His followers
- B. Console, reassure, uplift, comfort, exhort and encourage Christians in the face of such persecution from the outside and heresy from the inside.
- C. To challenge them to remain faithful, even to the point of martyrdom.
- D. Eternity is real; Jesus is coming; You better live like it.

IV.) As Literature

- A. Apocalyptic
 - 1. A genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework in which revelation is mediated by another-wordly being to a human recipient.
 - 2. It unveils the future in mysterious way. It applies to the whole world. It uncovers timeless truths. It emphasizes God's sovereign intervention in the unfolding of history.
- B. Prophetic: predictive, but mainly concerned with calling people to repentance, faith, and obedience. The exhortation is immediate.

PART THREE

HOW CAN WE READ THE BIBLE AND GET/GROW THE MOST?

I.) The Goal of Bible Reading

- A. To become doers, not hearers only
- B. To be formed, not just informed
- C. Always respond, never just observe
 - 1. Thinking
 - 2. Affections
 - 3. Behaviors

II.) The Practice of Bible Reading:

A. Read the bible in context:

1. Remember the author, audience and agenda
2. Consider the whole agenda
3. Consider the immediate context
4. Consider the interpretative map:
 - a. Their town:
 - What did the text mean to the original audience?
 - i. Meaning refers to what the original author intended to convey
 - ii. Historical-cultural context
 - iii. Literary context
 - Be aware:
 - i. Foundational beliefs do not change each time we study a passage (the application may vary)
 - ii. Pre-understanding: our preconceived notions that we bring to the text, formed consciously and subconsciously before we actually study
 - iii. Culture-based Interpretational Reflex:
 - 1) We fill in gaps and ambiguities with explanations from our culture
 - 2) Our cultural background forms a parameter of limiting possibilities for a text (what is possible and not possible based upon our cultural frame of reference)
 - b. The River
 - Measure the width of the river to cross: what are the differences between the biblical audience and us?
 - c. The Bridge
 - What is/are the theological principles in the text that bridge / connect the two towns?
 - i. The principle should be reflected in the text
 - ii. The principle should be timeless and not tied to a specific situation
 - iii. The principle should not be culturally bound

- d. Our Town
 - How does the meaning (principle) apply to us?
 - Application is what a reader does with the meaning, how we respond to the meaning.
 - The Holy Spirit does not change the bible to accommodate our circumstances, but will bring the meaning to bear upon them.
- B. Read the bible on purpose:
1. Believe the Holy Spirit breathed this
 2. Expect that the Lord has something for you
- C. Respond to the Bible:
1. What did I read today? (Summary)
 2. What did it mean? (What general principle, timeless truth?)
 3. What should I do? (How should I think, feel, act differently?)
- D. *Lectio Divina: Historical practice of seeking to commune with the Lord via the scriptures:
1. **Preparation:** Prayerfully quiet your mind and open your spirit to the influence of the Spirit
 2. **Read:** Read slowly and carefully, even repeatedly. Seek to listen to the voice of God, not merely to complete the page with your eyes.
 3. **Meditate:** Think about what the phrase that stood out to you meant to the original audience, and what the author might have been thinking when he wrote it. Picture yourself in the setting and context of the passage. Play out the scenario in your head. Think about the specific part of the passage that spoke directly to you. Focus intently on why the Holy Spirit might have chosen these words to speak to you today. Reflect on how it might apply to your life. Is it relevant to something that you are going through? Does it bring to mind a struggle that you have been dealing with? Do certain people come to mind that God may want you to reach out to or reconcile a relationship with? Is there a strong sense of a movement or change that needs to happen? When you are thinking about a passage in God's presence, ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate that passage so that you can grasp the message in terms of your own life.
 4. **Pray:** The next step is to take all the thoughts, feelings, actions, fears, convictions, and questions you have meditated on and offer them to the Lord in prayer. Praise God for who he is. If you feel convicted about a poor relationship, simply apologize, request forgiveness, and ask for guidance on restoring the relationship. If you feel thankful for something that God has done for you, then pour out those feelings of thanksgiving. If you feel a specific anxiety about something in your life, present it to the Lord and pray for the guidance and peace to be able to submit to God's will.

5. **Contemplation:** This stage (though frequently overlooked) is one of vital importance. The “task” in this stage is to simply be silent in the presence of God (Psalm 46:10). This is one of the most essential aspects for building a growing relationship with the Lord. Many testify that at the end of a lectio divina session one has a feeling of closeness and intimacy with the Lord. One of the most valuable things that we can do with this feeling is to relax and embrace it. Just “be” with God. We don’t need to always be talking at God. In this stage we are to simply sit in the presence of God and feel His tender love and embrace. We are to continue to resist worrying about our cell phones, work, friends, illnesses, and whatever else holds us back from God and sit in the love that is shared between us and Jesus.
6. **Action:** Commit yourself, with the help of God, to “do” the truth that he has implanted in your heart. It is our submitting to God’s Word, our living it out, that God is calling us to (e.g., James 1:22-25, Matthew 7:15-27, Romans 2:12-16). Living out our faith is a following of Jesus that happens naturally as we know Christ and become like him.

*This section is not original to this course or to Dr. Dav, it is an historical approach dating back many generations, and much of the above instruction is derived elsewhere.



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