

BRIDGE “FOUNDATIONS”

Session B

Based on the book:

30 Days To Understanding The Bible In 15 Minutes A Day!

By Max Anders

Section One: The Story Of The Old Testament

I. Ch. 1: The Structure Of The Bible

- A. There are 2 major divisions: Old & New Testaments (66 total “books” make up the Bible)
 1. Old Testament: begins with creation & tells the story of the Jewish people up to the time of Christ.
 - a. Contains 39 books
 - b. Written by 28 authors
 - c. Spans a period of over 2000 years
 2. New Testament: records the birth of Jesus, His life & ministry, and the ministry of His disciples, which was carried on after Jesus was crucified.
 - a. Contains 27 books
 - b. Written by 9 different authors
 - c. Covers a time period of less than 100 years
 3. The Old Testament:
 - a. Key to understanding the Old Testament is knowing that there are “3 different kinds of books” therein...
 - 1). Historical (first 17 books)
 - a). 11 books are “Primary Historical Books” which means the history of Israel is advanced in the 11 primary books
 - b). 6 books are “Secondary Historical Books” which means they repeat and/or amplify the message of the 11 primary historical books
 - 2). Poetical (next 5 books)
 - 3). Prophetical (next/last 17 books)
 - b. If you know what kind of book you are reading, you will know what kind of information to expect...
 - c. If you want to read the story of the Hebrew nation in the Old Testament, you must read the first 17 books which also compose a historical timeline for the nation of Israel.
 - d. If you want to read about the prophecy of Israel, you must read the last 17 books...
 - e. While this is somewhat oversimplified, the point is each of the books fits into a “primary category.”
 - f. Note: Insert “Time Line of Old Testament” diagram (page 7)

4. The New Testament:
 - a. The New Testament is also made up of 3 types of books:
 - 1). Historical:
 - a). The first 5 books
 - b). The 4 gospels plus the book of Acts
 - 2). Pauline Epistles: (“letters” written by Paul)
 - a). The next 13 books
 - First 9 written to churches
 - Next 4 written to individuals
 - b). All = letters written by the apostle Paul
 - 3). General Epistles: (“general” letters)
 - a). The next/last 9 books of the New Testament
 - b). Letters written to individuals and congregations by a number of different people
 - b. The primary content in all the epistles is instruction on Christian doctrine and lifestyle.
 - c. If you want to read the story of Jesus & the Church He established, you must read the first 5 books of the New Testament. These 5 books form the framework for understanding the entire New Testament!
5. References:
 - a. To find something in the Bible, refer to the “name” of the book, the chapter number and the verse number.
 - b. One should memorize the books of the Bible... easiest to memorize them according to their categories.

B. Summary:

1. There are 66 books in the Bible
 - a. 39 books in the Old Testament
 - b. 27 books in the New Testament
2. The Old Testament is the story of God & the Hebrew people, their poets, and prophets.
3. There are 3 kinds of books in the Old Testament
 - a. 17 Historical
 - b. 5 Poetical
 - c. 17 Prophetical
4. The New Testament is the story of Jesus of Nazareth, the Church He founded, and its growth under the leadership of His apostles after His death.
5. There are 3 kinds of books in the New Testament
 - a. 5 Historical
 - b. 13 Pauline Epistles (first 9 to Churches, then 4 to Individuals)
 - c. 9 General Epistles

II. Ch. 2: The Geography Of The Old Testament

- A. Knowledge of geography can give perspective about the events of the Bible. It is helpful to know the names, locations and distances between important geographical locations. Otherwise, we skim over information without comprehension or visualization.

- B. Bodies of Water:
1. The primary anchor points for mastering the geography of the Bible are the bodies of water.
 2. The Mediterranean Sea: the land of the Old Testament lies east of this body of water
 3. *The Sea of Galilee*: a fresh water lake that is 7 miles wide and 14 miles long. It lies inland from the Med. Sea about 36 miles.
 4. *The Jordan River*: flowing south out of the Sea of Galilee for 35 miles and empties into the Dead Sea.
 5. *The Dead Sea*: the Dead Sea lies at the “bottom of the world.” It is the lowest point on land, almost 3,000 feet below sea level. Consequently, water flows into it but never flows out... As a result, the water has developed very high mineral deposits and does not support normal plant or animal life... hence the name Dead Sea.
 6. *The Nile River*: the Nile flows through the heart of Egypt and empties into the Med. Sea.
 7. *Tigris & Euphrates Rivers*: (twin rivers) these twin rivers flow for almost 1,000 miles each before they join hands and deposit their flow into the Persian Gulf.
 8. *The Persian Gulf*: the Persian Gulf separates modern day Iran and Saudi Arabia. Together with the twin rivers, the Persian Gulf form the easternmost boundary for the lands of the Old Testament.
- C. Locations:
1. *The Garden of Eden*: thought to be near the convergence of 4 rivers, 2 were the Tigris & the Euphrates...
 2. *Canaan / Israel / Palestine*: between the Med. Sea and the Sea of Galilee – Jordan River – Dead Sea... The land changes names over time in the Old Testament. In Genesis it is called Canaan. After the Hebrew people establish themselves in the book of Joshua it becomes known as Israel. 1300 years later, at the beginning of the New Testament, it is called Palestine.
 3. *Jerusalem*: just off the northwestern shoulder of the Dead Sea, nestled in the central mountains of Israel. It is the capital of the nation of Israel and central to the story of the Old Testament.
 4. *Egypt*: the grand-dame of ancient civilization and also central to the story of the Old Testament
 5. *Assyria*: at the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates, this great world power is notable in the Old Testament for conquering the Northern Kingdom of Israel and dispersing her people to the four winds...
 6. *Babylonia*: another gigantic world power (short-lived) that conquered Assyria & the Southern Kingdom of Judah 136 years after Assyria conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel. It is found in Mesopotamia between the Tigris & Euphrates rivers.
 7. *Persia*: the final historical superpower of the Old Testament. It is located at the north bank of the Persian Gulf and comes into play by conquering Babylonia and allowing the Hebrews to return from captivity in Babylonia to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and reinstate temple worship.

8. The map of the Old Testament compares with a map of the state of Texas.
9. Note: Insert map from page 20

III. Ch. 3: The Historical Books

- A. The story line of the Bible can be broken down into 12 main eras, with a central figure and main location for each era. Nine of the eras are in the Old Testament & three in the New Testament.
- B. The Nine Main Eras of the Old Testament:
 1. *Creation*: the creation of the world and man, and early events
 2. *Patriarch*: the birth of the Hebrew people through a family of patriarchs, covering a period of 200 years
 3. *Exodus*: the exodus of the Hebrew people as they are delivered out of 400 years of slavery in Egypt
 4. *Conquest*: the conquest of the Promised Land by the Hebrew people upon their return from Egypt
 5. *Judges*: a 400 year period during which Israel is governed by rulers called judges
 6. *Kingdom*: an additional 400 year period during which Israel becomes a full-fledged nation ruled by a monarchy
 7. *Exile*: a 70 year period during which Israel's leaders lived in exile after being conquered by foreign countries
 8. *Return*: the return of exiled Jews to Jerusalem to rebuild the city and temple
 9. *Silence*: a final 400 year period between the Old & New Testament
- C. The Story of the Old Testament: chronologically... ("Era/Figure/Location")
 1. Note: Insert Chart from page 28
 2. Creation / Adam / Garden of Eden
 3. Patriarch / Abraham / Canaan
 4. Exodus / Moses / Egypt
 5. Conquest / Joshua / Canaan
 6. Judges / Samson / Canaan
 7. Kingdom / David / Israel
 8. Exile / Daniel / Babylonia
 9. Return / Ezra / Jerusalem
 10. Silence / Pharisees / Jerusalem
- D. Note: Insert Map from page 30 to show the movement during the main eras of the Old Testament

IV. Ch. 4: The Creation Era (Genesis 1 – 11)

- A. *Story line summary*: Adam is created by God, but he *sins* and *destroys* God's original *plan* for man.
- B. Expansion: the 4 major events within the Creation era are accounts of:
 1. Creation
 2. Fall
 3. Flood
 4. Tower of Babel
- C. Creation: Man Created in the Image of God (Genesis 1 – 2)
 - Adam & Eve are created in the image of God
- D. Fall: Sin Entered the World (Genesis 3)
 1. Satan lures Adam & Eve into rebelling against God

2. They are driven out of the Garden of Eden and a curse is placed on the earth (sin enters the world)
 3. All the pain, all the evil, all the suffering endured by mankind for all time can be traced to that one act (called the “fall of man”).
- E. Flood: Judgment for Sin (Genesis 6 – 10)
1. Over the next several hundred years man multiplies in sin...
 2. Finally there are only 8 people willing to live righteously
 3. God sends the worldwide flood as judgment for sin and destroys all mankind except for Noah and his family
- F. Tower of Babel: Beginning of the Nations (Genesis 11)
1. God’s post-flood mandate to man was to spread out, populate and subdue the whole earth.
 2. Man directly disobeys, stays in one place and begins building a monument to himself – the Tower of Babel
 3. God causes these people to begin to speak in different languages
 4. The people of each tongue disperse to the four corners of the earth and form the beginning of the nations.

V. Ch. 5: The Patriarch Era (Genesis 12 – 50)

- A. The Patriarch Era was a time of godly men presiding over a growing family. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and, Joseph, successive generations of the same family, ruled over the Hebrew people in the earliest days of their existence.
- B. The time of slavery in Egypt sharpened the spiritual hunger of the Hebrew people, and a great family, which became a great nation, emerged.
- C. *Story Line Summary: Abraham is chosen by God to “father” a people to represent God to the world.*
- D. Expansion: there are 4 major men in the Patriarch Era
1. Abraham
 2. Isaac
 3. Jacob
 4. Joseph
- E. Abraham: Father of the Hebrew People (Genesis 12 – 23)
1. God’s attention is now focused on a plan of redemption for mankind
 2. God wants a people to serve as a reflection of Himself and a group to spread the word of His redemptive power
 3. God chooses Abraham to become the “father of the Hebrew people” and promises him:
 - a. A country (land)
 - b. Countless descendants (seed)
 - c. Worldwide & Timeless impact (blessing)
 4. Abraham was living in Ur (near convergence of Tigris & Euphrates rivers) when God leads him to the land of Canaan – where Abraham settles and has two sons (Ishmael & Isaac).
- F. Isaac: Second Father of Promise (Genesis 24 – 26)
1. Isaac becomes the second father of the promise
 2. Several major miracles witnessed in his life
 3. Isaac is prosperous and dies at an old age
 4. Isaac fathered two sons – Esau & Jacob

- G. Jacob: Father of the Nation of Israel (Genesis 27 – 35)
 1. The promises given to Abraham are passed through Isaac to Jacob, Isaac’s younger son
 2. Jacob begins life as a conniving scoundrel but mends his ways
 3. Jacob has 12 sons and the promises of Abraham are passed down to all of them as a family
 4. While Abraham is the father of the Hebrew “people,” Jacob is the father of the “Nation of Israel”
 5. From Jacobs 12 sons, emerge the 12 tribes of the nation of Israel
- H. Joseph: Leader in Egypt (Genesis 37 – 50)
 1. Jacob’s sons have very little commitment to God’s call on them as a nation
 2. The other 11 brothers sell Joseph as a slave and he is taken to Egypt
 3. Because of Joseph’s righteousness, he rises to become a great leader in Egypt
 4. After Joseph dies, his people are enslaved for the next 400 years
 5. This time of trial sharpens the spiritual hunger of the Hebrew people and they cry out to God for deliverance

VI. Ch. 6: The Exodus Era (Exodus – Deuteronomy)

- A. The Exodus was the mass movement of the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt back to the Promised Land of Canaan
- B. The miracle God performed during this time are among the most spectacular recorded in the Bible
- C. The book of Numbers describes how many Israelites there were... “fighting men” were numbered, the rest are assumed...
 1. 600,000 “fighting men”
 2. 600,000 women (wives of the fighting men)
 3. 1,200,000 children of fighting men and their wives... ave. 2 per...
 4. 500,000 “others” (older men & women... priests...)
- D. There were, conservatively speaking, 2.5 – 3 million people who left Egypt during the Exodus
- E. Moses presided over this “nation on the move”
- F. *Story Line Summary*: Through Moses God *delivers* the Hebrew people from *slavery* in Egypt and then gives them the *law*
- G. Expansion: the four major events of the Exodus Era
 1. Deliverance
 2. The Law
 3. Kadesh Barnea
 4. 40 Years of Wandering
- H. Deliverance: Freedom From Slavery in Egypt (Exodus 1 – 18)
 1. God raises up Moses to take the Hebrews out of 400 years of slavery in Egypt
 2. Pharaoh refuses and a series of 10 plagues is levied on Egypt to prompt Pharaoh to let the people go
 3. After Pharaoh agrees to let them go he changes his mind...
 4. The Hebrews made it as far as the Red Sea before Pharaoh caught them...
 5. The Red Sea “parted” and the Hebrews made it across

6. The Red Sea water “came back together” before the Egyptians could get the Hebrews – thus protecting the Hebrews and “freeing them from slavery in Egypt.”
 7. The land that their father Abraham first settled is again to be their home.
- I. The Law: God’s Commandments at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19 – 40)
1. The Hebrew people now begin to take on a national identity as Israel
 2. From the Red Sea, the Israelites travel south to the bottom of the Sinai Peninsula and camp at Mount Sinai
 3. The Israelites receive God’s 10 Commandments at Mount Sinai when Moses meets God alone at the top of Mount Sinai
 4. Moses also receives a full revelation of the Law that is to govern Israel’s national life
 5. God promises to bless her abundantly for obedience and curse her soundly for disobedience
- J. Kadesh Barnea: Place of Rebellion Against God (Numbers 10 –14)
1. Israel leaves Mount Sinai and migrates north to an oasis, Kadesh Barnea, which is the southern gateway into the Promised Land
 2. 12 spies are sent into the Promised Land (1 spy from each of the 12 tribes of Israel) to inspect the land
 3. Spies report “good and bad news”
 - a. Good news: beautiful land... “filled with milk & honey”
 - b. Bad news: the Canaanites are “giants with hostile armies throughout the land”
 4. Two spies (Joshua & Caleb) exhort the people to believe God and go into the land
 5. The people believe the other 10 spies and are afraid to go into the Promised Land...
 6. The people ultimately refuse to follow Moses into the Promised Land and this area becomes known as the “place of rebellion against God”
 7. The bottom line is that the people did not trust God enough to override their perceptions and fears, even though He told them He would give them this land.
- K. 40 Years of Wandering: Consequences of Rebelling (Numbers 20–36)
1. God condemned them to “wander in the wilderness” for a generation – 40 years
 2. This ensured that everyone who was 21 or older at the time of rebellion would be dead before the people went into the Promised Land... the consequence for rebellion.
 3. Moses lead the people to the north of the Dead Sea near Jericho (the eastern “Gateway To The Promised Land”)
 4. Moses gives them additional instruction (found in the book of Deuteronomy) and then dies without ever going into the Promised Land
- VII. Ch. 7: The Conquest Era: (Joshua)
- A. After they had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, they were at Jericho and needed to resolve to forge ahead and not shrink from their circumstances the way their fathers had done...

- B. The task of rallying and leading the people fell to Joshua because Moses was now dead... the question was: would the people galvanize behind Joshua...
- C. *Story Line Summary: Joshua leads the conquest of the Promised Land*
- D. Expansion: 4 main events of the Conquest Era
 - 1. Jordan
 - 2. Jericho
 - 3. Conquest
 - 4. Dominion
- E. Jordan: A Miraculous Parting of Water (Joshua 1 – 5)
 - 1. Moses dies and God hand picks Joshua to succeed Moses
 - 2. Joshua’s first challenge is to cross the Jordan while it is at flood stage
 - a. God commands him to prepare the nation for a ceremonial procession and to begin walking, priests first, toward the Jordan River.
 - b. When the priests touched the water the Jordan River parted (2nd miraculous parting of water) for a distance of about 21 miles and the people crossed without incidence
- F. Jericho: A Miraculous Conquest of a City (Joshua 6)
 - 1. Joshua proves to be a brilliant military strategist (his campaigns are still studied in the Army War College today)
 - 2. The city of Jericho is a small oasis on the west side of the Jordan River...
 - a. It is also the eastern gateway to the Promised Land
 - b. It’s also a fortified city that poses a threat to the welfare of Israel
 - 3. The angel of the Lord appears to Joshua and instructs him to march around the city once a day for 7 days
 - 4. On the 7th day, he is to march around the city 7 times and his people are to shout
 - 5. God promised him if he did this the walls of the city would fall down...
 - 6. They obeyed God and it happened just as promised – a miraculous conquest of a city!
- G. Conquest: The Defeat of Canaan (Joshua 7 – 12)
 - 1. The Canaanites are united in their hatred of the Israelites but not in their military opposition to them
 - 2. The region is characterized by individual kings
 - 3. Joshua cuts through the mid-section of the land (toward the Med. Sea) to divide the enemy in half...
 - 4. Joshua then begins to conquer the Canaanites from South to North...
 - 5. In about 7 years the initial “defeat of Canaan is complete”
- H. Dominion: Finalizing Dominion (Joshua 13 – 20)
 - 1. Each of the 12 tribes are given a land area by lottery
 - 2. Each is responsible for finalizing dominion over their area
 - 3. A loose relationship of “federation” is established with the other tribes but no “one solid organization”

- VIII. Ch. 8: The Judges Era: (Judges – Ruth)
- A. This was a dark period for the Jewish people
 - B. They had lost their spiritual moorings... everyone did what was right in their own eyes
 - C. This was a “morally degraded, socially perverted, and spiritually bankrupt time of almost 400 years”
 - D. *Story Line Summary: Samson and others were chosen as judges to govern the people for 400 rebellious years*
 - E. Expansion: four main subjects in the Judges Era:
 1. Judges
 2. Rebellion
 3. Cycles
 4. Ruth
 - F. Judges: The Leaders of Israel (Judges)
 1. These were the political-military leaders of Israel who exercised almost absolute power
 2. The 4 Major Judges were:
 - a. Deborah – a woman judge early in the era
 - b. Gideon – he defeated an army of thousands with only 300 men
 - c. Samson – the most famous judge with fabulous strength
 - d. Samuel – both the last judge and 1st prophet
 - G. Rebellion: The Breaking of God’s Law (Judges)
 1. The book of Judges records the darkest period in Israel’s history
 2. Moses instructs them to do 3 things on his death bed:
 - a. Destroy all the inhabitants of Canaan
 - b. Avoid intermarriage with the Canaanites
 - c. Shun worship of the Canaanite gods
 3. Israel failed on all 3 accounts – thus breaking God’s Law
 - H. Cycles: Repetition of Israel’s Misfortunes (Judges)
 1. Much of the Judges Era involves a series of “7 cycles” that are recorded in the book of Judges. Each cycle has 5 component parts:
 - a. Israel “sins”
 - b. God disciplines them thru military “conquest” by others
 - c. Israel “repents” and cries out to God for deliverance
 - d. God raises up a “judge” that delivers them from bondage
 - e. God “frees” the land from military oppression for the remainder of that judge’s life
 2. Each cycle contains:
 - a. Sin
 - b. Conquest
 - c. Repentance
 - d. Deliverance
 - e. Freedom
 3. 7 Cycles are recorded in the book of Judges
 - I. Ruth: A Model Woman (Ruth)
 1. Ruth stands out as a refreshing contrast in the Judges Era
 2. Ruth is known as a “model woman” of high moral and spiritual strength
 3. She is a living illustration of blessings that God showers on those who live in faithful obedience to Him

4. Her story is one of love, purity & commitment.

IX. Ch. 9: The Kingdom: (1 Samuel – 2 Chronicles)

- A. The kings of Israel wanted “total freedom” to ignore the directives of God while at the same time enjoying economic & military prosperity.
- B. As a result, the Kingdom Era was a very turbulent time with many ups and downs... a righteous king would prosper and an unrighteous king would falter... in the down times the nation collapsed and suffered at the hands of warring neighbors
- C. *Story Line Summary: David is the greatest king in the new monarchy but he is followed by a string of mostly unrighteous kings, and God eventually judges Israel for her sin and sends her into exile.*
- D. Expansion: four main periods in the Kingdom Era:
 1. United Kingdom
 2. Division of Kingdom
 3. Northern Kingdom
 4. Southern Kingdom
- E. United Kingdom: A New Monarchy (1 & 2 Samuel)
 1. The 12 tribes of Israel are united in their demand to God for a king
 2. Samuel (last judge & first prophet) anoints Saul to be 1st king
 3. Because Saul is not a righteous king God does not honor his reign or establish his family on the throne
 4. David is his successor
 5. David is a righteous king and Israel prospers under his reign
 6. Solomon is David’s son
 7. Solomon is David’s successor
 8. Solomon rules righteously at first but then drifts from the Lord
- F. Divided Kingdom: A Civil War (1 Kings)
 1. A civil war erupts when Solomon dies (due to his spiritual drifting)
 2. A “Northern” and “Southern” Kingdom is created
 3. The “Northern Kingdom” (now known as Israel) has 10 of the 12 tribes
 4. The “Southern Kingdom” (now known as Judah) has 2 of the 10 tribes
 - a. Judah
 - b. Benjamin
- G. Northern Kingdom: The Unrighteous Kingdom (2 Kings)
 1. Jeroboam commands the Northern Kingdom during the civil war and he is unrighteous
 2. 19 more kings succeed Jeroboam over the 250 year life of the Northern Kingdom... they are all unrighteous
 3. God raised up Assyria to conquer the Northern Kingdom due to their unrighteousness
 4. Assyria scattered the people of the Northern Kingdom to the four corners of the earth as an additional consequence...
 5. The “unrighteous kingdom is never restored”
- H. Southern Kingdom: The Inconsistent Kingdom (2 Kings)
 1. Rehoboam is Solomon’s son who initially leads the Southern Kingdom
 2. Rehoboam is also unrighteous
 3. The Southern Kingdom has a 400 year life...

4. There are only 8 righteous kings out of a total of 20 kings...
5. God ultimately brings judgment on the “inconsistent kingdom” by raising up Babylonia (which had already conquered Assyria) to conquer Judah
6. Babylonia took all of Judah’s gifted people (leaders, artisans, musicians & promising children) into captivity in Babylonia

X. Ch. 10: The Exile Era (Ezekiel – Daniel)

- A. The lesson of the Kingdom Era is that while God forgives whoever comes to Him in repentance, that doesn’t change the fact that sin has consequences
- B. *Story Line Summary: Daniel gives leadership and encourages faithfulness among the exiles for the next seventy years*
- C. Expansion: the four main divisions in the Exile Era are:
 1. Prophecy
 2. Prophets
 3. Exiles
 4. Power Changes
 - Some history is contained in books that are primarily Prophetical and that is the case in the Exile Era
- D. Prophecy: Warning of Impending Captivity (Jeremiah)
 1. The Northern Kingdom (Israel) was conquered by Assyria and is dispersed in 722 B.C.
 2. During the time period described in 2 Kings, Jeremiah warned Judah (the Southern Kingdom) of “impending captivity” by Babylonia.
 3. Jeremiah’s prophecy came true in 586 B.C.
 4. Jeremiah also accurately predicted a 70 year length of captivity
 5. Jeremiah is called the “Weeping Prophet”
- E. Prophets: Encouraging Faithfulness of Exiles (Ezekiel & Daniel)
 1. Two prophets wrote books of the Bible during the Exile Era
 - a. Ezekiel
 - b. Daniel
 2. Ezekiel foretells of national restoration and “encourages faithfulness among the exiles”
 3. Daniel’s book includes prophecy but is more biographical.
 - a. Daniel was a prominent governmental leader
 - b. He was similar to Joseph in Egypt
 - c. Daniel’s prophecies tend to concern the future destruction of the world
- F. Exiles: Assimilated Into the Culture (Daniel)
 1. The book of Daniel gives us a glimpse of life among the exiles
 2. The Jews “assimilated into the culture”
 3. They had experienced discrimination
 4. Nonetheless, they integrated into society, some even achieved positions of prominence
- G. Power Change: Persian Empire Expands (Daniel)
 1. While the Jews are in exile in Babylonia, Persia rises to become a dominant military power.
 2. Persia conquers Babylonia (which had previously conquered Assyria)

3. The “Persian Empire expands from the Tigris River to the Mediterranean Sea

XI. Ch. 11: The Return Era (Ezra – Esther)

- A. The return of the nation of Israel from 70 years of captivity in Babylonia is at the heart of the Return Era
- B. The Israelites went into exile a drifting and confused people. They spend agonizing years in solitude, and in physical and mental torment.
- C. While in exile, they were ministered to unexpectedly by people sent by God.
- D. The Israelites returned to Israel a sobered people ready to begin worshipping Jehovah again
- E. *Story Line Summary: Ezra leads the people back from exile to rebuild Jerusalem*
- F. Expansion: the four major subjects in the Return Era are:
 1. Disrepair
 2. Temple
 3. People
 4. Walls
- G. Disrepair: Destruction From War & Neglect (Nehemiah 1: 1-3)
 1. During the 70 years of captivity, the city of Jerusalem fell into disrepair
 2. Destruction from war and neglect left Jerusalem in a state of ruin
- H. Temple: Rebuilding the Temple (Ezra 1 –6)
 1. God prompts the king of Persia (Cyrus) to finance the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem
 2. Zerubbabel (a notable Jewish figure in Persia) directs the “rebuilding of the temple”
 3. Gentiles in Jerusalem generate considerable opposition to the rebuilding of the temple...
 4. Haggai & Zechariah (2 Jewish prophets living in Jerusalem) are key to the temple’s complete restoration.
- I. People: Spiritual Rebuilding (Ezra 7 – 10)
 1. The “spiritual rebuilding of the people” is a direct parallel to the rebuilding of the temple
 2. A “national re-education program” is needed...
 3. Ezra sets his heart to study the Law, practice it & teach it to the people of Israel as they return from exile
- J. Walls: Restoration Complete (Nehemiah)
 1. After the return from exile and post temple reconstruction... the city of Jerusalem has no protective walls in place...
 2. Nehemiah (another Jewish notable serving the king of Persia) feels burdened to rebuild the city walls
 3. Not having these walls is both a security threat and a national humiliation
 4. The king of Persia (Artaxerxes) gives Nehemiah authorization and financing to rebuild the city walls
 5. “Restoration is Complete” when the Temple Is Rebuilt, the People Are Rebuilt, and the Walls Are Rebuilt

- XII. Ch. 12: The Silence Era (Between the Old and New Testaments)
- A. The religious leaders of the Silence Era pretended to have power and they became self-absorbed. All this pride caused a pattern of religious hypocrisy that was leading to self-destruction and made this period one of the more disappointing in the nation's history.
 - B. *Story Line Summary: Pharisees and others entomb the Israelites in legalism for the next 400 years*
 - C. Expansion: the four major subjects in the Silence Era are:
 1. The Changing Guard
 2. Political Sects
 3. Religious Sects
 4. Messianic Hope
 - D. The Changing Guard: The March Of Nations
 1. At the close of the Old Testament, Jerusalem was ruled by Persia
 2. Alexander the Great defeated the Persians in 333 B.C.
 3. Greek language and culture are established with Alex...
 4. When Alexander the Great dies, his kingdom is quartered but his "Hellenistic" (Greek) culture remains the dominant influence until Rome conquers the area
 5. The "march of nations" passes from Persia to Greece to Rome
 - E. Political Sects: The Maccabeans & Zealots
 1. Throughout the 400 Silent Years militant Jews attempted to revolt against foreign rule
 2. The goal was to make Jerusalem and the surrounding area of Judea and independent country
 3. The "Maccabeans & Zealots" were key figures in these attempts and era
 - F. Religious Sects: Pharisees and Sadducees
 1. Pharisees & Sadducees are the 2 primary religious "parties" in Jerusalem at this time
 2. Neither offers much true spirituality... legalism rules while inner motivations and attitudes are largely ignored
 3. Pharisees:
 - a. Orthodox and conservative
 - b. They foster separation between themselves & secular society
 4. Sadducees:
 - a. More liberal
 - b. The party of the Jerusalem aristocracy
 - c. They use their wealth and influence to keep the political waters calm
 5. The Sanhedrin is a ruling body made up of representatives from both the Pharisees and Sadducees
 - a. The 2 parties have little in common...
 - b. The only common ground is their antagonism for Jesus of Nazareth
 - G. Messianic Hope: Expectations of a Savior
 1. The "Messiah" or "Savior" is one who is prophesied throughout the Old Testament to come save the Jews
 2. The expectations and hopes for the coming of the Messiah are strong during the 400 year Silence Era

3. Events of the Silence Era seem to especially prepare the world for the coming of the Messiah
 - a. This part of the world has a common language & culture which facilitates the spread of a Messianic message
 - b. The Roman Empire established the ability for people to travel extensively by bringing military peace, roads and open sea travel
 - c. The Jews were suffering such religious persecution and political humiliation that widespread hope and “expectation of a savior” existed
4. These facts made the coming of Jesus and his claim to be the Messiah an event that captured the attention of the entire Jewish world

XIII. Ch. 13: The Poetical Books (Job – Song of Solomon)

- A. Poetry is a song of the soul. Wherever great civilizations have existed, poetry has been written, and the poetry of Israel is among the finest.
- B. Review: there are 3 types of books in the Old Testament:
 1. Historical
 2. Poetical
 3. Prophetical
- C. The Five Poetical books are:
 1. Job
 2. Psalms
 3. Proverbs
 4. Ecclesiastes
 5. Song of Solomon
- D. The Poetical books can be located in the time line constructed by the Historical books.
 1. Job was written during the time of Genesis
 2. Psalms was written during the life of David in 2 Samuel
 3. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes & Song of Solomon were written during the life of Solomon which is covered in 1 Kings
- E. Note: Insert diagram from page 93
- F. *Overview Summary*: The *Poetical books* fall into 3 major *types* within which a number of different literary *techniques* are used.
- G. The 3 Major Types of Hebrew Poetry are:
 1. Lyric Poetry – “accompanied by music,” like a song
 2. Instructional Poetry – “teach principles of living”
 3. Dramatic Poetry – “tells a story”
- H. The 2 Main Literary Techniques are:
 1. Parallelism
 2. Figures of Speech
- I. Parallelism: The *Matching of Ideas* (6 most common forms)
 1. Synonymous Parallelism – ideas presented are similar
 2. Synthetic Parallelism – the 2nd thought completes the 1st
 3. Antithetic Parallelism – 2nd thought contrasts the 1st
 4. Emblematic Parallelism – the first line uses a figure of speech to illustrate the idea stated in the second line

5. Climatic Parallelism – the second line repeats the first with the exception of the last word or words
 6. Formal Parallelism – both lines of poetry must exist for a complete thought
- J. Figures of Speech: Creating Visual Images
1. Hebrew poets like to create visual imaging through the use of vivid figures of speech
 2. The 5 most common Figures of Speech used are:
 - a. *Simile* – a comparison between 2 unlike things (i.e. Keep me as the apple of your eye – Psalm 17:8)
 - b. *Metaphor* – one thing is said to be another (i.e. The Lord is my Shepard – Psalm 23:1)
 - c. *Hyperbole* – overstatement for the sake of emphasis
 - d. *Rhetorical Question* – the asking of a question for the purpose of making a statement
 - e. *Personification* – assigning the characteristics of human to lifeless objects
 - f. Figures of Speech express visual imagery which cause mental pictures to pop up into our minds
- K. Expansion: The 5 Poetical books...
1. Job
 2. Psalms
 3. Proverbs
 4. Ecclesiastes
 5. Song of Solomon
- L. Job: Suffering and God’s Sovereignty
1. Job is blessed man whose fortunes are suddenly and dramatically reversed
 2. He debates with 3 friends trying to gain a proper perspective on “suffering and God’s sovereignty”
 3. Job’s questions are never answered (beyond his faith)
 4. Nonetheless, Job willingly submits to the sovereignty of God
 5. In the end, Job’s fortunes are restored and doubled
- M. Psalms: Praise In Public Worship
1. Psalm means “book of praises”
 2. There are a total of 150 Psalms
 3. King David wrote almost half the Psalms
 4. There are 3 primary types:
 - a. Praise
 - b. Thanksgiving
 - c. Lament
- N. Proverbs: Wisdom & Skills For Living
1. Purpose of Proverbs is to “impart wisdom” and “skills for living”
 2. Proverbs highlights practical wisdom, discernment, self-discipline and moral courage
 3. Proverbs focuses on one’s relationship to God and others (to include money, morals, speech, industry, honesty, etc.)
 4. Proverbs’ message is that a life of wisdom and righteousness should be our goal

- O. Ecclesiastes: Futility Of Temporal Pursuits
 - 1. At its heart, Ecclesiastes tells the story of Solomon, with his unlimited resources, trying to find meaning in life
 - 2. Solomon reviews the “futility of temporal pursuits”
 - 3. Solomon concludes there is only one thing that can satisfy man...
 - 4. “To fear God and keep his commandments” (12:13)
- P. Song of Solomon: God’s Marriage Manual
 - 1. This book presents God’s perspective on married love
 - 2. This “dramatic poetry” is a picture of intimate love

XIV. Ch. 14: The Prophetical Books (Isaiah – Malachi)

- A. Biblical prophets were highly reliable because if anyone claimed to be a prophet and their predictions were not 100% accurate, they would be stoned to death.
- B. 16 men wrote down their prophetic messages and they comprise the last 17 Prophetical Books of the Old Testament
- C. 12 of the prophetical books were written during the time covered in the book of 2 Kings (which records the decline of the nation)
- D. 2 prophets (Ezekiel & Daniel) wrote Prophetical books while ministering during the Exile Era
- E. 3 prophets (Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi) wrote Prophetical books during the Return Era
- F. *Overview Summary: Prophecy is proclaiming the Word of God, both for the future and in the present*
- G. Expansion: four main features of the Prophetical writings:
 - 1. Designation
 - 2. Time Period
 - 3. Foretelling
 - 4. Forthtelling
- H. Designation: Major and Minor Prophets
 - 1. The Major Prophets are the first 5 Prophetical books:
 - a. Isaiah
 - b. Jeremiah
 - c. Lamentations
 - d. Ezekiel
 - e. Daniel
 - 2. Time Periods: Pre-Exile, Exile, Or Post-Exile
 - a. Prophetical Books are divided into 3 chronological periods
 - 1). Pre-Exile
 - 2). Exile
 - 3). Post-Exile
 - b. Most of the prophetical ministries and books occur before the exile
 - c. 3 prophets (Haggai, Zechariah, & Malachi) prophecy during the return (post-exile)
- I. Structure Of The Prophetical Books
 - 1. Pre-Exile:
 - a. To Israel:
 - 1). Hosea
 - 2). Amos

- b. To Judah:
 - 1). Habakkuk
 - 2). Isaiah
 - 3). Jeremiah
 - 4). Joel
 - 5). Micah
 - 6). Zephaniah
 - 7). Lamentations
- c. To Assyria:
 - 1). Jonah
 - 2). Nahum
- d. To Edom:
 - Obadiah
- 2. Exile:
 - Ezekiel
 - Daniel
- 3. Post-Exile:
 - a. To Jerusalem:
 - Haggai
 - Zechariah
 - Malachi
- J. Foretelling: Predicting The Future
 - 1. The most famous characteristic of a prophet is his ability to predict the future with information given to him by God
 - 2. If a prophet ever said anything that did not prove to be true he was killed and never thought of as a prophet again
- K. Forth-telling: Proclaiming The Teachings of God
 - 1. Forth-telling simply means “proclaiming the teachings of God” to the people
 - 2. It primarily relates to righteous living
 - 3. There are 3 characteristics of this part of a prophet’s ministry
 - a. Exposing sin and calling people to a higher moral lifestyle
 - b. Warning of judgment if the people don’t reform
 - c. Proclaiming the coming Messiah
 - 4. Prophets usually warned about judgment related to the nation of Israel or Judah being militarily conquered

SECTION 2: THE STORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

- I. Ch. 15: The Geography Of The New Testament
 - A. The landmass of Israel is approximately the same as the state of Massachusetts standing on end...
 - B. Israel is a land of varied topography... low deserts, high mountains, lush valleys and rolling hills
 - C. Any body of water too big to swim across was called a “sea”
 - 1. The Sea of Galilee is 7 miles by 14 miles
 - 2. The Dead Sea is 10 miles by 15 miles
 - D. Any hill higher than your head was called a “mountain”
 - E. Everything is exaggerated due to the small size of the country

- F. The Geography of the Gospels:
1. The geography of the Gospels is very different from the geography of the book of Acts... it will have its own section
 2. Bodies of Water: (all within the group from the Old Test.)
 - a. Mediterranean Sea
 - b. Sea of Galilee
 - c. Jordan River
 - d. Dead Sea
 3. Provinces and Cities: the primary geographical area in the Gospels is the same as that which was ruled by the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. On the other hand, the area known as Palestine was ruled by Rome and divided into sections, or provinces
 - *The Province of Galilee*: located between the Med. Sea and Sea of Galilee. It was the province Jesus considered His home. Both Nazareth (His early home) and Capernaum (His later home) are in the Province of Galilee.
 - *The Province of Samaria*: located between the Med. Sea and the Jordan River. This was home to the Samaritan (part Jew, part Gentile) who lived in constant animosity with the Jews.
 - *The Province of Judea*: located between the Med. Sea and the Dead Sea. It was home to most of the Jews in the New Testament and the city of Jerusalem.
 - *The Province of Perea*: A long, narrow province on the east bank of the Jordan River. Jesus spent some concentrated time there with His disciples toward the end of His ministry.
 - *The City of Nazareth*: located in the province of Galilee just west of the Sea of Galilee. It is the city in which Mary and Joseph lived and where Jesus grew up.
 - *The City of Capernaum*: located on the very top of the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum is where Jesus called home during His ministry years.
 - *The City of Jerusalem*: located in the province of Judea, just off the top of the Dead Sea. It was the home of the temple, the holy city and the center of activity for Jews.
 - *The City of Bethlehem*: also located in the province of Judea, just five miles southwest of Jerusalem. It was also the birthplace of Jesus.
- G. The Geography of the Book of Acts:
1. Bodies of Water: the bodies of water are the same as those in the Gospels, only more of the Med. Sea is involved.

2. Countries & Cities: in Acts the geography involved extends beyond Palestine further into the Roman Empire...
 - *The Country of Galatia*: this is modern day Turkey and the destination of Paul's first missionary journey to bring the gospel message to the gentiles
 - *The Country of Greece*: this is the same as modern day Greece and the destination of Paul's second missionary journey
 - *The Country of Asia*: located on the western coast of modern Turkey and the destination of Paul's third missionary journey
 - *The Country of Italy*: located in modern Italy and it is where Paul spent his last imprisonment and was killed
 - *The City of Jerusalem*: same as modern Jerusalem and where the early Christian Church had its beginning
 - *The City of Damascus*: same as modern Damascus in modern day Syria. This was Paul's destination when he was temporarily blinded by Jesus and converted to Christianity
 - *The City of Caesarea*: located on the Med. Sea coast just south of the Sea of Galilee and the site of Paul's trials
 - *The City of Antioch*: on the Med. Sea coast north of Israel, near modern day Turkey. Antioch was the beginning point for Paul's 3 missionary trips
 - *The City of Rome*: same as modern Rome and the political/cultural heart of the Roman Empire
- H. The Historical Books of the New Testament:
 1. The 27 books of the New Testament are divided into 3 different kinds
 - a. 5 Historical Books
 - b. 13 Pauline Epistles
 - c. 9 General Epistles
 2. The Historical Books are:
 - a. The 4 Gospels
 - b. The Book of Acts
- I. The 3 Main Eras of the New Testament:
 1. Gospels: the Life Of Jesus
 2. Church: the formation of the Christian Church
 3. Missions: expansion of the Church through Missions
- J. The 3 Central Figures of the New Testament:
 1. Gospels / *Jesus* / The Predicted Messiah
 2. Church / *Peter* / The Leader of the Early Church
 3. Missions / *Paul* / The First Christian Missionary

- II. Ch. 16: The Gospel Era (Matthew – John)
- A. The term A.D. stands for “anno Domini” which means “in the year of our Lord”
 - B. The Gospels are biographical, thematic portraits of Christ’s life with great emphasis on the last week of His life
 - C. Not all the Gospels cover the same events in Jesus’ life
 - D. When all 4 Gospels are put together and harmonized, only about 50 days of Jesus’ active ministry are dealt with.
 - E. *Story Line Summary*: Jesus came in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of a savior and offers salvation and the true kingdom of God. Most people reject Him and He is crucified, buried and then resurrected.
 - F. Expansion: there are 4 major divisions in the Gospel Era:
 - 1. Early Life
 - 2. Early Ministry
 - 3. Later Ministry
 - 4. Death & Resurrection
 - G. Early Life: Childhood to Baptism
 - 1. Jesus is born of the Virgin Mary through a miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit (in Bethlehem of Judea)
 - 2. Jesus grows up in Nazareth after a brief excursion into Egypt to save Him from king Herrod’s attempt on His (and all other first born son’s) life
 - 3. Jesus lived a pretty normal life from childhood to the time of His baptism (age 30)... He learned the trade of carpenter
 - 4. John the Baptist (Jesus’ cousin) was baptizing people around that time in the Jordan River near the Dead Sea
 - 5. Jesus was baptized by John... after which a remarkable event took place – God the Father is heard speaking from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” and the Holy Spirit, in the visible form of a dove, descends on Jesus.
 - 6. From there Jesus is lead by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness of Judea, where he is tempted by Satan for 40 days
 - 7. Satan offers Jesus everything God the Father offers Jesus but on a different time table and with different requirements
 - 8. Jesus remained sinless (quoting scripture to rebuke Satan when tempted) thus validating His readiness to begin making Himself known as the Messiah
 - H. Early Ministry: Initial Acceptance
 - 1. After Jesus’ baptism and temptation He began His public ministry
 - 2. His message had a two-fold focus:
 - a. He is the predicted Messiah / Christ
 - b. He challenged people to live a life of genuine righteousness
 - 3. Jesus validated His message by performing astounding miracles
 - 4. Initial Acceptance of Jesus by the crowds was encouraging
 - 5. Most of the early activity took place around Jerusalem
 - I. Later Ministry: Growing Rejection
 - 1. Jesus’ early popularity did not last
 - 2. The religious leaders were profoundly jealous of Jesus
 - 3. Jesus began to focus more time on the attitudes of the religious leaders, warning them of its seriousness

4. At the same time, Jesus set more time aside for his 12 disciples, preparing them to carry on without Him
 5. Jesus began to challenge the multitudes to count the cost of following Him
 6. Jesus' home town at this point was Capernaum
- J. Death & Resurrection: Final Rejection
1. Jews became polarized about Jesus (love / hate)
 2. Religious leaders were able to stir up enthusiastic hatred for Jesus around the time of Passover... that lead to Jesus' crucifixion
 3. They subjected Jesus to a series of mock trials on false charges...
 4. Jesus was crucified on Friday, buried that night, and rose again from the dead on Sunday – after being in the tomb 3 days

III. Ch. 17: The Church Era (Acts 1 – 12)

- A. The Message of the Church – The gospel is carried *to* imperfect people *by* imperfect people. Then those imperfect people are to band together to help one another grow to spiritual maturity.
- B. *Story Line Summary: Peter*, shortly after the *ascension* of Jesus, is used by God to *establish the Church*, God's next major plan for man.
- C. Expansion: the 4 major subjects in the Church Era:
1. Creation
 2. Growth
 3. Persecution
 4. Transition
- D. Creation: Birth of the Church (Acts 1 – 5)
1. Jesus instructed His disciples to wait in Jerusalem (do not begin their ministries) until they receive the power of the Holy Spirit
 2. Therefore, the birthplace of the Church is Jerusalem
 3. Jesus told the disciples to be witnesses to Him in:
 - a. Jerusalem (their city)
 - b. Judea & Samaria (the surrounding provinces)
 - c. Remotest part of the earth (rest of the world)
 4. Then Jesus ascended into heaven right before their eyes!
 5. Then, on the Jewish feast day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus' disciples
 6. The disciples were "filled with the Holy Spirit" which was evidenced through their "speaking in other tongues"
 7. Christianity and the Church began to spread rapidly due in part to these and other notable miracles associated with Christ.
- E. Growth: Organization of the Church (Acts 6)
1. Deacons are chosen to look after the material needs of the Church
 2. The disciples were attending to the Church's spiritual needs
 3. All of this needed to be in place because of rapid growth...
- F. Persecution: The First Christian Martyr (Acts 7)
1. Stephan was one of the early preachers... he was arrested for preaching about Jesus
 2. The Jews stoned him to death, making him the 1st martyr
 3. This kicked off a round of persecution against new Christians
 4. Many new Christians are forced to flee Jerusalem for their safety...
 5. They take the message of the gospel with them – thus seeding the ground in Judea, Samaria and other lands

- G. Transition: A Missionary to the Gentiles (Acts 8 – 12)
1. Saul of Tarsus (Paul) was a zealous Pharisee bent on wiping out the Christians
 2. On a journey to Damascus (to persecute other Christians), Saul has Jesus appear (descending down from heaven) to him and Saul is converted to Christianity
 3. Jesus temporarily blinds Saul and changes his name to Paul
 4. Jesus tells Paul that he will become a missionary to the Gentiles
 5. Shortly thereafter, Peter has a vision... the Lord tells him the message of the gospel is to be taken to the Gentiles also.
 6. This marks a transition in the nature of the Church
 7. Up until this time, the message had been circulated exclusively to Jews

IV. Ch. 18: The Missions Era (Acts 13 – 28)

- A. *Story Line Summary: Paul expands the Church into the Roman Empire during the next two decades*
- B. Expansion: the 4 major subjects of the Missions Era:
1. First Missionary Journey
 2. Second Missionary Journey
 3. Third Missionary Journey
 4. Trials & Imprisonment
- C. First Missionary Journey: Galatia for 2 Years (Acts 13 – 14)
1. Paul & Barnabas take the gospel to the gentiles of Galatia
 2. After 2 years they experienced encouraging results
 3. After returning to Jerusalem (amidst much controversy), a council determines that Gentiles do not have to become Jewish to become Christians
- D. Second Missionary Journey: Greece for 3 Years (Acts 15 – 17)
1. Paul intended to leave from Antioch to visit the believers from his first journey
 2. However, he receives a vision of a man in Macedonia (Greece) and changes his plans, going to Greece with the gospel message for the Gentiles there. He's there 3 years
- E. Third Missionary Journey: Asia for 4 Years (Acts 18 – 21)
1. Again, Paul leaves to encourage the believers from his first two trips and to spread the message into Asia
 2. He has both great success and great opposition:
 - In Ephesus, the whole city breaks out in riot over his visit
 3. Paul is warned that if he returns to Jerusalem he will be imprisoned
 4. He returns anyway (after 4 years in Asia) and is arrested immediately
- F. Trials & Imprisonment: Roman Prison for 2 Years (Acts 22 – 28)
1. Jewish leaders in Jerusalem have Paul arrested on false charges
 2. Since his life is threatened (even while under guard), he is moved to Caesarea, the Roman capital in the area
 3. Paul is tried under 3 men in Caesarea
 - a. Felix
 - b. Festus
 - c. Agrippa

4. Paul claimed his right as a Roman citizen to take his case before Caesar in Rome
5. He is taken to Rome but his case never came to trial
6. After being in a Roman prison for 2 years, it is said that he was beheaded (the normal execution style for Roman citizens)

V. Ch. 19: The Epistles (Romans – Revelation)

- A. Paul and other writers wrote letters both to church congregations and to individuals to encourage them and to instruct them.
- B. In the providence of God, these letters were saved and eventually compiled in the “Epistles” section of the Bible.
- C. The epistles were simply letters
- D. Paul wrote 13 epistles
- E. Other authors wrote an additional 9 epistles
- F. Note: Insert “Time Line of the New Testament” chart from page 143
 1. Historical Books (Gospels & Acts) written between A.D. 0 thru A.D. 60
 2. Pauline Epistles written:
 - a. Galatians ~ A.D. 48
 - b. 1 & 2 Thessalonians ~ A.D. 50
 - c. 1 & 2 Corinthians ~ A.D. 53
 - d. Romans ~ A.D. 53
 - e. Ephesians ~ A.D. 60
 - f. Colossians ~ A.D. 60
 - g. Philemon ~ A.D. 60
 - h. Philippians ~ A.D. 60
 - i. 1 Timothy ~ A.D. 62 (post Acts)
 - j. Titus ~ A.D. 62 (post Acts)
 - k. 2 Timothy ~ A.D. 67 (post Acts)
 3. General Epistles written:
 - a. James ~ A.D. 48
 - b. 1 & 2 Peter ~ A.D. 62 (post Acts)
 - c. Hebrews ~ A.D. 67 (post Acts)
 - d. Jude ~ A.D. 67 (post Acts)
 - e. 1 & 2 & 3 John ~ A.D. 95 (post Acts)
 - f. Revelation ~A.D. 95 (post Acts)
- G. *Overview Summary:* The *Epistles* are letters to churches and to individuals to *encourage* them and *instruct* them in the Christian faith
- H. Expansion: the 4 main topics to be dealt with in studying the Epistles:
 1. The Nature of the Epistles
 2. Pauline Epistles to Churches
 3. Pauline Epistles to Individuals
 4. General Epistles
- I. The Nature of the Epistles: Doctrine, then Duty
 1. Epistles are letters written for all Christians... they deal with specific problems in a way that is universal and timeless.
 2. The pattern is to write a section of doctrinal truth and follow up with the practical implications... “Doctrine, then duty – Principle, then practice”

- J. Pauline Epistles to Churches: Letters to the Local Churches
1. 9 of Paul's 13 Epistles went to local churches
 2. Letters to local churches are named according to which church they were written
 3. Here are general overviews of those books:
 - a. *Romans*: doctrinal, most complete doctrine of *salvation* by grace through faith in all the Bible
 - b. 1 & 2 Corinthians: practical, dealing with specific *problems* in the Corinthian church
 - c. *Galatians*: written to early converts, refuting *legalism*
 - d. *Ephesians*: deals with the believer's *position* in Christ and its practical implications
 - e. *Philippians*: letter of *joy* despite trials
 - f. *Colossians*: the *preeminence* of Christ is its major theme
 - g. 1 & 2 *Thessalonians*: dealing with specific issues in the Thessalonian church, including *prophecy* & *practical* living
- K. Pauline Epistles to Individuals: Letters to Individuals & Pastors
1. 4 of Paul's 13 Epistles went to individuals & pastors
 2. These books are named according to whom they are written
 - a. 1 & 2 *Timothy*: letters to a young pastor in Ephesus: 1 Timothy *counsels* him on local church issues while 2 Timothy *encourages* him to remain strong in faith amidst trials
 - b. *Titus*: to the pastor of the church on the island of Crete, it deals with local church issues with a focus on *qualifications for church leaders*
 - c. *Philemon*: to a *slave* owner, it urges lenient treatment of a runaway slave who became a Christian and is returning to a Christian master
- L. General Epistles: Letters to the Christian Public
1. There are 9 General Epistles... written by various authors
 2. They are usually named according to their authorship
 3. All 9 (except 2 & 3 John) are written to the *Christian Public* at large
 - a. *Hebrews*: *doctrinal*, draws largely on Old Testament truth in teaching New Testament truth to a Jewish audience
 - b. *James*: a practical expression of the proper outworking of Christian *faith* in everyday life
 - c. 1 & 2 *Peter*: deals with the proper response to *suffering* & opposition (written to believers in Asia and Galatia)
 - d. 1 & 2 & 3 *John*: from the apostle John dealing with the *love* of God and its outworking in Christian lives
 - e. *Jude*: a powerful book *warning* against ungodly living

- f. *Revelation*: a giant of a book... heavily prophetic dealing with the nature and chronology of the *end times*

SECTION THREE: GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE

- I. Ch. 20: A Comparison Of The Four Gospels
 - A. The book of John is a little different than the other 3 gospels
 - B. In general, the reason we have 4 different authors/versions (gospels) is to give us different perspectives and different pieces of information
 - C. All 4 men had personal knowledge of Jesus, some had spent years with Him
 - D. The 4 men were writing for different audiences and each emphasized a distinctive aspect of Jesus' identity and mission:
 - E. Matthew, Mark & Luke are known as the "Synoptic" (literally means, "seen together") Gospels. They view Christ's life from much the same viewpoint and share many common details.
 - F. John stands alone as a unique picture of the life of Christ
 - 1. Matthew was a Jew and a Tax Collector...
 - 2. Luke was a Gentile and a physician
 - 3. Mark had worked with Peter, Paul & Barnabas
 - 4. John waited longer to write his account
 - G. "Gospel" actually translates to: "good news" (that God has come to die for man so that man can live with God)
 - H. Matthew:
 - 1. Overview:
 - a. The Gospel of Matthew is best suited to serve as the bridge between the Old & New Testament.
 - b. Jesus is presented as Israel's promised messianic king
 - c. The book was written by a Jew to convince a Jewish audience
 - d. A genealogy starts the book to prove Jesus' legal right to the throne of David
 - e. Matthew makes a special effort to demonstrate significant events in the life of Jesus
 - f. This books quotes more Old Testament passages than any other
 - g. Matthew proves that Jesus' birth, birth place, home, ministry & death – directly fulfilled Old Testament prophecy
 - 2. Authorship:
 - a. All of the Gospels are anonymous in that none specifically identifies its author
 - b. Greek manuscripts title the first Gospel, "According to Matthew"
 - c. Matthew was also known as a Levi, a publican, a Jewish tax collector, & an extension of the Romans... something no "good Jew" would do
 - d. As a tax collector, Matthew was one of the least likely people in Israel to be chosen to serve as an apostle or to write one of the four Gospels
 - e. The first Gospel has the most references to money

- f. Matthew shows his Christian humility by continually referring to himself as “Matthew the tax collector”
- 3. Date:
 - a. A date before A.D. 70 is probable since:
 - The destruction of Jerusalem is predicted in Matthew 24
 - No reference to a fallen Jerusalem...
 - Jerusalem is referred to as the “Holy City” which implies its continued existence
- 5. Occasion & Purpose:
 - a. Matthew’s first objective was to convince unbelieving Jews that Jesus is the Messiah
 - b. Next, he wanted to encourage Jewish believers by explaining God’s plan for His kingdom
 - c. Matthew explains that the promised Davidic kingdom will be established at a later time
 - d. In the interim, believers are responsible to proclaim a message of faith in the Messiah while making disciples among all nations as the kingdom takes a different form
- 6. Summary: The Gospel of Matthew was written by a Jew to an audience of Jews to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah, the King of the Jews

I. Mark

- 1. Overview:
 - a. Mark’s Gospel presents Jesus as the Servant who came “to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (10:45)
 - b. The second half of Mark focuses on Jesus’ teaching and ministering to His disciples.
 - c. 36% of this book devoted to the events of Christ’s final week
 - d. This is the shortest and most “to the point” Gospel
 - e. Mark emphasizes action rather than detailed teaching
 - f. Mark says “immediately” again and again...
- 2. Authorship:
 - a. Early church fathers agreed Mark was the author
 - b. The source of info for this Gospel is Peter’s preaching
 - c. We assume “Mark” (Latin name) is the same person as the “John” (Hebrew name) mentioned 10 times in the New Testament
 - d. John Mark was a Jewish Christian, the son of Mary, whose house was an early Christian meeting place (Acts 12:12)
 - e. He may have become a Christian under the influence of Peter... (Peter referred to him as “my son”)
 - f. After a falling out with the apostle Paul during a missionary trip, the rift was apparently healed, because Paul sent for Mark later on, writing “he is helpful to me in my ministry” (2 Timothy 4:11)
- 3. Date:
 - a. Assumed prior to A.D. 70 based on Jesus’ prediction of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem
 - b. Many scholars believe Matthew and Luke used Mark’s Gospel as a source for their own.

- c. The book was probably written between A.D. 55 and 63
 4. Occasion & Purpose:
 - a. It was written in Rome, primarily for Gentile Roman Christians
 - b. Mark did not quote much from the Old Testament because he would not be expected to do so for people unfamiliar with Jewish history and customs
 - c. Mark explains many Jewish customs & uses the Roman method of measuring time (6:8)
 - d. Mark uses the word “disciple” (learner) 40 times...
 - e. Mark shows how often the disciples misunderstood God’s ways and Jesus’ identity
 - f. Mark apparently wanted his readers to understand that discipleship and failure are not mutually exclusive
 - g. Biblical realism would help keep the Roman Christians from giving up in disillusionment when they faced hardship and stumbled.
 5. Summary: Mark is a Jewish Christian, writing to Roman Christians, presenting Jesus as a perfect Servant
- J. Luke:
1. Overview:
 - a. Luke’s Gospel presents Jesus as the perfect “Son of Man” who “came to seek and to save what was lost” (19:10)
 - b. Luke emphasizes the perfect humanity and redemptive mission of Jesus
 - c. The intended audience:
 - Theophilus – a government official (1:3)
 - Others of an idealistic Greek mind-set
 - d. Luke emphasizes the universal message of the gospel more than the other Gospel writers
 - e. He often writes about the faith of women, children, Gentiles, Samaritans and outcasts from Jewish society
 2. Authorship:
 - a. Early church leaders agreed Luke was the author
 - b. Luke was called the “beloved physician”
 - c. Luke was a fellow missionary with Paul
 - d. The prologues to both Luke and Acts indicate that the books were written to a man named Theophilus as a two-part story.
 - e. Luke was a Gentile
 - f. The Greek language found in Luke generally considered the finest in New Testament writings
 - g. Luke’s use of Greek suggests he was Greek and perhaps from Antioch in Syria
 3. Date:
 - a. Luke’s Gospel was written after Mark’s which it used as a source
 - b. Acts closes with Paul still alive and in prison
 - c. Therefore, a date of the late 50’s or early 60’s (A.D.) is assumed for authorship

4. Occasion:
 - a. Luke dedicated his book to “most excellent Theophilus” who may have been Luke’s literary patron
 - b. Luke may have written it to him in expectation of Theophilus getting the book to a wider audience
 - c. Luke emphasizes throughout his book that the proper response for ALL people is to follow Jesus
 - d. There were 2 key purposes behind Luke’s book:
 - Authenticate the faith of Theophilus by demonstrating proven historical references
 - Present Jesus as the Son of Man who has brought the salvation of God’s kingdom to all who follow Him (Gentiles and Jews)
 5. Summary: Luke is a Greek who writes to a Greek audience to convince them that Jesus was the perfect Son of Man
- K. John:
1. Overview: John writes to a universal audience that Jesus is the Son of God & tells them they might have eternal life through belief in Him (20:30-31)
 - a. John tells us that he built his Gospel around seven miraculous signs
 - b. In addition, John records seven great sayings of Christ that begin with the words “I am”
 2. Authorship:
 - a. The author is identified only as the disciple “whom Jesus loved”
 - b. Early church fathers identified John, the elder of Ephesus, who was probably the apostle John
 - c. John and his brother James were sons of Zebedee (Jesus nicknamed them “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17)
 - d. John and James were Galilean fishermen prior to their call by Jesus
 - e. They were also first cousins to Jesus
 - f. Both John and James were selected as apostles
 - g. Scholars believe John was the disciple Jesus was closest to (“the disciple whom Jesus loved”)
 - h. John became one of the leaders of the early church in Jerusalem, along with Peter and James (half brother of Christ, not the brother of John, who became an early martyr – Gal. 2:9)
 - i. John later spent many years laboring in the church at Ephesus that Paul had founded
 - j. John is believed to have died in exile on the island of Patmos, off the coast of Asia Minor
 3. Date: written in Ephesus between A.D. 70-90
 4. Occasion & Purpose:
 - a. “These miraculous signs are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (20:31)
 - b. John wrote his Gospel to supplement the already-written three “Synoptic Gospels”

- c. John indicated that he was selective in his choice of material (20:30)
 - d. He picked certain signs to prove that Jesus was worthy of faith
 - e. John's Gospels appears to be directed toward a universal audience
 - f. John wrote to confront his readers with the necessity of making a choice so that they might gain eternal life
5. Summary: John wrote to a universal audience to convince them that Jesus was the Son of God

II. Ch. 21: The Parables of Jesus

- A. Jesus was a great storyteller. His stories were told to impart spiritual information and wisdom (parables).
- B. 1/3 of all Jesus' teachings were in the form of parables (Matthew wrote that "he did not say anything to them without using a parable" – 13:34)
- C. The Nature Of Parables:
 - 1. A parable is a saying or story that seeks to drive home a point by illustrating it from a familiar situation of common life.
 - 2. "Parable" is used to describe a number of different figures of speech:
 - a. *Simile* – a stated likeness using the words "like" or "as"
 - b. *Metaphor* – an implied likeness
 - c. *Similitude* – the truth being taught is based on what people generally do rather than on what a certain individual actually did... i.e. Christ stated, "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough" (Matt. 13:33).
 - d. *Story* – (Jesus most used figure of speech) The story parable teaches truth by relating a specific incident and calling attention to what one individual did. This is the form of parable most people think of when they hear parable.
 - e. All these forms teach truths based upon the transference of reality. The content is familiar and possible.
 - 3. Summary: A parable is a story intended to communicate a "spiritual" truth, illustrating it with a familiar situation of common life.
- D. The Purpose of Parables: (2 basic purposes)
 - 1. Reveal truth to believers in a more vivid and powerful way than ordinary dialogue
 - 2. Hide truth from those who have already hardened their hearts against it
 - 3. Jesus wished to teach believers, but not to increase the responsibility (and guilt) of those who would not believe, by revealing additional truth to them (see Luke 12: 47-48)
 - 4. Summary: Jesus taught in parables to "reveal" truth to the believers and to "conceal" truth from the unbelievers
- E. The Interpretation of Parables – parables must be interpreted in light of the "context" in which they are found...

- F. The Historical Setting of Parables:
1. We need to understand the details from the perspective of Christ's original hearers
 2. Tools such as a biblical encyclopedia and a book on biblical customs will help
 3. Understanding the culture, customs and daily living will help
 4. Summary: parables must be interpreted in light of the "historical" setting in which they occur.

III. Ch. 22: Miracles In The Bible

- A. Christianity, unlike other religions, rests upon God's "doing" miracles. The claims of Christianity stand or fall depending upon these miracles, especially the Resurrection.
- B. Paul said: if Jesus Christ has not been raised from the dead then our faith is futile...
- C. It is important to understand why and when God does miracles.
- D. The Possibility & Nature Of Miracles:
1. A miracle is an event that runs contrary to what is known of nature.
 2. Different words are used in the Bible to refer to miracles:
 - a. "Wonder" – reveals that such events are amazing
 - b. "Power" – implies the need for more than human capability
 - c. "Sign" – indicates that they must be visible events
 3. One can only deny the possibility of miracles if one denies the existence of God
 4. Summary: miracles are events that run contrary to what we know of nature and are "possible" if God exists
- E. The Purpose Of Biblical Miracles: miracles "validate" the authority and message of the divine messenger!
- F. The Periods Of Biblical Miracles:
1. Miracles were not God's typical way of working with His people in Scripture
 2. Most biblical miracles revolve around the giving of new revelation in 3 brief periods of history:
 - a. Moses & Joshua (1441 – 1370 B.C)
 - God delivered the Israelites out of bondage
 - New revelation was being given through the Law and God used miracles to authenticate:
 - 1). Moses and his message
 - 2). Joshua and his authority
 - 3). His own identity as the true God
 - The 10 plagues was to demonstrate that He was the Lord
 - Each of the plagues showed God's superiority over one or more of the Egyptian gods
 - Many miracles during the lives of Moses and Joshua were for the purpose of bolstering the faith of the people to believe in God and to trust in Him for their lives.

- b. Elijah & Elisha (870 – 785 B.C.)
 - Worship to the false god Baal became a serious threat to Israel’s existence as a nation under God
 - Miracles were used to prove that Elijah & Elisha came from God, and that God was superior to Baal
 - The miracles ceased after these prophets delivered their unique message
 - c. Christ and the Apostles (c.30 – 70 A.D.)
 - Proof was needed to demonstrate that Jesus was both God and man
 - Sincere Jews had to have a sufficient reason to transfer their belief from the Law to the Messiah
 - Jesus claimed to be the light of the world, then He healed a blind man
 - He claimed to be the bread of life, then He fed the 5,000
 - He claimed to be the resurrection and the life, then He raised Lazarus from the dead
 - d. Miracles as recorded in the Bible began phasing out as the message of the gospel began to become established (Heb. 2:3-4)
3. Summary: miracles occurred primarily in 3 concentrated times in history
- G. The 7 Signs of John’s Gospel:
1. Of the many signs performed by Jesus, John selects 7 (not counting the resurrection or the miraculous fish catch described in John 21) to prove that Jesus was God’s son. Seven is the biblical number of completeness, and each sign revealed some specific characteristic of Jesus’ power and person. They are, in order:
 2. The Changing Of Water Into Wine (2:1-11) – the mastery over “quality”
 3. The Healing Of The Nobleman’s Son (4:46-54) – mastery over “distance”
 4. The Healing Of The Impotent Man (5:1-9) – mastery over “time”
 5. The Feeding Of The 5,000 (6:1-14) – mastery over “quantity”
 6. The Walking On The Water (6:16-21) – mastery over “natural law”
 7. The Healing Of The Man Born Blind (9:1-12) – mastery over “misfortune”
 8. The Raising Of Lazarus (11:1-16) – mastery over “death”
 9. Summary: Jesus demonstrated, in the Gospel of John, His superiority over the “limitations” of this life

IV. Ch. 23: Messianic Prophecies

- A. In the Old Testament, the test of a prophet was to stone to death anyone who claimed to be a prophet but was not 100% accurate
- B. The New Testament appeals to 2 main lines of evidence to prove that Jesus is the Messiah:
 1. Jesus’ resurrection

2. Christ's fulfillment of hundreds of prophecies contained in the Old Testament regarding the Messiah
- C. The Importance Of Messianic Prophecy:
1. God's true divinity is demonstrated by His ability to reveal events in advance of their occurrence
 2. God placed more than 300 references to the Messiah in the Old Testament... ALL fulfilled by Jesus Christ
 3. Christ's disciples and contemporaries did not immediately understand how He fulfilled all of the prophecies
 4. Once the disciples thoroughly understood... Christ's fulfillment of the Old Testament messianic prophecies became central to their presentation of the gospel
- D. Key Messianic Prophecies Fulfilled By Jesus:
1. 61 major prophecies in the Old Testament were fulfilled by Jesus
 2. Some of the key prophecies include:
 - a. Descendant of Abraham
 - b. From the tribe of Judah
 - c. Heir to the Throne of David
 - d. Born in Bethlehem
 - e. Triumphal Entry
 - f. Betrayed by Close Friend
 - g. Betrayed for 30 Pieces of Silver
 - h. Forsaken by God
 - i. Summary: 61 major prophecies in the Old Testament "fulfilled" by Christ
- E. Objections: the fulfilled prophecies suggest overwhelmingly (1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000 probability according to scientific reason via the law of probability) that Jesus is the Messiah
- F. The Purpose of Prophecy:
1. Prophecy is always given to get us to live properly
 2. The purpose in telling about things in the future was to purify lives in the present
 3. Summary: the purpose of prophecy is not to satisfy our curiosity but to "purify" our lives

V. Ch. 24: Passover And The Lord's Supper

- A. Christianity is Judaism extended to its logical conclusion
- B. The Old Testament Significance of the Passover
1. The festival commemorates God's deliverance of Israel from Egyptian captivity...
 2. The last of 10 plagues was the death of each 1st born Egyptian son
 3. God would "PASS OVER" the Hebrew houses that displayed a sacrificial lamb's blood on the sides and top of their door frames
 4. Pass Over in Jesus' day had a twofold significance:
 - a. Commemoration of Israel's deliverance from Egypt
 - b. It looked forward to the coming of the Messiah to establish His kingdom
 5. Hebrew families typically set an extra place at the Pass Over table for Elijah, the forerunner of the Messiah... Elijah is expected to announce the joyful news that the Messiah has come
 6. Pass Over represented a new birth and new beginning to Israel

7. The Pass Over prepared them to enter into a new covenant with God at Sinai, which would establish them as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation
 8. Summary: the Old Testament significance of the Passover is that it looked back on Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt and looked forward to ultimate spiritual deliverance through the "Messiah"
- C. Christ's Observance Of Passover With His Disciples (The Lord's Supper)
1. The Lord's Supper began with the last supper Christ had had with His disciples before His death
 2. This supper is also known as:
 - a. Communion
 - b. Eucharist
 3. The Last Supper grew out of Christ's celebration of the Passover meal with His disciples
 4. Summary: Jesus observed the Passover with His disciples the night before His death, not only in faithfulness as a Jew, but also in "prophetic" symbolism of His own forthcoming crucifixion.
- D. The Passover As Object Lesson
1. Again and again the Israelites were told by God to remember His deliverance of them...
 2. God commanded an annual reenactment of the first Passover
 3. In so doing, God had his people employ all 5 senses to powerfully remember the story of their deliverance
 - a. The Object Lesson Began With The Passover Lamb
 - The Passover meal taught a painful lesson: God's holiness requires that sin be judged, and the price is a costly one. However, in His mercy God provides a way of escape or redemption
 - In several ways, the death of the innocent Passover lamb parallels the death of the One who would ultimately provide redemption from the penalty of sin
 - 1). The Passover lamb was marked for death
 - 2). The Passover lamb was carefully scrutinized to make certain it was perfect – a flawed animal was not an acceptable sacrifice for sin
 - 3). The Passover lamb was roasted with fire (symbolic of God's judgment)
 - 4). None of the Passover lamb's bones were to be broken
 - b. God Instructed the Israelites To Eat The Passover Lamb With Bitter Herbs (Exodus 12:8)
 - Bitter herbs represent the bitterness of the bondage Israel had experienced in Egypt
 - Bitterness is often symbolic of death in the Bible
 - Bitterness is often associated with mourning
 - c. Unleavened Bread was also Part of the Passover Meal
 - Leaven is a symbol of sin in the Bible (except for Matt. 13:33 where it represents growth & expansion)

- The bread without yeast has a twofold symbolic reference:
 - 1). It represents the sinless Messiah
 - 2). The putting away of all leaven or yeast represented the Hebrews' breaking the cycle of sin and starting out as a new nation as they left Egypt
 - d. The Hebrews were to Place the Sacrificial Lamb's Blood on the Door
 - Israelites would go thru the motion of making a bloody cross, symbolic of the Passover sacrifice by Christ 1400 years later
 - No house was spared without personal application of the sacrificial blood...
 - Similarly, there's no benefit from the sacrificial death of Christ without personal application thru faith in Him...
 - e. The Passover Celebration Concluded with the Singing of Psalms 113 – 118...
 - Passover and the Lord's Supper merge into one complete story of deliverance and salvation
 - f. Summary: the Passover was an object lesson of sacrifice and atonement for sin
- E. The Significance of the Lord's Supper: (5 keys)
1. Memorial To Christ
 2. Pledge of the New Covenants
 3. Proclamation of Christ's Death
 4. Prophetic Reminder of Christ's Return
 5. Time of Fellowship With Christ and Other Believers
 6. Summary: The Lord's Supper is the New Testament's "fulfillment" of the Passover, symbolizing Christ's fulfillment of the Old Testament promises

VI. Ch. 25: The Resurrection Of Jesus Christ

- A. Paul went as far as to assert that the Christian faith and the salvation it promises stand or fall with the resurrection
- B. Critics of Christianity have zeroed in on the resurrection of Jesus Christ ... If they can bring down the resurrection, they know they can bring everything down...
- C. There are 3 common attempts to explain away the resurrection:
1. The Theft Theory
 2. The Swoon Theory
 3. The Subjective Vision or Hallucination Theory
- D. The Theft Theory:
1. Some say Jewish believers bribed the Roman guards to report that Jesus' body had been stolen while the soldiers had slept... even though admitting to sleeping on the job would mean certain death... Besides, who knows what goes on while they are sleeping?
 2. How likely is it that ALL the solders would fall asleep at once?

3. Wouldn't at least one of them wake up to the sound of the rolling away of the large stone that sealed the opening?
 4. This would have required the disciples to have knowingly & deliberately do something that was a lie, caused others to be killed and risk their own lives – all of which are very uncharacteristic of them
 5. None of the disciples or alleged conspirators ever recanted their story, even on their deathbed. If it were a lie, someone would have cracked...
 6. How can the people who claim this theory explain the post resurrection sightings, including one by more than 500 people?
- E. The Swoon Theory:
1. This theory asserts that Jesus never really died on the cross but rather, he only swooned (passed out or coma) from exhaustion, pain and loss of blood. It is said that Jesus later woke up in the tomb and escaped.
 2. This theory did not even surface until the late 18th century
 3. One of the Roman soldiers was responsible to make sure that He was dead... even put a spear into his side before taking him down. (The fact that the bleeding described as a result of this wound (red and watery liquids separately poured out of Him) is consistent with what happens to one's circulation after death.
 4. In preparing a body for Jesus' type of burial, there are approx. 70 lbs of spiced linens used to wrap the body
 5. Would He have had the strength to free Himself from the grave clothes, roll away the heavy stone sealing the tomb, overpower all the Roman soldiers and then walk several miles on feet that had been pierced with nails?
 6. If all that happened Jesus would have been guilty of glaring falsehoods and deception... someone would have defected from him and told a different story in that case...
- F. The Subjective Vision or Hallucination Theory
1. This theory assumes the disciples imagined that they saw Jesus and heard Him speak to them...
 2. Christ appeared to groups as well as individuals (some of which were hard-headed like Peter and massive in number – 500+ in one case)
 3. Christ appeared in a number of different settings:
 - a. Early morning to the women at the tomb
 - b. In the afternoon to 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus
 - c. Another morning to His disciples by the Sea of Tiberias
 - d. On a mountain in Galilee to more than 500 people
 4. Most importantly, these types of hallucinations always happen as the climax to a period of exaggerated wishful thinking... However, the disciples were not at all optimistic about Jesus... Instead, they disbelieved or doubted when they were told of His rising and even when they themselves saw the risen Lord. In reality, after Jesus was buried most of the disciples were hiding and afraid – not expecting or hoping to see Him.

- G. The Resurrection as History
1. The positive case for the historical accuracy of the resurrection is overwhelming!
 2. The New Testament passes 3 test generally employed to test the validity of history and literary criticism:
 - a. Bibliographical tests – based on how many copies of the original manuscripts we have and the short period of time between the lost originals and the first known copies... very reliable
 - b. Internal-evidence tests – New Testament authors frequently wrote as eyewitnesses or from firsthand knowledge
 - c. External-evidence tests – careful examination of literature written at the same time as the Bible confirms the historical trustworthiness of the New Testament accounts
 3. If Jesus was not divine, there are only 3 ways to interpret the New Testament data:
 - a. Jesus was a liar
 - b. Jesus was a lunatic
 - c. Jesus never claimed to be God’s Son. This would mean that the disciples who attributed the false claim to Jesus, were themselves liars, lunatics or naïve exaggerators
 4. Summary: the Resurrection as History position states that Jesus “rose” from the dead, as He said He would!

VII. Ch. 26: Distinctiveness Of Christianity

- A. We live in an age of increasing options... over 1,500 religious groups in U.S. with over 600 non-Christian... nearly 18 million U.S. citizens claim a non-Christian religion.
- B. As a result, there has been a switch from absolute values to “relative values”
- C. It is asserted that all religions are fundamentally the same anyway... they are simply different ways to the same god
- D. Similarities Between Christianity & Other Religions:
 1. There are 3 areas of similarity among all religions:
 - a. They recognize a need for something beyond themselves
 - b. They are equally sincere
 - c. All religions teach essentially the same moral code
 2. It is a fundamental fallacy to identify the essence of Christianity with a code of ethics. Rather, Christianity is God’s decisive interaction in human history through the incarnation, substitutionary death & resurrection of Jesus Christ
 3. True Christianity is not so much a religion as a God-initiated relationship
- E. Differences Between Christianity & Other Religions:
 1. Two key differences:
 - a. Different answers to the “nature” of humanity’s basic problems
 - b. Therefore, the “answers” to the problems differ as well
 2. The common denominator among all non-Christian religions is that achievement of the ultimate salvation depends upon the adherent’s “good works” (in contrast, the Bible teaches that salvation is a

result of God's grace and that good works are the natural response to God's love).

3. Islamic Beliefs:
 - a. One may indulge in wine, women and song in the afterlife by living a virtuous life that renounces alcohol, sexual immorality and by keeping the "Five Pillars of Islam"
 - Repeating the creed
 - Traveling to the sacred city of Mecca
 - Giving gifts to the poor
 - Praying 5 times a day
 - Fasting each year during Ramadan
 - b. There is a "formula" of deeds that open the doors of heaven
 - c. Islam acknowledges God as personal and separate from His creation (Judaism shares this view)
 - d. Mohammed taught that Jesus was a prophet but not divine
 - e. Mohammed taught that he (himself) was Allah's (God's) greatest prophet
 - f. The Koran, (Islamic scriptures) portrays Allah as capricious and totally separate from human beings
4. Buddhism:
 - a. All pain and suffering are said to be the result of "desire"
 - b. The goal of Buddhism is to extinguish all desire by following Buddha's "Eightfold Path to Enlightenment"
 - c. Success results in "Nirvana"
 - d. Nirvana is a state of total nothingness in which the self is annihilated
 - e. Buddha never claimed deity and professed agnosticism as to whether God even existed
5. Hinduism:
 - a. Nirvana is also the goal of Hinduism
 - b. Nirvana is understood to be a reunion with God achieved through a continuous cycle of birth, life, death and rebirth.
 - c. Whether one is reborn in a "higher form" (and thus moves closer to eventual nirvana) or "lower form" depends upon how morally one has lived.
 - d. Hindus are "pantheists" – they believe:
 - "Everything is God"
 - God and the universe are identical
 - The material world is illusion (maya) and all reality is spiritual.
 - God (Brahman) is a principle of force underlying creation rather than a person
 - God is the universe's underlying "Force", and has a "dark side" as well as a light or good side
 - Ultimately, Brahman is beyond good and evil, and these categories are illusions
6. Religions differ greatly in their conception of God:
 - a. The Bible reveals God to be:
 - A Spirit who is infinite or unlimited in respect to:
 - 1). Knowledge (Omniscience)

- 2). Space (Omnipresence)
 - 3). Power (Omnipotence)
 - 4). Time (Eternality)
 - God is both transcendent (other than us and our world) and immanent (present with us)
 - God is sovereign (nothing is beyond His interest, control & authority)
 - God's goodness is expressed in His holiness, absolute righteousness & His love
 - God is personal (not merely a force, energy or substance)
 - God is revealed to be a Trinity within the one essence of the Godhead
 - 7. Judaism does not accept Jesus as the Son of God and therefore it falls short
 - 8. Christianity is unique in that Jesus Christ claimed to be God.
- F. Christ As The Only Way
- 1. The Bible asserts that Jesus Christ is the only way to God.
 - 2. Jesus made belief in His divine identity the focal point of His teaching
 - 3. There are 3 major objections to the truth of Christianity's exclusivity:
 - a. It eliminates many sincere people seeking God thru other religions
 - b. Christianity isn't "right" for everyone... The assumption is that truth is determined by one's subjective beliefs
 - c. Belief that anything so narrow must be wrong
 - 4. Summary: Christianity's primary distinction is that Christ is the only way to God
- G. Principles Of Proclaiming The Truth
- 1. First, understand well your own faith before explaining it to others
 - 2. Second, recognize truth in other religions
 - 3. Third, consider your motives. Beware of the following motivations and behaviors:
 - a. Scalp hunting – trying to get spiritual trophies thru conversions...
 - b. Manipulation – using salesmanship instead of the gospel message..
 - c. Arrogance – forgetting God's grace & that we too are sinners
 - 4. Fourth, set limited goals for the discussion.
 - a. Aim for clear communication & understanding
 - b. We cannot argue someone into the kingdom
 - c. The Holy Spirit must produce the response of faith
 - d. Be positive
 - e. Focus on proving Christianity rather than disproving other religions
 - f. Share salvation in an attitude of prayer
 - g. Leave all the results with God – only he can save

5. Summary: there are certain principles that should guide us in proclaiming the truth

VIII. Ch. 27: Different Literary Forms In The Bible

- A. To understand a particular biblical book or passage, the reader must understand the kind of literary form you are reading
- B. Ch. 21 covered the “parable” literary form...
- C. This chapter covers the other 5 key literary forms:
 1. *The Didactic Form (Exposition)*
 - a. The Didactic/Expository literature teaches truth in a relatively direct manner.
 - b. The argument or explanation usually moves from point to point in a logical, highly organized fashion.
 - c. The meaning of a didactic passage is often easy to understand...
 - d. The more difficult challenge is obeying it and applying its truth
 - e. Paul’s epistles are clear examples of the didactic form
 - f. Transitional & Connective words typically used: *for, therefore, and, and but*
 - g. This form has many rhetorical questions... “meanings” lie close to the surface in didactic literature
 - h. Didactic books are very good starting points for people beginning to study the Bible...
 - i. Truths taught in didactic literature are profound enough to warrant detailed analysis by even experienced Bible students
 - j. The most important guideline is to study the logical development of the argument & pay attention to the structure and terms employed.
 - k. The 2nd principle is to study the situation behind the statements... (i.e. One must understand the principle behind Paul’s command not to eat meat sacrificed to idols if one is to correctly apply the injunction today)
 - l. Summary: Didactic literature teaches truth in a relatively direct manner
 2. *The Narrative Form*
 - a. Narrative literature emphasizes stories (i.e. God’s creation, Flood, tower of Babel, family of Abraham, lives of Abraham/Isaac/Jacob/Joseph...)
 - b. Narrative Books:
 - All books from Genesis thru Ezra
 - All four Gospels
 - The book of Acts
 - b. Read the text closely, focusing on the narrative flow and the plot
 - c. Determine how the story progresses. Is the movement
 - Physical
 - Spiritual
 - Relational
 - Political

- d. Look at the book as a whole, then analyze individual stories
 - e. Ask yourself: *what has changed by the end of the book & why?*
 - f. Who are the characters and how are they presented. Note how the characters interact with each other & God. *Do they succeed or fail and why?*
 - g. Study the effect of the setting (geographical, temporal, or social) on the plot
 - h. Awareness of the prevailing social customs will greatly enhance your understanding of many biblical stories
 - i. Narrative sections express theological truths... consider what lesson(s) they illustrate... How might these truths be expressed in our lives today?
 - j. Summary: Narrative literature tells a story
3. *The Poetic Form:*
- a. Poetry appeals to our emotions & our imagination
 - b. The Bible's "mainly poetic books"
 - Job
 - Psalms
 - Proverbs
 - Ecclesiastes
 - Song of Solomon
 - c. Hebrew poetry's key characteristics...
 - Most Psalms meant to be sung (listen to how they sound)
 - 1). Recognize that each Psalm has a controlling topic or theme
 - 2). The stanza patterns can assist in discerning the flow of thought(s)
 - Makes extensive use of parallelism
 - Figurative language is frequently used (i.e. hyperbole)
 - d. Understanding the historical background of a situation covered is key to understanding its full message (i.e. Knowing that David wrote Psalm 51 after being confronted regarding his sin with Bathsheba helps us understand the depth of David's spiritual agony and repentance.)
 - e. Try to identify the poet's spiritual & psychological mood at the time of the psalm's composition
 - f. The Messianic Psalms: (2, 8, 16, 22, 40, 45, 69, 72, 89, 102, 109, 110, 132)
 - g. Summary: Poetic literature presents poetry and must be interpreted in light of key principles
4. *The Proverb:*
- a. A proverb is a distinctive literary form that concisely states a moral truth, reducing life to black and white categories.
 - b. Proverbs often use parallelism to make their point
 - c. Metaphors, Hyperbole & Similes are also used frequently
 - d. Proverbs are general guidelines that offer *wise advice* vs. strict, invariable rules by which God works.

- e. Proverbs need to be understood in accord with the totality of scriptural teaching on any given subject
 - f. Proverbs 1-9 & 30-31 are set up with a description of their “context”
 - g. Proverbs 10-29:
 - First examine each proverb on the basis of its parallelism
 - Then collate the proverbs according to topic and interpret the similar proverbs together
 - Next, extract the timeless principles and apply them to current situations
 - h. Summary: Proverbial literature concisely states a moral truth as a general guideline
5. *The Prophetic & Apocalyptic Forms:*
- a. Prophecy is both “foretelling” of the future & “forthtelling” of God’s message (whether encouragement, admonition, or warning) to the people.
 - b. Prophetic Books:
 - Old Testament – Isaiah thru Malachi
 - New Testament – Revelation
 - 1). Apocalyptic Prophecy – focuses on cataclysmic events having to do with the end of the world & God’s ultimate triumph over evil
 - 2). Heavy symbolism and vivid imagery throughout the book
 - 3). Interpretation can be very challenging (Old Testament books of Daniel & Zachariah have similar parts)
 - 4). Some principles will help to understand biblical prophecy:
 - a). Study the passage in terms of its history, context, and literal meaning of both the individual prophet and people group being addressed.
 - b). Carefully consider both the immediate (before & after) and broad (such as parallel passages) context
 - c). Identify exactly to whom or to what the passage refers
 - *** If it is a “didactic” passage, note how the people responded.
 - *** If it is “predictive”, consider 2 additional questions: Was the prophecy *conditional or unconditional*? The second question: Has the prophecy been *fulfilled or is it still unfulfilled*?
 - d). Distinguish between “direct predictions” and “types of predictions.”
 - *** Direct predictions typically have a “single” fulfillment

*** A “type” is a “preordained representative relationship which certain persons, events, and institutions bear to corresponding persons, events and institutions occurring at a later time in salvation history.”

- c. The main purpose of prophecy is to change lives by encouraging faith in God and holy living in the present
- d. When studying biblical prophecy always ask yourself, “How does God intend this truth to change my life?”
- e. Summary: Prophetic literature proclaims the Word of God and sometimes tells the future, often in highly figurative & symbolic language

IX. Ch. 28: How To Be Properly Related To God

- A. There are certain rules that apply in our ability to approach God.
- B. God earnestly desires our fellowship
- C. Faith is the key to a relationship with God. If we believe in Him, He adopts us as His spiritual children (Eph. 1:5)
- D. The Program of God: (God’s strategy in developing His relationship with man has 4 main principles)
 - 1. Revelation from God: (God reveals truth to man)
 - a. Earliest days He did this directly (dreams, visions, angels...)
 - b. Today the Bible is His primary means of revelation
 - 2. Requirements of Faith: (God wants us to believe, obey & live by faith)
 - a. God asks man to take the opposite direction of his “nature”
 - b. Subordinating your instincts is the essence of faith...
 - 3. Reward of Blessing: (God blesses living by faith)
 - a. As a man lives for God by faith, trusting God and obeying Him as best he knows how, God blesses that man.
 - b. God gives him a quality of life that is deeply satisfying
 - c. We must remember to evaluate our blessing by God’s standards and not make the mistake of understanding this promise to mean we’ll have an “easy” life. Our blessing is that we get to live in fellowship with God (even when times are tough)... PLUS, we have the promise of eternal life in heaven with God, which is the ultimate blessing!
 - 4. Redemption of Others: (others are drawn to faith in God)
 - a. Others want to know God because of the believer’s quality of life
 - b. The Old & New Testament revealed this truth differently...
- E. The Old Testament: The Fruit of the Vine
 - 1. Revelation from God: (God reveals truth to man)
 - a. In the early days God revealed Himself through miraculous means because the Bible had not been written yet
 - b. God promised to prosper them if they obeyed
 - 2. Requirement of Faith: (God wants us to believe, obey & live by faith)
 - a. Man’s natural inclinations are to protect, supply, and fund himself

- b. Instead, faith requires us to believe God & do things His way
 - 3. Reward of Blessing: (God blesses living by faith)
 - a. God promised the Israelites an abundance in all areas of their national life if they trusted Him and lived by faith
 - b. God put His word on the line in unambiguous terms.
 - 4. Redemption of Others: (Others are drawn to faith in God)
 - a. God chose Israel in order to reach all the other people in the world
 - b. God's idea: other nations would see God's blessing on Israel and want to follow their lead to Him
 - c. This is shown in Psalm 67
 - d. Key: God's blessing is always tied to obedience to His commandments... this is the evidence of faith!
- F. The New Testament: The Fruit of the Spirit
 - 1. God's dealings with Israel foreshadowed the spiritual truths presented in the New Testament. The Old Testament sacrificial system was intended to picture, in literal terms, the spiritual work that would be done by Christ on the cross in the New Testament.
 - 2. God's strategy for developing a relationship with man is the same in the New Testament as it was in the Old... but the principles are worked out differently:
 - a. Old Testament blessing were material & physical – “fruit of the vine”
 - b. New Testament blessings are spiritual – “fruit of the spirit”
 - 3. Revelation from God: N.T. style...
 - a. There is no longer any need for a sacrificial system since Jesus has come, died for our sins and risen again from the dead.
 - b. There is no need to observe the Mosaic law any more...
 - c. Key: Pursue the kingdom of God first, and all our material needs will be met...
 - d. We must live for the next world instead of this one!
 - 4. Requirement of Faith: N.T. style...
 - a. It's the same as in the O.T... If we believe God, we obey His commands
 - b. Disobedience is linked to a lack of faith
 - 5. Reward of Blessing: N.T. style...
 - a. N.T. blessings lead to spiritual abundance...
 - b. The Fruit of the Spirit... (Gal. 5: 22-23)
 - Love
 - Joy
 - Peace
 - Patience
 - Kindness
 - Goodness
 - Faithfulness
 - Gentleness
 - Self-Control
 - c. Think of it as inner peace, genuine love & deep joy!

6. Redemption of Others: N.T. style...
 - a. God promises to raise individual Christians higher than the world by bestowing spiritual abundance
 - b. It is our inner spiritual abundance, not our outer material abundance that reveals God to the world...
 - c. Key verses: Matt. 5:16 & Phil.2:14-15 & John 13:34-35
 - d. When we live as we ought, it calls attention to the Lord and encourages others to become Christians!
- G. Consequences:
1. Faith is the only way to establish a relationship with God (Eph. 2:8-9) and living by faith is the only way to receive the blessings of that relationship
 2. God's spiritual blessing has 3 primary consequences:
 - a. God is Glorified – people see Christ thru our living example
 - b. Man is Satisfied – living by faith leads to the fruits of the spirit
 - c. Others are Evangelized – others see how good life can be when we live by faith and are subsequently drawn to do the same
 3. Summary: The Program of God and Its Consequences
 - a. Revelation from God – God has made His revelation known to us in His Word, the Bible
 - b. Requirement of Faith – If we trust God and believe in Him, we live by faith and obey them. If we don't believe, we don't obey.
 - c. Reward of Blessing – If we believe God and live by faith, He blesses us with spiritual abundance & we begin to take on the character of God
 - d. Redemption of Others – Seeing the spiritual blessings of God's character in our lives, others are drawn to Him for relationship. God is glorified, man is satisfied, others are evangelized!

X. Ch. 29: How To Be Properly Related To Self

- A. If we cast ourselves in utter devotion on our "heavenly Master," He will enlarge, expand and develop us so that we achieve our highest good as a human being – to the satisfaction of man and the glory of God.
- B. Man's Motivation in Life – 2 Basic Needs
 1. Meaning or purpose in life
 2. Meaningful relationships, to love and be loved
- C. Meaning: Purpose in Life – Our souls are hungry for meaning, to do something so that our lives will have mattered
- D. Relationships: To Love and Be Loved – we also long for meaningful relationships
- E. God's strategy was to implant these needs within our souls and then meet these needs Himself. They can only fully and permanently be met in Him.
- F. Fulfilling The Needs:
- G. Fulfilling the Needs: (thoughts determine actions, actions determine consequences... To change life consequences, we must go back to the beginning and change our beliefs. On that basis, we can change our actions and thereby our life consequences.

1. Beliefs:
 - a. Man's Way – truth is what he can determine through his intellect and his 5 senses...
 - b. God's Way – Truth is revealed in the Bible and it is sometimes contrary to man's reasoning
 - c. Summary: Man's confused beliefs put him at odds with God
2. Actions:
 - a. Man's Way – man believes he must meet those 2 needs himself, he attempts to control people & circumstances to win for himself the significance and relationships he craves.
 - b. God's Way – the Lord promises to give a sense of purpose and meaningful relationships
 - c. Summary: Man's misguided efforts are never fully satisfying
3. Consequences:
 - a. Man's Way – We cannot control people and circumstances long enough to bring permanent satisfaction
 - b. God's Way – God promised that if we stop trying to do everything ourselves and live for Him, He will satisfy us with the fruit of the Spirit
 - c. Summary: we get our satisfaction in life from living for and with our heavenly Master
4. We are pulled toward sin when we try to meet those longings outside of what God has given us.
5. So, in being rightly related to yourself, you must understand who you are. You have been created for God. Your longings can only be met in relationship to Him. All that you want is found as you pursue Him. You can then be at peace with both God and self.

XI. Ch. 30: How To Be Properly Related To Others

- A. No one ever had a meaningful life without meaningful relationships
- B. A rich full life is a life lived with and for other people. We are all part of one another, and the more deeply we learn to love and accept love, the more life becomes what we hoped it would be.
- C. Some key verses: John 13:34 & Matt. 22:39
- D. The most complete passage in the Bible on love is 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (referred to as the "Love Passage")
- E. Christ demonstrated infinite love for us. He calls us to the same kind of love.
- F. Being properly related to others is just a matter of loving them... Usually it is nothing spectacular... It is letting others know we care while trying to meet their needs if we can...
- G. Often that love is returned to us and our needs are met in the context of love, unity and harmony
- H. Meaningful relationships are made of:
 1. Forgiveness
 2. Kindness
 3. Compassion
 4. Love
- I. Summary – As we consistently reach out to others, making them feel loved and accepting love in return, we become "rightly related" to others and experience the joy and fulfillment of meaningful relationships
- J. Love is the basis of all meaningful relationships. Love gives. Love receives.