

The Bible-Reading “Help” Book



Overviews & Insights for the Scriptures

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Worth Considering...

For the word of God is quick, & powerful, & sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing... to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit...

Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed...

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

I die daily... Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me...

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter; but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

The flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

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Table of Contents

Preface -	Why I wrote this book	- p 4
Chapter 1 -	Keys to Bible Study	- p 8
Chapter 2 -	Old Testament Overview	- p 14
Chapter 3 -	New Testament Overview	- p 23
Chapter 4 -	Order of the books	- p 33
Chapter 5 -	How we got the Bible	- p 38
Chapter 6 -	What is the "Bible"	- p 42

*"Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have
dominion over me." Psalm 119:133*

Preface - Why I wrote this book

Setting out to read and understand the Bible is one of the best decisions you could make. The first 8 years of my life I grew up in a home where there was no Bible, no church, and no presence of God. I was empty, lonely, and had no sense of purpose. I had nightmares just about every night of my life. At around the age of 8, my mother started bringing me to church. At this point I started hearing about Jesus and began learning about this book called the Bible. My Dad (who previously was an atheist) began coming to church as well. The three of us became believers in God and in his Son Jesus Christ. At this point, my home dramatically changed. The Bible and church became a very important part of our home. I no longer felt as lonely and empty. Life had meaning! And I literally had NO nightmares again until around the age of 14. They just immediately stopped. Our home went from a home of darkness to a home of light.

From this point forward in my youth, I grew up hearing stories, sermons, teachings, and messages from the Bible. I received a beautiful "Thompson Chain-Reference Bible" of my own at 9 and read it intermittently for the next 9 years or so. During this time, I was not in love with the Bible, but I believed it to be completely true and without error. I never questioned the authority or the truth of the word of God. Anything that was clearly from the Bible I believed completely. At around the age of 14 though is when I started straying from the Lord and his word. During this time, I never once questioned the truth of the Bible. I just didn't really know God very well or his word. I didn't know his design and purpose of life in a real way. I knew his will and purpose in a vague way, but I lacked real wisdom and understanding. I lacked the knowledge of God's ways, his judgments, his statutes, his covenants, his plans and purpose.

Because of this, I followed the crowd of this modernized, secular society into much sin and lust. This was the most miserable time of my life. The loneliness and emptiness returned, and yet, it was different than in my early childhood. I wasn't completely empty or alone. I was just someone completely out of place. I felt like a person with a purpose that had no idea what my purpose was. And so, I went the way of the fools. However, God never allowed me to go too far into sin. And he always gave me plenty of warning signs and wake up calls before I got in as deep as others around me. He was a faithful Father to me.

At around the age of 18-and-a-half, I decided it was time to change my life. I decided it was time to lose my "friends", stop the "partying", and get my life on track. At this point I began going back to church whenever there were services. I also decided to go to college. And most important of all, I purposed to read the Bible seriously for myself. At this point, my journey as a student of the Bible really began. I am now 34 years old, and I have been reading the Bible consistently for the last 16 years. And I want to tell you honestly, my journey in the Bible has done more than ANYTHING else in my life to bring me to find the truth about God, life, history, economics, politics, health, psychology, science, and TRUE spirituality. The things that God has revealed to me are SO FAR greater than anything else I have experienced in this life. And I have not just learned information, but through the Bible, I have begun to understand how to walk with the true God. I have learned more and more about who he is and what his purpose and plan is for life. And by God's grace, he has helped me to begin to not just learn through reading, but also through living how to actually live a life of peace, joy, love, and self-sacrifice for the good of others. This journey, has been (and continues to be) the greatest journey I ever undertook.

So, my purpose for writing this book is the following: As I began my journey of reading the Bible, I had many helps along

the way, but I never came across a simple book that gave a good understanding of the Bible as a whole along with overviews of the books. I was given huge volumes written by very scholarly individuals during the 19th and early 20th centuries, but these were overwhelming to me, the average person in the 21st century. Thus, much of the information contained in those volumes was useless to me. The other thing that I have discovered in my 16-year journey in the word of God is that very few people in Christianity (including leaders and pastors) really have a good working knowledge and understanding of the Bible as a whole. I found that many people had favorite passages and favorite portions of scripture, but few really had a good understanding of the whole book. Many had certain topics that were dear to them (the love of God, sin and death, hellfire, heaven, judgment, wisdom, etc....) but few really tried to take ALL of the truths of God in his word and put them in a balanced perspective. Many present God as a furious tyrant who can't wait to burn you in hell for ever. While many others present God as the loving grandfather who loves EVERYONE and there is no urgency to life or anything (*like he is just so happy that you are alive, and that you exist; his whole being and purpose revolves around YOU and your desires and dreams*). I found neither of these extremes to be even close to the true God as revealed in the Bible. And of those who had a good understanding of the Bible, none had written a simple book for the average person to have as a help in their journey.

Now, I don't profess to be an absolute expert of the Bible, but I feel like after 16 years in the vast forest of the word of God, I have gained a decent overview sense of where things are and why they are there. I feel like an explorer who went into a huge forest or jungle where many people have been and scouted before, but I never really had anyone officially take me on a full tour. And so, I set out to scout this forest and traverse through it

to know where the key landmarks are, and also to find the hidden beauties that were not apparent to most. I did not discover everything on my own (far from it). Many of the things I have learned from preachers and fellow-Christians alike have been true and have helped me in my journey. However, I never just accepted their report as true without going into the forest to see it for myself.

So, in conclusion, this book is a very simplified version of an overview sense of the understanding that I have gained from my last 16-years in the Bible. There is one last thing I would like you to know before we dive in: At times, I read the Bible for knowledge and understanding. At times, I read it for wisdom and insight. At times, I read it for judgment and discernment. And often, I read it for love's sake and enjoyment. However, above all, I have read the Bible so that I might know the true God, and live an obedient life that is pleasing to him. I have not always lived up to that mark, but by God's grace, the farther I go on my journey through the Bible, the closer I get to fulfilling that purpose. I hope this book is a help and encouragement to you in your journey through the Bible and life.

*"Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him
with the whole heart." Psalm 119:2*

1 - Keys to Bible Study

“God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” ~ Jesus Christ (*John 4:24*)

Reading and understanding the word of God is a spiritual matter. God is a Spirit, and he wants to reveal himself to your spirit. That is why it is so helpful when you come to the word of God to come with a humble, hungry, and pure spirit.

There are many things that have helped me in my journey to understanding the word of God. In this chapter, I give you a bunch of tips that aided me. I hope they are a help to you.

3 Things to Prepare you for the word

1. Purity - *Matthew 5:8*
Seek God to make your heart and spirit pure in him. God reveals himself to those that are pure in heart.
2. Prayer - *James 1:5-6*
Ask God for enlightenment, wisdom, revelation, faith, strength, etc. It is amazing how much more you will grow if you pray sincerely and consistently.
3. Purpose - *John 12:26; James 1:25*
Read the word with the intention of becoming godly and obeying the Lord. Purpose to be different through God’s Spirit and power (not your own power).

4 Ways of personally taking in the Bible

1. Read it - *Isaiah 34:16, Revelation 1:3*
Many religions and cults study parts of the Bible; very few people actually read it through regularly. This is vital to having proper understanding of God, his will, and his

truth. Read the Bible fast to get the overview sense; read it slow to consider the deep things. READ!

2. Study it - 2 Timothy 2:15, Isaiah 28:9-10
Studying will help clarify things from your reading and reveal things that you won't get by just reading. There are benefits to studying alone, and studying in a small group. Both are good. When you have a question, search it out. Study topics, key words, people, etc....
3. Listen to it - Revelation 1:3, Romans 10:17
There are many insights that I have gained from hearing someone else read the Bible (whether in person or on CD) that I never picked up when reading it myself. Faith comes by hearing; we must have ears to "hear" what the Spirit says. There is a blessing for those who hear!
4. Memorize/Meditate on it - Psalm 1:2, 1 Timothy 4:15
Meditating on the word of God is key to developing deep rooted faith and love in the Lord. I am not a big reader. I am not a great student. However, I spend hours upon hours meditating on the things that I have read and studied. When I was a kid I spent hours playing games, watching TV & movies, and day-dreaming. All of this was a waste of time at best. Now, I consider the things of the Lord. There is no comparison. God's word is the best treasure! Fill your heart, mind, and spirit with it!

3 Things you must do with the word

1. Believe it - 1 Thess 2:13; Hebrews 4:2
Even if you don't understand it, believe it. The word is always right. God is true and faithful. However, he only blesses you if you believe him.
2. Obey it - James 1:22; Psalm 111:10
The best way to understand the Bible is to obey it! Plenty

of people study and study, but God reveals himself to those who DO his will.

3. Speak/Teach it - *2 Corinthians 4:13*

The Lord never meant for us to have a "private/personal" faith only. When you believe something that is important, you pass it on to others. God blesses GREATLY when you spread his word!

3 things concerning church & preachers

1. Go to a good church that teaches and preaches the word. It is so important to hear the word taught and gather together with other believers in Christ.
- *Hebrews 10:23-25*
2. Don't just "attend" church. Become part of the church. Join Bible-study groups and develop Christian friends who also are interested in growing in the Lord and doing his will. Be active in serving and getting out the gospel!
- *1 Corinthians 12:1-27*
3. Don't only listen to one preacher. Find a few good men of God that preach the truth and it will help you grow in a more well-rounded way. "Out of the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses every word shall be established." I have found that many people that only listen to one preacher/teacher often become followers of that man and not of Christ. Also, their understanding of the word tends to be weak and their growth gets stunted. For the last 15 years, instead of listening to junky music, I have listened to good, solid, Spirit-filled men preach and teach the word of God. This has helped me grow in SO MANY ways.
- *1 Corinthians 3:5-8*

The 3 Applications of Scripture (and proofs that the Bible is written by God)

1. Historical - *Isaiah 44:21-25*
The Bible is written as a true historical record AND is always verified by sincere and true science and archaeology.
2. Practical - *Romans 15:4; 1 Cor 10:6-12*
God chose to record these particular events to convey practical life lessons.
3. Prophetical/Picture/Type - *John 5:39; Hebrews 9:1-14*
The stories and instructions in the Bible were not just randomly selected, but were chosen by God to foreshadow future people and events. (Mostly, Jesus Christ and his 1st & 2nd comings, but also the Antichrist, the tribulation, the rise and fall of nations, the building of the church, etc.)

EXAMPLE: The story of Noah - Genesis 6-8

1. Historical - This is a true story that really happened! It is confirmed by the fossil & ancient civ records, etc.
2. Practical - God will judge the ungodly and save the righteous no matter how many or how few.
3. Prophetical - Noah is a picture of Christ: all were unrighteous except him; he did all the work for salvation exactly as God told him; his family was saved along with him; God used him & family to enter into the new world.

The 3 Ways of Studying the Bible

(according to *Isaiah 28:9-13*):

1. The Principles: Topically (*"precept upon precept"*)
The word of God must be studied topically. There is an order to our walk with God. Before you can receive grace,

you must be humble. Before you can have faith, you must repent. It is important to learn God's ways according to his due order! - *Hebrews 6:1-2*

2. The Context: Contextually (*"line upon line"*)

The word of God must also be understood properly in the "context" of where it appears, who is speaking, to whom they are speaking, and what they are specifically dealing with. When Paul says "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me", he wasn't actually advocating doing anything you want and trying to get Christ to help you through. He was actually referring to the fact that as we follow the Lord in HIS will for our lives, that no matter what he brings us through (riches, poverty, freedom, prison, etc.) we can be CONTENT in Jesus Christ! Quite a difference. - *2 Peter 3:15-16*

3. The Prophecy: Spiritually. (*"here a little, there a little"*)

The word of God must also be understood and enlightened spiritually by the Holy Ghost. God has hidden many deep things in his word that are neither obvious nor often contextual to the history of what is being read. The best examples of these things are to read how the New Testament writers showed the interpretation/fulfillment of scriptures from the Old Testament and see how these things had to be given to them by the Holy Ghost. There is no other way they could have ever come to those conclusions. (When James quotes Amos 9 in Acts 15 saying it confirms the free salvation of the Gentiles in the NT church, there is no way he could have ever discerned that without the enlightenment of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit searches ALL the deep things of God.) - *2 Peter 1:20*

EXAMPLE: Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"

1. The Principle - Everybody is a sinner that falls short of God's original purpose for their life. - *1 John 1:8,10*
2. The Context - Christ's free salvation is universally offered to all people because everyone has sinned with no exception. - *Romans 3:22,24; 1 Timothy 2:5-6*
3. The Prophecy - All have sinned, therefore naturally (without Christ):
 - a. The wages (penalty) of sin is death; *Romans 6:23*
 - b. But not just the death of the body, *Hebrews 9:27*
 - c. But also the 2nd death of the soul in the lake of fire. *Matthew 10:28, Revelation 20:11-15*

But...

- a. Christ was the only man who NEVER sinned!
1 Peter 2:22, 1 John 2:2
- b. And he was willing to DIE (pay the penalty) for our sins.
1 Corinthians 15:4, 1 Peter 2:24
- c. So if you will come to Christ by faith and die to your old man, you can be free from your sins, the wages of your sins, AND be restored to the glory of God that we have all fallen short of! *Romans 6:6-8; 2 Thess 2:14*

"Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart." Psalm 119:34

2 - Old Testament Overview

General Overview:

The Old Testament (OT) is a compilation of 39 books of various lengths and themes. It was written by about 32 different human authors all of which were Jewish men (with the exception of the author of the book of Job possibly). Therefore, it was originally written primarily in the Hebrew language. The OT was written over a period of approximately 1,400 years and covers 3,600 years of human history. The OT is:

1. A history book (mostly of Israel)
2. An instructional book (mostly under the Old Covenant)
3. A prophetic book (of many things)

The OT as a whole:

1. The History of the OT:

The OT begins with God creating the heaven and earth and all things therein. However, it focuses primarily on the earthly realm as this is the book written to mankind on earth. It shows man choosing to sin against God's command, and thus, bringing death into the world. It then begins to trace the line of the righteous which would ultimately lead to the promised Messiah that would save man from sin and death and rule the world in righteousness. This chosen line goes through key men like Noah (the father of the new world after the flood) and Abraham, and it ultimately leads to the establishment of God's chosen nation of Israel. The rest of the OT primarily focuses on God and his covenant relationship with the nation of Israel. It shows their struggle to submit to God and his law, their punishments for disobedience, them being carried off into captivity, God's mercy to not utterly forsake them, and God regathering them into their promised land. In the midst of this story we are led to David, a man after God's heart. He is given the throne and promised to be the "father" of the chosen line which would lead to the

Messiah (who would ultimately be God's Son himself). We also see David's direct son, Solomon, being used of God to build the temple in Jerusalem. This ultimately ends up being destroyed by the Babylonians and then rebuilt later on a smaller scale by the Jews after a period of 70-years in captivity.

2. The Teaching of the OT:

The OT manifests God's law and order for how natural man is to live life on earth in the best and most fulfilling way as possible. It teaches man how to keep all things in life in their proper place so that God is glorified and fellow man is loved and kept in line for the good of justice. It instructs man how to obtain knowledge, wisdom, understanding, discretion, discernment, a happy marriage, a loving home, and an orderly, industrious society. It teaches compassion and provision for the poor and success and prosperity for the talented. It also teaches the reality of man's selfish and potentially evil and wicked nature and provides for swift, proper, sound judgment for the good of the family and nation. Most importantly, it teaches how man on earth (before the New Testament and Christ) was to properly sacrifice to and worship the holy, Almighty God. The majority of this instruction was given specifically to the nation of Israel in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and the last 4 books of wisdom. However, they were to be an example to the rest of the nations, and so there is much for us to learn from this instruction. And, apart from the instructional books, there are countless valuable life lessons to be learned from all the history and prophetic books.

3. The Prophecy of the OT:

The OT clearly shows itself to be the absolute word of God (impossible to be given by the will & mind of man) because of its literally hundreds of specific and accurate prophecies of future events, places, times, and people. While many are yet to be

fulfilled, approximately 2,000 have already been fulfilled! The topics of these prophecies widely vary, but many have to do with the rise and/or fall of specific individuals, kings, rulers, nations, kingdoms, and empires. In these prophecies, often specific names are given with details and even time-frames of occurrence. While there are many nations prophesied of, the majority of the prophecies centre around the nation of Israel. And while there are many individuals prophesied of, the majority of the prophecies centre around the coming Messiah (Christ Jesus). There are 3 major types of prophecies. The first type are **plain prophecies** that say exactly what is meant. The second type are **metaphoric/vision prophecies** that show some symbolic picture of what is to come. And finally, every story in the OT is not only true history containing valuable life lessons, but also is a **prophetic picture** of something greater to come. To determine the meanings of types 2 and 3 prophecies often requires much reading, study, meditation, and ultimately, the illumination of the Holy Ghost. The Books of Prophecy are filled with type 1 and type 2 prophecies, although the rest of the OT contains these throughout them as well. Another thing to consider is that nearly all prophecies are of a DUAL nature. There is a near-term fulfilment (often fulfilled during the days of the prophet or closely thereafter), and there is a long-term fulfilment (usually pertaining to either the time of the first coming of Christ or the end days around the second coming of Christ).

SECTION I. 5 Books of the Law (or 5 Books of Moses)

In these books you will see...

- *the beginning of ALL things in the early part of Genesis.*
- *the beginning of God's chosen nation: Israel (through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob).*
- *Israel's growth, deliverance and wanderings BEFORE they enter the land promised to them by God.*

- *God raising up his prophet Moses to establish the covenant of the law, and the choosing of the tribe of Levi for his priests.*
- *the construction of “the tabernacle” (God's house of worship through about the first 500 years of the law).*

(Dates are not certain. Most of my dates were obtained from [Usher's Chronology](#))

1. GENESIS 4004 BC - 1635 BC

The beginning of creation, man, marriage, temptation, sin, death, sacrifice, judgment, languages, nations, and the nation of Israel.

2. EXODUS 1635 BC - 1491 BC

The raising up of Moses; the Passover; the exit out of Egypt; the beginning of the law; the plans & construction of the tabernacle.

3. LEVITICUS 1491 BC

An instructional book for the priests (Levites) on offerings, ordinances of cleanliness, proper living, and special feasts.

4. NUMBERS 1491 BC - 1452 BC

The census of the nation of Israel, their rebellion against God's word of the promised land, and their 40-year wilderness march.

5. DEUTERONOMY 1452 BC

Moses' final message to the nation of Israel before his death where he re-establishes God's law, and prophesies their future.

SECTION II. 12 Books of History of Israel

In these books you will see...

- *the wars of conquest and the establishment and expansion of Israel INSIDE the promised land.*
- *their ups and downs of obedience and disobedience to God and his law.*
- *the rise of the kingdom of Israel and God's chosen man, David, claiming God's chosen city: Jerusalem.*
- *David's son, king Solomon, building the temple (God's new*

house of worship) in Jerusalem.

- *the split of the kingdom into 2 parts: the northern kingdom of Israel/Samaria and the southern kingdom of Judah.*
- *both kingdoms turning from God to the idolatry and sins of the heathen.*
- *both kingdoms being conquered (Israel by Assyria, and Judah by Babylon) and carried away into captivity due to their disobedience and hardness of heart to God and his prophets.*
- *the destruction of both Jerusalem and the temple.*
- *God's mercy in bringing the Jews back to their land so they could rebuild the temple and the city of Jerusalem.*

Before the Kingdom

6. JOSHUA

1452 BC - 1424 BC

The conquest of the promised land led by Moses' successor: Joshua; and the dividing up of the land amongst the 12 tribes.

7. JUDGES

1426 BC - 1150 BC

The nation of Israel as 12 confederate tribes under various judges and their victories, defeats and oppressions.

8. RUTH

1290 BC - 1280 BC ?

A love story of redemption, 2nd chances, and royal lineage; also a beautiful foreshadow of Christ and his bride.

The Kingdom

9. 1 SAMUEL

1150 BC - 1054 BC

The end of the rule of the judges; the loss of the ark of God; the kingdom of SAUL (the 1st king anointed by Samuel); his rise & fall; the anointing and growth of David.

10. 2 SAMUEL

1054 BC - 1015 BC

The kingdom of DAVID (the 2nd king anointed by Samuel); his conquests, conflicts, covenant, sins, and family troubles.

11. 1 KINGS

1015 BC - 899 BC

The kingdom of Solomon; construction of the temple; the split of Israel into 2 kingdoms (North = Israel; South = Judah); the apostasy of Ahab & Jezebel; the ministry of Elijah the prophet.

12. 2 KINGS

899 BC - 561 BC

The ministry of Elisha and the record of the kings of Israel & Judah with the downfall of first the northern kingdom to Assyria and then the southern kingdom to Babylon.

13. 1 CHRONICLES

4004 BC - 1015 BC

The priests' recorded history of the lineage of the nation of Israel, the lineage of king David, and the kingdom of David.

14. 2 CHRONICLES

1015 BC - 536 BC

The priests' recorded history of the kingdom of Solomon and the southern kingdom of Judah until its carrying off into captivity.

After the Kingdom**15. EZRA**

538 BC - 432 BC ?

A remnant of Jews being sent back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple; their challenges; Ezra re-establishing proper worship.

16. NEHEMIAH

519 BC - 432 BC ?

Nehemiah, the governor, is sent back to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls & gates; he overcomes challenges and re-establishes order.

17. ESTHER

486 BC - 474 BC ?

A story of God's protection of his chosen people (the Jews) in captivity; a picture of their future triumph over their enemies.

SECTION III. 5 Books of Wisdom

- *while Job and Song of Solomon actually record historical stories, most of the content in these books is instructional.*
- *they teach the child of God patience and how to: pray, live righteously, seek God, walk in faith, be happily married, raise godly children, treat others, work hard and be industrious, and*

most importantly, how to know and stay close to God.

- *They guide the child of God to know wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, and the fear of the LORD.*

18. JOB ????? (1700 BC???)

A story of great loss, judgmental friends and how God works all things for good to them that love him in the end.

19. PSALMS 1054 BC - 1014 BC

A great book of prayer-songs written by men who loved God and leaned on him through life; filled with Messianic prophecies.

20. PROVERBS 1014 BC - 994 BC

Solomon's wisdom from God on how to grow from a child into a strong man of God; the greatest book for practical life on earth.

21. ECCLESIASTES 975 BC

Solomon, the preacher, at the end of his life after experiencing and accomplishing everything any person could ever dream of on what really matters in life.

22. SONG OF SOLOMON 1014 BC

A love story/song between the young king Solomon and his beautiful bride throughout their courtship and early marriage.

SECTION IV. 17 Books of the Prophets

These books...

- *detail the messages of God's prophets to Israel and other nations throughout the times of the divided kingdom of Israel, the captivity, and the regathering to Jerusalem.*
- *are the most difficult to understand in all the scriptures; they are prophecies (accurate predictions of the future) which sometimes are clear and other times are spoken in parables, metaphors, similes and other symbolic language.*
- *have many references to the 1st & 2nd comings of Christ, the judgment & regathering of Israel, the Antichrist & end of this*

evil world system, and the millennial reign of Christ & Israel.

➤ *are sobering books that reveal the true extent of God's holiness in both his destructive judgment and restoring grace.*

Major Prophets

23. ISAIAH

760 BC - 698 BC

Foretells judgments on sinful nations, the judgment and restoration of Israel, and is RICH with Messianic prophecies.

24. JEREMIAH

626 BC - 562 BC

Foretells and shows the judgment of the southern kingdom of Judah & their rejection of God's 2nd chances (very sad).

25. LAMENTATIONS

576 BC ?

Shows Jeremiah the prophet lamenting for Judah which has been judged severely.

26. EZEKIEL

596 BC - 572 BC

Prophecies portraying the judgment of certain nations, the perverseness of Israel, and yet, God's grace and restoration of the kingdom of Israel and the temple in the last days.

27. DANIEL

607 BC - 534 BC

Stories of Daniel and his friends (Jewish captives) in Babylon standing for the true God; also a book of great prophecies regarding world empires, the Antichrist, and the end times.

Minor Prophets

28. HOSEA

784 BC - 722 BC

Likens the idolatry of the northern kingdom of Israel to a wife cheating on her husband; yet, God showing grace in the end.

29. JOEL

822 BC - 819 BC ?

End-times book showing the tribulation of the world and the Messiah returning to earth to judge & establish his kingdom.

30. AMOS

789 BC - 770 BC

Judgment against the ease & phony religion of Israel and their

hatred of God's prophets; and yet, it promises their restoration.

31. OBADIAH 576 BC

Judgment against the nation of Edom (the descendants of Jacob's brother, Esau) for their hatred and envy of Israel.

32. JONAH 828 BC - 824 BC

A selfish, bitter prophet who God had swallowed by a whale to get his attention; God then used him to preach to Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria, and the entire city repented!

33. MICAH 756 BC - 701 BC

God's call to righteousness & judgment to the corrupt leaders of the nation of Israel that are profiting off of the weak and vulnerable; promises both of the comings of the Messiah.

34. NAHUM 664 BC - 616 BC ?

160 years after Jonah preached Nineveh now will not repent and therefore must be judged for its lies and witchcrafts.

35. HABAKKUK 613 BC

Predicts the destruction of the wicked men of Judah by Babylon, but promises salvation to the just that live by faith.

36. ZEPHANIAH 613 BC

The day of the LORD which is God's judgment of the wicked, purging of Jerusalem, and salvation of the meek remnant.

37. HAGGAI 520 BC

He exhorts the remnant of Israel to rebuild the temple.

38. ZECHARIAH 520 BC - 487 BC

Visions & prophecies of the end-times & comings of Christ.

39. MALACHI 435 BC - 433 BC

A stern rebuke to the priests and people of the remnant of Judah for their sins of lousy offerings, divorce, and no tithes.

"But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed." Galatians 3:23

3 - New Testament Overview

General Overview:

The New Testament (NT) is a compilation of 27 books/letters of various lengths and themes. It was written by 11 different human authors all of which were Jewish men (with the possible exception of Luke) that all became born-again Christians. Due to Greek being the prevailing educated language of the day, it was originally written primarily in the Greek language. The NT was written over a period of roughly 60 years, and highlights key events and people in the first 90 years or so A.D. The NT is:

1. A history of Christ and the early church.
2. An instructional guide for Christians
3. A prophetic book of the end-times.

The NT as a whole:

1. The History of the NT:

The NT begins with the good news of the coming birth of the Son of God: Jesus. It shows the circumstances surrounding the miraculous conceptions of both John the Baptist (the cousin and forerunner of Jesus) and Jesus Christ. It shows the faithful ministry of John the Baptist to prepare the nation of Israel for their coming Messiah. Then it shows Jesus' ministry as prophet/apostle to the nation beginning with his baptism, his overcoming temptation, and offering the kingdom to Israel through repentance. It shows his power-filled preaching, heart-transforming teaching, and Spirit-filled miraculous works of healing, cleansing, and casting out devils throughout the land of Israel. It shows him choosing and sending out the 12 apostles with power to preach and heal. Jesus is received by many, but also hated by many. He is hated especially by the organized

religious groups of the day as they constantly attempt to make him look bad and ultimately seek to destroy him. After 3-and-a-half years of public ministry, he is betrayed by one of his 12 apostles, falsely convicted by the religious Jews, and delivered to the Romans to be crucified. While this appears to be a tragedy, it is actually all according to God the Father's plan. After he is dead and buried, 3 days later, he emerges victorious over death and appears to his disciples to send them into all the world to proclaim this gospel of complete forgiveness of sins and eternal life. After Christ ascends into heaven the story then follows the beginning of the church of Jesus Christ being led by the Holy Ghost into preaching, converting sinners, healing, blessing, multiplying, persecution, martyrdom, and the spread of the gospel throughout much of the world. It mainly follows the ministries of Peter and Paul as they lead the charge.

2. The Teaching of the NT:

The teaching of the NT is both instructive and preparatory. It is mainly directed to believers in Christ to teach them how to live godly lives that are pleasing and acceptable to our Lord Jesus Christ. It teaches us how to live simple, chaste, sober, holy lives that reflect our conversion out of the power of darkness and into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Christians are taught to put away the works of the flesh, and instead, yield to and walk in the Spirit of Christ which ultimately leads us to be more and more like Christ! It is also instructive not just for individual Christians but for churches on how to function together to edify one another and bring glory to God as a whole unit. Therefore, there is instruction both to churches and pastors. The NT also prepares us for the return of Christ to set up his kingdom, and thus, we are commanded to set our affections on things in the heavenly realm and not on things on the earth. We are to live life with a mission to remain holy, help other Christians remain holy, and try to save

others by bringing them to the faith which was once not available but is now made manifest by Christ's resurrection. Thus, we are to trade our temporal earthly good for others eternal good.

3. The Prophecy of the NT:

The prophecy of the NT mainly focuses on the "end times." It discusses the apostasy and corruption of the latter days along with the signs to mark the return of the Lord. It focuses primarily on the return of Christ (known as the 2nd coming) to both save his church from wrath and destroy those who join rank with "the beast". It reveals the man of sin and his political kingdom that will rule for 7 years. The prophecy shows the plagues, catastrophes, and hellish judgments that will be unleashed on a vile world during the 7-year tribulation period to come. It also reveals the devil's strategies to try to obtain worldwide dominion but also shows his certain failure in the end. It is specific towards the understanding of Christ's kingdom, his judgment seat, the first and last resurrections and the final white throne judgment with the lake of fire. It also shows the creation of the new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness with the beauty of the new Jerusalem after the final judgment!

SECTION I. 4 Books of the Gospel

4 B.C. - A.D. 30

- *these books are all the good news about the life, ministry, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ the Son of God (Matthew & Luke include his birth and parts of childhood).*
- *Christ Jesus came into this world for MANY purposes, and thus, we have 4 different books written by 4 different men all inspired by the same Holy Ghost to emphasize different aspects of his ministry, his fulfilment of the will of God on earth and how it relates to the different people groups (Jew, Gentile, & Church).*

seek after wisdom). It is definitely written with a Gentile perspective as Luke got his info from Paul (the chief apostle to the Gentiles), and it is not for the unlearned. Luke was a physician (doctor), and thus, he reveals Jesus as the greatest spiritual doctor in piercing through to men's hearts using proper judgment (not according to appearance). Therefore, the grace of Jesus Christ is ministered to the humble & wounded, while the proud and self-righteous miss his grace and await his wrath.

4. JOHN

A.D. 65 - 68

This book is written to show Jesus as the incarnation of God. It shows his deity more clearly than any other gospel. It shows him as the eternal Word and Light of God. Throughout the gospel it confirms his deity through his words and his works. Those who receive the truth of his words and works become sons of God and those who reject are left in darkness. John is unique from all other gospels as it is the only book that focuses quite a bit on Jesus' time spent in Jerusalem at the feast days throughout his 3-and-a-half year ministry. John also is the only gospel that reveals Jesus' private instruction to the 11 true apostles in the upper room where he teaches thoroughly on the Holy Ghost and his Father in heaven. John is written to the whole world to show them that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that anyone may have the gift of eternal life through faith in him.

SECTION II. 1 Book of Church History - From: A.D. 30 - 60

5. ACTS

Written around A.D. 65

This book shows the history of the early church during the time of the apostles after Jesus Christ went back to heaven. It shows the beginning, the blessings, the growth, the trials, and the sacrifices of the church led by the Holy Ghost. Acts 1:8 gives the outline of the movement of the gospel throughout the book. It primarily focuses on Peter's ministry through the 1st half of the book as the gospel goes to the Jews only, and then it focuses on

Paul's ministry through the 2nd half as the gospel goes to both Jew and Gentile. This is a great book that shows the real Holy Ghost working through the real apostles of Jesus Christ to preach the pure gospel and build the true church of Christ.

SECTION III. 21 Books of Epistles (or letters)

- *The epistles are letters written by different apostles either to specific churches, individuals or people groups.*
- *They are predominately written to New Testament born-again believers in Jesus Christ.*
- *They are wonderful books to learn the New Testament doctrines of faith, grace, love, mercy, humility, service, charity, and many other topics.*
- *They are comprehensive in the instruction for the NT believer to live a godly life in Christ Jesus according to the word, will, and Spirit of God in fellowship with the church and the Lord.*
- *They all point continually back to Christ's work and example, and forward to his return.*

A. Paul's Epistles (14)

To Churches (9)

6. ROMANS

A.D. 58 - 60

The most complete epistle of the NT showing the full gospel of God: his creation, his people, his law, all under sin, Christ's complete payment for sin, justification by faith, righteous Christian living, and the past, present, and future of Israel.

7. 1 CORINTHIANS

A.D. 56

Written to a young, carnal church filled with strife, divisions, sexual sins, selfishness, disorder, pride and misuse of spiritual gifts. Paul rebukes and instructs accordingly.

8. 2 CORINTHIANS

A.D. 57

The 2nd letter to the church. They received the rebuke and

instruction of Paul and have therefore grown; here Paul opens up some amazing NT truths and defends his apostleship.

9. GALATIANS

A.D. 58

Here Paul is correcting a church that is slipping back into the bondage of the OT law. He contrasts the law & grace, works & faith, the OT & NT, the works of the flesh & the fruit of the Spirit, the bondage of religion & the liberty of Christ, and the glory of man & the glory of the cross of Christ.

10. EPHESIANS

A.D. 62

Paul is showing the riches of Christ to a good, obedient church. He is stressing the unity in the church with Jews and Gentiles being made one in Christ and the need to cast off the old life and resist the devil in order to maintain unity.

11. PHILIPPIANS

A.D. 62

Written to a mature church. Paul shows God's ways are not our ways. His imprisonment led to freedom for the gospel; Christ's humility & death led to his exaltation & life; Paul's loss of his old life led to his gain in Christ; and in instability he had contentment!

12. COLOSSIANS

A.D. 64

Paul shows that Christ is the head, completion and fulness. He is the fulness of creation and head of the church. He is the fulfilment of all the OT. We are complete in him alone. Thus, any other teaching or philosophy is not after Christ!

13. 1 THESSALONIANS

A.D. 51 - 52

A great letter to a great young church about how to take care of the young ones in the faith, how to stay pure, and how to look for and prepare for the coming of the Lord Jesus.

14. 2 THESSALONIANS

A.D. 53 - 54

The 2nd letter to show the signs, purpose and prerequisites of the coming of Christ. Paul reveals details about the Antichrist and deception of the last days so we will not be ignorant; and he admonishes all men to work as they wait for Christ.

To Bishops (4)

15. 1 TIMOTHY

A.D. 65

A miniature church manual for a young bishop (overseer of a church) on topics such as church doctrine, discipline, conduct of men and women, ordination of bishops and deacons, care of widows, and warnings about straying from the truths of the word and the love of money (problems for leaders).

16. 2 TIMOTHY

A.D. 68

Paul's final letter before he died in which he pours his heart, soul, spirit, mind and strength into one powerful little letter to pass the torch to his dearly beloved son in the faith, Timothy. He challenges him to endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ and to fight until the end as Paul had, no matter what the cost.

17. TITUS

A.D. 65

Almost a smaller version of 1 Timothy where Paul constantly stresses the need of believers to live righteous lives with good works to combat the lazy, "I'm saved, so I can do what I want" false convert mentality that Titus had to deal with in Crete.

18. PHILEMON

A.D. 62

A beautiful little letter about forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration following true repentance between brothers in the Lord (Philemon and Onesimus). This is all made possible because of the godly example Paul gave and Jesus himself.

To the Jewish people (1)

19. HEBREWS

???

Perhaps the richest NT book. It is written to show the Jewish people that Jesus is the Messiah from the OT by proving that he is the Son of God and high priest after the order of Melchizedec as promised in the Psalms. It shows the superiority of the NT to the OT. It also shows that Christ's work and sacrifice are complete, and teaches that the Jewish people must follow Christ by faith until the end no matter what the cost.

B. Other Apostles' Epistles (7)

20. JAMES

A.D. 38

Written to the 12 tribes of Israel to show that true faith in Christ and his word results in good works involving the widows, the fatherless, the poor, the use of our tongues, and treatment of the brethren. This is a call to a real Christian life out of real faith.

21. 1 PETER

A.D. 60

Written to the strangers to show that the new birth leads to holiness, charity and patience. It stresses submission to authority and following Christ even to the point of suffering wrongfully.

22. 2 PETER

A.D. 66

Written to show the certainty of the prophecy of the word of God. It warns of false teachers and how to spot them, and of scoffers who will deny the 2nd coming. It looks at the 2nd coming, the end of this heaven & earth, and the promise of the new creation.

23. 1 JOHN

A.D. 88 - 90

Written to Christians of all ages and stages to help them grow closer to the Lord, have fulness of joy, and know that they have eternal life. John is given great discernment to show the clear difference between those who are still in darkness (those who live unrighteous and hate their brethren) and those who are truly in the light (those who live righteously and love their brethren). He is showing what it truly means to "believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God".

24. 2 JOHN

A.D. 88 - 90

A great short book written to a lady and her children to emphasize the importance of the truth of the doctrine of Christ, and that those who deviate from this truth are not really Christians but rather antichrist. He also shows that true love is manifested by keeping God's commands.

25. 3 JOHN

A.D. 88 - 90

A short book written to a faithful man who walked according to

the truth in faithfulness and charity. He is warned of prideful, evil leaders in the church (Diotrephes) and commended to follow good, honest leaders (Demetrius).

26. JUDE

A.D. 66

A powerful book that admonishes us to battle for the true gospel because ungodly men have crept into the church. These men are lost and turn God's grace into lasciviousness. Jude promises God will judge them by giving examples of God's judgment from the OT. He shows us their attributes so we can identify them, stay away from them, and help others stay away.

SECTION IV. 1 Book of Prophecy

27. REVELATION

A.D. 91 - 96

This is the revelation of Jesus Christ to John the apostle to give him messages to 7 churches. He then gets to see heaven itself, and then the events of the tribulation, the return of Christ, the millennial kingdom, the final judgment, and the new creation. Chapter 1 is past tense; chapters 2 & 3 are for the present tense church age and are filled with great instruction for churches from Jesus himself; chapters 4-22 show the future events yet to occur. This is a wonderful and glorious book that brings many of the themes introduced back in Genesis (and other prophetic books like Daniel and Zechariah) full circle to the conclusion and culmination of this creation into the perfect new creation that will be reserved only for those who overcome by faith in Christ Jesus. It is very difficult to understand certain portions apart from a knowledge of the rest of the scriptures; and it is very sobering and exciting to see the imminence of the Lord's return and future for his children!

"That the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." Ephesians 1:17

4 - Order of the Books

This section is designed to help you become familiar with the order of the books of both the Old and New Testaments. The order of the books is broken down into 4 sections in each Testament. This will help you in memorizing the order of the books. Included next to each book and section is the number of chapters in that particular book or section. These also should be eventually committed to memory for serious Bible students as it will help you in becoming more familiar with each book and to know approximately where particular passages will be found within that book. I have also included the 32 human authors of the Old Testament and the 11 human authors of the New Testament for interest. Wherever there is uncertainty in the authorship, it is indicated, and it should be noted that all of the books of the Prophets were written by the man after whom the book is named. Also, for an interesting study, it is neat to lay the OT books side-by-side with the NT books in corresponding number order and see the connections that can be found between corresponding books. (i.e. Genesis with Matthew; Exodus with Mark; Leviticus with Luke; Numbers with John; etc.)

THE HOLY BIBLE - 66 books (1,189 chapters)

OLD TESTAMENT - 39 books (929 chapters)

SECTION I. 5 books of Law/Moses (187)

- | | | |
|----------------|------|---------|
| 1. Genesis | (50) | - Moses |
| 2. Exodus | (40) | ... |
| 3. Leviticus | (27) | ... |
| 4. Numbers | (36) | ... |
| 5. Deuteronomy | (34) | ... |

SECTION II. 12 books of History of Israel (249)

3 Before the Kingdom (49)		
6. Joshua	(24)	- Joshua
7. Judges	(21)	- Samuel
8. Ruth	(4)	...
6 During the Kingdom (167)		
9. 1 Samuel	(31)	- Samuel & Nathan ?
10. 2 Samuel	(24)	- Nathan & Gad?
11. 1 Kings	(22)	- Nathan & Isaiah ?
12. 2 Kings	(25)	- Isaiah & Jeremiah ?
13. 1 Chronicles	(29)	- Ezra
14. 2 Chronicles	(36)	...
3 After the Kingdom (33)		
15. Ezra	(10)	...
16. Nehemiah	(13)	- Nehemiah
17. Esther	(10)	- Mordecai

SECTION III. 5 books of Wisdom (243)

18. Job	(42)	- Job or Elihu ?
19. Psalms	(150)	- David + 4 others*
20. Proverbs	(31)	- Solomon+ 2 men**
21. Ecclesiastes	(12)	- Solomon
22. Song of Solomon	(8)	...

SECTION IV. 17 books of the Prophets (250)

5 Major Prophets (183)		Authors = name of book
23. Isaiah	(66)	
24. Jeremiah	(52)	
25. Lamentations	(5)	- Jeremiah
26. Ezekiel	(48)	
27. Daniel	(12)	

12 Minor Prophets (67)

28. Hosea	(14)
29. Joel	(3)
30. Amos	(9)
31. Obadiah	(1)
32. Jonah	(4)
33. Micah	(7)
34. Nahum	(3)
35. Habakkuk	(3)
36. Zephaniah	(3)
37. Haggai	(2)
38. Zechariah	(14)
39. Malachi	(4)

* Asaph (Psalm 50, 73-83); Heman (88); Ethan (89); & Moses (90)

** Agur (Proverbs 30); & Lemuel (Proverbs 31)

NEW TESTAMENT - 27 books (260 chapters)

SECTION I. 4 books of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (89)

1. Matthew	(28)	- Matthew
2. Mark	(16)	- Mark
3. Luke	(24)	- Luke
4. John	(21)	- John (the apostle)

SECTION II. 1 book of Church History

5. Acts of the Apostles	(28)	- Luke
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SECTION III. 21 Books of Epistles (121)

Paul's Epistles - 14 books (100)

9 To Churches: (73)

6. Romans	(16)	- Paul
7. 1 Corinthians	(16)	- Paul + Sosthenes
8. 2 Corinthians	(13)	- Paul + Timothy

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|-----|----------------------|
| 9. | Galatians | (6) | - Paul |
| 10. | Ephesians | (6) | ... |
| 11. | Philippians | (4) | ... |
| 12. | Colossians | (4) | - Paul + Timothy |
| 13. | 1 Thessalonians | (5) | - Paul, Silas, & Tim |
| 14. | 2 Thessalonians | (3) | - Paul, Silas, & Tim |

4 To Bishops: (14)

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------|-----|--------|
| 15. | 1 Timothy | (6) | - Paul |
| 16. | 2 Timothy | (4) | ... |
| 17. | Titus | (3) | ... |
| 18. | Philemon | (1) | ... |

1 To the Jewish People:

- | | | | |
|-----|---------|------|-----|
| 19. | Hebrews | (13) | ... |
|-----|---------|------|-----|

7 Other (General) Epistles: (21)

- | | | | |
|-----|---------|-----|--------------------------|
| 20. | James | (5) | - James (Jesus' brother) |
| 21. | 1 Peter | (5) | - Peter |
| 22. | 2 Peter | (3) | ... |
| 23. | 1 John | (5) | - John (the apostle) |
| 24. | 2 John | (1) | ... |
| 25. | 3 John | (1) | ... |
| 26. | Jude | (1) | - Jude (Jesus' brother) |

SECTION IV. 1 Book of Prophecy

- | | | | |
|-----|------------|------|----------------------|
| 27. | Revelation | (22) | - John (the apostle) |
|-----|------------|------|----------------------|

Order of the Bible concerning God working with man:

There is an order to how God has worked with mankind through the ages. The Bible really gives that story in order. Here is a very brief overview of God's dealings with man in how it is revealed in the different sections of the Bible:

Law: God creates everything good. Man disobeys. Man's conscience is unable to sufficiently restrain him from evil, so God needs to give his law to keep man in check and expose his sin.

History of Israel: God tries to work personally with one family that turns into a nation so that they might be different and holy to God. They experience great blessings at times. However, more often than not, they stray (wanting to be like the other nations around them) rather than stay close to their God. The kingdoms and glory of men rise and fall. Great is their fall.

Wisdom: God continues to work with man in the midst of their confusion by giving his good spirits to men (like the fear of the Lord, wisdom, knowledge, understanding, counsel, might, etc.). While most ignore or refuse, there always seems to be a small remnant that receives of God's spirits and loves the Lord in the midst of the suffering and adversity of life on earth.

Prophets: Since all nations go astray (including Israel) he raises up prophets to offer mercy and warn of judgment. These men see the corruption of their society and will not participate. They love the truth of God and want to see God's will prevail on earth. God calls them to preach and call men to repent to God and his ways. Most ignore/reject their messages. Some hearken. Most prophets struggle greatly but await the coming of their God.

Gospel: Finally the Messiah shows up. This is the one that the prophets and saints awaited. This is their hope. He is our life. He comes to undo all that man has ever corrupted. He comes to offer salvation & eternal life to all who turn to him in faith, but his plan and ways are so different than we would expect...

Church History & Epistles: God begins a new work. People from all nations are brought together in unity, faith, & love by HIS Spirit. They are given power to testify of Christ who has come (died & ascended) AND who will return to bring HIS kingdom.

Revelation: Rebellious man led by Satan will be defeated! Jesus Christ and his saints will prevail! Glory to God for ever and ever!

5 - How we got the Bible

The 3 stage process to the Bible we read today

How did we get the Bible that we have today? I will not give a thorough history of the Bible as that would be an entire book in and of itself. But I will explain the 3 main stages God used men to accomplish so that we can have a pure bible today in English (amongst other languages).

Stage 1. Inspiration & Inscription: This stage often refers to the INITIAL giving of the scriptures. These terms refer to God moving men to speak his words and then be recorded accurately and precisely. Here are some verses to show this first stage:

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

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

"Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever." *Isaiah 30:8*

From these verses we see that the scriptures were not written by the minds and will of men, but that it was actually God (by the Holy Ghost) who inspired them to speak these things. We also see that God wanted future generations to have the scriptures so that they might be made perfect by them. Thus, he instructed these men to write down the things that he revealed to them so that future generations could know his word.

Stage 2. Preservation & Protection: This stage refers to the faithfulness of God to KEEP preserved that which was INITIALLY given so that the word might do more than just help certain people at only a specific time in the past. Consider these verses:

“Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever.”

Isaiah 30:8

“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.” *Psalms 12:6-7*

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” ~ Jesus Christ *Matthew 24:35*

God (as we saw before) wanted his word to pass from generation to generation. Not only was this his desire, but he actually PROMISED that he would preserve his word through the end of time even into the new creation. He promised this. And he has kept his promise. The way he did this was by having people make accurate copies of his word throughout the centuries. In fact, the copies of his word were considered just as authoritative and had just as much POWER as the originals (sometimes even MORE powerful than the originals). When we read the story of Hilkiah finding the law in the temple and reading it to king Josiah in 2 Kings 22, we see them reading a copy of “the law” (around 800 years after the original was written) and it bringing a national revival! We also see Jesus reading from the book of Isaiah (most definitely a copy) in Luke 4 and the copy is called the “scripture.” God preserved his words through accurate copies.

Stage 3. Translation & Transmission: This stage is the means whereby God used men to take his word and accurately translate

it and send it out throughout all the earth so that all the nations of the world may be taught to observe all things that Christ and his Father commanded us. Consider these verses and concepts:

God is the author of ALL languages and nations

"Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth."

Genesis 11:7,9

God shows HE can easily translate into any language

"And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" *Acts 2:7-8*

Proof that a translation can be inspired

"And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying, Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you. (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them..." *Acts 21:40; 22:1-2*

(Paul SPOKE in Hebrew, but Acts was WRITTEN in Greek)

People often think that the word of God was only inspired and perfect in the "original" languages.. They think that a long time ago the word was perfect, but over time man messed up the Bible; and so today, all we have is a bunch of versions of the word of God where man tries to do his best to put back together the fragments left of God's word, but falls very short. The problem with this thinking is that God (as we just saw before) PROMISED that his word would be preserved perfectly for ALL generations!

Did he only preserve his word in old languages that are basically dead today? Is our God the God of the dead? Is it true that the only way you can really know the word of God is by being a brilliant scholar that is a master of Hebrew and Greek? Can only the super-educated know God? Of course not! Our God is the God of the LIVING! He is the God of all people. The whole basis of the New Covenant is that it is to spread to ALL people and languages. Is God faithful to his will?

Now people say that it is impossible to translate perfectly from one language into another, so we can NEVER have a perfect translation of God's word. However, the problem with this thinking is that first and foremost, **with God, ALL things are possible.** And secondly, people forget that God is the author of ALL languages! If he could inspire men to speak his word in Hebrew or in Greek, then certainly he can inspire men to translate into other languages. Also, we KNOW from the New Testament that it is God's desire that his word would spread through the ENTIRE earth to ALL people. He literally gave the divine gift of speaking in other tongues (languages) so that the gospel could spread. So God has clearly shown that he can **perfectly** translate into other languages.

Seeing that English is the worldwide language of the end-times, it is no surprise that God would see to it that we would have a perfect copy of his word in the English language that would have spread throughout the earth AND have been published more than ANY other book in the history of mankind. And thanks be to God, we have such a book in the King James Holy Bible. It is God's pure word in English and is the king of all books with authority, clarity, purity, and power unlike any other book in the English language. Praise God for his grace and faithfulness in giving us his word just as he promised he would!

6 - What is the "Bible"

A fresh look at the Bible for Bible-believers

It seems as Bible believers, we are constantly trying to defend the truth that the Bible is God's word to man. Whether we are dealing with a lost person who isn't even sure that the Bible is true or with a Christian who isn't aware of the differences and corruptions of modern versions of the Bible, we are always seeming to have to try to lift up the Bible as being the preeminent book that is FAR ABOVE all other books ever written. We defend and preach the Bible as the inspired word of God to man.

However, in doing this, it sometimes seems that we have lifted the Bible up so high that it becomes an untouchable book. It, at times, almost becomes a book of standards and expected character qualities that are unattainable for man on earth. And so we writhe in agony for this spiritual obedience to God (if we try to attain like Paul in Romans 7); or we turn the Bible into a bag full of tricks with lots of neat hidden things to fascinate the mind; or we use the Bible to prove EVERYBODY else's religion/cult to be in error (while of course maintaining that we have the truth); or we just set it on the shelf Monday through Saturday and it becomes relatively obsolete for the post-modern world in which we live and the day-to-day problems that we face. This, my brother and sister, is not what God intended the Bible to be.

So may I be allowed to give you a fresh perspective of the book that we call the Bible. While the Bible is indeed a book that was inspired of God, it also was a book that was actually **written by MEN**. Now this is kind of an obvious statement, but as I stated previously, sometimes we spend so much time defending the Bible as the word of God that we almost forget that God didn't drop the book down out of the sky. We nearly forget that God used REAL men (not super-human men), but real flesh-and-blood

men to write the Bible. In fact, he used about 43 different men at different times in ACTUAL history to write 66 different books. In fact, not all of the "books" of the Bible were even intended to be books. Many of them (most of the "New Testament") were letters from REAL men to REAL people at a REAL point in history.

Now up to this point, I probably have not said anything profound, but before I proceed, I wanted to make sure that we were all reminded of those facts. So while most of us know everything I just stated and it is not news, what I think that many have never done is really consider the implications of those facts and how they can relate to us today in the "post-modern" world.

The first thing that I want to establish is that the men that God used to write the scriptures are some of the GREATEST MEN that have ever lived in the history of mankind. Now based on what you learn in school or from the media, you might not recognize that fact as being such, but let me indeed state that these men were amongst the BEST of the BEST ever to live. I don't want to go down the entire list, but just consider for a moment a few of them:

1. **Moses** - (wrote the first five books); raised a prince of Egypt (the world power of that time). He eventually became a pastor of the biggest mega-church ever (approximately 2 million people at low estimates), and the CHURCH had NO building (definitely not state-of-the-art), NO fun programs for the kids, and wandered in the wilderness with NO "stability" except very simple bread to eat 6 days a week. He dealt with murmurings, rebellions, sin in the camp, etc. and maintained the testimony as the "meekest man on the earth." And after 40 years, he left the church in BETTER condition to his successor than when he started... PRETTY IMPRESSIVE!

2. **Joshua** - (wrote Joshua); led a basically brand new nation with little to no military training or weaponry into a very hostile and well-defenced land where they basically won battle after battle with very few casualties and no defeats! Talk about the greatest coach of the biggest underdog team EVER! But we're not talking about a game; we're talking about LIFE and DEATH BATTLE! Arguably the greatest war leader in human history.
3. **David** - (Many Psalms); the youngest of 7 boys; a simple, country, shepherd boy that ended up taking over a very weak, discouraged, and divided nation that had been losing battles and ground from its enemies; after being in charge for 40 years, he left it a very safe, united, content nation with secured and expanded borders for the first time in nearly 400 years! He was an excellent warrior and king without a doubt; he was also a true man of God that took a very spiritually confused nation, turned them back to the Lord, and prepared them to build a temple to the LORD for his glory in acceptable worship.
4. **Paul the apostle** - (14 letters of the NT: Romans through Hebrews); a brilliant Pharisee (lawyer of God's law), specially trained to lead Jews within Judaism; he turned into arguably the world's greatest evangelist and church planter/missionary throughout Asia minor and Europe! He successfully started and established well over 20 churches from scratch! He personally won most of the converts to the Lord, taught them the ways of the Lord, and then left some good, able men in charge to carry the work forward. He maintained communication and oversight of the churches throughout the rest of his life and never even considered quitting; and he did ALL of this without modern technology, printing presses, a wife or children, while at times, being completely abandoned by all!

Those are just a few of the authors of some of the books/letters of the Bible. The purpose of this chapter is not to do an exhaustive biography of the authors of the books of the Bible (although I would encourage you to take the time and look more into the other authors as you will be amazed at how great these men really were) but rather to point out some key things that I think we should know and understand about these men.

The second thing that I believe we should know is that these men were **HOLY men**. Now they were not born as holy men, and they did not live perfectly holy lives (that much should be obvious). But when they wrote the things that they wrote, they were not vile sinners living in sin and justifying their sin. Peter himself testifies in 2 Peter 1:21, that they were “holy men of God [that] were moved by the Holy Ghost.” These were holy men. These were men that drew near to God with all their hearts. They were not living like the heathen that don't know God. They were not conformed to the standard culture of their day. They were sanctified and set apart. EVERYONE who knew them knew that they were set apart to God and were different than the normal person (whatever that means). They were DIFFERENT (in a good way) which is why they made such a DIFFERENCE! God has always required holiness from his people (“be ye holy, for I am holy”), and these men answered the call.

Now after realizing that these men were so great and holy, you might think that the gap between you and the Bible is just getting bigger and bigger, but it is ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY that we realize those 2 things before we can begin to understand some other key points that might REALLY help us to close the gap. We must understand that God Almighty created man to be great and pure. Man was made to be in God's image. And so it is vital for us to understand that if God is going to use anybody to do great things for his plans and purpose, they must be PURE and CLEAN vessels. He does not use filthy vessels.

However, what might be a help in closing the gap for us is to understand that NONE of these men considered themselves to be great in and of themselves. In fact, ALL of them realized that before God and without God they were absolutely NOTHING. They were all **humble men**. They (as I stated before) were men that struggled with various sins and character flaws; but if they ever fell into sin, they didn't try to make excuses or justify themselves. Instead, they REPENTED (genuinely were sorry for it and didn't want to repeat it). They always sought to please God, draw near to him, and live acceptable lives before him. They struggled at times with FEARS. They struggled at times with PATIENCE. They struggled at times with DISCOURAGEMENT. They were REAL people! They were not the sinless, incorruptible Son of God (although he took upon him corruption, but that is for another study). They were regular flesh-and-blood men that were born of regular flesh-and-blood parents. But what separated them from MOST people in human history (and today) is that through their difficulties and in the end they ALWAYS sought the LORD to be their refuge, strength and hope. They REALLY believed in a REAL living God that TRULY cared about them and watched over them throughout their REAL, ACTUAL life experiences. We look back at these men as historical figures, but we must never forget that they ALL at one time lived REAL lives in the PRESENT and trusted God through their challenges and growth. Now think about the great things that we see them do in the Bible! Think about all the AMAZING, MIRACULOUS things that these men were a part of that they KNEW they could have NEVER ACCOMPLISHED or performed by their own power. They knew it was God's power and God's blessing on their lives (which is why God did such GREAT things for them and others around them)!

Another thing that I think we must establish about these men is that they were men that had their **priorities straight**.

What distinguished them from most people and allowed them to BECOME great (they were not born great or great by default), was that they set their hearts, minds, spirits, and lives in ORDER. What do I mean? They understood that EVERYTHING good that they had in their life was a GIFT from the GREAT ALMIGHTY GOD! They understood that apart from their Creator and Lord, they would not even EXIST, let alone have any kind of blessings in life. Knowing these things and believing these things with all their heart, they really set God as the TRUE number one priority in their life. They didn't just play dress up once or twice a week while pursuing their OWN pleasures and their OWN dreams and their OWN goals and their OWN happiness 6-and-a-half days a week. They made sure that God ALWAYS got the first-fruits in their lives. That means in everything they gave God the PREEMINENCE (the first and rightful place). Their jobs did not come first. Their riches and houses did not come first. Their families did not even come first. And THEY themselves did not come first. GOD came first! He was the first one they spent time with in the morning, and the last one they spent time with in the evening. He was offered up the first and best of their livestock, their time, their energy, their thoughts, etc... and some even gave God ALL that they had! Now, remember, they did not do this FLAWLESSLY from the day they were born until the day they died. We know that they all messed up and slipped in their priorities at times. However, as they grew more in their knowledge and love of God, the more and more they were perfected by him and set him as the rightful King and Lord of their lives.

One final thing that I think that we should make note of regarding these men is the state of their heart, mind, and spirit when they actually wrote the scriptures (or spoke them, as often they did not actually pen the words onto the page but had someone else write the scriptures for them). For most of these men (ESPECIALLY in the "New Testament") when they wrote the

things that they wrote, they were writing down **things that God had revealed to them by his Spirit**. You say, "Duh! I knew that. That's not very profound..." Well, let me further expound and then see if you can see what I am getting at. For instance, when Peter says: "Seeing that ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren..." he is not just stating a THEORETICAL ("DOCTRINAL") truth about something that happens in theory when someone prays a prayer of salvation to accept Jesus. He wasn't writing a doctrinal thesis about what could happen if someone actually believed the truth. No, he was writing to REAL people that he SAW the effects of what happened to them in their REAL LIVES (he says their "souls" which is really a fulness of their self-being) when they BELIEVED and OBEYED the truth. He saw them go from filthy, perverted, fleshy, carnal people to PURE, gentle, loving people. He ACTUALLY saw it happen! And he RECOGNIZED it for what it was, because it was something that he himself also experienced! How many people pray some prayer to try to appease an angry God so that they might get their fire-insurance policy to avoid hell and NEVER change from vile to pure? Their souls NEVER transform from hateful to loving. And a lot of times, it doesn't even seem to bother their preachers?! What is going on today? I think many have relegated the Bible to a book of theory and forgotten that the things that these men wrote of were things that they ACTUALLY believed with all their hearts, and things that they had ACTUALLY lived and experienced in their REAL lives. They were not a bunch of filthy men that God quickly gave his Spirit to and forced them to write a bunch of true theory that none of them knew anything about and never really believed could happen. And they were not a bunch of religious experts writing theoretical doctrinal thesis' to make a name for themselves and sell a lot of copies for their own gain... No, that is not what the Bible is at all! The Bible was written by REAL men who had really received

God's Spirit and believed the things that they were writing because they knew that their God was true; and much of what they wrote about, they had experienced God's faithfulness to perform those things. I know that there are exceptions with prophecies (especially in the Old Testament) but even in those cases, they knew it was the word of the Lord and that God would fulfil his word in HIS time!

So in conclusion, the reality is that most of us (probably all of us) will NEVER be one of the greatest of the greats of all time in the Lord's mind. And I know that we will not be used to add to the Holy Scriptures. However, is it possible that we could consider ourselves to be nothing apart from God? Is it possible that we could humble ourselves to realize that anything good that we have received really was ultimately from or made possible by our great God? Is it possible that we could realize that he is WORTHY (and truly the only one worthy) to be absolutely first in our lives? And is it not possible (even likely) that if we did these things from our hearts, that our great God and Lord Jesus Christ could make us and our lives GREATER and of MORE ETERNAL VALUE than we EVER could on our OWN? Could he not TRANSFORM us into men and women (and even children) of faith, honesty, strength, patience, and love? And then could he not actually begin to FILL us and INSPIRE us with the SAME Spirit that filled and inspired those men that wrote the Bible so that the Bible could become a TRUE and LIVING book that reveals our God, his ways, and his will? Could it not (as we continue in his word and Spirit) become a book where we can actually begin to RELATE to the things that those men wrote of as we begin to EXPERIENCE the SAME God work those same things in our lives? And is it not possible that if the GREAT God could perform such GREAT feats to overcome GREAT obstacles for these GREAT men, that he could do little things to overcome the small obstacles for simple, average people as ourselves? (God

loves to choose the poor, weak, and common people to work with.)

Maybe, just maybe, the Bible can become to us, what it was originally meant to be: our real connection to our real God, so that we might please our Lord, and ACTUALLY be conformed to HIS image! Hallelujah! All praise be to our God! "For of him, and through him, and to him are ALL THINGS": His Bible, his Spirit, and even OUR LIVES!

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."
Ephesians 3:14-21

"And he that sat upon the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' And he said unto me, 'Write: for these words are true and faithful.' And he said unto me, 'It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.'"
Revelation 21:5-7