

Sunday, February 13, 2022 pm

## A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE

### Introduction

It has been a few months since I concluded our study through Ecclesiastes (an ongoing study from the Old Testament). Tonight, I want to begin a new subject in these studies. I want us to begin an overview of the Bible. Tonight's lesson will be a very basic outline. In lessons following for the next few years, we will systematically go through these various sections of the Bible.

These lessons, the duration of which is unknown, are based upon some of the background materials by Bob and Sandra Waldron. They have produced a series of lesson books that will take you through the history of the Bible – including locations, people and most importantly, its purpose is leading us to Christ – who is at the center of our worldview and its history, and whose life gives us eternal life and brings us to God (cf. 2 Peter 1:2-4).

To help Christians appreciate the history of the Bible, he has broken it down into 17 historical periods. That is going to be the basis of this monthly study. This lesson is an introduction.

#### I. **Why this study?**

- a. Some passages to consider:
  - i. 2 Timothy 2:15. We are to handle accurately God's word. To do this, we need a good grasp of His word, including its order.
  - ii. Romans 15:4 – whatever things were written before were written for our learning... - this is primarily reference to the Old Testament
  - iii. 1 Corinthians 10:1-10 – the example of Israel
  - iv. Hebrews 1:1-2 – God has spoken in various ways in times past
  - v. 2 Peter 1:19-21 – and so we have the prophetic word confirmed...
  - vi. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – reminds us of the importance of God's word. NOTE how Timothy knew the scriptures from childhood. God's word (in this case it clearly included the Old Testament – with its stories and teachings) was ingrained in him. It led him to Christ.
  - vii. The point of such passages is to remind us of the importance of God's word – ALL of it!
- b. To give us a good foundation of the Bible timeline – this will be helpful in knowing where characters are in the Bible, as well as key events.
- c. The following list of 17 periods is something that EVERYONE ought to try and memorize. In time, if you want even greater detail, you can make this an outline that is far more extensive (by inputting specific characters and events where they belong).
- d. Learning this outline will not only help you gain a better understanding of the Bible, but it can be very helpful in studying with others. For example: In studying with someone about Jesus in prophecy, you might introduce them to Abraham, a name they have likely heard of. BUT, where did he come from and where is he found in the Bible? How does he relate to David and Moses? Knowing this background can be helpful in answering such questions.
- e. After this introductory lesson, we will address several elements in this study:
  - i. We will establish a timeline for the events of the Bible.
  - ii. We will notice God's scheme of redemption as it unfolds – His plan to save man.
  - iii. We will learn about Jesus in the Old Testament (and New) – this will be a focus of our study.
  - iv. We will learn about the various prophets of God and where they fit into His timeline (Note: Our yearly Bible reading is chronological)
  - v. We will find SOME of the answers as to WHY God gives specific commands for us to follow.

#### II. **The 17 periods of Bible history**

- a. **Before the flood** –
  - i. This covers Genesis 1-6.

- ii. Dating is unknown (likely 4000-10,000 BC) but clearly, I hold to a “young earth” position for the creation of man. I believe God created this world in 6 literal days and rested on the 7<sup>th</sup>.
- iii. This obviously includes the creation of the world, Adam and Eve, Cain murdering Abel, Seth appointed to replace Abel (Gen. 4:25-26). Then we have the increasing wickedness of the world that leads God to determine 120 years before He will destroy the world by flood.

**b. *The flood and renewing of the earth***

- i. Genesis 6-10
- ii. ~3200-3000 BC
- iii. During this time God destroys the world by flood. But Noah finds grace in the eyes of the LORD (Genesis 6:8). After the flood, the world has changed in a number of ways (Genesis 8) – man eats meat, the rainbow, not eating blood, death penalty, etc. Finally, we find the genealogy of Noah’s 3 sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth (ch. 10).

**c. *The scattering of nations***

- i. Genesis 11
- ii. ~2800 BC, though there is different datings.
- iii. Here we find man again defying God. Languages are confused and nations are scattered. This explains why there are so many nations and different peoples today.

**d. *The age of the patriarchs***

- i. Genesis 12-Exodus 1
- ii. ~2100 - ~1500 BC
- iii. Here is where we find Abraham and the seed promise begins to develop. Of course, our main characters are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the 12 sons of Jacob (Israel), especially Joseph. God is here beginning to separate for Himself a people.

**e. *Bondage in Egypt***

- i. Exodus 1-12
- ii. ~1800-1400 BC
- iii. Here we read of the bondage of Israel in Egypt as another king arose that did not know God. WE also find Moses who leads the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt and into the wilderness.

**f. *The Exodus and wilderness wanderings***

- i. Exodus 12-Deuteronomy
- ii. ~1450-1400BC
- iii. Israel is delivered from Egyptian bondage. Moses leads them into the wilderness where they cross the Red Sea, and then arrive at Mt. Sinai where they receive the law from God, build the tabernacle and establish the Aaronic priesthood. Because of rebellion they spend 40 years in the wilderness and most perish there. But God is with them and sustains them in various ways.

**g. *Conquest of Canaan –***

- i. Joshua
- ii. ~1400-1350 BC
- iii. When Moses dies, Joshua leads the people. They cross over the Jordan River in miraculous fashion, conquer Jericho and proceed to subdue the land that God had given them. They receive the land and nation promises to Abraham.

**h. *Period of the Judges***

- i. Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel 1-7
- ii. ~1350-1050
- iii. The book of judges records 15 different judges. This was a time where Israel, in the promised land, waffled back and forth between faithfulness and rebellion. Over and over you find a continuous cycle of reaction. 1) Israel (or a portion thereof – many of these

judgements were regional) would rebel against God; 2) He would send an oppressing nation to punish them; 3) They would cry out for deliverance (hopefully repenting); 4) God would appoint a judge (deliverer) and deliver them; 5) There would be a period of rest. Then the cycle would start over again. Interestingly, Samuel is the last judge (1 Samuel 7:15).

**i. The United Kingdom –**

- i. 1 Samuel 7-31 (recording Saul as King), 2 Samuel & 1 Chronicles (recording David as King), 1 Kings 1-11, 2 Chronicles 1-9 (recording Solomon as King).
- ii. 1050-930 BC
- iii. We find here that Israel is united and enjoys some of its greatest prosperity. Saul started good, but went bad; David was faithful (a man after God's own heart); Solomon started good, but went bad.) Much of the poetic literature was written during this period (~2/3 of psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon). David would become part of God's seed promise.

**j. The Divided kingdom –**

- i. 2 Kings 12-17, 2 Chronicles 10-28 (dealing mainly with Judah). The earliest written prophets work during this time.
- ii. 930 – 722 BC (we start getting a little more exact with dating during this time frame)
- iii. Because of Solomon's apostasy, the kingdom is divided. God's promise to David resulted in his lineage continuing in Judah. But most of the rest of the tribes rebelled against Rehoboam, Solomon's son, under the leadership of Jeroboam. This is a tragic time in the history of Israel. Most often Israel and Judah were enemies. Israel, under Jeroboam established a false religion that followed all 19 of its kings with numerous dynasties and assassinations. Israel North only lasted about 200 years before they fell to Assyrian captivity. As Northern Israel fell, Judah was governed by a very righteous king, Hezekiah. His faithfulness helped to spare Judah from immediate defeat. Isaiah was a predominant prophet during this time.

**k. Judah alone**

- i. 2 Kings 18-25. 2 Chronicles 29-36. Also, numerous written prophets wrote during this time.
- ii. 722-606 BC
- iii. After Israel fell, Judah continued but again they were inconsistent with their obedience. We find very good kings (Hezekiah and Josiah) and very wicked kings (Manasseh, Jehoiachin, etc.) Because of their persistent sins, including idolatry and trusting in foreign nations instead of God, they would fall to Babylon, beginning in 606 BC. Judah too had 19 kings, of which several were righteous, and others mixed. They lasted about 325 years until the beginning of their fall to Babylon. Many prophets arose during this time – including Isaiah's continued reign, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel all began prophesying during this period (some continued into the next)

**l. The Babylonian Captivity**

- i. Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah & Lamentation.
- ii. 606 - 536 BC
- iii. The Babylonian captivity lasted 70 years. Like the Assyrian captivity of Northern Israel, it was because of idolatry, immorality, and corruption. The actual captivity took place in 3 phases (from 606-586). During the first phase, Daniel and others were taken to Babylon; the second phase (~597 BC), more were taken leaving the land almost desolate, including Ezekiel; the third phase (586 BC) resulted in the total destruction of the temple and city. It was this devastation that Judah would return to after their captivity was complete.

**m. Return from captivity and restoration**

- i. Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.
- ii. 536 - ~400 BC

- iii. Daniel 5 records the fall of the Babylonian Empire to Darius the Mede and Cyrus, King of Persia. Under these rulers, the Jews in Babylon were permitted to return to Jerusalem and even to rebuild the temple, city of Jerusalem and live in their land worshipping God. The Babylonian captivity solved their craving for idols once and for all – Israel was finally a monotheistic (one God) people. During this period, the temple was rebuilt, Jerusalem repaired and rebuilt and Levitical worship was restored. But there were still many sinful issues that they had to deal with such as corruption among the leaders, pride, a failure to be holy and serve God with a pure heart. This time period is where we find the Old Testament writings were completed.

**n. The years of silence**

- i. Amos 8:11 says, *“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord God, “That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the Lord.”* Amos prophesied the mid 700s BC, when Northern Israel was close to being overthrown by Assyria. He prophesies a period where there would be a famine of God’s word. This COULD be reference to the period of time we are discussing here as it certainly fits. God’s revelation was silent during this time (hence the title of this period), but many of the the apocryphal books (which did NOT claim inspiration) were written.
- ii. ~400 - 4 BC
- iii. During this period of time, the people of Israel (they did not independently rule in in Israel/Palestine) developed many characteristics that we find in the New Testament times. The Hebrew Bible, was compiled and translated into Greek (the Septuagint). The various sects of the Jews and the Synagogue system was developed. There was also interaction with the various empires that ruled over them (Medo-Persian, Macedonian and early Roman) which times of severe persecutions and other times of peace.

**o. The life of Jesus**

- i. The 4 Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John
- ii. ~4 BC – 30 AD
- iii. This period records the life of Jesus. God has recently broken His silence by sending the angel Gabriel to Zechariah, who would father John the Baptist, and then to Mary, who would miraculously conceive and give birth to Jesus (Luke 1-2). Of course, the gospels record the early childhood of Jesus, His ministry, and ultimately His death AND resurrection. We know how important Jesus is and continually study His life and teachings (the New Testament) – He is the central figure of God’s plan and our hope of salvation.

**p. The early church established**

- i. Acts
- ii. ~30 – 60 AD
- iii. Jesus came to establish His church/kingdom (Matthew 16:18-19, Ephesians 1:22-23). Acts records the history of its beginning and early development, including how it spread beginning in Jerusalem, then to other areas of Palestine and ultimately to the known world of that time (cf. Acts 1:8). Many of the NT letters were written during this time period.

**q. Letters to Christians**

- i. Romans – Revelation
- ii. ~45 - 95 AD
- iii. Our final section deals with letters written to both individuals and churches as the church is developing. Some were written and addressed during the travels recorded in Acts, others were written to individuals and other congregations, including the latter letter of Revelation, written by John. This section actuality, this could include the ENTIRE New Testament, including the gospel. While the gospels introduce Jesus (and thus historically they stand

apart), they were written by Christians to both Jewish and Gentile audiences. So they were written as the church was in existence and this ties them to the various letters (aka epistles).

And thus, we have an introduction to the 17 period of Bible history. Obviously, in coming lessons, we will develop each of these in greater detail. My hope is that this study will further ground us in God's word and give us a working background with which to bring others to Christ and strengthen our faith.