

A vibrant, stylized illustration of a scroll. The scroll is unrolled from the top left, where a rainbow is visible, and curves around the bottom right. On the left side of the scroll, a globe is depicted with a rainbow arching over it. The scroll itself features various scenes: a rainbow, a ship (Noah's Ark), a city (Babel), and a crowd of people. Labels are placed along the scroll: 'The Flood' near the ship, 'Ham' near a small image of a person, 'Japheth' near another small image, and 'Shem' near a third small image. The background is white with some light blue and yellow clouds.

# A Visual Survey of the Bible

David L. Dawson





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David L. Dawson



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# ***Contents***



Dedication.....	iv
Preface .....	v
Acknowledgments.....	vi
Introduction .....	vii

<b>1</b>	<b>Overview: Genesis to Malachi.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Overview: Matthew to Revelation .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>The Promise to Adam.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>The Promise to Abraham .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Overview: Abraham to David .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>The Promise to David.....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Overview: David to Jesus.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>The Promise of a New Covenant .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>The Promise Fulfilled.....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>The Promise Expanded to the Holy Land.....</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>The Promise Expanded to all Nations .....</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>The Promise Through Prophecy .....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>The Promise Experienced .....</b>	<b>125</b>

## **Pictorial Bible Chart**

# ***Dedication***

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*At birth God gave me a set of parents,*

***Marshall and Mamie Dawson***

*When I married my wife, Mary, God gave me a second set,*

***Roy and Elsa Seedoff***

*This book is dedicated to them for their loving  
care, guidance, and encouragement.*

# Preface



**I**t is my conviction that *every* believer should have a firm grasp of Scripture and understand the central message of the Bible. Unfortunately only a small percentage of Christians has ever read through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Those who have read the Bible from cover to cover often find it almost impossible to arrange the events they read about in any kind of logical sequence. For them the Bible becomes a book of assorted narratives that are related, but not in a fashion they can understand.

For eighteen years I had been an ardent student of the Bible. I knew all the Bible stories and had preached on many of them for years. But it bothered me that somehow as a disciple I couldn't line them all up in their chronological order and see their relevance and relationship to one another.

Finally I set out to remedy this problem for myself. I found some books which were very helpful, and from each I learned something which helped to put the pieces of the Bible's jigsaw puzzle together. Out of that study grew this *Visual Survey of the Bible*, which I use to help people master the Bible in my *EQUIPPING THE SAINTS* program. I want to acknowledge my gratitude to the authors of the following works:

*The Golden Bible Atlas* by Samuel Terrien  
*An Outline of Old Testament History* by Charles F. Pfeiffer  
*The Panorama Bible Study Course* by Alfred T. Eade  
*An Old and New Testament Walk Through* by Ralph G. Braun  
*Contemporary Options in Eschatology* by Millard J. Erickson  
*The Meaning of the Millennium* by Robert G. Clouse

It was with the aid of these books that I eventually was able to start at Genesis and arrange all the major events of the Bible in order, right through to the book of Revelation. For the first time in my life I could visualize the central message of the Bible and could lay it out chronologically. I remember thinking, "So that's what the Bible is all about." I only wished someone had shown me this when I first came to Christ. How much richer my study and understanding of the Bible would have been!

If you find yourself confused and overwhelmed as you try to understand the Bible's central theme, I commend to you this *Visual Survey of the Bible*. It was created in an effort to help Christians understand God's plan and revelation of Himself in the Bible.

I have taken the liberty to insert a set of dates as well as indicate where the books of the Bible occur on the chart. Since scholars differ in the pinpointing of dates, these are meant to be approximate and not exact.

**David L. Dawson**  
Greenville, Texas  
August 1994

# Acknowledgments

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*I want to express my thanks to the following people for their significant contributions to the production of this book:*

**Dr. Lau Waun Kei** and **Angela Ang**, my collaborators and dear friends who worked closely with me on the rough draft of the 15-foot chart.

**Rocky Hails**, who did the finished art work for the chart.

**Stephanie Walton** for the beautiful water coloring of the final chart.

**Julie Robinson** for the excellent calligraphy on the chart.

**Bill Shell** and **Harold Bullock** for their theological assistance in the preparation of the *Survey* manuscript.

**Sheri Seawright** for input of the text to the computer and layout of the initial draft.

**Bill Shell** and **Laura Ragan** for the detailed proofreading of many drafts.

**Molly Ragan**, my faithful assistant for twelve years, for her supervision of the office, her typing of the original draft, and her tedious attention to the detail of proofreading and correction.

**Gordon Adams**, my collaborator in the ministry and member of the Board, for his design of the book, his editorial assistance, and final layout on our desktop publishing computer.

Finally, to my beloved wife and my best friend, **Mary Dawson**, who edited and corrected my many manuscripts. Without her help I would be reluctant to undertake any such project such as this.

Those afflicted with dyslexia ordinarily should not attempt to write books. Without the help of those listed above, and many others I have not mentioned, *A Visual Survey of the Bible* would not exist. Join me in thanking God for the way He works in the Body of Christ, and if this book proves to be a blessing to you, may He receive the glory.




# *Introduction*



This book has been deliberately designed to be used in a variety of ways; it has also been integrated with the 15-foot chart, which is part of this package. You will “walk through” this chart two times during your study (chapters 1–2 and 3–12). Every panel is 11” x 17” in size, each half being designated “a” (left) and “b” (right); these panels may be taped together and laminated to make the 15-foot chart, which can then be hung as a display in your own room or before a group or class.

The format of this study book is as follows:

- Each **page** has about a 2-1/2” margin on the outside for **your own** additional notes (such as, observations, questions and answers, cross-references, emphases, and additional memory verses). Each **chapter** in the study margins tells you exactly where the written data may be found on or correlated with the chart visually (**Panel 1▲**, **Panel 1▼**). Certain **chapters** (3, 4, 6, 8, 9 [twice], 13) have a key verse in them (marked with a **box** and a key, ) to designate a crucial statement that should be **memorized** to acquire a clear flow of biblical history and the main message of the Bible. Also included are perforated verse cards to help you with the memory work.

This study book may also be used in a number of different ways — as an individual study, an evangelistic study, a classroom text, and a group discussion.

- **Individual Study** — With the chart open to the necessary **panels** before you (marked in the margins, or as individual panels if you have not made a scroll), read each chapter carefully, visualize what you are reading (on the chart), and write down any personal notes in the margins. (**Optional:** The books of the Bible for each panel are marked on the bottom, so check to see each book as an overview in a study Bible or skim through the book itself.) Proceed at **your own** pace.
- **Evangelistic Study** — Get a group of people together who are interested in discovering what the Bible is all about — what it actually says and teaches. Ask every member to study each chapter carefully on his/her own (**except** chapter 12) **before** class, then discuss the studies and discoveries in your group settings. Be sure you always emphasize the **gospel**, moving toward the first half of chapter 13 (pages 125-130), trusting God that each member will eventually pray the prayer on page 130.

- **Classroom Text** — Enlarge each page of the panel to double its size, or more if possible (8-1/2" x 11" to at least 11" x 17"), making a 20-foot chart (or larger), then hang it on a wall the class can see. Walk your class through each chapter and panel, using a combination of lecture, discussion, and question and answer methods. Proceed at a pace comfortable for you and your class.
- **Group Discussion** — Ask your group of **Christians** to study each chapter individually, then meet together for discussion of the lesson (**suggestion:** one chapter per week, **including** chapter 12). This time, however, aim at the practical emphasis given in chapter 13, second half (pages 130-136). For the Christian, **personal application** must always be the conclusion to every Bible study.

## Chapter 1

# ***Overview: Genesis to Malachi***

## **Introduction**

Many people think of the Bible as a Holy Book which contains the message of God. It seems to them an assortment of nice stories that somehow relate to God, but just *how* they relate is not clear. Many fail to understand the Bible's central message or to see how all of the parts fit together and relate to one another.

In reality the Bible is God's revelation of Himself to man. This revelation describes the most amazing story the world has ever known. It is the historical account of how God created man, how man rebelled against God, and how God, in His love, made a way for man to be restored to fellowship with Him through His Son, Jesus Christ.

The English Bible has 66 books which are divided into two sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. These books were written by some 40 authors over a period of more than 1,500 years, but they are amazingly integrated into one story — the story of God's love and man's salvation.

## **The Old Testament**

In our English Bibles the Old Testament contains 39 books that may be divided into four sections:

■ The Law — 5 books

■ Poetry — 5 books

■ History — 12 books

■ Prophecy — 17 books

# The Old Testament at a Glance (39 Books)

## ① Law

Genesis  
Exodus  
Leviticus  
Numbers  
Deuteronomy

## ② History and Government

Joshua  
Judges  
Ruth  
1 Samuel  
2 Samuel  
1 Kings  
2 Kings  
1 Chronicles  
2 Chronicles  
Ezra  
Nehemiah  
Esther

## ③ Poetry

Job  
Psalms  
Proverbs  
Ecclesiastes  
Song of Solomon

## ④ Prophecy

### Major Prophets

Isaiah  
Jeremiah  
Lamentations  
Ezekiel  
Daniel

### Minor Prophets

Hosea  
Joel  
Amos  
Obadiah  
Jonah  
Micah  
Nahum  
Habakkuk  
Zephaniah  
Haggai  
Zechariah  
Malachi



If we are to understand the Old Testament, we must especially comprehend the first three chapters of Genesis, because these chapters set the stage for understanding all the rest of the Bible from Genesis 4 through Revelation 22.

## The Creation

The Bible opens with the account of the creation of the universe — how God created the light, firmament, earth, sea, sun, moon, and the creatures of the air, land, and sea.

▼ Panel 1

## Creation Chart (by Days)

Creation of light, the division of light from darkness. Light was called day and the darkness was called night (Genesis 1:2-5).	①
The separation of the earth's water from the atmospheric water in the firmament of heaven (Genesis 1:6-8).	②
Creation of plant life, whose seed was within itself to provide vegetation for the land which was emerging as the waters gathered together in lakes, streams, and seas (Genesis 1:9-13).	③
Creation of the sun, moon, and stars to divide day from night and to provide the light source for both (Genesis 1:14-19).	④
Creation of fish and sea creatures to populate the waters, and birds to inhabit the skies (Genesis 1:20-23).	⑤
Creation of land animals to roam the earth and "man" who was created in God's own image and who was to have dominion over all creation (Genesis 1:24-31).	⑥
Creation of rest. Creation was completed, and God rested from all His labors (Genesis 2:1-3).	⑦

## Adam and Eve

The crowning work of God's creation was mankind, whom He made in His image for fellowship with Himself.

In Genesis 1:1—2:3, we are given a general account of what God did. In Genesis 2:4-25, we are given more specifics about man's creation and his special relationship to God. Here we learn that we were created from the elements of the earth, but in the image of God. It was not until God breathed into man the breath of life that he became a living soul. Adam was placed in

Panel 1 ▲

Panel 2 ▲



the garden and given a role to perform — to tend and keep the garden. From Genesis 1:28 we know this means he was to have dominion over all of God’s creation. Adam was given specific instructions about one tree called “The Tree of Knowledge” — he was told not to eat of it because he would die.

*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*

— Genesis 2:17

God caused all the animals of His creation to pass before Adam, and whatever Adam named the animal, that is what it was called. Yet out of all of creation nothing was found as a suitable helper for Adam himself. So God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep and from his side He took a rib and created a helper for him.

It is interesting to note that when Eve was created, her role in the mind of God was to be a *helper* to Adam. This is not a popular view in the twentieth century women’s liberation movement, but nonetheless this was God’s distinct role for her. It was Adam who called her “Woman,” for she was created from man.

## **The Fall**

Satan, in the form of a serpent, deceived Eve into taking the forbidden fruit, and she gave some to Adam who also ate it. Now, because of disobedience and rebellion, they were cut off and separated from God — spiritually dead though physically alive.

## **The Promise**

If God had abandoned man in his sin, the Bible would have been only three and one-half chapters long. However, God did not abandon mankind in his sin. God punished or cursed Satan for what he had done to separate mankind from Himself. Through this curse God indirectly gave a great promise to Adam and Eve. In this survey we are going to call this “The Promise to Adam.” One day the seed of the woman, whom Satan had deceived, would destroy the power of Satan and make a way for people to return to God. This seed was to be Jesus. This is the first prophecy of Jesus Christ, the coming Savior.

*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.*

— Genesis 3:15

The Bible is not a history book of the world; it is a history book of the promise God made to Adam. It is the historical account

of how God fulfilled this promise and made a way to restore man to fellowship with Himself. It only records those events which are relevant to the fulfillment of this promise. If you know world history, you can put in the events which will enhance your understanding of God's working in human history.

## Cain and Abel

After Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden in punishment for their sin, God made them coats from the skin of an animal. This was the first shedding of blood for sin and is the forerunner of a system which God would establish at a later date under Old Testament Law.

Adam and Eve had two sons named Cain and Abel. One day when they were offering sacrifices to God, Cain's gift of fruits and vegetables was rejected by God while Abel's animal sacrifice of blood was accepted. In anger Cain killed Abel. Soon after this God gave Adam and Eve another son named Seth. The promise is carried on through him.

## Men Multiply for Many Years

For centuries men multiplied on the earth and tragically became more and more corrupt.

*Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

— Genesis 6:5

There were some good men, like Enoch, who walked with God, but most were evil. God decided to destroy all of mankind through a great flood, but because of His promise to Adam and Eve He preserved man's seed. This He did through Noah and his family.

## Noah and the Ark

Noah was a man who loved and obeyed God. God warned him of the coming flood and told him to build an ark (a large ship), which would carry pairs of each kind of animal in the world to preserve the species. Everything else would be destroyed.

Noah and his sons worked at building the ark for over 100 years. When completed it measured 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. After Noah loaded it with the animals and provisions, the rain began to fall. It continued for 40 days and nights, with additional water coming from the lower parts of the earth. All the world was covered, and all life died except for Noah and his family and the animals in the ark.

Panel 2 ▲

Panel 3 ▼

The ark came to rest 150 days later on Mount Ararat where it is believed to remain to this day. One year and 17 days after entering the ark Noah and his family and the animals disembarked from it. Noah immediately built an altar and offered a sacrifice to the Lord.

At that time God promised that He would never again destroy the world by flood and gave the rainbow as a sign of that promise to all mankind. We are all descendants of Noah and his sons.

### **Shem, Ham, and Japheth — Noah's Sons**

After the flood, men began to multiply again, but their hearts were still in rebellion to God. Ham, Noah's son, had a son named Cush, who in turn had a son named Nimrod. Nimrod led his people out into the plains of Shinar where he set up the first organized false religion. He and the people began to build a tower to reach into heaven. The tower displeased God, who put a stop to it by confusing the language of the builders so that they could no longer continue.

The people divided up and went their separate ways. The sons of Ham became the fathers of the dark-skinned African races. The descendants of Japheth populated Asia Minor and Europe. The promise of God was carried through the sons of Shem, among whose descendants were God's chosen nation, the Hebrews.

▲ Panel 3

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▼ Panel 4

### **Abraham — 2000 B.C.**

One of Shem's descendants was named Abraham. He was personally visited by God while living in Ur of the Chaldees and was commanded to leave that sinful place and follow God's leading to a new land. Abraham and his wife, Sarah, obeyed and left with their household to follow God. God promised Abraham that He would make of him a great nation, and that he would be a blessing to the whole world. The only problem was that Sarah was barren. Rather than trust God to fulfill His plan through Sarah, Abraham and Sarah took matters into their own hands. Abraham fathered a son (Ishmael) by Sarah's servant Hagar.

However, because of His promise, God now would also make a great nation out of a seed that never should have been. Ishmael became the father of the Arab peoples, many of whom are in great opposition to Christianity and Judaism today. God's plan was to give Abraham a child through Sarah, which He eventually did. Isaac was born, the son through whom the promise would come. God gave the land that Israel later occupied as an eternal inheritance to Abraham and his descendants. He was told by God that his descendants would later spend 400 years in bondage.

## **Isaac and Rebekah/Jacob and Esau**

Isaac married Rebekah, and they had two sons — Jacob and Esau. Although Esau was the eldest, Jacob persuaded him to sell his birthright for a bowl of stew. He also stole Esau's blessing from Isaac and had to run for his life from his enraged brother. Many years later Jacob personally encountered an angel of God, who wrestled with him and put his hip out of joint. This was a life-changing experience for Jacob, whose name was then changed by God to Israel. Jacob had twelve sons who eventually became the twelve tribes of Israel.

## **Joseph**

Joseph was one of Jacob's younger sons and was greatly loved by his father. However, his ten older brothers were jealous of his favored position, so they sold him to some slave traders who brought him to Egypt and sold him as a slave. This was part of God's plan to prepare the way for the Israelites' 400-year stay in Egypt. Joseph, because of his obedience to God and his integrity, rose to the position of prime minister by the time his family was finally reunited with him in Egypt.

Because of Joseph, Jacob and his sons were allowed to stay in Egypt and thereby survive the famine that had swept the entire region. However, after Joseph's death a new pharaoh came to power, who eventually enslaved the Hebrews and caused them to serve the Egyptians for 400 years.

## **Moses and the Exodus — 1450 B.C.**

In spite of their slavery and mistreatment, the Hebrews continued to multiply until they numbered nearly 3 million. Because of their bondage they cried out to God for deliverance, and He raised up a man named Moses. Moses was a Hebrew who had been raised and educated by Pharaoh's daughter as her own son.

Moses became the leader of the Israelites and was sent by God to tell Pharaoh to let His people go. Pharaoh stubbornly refused at first. However, after God sent ten plagues upon Egypt, he decided to let the Hebrews leave. Moses led them out as far as the Red Sea, where God miraculously caused the water to be held back so that His people could pass over on dry ground. When Pharaoh's army tried to pursue them, God caused the sea to close up, drowning the Egyptians.

At Mount Sinai God delivered to Moses the Ten Commandments. At Kadesh-barnea the people refused to enter the Promised Land through lack of faith and disobedience. As a result they were doomed by God to wander in the wilderness for 40 years. Even

Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land because of disobedience to God! At the end of 40 years he was allowed to see the land at a distance from Mount Pisgah before he died.

## **The Mosaic Covenant**

God had Moses draw the people into a covenant which made possession of the land contingent on their obedience to God. The rest of Hebrew history as it relates to the Promised Land is conditioned by this covenant of obedience. If they obeyed God, He promised to bless them in the land. If they disobeyed, God said He would curse them. The ultimate curse was to remove them from the land and scatter them throughout the earth.

## **Joshua — 1400 B.C.**

After Moses' death God chose Joshua, who had been Moses' assistant, to lead the people into the Promised Land that God had sworn to Abraham. The walls of Jericho fell, and the Israelites, under Joshua's leadership, conquered much of the Promised Land.

Because of their obedience to the Mosaic Covenant, God blessed them in the land. However, at the end of Joshua's life part of the land was still in the hands of the enemy. After Joshua's death there was no trained leader to replace him. Israel was left in confusion.

▲ Panel 4

▼ Panel 5

## **Time of the Judges — 1390-1050 B.C.**

Because Israel's tribal leaders were rebellious, they inevitably fell into sin, thereby incurring the punishment of God because of the Mosaic Covenant. The Bible records that in this 340-year period of time "every man did what was right in his own eyes."

When the Israelites cried out to God for deliverance, God raised up a series of judges or military leaders who delivered Israel from foreign oppression. The people, however, were not happy with this system and demanded a king like all the other nations. So Samuel the prophet anointed Saul as the first king of Israel.

## **The United Kingdom — 1050-930 B.C.**

This period of 120 years involved the leadership of Israel's first three kings — Saul, David, and his son Solomon. The kingdom began strongly under these competent monarchs, but later disintegrated, leading to moral, physical, and spiritual ruin — unity gave way to division.



## **Saul — Israel's First King — 1050 B.C.**

Saul ruled Israel for 40 years and took control of more of the Promised Land. When Saul became disobedient, God raised up David, the son of Jesse, to rule in his place.

## **David — 1010 B.C.**

David was a humble shepherd, whom God had chosen to be the king of Israel. David's lineage could be traced back to Abraham, and through him God renewed His promise that one day his seed would rule Israel forever. (This future seed was to be Jesus.) David was "a man after God's own heart" who truly loved God and desired to obey Him. David, like Saul before him, conquered more of the Promised Land and brought Israel to great heights of power.

In his later years David committed adultery with Bathsheba and had her husband, Uriah, murdered. But he truly repented, so God forgave him and allowed him to continue his rule until the end of his life. However, his sin had costly consequences in causing rebellion within his own family and repercussions within the rule of his son Solomon, who assumed the throne after him.

## **Solomon — 970 B.C.**

Solomon brought Israel to its Golden Age. Israel had conquered almost all of the Promised Land and was at peace for the first time in many years. Solomon built the beautiful Temple for God which had been David's dream. In his early years Solomon walked with God, and God blessed him with great wisdom and riches, more than the world had ever known.

For many years he ruled Israel in godliness, but Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines who drew his heart away from God. By the end of his life the kingdom was physically, morally, and spiritually bankrupt.

## **The Divided Kingdom — 930-586 B.C.**

After Solomon's death, his son Rehoboam assumed the throne, but he dealt harshly with the people of Israel. Jeroboam, son of Nebat, led a rebellion against him. Ten of the tribes of Israel followed Jeroboam. Only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to Rehoboam's leadership.

Unfortunately, neither Jeroboam nor Rehoboam were godly leaders, and both kingdoms were plunged into sin and idolatry. Both kingdoms were later taken into captivity because of their sins. This was the ultimate cursing of the Mosaic Covenant.

▲ Panel 5

▼ Panel 6

## **Jeroboam — 930 B.C.**

Jeroboam became the leader of the ten northern tribes of Israel. Their capitol eventually became the city of Samaria. There was war and dissension between the ten northern tribes of Israel and the two southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin most of the time they existed.

## **Rehoboam — 930 B.C.**

The fulfilling of the promise that God first gave to Adam, reaffirmed in Abraham, and renewed in David, was to be continued in the southern kingdom of Judah. Rehoboam, who remained leader of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, maintained Jerusalem as the capital city of Judah. Much of the time, Judah was at war with the ten northern tribes of Israel as well as with Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon.

## **The Prophets — 850 B.C.**

It was during this period that the prophets were active. An oversimplified understanding of their message was that the people were to repent and return to God. If they refused, the ultimate curse of the Mosaic Covenant of being removed from the land would come upon them. The prophets were categorized by whether they prophesied to the northern or southern kingdom, or both. They were also categorized by when they were prophetic — before, during, or after the exile.

## **The Captivities — 721 and 586 B.C.**

The ten tribes of Israel lasted until 721 B.C., when they were marched into exile by the Assyrian king, Sargon II. They were ruled by some nineteen kings who were all evil. The entire kingdom only lasted for 200 years.

During the next 344 years, Judah (or the southern kingdom) had nineteen kings and one queen. Because eight of these leaders were good and drove idol worship out of the land, God blessed Judah and caused it to be extended longer than the northern kingdom. But in 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. He took the southern kingdom into captivity just as the prophets had warned would happen many times before. The Hebrews did, however, retain their national identity and religion while exiled in Babylon.

## **The Restoration — 539 B.C.**

King Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. and offered to allow the Jews to return to their homeland. (The returning exiles were now called Jews because of the prominence of their territory — Judah. “Jews” comes from “Judah-ites.”) Zerubbabel led about 50,000 Jews back to Jerusalem with orders to rebuild the Temple of Jehovah God.

In 458 B.C. another Jew named Ezra brought a small band of about 6,000 Jews back to Jerusalem to restore the religious life of the community. Then in 444 B.C. Nehemiah returned to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem in 52 days. The city was now completed and the Jews were restored, but the land no longer belonged to them. They were under foreign occupation.

## **Malachi — 400 B.C.**

Malachi was the last of the post-exilic Old Testament prophets. He foretold the coming of a messenger — like Elijah — who would be sent from God to prepare them for the coming of the Promised Messiah (Jesus).

## **400 Years of Silence**

After Malachi’s prophecy no word was heard from God for 400 years. During this time the “world” was ruled by the Greek and Roman Empires, which successively dominated the Middle East. But even during this time, the Jews amazingly retained their national identity and their system of religious worship. Those centuries of silence brought the Old Testament to a close.

Panel 6 ▲



## Chapter 2

# ***Overview: Matthew to Revelation***

## **Introduction**

In the perfect fullness of time, when God was ready to enact His Plan of Redemption, the 400 years of silence that followed the book of Malachi was at last broken. The Old Testament had revealed man, made in the image of God, defeated by Satan in the Garden of Eden, and unable to have fellowship with God because of sin. God in His wisdom, however, had devised a plan for the seed of the woman to restore mankind to his rightful place of fellowship with Him.

The New Testament reveals, through the incarnation of Jesus Christ, that God in the image of man has defeated Satan, who once had deceived and conquered the human race. Because of Christ men may once again know intimacy with the Father. The seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15) has crushed Satan's head.

Matthew's and Luke's Gospels trace the lineage of Jesus Christ back to David and Abraham, fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies and requirements for the coming of the Messiah.

## **The New Testament**

The New Testament contains 27 books that may be divided into four sections:

■ The Gospels — 4 books


■ Epistles — 21 books

■ History — 1 book

■ Prophecy — 1 book



The New Testament  
at a Glance  
(27 Books)

<b>❶ Gospels</b> Matthew Mark Luke John  <b>❷ History</b> Acts  <b>❹ Prophecy</b> Revelation  	<b>❸ Epistles</b>	
	<b>Paul's Letters</b>	<b>General Letters</b>
	Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians 1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Philemon	Hebrews James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude

The Forerunner of Jesus —  
John the Baptist

The Old Testament ended with Malachi’s prophecy of “Elijah,” the forerunner of the Messiah, who would prepare the way for the long awaited Savior. The subsequent 400 years of silence was broken when God sent the Angel Gabriel to Zechariah. He was offering the sacrifice before the Altar of Incense in the Holy Place in the Temple. He was told that Elizabeth, his wife, would bear a son in her old age, and that he was to be called John. His mission would be to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah.

Panel 7

We know this man today as John the Baptist, who would call on the people of Israel to repent of their sins, to be baptized for the remission of those sins, and to await the appearance of the Messiah.

# **The Life and Ministry of Jesus the Messiah**

## **His Coming and Preparation**

### **Jesus' Birth**

The Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary six months after he had visited the priest Zechariah. Mary was a virgin living in Galilee. She was engaged to a man named Joseph, a humble carpenter. God sent Gabriel to tell Mary she was to bear the Son of God, who would rule from David's Throne, and who was to be named Jesus. Her response to the angel was, "Be it unto me according to your word." An angel then appeared to Joseph and told him to take Mary as his wife.

As Mary's time for delivery approached, she and Joseph were forced to travel to Bethlehem for a Roman census. Jesus was born in a stable because there was no room for Him elsewhere. Angels first proclaimed His birth to shepherds, who then went to see Him. He was circumcised and named on the eighth day, then presented to the Lord in the Temple on the 40th day. This is where Simeon and Anna met the family, and Simeon prophesied.

Months later wise men from the east came to worship Jesus and left gifts for Him. King Herod the Great tried to kill the Baby, but Joseph was warned by an angel to flee to Egypt, where he remained till after Herod's death. At the instructions of an angel the family returned home to Nazareth of Galilee.

### **Jesus' Youth**

The Bible records little of Jesus' youth after His early childhood. We have the account of His trip to Jerusalem at the age of 12 with His family for the Passover. When the family began the journey home, they found that Jesus had remained in Jerusalem to discuss the law with the priests. The religious leaders were amazed at His understanding of the law. When reproved by His parents for causing them to worry, Jesus responded with His first recorded words, "I must be about my Father's business." After this incident Jesus returned to Nazareth where Luke records that Jesus grew to maturity in wisdom (mental), stature (physical), favor with God (spiritual), and favor with man (social).

### **Jesus' Baptism and Temptation**

At age 30 Jesus departed from Nazareth for Bethabara on the Jordan River and was baptized by His cousin, John the Baptist. This is the only place in Scripture where all three persons of the Trinity were together in one place. Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Satan was defeated by Jesus in each temptation with words of Scripture, "It is written...." The author of Hebrews reminds us:

*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

— Hebrews 4:15

## **The First Year of Ministry**

### **Bethabara to Capernaum**

Jesus began His public ministry by returning to Bethabara, where John was baptizing. John declared, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." The time element is right around the Feast of Dedication, early in December A.D. 26.

Jesus immediately began attracting followers, the first of whom were John and Andrew, then Simon Peter. He then went to Bethsaida in Galilee, where He recruited Philip and Nathanael. With His first group of disciples Jesus attended a wedding in Cana, where He performed His first miracle by changing water into wine. He moved His family and His followers to Capernaum, the city that would become His center of ministry in Galilee.

### **Capernaum to Jerusalem**

Jesus went to Jerusalem for the first Passover of His public ministry (Spring A.D. 27), where He carried out His first cleansing of the Temple. When asked to give a sign that He had the authority to do this, He answered, "Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up" (speaking of His resurrection). Here He also met Nicodemus and explained to him the need of the new birth.

### **Jerusalem to Capernaum**

In the Judean countryside near the Jordan where John the Baptist's ministry was still going on, Jesus also did some baptizing. This brought on a crisis among John's disciples who were bothered by Jesus' rising popularity. John's grand reply showed his knowledge of his own limited mission: "He must increase, and I must decrease." Jesus continued north into Samaria where He encountered the woman at the well of Sychar; through her and Jesus' testimonies many in that city were won to the Messiah.

The group continued on to Galilee, where Jesus ministered to the now-gathering crowds: “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.” Later in Cana He met a nobleman from Capernaum who asked Jesus to heal his dying son; Jesus did so “long-distance.” On another occasion in His hometown synagogue in Nazareth Jesus was asked to read the Scripture from the Prophets. He read from Isaiah 61:1-2, and identified Himself as that long-awaited Messiah of that prophecy. The people were furious when they heard this and attempted to kill Him. This ended Jesus’ first year of ministry.

## **The Second Year of Ministry**

### **The First Galilean Tour**

Jesus began His second year of public ministry by calling Peter, Andrew, James, and John “to fish” full-time for men. While in Capernaum He cast out demons for the first time and healed Peter’s mother-in-law of her fever. With His group of followers He traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and sometimes from Peter’s boat by the seashore. He healed many during this time, including His first leper, whom He sent to Jerusalem to be examined.

A delegation of Pharisees from Jerusalem were angered by Jesus’ healing of a paralyzed man by first forgiving him his sins. They were further upset by Jesus’ calling on a hated tax collector, Levi/Matthew, and eating with him in his home. Jesus rebuked them for their attitude with the parable of the wineskins. This was the beginning of a long period of controversy between Jesus and the religious leaders of Israel.

Jesus traveled to Jerusalem for His second public Passover (Spring A.D. 28) and there healed a lame man by the Pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath. In answering His critics Jesus demonstrated His equality with the Father and preached on judgment and the resurrection. This began a series of Sabbath controversies. The Pharisees accused Him of breaking the Sabbath when He allowed His disciples to pluck grain on that day from the fields. He also healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath in a synagogue somewhere in Galilee.

At this point, since His enemies were plotting to kill Him, Jesus withdrew to the Sea of Galilee, where He preached to larger and larger crowds. After a night of prayer on a mountain, Jesus chose 12 of His disciples to be with Him in a training situation. They were called apostles (“sent ones”). Following this He delivered one of His many series of teachings we call “The Sermon on the Mount.”

### **The Training of The Twelve**

After calling The Twelve, Jesus began to change the focus of His ministry from the masses to the training of these men. He personally spent less time with the multitudes, but trained the disciples to minister to them as they encountered them throughout this training period.

Jesus returned to Capernaum and healed the Roman centurion's servant, then raised a widow's son from the dead in Nain. He praised John the Baptist, who was then in prison, by stating that he was the greatest of all prophets and was the Elijah of Malachi's prophecy. He denounced some cities for their failure to repent.

During this journey in Galilee Jesus was ministered to by an immoral woman who washed His feet with her tears. This ended His second year of ministry.

## **The Third Year of Ministry**

### **The Second Galilean Tour**

Some older women accompanied Jesus and His disciples on this trip. He was accused by His family members of being insane. After casting out another demon, He was accused by the Pharisees of working these miracles by the power of Beelzebub (Satan). His family was further offended because He told His listeners that His real family was made up of people who would do His will.

While on this tour, Jesus frequently taught in parables, thus hiding spiritual truth from His skeptics, but revealing it to His committed followers. (*Parables may be defined as true-to-life stories that teach moral and spiritual truths.*) After a long series of these teachings Jesus stilled a raging storm on the Sea of Galilee. He and His disciples arrived safely at Gadara (or Gerasa), where He healed a demoniac possessed by a legion of demons. He allowed the demons to enter a herd of pigs who then ran into the sea and were drowned.

### **Ministry in Capernaum**

The group then returned to Capernaum where Jesus healed the woman who touched His cloak, raised Jairus' daughter from the dead, and healed two blind men and a demoniac. He was again accused of healing people by the power of the prince of demons.

He returned to Nazareth for the last time and was again an embarrassment to His family. The people rejected Him as the Messiah, for they knew Him and His family too well and could not believe He was divine.



### **The Third Galilean Tour**

On this tour of Galilee Jesus taught His disciples that “the fields are white unto harvest” (people were responsive to the Gospel), and sent them out in teams of two to multiply the ministry. When they returned, they reported to Jesus on their experiences. Jesus was informed that John the Baptist had been murdered by King Herod Antipas. He then departed for a rest, but was moved with compassion to heal many of the sick brought to Him and to minister to the crowds.

At this point Jesus fed the 5,000, sent The Twelve across the sea, then departed to pray alone on the mountain. Later that night Jesus came to the disciples by walking on the water. He invited Peter to come to Him in the same way, which Peter did as long as he kept his eyes on Christ. The next day they landed in the plain of Gennesaret where Jesus healed many before going on to Capernaum.

### **Capernaum, Phoenicia, The Decapolis, Eastern Shore**

Jesus taught that He was the Bread of Life and that those who followed Him must “eat” His flesh. Many were offended by this and departed. Jesus asked The Twelve if they wanted to go also. He predicted that one of The Twelve would betray Him. The Pharisees accused Him of breaking the law because He let the disciples eat with unwashed hands. Jesus exposed their hypocrisy by saying that dirty hearts — not dirty hands — bring defilement.

He then departed for Tyre and Sidon to find rest, but encountered the Syro-Phoenician woman and healed her daughter. Jesus journeyed on to The Decapolis and healed a deaf man with a speech impediment. Here also He fed 4,000 men and their families before He continued to Magdala where the religious leaders demanded a miraculous sign. Jesus said that no sign would be given except for the sign of Jonah, and warned The Twelve about the religious leaders. They departed for Bethsaida, where Jesus healed a blind man.

### **Caesarea Philippi and Mount Hermon**

At this point Jesus again departed from Galilee for Caesarea Philippi, where Peter, on behalf of the disciples, made his great confession as to who Jesus was: “You are the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the Living God.” Jesus then told the disciples about His approaching sufferings, death, resurrection, and second coming. He climbed Mount Hermon with Peter, James, and John where He was transfigured before them, and they briefly saw His deity. He again foretold His sufferings and resurrection. On returning to the others Jesus healed the demoniac boy by casting the foul spirit out of him, then returned with them to Capernaum.

### **Ministry in Capernaum**

In Capernaum Peter caught a fish with money in its mouth, which Jesus used to pay the temple tax. Here in Capernaum Jesus also taught the following lessons:

- **Humility**
- **That the people who were not for Him were against Him**
- **To cast away your eye or hand if they were members that offended**
- **That His purpose was to seek and save that which was lost**
- **How to be reconciled to one's brother**
- **That we are to forgive our brother seventy times seven**
- **The parable about the man who wouldn't forgive others**
- **That complete commitment is required of His followers**

### **Journey to Jerusalem**

In Capernaum Jesus was rebuked by His half brothers, who wanted Him to go to Jerusalem and reveal Himself publicly to the people. Jesus replied that His time had not yet come. A few days later He left for Jerusalem and the Feast of Tabernacles (Fall A.D. 29). In Samaria the people in a village refused His group a place to stay.

In Jerusalem Jesus was the object of much speculation. He taught daily in the Temple during the feast, predicting His ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. He invited people "to drink" of the water that He alone could give (salvation). Upset by these statements, the Pharisees tried to trap Him. They brought a woman caught in the act of adultery to Him for judgment. Jesus rebuked them saying, "Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone."

Jesus again predicted His death, resurrection, and ascension and rebuked the Pharisees, who claimed to be Abraham's children. He said, "Before Abraham was, 'I AM.'" He healed a man who had been born blind and received his worship; this further antagonized the Pharisees. He proclaimed He was the Good Shepherd who would lay down His life for His sheep. The leaders tried to stone Him for His claims that He was one with God. The events at and shortly after this feast ended His third year of ministry.

## Last Half Year of Ministry

### The Later Judean Ministry

After further division among the Jews Jesus left Jerusalem and appointed 70 (72 in some manuscripts) disciples to go out two- by-two to preach throughout Judea. Upon their return, He received their joyful report. In answer to the lawyer's question He gave the parable of the Good Samaritan. He visited with Mary and Martha in Bethany near Jerusalem, and gave another version of The Lord's Prayer to His disciples.

He had another encounter with the teachers of the law, resulting in their third accusation against Him. They accused Him of performing healing miracles by the power of Beelzebub. Jesus pronounced a series of woes against them and warned His disciples about their hypocrisy. Another series of warnings followed:

- About greed and trust in wealth
- About unpreparedness for His second coming
- About the coming divisions among men
- About failing to discern the times
- About the alternatives: repent or perish

This series of events concluded with Jesus' healing of a woman on the Sabbath in a synagogue. This resulted in opposition from the Jewish rulers. He then went back to Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication, where He claimed, "I and the Father are One!" As they again tried to seize Him, He left Jerusalem for Perea.

### The Later Perean Ministry

Jesus was violently assailed by the Pharisees and lawyers because of His condemnation of them and because of His claims to deity. So Jesus retired across the Jordan to Perea. Knowing that He was nearing the end of His own life, He gave Himself to teaching about the importance of being prepared to meet God. In this ministry of some weeks Jesus gave a series of parables and taught some lessons:

- The lesson on entering the Kingdom of God
- Three parables in the house of a Pharisee
- The lesson on the cost of discipleship
- The lost sheep
- The lost coin

- The prodigal son
- The unfaithful steward
- The rich man and Lazarus the beggar
- Four lessons on discipleship

### **Jesus in Bethany**

While traveling throughout Perea, Jesus learned of His friend Lazarus' sickness and death. He immediately returned to Bethany, and, after a discussion with Martha and Mary, raised Lazarus from the dead.

The result of this astounding miracle was that the Sanhedrin (the religious council of the Jews) formally made the decision to put Jesus to death. He and His disciples then withdrew to Ephraim near the Judean desert, eventually going north to the border region of Galilee and Samaria.

### **The Final Journey to Jerusalem**

Jesus now healed the ten lepers and sent them to the Temple for the ceremonial cleansing. He taught about His sufferings to come, the condition of the world in the last days, and about Armageddon. He told the parable of the persistent widow and the unjust judge, then He told the stories of the self-righteous Pharisee, and the humble tax collector praying in the Temple.

In Perea again, He taught about God's views on divorce, as well as about three kinds of eunuchs. He blessed little children, interacted with the rich young ruler, and told His disciples that they would rule with Him. He then gave the parable of the vineyard and predicted His death and resurrection.

Prior to His final journey to Jerusalem, Jesus was approached by James, John, and their mother requesting important positions in the kingdom. He used this episode to warn all His disciples of the dangers of ambitious pride and rivalry, then started on the road to Jerusalem.

### **Jericho to Bethany**

Near Jericho Jesus healed blind Bartimaeus and his companion. Also in the city of Jericho He encountered Zaccheus and came to eat at his house. Here He taught the parable of the ten pounds, with its lessons on responsibility and accountability.

On Friday of His so-called "Passion Week," Jesus arrived in Bethany at the house of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. He had often stayed with them, and it again became His home during the last days of His life.

## Jesus' Final Week

### Sunday

From Bethany two disciples were sent out to fetch a donkey's colt which Jesus would ride into Jerusalem. The people going up to the Passover Feast and the city's residents hailed Him as the Messianic Son of David. As He entered the city, the Pharisees told the crowds to keep silent, but Jesus said the rocks would cry out if they were quiet. He wept over Jerusalem, predicted its destruction, and went back to Bethany.

### Monday

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus cursed a fruitless fig tree. In the city He carried out the second cleansing of the Temple, talked with some Greeks about a worldwide salvation, and warned His listeners about the Judgment.

### Tuesday

Jesus taught His disciples the lesson of the withered fig tree, then spent a very busy day at the Temple meeting the challenges and opposition of all His enemies.

These oppositions and challenges were about:

- The question of Jesus' authority (chief priests and lawyers)
- Three parables of warning
- The question of paying taxes to Caesar (Pharisees and Herodians)
- The question of the resurrection (Sadducees)
- The question about the greatest commandment (Pharisees)
- The question on the relationship of the Messiah to David
- Warning to the crowds and His disciples
- Jesus' severe denunciation of the Pharisees
- Jesus' lament over Jerusalem
- The episode of the widow's two copper coins

Jesus then left the Temple complex, crossed the Kidron Valley, and climbed to the top of the Mount of Olives. He overlooked the city of Jerusalem and its beautiful Temple, and delivered the

Panel 7 ▲

Panel 8 ▼

Mount Olivet Discourse concerning the coming destruction of that city and Temple and end time events. Jesus then predicted His crucifixion at the very time that the Jewish leaders were plotting His death. He returned to Bethany to a dinner at Simon the [former] leper's house. Mary, sister of Lazarus, anointed Jesus with costly perfume. Judas objected to this extravagance, but Jesus then rebuked Judas and praised Mary.

### **Wednesday**

This was a day of silence and preparation for Jesus. It was at this time that Judas went to Jerusalem, finalized the details of his betrayal of Jesus, and was given his 30 pieces of silver.

### **Thursday**

Peter and John were sent into the city to prepare for the Passover Meal, which would be the Last Supper for Jesus and His disciples. The rest of the group with Jesus arrived at the appropriate time and ate the Passover Meal. The following series of events then took place:

- Dispute among the disciples as to who was the greatest
- Jesus' washing the disciples' feet
- Jesus' revelation of His betrayer (though no one caught it)
- Judas left the group to do his work of betrayal
- Jesus' prediction of Peter's three denials
- New Commandment given (John 13:34-35)
- Institution of the Lord's Supper
- Four questions about the end times
- Allegory of the Vine and the Branches
- Prediction of future opposition for Christ's disciples
- Promise of the Holy Spirit
- Prediction of His resurrection
- Promise of answered prayer and resulting peace

These events took place during the evening — some in the upper room, and the balance on their journey to the Garden of Gethsemane. In the garden, Jesus prayed His "high priestly prayer" (recorded for us in John 17). He agonized over His impending death on the cross for men's sins, but subjected His own will to the will of His Father.



## Friday

It was now Friday morning (about 1:00 A.M.) when Judas, some Temple soldiers, religious leaders, and a crowd arrested Jesus. He was betrayed by a kiss, forsaken by His remaining disciples, and taken to trial before Annas, Caiaphas, Pontius Pilate, and King Herod Antipas. Later that morning, He was taken back to Pilate, condemned and beaten, taken to Calvary, and there crucified by the Romans.

Jesus was put to death in a manner reserved for common criminals. Through His atoning death for our sins (“substitutionary atonement”), Satan’s head was crushed, but the Messiah’s heel was bruised (see Genesis 3:15 and Chapter 1 ). Mankind was now provided a way of salvation and restored to a relationship with God. Jesus was taken off the cross and buried in a borrowed tomb that was then sealed and guarded by a select squad of Roman soldiers.

## Saturday

This was a day of silence — the Jewish Sabbath Day.

## Sunday — the Glorious Resurrection

Early on Sunday morning, Jesus Christ rose from the dead, triumphant over death, sin, and hell. Angels in the empty tomb declared the glorious news: “He is not here! He is risen!” The Bible records many post-resurrection appearances of Jesus over the next 40 days:

- To Mary Magdalene in the garden
- To the other women returning from the tomb
- To the disciples on the road to Emmaus
- To Simon Peter in Jerusalem
- To the 10 disciples in the upper room (Thomas was absent)
- To the 11 disciples in the upper room ( a week later)
- To seven of the disciples by the Sea of Galilee
- To 500 brothers on a mountain in Galilee
- To the 11 disciples in Jerusalem, including James, the half brother of Jesus
- To the 11 disciples plus many others on the Mount of Olives at the ascension

From the Mount of Olives Jesus was received by the Father back into Heaven. At the second coming He will come again in power

Panel 8 ▲

Panel 9 ▼

and glory to the same mountain. During many of the appearances enumerated above Jesus gave the Great Commission to His disciples (see Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:48-49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8).

## **The Acts of the Apostles**

This historical book records the birth of the Christian Church through the coming of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus had promised and who would indwell believers after His return to Heaven. In the early days of the Church, God made it clear that the Gospel was to be preached to all people — Jews and Gentiles. The new believers were freed from living under the restrictions of Jewish religious legalism. With the conversion of the Apostle Paul God began the expansion of the Church into Asia Minor and Europe.

## **The Epistles**

These books of the New Testament are letters written by various writers to the young congregations of Christians which were established through missionary enterprise of the early Church. Of these letters 13 out of 21 were written by Paul. The others were written by John, Peter, James, and Jude. The epistles established the doctrines of the Christian Church and set the standards of Christian conduct for all believers. Through the epistles Christian doctrines were distinctly separated from the perversions of heresy which grew up soon after Christ's death.

## **The Revelation**

This book is a longer letter of the Apostle John. It is, however, more than an ordinary epistle in that it is prophetic in nature. The book gives us a glimpse of the end times, which include the sudden coming again of Jesus Christ. It is important to note that biblical scholars and theologians differ widely concerning the eschatological events (events of the last days), outlined primarily in the Book of Revelation.

All interpretations committed to the integrity of the Scriptures agree that the Book of Revelation includes the following:

- **A picture of seven representative churches**
- **A time of tribulation**
- **The personal, visible, glorious second coming of Jesus Christ**
- **The Millennium (views differ as to when it occurs)**
- **The Great White Throne Judgment**
- **The new heaven and new earth (the eternal state)**

▲ Panel 9

▼ Panel 10b\*

\*Panel 10a is a short overview of church history.

## Chapter 3

# ***The Promise to Adam***

[Panels 1 — 3]

## **Introduction**

It has been established that the Bible is primarily a historical account of how God promised and then restored man to fellowship after his rebellion against Him. To understand the Bible as a whole, we must understand the promise God gave indirectly to Adam and Eve through Satan's curse, and be able to trace it through the Bible.

In this brief survey an honest effort is made to outline the promise so that anyone can understand the basic message of the Bible. This study book, together with the Bible Chart, should help the Bible student to put the stories of the Bible together in chronological order, to see the relevance of one story to another, and to understand how God fulfilled His promise. In the first two chapters an overview of the entire Bible was presented, which enabled the student to assemble the fifteen-foot chart and trace the *Promise* from Adam to Jesus. In subsequent chapters, details will be added, beginning again in the Genesis account.

## **The Creation**

In the first chapter, events surrounding the creation of the earth and its inhabitants were presented in outline form. In this chapter these same events will be further amplified, since the first three chapters of Genesis set the stage for the remainder of the Bible. An understanding of the creation events is crucial for clear comprehension of all that follows from Genesis 4 through Revelation 22.

Panel 1 ▼

It is an indisputable biblical fact that God created the heavens and the earth and all that was in them. Genesis 1 specifies what God created on each of the successive days of creation.

DAY 1	Creation of heaven and earth with light
DAY 2	Separation of the atmospheric water from land water
DAY 3	Creation of land and plant life
DAY 4	Creation of the sun, moon, and the stars to light the day and the night
DAY 5	Creation of fish and birds
DAY 6	Creation of the land animals and man—created in God's image
DAY 7	Creation completed; God rested from His labor

Man (Adam and Eve) was God's crowning work of creation. He was created in the image of God, unlike all the other creatures. He was given a will, an intellect, and emotions. God placed him in the Garden of Eden to tend it (labor), and to take authority over His creation.

*Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*  
— Genesis 1:28

▲ Panel 1

▼ Panel 2

It is important to note that Adam was specifically commanded concerning the Tree of Knowledge.

*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*  
— Genesis 2:17

It is also interesting to observe that with this one restriction, the faculties of the will, intellect, and emotion became operative.

In the more detailed account of creation in Genesis 2, God revealed that Eve was made from a part of Adam's side. Her role was to be a helper, since nothing else in all God's creation was suitable for Adam as a companion.

There, in that paradise of Eden, Adam and Eve had perfect fellowship and communion with the God who had created them. However, that peace and tranquility was soon shattered by an event which has affected the universe to this very day.

## The Fall

In Genesis 3 Satan was introduced in the form of a snake. He was more crafty and deceitful than any of the other animals which God had created. He confronted Eve one day, in the absence of Adam, near the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, from which Adam had been commanded not to eat. Adam must have warned Eve concerning this tree, because she was so clear in her answers to Satan's questions and temptations.

*Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" And the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.*

— Genesis 3:1-6

Since this one restriction rendered the faculties of the will, intellect, and emotion operative, Satan tried to persuade Eve to disobey God and to obey him. When both Adam and Eve did this, it disrupted the fellowship that God had established with them.

## Satan's Deception

Satan began by questioning God's Word: "Did God say?" He always approaches the believer by questioning the authority of God's Word. Whenever a believer finds himself in disagreement with a principle clearly presented in Scripture, he can be sure that Satan is lurking nearby.

Eve was clear in her answer: "God has said we are not to eat or touch it, or we will die."

Satan countered Eve by denying God's Word again. "You shall not surely die." Here the first lie is recorded. The Bible does not lie, but it does record on occasion the lies of sinners, as well as

saints. He went on to tell her if she would eat her eyes would be opened, and she would be like God, knowing good and evil.

Satan ended by deceiving Eve into eating the fruit. The stages of Eve's sin could be outlined as follows:

- Eve saw the tree was good for food
- She noticed it was pleasant to the eye
- She reasoned the tree could make her wise
- Eve took of the fruit and ate and gave some to Adam, who ate as well

The serpent may have reasoned with Eve something like this:

- God's plan is restrictive
- Restrictions are bad
- Therefore, God's plan was bad

At the moment they ate Adam and Eve died spiritually. Sin had entered the world, and sinful creatures could no longer have fellowship with a holy God.

We see in this encounter *four progressive stages of sin*.

**1 👁 Eve *Saw***

*(Sin begins with the eyes.)*

**2 👁 Eve *Desired***

*(Seeing can lead to desire.)*

**3 👁 Eve *Took***

*(Desire, unchecked, results in sin.)*

**4 👁 Adam and Eve *Hid***

*(Sin results in biding from God.)*

Eve's defense was to blame *Satan*, a tactic she had learned from Adam—who had blamed her!

Notice also that Adam and Eve could only do *one thing* to sin since they only had *one restriction* placed on them.

## The Curse

Because of the sin of Adam and Eve, God pronounced a curse on Satan and the earth. Adam and Eve, whom God would later restore to fellowship with Himself, were not cursed.

<b>Satan</b>	<b>Was cursed above all created animals. His head was to be crushed by the woman's Seed.</b>
<b>Woman</b>	<b>Would bring forth her children in sorrow and pain. God reinforced that Adam was to rule over her.</b>
<b>Man</b>	<b>The earth was cursed, and by the sweat of his own labor man was now to extract his own needs.</b>

## The Promise to Adam

One of the keys that unlocks our understanding of the Bible is the following verse in Genesis 3, which will be referred to throughout our study as ***"The Promise."*** This verse, perhaps the key verse of the entire Bible, should be committed to memory.

“*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.*”

— *Genesis 3:15*

In this passage God, indirectly through a curse on Satan, gave a promise to Adam and to all mankind. One day, from the woman whom Satan had deceived, God would bring forth a seed (Jesus Christ). This seed would be Satan's enemy and would crush or bruise his head. In the process, Satan would bruise Christ's heel. This seed, Jesus Christ, would make a way for man to be restored to fellowship with God.

If there had been no promise, the Bible would have ended with Genesis 3. The rest of Scripture is the historical account of how God fulfilled this promise to Adam and his wife, Eve.



The Seed was given to restore mankind back into fellowship with God. This Jesus did when He died upon the cross as a substitute in our place and for our sins. Satan's head was crushed, and Jesus Christ was bruised for our iniquities. Isaiah reminds us:

*But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.*  
— Isaiah 53:5

The promise has to do with the seed of the woman. All the way through the Old Testament this promise is repeated, amplified, and explained. It is this sacred, or scarlet, thread that turns the books of the Bible into One Book.

Red Line of The Promise  
begins (▼ Panel 2b).

## **The Tree of Life**

Adam and Eve, because of their transgression and present sinful condition, were removed from the garden.

*Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever."*

— Genesis 3:22

If man in his sinful condition were to have eaten from this tree, he would have lived forever, without hope of the redemption which God had just set in motion.

So God sent them out of the garden in an act of love and mercy. He placed cherubim and a flaming sword to guard the Tree of Life so no one could eat. The cherubim may have remained there even to the flood when everything on earth was destroyed.

Before they were sent away, God replaced Adam and Eve's aprons of leaves with the skins of an animal as a covering for them. This was a foreshadowing of what God was to later do under the Old Testament Law.

The writers of Leviticus and Hebrews remind us that "... without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." So God provided Adam and Eve with a blood sacrifice to cover them and their sin until their redemption could be completed in Jesus.

## **Multiplication of Mankind**

In Genesis 4 mankind began to reproduce and inhabit the world. Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. As young men, the brothers brought a sacrifice to God. Cain, a farmer, offered the

fruit of the ground, which was cursed. His sacrifice was rejected. Abel, a shepherd, offered a blood sacrifice, which was accepted. In anger Cain killed his brother. By his actions he forfeited the right for the Promise to be carried through his lineage.

God replaced Abel by giving Adam and Eve a third son, Seth. The Promise was carried forward through Adam's family tree. In Chapter 5 the lineage was continued through Seth to Enosh, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, and Shem. One of Shem's descendants was a man by the name of Abram (later to become Abraham). He became a key figure in God's plan of redemption.

In Chapter 6 the Scriptures yield further insight into what was to follow. Though men looked to God for the seed who would restore them to fellowship with their Creator, they also followed after their sinful ways. They lived in rebellion against God; so much so that He was sorry He had created them.

*Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them."*

— Genesis 6:5-7

## The Flood

The Bible records that Noah found grace in God's eyes. He, along with Enoch, who "walked with God," are the only bright spots in this snapshot of mankind before the flood.

*This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch."*

— Genesis 6:9-14

Noah and his sons labored at this great building task for 120 years, until they had completed the ark. It was 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.

Panel 2 ▲

Panel 3 ▼

Noah loaded the ark with the animals and provisions as God commanded, then the rain began to fall. It continued for 40 days and nights. In addition to the rains from above, water came from the lower parts of the earth. All the world was covered, and all life died except for Noah, his family, and the animals in the ark.

The ark came to rest 150 days later on Mount Ararat, where it is believed to remain to this day. It took another five months for the water to recede enough that Noah could leave the ark and free the animals. Noah and his family spent a little over one year in the ark. In his 600th year, the tenth day of the second month, Noah went into the ark. In his 601st year, the 27th day of the second month, he came out of the ark.

Immediately after leaving the ark Noah offered a sacrifice to the Lord. At that time God promised He would never again destroy the world by a flood and gave the rainbow as a sign of that promise to all mankind. All living people are descendants of Noah and his sons.

## **The Tower**

Noah and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, once again began to repopulate the earth. One of Ham's sons, Cush, had a son named Nimrod, who led his people to the plains of Shinar, ruled over them and there began building the cities mentioned in Genesis 10:11. The people, instead of scattering, began building a tower to reach into the heavens.

The building of the tower was the first organized false religion after the flood. Their rebellion was threefold: (1) Disobedience in not scattering; (2) taking away honor from God by "making a name for themselves"; and (3) building the tower "to the heavens," which implies that they could get above any future flood of judgment God would send on them, coupled with unbelief in the rainbow promise.

So God sent another judgment on them by confusing their language and scattering the people all over the earth by language groups. Building on the tower ceased. The remaining inhabitants of the land, later to be called Babylon, never attempted to rebuild.

The descendants of Ham became the African races and some of the Near Eastern peoples; the descendants of Shem settled in the Middle East; the descendants of Japheth scattered to the rest of the earth (probably with some later mixtures with Hamites and Shemites). The *Promise* of God was carried forward through the sons of Shem, however, among whose descendants was Abraham, the father of God's chosen people, the Hebrews. They were to be the people through whom the promised Messiah would come.

## Chapter 4

# ***The Promise to Abraham***

[Panel 4a (2/3) only]

Panel 4 ▼

### **Introduction**

Abram (later called “Abraham”) was one of Shem’s descendants and the vehicle through whom the promise of God was to be carried forward. Many centuries had passed since God first gave the promise to Adam and Eve. Many biblical scholars have tried to gauge the time span from Adam to Abraham. Irish Bishop Ussher, who lived in the sixteenth century, was one such scholar. He set the time at 2,000 years. It is not until Abraham, however, that the first reliable dating can be established at 2,000 B.C. At this point in time, God was ready to take His next step toward man’s redemption by giving the man Abram a promise.

### **Important Factors Surrounding the Promise**

This promise, often referred to as the “Abrahamic Covenant,” is an important biblical truth to grasp. It merits close attention for at least the following three reasons:

- *Abram’s promise was an extension of Adam’s promise in Genesis 3:15.* It had to do with the seed which would crush Satan’s head and restore man to fellowship with God. That seed was to be Jesus Christ.
- *This promise dealt with the future of Israel, the people that God was about to bring forth through Abram.* A clear understanding of His promise is necessary for comprehension of biblical eschatology (the study of the events of the end times).

- *The rest of the Old and New Testaments show how God fulfilled this promise.* A lack of understanding of Abraham's promise will result in a failure to see the relevance of the rest of Old Testament history.

Since the promise given to Abram is the *foundation stone on which the Bible is built*, it is important that this foundation be accurately laid. To illustrate: the story is told of the building of the St. Louis arch — a 64-story stainless steel structure overlooking the Mississippi River. Two halves of the arch were being built simultaneously and separately, with the hope of placing a keystone to fit them together at the top of the arch.

One day someone figured out that if the foundation were off a mere 1/16 of an inch, the two halves would be off by *eight feet* when the keystone joined them. The construction was halted while the foundation was rechecked. It was found to be accurate, so the keystone joined the two halves together just as it was designed.

The Bible student's foundation must be just as accurate if all the facts of the Bible are to fit together according to God's plan to form a unified, consistent whole. Abram's promise is also that keystone which helps join the Old and New Testaments, creating one Book out of the two.

## **The Promise to Abraham**

Just as the promise to Adam was repeated and amplified in the promise given to Abram (whose name was later changed to "Abraham" by God, meaning "father of many nations"), Abram's promise is repeated, explained, and amplified throughout the rest of the Scriptures. In this promise there are several elements that need to be noted in order to see how all the parts fit together. The three aspects of the promise that are dealt with are *land*, *seed*, and *blessing* — explained further in these passages:

- Land ..... Deuteronomy 30:1-8
- Seed ..... 2 Samuel 7:12-16
- Blessing ..... Jeremiah 31:31-34

This promise was intended by God to be taken literally, eternally, and unconditionally. It was originally made to the nation of Israel, but some others feel it was inherited by the Church.


- Literally ..... Just what it says
- Eternally ..... Never passes away
- Unconditionally ..... Without qualifications
- Made with Israel ..... Abraham and his seed

Amillennialists and Historical Premillennialists (differing theological views) believe the promise was made to Abraham and his *spiritual* seed, the Church. Dispensationalists believe it was made to Abraham and his *physical* seed, that is, the nation of Israel. The Gentiles (all non-Jews) are also affected because of what Galatians teaches.

*That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*

— Galatians 3:14

We must now take an in-depth look at the promise itself as it is recorded in Genesis 12:1-3. As was the case with Genesis 3:15, this passage is another of the *keys* that unlock the Bible. These verses should also be memorized by the serious student of Scripture.



**“Now the LORD had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, from your kindred, and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”**

— Genesis 12:1-3

### **“I will make you a great nation.”**

If Abram were to become a great nation, he would need to have land for himself and his descendants. He also would need to have many descendants to follow him — seed, progeny, or people.

### **“I will bless you and make your name great.”**

A study of Abram’s life reveals that God blessed him with great wealth and material possessions (Genesis 13:2). He was also blessed spiritually since he was the man known as the “friend of God.” Throughout history, Abram’s (Abraham’s) name has become great, since all three of the major monotheistic religions of the world trace their foundations back to him (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam).

### **“In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”**

Abram was to bring forth from his seed a Savior, who would save all people from their sin and separation from God. However, there were two major problems Abram had with the promise as given to him by the Lord God:

■ He had *no land*, since God had commanded him to leave his home in Ur of Chaldees and go to the land of Canaan.

■ He had *no seed*, since Sarah was barren and unable to give him any children.

## **Land**

The land element of Abram's problem is dealt with first. Because of his obedience to God's command to leave Ur of the Chaldees, God gave Abram the land of Canaan as he passed through it. This land became the homeland of Abram's seed.

*Then the LORD appeared to Abram, and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.*

— Genesis 12:7

In Genesis 13, after Lot and Abram had parted ways, God appeared again and spoke to Abram.

*And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are — northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see, I give to you and your descendants forever."*

— Genesis 13:14-15

So Abram was given the land of Canaan, by God, as an eternal inheritance. It was to belong to him and his seed forever. But again the question arises, "Was this land promised to his *physical* or his *spiritual* seed?" In these verses it can be seen that God promised *literal* real estate. Two questions immediately present themselves:

**Question 1:** What did Abram do to deserve it?

*Nothing!*

**Question 2:** Did God have the right to do this?

*Yes, He created it.*

With the land aspect of the problem solved, God turned to the second problem, which dealt with Abram's offspring, or his seed. Sarah was barren and old. How could this promise be fulfilled through this woman?

## **Seed**

The seed element of Abram's problem is dealt with in the next verse of the passage; here God promised to multiply Abram's seed and his descendants more than could be counted.



*And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth;  
so that if a man could number the dust of the earth,  
then your descendants also could be numbered.*

— Genesis 13:16

In these verses, God said Abram's seed was to be as numerous as the dust of the earth. Abram was 75 years old when he received this promise. For years Abram waited while nothing happened. Sarah remained barren. Then, ten years later, God again appeared to Abram.

*After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram  
in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid Abram, I am your  
shield, your exceedingly great reward."*

*But Abram said, "Lord God, what will You give me,  
seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is this  
Eliezer of Damascus?"*

*Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring;  
indeed, one born in my house is my heir."*

*And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying,  
"This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come  
from your own body shall be your heir."*

*And He brought him outside, and said, "Look now  
toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able  
to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your  
descendants be."*

*And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to  
him for righteousness.*

— Genesis 15:1-6

**God said He would be a shield.** This means that God would *protect* Abram, since that is the function of a shield. Abram did not live in a walled city like others of his time, but in tents in the open countryside. So he needed this kind of protection from God.

This seems to be as far as God got with Abram, because Abram had a matter he wanted to take up with God. Sarah was still barren, so he had no seed. Ten years earlier God had promised to give him children, but the only thing Abram had was a band of servants. Under law, his chief steward would inherit his estate when he was dead if he had no biological heir.

**Then God again reaffirmed that promise concerning the seed:** "Eliezer will not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." Then He told Abram to go out and count the stars. Abram went out, and as he began to

count, he realized there were millions of them in the heavens. He finally understood that God was saying, in effect, “Abram, that is how many children you are going to have!”

***The next statement is amazing — it says that Abram believed the Lord, and it was counted to him for righteousness.*** This means that sinful Abram was made right with God — he had become righteous in the eyes of God.

## **Abram’s Righteousness**

The word *righteousness* is a bookkeeping term. Because of the sinfulness of man, Abram was on the *minus* side of God’s ledger book. Now, because of believing God, he was put on the *plus* side of the ledger. This was possible because Revelation 13:8 tells us that Jesus Christ was slain from the foundation of the world in the mind of God. Abram, as an Old Testament believer, had to look *ahead* 2,000 years in history for his salvation. Today’s New Testament believers must look *back* some 2,000 years. *Both are saved by believing God.*

*Believing* means to be “fully convinced, persuaded, or to trust in.” It connotes an *absolute* belief, not a *relative* belief. The story is told about the man who walked across Niagara Falls on a tightrope wire. When he reached the other side, he asked one of his cheering fans, “Do you think I could push a man in a wheelbarrow across to the other side?” The man said, “Yes, I believe you could.” The tightrope walker then asked the fan to let him push him across. The man said he *believed*, but he refused to get into the wheelbarrow.

This is an illustration of *relative belief*. Abram did not believe relatively. Rather, his was an absolute belief or trust in what God had said. The only way anyone gets on the plus side of God’s ledger book is by believing God. He is then counted righteous in God’s eyes.

Most people try to become righteous through good works or a good life. They fail to understand that good works or a good life can never make them righteous in the eyes of God. It is not that God does not appreciate right living, but because mankind inherited Adam’s sin nature, good deeds can never meet the standard of righteousness necessary to be saved by a holy God.

It might be compared to 100 people lined up on the coast of California, each of whom is about to attempt to swim to Hawaii. Some will make it only a few yards; others may be able to swim several miles; a few may make 20 or 30, or even 40 miles. But NO ONE will be able to reach Hawaii. It is simply too distant a goal for a human being to attain. So it is with salvation.

Since man cannot become righteous enough in his own strength or merit, the Scriptures teach that he can become righteous ONLY by believing God. If a person believes God, God declares that person to be righteous through the righteousness of Christ.

Paul reminds us:

*For what does the Scripture say? "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor; but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, And whose sins have been covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account."*

— Romans 4:3-8 (NASB)

## Abram's Assurance

Having solved the seed problem related to the promise given to Abram by God, the Lord God sought to complete the message He had come to deliver to him. Once again, Abram, short on patience, interrupted God, seeking assurance regarding the fulfillment of the promise of land.

*Then He said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give you this land to inherit it." And he said, "Lord God, how shall I know that I will inherit it?" And He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." Then he brought all these to Him, and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. Then He said unto Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them; and they will afflict them four hundred years; And also the nation, whom they serve, I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there was a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. On the same day the LORD made a covenant*

*with Abram, saying: “To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.”*

— Genesis 15:7-18

In verse 8 Abram asked God for a confirmation that he would inherit the land God had said He would give to him.

In verse 9 God told Abram to take a heifer, a goat, a ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon. He was to divide the four-footed beasts and lay each half on the ground.

In verse 12 God caused a great sleep to fall on Abram when the sun went down.

In verse 13 God said to Abram,

*Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them; and they will afflict them four hundred years.*

So it was part of God’s plan for His chosen people to spend 400 years of bondage in Egypt.

In verse 17 God alone, in the form of a torch, moved through the divided animals. This is the way a promise or a covenant was confirmed in Abram’s day. Both parties would move through the animals, and if one broke the agreement he was saying, “Let my blood be shed as the blood of these animals.” God did not allow Abram to move through the animals. So God was making an unconditional promise on His part. This meant the promise was not conditioned upon any action or behavior on Abram’s part.

In verse 18 God extended the land from the River of Egypt to the River Euphrates. Up to this time, the land of Canaan had extended from Dan to Beersheba, 183 miles long by 25 to 52 miles wide, varying in width from the Mediterranean to the Jordan. This land was to belong to Abram and his seed forever.

## **Abram and Sarah’s Folly**

But Sarah was still barren. After years of waiting, Sarah devised a plan for Abram to have children by her handmaiden Hagar. God, however, did not need any intervention on the part of Sarah or Abram to complete His promise.

Out of this union Ishmael was born to Abram when he was 86 years of age. Abram now had a seed God never intended him to have. God honored His promise and made a great nation

of Ishmael. Ishmael became the father of the Arab peoples, many of whom are still in great opposition to both Judaism and Christianity to this very day. Abram learned the hard way that he could not improve upon God's plan.

God again came to Abram when he was 99 years old and reaffirmed the promise. It was at this time that God changed Abram's name to "Abraham," which means, "father of many nations."

*No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.*

— Genesis 17:5

God reaffirmed that Sarah was to have a son in her old age, and that their son Isaac was to inherit the promise, not Ishmael.

*Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him."*

— Genesis 17:19

In Genesis 21, the Bible reveals:

*For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.*

— Genesis 21:2

In the opening chapters of Genesis God created that which was beautiful out of nothing; He set mankind as the crown jewel of His creative genius. Adam, however, rebelled against God's plan and introduced sin into the world.

With the birth of Isaac, the stage was set for the continued unfolding of His redemptive plan — the restoration of fallen mankind back to Himself.

Panel 4a ▲



## Chapter 5

# *Overview: Abraham to David*

[Panels 4a — 5a]

## Historical Overview

### Isaac

When Isaac was grown, Abraham arranged for him to marry Rebekah. They had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Before the boys were born, God told Isaac that the elder would serve the younger. According to Eastern custom, the elder son receives the birthright and should have been served by the younger.

Panel 4a ▼

### Jacob and Esau

Years later Esau sold his birthright to Jacob and with it, the privilege of the *Promise* being fulfilled through his line. Jacob also stole the blessing from Esau by deceiving his father, Isaac, before his death. Jacob was forced to run for his life and spent years exiled from his brother. Jacob encountered God, and his name was changed to Israel. Through four marriages, he had twelve sons who became the twelve tribes of Israel.

### Joseph

One of Jacob's favorite sons was Joseph, whom his brothers hated because of his dream that they would bow down to him. So they sold him to some Ishmaelite traders who sold him in Egypt. This was God's way of setting the stage for His children to go into Egypt, where they would experience 400 years of bondage.

Later, when Jacob joined Joseph in Egypt, he reminded Joseph that God would be with them and bring them again into the



land He had given to Abraham. Genesis states that when Joseph was at the end of his life he reminded the Israelites again about the promise.

*And Joseph said to his brethren, "I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."*

— Genesis 50:24

Up to this point Abraham and his descendants had never possessed the land that God had promised them. They were now out of the land as God had predicted.

While Abraham's descendants were in bondage, God multiplied them until they became a great nation. The people cried out to God, and He heard them.

*So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.*

— Exodus 2:24

## **Moses**

At the end of the 400 years God came to a man by the name of Moses and reminded him of the promise He had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God told Moses:

*And I will bring you in into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD.*

— Exodus 6:8

Moses was born during a period of the captivity when Pharaoh was trying to kill the male babies who were born to the Hebrews in bondage. Moses was hidden by his mother, but was found by Pharaoh's daughter and taken home to be raised at court as Pharaoh's grandson, with all the finest that Egypt had to offer.

At age 40 Moses fled Egypt because he killed an Egyptian for beating a Hebrew slave. The next 40 years he lived as a shepherd in Midian. It was here that he encountered God in a burning bush. He was told by God to return to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to let His people go.

At first Moses resisted the call, but became obedient and was allowed by God to take his brother, Aaron, as a spokesman. Pharaoh, like Moses, resisted God and increased the slaves' tasks. God, therefore, unleashed ten plagues — which caused Pharaoh to have a change of heart. With the firstborn of each Egyptian household dead, the Hebrew slaves departed with

great wealth to worship God in the wilderness. Pharaoh again had a change of heart and sent his army in hot pursuit. At the Red Sea, God parted the waters for His own people to pass over on dry ground, while Pharaoh's army was drowned when they followed them into the sea.

The Israelites traveled to Mount Sinai where they had a significant encounter with God. They spent almost a year there, and God turned them from a nation of slaves into a people of God. Here an event took place: the people were given by God a **Moral**, a **Spiritual**, and a **Social Code** that transformed them from slaves into one of the most advanced nations of the world.

The **Moral Code** provided harmony in their relationships to God and in interpersonal relationships between each citizen of the Hebrew nation. This code was embodied in what is called the "Ten Commandments." The **Spiritual Code** was set forth in the Levitical feasts and special offerings which God required of the Hebrews. It is interesting to note that these ordinances were a foreshadowing of Christ's redemptive ministry. The **Social Code** comprised rules and divine laws which governed some 70 aspects of the Hebrews' lives, such as marriage, divorce, childbirth, diet, sanitation, quarantine, soil conservation, military service, and taxation.

Moses was given special instructions concerning the building of a *tabernacle* which would provide a visible center of worship and a place where God could dwell among His chosen people. God also gave specific instructions concerning a Levitical priesthood which would care for the spiritual needs of the people and the physical needs of the tabernacle. The people were given instructions concerning the placement of each of the twelve tribes around the tabernacle and the tribal marching formation they were to follow as God led them from place to place.

Eleven months after arriving at Sinai as a disorganized band of slaves, the people departed as a well-organized nation of Hebrews bound for the promised land of Canaan via Kadesh-barnea. At Kadesh-barnea 12 spies were sent out into the Promised Land. Because of the 10 spies' report of walled cities and giants in the land, the people refused to follow God's command to enter and take the land. God's punishment was for every person over the age of 20 to die over the next 40 years while they wandered in the desert. Only the children age 20 or less would be allowed by God to enter the land.

God used these years to further develop and train the nation to follow Him. At the end of the 40 years, when all the elders had died, God was ready to bring them into the Promised Land.

In Deuteronomy 9:1-5 God told them, “This day you are to pass over Jordan and go in and possess the nations.”

A journey which should have taken 10 days had become a 41-year sojourn in the wilderness. It should be noted that during these 40 years, Israel was in a continuous state of rebellion toward God, but God was faithful to discipline them.

It was not because of the Israelites’ goodness that God gave this land of Canaan to them, but because God was faithful to fulfill the promise He had made previously to Abraham.

At this point God drew the people of Israel into another covenant with Him.

Review again the promise that God made to Abraham concerning the land: *ownership* was **unconditional** and **eternal**. But with this covenant God made with the people of Israel, *possession* was to be based on **obedience**. In a very real way this is like salvation. It is a free gift of God, but the blessings and future rewards of the Christian life are based on obedience to the commandments.

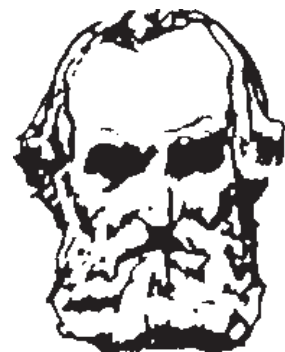
Deuteronomy chapter 28 outlines the conditions of the covenant God made with Israel through Moses.

## Blessings

*If you obey the commandments:*

### Deuteronomy 28

- **Verse 1** — I will set you on high above all nations.
- **Verse 2** — Blessings shall come on your cities, fields, bodies, and flocks.
- **Verse 3** — Your enemies will be defeated.
- **Verse 4** — You will be established as a holy people.



# Curses

*If you disobey the commandments:*

## Deuteronomy 28

- **Verse 16** — I will curse your cities and fields.
- **Verse 18** — I will curse the fruit of your body, the increase of your flocks.
- **Verse 22** — I will strike you with sickness.
- **Verse 25** — You will be defeated by your enemies.
- **Verse 62** — You will be few in number and not as the stars of heaven.
- **Verse 63** — You will be plucked from the land you go to possess.
- **Verse 64** — You will be scattered among all people and the whole world.



So God through Moses made this covenant with the people.

*These are the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.*

— Deuteronomy 29:1

This Mosaic covenant became a part of the promise which God made to Abraham. It didn't change any of the conditions, since ownership was unconditional. It only meant that possession was conditioned upon their being obedient to God.

The covenant at Mount Horeb concerned the Ten Commandments. (Mount Horeb is another name for Mount Sinai.)

Again in Deuteronomy 30:1-8, God reminded them that His blessings and curses are a matter of choice. God's children were about to go into cities and nations which were wicked and filled with idolatry and rebellion to God. God desired that

they remain true to Him and live as a real testimony for Him. The Scripture says if they did this, the blessing of God was to be upon them.

Joshua was chosen to lead the people into the Promised Land. Moses, because of his sin, was not allowed to take the people into the Promised Land. God *did* allow him to climb Mount Nebo and the top of Pisgah to look into the Promised Land. There Moses died and was buried by God Himself.

These first five books of the Bible are called “The Law.” Most of the rest of the Old Testament is a historical account of the people in the Promised Land — how they went in and possessed it, then lost it and possessed it again (all based on their obedience or disobedience to God).

## **Joshua’s Conquest of the Land of Canaan**

Under Joshua’s leadership, the conquest of Canaan and the distribution of the land to the 12 tribes of Israel took place. The book of Joshua covers a time span of some 25 years.

Joshua led the Israelites over the Jordan on dry ground — like their escape from Egypt — and moved against the fortress of Jericho. The people marched around the city seven times, and it fell. From there the army went to Ai where they were defeated because of Achan’s sin, necessitating a new plan.

Gibeon made a treaty with Israel to be slaves rather than to fight Joshua. The king of Jerusalem made a military alliance with the kings of Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon, and moved against Gibeon. The Gibeonites called on Joshua, who marched from Gilgal and took the invading army by surprise. The army of Jerusalem fled in terror, but Joshua’s forces pursued and took full vengeance on them (this is when the sun stood still).

Joshua then began a systematic conquest of the southern part of the land. They took Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir. From there they moved south and made thrusts into the Negeb as far south as the oasis of Kadesh-barnea. They also reached over toward Gaza to the sea coast. Then the rulers of northern Canaan formed an alliance. The kings of Madon, Shimron-meron, Achshaph, and tribes from the hill country on both sides of the Sea of Galilee gathered at the foot of Mount Hermon near the waters of Merom. Joshua marched north and struck without warning, defeated the enemy, and burned Hazor to the ground. The Israelites took a good portion of the land, but some remained in the hands of the inhabitants.

## Judges

The period of The Judges records some 340 years of rebellion, retribution, repentance, and restoration over and over again in a downward spiral. Under Joshua most of the people were obedient, and God expanded them in the land based on the Mosaic Covenant. But Joshua died, leaving them without a leader. So every man “did that which was right in his own eyes.” This led to disobedience and rebellion against God and brought about retribution and the loss of their land. This was followed by the repentance of the nation and a return to obedience to God’s commands. These incidents caused God to honor His covenant and restore their land.

Under the leadership of Joshua, the lifestyles of the people gradually changed from that of nomads and shepherds to farmers, craftsmen, and merchants. They also found themselves being influenced by the Canaanites — whom they had not destroyed — and their worship of Baal. They were facing invasion from nomadic tribes, such as the Philistines, who were building cities on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and the Midianites, who were pressing them from east of the Jordan River.

At this point in history, God raised up 12 military reformers called Judges. They were: Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Barak and Deborah, Gideon, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, and Samson. These judges helped the Hebrews drive out the invading nomads and take or retake the land. This form of government is called a Theocracy, for God was their true monarch. This span of time is one of Israel’s darkest periods of history. The people were frustrated and felt the source of their problems was their lack of leadership and the source of leadership — a denial of God’s supremacy.

Neighboring people groups in the land of Canaan were ruled by a monarch or king. The people of God felt if they had a king their problems would be solved and they would be like other nations.

Samuel, a priest who had taken over from Eli, was the last in the succession of judges. The people told him they wanted a king like everyone else. Samuel took this personally, sensing the people were rejecting him, but God made it clear they were actually rejecting Him.

*And the LORD said to Samuel, “Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.”*

— 1 Samuel 8:7

Panel 5 ▼

The Israelites were warned that a king would take their sons for the army, their daughters for handmaidens to serve in the courts, and tax them heavily. In spite of this, the people demanded a king — one that could be seen.

## **The Book of Ruth**

At this point in the era of The Judges God has an anonymous writer insert what we know today as the Book of Ruth. It is the story of a Hebrew family that flees a Palestinian famine to Moab, where the sons marry Moabite women, one of whom is Ruth. When death takes all the men, Naomi, the mother, returns to her homeland accompanied by Ruth who has come to believe in God. There she eventually marries Boaz of the tribe of Judah, who becomes the ancestress of David, through whose lineage the Messiah would come.

## **Saul**

In response to the demand, Saul, a son of Kish from Gibeah, was chosen by the people and anointed king by Samuel. Saul gave much of his time trying to drive the Philistines out of the central mountain range of Canaan. Saul's reign started well but didn't end well. He began to rebel against God through his pride and impatience. Because Saul disobeyed God, Samuel was sent to inform him that God was going to remove him as king.

▲ Panel 5a



## Chapter 6

# ***The Promise to David***

[Panel 5a (middle) only]

### **A Man After God's Heart**

David was a significant individual in God's unfolding plan for man's redemption. God was ready again to amplify on the promise which was given to Adam. It was revealed that the promised Seed would sit upon the throne of David.

Panel 5a ▼

Because of Saul's disobedience, God was searching for a man to replace the king. The prophet Samuel said to Saul:

*But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.*

— 1 Samuel 13:14

Luke teaches that David was a man after God's own heart:

*And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will."*

— Acts 13:22

In this chapter notice God amplifying through David and his descendants the seed portion of the promise given to Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

## **Saul's Kingdom Ends**

Saul was removed from being the first monarch of Israel because of his pride and continued disobedience to God. Saul revealed his disobedience to God when he usurped the priest's responsibility to offer sacrifices to God, and by allowing God's enemy, King Agag (of the Amalehites), to live after he was ordered to destroy everything. Samuel was reluctant to give up on Saul until God made it abundantly clear Saul was no longer anointed to lead Israel.

*Then the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons."*

— 1 Samuel 16:1

## **David — the Shepherd**

Samuel was sent by God to the household of Jesse to anoint a new king. Jesse's sons were gathered, but David was away tending sheep. No one thought it was important to call a shepherd boy, since the more prominent sons were assembled. Since Samuel had no peace from God, he inquired if there were yet other sons. David was sent for and had to leave his sheep to return home. God had used his shepherding responsibilities to prepare David for his coming ministry as king. He was immediately recognized by Samuel and anointed as king of Israel.

It was years before David would ascend the throne and rule all Israel. God used these years to prepare David for the ministry to which He had called him.

The Bible states that the Spirit of God came upon David.

*Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.*

— 1 Samuel 16:13

As the Spirit came upon David, He also departed from Saul. This caused David's life to become dramatically linked to Saul's life.

## **David — the Singer and Musician**

One of David's natural gifts from God was his musical ability. David was skilled on the harp as well as psalmwriting — a skill

he may have developed during his years as a shepherd. An evil spirit replaced the Spirit of God in Saul's life and often troubled him. It was suggested that a skillful musician be found to soothe the troubled and restless king. David, because of his skillfulness in music, was brought to the king and became the king's personal and special musician. Saul at once loved David and conscripted him into his service as his armorbearer. This love, however, was short-lived. Because of Saul's pride and arrogance, his love turned to hatred and resulted in murder.

## **David — the Soldier**

David was allowed by Saul to return to his shepherding duties, but was soon sent to carry food to his brothers, who were fighting the Philistines. It was at this point that David encountered Goliath, the giant from Gath, and killed him. Overnight David became a military hero and was made commander-in-chief of the army. That began David's disfavor with Saul, since his military exploits were exalted above Saul's. David's military successes also resulted in his becoming a son-in-law to the king. David was given Michal as his wife in exchange for the foreskins of 200 Philistine soldiers. David and Jonathan, Saul's son, who were military buddies struck up a friendship which 3,000 years later the world is still talking about. When Saul sensed his family's loyalty and love for David, this further alienated the two.

## **David — the Fugitive**

Because of Saul's repeated attacks on David's life, he was forced to become a fugitive. Saul spent years in active pursuit of David in an effort to kill him. Twice David spared Saul's life while being murderously pursued. This resulted in momentary peace. God used all of these events to mold David into the kind of man that He was searching for to rule His people. David's kind, loving, and forgiving spirit reflected what God looks for in any person who is to serve Him.

## **David — the King**

In a battle with the Philistines, Saul was mortally wounded and fell on his sword to keep from being captured and tortured by the Philistines. Jonathan was also killed in the same battle.

At age 30, while in Hebron, David was anointed by the men of Judah. Abner, Saul's general, had Ishbosheth, Saul's son, anointed as king over the other 11 tribes. After a period of time Abner broke with Ishbosheth and joined David. Joab, David's general, murdered Abner. Two of Ishbosheth's captains murdered him, thinking they would be rewarded by David. But David put them

to death for that murder. David was then anointed for the third time as the king of all 12 tribes.

As king, David pursued the enemies of God, driving them out of their land. Under David's leadership the Israelites took possession of the land that God had promised to Abraham. Because of their obedience, the blessing of God was upon them, and they prospered in the land. Under David's leadership they possessed more of the land than they had at any time up to this point in their history. Jerusalem was also taken and became the capital city. David built a magnificent palace for himself and lived in luxury and comfort.

## **David and the Temple**

Throughout the years of hardship and exile, David had grown in his personal relationship with God. With things relatively safe, David set his heart to bring the Ark of God to Jerusalem and place it in a tabernacle he had prepared for it. For years the Ark had been in the enemy's hand until it had been returned to Israel and preserved in Abinadab's home. After the Ark was in Jerusalem, David determined to build God a magnificent temple so that He might dwell among His people once again.

It may have bothered David that he lived in a beautiful palace while God lived in a tent. Because of David's love for God he went to Nathan, the prophet, with his dream of building God a magnificent temple. Nathan was excited about the idea of a temple until God revealed to him that David was not to build it. God sent Nathan back to David with a promise that He was going to build David a house.

## **David's Promise From God**

This promise to David is set forth in the book of 2 Samuel.

**“When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.”**

**— 2 Samuel 7:12-16**

## God's Promise (2 Samuel 7:12-16)

- Verse 12 — I will set up your seed after you.  
I will establish his kingdom.
- Verse 13 — I will establish the throne of his  
kingdom forever.
- Verse 14 — I will be his father, and he will be  
my son.
- Verse 16 — Your house and your kingdom and  
throne shall be established forever.

God made these promises concerning three things:

- **DAVID'S HOUSE** — a dynasty, a ruling  
monarch's future family, his seed.
- **DAVID'S THRONE** — a place from where he  
was to rule, seat of government, thus his actual  
rule.
- **DAVID'S KINGDOM** — sphere over which he  
ruled.

This promise did not guarantee an uninterrupted rule, but that the right to rule would remain with David's house forever.

God did not allow David to build Him a house but promised David an eternal house. Solomon, who followed David as king, was allowed to build the temple for God that his father David had wanted to build.

Jesus Christ was and will be the ultimate fulfillment of this promise. He is going to return and sit on David's throne to rule, according to some Bible scholars.

In Psalm 89 David spoke about this promise God gave to him:

*I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn  
to My servant David: Your seed I will establish forever,  
And build up your throne to all generations.*  
— Psalm 89:3-4

*His seed also I will make to endure forever, And his  
throne as the days of heaven.*  
— Psalm 89:29

*My covenant I will not break, Nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David: His seed shall endure forever, And his throne as the sun before Me.*

— Psalm 89:34-36

## **Qualifications for Fulfillment**

When David died, God gave his throne to Solomon, David's son. Solomon's son Rehoboam later caused the kingdom to be divided. However, David's throne was to be reoccupied by an eternal king, Jesus Christ. The Bible explains how Jesus Christ fulfills the promise:

- **The person who fulfills this promise must be David's seed.**

*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the **son of David**, the **son of Abraham**.*

— Matthew 1:1

- **He must be virgin-born.**

*Then he said, "Hear now, O house of David! Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, **the virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son**, and shall call His name Immanuel."*

— Isaiah 7:13-14

- **He must establish the throne and the kingdom of David.**

*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of **His government** and peace there will be no end, upon the **throne of David**, and over **His kingdom**, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

— Isaiah 9:6-7

- **He must restore the house of David and sit on his throne.**

*He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the **throne** of His father David. And He will reign over the **house** of Jacob forever; and of His **kingdom** there will be no end.*

— Luke 1:32-33

When Jesus Christ came to earth nearly 1,000 years later, David's house (or dynasty) had fallen. He came to restore the nation

and sit on David's throne to rule. The religious leaders and many of the Jews rejected Jesus as their king. Here Bible interpreters diverge, with Premillennialists believing that when Jesus comes again, He will rule literally from David's throne, while Amillennialists believe the prophecy is fulfilled in the spiritual kingdom over which Christ presently rules (see also Chapter 12 *The Promise Through Prophecy* for further details).

■ **Because of His rejection, Jesus will come again the second time and will rule.**

*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets, and stones those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. See Your house is left to you desolate; For I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."*

— Matthew 23:37-39

Jesus wanted to gather Israel back together, since they had been scattered because of their disobedience; He wanted also to restore the desolate house of David, and He informed the Jews that they would not see Him till He came again the second time.

## The Second Coming of Christ

### Proclamation

When the people had returned from the Babylonian Exile, the prophet Zechariah proclaimed Christ's second coming.

*And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.<sup>1</sup>*

*Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my God will come, and all the saints with You.*

*It shall come to pass in that day that there will be no light; the lights will diminish. It shall be one day which is known to the LORD — neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen that it will be light.*

<sup>1</sup> Geologists tell us that two major faults converge on the Mount of Olives, and one day the mountain will split in a major earthquake. 2,500 years ago when Zechariah prophesied, no one even knew what a fault was.



*And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur. And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be — “the LORD is one,” and His name one.*

— Zechariah 14:4-9

***“But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking,” says the LORD. “Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”***

— Jeremiah 23:3-6

*But, “As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.” And they shall dwell in their own land.*

— Jeremiah 23:8

Jeremiah understood from God that Israel, which was scattered due to disobedience, would one day be drawn back into the land which was now under foreign occupation. For some 2,500 years Israel was a nation without a land. It was not until 1948 that Israel, overnight, became a nation once again. From that day in May of 1948, the Jews have been returning home to Israel from every part of the earth where they were scattered, and like Jeremiah was told, they will dwell in their own land.

## **Jesus' Second Coming**

When the prophets told of Jesus' coming to earth to redeem mankind from sin, they saw this as a single event. They thought everything would occur at His first advent. We now see that the prophets were talking about two events which were divided by a space of time now some two thousand years apart. It's like looking at a mountain range from a distance; the peaks look like they are touching one another. It is not until you are face-to-face with the mountains that you realize there is a great distance which separates one peak from the other. So it was with the prophets. They saw the event clearly, but did not understand the distance which separated these two advents.

## Implications of the Promise

- Some believe that literal Israel will be preserved, while others apply that preservation to spiritual Israel, the Church.
- David's seed will return to the land of Palestine at a future date. (This became a reality in 1948, when Israel became a nation with land.)
- Jesus will either reign over a literal earthly kingdom, or He now reigns over His people the Church in a spiritual lordship manner from heaven.

Panel 5a ▲



## Chapter 7

# *Overview: David to Jesus*

[Panels 5a — 6]

## **David**

### **David Retakes the Land**

David, like Saul and the Judges before him, was occupied with driving the enemies of Israel off their land. Much of his life as king was spent at war. He was successful in claiming all the land that Joshua had begun to conquer. He ruled over or controlled indirectly the whole land bridge of the fertile crescent from the River Euphrates to the River of Egypt. This total land mass was the expanded Promised Land God had given to Abraham as an eternal inheritance.

### **David's Sin**

One year — when David, as commander-in-chief, should have been at war with his men — he remained at home in his palace in Jerusalem. His lust for a beautiful woman named Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, one of his soldiers, ended in adultery. In an effort to cover Bathsheba's resulting pregnancy, Uriah was called home from the front under the pretense of bringing David a battle report. When Uriah refused to see his wife, David sent him back to the battlefield and arranged for him to be killed.

After Uriah's death, David and Bathsheba were married. Nathan, the prophet, confronted David with his sin through an indirect story about the event. The story concerned a wealthy man with many sheep who, instead of taking one of his own sheep to feed his guest, took a poor man's only pet sheep to feed them. David in anger decreed that this man would pay four-fold for

Panel 5a ▼

the crime. Nathan told him that *he* was the man. David confessed and repented, and God forgave him. However, God punished David for his sin. Sins *are* forgiven when confessed, but the individual sinner will reap the consequences of the sin. David's sin started a chain of events which eventually destroyed his own family and affected the rule of his kingdom:

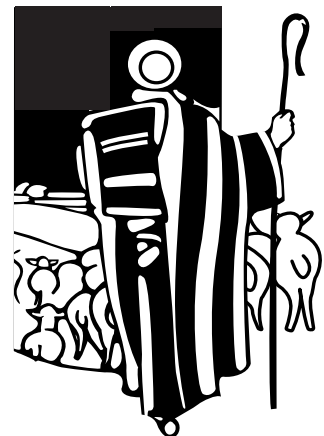
- David and Bathsheba's baby died.
- David's son, Amnon, raped his half-sister, Tamar.
- Tamar's full brother, Absalom, killed Amnon, his half brother.
- Absalom led a revolt against his father, David, and was killed.

During Absalom's revolt, David was forced to leave Jerusalem and live in the wilderness. Ahithophel, one of David's royal counselors, sided with Absalom and encouraged him publicly to rape David's concubine. Some scholars believe Ahithophel may have been Bathsheba's grandfather, and this would account for his savage counsel and defection from David.

When the two armies finally met, Absalom was killed by Joab, David's general. Having put down one revolt, David was confronted by a second when ten of the tribes defected from the kingdom. Joab and the army crushed the revolt, and David returned to Jerusalem. Many believe this settled the four-fold payment for David's sin with Bathsheba.

David did endure a three-year plague which was carried over from Saul's sin against the Gibeonites. The nation also suffered another short plague resulting in the death of 70,000 men, because David had taken a census of the nation. The plague was stopped by David's sacrifice and intercession, to which God responded by sending fire from heaven.

David in his old age made preparation for the building of the Temple which he had been forbidden by God to construct. When everything was ready, David called for a special dedication service. The plans which he had received from God were given to Solomon, his son. Solomon was anointed as king while David was on his deathbed.



## Solomon

Even before David's death, his son Adonijah was plotting to take control of the throne. He rallied the support of Joab, the commander of David's army, and Abiathar, the high priest, and prepared to have himself anointed and crowned at En-Rogel. Nathan the prophet, Zadok the priest, and Benaiah, one of David's mighty men, brought this plot to Bathsheba's attention.

Bathsheba immediately informed David, who then had Solomon anointed and crowned at the spring of Gihon. After David's death Solomon arranged for the deaths of Adonijah and Joab and had Abiathar removed from the priesthood and exiled.

Solomon was quite different from his father. David was a **shepherd, soldier, and fugitive** — a man of action — yet he had a heart for God. Solomon had grown to manhood as the son of a king with all the luxuries that royalty could afford. Though ruthless with his enemies, Solomon was basically a man of peace who pursued luxuries and temporal values such as women, horses, and wealth. Solomon was content to maintain and not expand the land which David had fought so hard to regain.



God was pleased with Solomon's sacrifice at Gibeon, where the tabernacle was erected, and granted him a request. Solomon asked God for wisdom to rule the people, and God granted this prayer, promising him both riches and honor for his leadership.

Though not a soldier, Solomon was a wise **military strategist** who fortified the key cities of his kingdom in an effort to defend the nation. His primary defense consisted of chariots, cavalry, and strong fortifications. He also maintained a standing army ready for battle if needed.

Solomon divided the kingdom into twelve *districts*, which he ruled as a wise and gifted **administrator**. His lavish lifestyle was paid for through taxes, forced labor, tributes, and gifts from foreign rulers, and through his genius for commerce and trade. His ships carried copper everywhere and returned with treasures from all over the world. His international influence grew and his foreign commerce and relationships were cemented with marriages that ensured peace and tranquility for Israel.

Solomon was also a gifted **builder**, which could be seen throughout the whole kingdom in his military fortifications. At home his genius for building was seen in his palaces, and in his impressive government structures (such as the Hall of Justice which contained Solomon's ivory throne overlaid in pure gold with twelve lions, two for each step).

Solomon's crowning achievement was the *Temple* which David had longed to build. He had spent his final strength accumulating and dedicating the necessary materials for its building. Solomon spent seven years in its construction. When it was completed, it stood as the most beautiful Temple in the world. Unfortunately, however, Solomon failed to understand the moral principles of the Hebrew faith.

Solomon and David were both gifted writers, and entire sections of the Bible are devoted to their writings. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, and many Psalms were written during this "golden age of literature." Solomon, with all of his advantages of wisdom, gifts, and promises from God, could have been one of the greatest leaders the world has ever known, rather than merely a "good" ruler.

But, like David his father, Solomon had a problem with lust. In one whole generation that problem had multiplied itself 1,000 times (David's major problem developed from a relationship with one woman named Bathsheba. Solomon had many marriages totaling 700 wives and 300 concubines). As he had built a Temple for God, so he also built temples and high places for his foreign wives to worship their gods. Israel again became filled with idolatry.

This false worship, combined with his love for wealth and horses, resulted in a temporal mind set for Solomon, and he lost sight of God's eternal purposes and will for his life. Though he ruled Israel during its "golden years of peace and tranquility," at his death the nation was morally, spiritually, and financially bankrupt. Many of his subjects were ready to revolt from Solomon's son's leadership.

The story of Solomon is a truly tragic commentary on what could have been a magnificent life.

## **The Divided Kingdom**

### **Rehoboam**

Rehoboam, Solomon's son, succeeded his father as king of Israel. Unfortunately, he refused to deal with certain political rivalries and jealousies, which had existed in Israel since the exodus from Egypt. Since the monarchy was established under Saul, these factions had resulted in divisions of the twelve tribes on several occasions.

Only Judah had crowned David, while the other tribes had anointed Ishbosheth, Saul's son, as their king, producing a kingdom divided into northern and southern factions. During



Absalom's rebellion, many of the tribes followed him; during Sheba's revolt, the northern tribes followed him.

Solomon conscripted his work force from the people and taxed them heavily. The resulting discontent was fertile soil for yet another rebellion. Upon being made king, Rehoboam should have exercised extreme discretion, but he ignored the tribal elders' request for easing the load, and a revolt followed.

Jeroboam, a spokesman for the ten northern tribes, was made their king. Only Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to the southern king, Rehoboam. The southern kingdom maintained its capital in Jerusalem, and its center of worship was the Temple built by Solomon.

## Jeroboam

Jeroboam, who must have been more sensitive to the increasing levels of discontent, established the initial capital for the northern kingdom at Shechem. He set about creating a division, which kept the ten tribes from interacting with the southern tribes. His immediate problem was a place to worship other than Jerusalem, because three times a year the Law required Israelites to journey there to the Temple.

Thus, Jeroboam set up two altars, one at Dan in the north, and the other at Bethel in the south. On each altar he erected a golden calf as a symbol of worship and in both locations he appointed priests. These new practices were in direct violation of the commandments of God, yet this system of worship was continued under every king of the northern kingdom.

Due to their willful disobedience to God, the inhabitants of the northern kingdom forfeited God's promised blessing and began to experience the curses of the Mosaic covenant their forefathers had bound them to before departing into the wilderness almost 500 years earlier. They began to lose their land, and within 200 years they experienced the ultimate cursing of captivity and deportation to Assyria.

Since there is no way to deal with the details of each monarch in the northern and southern kingdoms in this short survey, two charts are included on the following pages. One chart lists the kings of the north, while the other lists the kings of the south.

Dates are included to compare the monarchs, along with the length of each king's reign. While all the kings of the north are considered evil, eight of the southern kings are considered good. The charts also include references from the books of 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles to aid in further study.



# The Kings of Israel

## (Ten Tribes of the North)



Name	* Date (B.C.)	Years	Character	References	
				1 Kings	2 Chron.
<b>Jeroboam</b>	931-910	22	Evil	11:26-14:20	9:29-13:20
<b>Nadab</b>	910-909	2	Evil	15:25-28	
<b>Baasha</b>	909-886	24	Evil	15:27-16:7	16:1-6
<b>Elah</b>	886-885	2	Evil	16:6-14	
<b>Zimri</b>	885	7 days	Evil	16:9-20	
<b>Omri</b>	885-874	12	Evil	16:15-28	
<b>Ahab</b>	874-853	22	Evil	16:28-22:40	18:1-34
<b>Ahaziah</b>	853-852	2	Evil	22:40- 2 Kings 1:18	
<b>2 Kings</b>					
<b>Jehoram</b>	852-841	12	Evil	3:1-9:25	22:5-7
<b>Jehu</b>	841-814	28	Evil	9:1-10:36	
<b>Jehoahaz</b>	814-798	17	Evil	13:1-9	22:7-12
<b>Jehoash</b>	798-782	16	Evil	13:10-14:16	25:17-24
<b>Jeroboam II</b>	782-753	41	Evil	14:23-29	
<b>Zechariah</b>	753-752	6 mo.	Evil	14:29-15:12	
<b>Shallum</b>	752	1 mo.	Evil	15:10-15	
<b>Menahem</b>	752-742	10	Evil	15:14-22	
<b>Pekahiah</b>	742-740	2	Evil	15:22-26	
<b>Pekah</b>	740-731	20	Evil	15:27-31	28:5-8
<b>Hoshea</b>	731-722	9	Evil	15:30-17:6	

\* Scholars do not always agree on these dates.



# The Kings of Judah

## (Ten Tribes of the South)



Name	* Date (B.C.)	Years	Character	References	
				1 Kings	2 Chron.
<b>Rehoboam</b>	931-913	17	Evil	11:42-14:31	9:31-12:16
<b>Abijam</b>	913-911	3	Evil	14:31-15:8	13:1-22
<b>Asa</b>	911-870	41	Good	15:8-24	14:1-16:14
<b>Jehoshaphat</b>	873-848	25	Good	22:41-50	17:1-20:37
<b>2 Kings</b>					
<b>Jehoram</b>	853-841	8	Evil	8:16-24	21:1-20
<b>Ahaziah</b>	841	1	Evil	8:24-9:29	22:1-9
<b>Athaliah</b>	841-835	6	Evil	11:1-20	22:1-23:21
<b>Joash</b>	835-796	40	Good	12:1-12:21	22:10-24:27
<b>Amaziah</b>	796-767	29	Good	14:1-20	25:1-28
<b>Azariah</b>	792-740	52	Good	15:1-7	26:1-23
<b>Jotham</b>	750-732	16	Good	15:32-38	27:1-9
<b>Ahaz</b>	735-716	16	Evil	16:1-20	28:1-27
<b>Hezekiah</b>	716-697	29	Good	18:1-20:21	29:1-32:33
<b>Manasseh</b>	697-643	55	Evil	21:1-18	33:1-20
<b>Amon</b>	643-641	2	Evil	21:19-26	33:21-25
<b>Josiah</b>	641-609	31	Good	22:1-23:30	34:1-35:27
<b>Jehohaz</b>	609	3 mo.	Evil	23:31-33	36:1-4
<b>Jehoiakim</b>	609-598	11	Evil	23:34-24:5	36:5-7
<b>Jehoiachin</b>	598-597	3 mo.	Evil	24:6-16	36:8-10
<b>Zedekian</b>	597-586	11	Evil	24:17-25:30	36:11-21

\* Scholars do not always agree on these dates.

## Disobedience and Exile

It is interesting to observe that during this period God dealt with the kings on the basis of the promises their forefathers had made with God before they entered the Promised Land. In essence, the covenant promised: *If you obey me and keep my commandments, I will bless you and you will prosper in the land. If you rebel, I will scatter you, and your enemy will possess your land.*

## The Prophets

During those years God raised up prophets who warned the people of their impending doom. God used them to urge the people to remain true to God. The essence of their message was: *Return to God or what was prophesied in the Mosaic Covenant will come upon you. You will be cursed, smitten by your enemies, plucked off your land, and scattered over the earth.*

For the most part the message of the prophets fell on deaf ears. Some of the prophets prophesied to the ten northern tribes of

### Dates of the Major and Minor Prophets

Prophet	*Date	To Whom Addressed	Time
Obadiah	848-841 B.C.	Edom	Pre-Exile
Joel	853-800 B.C.	Judah	Pre-Exile
Jonah	782-753 B.C.	Assyria	Pre-Exile
Amos	760-753 B.C.	Israel	Pre-Exile
Hosea	755-710 B.C.	Israel	Pre-Exile
Isaiah	740-680 B.C.	Israel and Judah	Pre-Exile
Micah	735-700 B.C.	Israel and Judah	Pre-Exile
Nahum	664-654 B.C.	Assyria	Pre-Exile
Zephaniah	632-628 B.C.	Judah	Pre-Exile
Jeremiah	627-580 B.C.	Judah	Pre-Exile
Habakkuk	609-605 B.C.	Judah	Pre-Exile
Daniel	605-534 B.C.	Exiles in Babylon	Exile
Lamentations	586 B.C.	Jerusalem	Exile
Ezekiel	592-570 B.C.	Judah and Exiles	Exile
Haggai	520 B.C.	Jews in Jerusalem	Post-Exile
Zechariah	520-480 B.C.	Jews in Jerusalem	Post-Exile
Malachi	432-424 B.C.	Jews in Jerusalem	Post-Exile

\* Scholars do not always agree on these dates.

Israel, while others prophesied to the two southern tribes of Judah. Another group of prophets was sent by God to both Judah and Israel. Some prophesied *before* the exile, others *during* the exile, and some *after* the exile. Scholars divide them into two groups — the Major and the Minor Prophets.

Another aspect of the prophets' messages that is pertinent to this survey is their prophecies concerning Jesus Christ, the long-awaited Messiah. They prophesied concerning almost every aspect of His life: birth, ministry, death, resurrection, and second coming. At that time they saw all of this as one event. Today Christian believers know His coming as two events, since they anxiously await His glorious reappearance, which will signal the end of time.

Panel 5b ▲

## The Captivities and the Exile

In the northern kingdom the predictions and warnings of the prophets went unheeded and the promised judgment of God descended on Israel in 721 B.C., as the Assyrians took them captive and deported the vast majority of the people away from their land. Other settlers were brought in to Samaria to become the later Samaritans.

Panel 6 ▼

The southern kingdom survived for another 135 years because of the last two good kings in Judah — Hezekiah and Josiah — but then was taken captive by Babylon because of the evil final kings. In 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple and the city, and deported most of the people to Babylonia.

## The Post-Exilic Period

The Babylonian exile was ended by Cyrus, a Persian conqueror. Jeremiah's prediction of a 70-year captivity was now completed. King Cyrus issued a decree allowing the Jews (the new name of the Israelites, taken from "Judah-ites") to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple. Under the leadership of Zerubbabel, a descendant of David, 50,000 Jews returned to Jerusalem in 536 B.C., exactly 70 years after the first deportation in 606 B.C.

The people began at once to rebuild the city. Two years later, in 536 B.C., construction of the Temple was begun. Because of opposition from their Samaritan neighbors, the work was stopped two years later in 534 B.C. It remained in this incomplete state until 520 B.C., when God used two of the post-exilic prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, to exhort the people to complete the Temple. Work was then resumed and the Temple was completed in 516 B.C., exactly 70 years after the destruction of the Solomonic Temple in 586 B.C.

**Queen Esther**, a Jewish maiden who was married to a Persian king, appeared during this span of history, about 437 B.C. She was used of God to rescue the lives of the Jews who remained in Persia, and who were being plotted against by Haman, the Persian prime minister. Because she was the queen, she was able to expose the plot and save her people.

**Ezra**, a godly priest and scribe, brought a smaller remnant of 5,000–6,000 people back to Jerusalem in 457 B.C. Under his leadership a spiritual revival began, and resulted in the people living in obedience to the commandments of God.

**Nehemiah**, who was the cupbearer to a Persian king, led the third remnant back to Jerusalem. He had learned from travelers that the walls of Jerusalem had never been rebuilt, even though more than 90 years had passed since its reoccupation by the Jews. Nehemiah was allowed and assisted by the Persian king to work on the restoration of the walls and gates of the city. In just 52 days Nehemiah's workers were able to complete the task. The walls and gates which had been destroyed 142 years before were now operational and once again defended Jerusalem.

**Malachi**, the last of the post-exilic prophets, prophesied about a forerunner — an Elijah — who would prepare the people for the coming of their long-awaited Messiah. After this prophecy, 400 years passed, during which there was no direct revelation from God — it was an age of divine silence. God was silent (no revelation) but His providence was working and the faithful remnant did persist spiritually.

Just as God was preparing the way for His Messiah to enter the world, two prominent religious leaders were born into the world — Gautama Buddha, who lived from 560–480 B.C., and Confucius, who lived from 551–479 B.C. Both were used by Satan to lead people away from God in later history.

During this period of time Alexander the Great conquered the world in 333 B.C. In 167 B.C. Judas Maccabeus and his brothers led a series of revolts in an effort to retake the Promised Land. They were only partially successful in their efforts. In 63 B.C. a new force moved onto the stage of history — Rome. The Romans would shortly conquer the world, and it was into this Roman-dominated world that the Messiah, God's Son, was born.

▲ Panel 6

## Chapter 8

# ***The Promise of a New Covenant***

[Back to Panel 6a,  
Panel 9]

## **Introduction**

The writer of Genesis records (God is speaking to Abraham):

*In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*  
— Genesis 12:3

The new covenant deals with the *blessing* part of Abraham's promise. Up to this point only Abraham's *seed* was being blessed. However, it was God's plan that the *whole world* would be blessed.

In one of Judah's darkest hours prior to the Babylonian captivity God told Jeremiah, the last of the pre-exile prophets, that He was going to make a *new* covenant with His people.

## **The New Covenant — The Law Written on Men's Hearts**

*"Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah — not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them," says the LORD.*  
— Jeremiah 31:31-32





**“But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days,” says the LORD, “I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them” says the LORD. “For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more. ”**

**—Jeremiah 31:33-34**

God made some important promises to the nation of Israel in the above passages. Note these key statements:

- I am going to make **a new covenant** with the house of Judah and Israel (David’s seed).
- I will put **my Law in their minds and write it on their hearts**.

Prior to this time, the Law of God was *external* to men, and written on tablets of stone. But now God said He was going to change that — He was going to write His Law *internally* on the hearts of His people. God further stated:

- **I will be their God**, and they shall be My people.
- They **shall all know Me** from the least to the greatest.
- **I will forgive their iniquity and will remember their sin no more.**

The Hebrews needed this new covenant because of their inability to live up to the conditions of the Mosaic Law. God’s blessing and their possession of the land were conditioned upon their total obedience to the Mosaic Covenant.

The northern ten tribes of Israel had already lost all their land and were in captivity. Judah was about to lose all the land which she possessed. The Mosaic Law convicted them of sin and acted as a schoolmaster to lead them to repentance, but they needed a pure heart toward God and the indwelling of God’s Spirit to help them live up to God’s Law. The Holy Spirit, third person of the Trinity, had only come upon selected individuals for specific tasks at specific times until this promise was given.

## A New Heart

*Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.*

— Ezekiel 11:19-20

The prophet Ezekiel adds to our understanding of God's promise of a new covenant. Observe the key ingredients:

- I will put a ***new spirit within them***.
- I will ***take the stony heart out*** of their flesh.
- I will ***give them a heart of flesh***.
- That they ***may walk in my statutes and keep my judgments and do them***.

## All Flesh

Because of man's fallen nature (Genesis 3), his heart tended toward sin and not toward the righteousness of God. Therefore, people realized they could never measure up to God's perfect standard and were forever falling short of God's expectations. But in this passage God promised to send "a new Spirit" to indwell them and enable and empower them to walk with God and serve Him.

*And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.*

— Joel 2:28-29

The prophet Joel, who had prophesied 200 years before Jeremiah and Ezekiel, had predicted the coming of the new covenant without mentioning it by name. Compare the statements here with the other passages above.

- God said this event was to ***happen some time in the future***.
- He also said, "I will ***pour out My Spirit upon all flesh***." ("I will pour out" meant He would indwell His people with His Spirit. This was to be available to *all* people, not just Abraham's seed.)

## **The Difference Between the Covenants**

The Bible is divided into two parts — the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, or the Old Testament and the New Testament (“testament” means “covenant”).

In the old covenant, since the days of Moses, the laws of God were written on tablets of stone and were designed for a people already righteous in their daily living. However, for those who were not redeemed, the Law served notice that man could not attain righteousness by his own effort, for in the flesh these laws were impossible to keep perfectly. The tablets of stone were a constant reminder that man could not keep the Law by himself.

The new covenant was instituted by Jesus Christ when He died on the cross for our sins, and under it man gained direct access to God. The Law is now written on hearts of flesh, not on tablets of stone. Under this new covenant, still in effect today, man can attain righteousness based on the merits of Christ alone, not by virtue of his own ability to keep God’s Law.

Salvation has always been by grace through faith, for Abraham “believed God,” and it was counted to him for righteousness (see Genesis 15:6 and Galatians 3:6). He and others trusted in God, knowing what He was going to do in the future at Calvary, while we today look in retrospect to what God has already done for us at Calvary.

## **Jesus — The Mediator of the New Covenant**

*But now He [Jesus] has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.*

— Hebrews 8:6

*But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

— Hebrews 9:11-14

Important things to note in these passages from Hebrews are:

- The old covenant had been established with a sacrifice.

The shedding of blood was the means of forgiveness and salvation under the Mosaic Law. The new covenant was also established with a sacrifice — the blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross. The Israelites looked ahead 2,000 years by faith to the blood of Christ. Today we look back by faith 2,000 years to the blood of Christ.

*For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

— Matthew 26:28

- The old covenant required repeated sacrifice of countless animals. Christ's sacrifice was **once for all**.
- The old covenant required a priest to mediate between God and the people. Christ has now become the Mediator of the new covenant, forever interceding with God on man's behalf.

While on earth Jesus tried to explain to His disciples that He must depart if the new covenant was ever to come. This was necessary because:

- ***His blood had to be shed for the remission of sin.***
- ***The promised Spirit could not come until Christ departed.***

*Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper [Spirit] will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.*

— John 16:7

## The New Covenant Confirmed at Pentecost

*Now when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of*

*fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

— Acts 2:1-4

In explaining the Pentecost event Peter, in the Book of Acts, declared:

*For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: [Peter went on to quote Joel 2:28-29 mentioned earlier].*

— Acts 2:15-16

Things to note from Acts 2 are:

- Pentecost ushered in the second stage of the promised new covenant, about which Jesus had told His followers. The Holy Spirit was now given to indwell every believer permanently and to give assistance to the Christian in his personal obedience to God. The Holy Spirit was no longer the external influence that He had been under the old covenant but was now an internal Power — the very Person of God within the Christian's heart.
- Some theologians question if Joel's prophecy, which Peter quoted, was totally fulfilled. They cite the following reasons:

***Only some of the Jews at Pentecost were filled with the Spirit*** — those who believed in Christ. So as yet the Spirit had not been poured upon “all flesh.”

***Due to unbelief, Israel remains largely cut off from the Messiah as they were in the days of Jesus.*** However, many believe the day is coming when Israel as a nation will return to God.

*For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that hardening in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”*

— Romans 11:25-26

It is apparent that the blindness of Israel to Christ's reality is for a season only — until the full number of Gentiles are saved.

- These theologians believe that at some point in the future the universal aspect of the Joel prophecy will be fulfilled. The Gentiles are being won and brought into the Kingdom in great number. And when the full number is complete, God will again turn His attention to Israel to pour out His Spirit upon them.

## Jesus Fulfills the Covenant

Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises to Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. Because of His death on the cross for our sins, we are now made righteous in the sight of God. His shed blood has washed our sins away and we are now capable of a restored personal relationship with God. Because of the new covenant, we now have the Spirit of God living in our hearts and He is ever at work in us. The Spirit indwells us and gives us power to live by the Law of God, which is written on our hearts.

Every time Christians take communion they commemorate the new covenant God made. It means that God's promise to Adam is now a reality. Believers in Jesus Christ are now restored to fellowship with God.

Paul declares:

*That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*

— Galatians 3:14

Jesus was the seed of Adam and Abraham, and through His finished work on the cross the whole world can be blessed. Through Jesus Christ God has provided a way for mankind to be reconciled to Him. All we need to do is be willing to receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

## The New Birth and the New Covenant

When Jesus met with Nicodemus, He expected him to understand the new covenant better than he did, because He had come to establish it. He explained how a man must experience a "new birth" by the Spirit of God if he was to be a part of the new covenant which the Father was about to initiate. The story of Nicodemus' encounter with Jesus is recorded in John's gospel:

*There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and*

said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”

Jesus answered and said to him, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”**

Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

Jesus answered, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’** The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?”

Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?”

— John 3:1-10

To be a partaker of the new covenant one must be born again and have the Spirit of God dwelling in him. The conditions of the old covenant have been fulfilled in Christ and His new covenant, so that salvation must be gained through faith in Christ. Please note again what the preceding verses have to say, especially these verses:

- **Verse 3** — “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
- **Verse 4** — “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”
- **Verse 5** — “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”
- **Verse 10** — “How can these things be?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?”



## Chapter 9

# *The Promise Fulfilled*

[Panels 7 — 9a]

## Introduction

In the last book of the Old Testament there are two important prophecies which help us understand what God was about to do.



*“Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,” says the LORD of hosts.*  
— Malachi 3:1

*Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.*  
— Malachi 4:5

God was going to send a messenger. He was to prepare the way for the Messiah, who would come and establish God’s new covenant with men. Elijah was to be his name. His ministry was to turn a rebellious people back to God. He called on people to repent, wash away their sins, and prepare to meet the Messiah.

## John the Baptist

The people wanted to know if John was Elijah. He said he wasn’t, so they asked him who he was. John identified himself with Isaiah’s prophecy about his ministry rather than Malachi’s:

Panel 7 ▼

*The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."*

— *Isaiah 40:3*

Isaiah 40:3 is a cross reference to Malachi's prophecy.

However, Jesus clearly identified John as the Elijah who was to come. So according to Jesus' own testimony, the prophecies in Isaiah and in Malachi both were fulfilled in John the Baptist.

*And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come.*

— *Matthew 11:14*

## **The Life of Jesus Christ**


Jesus came as the perfect fulfillment of God's promise to *Adam*. He was the seed of the woman who would crush Satan's head. He came also as the perfect fulfillment of God's promise to *Abraham*, "that in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." He came as the perfect fulfillment of God's promise to *David* that He would one day rule from David's throne.

The four Gospel writers each describe the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This survey of the life of Christ will follow Matthew's account.

*(Note: Read each chapter as you study the following lesson.)*

### **Matthew 1 — The Birth of Jesus**

This chapter reveals the genealogy of Jesus Christ. It traces His ancestry to David and Abraham. It tells of Jesus' virgin birth and His mission in life. Matthew contains another key verse:

 ***“And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”***

— *Matthew 1:21*

### **Matthew 2 — Herod's Plan to Kill Jesus**

Here we learn how Herod became aware of Jesus' birth from the wise men who searched for the new King of the Jews. Chapter 2 also records Herod's attempt to kill Jesus. He was unsuccessful because an angel of the Lord instructed Joseph to flee to Egypt. Joseph returned to Galilee after Herod's death.

*Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt... But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead."*

— Matthew 2:13-14, 19-20

### **Matthew 3 — The Baptism of Jesus**

In chapter 3, we learn of Jesus' baptism in the River Jordan by John the Baptist, his cousin. For the first time in Scripture, all three members of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) are mentioned in a single passage. Jesus, the Son, was baptized; the Spirit descended from above; and the voice of God the Father was heard from heaven.

*Then Jesus, when He had been baptized, came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

— Matthew 3:16-17

### **Matthew 4 — The Temptation of Jesus**

This chapter reveals Satan's temptation of Jesus in the wilderness for 40 days and nights, and how Jesus defeated him each time with the Word of God. It also tells of Jesus' early ministry and how He called His disciples to become fishers of men — a call still made to those who would follow Him.

*From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Now Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Then they immediately left their nets and followed Him. And going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. And He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.*

— Matthew 4:17-22

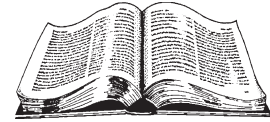
## **Matthew 5 – 7 — The Sermon on the Mount**

These chapters review God's practical principles which were to govern the lives of Christians then and now. They include:

### ■ **The Beatitudes**

### ■ **The Laws of ...**

- Moses
- Adultery
- Oaths
- Love
- Reconciliation
- Divorce
- Nonresistance



### ■ **Instructions in ...**

- Almsgiving
- Fasting
- Anxiety
- Prudence
- Prayer
- Money
- Judging

*And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*

— Matthew 7:28-29

## **Matthew 8 – 9 — The Authority of Jesus**

These chapters deal with Jesus' power and authority over the elements of the earth.

- Disease
- Disciples
- Demons
- Darkness
- Dominions
- Distance
- Disaster
- Death
- Dumbness

None of these things were a threat to Him — He had absolute power over all of them. Because of this, He was able to minister and help people who had no power over them.

*But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."*

— Matthew 9:36-38

## Matthew 10 — The Calling of the Disciples

This chapter deals with Jesus' calling of The Twelve apostles and His instructions to them as they went forth to minister. He told them specifically everything they were to do, as well as how to handle various circumstances, such as:

- |             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| ■ Geography | ■ Message     |
| ■ Finances  | ■ Opposition  |
| ■ Clothing  | ■ Persecution |

These things were addressed by Jesus in order to instruct and prepare His servants for service.

*And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.*

— Matthew 10:38-39

## Matthew 11 – 12 — Opposition to Jesus

The opposition Jesus received from the Jewish leaders and people reach a climax in these chapters. Jesus came to lead and guide but was rejected instead. After John the Baptist was imprisoned, Jesus became the Jewish leaders' main target. If they could not find fault with Him, they found fault with His disciples. They tried to trap Jesus with their questions and discredit His work by attributing His power to Satan.

*But when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."*

— Matthew 12:24

## Matthew 13 — The Parables of Christ

Matthew 13 is a collection of Jesus' parables. His parables were stories in which a moral or spiritual truth was illustrated by an analogy drawn from the experiences of everyday life. Some of the topics include:

- |                        |               |
|------------------------|---------------|
| ■ The Sower            | ■ Wheat/Tares |
| ■ Mustard Seed         | ■ Leaven      |
| ■ Hidden Treasure      | ■ Dragnet     |
| ■ Pearl of Great Price | ■ Household   |

*But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly I say to you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.*

— Matthew 13:16-17

## **Matthew 14 – 15 — The Miracles of Christ**

These chapters record some of the miracles Jesus performed:

- Feeding of the 5,000
- Walking on the water
- Healing of the woman's daughter
- Feeding of the 4,000

The miracles clearly demonstrated that Jesus was the Son of God. In these two chapters Jesus also reproved the Sadducees and Pharisees for their hardness of heart.

*Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them those who were lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them. So the multitudes marveled when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.*

— Matthew 15:30-31

## **Matthew 16 – 17 — Jesus, the Son of God**

Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, in these chapters. Jesus delivered His first word about His death on the cross and His resurrection. He was also transfigured before Peter, James, and John, as they heard God's voice.

*While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"*

— Matthew 17:5

All these events were to authenticate Jesus' claim that He was the long-awaited Messiah.

## **Matthew 18 – 20 — Practical Teaching**

Here Jesus gave practical instructions on such things as:

- Humility
- Discipline of a brother
- Forgiveness
- Children
- Wealth
- Rewards
- Rank

Jesus set a standard of moral conduct for all who would follow Him and taught servanthood by example.

*But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*

— Matthew 20:25-28

## Matthew 21 – 23 — The Triumphal Entry and Debates

These chapters describe Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem riding on a donkey. As He entered the city, the people shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David — blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”

Jesus’ purification of the Temple from money-changers and merchants, His rejection by the spiritual leaders, and their bid to trap Him and put Him to death are recounted also in these three chapters. His stinging rebuke of the Jewish religious leaders and warnings to the people about them complete this section.

*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.*

— Matthew 23:27

## Matthew 24 – 25 — Prophecies of Jesus

Jesus spoke of the signs of the end times and future events in this section, often called the Mount Olivet Discourse. He instructed His followers often in the form of parables. Here we see:

- The destruction of the Temple
- Signs of the end times
- Signs of His second coming
- The parable of the fig tree
- The parable of the ten virgins
- The parable of the ten talents
- The judgment of the nations

Panel 7 ▲

Panel 8 ▼





**“** *But of that day and hour no one knows, no, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.* **”**

— *Matthew 24:36-39*

## **Matthew 26 — The New Covenant Instituted**

This is the account of the Passover and the Last Supper in the upper room, including the institution of the new covenant which is seen symbolized in the Last Supper. The symbolism is shown through the eating of bread and the drinking of wine. The bread symbolized Christ's broken body and the wine symbolized His shed blood for our sins.

*And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”*

— *Matthew 26:26-28*

Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver and the final hours in the Garden of Gethsemane with the disciples are described. At that time Jesus was arrested and brought before the high priest, Caiaphas.

## **Matthew 27 — The Death of Christ**

Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin and Pilate is continued in this chapter. Barabbas was chosen over Jesus for release. Jesus was then condemned and scourged by the Romans. He was crucified on a cross, where His shed blood became the cleansing for all sin. Through His death men can now be reunited with God and restored to fellowship with Him. Jesus Christ was buried in the borrowed grave of Joseph of Arimathea, which was then sealed by guards.

*On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, “Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise.’ ”*

— *Matthew 27:62-63*

## Matthew 28 — The Resurrection of Christ

In this chapter we find the account of the resurrection and the women who came to the tomb to find it empty. The disciples refused to believe their story. Jesus appeared to the disciples and gave them the Great Commission. Later they were commanded to go and make disciples of all nations of the world.

*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe [obey] all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*

— Matthew 28:19-20

Panel 8 ▲

Panel 9a ▼

## The Purpose of the Gospel — Restored Fellowship

This is the Good News of restored fellowship with God through the life and death of Jesus Christ. For thousands of years God had been enacting His plan for man's salvation. During Jesus' life He proclaimed this message and trained other disciples to do the same following His ascension. Because of His rejection by the people who wanted a political instead of a spiritual Savior, Jesus said He would come again to rule the world.

Dispensationalists believe the Jews will on that day possess the land fully that God gave to Abraham and his seed. Today the people of God await the return of Jesus for the second time. Until He does come, believers are to make disciples of the nations.

### The Primary Mission

From the Gospels one gains a historic overview of Jesus' life and ministry. A cursory reading of His life might lead one to believe that Jesus' primary purpose while here on earth was to bring physical healing, do good works, and be an example of love. While these things were important in Jesus' public life, they were most certainly not the major tasks He was sent to accomplish. Jesus' primary objective while on earth was two-fold.

### The Work of Redemption

First, Jesus came for man's redemption. This was accomplished on the cross when "the seed of the woman" died as a substitute for sin, and men were restored to fellowship with God. This redemption was sealed by His resurrection from the dead.

### The Establishing of the Kingdom

Second, Jesus came to establish God's Kingdom and rule in the world He had created. This He did through the training of The

Twelve — charging them to make disciples of all nations. These men became the leaders of the early Church as they carried out the Great Commission given to them by the Master.

Making disciples means to call men and women to submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ over their lives. The proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom, then, is the call for people to believe that Jesus died for their sins and that He wants to be Lord of their lives. People, to be disciples, must have Jesus as both Savior and Lord.

In Mark's chronology of the life of Christ, the first year of Jesus' ministry was spent with the masses about Him. He preached about His Father; He healed the sick; He fed the multitudes; He made the blind to see, and the lame to walk. He even raised the dead and cast out demons. All of these miracles were to demonstrate to the world that He was the long-awaited Messiah, the Son of the Living God.

In chapter 3 of Mark, however, Jesus changed His emphasis. He spent the entire night in prayer, and in the morning selected twelve individuals to relate to more intimately. Now, although Jesus still was involved with the masses, He began to devote Himself specifically to the training of these twelve men.

*Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him  
and that He might send them out to preach.*

*—Mark 3:14*

With this transition in His ministry, Jesus then shared the parable of the sower. He told about the seed, and how in three cases it did not produce. When the seed fell upon good and fertile ground, He said, it produced thirty-, sixty-, and one hundred-fold. The disciples were this good soil, and for the last two years of His earthly ministry, Jesus gave His attention to their preparation.

At the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus charged His disciples with the responsibility of discipling ALL the nations of the world. As has been pointed out, He commanded them to teach their disciples to observe (**obey**) all that He had commanded them (the Great Commission). This plan ensures that succeeding generations of people will be won and trained until He returns to rule on David's throne.

## **Summary**

These two purposes (man's redemption and the establishing of the Kingdom through the training of The Twelve) were Jesus' main objectives during His three years of earthly ministry. With the promises fulfilled in Christ, the Book of Acts now picks up the narrative and expands it further — from the Jewish nation outward to the world.

▲ Panel 9a

## Chapter 10

# ***The Promise Expanded to the Holy Land***

[Panel 9a only]

## **Introduction**

While Jesus was on the earth, He told His disciples through Peter:

*I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

— Matthew 16:18

Christianity expanded through the establishing of small groups of believers into local churches or congregations. This expansion eventually occurred through the Gentile nations.

We can examine the growth of Christianity by studying the Book of Acts. Read each chapter as you study the lesson.

## **Ministry in Jerusalem (Acts 1 – 7)**

### **Acts 1 — Commission and Ascension**

Jesus appeared to His disciples and commissioned them:

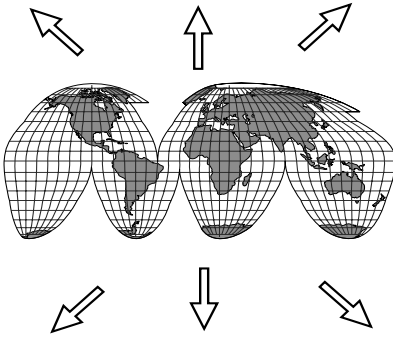


**“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”**

— Acts 1:8

Panel 9a ▼  
(left half)

Following is a diagram of how God intended the Gospel to expand in the early church.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How the Gospel Was to Expand</b></p> 						
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>“And you shall be witnesses to Me in <b>Jerusalem</b>, and in all <b>Judea and Samaria</b>, and to the <b>end of the earth</b>.”</i></p>						
<table><tr><td><b>Acts 1 – 7</b></td><td>Ministry in <i>Jerusalem</i></td></tr><tr><td><b>Acts 9 – 12</b></td><td>Ministry in <i>Judea and Samaria</i></td></tr><tr><td><b>Acts 13 – 28</b></td><td>Ministry to the <i>end of the earth</i></td></tr></table>	<b>Acts 1 – 7</b>	Ministry in <i>Jerusalem</i>	<b>Acts 9 – 12</b>	Ministry in <i>Judea and Samaria</i>	<b>Acts 13 – 28</b>	Ministry to the <i>end of the earth</i>
<b>Acts 1 – 7</b>	Ministry in <i>Jerusalem</i>					
<b>Acts 9 – 12</b>	Ministry in <i>Judea and Samaria</i>					
<b>Acts 13 – 28</b>	Ministry to the <i>end of the earth</i>					

Jesus led His disciples up to the Mount of Olives, and there He ascended until the clouds received Him out of their sight. Two men in white clothing (angels) appeared beside them, assuring them Jesus would come again in the clouds, just as He had been taken. The disciples returned to Jerusalem and appointed Matthias as an apostle in Judas’ place.

## **Acts 2 — Pentecost**

This chapter describes the coming of the Holy Spirit and the confirmation of the new covenant. The Spirit of God was now to live in the hearts of men and not in a temple made of stone. This was a historic event — Jews from every nation were gathered at the Feast of Pentecost. The Spirit descended, and every man from all points of the compass heard the Gospel being preached in his own language by Jewish disciples who had never learned those languages. Some people accused the disciples of being drunk, but Peter defended their actions and explained what was happening. Peter’s sermon resulted in 3,000 conversions. The converts were then established in their faith by the disciples.

*Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

— Acts 2:41-42

The Book of Acts is a fascinating narrative on the expansion — or “explosion” — of the Church. This rapid growth took place because new believers were being followed up in their walk with God by the more mature believers. This was God’s plan for personal Christian growth. Chapter 1 exhorts Christians in evangelism; Chapter 2 shows evangelism beginning to take place as the believers care for and nurture new followers of Jesus Christ.

### **Acts 3 — Authenticated by Miracles**

Peter and John healed a lame man and used the occasion to preach the Gospel to the crowd which had gathered. It is interesting to note how Peter took his listeners back to the promises and covenants of God and showed them how Jesus was the fulfillment of them.

*The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.*

— Acts 3:13-15

Again they used every opportunity to preach the Gospel.

### **Acts 4 — The First Persecution**

The temple priests and Sadducees were greatly offended by Peter’s message about Jesus, so they arrested him and John. The next morning Peter proclaimed that the lame man had been healed by Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified. The leaders commanded them not to speak in Jesus’ name anymore, but they refused. Peter and John were warned and released.

*However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.*

— Acts 4:4

This healing of the lame man resulted in 5,000 people turning to the Savior. It is no wonder the religious leaders were upset with these followers of Jesus.

### **Acts 5 — Lying to the Holy Spirit**

Ananias and Sapphira sold a piece of land and gave part of the money to the apostles but said it was the total amount. They both died for their lie to the Holy Spirit.



Again the apostles were put in jail for their preaching, but an angel released them and told them to proclaim the message. They were brought once more before the council but were spared because of Gamaliel's warning. They were beaten and commanded not to preach anymore. They departed rejoicing because they were counted worthy to suffer for Jesus' sake.

*And they agreed with him [Gamaliel], and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.*

— Acts 5:40-42

Their faithfulness resulted in further persecution by the religious leaders. However, God was at work and people's lives were being touched by the message of the Gospel.

## **Acts 6 — Deacons Appointed**

Some of the Grecian widows in the Jerusalem assembly were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. The multitude of believers chose seven men who were full of the Holy Spirit to be in charge of this task so the apostles could give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word of God. Stephen, one of the seven newly-appointed deacons, was so eloquent and bold in his witness that the religious leaders charged him with blasphemy, and brought him before the council.

*And the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.*

— Acts 6:7



It is interesting to note here the shift from *adding* converts to *multiplying* disciples greatly in Jerusalem. With this kind of impact, the Jewish religious leaders increased the level of their persecution of the believers.

## Acts 7 — Stephen's Martyrdom

In his defense before the council, Stephen reviewed the promises and covenants God had made with Abraham and his seed, and showed how Jesus was the fulfillment of those promises. (Study this sermon — it is an excellent review of the Old Testament story). The council members listened until Stephen began to speak of Jesus, at which time they angrily rose up against him and stoned him to death. Stephen died asking God to forgive them.

*And they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*

— Acts 7:58-60

Saul, a leader in the persecution of Jewish believers, was present at Stephen's death, which may have had a significant impact on him as he watched the ordeal.

## Ministry in Judea and Samaria (Acts 8 – 12)

### Acts 8 — Persecution Causes Expansion

Many believers left Jerusalem when the persecution began to increase, and they scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Saul continued his relentless torment of Jesus' followers.

*And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.*

— Acts 8:2-3

As a result of the continued abuse, many of the believers began to leave Jerusalem and move to other cities. Philip went to Samaria, where many were converted. When the apostles heard of this, they sent Peter and John, who prayed for the people, and the Holy Spirit was given to them. There is probably a two-fold reason why God withheld the Holy Spirit until some of the apostles were present to witness the event.

The Samaritans were a hybrid people, originating in the late 8th century B.C. when Assyrian settlers intermarried with a small remnant of the northern kingdom. Their religion was also a hybrid of Judaism mixed with some pagan elements. God wanted the two apostles to be the means of bringing the Holy Spirit to a near-neighbor who ethnically and religiously were a half-way people between the Jews and pure Gentiles.

Also in this section we find the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch through Philip's ministry, further showing the expansion of the Gospel to non-Jews.

## **Acts 9 — Saul Converted**

Saul, the chief persecutor, obtained letters of permission to carry out his hate campaign against Jewish believers in Damascus. On the way there he met the resurrected Jesus and was converted. He was blinded by light from heaven, and was told by Jesus to go to the city of Damascus and wait until it was revealed to him what God wanted him to do. Ananias was later sent by God to heal Saul's blindness and baptize him.

*And as he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" And the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."*

— Acts 9:3-6

Saul's mission from God was to be a messenger to the Gentiles. He remained in Damascus and began to preach Christ. The unbelieving Jews tried to kill him, so the believing Jews sent him away. Saul went into the Arabian desert and was instructed by God for several years.

Following his desert experience, he returned to Damascus and continued on to Jerusalem, where he was befriended by Barnabas. Barnabas put him in touch with the other apostles. Again some Jews in Jerusalem tried to kill Saul because of his preaching, and the apostles sent him to his hometown of Tarsus. Saul, also known as Paul, became the great missionary of the apostles.

Paul's conversion resulted in the Gospel going to the Gentile nations of the world. God used Ananias to help the apostle in the early days of his walk with Christ. Note also that the disciples were **multiplying churches** throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. In the first nine chapters of Acts the Church progressed from

*adding converts to multiplying disciples greatly, then to multiplying churches in the regions surrounding Jerusalem.*

## **Acts 10 — Cornelius Converted**

Cornelius, a Roman soldier who loved and served God, had a vision and was instructed to send for the Apostle Peter. He obeyed, and while his servants were on the way, God gave Peter a vision of a tablecloth being let down from heaven with all kinds of unclean animals in it — animals which the Jews would not eat because of the Old Testament dietary laws.

God told Peter that what He had cleansed should not be called unclean. This vision was repeated three times, and Peter was told by God that some men would soon come for him, and that he was to go with them. God sent Peter to Cornelius' home, where he preached Jesus to him.

The Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius, and Peter realized that although it was once wrong for a Jew to get involved with Gentiles, now God had accepted and saved them also. God was going to make Abraham's seed a blessing to ALL nations. In chapter 9 Paul was commissioned to be a special messenger to the Gentiles. From this point, God increasingly turned to the Gentiles, because the Jews continued to reject His plan.

*While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.*

— Acts 10:44-45

Notice the means by which God intended the new believers to be established in their faith. Peter was present in Cornelius' home by God's design, because the conversion of Gentiles into the faith represented significant problems for the Jewish believers.

## **Acts 11 — Defense of the Gentile Ministry**

When the believing Jews heard what Peter had done, he was called to give an account. He tried to explain how God had led him and how God was going to reach out to include the Gentiles in His plan. The leaders accepted this and glorified God.

The believers who were scattered (see Acts 8:4) began to win more and more people to Christ, and cell groups of Christians began to appear. One city, Antioch of Syria, came to the attention of the apostles, who sent Barnabas to minister to them. Barnabas checked on this church, then went on to Tarsus to find Paul. Paul came to Antioch and ministered there with Barnabas.

Later, the church in Antioch sent money through Paul and Barnabas to help meet the needs of the believers in Jerusalem.

*Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.*

— Acts 11:25-26

Paul, who had been befriended by Barnabas and was forced in chapter 9 to flee Jerusalem to save his life, was now assisting him in the ministry in the church at Antioch.

## **Acts 12 — Persecution by Herod**

Christians continued to suffer under the Roman and Jewish leaders, both political and religious. James, John's brother, was put to death by Herod, while Peter was again cast into prison. As the church prayed for Peter's release and safety, an angel led him out of the jail. Herod died soon afterward, and Paul and Barnabas returned to the band of believers (now called Christians) at Antioch.

*Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword.*

— Acts 12:1-2

This is the only record in the Scriptures of an apostle being put to death. If God had not intervened, Peter might also have died.

Up to this point in history, only the seed of Abraham had been blessed by the Gospel. But now God was willing, after the Jews' rejection of the Messiah, to reach out and bless the Gentile nations as well. The Church has expanded to this day through the Gentile nations of the world.

At this point in God's plan of the ages, He was ready to launch believers on a path which, in a few short years, would impact the entire **world** for the cause of Christ. The church in Jerusalem was well established and growing, despite the constant harassment. This church had learned to accept the Gentiles and was beginning to make inroads into the surrounding regions with the message of salvation.

God was now ready to thrust out Christian missionaries to carry the Gospel into the predominantly Gentile nations of Asia Minor and Europe. This He did through the ministry of Barnabas and Paul. God was preparing to make Paul the great missionary to the Gentile nations of Asia Minor.

▲ Panel 9a  
(right half)

## Chapter 11

# ***The Promise Expanded to All Nations***

### **Church Expansion: Paul's First Missionary Journey (Acts 13 – 14)**

*As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.*

— Acts 13:2-3



Chapters 13 and 14 are the account of the expansion of the early Church. Previously expansion had taken place primarily because of persecution. But God was now ready to expand His work through Barnabas and Paul. The leadership group (“they” in verse 2 above) sent them out. God commanded that Barnabas and Saul should be set apart for a special work He was calling them to do. So the Church prayed for them and sent them away. They went to Seleucia on the coast and departed for Cyprus.

[Panel 9b only]

Panel 9b ▼  
(left half)



### **Salamis**

They landed in an eastern port city in Cyprus called Salamis. They at once went to the synagogues of the Jews and preached the Word of God. John Mark, Barnabas' nephew, accompanied them. They traveled overland to the west coast city of Paphos. In this city Sergius Paulus, a Roman proconsul, wanted to hear their message. He was converted when he heard and saw the power of God. A sorcerer who tried to block the message was struck blind in that city. From there the men boarded a ship and departed for Perga in Pamphylia.

### **Perga — The Gospel in Asia Minor**

John Mark decided to leave Paul and Barnabas, so they went on without him to Antioch in Pisidia. There Barnabas and Paul again went to the synagogue. The people invited them to speak, so Paul gave a long historical review and showed that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. Many of the people stayed and talked with them and were encouraged to continue in the grace of God. The next week nearly the entire city turned out to hear Paul. The Jews, filled with envy, refused to believe their message.

So Paul turned to the Gentiles, and many of them were saved; the Word of God spread all over the region. The Jews expelled them from the city, so they went on to Iconium.

### **Iconium**

Here they went to the synagogue first, where Jews and Gentiles alike turned out to hear them. Many people from both races were converted, but unbelieving Jews stirred up the city against the pair, and they had to flee for their lives or be stoned. They moved on to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia.

### **Lystra**

Here Paul healed a lame man, and the people thought the gods had come down to them. They thought Paul was Mercury and Barnabas was Jupiter. The people wanted to make sacrifices to them, but Paul preached Christ to them. Some Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who had followed them, persuaded the people to stone Paul, and they left him for dead. The disciples cared for him, and the next day Paul and Barnabas departed for Derbe.

### **Derbe**

Here they continued to preach the Gospel and decided they needed to return and encourage the new believers they had ministered to previously. So they back-tracked through Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch and passed through Pisidia, Pamphylia, and from there, to Perga. Everywhere they taught the disciples and encouraged them. They departed to Attalia on the coast and sailed home to Antioch. They called the Church together and reported how God had opened the door to the Gentiles.

## **The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)**

Some Jewish believers from Judea came to Antioch and taught the Gentile Christians that they must be circumcised like the rest of the Jews. Paul and Barnabas disputed with them, and they decided to go down to Jerusalem and let the apostles and elders deal with this question. Their decision was that Gentile believers should abstain from things offered to idols, fornication, things strangled, and blood. There was no need for them to keep all of the Jewish laws. The council sent Silas back with them to communicate their decision.

*Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke  
on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers  
nor we were able to bear?*

— Acts 15:10

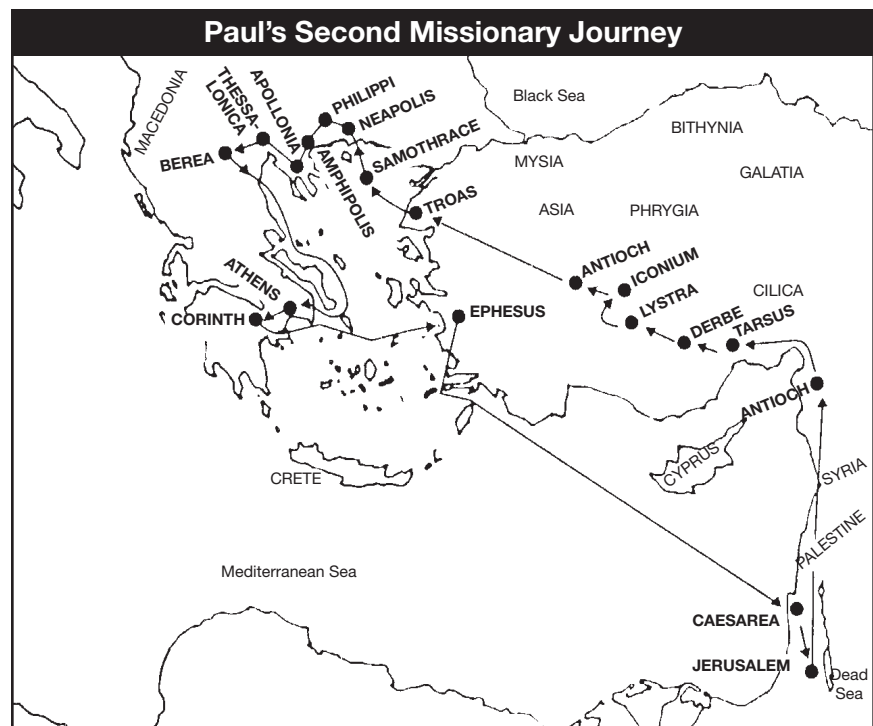
It was very hard for some of the Jewish believers to accept that salvation comes through grace alone and not by works of the Law. Since they didn't comprehend it, they wanted to place le-



galistic requirements on the Gentiles. The apostles, who were living under grace, did not allow this to happen.

## **Paul's Second Missionary Journey (Acts 16 – 18)**

At this time Paul decided to make another missionary journey. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark, but Paul disagreed because John Mark had left them part of the way through the first journey. The contention was so great that Paul and Barnabas parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, strengthening the churches. Paul took Silas and went overland through Syria and Cilicia to do the same. Then they went on to Derbe.



### **Derbe**

In Derbe Paul and Silas picked up Timothy, a young man Paul had led to Christ on the first missionary journey. Paul wanted to take Timothy with him, so he circumcised him because Jewish Law. Timothy's mother was Jewish, although his father was Greek, so Paul circumcised him to fulfill the Jewish legal requirement and took Timothy with him on his journey.

### **Lystra and Iconium**

With Timothy as their companion, Paul and Silas delivered the letter from the Jerusalem council concerning the keeping of the Old Testament Jewish Law — the council sought to simplify the demands made of Gentile converts.

They further strengthened the churches, then moved on. They went to Phrygia and the regions of Galatia but were forbidden by the Holy Spirit at this time to preach in Asia.

### **Mysia**

They passed on to Mysia and decided to go north to Bithynia, but the Spirit led them westward to Troas, where Paul had a vision in the night in which a man of Macedonia called him to come and help them. So from Troas they boarded a ship and sailed to Samothracia and on to Neapolis, a coastal city of Macedonia. From there they went to Philippi, a chief city of Macedonia.

### **Philippi**

In Philippi they met Lydia, a Jewish seller of purple fabric. She and her family were won to Christ and baptized. They also encountered a demon-possessed slave girl who could tell the future. Paul cast the evil spirit out of her and found himself immediately in trouble with the girl's masters, who were using her for profit. Paul and Silas were accused of false teachings, beaten, and cast into prison. At midnight, as they prayed and sang praises to the Lord, an earthquake opened the stocks and the gates. As a result of this miracle the jailer and his family were converted. The next day they were set free and departed for Thessalonica via Amphipolis and Apollonia.

### **Thessalonica**

Paul preached the Gospel for three weeks in the synagogue there. A number of Greeks responded, but the Jews stirred up trouble and took a bond from Jason with whom Paul was staying. So Paul and Silas departed for Berea, leaving Timothy behind.

### **Berea**

These people received Paul's message but wisely searched their Bibles to see if his message agreed with Scripture. Here Paul also asked Silas to stay in Berea to help strengthen the new church. Paul moved on to Athens when the Jews from Thessalonica made trouble for his party.

### **Athens**

While Paul was in the city of Athens waiting for Timothy and Silas to arrive, he was moved by all the pagan idolatry of the city. As he began to minister the Gospel, he was invited by the various philosophers to speak at the Areopagus. So he preached the Gospel to them, which was received by some. From Athens Paul moved westward to Corinth.

### **Corinth**

In Corinth Paul met Aquila and Priscilla, who were Jewish tent-makers. He teamed up with them while he waited for Silas and Timothy. Reasoning that Jesus was the Messiah, Paul began his ministry in the synagogue. The Jews rejected his teaching, so he turned instead to the Gentiles, many of whom responded. The Lord gave Paul a vision that He would be with him, so he remained there for a year and a half. Finally the Jews rose up against him, so Paul took Aquila and Priscilla and went by ship to Ephesus.

### **Ephesus**

Here Paul again went to the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. He found some who were interested and wanted to know more. Paul wanted to keep the feast in Jerusalem, so he did not stay but left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus. With a promise to return, Paul departed for Jerusalem via Caesarea. From Jerusalem he went back to his “home” church in Antioch.

## **Paul's Third Missionary Journey (Acts 19 – 20)**

After a time with believers in Antioch, Paul decided it was again time for him to return and visit the churches previously established in an effort to strengthen the converts and disciples. He retraced his steps through Galatia and Phrygia, then returned to Ephesus in Asia, as he had promised. Here he had left Aquila and Priscilla to minister on his second journey.



## **Ephesus**

In Ephesus this time, Paul found some of John the Baptist's disciples. When he inquired if they had received the Holy Spirit, they did not know what he was talking about. So Paul explained about Jesus, and they believed, were baptized in Jesus' name, and they prophesied, speaking in tongues.

## **Paul in the City**

For three months at Ephesus Paul reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue about Jesus. When they rejected his message, he moved his followers over to Tyrannus' school and stayed there for two years. This gave Paul a platform to reach people all over Asia. The Spirit of God moved so mightily that miracles were routinely performed, and people burned their books on sorcery.

At the end of about three years of fruitful service, Paul's ministry was ended by a riot. The silversmiths, who made idols of Artemis, feared that Paul's preaching would ruin their business, so they stirred up a mob against him and the other Christians. Paul wisely decided to move on to visit other churches.

## **Paul's Letters From Ephesus**

While he was in Ephesus, Paul wrote three letters to the church in Corinth, two of which were "lost" (they were not inspired by God, thus not Scripture, and have not been preserved). Some scholars believe that the Book of Galatians was written at this time, while others place the writing of Galatians earlier.

## **Macedonia and Achaia**

From Ephesus Paul departed for Macedonia and Achaia. It appears he visited most of the churches he had founded on his second missionary journey. While in Macedonia, he received word that the problems in Corinth had been resolved, and he wrote the letter we now know as 2 Corinthians. He then arrived in Corinth and spent a peaceful three months there, probably writing the Book of Romans.

When the Jews there plotted against him, he departed for Palestine overland through Macedonia, taking with him some disciples he was training. From Philippi he sailed for Jerusalem via Troas and Miletus.

## **Troas**

Paul's ship stopped in Troas while he called the church together. He preached until midnight, when one of the disciples named Eutychus, who was sitting in a window, fell asleep and tumbled out of the window to his death. Paul responded by restoring him

to life. They talked until morning, when Paul's ship departed for Assos. From there he sailed on to Mitylene via Chios, Samos, and Trogyllium, disembarking at Miletus.

### **Miletus**

Here, Paul sent for the elders from Ephesus and reviewed his ministry with them. He told them he was bound in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem and would not see them anymore. After commending them to God, the Word of His grace, and warning of divisions that would come, he departed for Jerusalem via Tyre.

### **Tyre**

The saints in Tyre warned him during his seven-day visit that he should not go to Jerusalem. Paul's mind was made up, so he departed for Caesarea.

### **Caesarea**

Paul stayed with Philip the evangelist for many days. Agabus, a local prophet, took his girdle, bound Paul with it and said that this was what the Jews would do to Paul in Jerusalem. He also warned that Paul would be given over to the Gentiles. The Christians pleaded with him not to go, but Paul was unmoved and continued toward Jerusalem.

## **Paul in Jerusalem (Acts 21 – 23)**

On his arrival in Jerusalem Paul reported to James and the elders and was warmly received by them. He detailed his ministry among the Gentiles, for which they were all grateful. They reminded Paul of his enemies who were saying that Paul was teaching the Jews to forsake the Law of Moses, not to circumcise their children, nor to observe the customs of the Jews. They advised Paul to make a vow and shave his head in order to demonstrate to the people that he kept the laws and customs of Moses. Paul agreed.

When the Jews found him in the Temple, however, they tried to kill him. The Roman guards saved him and placed him under arrest. Paul tried to explain to the Jews why and what he was doing. They listened to his testimony to the point where he declared how God had sent him to the Gentiles. Again the guards had to save him.

The next day Paul was brought before a judge, and the Sadducees and Pharisees came to charge him. The meeting ended in the two groups being divided in their opinions, and Paul was nearly pulled into pieces in the commotion. So the guards removed him from the courtroom. That night the angel of God

appeared and told him to be of good cheer and that he must also be a witness in Rome. The Jews plotted to kill Paul but were found out, so the captain of the guard stole him away in the middle of the night to Caesarea. A letter was sent to Felix, the governor, who held Paul until the Jews came to accuse him a few days later.

## **Paul in Caesarea (Acts 24 – 26)**

Paul's accusers could not make their charges stick, but Felix, not wanting to upset the Jews, delayed passing judgment. Paul was put under house arrest for almost two years but had great freedom to preach the Gospel.

Felix was succeeded by Festus, who went up to Jerusalem and learned that the Jews wanted Paul returned to Jerusalem. When Festus offered to send Paul to Jerusalem, Paul demanded his rights as a Roman citizen, claiming his entitlement to a formal trial in Rome. Before departing for Rome, however, he appeared before King Agrippa, who attempted to help Festus prepare his report for Caesar.

## **Paul's Trip to Rome (Acts 27 – 28)**

After hearing Paul, Agrippa said that Paul could have been set free if only he had not appealed to Rome. So Paul was placed on a ship and sent to Rome. On the way he was shipwrecked and bitten by a poisonous snake, either of which should have killed him. At long last he arrived in Rome, where again he was put under house arrest for two years. Paul first reasoned with the Jews, who did not believe, so he turned again to the Gentiles, who were more open. While he was in Rome he wrote the New Testament Books of Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon.

## **The Remainder of the New Testament and the Closing of the Canon**

The Book of Acts ends here, with Paul in captivity. The pastoral letters (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus) were written later, for history and tradition tell us that Paul was released and traveled throughout the Aegean Sea area and perhaps as far as Spain. Later he was rearrested in Troas, taken to Rome, tried, condemned, and executed.

Panel 9b ▲  
(right half)

Other New Testament data reveal that in the late 60's, Peter wrote his two epistles. The Book of Hebrews, with its anonymous writer, appeared in the churches at this time as well. In A.D. 70 the Roman general Titus captured Jerusalem and burned the Jewish Temple. This event was in partial fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy on the Mount of Olives (see Matthew 24).

Later in the first century the letters of John and Jude were written, and the New Testament canon was completed with the Book of Revelation, written by the Apostle John while exiled on the Island of Patmos.

## **Prophetic Events**

The Apostle John had been exiled by the Romans to the penal colony on the Island of Patmos (near Ephesus). While there, he received visions of Christ, who told him to write everything down in what became the Book of Revelation.

The entire book is a larger letter written to the seven churches of Asia, which are analyzed and reported on by Christ in the first three chapters. Chapters 4 and 5 describe a glorious scene in heaven, while Chapters 6 through 19 speak of a variety of tribulation events (subject to a wide range of interpretation). Chapters 20–22 describe the Great White Throne Judgment and the new heaven and new earth, where the followers of Christ will live with God forever.

At that point, all of God's promises will have been completely fulfilled, and those who are His children — true Christians — will be with Him throughout all of eternity.



## Chapter 12

# ***The Promise Through Prophecy***

[Panel 10b only]

## **Eschatology**

Among Bible-believing Christians there is a tremendous amount of agreement about the crucial issues of the faith — the Absolutes — such as the existence of the Trinity, the authority of Scripture, the deity of Jesus Christ, His atoning death for sins, His bodily resurrection, and more. These form the essential core of Christianity and are the basis of Christian unity.

But there are less crucial issues over which Bible-believing theologians are divided. Such is the case in the field of *Eschatology*. Eschatology is the study of the end times and the consummation of all things.

Even concerning these future matters, there is general agreement on the central issues. These include such things as:

- History will go on to a certain point, then God will intervene.
- There will be a tribulation.
- There will be a rapture in which God's people will meet the Lord Jesus in the air.
- At Jesus' return in power the Antichrist will be destroyed.
- There will be a final crushing of all opposition to Christ.
- There is a judgment that results in each person spending eternity in heaven or hell.
- There will be an eternal state of heaven or hell.

However, opinions vary on other issues. How one arranges the details of the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham depends on his views as to:

Whether the yet-unfulfilled Old Testament promises are to be fulfilled to the *physical* descendants of Abraham (the Jews), or the *spiritual* descendants of Abraham (the Church, made up of Jews and Gentiles).

Whether the 1,000-year reign of Christ — the Millennium — described in Revelation 20 is to be taken as a *literal* 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth, or as a *symbol* of the complete rule Christ now exercises over heaven and earth, and which He will exercise until He returns to destroy all opposition.

Bible-believing scholars disagree on the answers to these questions and others — such as, whether or not the Church will go through the tribulation and in what sequence the events of the end times will occur.

There are four basic positions taken by biblical scholars concerning the future. They are each assigned names based on the way that position believes the return of Jesus Christ is related to the Millennium.

## **Premillennialism**

**PRE**-millennialism states that Christ will return *before* the Millennium to set up His 1,000-year reign on the earth. This position is held by many scholars. Premillennialism is further divided into two major groups, the Dispensational and Historic.

## **Amillennialism**

**A**-millennialism states that the 1,000-year reign is *symbolic* of Christ's current rule over heaven and earth, begun at His ascension. According to this view, He will return *without a literal 1,000-year earthly reign*. This position is held by many other scholars.

## **Postmillennialism**

**POST**-millennialism states that the spread of the Gospel will improve world conditions and will lead to a "Golden Age" (the Millennium) *after* which Christ will return. Fewer scholars hold this view.

Consider the following chart. It will help identify the names of the various positions with the major beliefs associated with them. The discussion following the chart will give more detail on each of the four positions under consideration here.

Four Major Eschatological Positions				
Issues Views	Abraham's Descendants*	The Rapture	The Tribulation	The Millennium
<b>Dispensational Premillennialism</b>	The Jews	Pretribulation	The Church will be removed to heaven before the tribulation	A future 1,000-year reign of Christ over a Jewish kingdom on earth
<b>Historic Premillennialism</b>	In the O.T. the Jews, and now in the N.T. the Church, both Jew and Gentile	Posttribulation	The Church will be present on earth during the tribulation	A future 1,000-year reign of Christ over all mankind on earth
<b>Amillennialism</b>	In the O.T. the Jews, and now in the N.T. the Church, both Jew and Gentile	Posttribulation	The Church will be present on earth during the tribulation	A present indefinite span with Christ reigning over heaven and earth
<b>Post Millennialism</b>	In the O.T. the Jews, and now in the N.T. the Church, both Jew and Gentile	Posttribulation	The Church will be present on earth during the tribulation	A future Golden Age when the Gospel dominates the earth

\*This is the interpretation of the promise made to Abraham about his descendants.

## Premillennialism

There are basically two forms of Premillennialism held among evangelical scholars (Dispensational and Historic).

### Dispensational Premillennialism

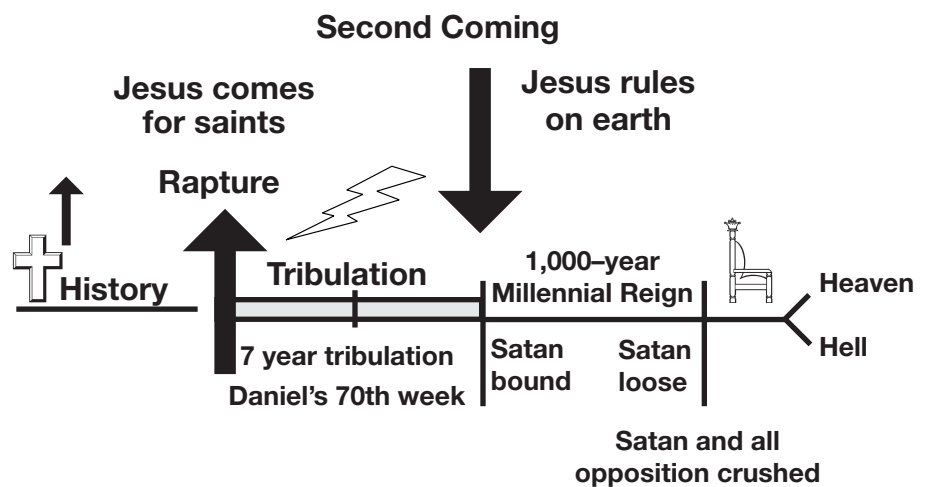
Adherents of this position believe that the promises God gave to Abraham were made *literally* to him and to his physical seed, the nation of Israel. Those promises which are yet unfulfilled will one day be fulfilled to Israel during a future 1,000-year reign of Christ on the earth. During this reign, Israel as a nation will have a special status in the world. The Jews will have returned to Christ and will have been converted.

This belief holds that the end time events will occur as follows:

- The Church will be raptured out of the world to meet the Lord in the air prior to the period of tribulation.
- There will be a seven-year period of tribulation on the earth which is the “Seventieth Week” of Daniel’s

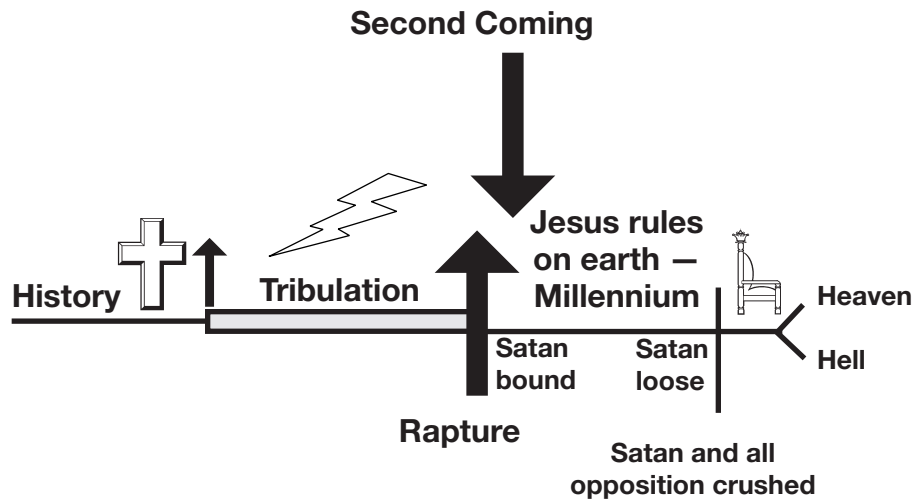
vision. It is described for us in Daniel 9 — especially verse 27.

- At the end of the tribulation, Jesus will return to earth in His second coming. The saints will return with Him and will reign with Christ for 1,000 years on the earth. During this Millennial reign, Satan will be bound, and Christ will rule from David's throne. Israel will be saved, and all the Old Testament prophecies which were not fulfilled during Christ's first coming will be accomplished.
- At the close of the Millennium, Satan will be loosed for a short time to deceive the nations, but then will be crushed forever by God.
- The Great White Throne Judgment will occur, during which all souls not raised before the Millennium will be judged, resulting in eternal condemnation for those who failed to establish a personal relationship with Jesus the Messiah.



### **Historic Premillennialism**

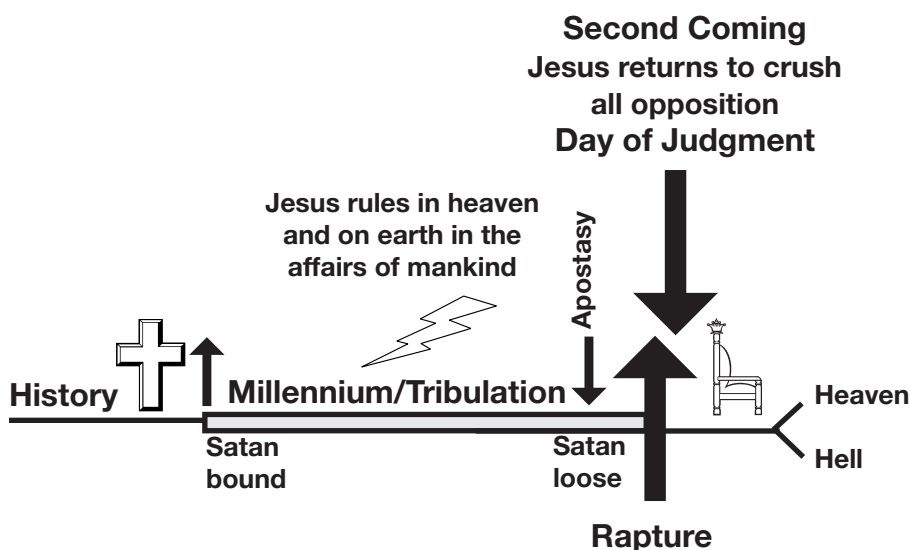
This view is similar to Dispensational Premillennialism. Historic Premillennialists believe that we are now in the tribulation, which takes place over a long period of time. Unlike the Dispensationalists they believe that the saints will go through the tribulation, but will be shielded from its most severe aspects. At the end of the tribulation the Church will be raptured out to meet Christ in the air and will at once return with Him to establish the Millennial reign of Christ. Satan will be bound, and Christ will possess absolute rule. The standard of the Sermon on the Mount will prevail. The Historic Premillennialist places considerably less emphasis on the nation of Israel and sees many of the promises of God being fulfilled in spiritual Israel—the Church. He does believe that the nation of Israel will one day be saved.



## Amillennialism

Students of this position believe that the promises God gave to Abraham were made with him and his *spiritual* seed rather than his *physical* seed. In the New Testament, Abraham's spiritual seed is the Church. Any unfulfilled promises from the Old Testament are now being fulfilled to Abraham's *spiritual* seed — the Church. Amillennialists do not see the 1,000-year reign of Christ as a literal period of time, but rather as an indeterminate epoch between the ascension and the second coming. This position also concludes that this reign takes place with Jesus in heaven and in the lives of believers here on earth.

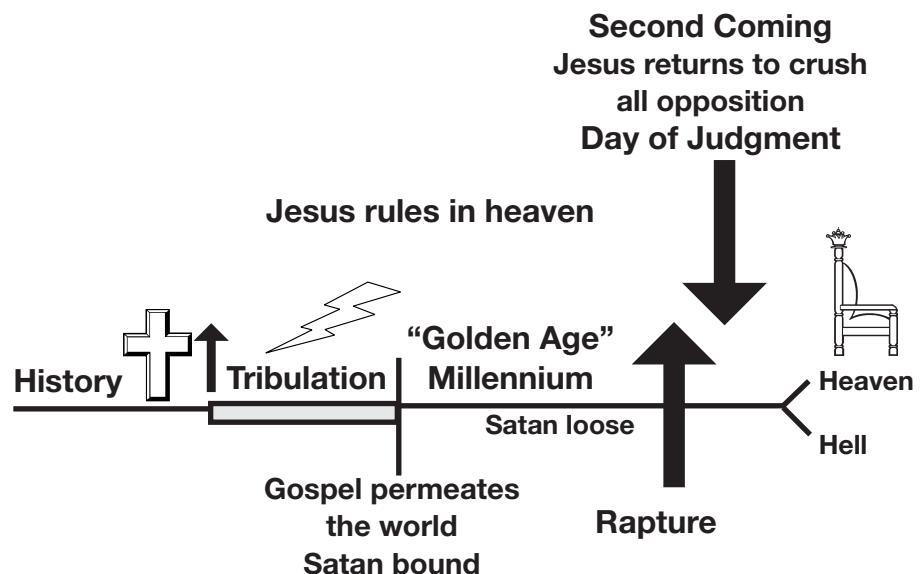
The Amillennialist believes that an intensity of tribulation and apostasy will culminate in the final emergence of an Antichrist just prior to Christ's return. When Jesus comes, He will at once rapture the saints and crush the Antichrist and all other opposition. This will be followed by the Day of Judgment, resulting in either heaven or hell for each person. He believes that toward the end of history many Jews will be saved individually.



## Postmillennialism

This position holds that the Kingdom of God is here and now, and is being extended to the whole world through the preaching of the Gospel. It affirms that the tribulation takes place throughout a nonspecific span of history. Because Satan is now “bound,” the Gospel is able to permeate the lives of individuals, circumstances, institutions, and national political organizations.

Although Satan still has some power, Christianity is overcoming that opposition and is steadily growing in its world influence. Eventually the victorious domination of Christianity will usher in the Millennial reign of peace — the “Golden Age of Righteousness.” Not everyone will turn to Christ, in this view, nor will sin be totally eradicated, but the principles of Christ will be the prevailing authority. Jesus will return for His Church at the end of this Golden Age after a flare-up of apostasy and opposition as Satan is loosed. The Antichrist will be crushed, as will all rebellion toward God. The Great White Throne Judgment will result in heaven or hell for each person.



## Conclusion

Much research time has been spent studying the different positions on the subject of Eschatology. We have made an honest effort to clarify in a few short paragraphs what men have spent years determining, and thousands of pages communicating. This survey is designed to help disciples understand the basic issues in their simplest form. *A Visual Survey of the Bible* is meant to be taught in thirteen 45-minute sessions, presenting an encapsulated picture of the central message and theme of the Bible.

My prayer is that, regardless of your personal position or beliefs, you may be able to take this simple tool and trace the Old Testament promises God gave to mankind to show how they were

fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Hopefully you will be able to present and clarify your own position as well as help people understand the other positions.

For a better understanding of these positions and their biblical apologetic I recommend the following three books. These works are within the grasp of any serious disciple who wants to research Eschatology further:

*The Meaning Of The Millennium*, edited by Robert G. Clouse. Inter Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois.

*Contemporary Options In Eschatology*, Millard J. Erickson. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

*The Prophecy of Daniel*, E. J. Young. Eerdmans Publishers, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

## Review: Promises and History

### Daniel's Prophecy

By the year 586 B.C. God's promise to Abraham and David had only been partially fulfilled. Abraham's seed, the Israelites, had been given the land God had promised and were in possession of part of it, but the promise to David that his seed would one day rule Israel was still only a dream. The ten tribes of Israel had long before been taken captive by the Assyrians. Then in 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon marched the remaining southern tribes into captivity.

In this dark hour, nearly half a century later, when the promise seemed hopelessly far from completion, the Angel Gabriel visited Daniel, a Hebrew captive in Babylon, and revealed to him God's plan.

*Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God, yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.*

*And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision: Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to*



*make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.*

*Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.*

*Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.*

— Daniel 9:20-27

## **Daniel's Seventy Weeks**

It is important to note several things from the verses just cited. Careful study of Daniel 9 is essential, since this is a key prophetic passage. Daniel speaks of a period of 70 sevens. The seven is usually translated and interpreted as a “week.”

### ■ Verse 24

Daniel was told there were 70 “weeks” left till God had finished with Israel’s sin and the Most Holy anointed.

### ■ Verse 25

God wanted Daniel to understand that from the time of the commandment to restore Jerusalem until the coming of the Messiah, the Prince, would be 7 weeks, plus 60 and 2 weeks ( $60+2=62$ ;  $7+62=69$ ). This means 69 of the 70 “weeks.”

### ■ Verse 26

At the end of the 69th week, the Messiah would be put to death or cut off, and the city with the sanctuary would be destroyed. From that time onward there would be desolation.

### ■ Verse 27

This is a key verse because it deals with the 70th week or the 70th seven. Daniel was told, “He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week, will cause the sacrifice to cease.”

It is imperative that one decide *who* “he” is referring to in the verse and *when* the 70th week will occur. Does it follow immediately after the 69th week, or is there a space of time before the events of the 70th week occur? Both these questions have far-reaching implications and ramifications in an understanding of Eschatology. This passage has divided theologians into two major schools of thought.

### **Group A — “He” Refers to Jesus**

One group of scholars say that “he” is the Messiah, Jesus Christ, the One who was cut off. He is the One who causes the covenant to prevail and will cause the sacrifice to cease in the middle of the week. Since we are not told what the covenant that prevails is, we must be guided by the advocates of this interpretation.

These theologians say this covenant refers to the Covenant of Grace. When the Lord fulfilled the terms of the Covenant of Grace, He caused the covenant to prevail. Under the Covenant of Grace, God freely offers to sinners salvation and eternal life by faith in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Jesus’ death and sacrifice has made every other sacrifice an abomination unto the Lord.

That system of sacrifices which was acceptable under the old covenant is now an abomination, according to this view. This, along with the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70 by Titus, has caused the sacrifice to cease once and for all. Many of these scholars say this finishes the 70th week and covers the entire period of Jesus’ humiliation on earth.

### **Group B — “He” Refers to the Antichrist**

The other interpretation of this passage is held by the Dispensational Premillennialists. They believe that the “he” referred to is the prince of darkness who was responsible for the death of the Messiah and the destruction of the Temple. They believe that there is a time gap between the 69th week and 70th week, which is now almost 2,000 years.

According to this theological position, the “prophetic time clock” was stopped after Christ’s death and resurrection, so that God could bless all the nations of the world through Abraham’s seed, Jesus. Up to the time of Christ God’s focus of blessing had been only upon the Jews. The Dispensational Premillennialists teach that Romans 11:25-27 provides the key answer as to why there is a gap between the 69th week and 70th week. In the New Testament, Paul provides insight into this question.

*For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own*

*opinion, that hardening in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins."*

— Romans 11:25-27

■ Verse 25

Blindness has come to Israel because of their sin and rebellion, but it is a part of God's plan to draw the Gentiles to Himself during this period. This will go on until the time of the Gentiles reaches its fullness. For many years God's dealings were only with the Jews. Now He is concentrating on the Gentiles. Paul reminds us that we need to remember that God still loves the Jews and will turn back to fulfill His promise to them.

■ Verse 26

God will return to Israel, and they will be saved. The day is coming when the Jews will receive Jesus as their Messiah. He will then deliver them and turn their hearts to God.

■ Verse 27

This verse again reminds us of God's covenant with His people.

When the 70th week finally does arrive, according to this view, the prince of darkness, empowering the Antichrist, will come and make a covenant with the nation of Israel. Midway through the week, he will break that covenant and cause the Jewish sacrifice to cease. This view presupposes that the Jews must be in their land, that the Temple must have been rebuilt, and that the sacrificial system must be reinstated by the time the Antichrist comes.

## **Jesus' Prophecy**

At the end of Jesus' life, just prior to His crucifixion, He responded to a question with a discussion of the occurrences of the end time events. This is actually a prophecy which further sheds light on how the promises of God will be fulfilled.

*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"*

— Matthew 23:37-39

Although the Jewish leaders rejected Jesus at His first coming, Jesus said that when He came the second time, they would know Him and say, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” The disciples were curious as to *when* these events would take place. So in Matthew 24 Jesus described the general events which would take place prior to His second coming. To summarize this long passage, the main points are listed here.

- Many will be deceived (v.4).
- Men will come saying, “I am Christ” (v.5).
- There will be wars and rumors of wars (v.6).
- There will be famines, pestilence, and earthquakes (v. 7).
- Jesus’ followers will be delivered up — afflicted and killed (v. 9).
- There will be betrayal and hatred of one another (v.10).
- Iniquity will abound; the love of many shall grow cold (v.12).
- The Gospel shall be preached in all the world, then the end shall come (v.14).
- The end will come when men see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel, standing in the Holy Place (v.15).

## Remaining Events

The sequence of the events remaining until the end of time depends on which theological position one follows. The various theologians for the four positions each have different views.

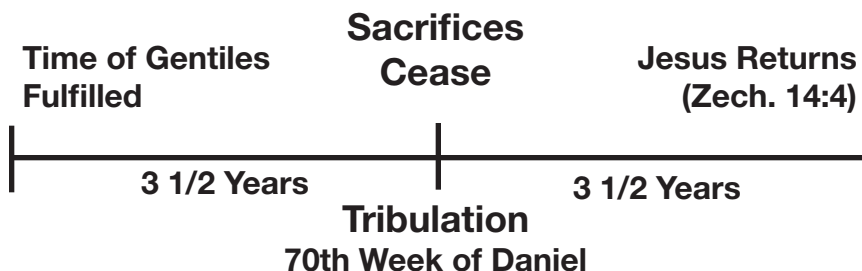
### Dispensational Premillennial Position

The Dispensational Premillennialist sees the beginning of the 70th week as the key to the start of the various prophetic events. This 70th week will begin with the rapture of the saints ushering in the seven years of great tribulation. Of the events which Jesus discussed in Matthew 24–25 only two are not a reality.

- The Gospel has not been preached in all nations.
- The abomination of desolation prophesied by Daniel has not occurred.

The angel told Daniel that in the 70th week the prince would make a covenant with Israel and would cause the sacrifice to

cease. This is when the abomination will take place. You remember from Daniel that this will take place half-way through the week. Luke 21:24 says that Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled.



### **The Rapture**

Both Premillennial positions see the rapture as the next great prophetic event. The Dispensationalist, who holds a pretribulation view, says that the Church will be taken out before the tribulation occurs.

### **The Great Tribulation**

The Dispensationalist sees the great tribulation as a future event which will last for seven years. The events of the seven years are described in Revelation, chapters 6–19.

### **Second Coming**

At the end of the 70th week Jesus will return the second time and reign for 1,000 years. Zechariah prophesied that His feet would touch the mountain, and that it would split in two.

*And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.*

— Zechariah 14:4

This event will usher in the Millennial reign of Christ on the earth, where He will sit upon David's throne at last to rule rightly.

### **The Millennium**

John in Revelation describes a time when Satan will be bound and cast into a bottomless pit for 1,000 years. At that time, Jesus will come with His saints and reign for 1,000 years on earth, and all the elements of Abraham's promises will be completely fulfilled — Land, Seed, Blessings, and the Great Nation all will become a reality. Jesus, David's seed, will rule in literal Israel, the land that God gave to Abraham. He will sit on David's throne, and there will be peace on earth. The Jews will be in the land God gave to them.

### **Great White Throne Judgment**

At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan will be unchained and set free for a short time. He will try to deceive the saints into following him. After that, Jesus will cause unbelievers to stand in judgment for their works.

*Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

—Revelation 20:11-15

***Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be with Him forever.***

### **New Heaven and Earth**

Revelation 21–22 describes the new heaven and earth that God will establish for His people. Throughout all eternity believers in Jesus Christ will be with Him.

### **Historic Premillennial Position**

#### **The Great Tribulation**

The Historic Premillennialist says we are now in the tribulation, and the tribulation will take place over a long and indefinite span of time. They also believe the tribulation will intensify as the Millennium draws nearer, but the Church will be shielded from its more severe aspects.

#### **The Rapture**

Historic Premillennialists see the rapture as the next great prophetic event. The rapture will be inaugurated by the second coming of Christ to the earth. The saints will go up to meet Him in the air and return at once to establish the Millennium. This is also called a posttribulation view of the rapture.

#### **The Millennium**

John, in the Book of Revelation, describes a time when Satan will be bound and cast into a bottomless pit for 1,000 years. At that time Jesus will come with His saints and reign for 1,000 years. This period of righteous rule will see Christ reign with justice

and peace over His subjects. The standards of life envisioned in the Sermon on the Mount will become a reality. There will also be harmony within creation, and hostility among the creatures will cease. The destructive forces of nature will be stilled. Israel will have a special status during this time.

### **Great White Throne Judgment**

At the end of the Millennium Satan will be set free for a short time. He will try to deceive the saints into following him. After that, Jesus will cause unbelievers to stand in judgment for their works.

***Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be with Him forever.***

### **New Heaven and Earth**

Revelation 21–22 describe the new heaven and earth that God will establish for His people. Throughout all eternity we will be with Him.

### **Amillennial Position**

#### **The Great Tribulation**

*For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.*

— Matthew 24:21-22

The Amillennialist believes that we are now undergoing the tribulation and that the tribulation will get worse prior to the rapture.

#### **The Millennium**

The word “Millennium” literally means a 1,000-year span of time. It is described for us in Revelation 20 (see verses 1-7). During this period Satan is bound and cast into a sealed pit which prevents him from deceiving the nations.

The Amillennialist position does not view the Millennium as a literal period of time, but holds that it is a figurative period beginning with Jesus’ ascension and continuing even now. Amillennialists believe that God’s rule is now taking place from heaven in the hearts of believers who are on earth, and that Satan is restricted (“bound” as a dog on a 12-foot chain, but still dangerous within its circle).



## The Rapture

*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

— 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

The Amillennialist interprets this passage to mean that the rapture of believers out of the world and the second coming of Christ to judge the world are simultaneous events. According to this view believers will be caught up to meet Christ in the air, return with Him to earth, then immediately go with Him to the Great White Throne Judgment.

## Great White Throne Judgment

At the end of the Millennium Satan will be unchained and set free for a short time. He will try to deceive the saints into following him. After that, Jesus will cause unbelievers to stand in judgment for their works.

*Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them....And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

— Revelation 20:11,15

***Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be with Him forever.***

## New Heaven and Earth

Revelation 21–22 deals with the new heaven and earth that God will establish for His people. Throughout all eternity we will be with Him.

## Postmillennial Position

### The Great Tribulation

The Postmillennialist, like the Amillennialist, believes that we are now undergoing the tribulation. However, the Postmillennialist thinks that things will get better as the Gospel makes an impact on the world and ushers in the Millennium.

### The Millennium

The Postmillennialist, like the Amillennialist, does not view the Millennium as a literal period of time, but holds that it is a

figurative period. Some Postmillennialists see the Millennium as the entire period of the Church; others see it being ushered in as the Gospel permeates the nations of the world and lasting for a literal 1,000 years.

### **The Rapture**

The Postmillennialist believes the rapture of the believers out of the world and the second coming of Christ to judge the world are simultaneous events. The believer will be caught up to meet Christ in the air and immediately return with Him to earth, then to the Great White Throne Judgment. This event will occur at the end of the Millennium.

### **Great White Throne Judgment**

At the end of the Millennium Satan will be unchained and set free for a short time. He will try to deceive the saints into following him. After that, Jesus will cause unbelievers to stand in judgment for their works.

***Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be with Him forever.***

### **New Heaven and Earth**

Revelation 21–22 describes the new heaven and earth that God will establish for His people. Throughout all eternity we will be with Him.

## Chapter 13

# ***The Promise Experienced***

### **Introduction**

The Bible was not written to make us more knowledgeable; it was written to change our lives. God does not want us to be “smarter sinners,” but rather “holy saints.” He has revealed Himself to us so that this changed life can become a reality for us, rather than just philosophy or theology for our heads. It is possible to understand this Bible survey and to trace God’s plan of redemption from Genesis 3:15 through Revelation 22 and never experience His redemptive love personally. Knowledge is not enough; there must be *application* of these truths to our individual lives.

### **You Must Have a Personal Relationship With God**

Churches are filled with people who are eighteen inches from the Kingdom of God. They know about God in their *heads*, but have never met Him in their *hearts*. I was one of those people for the first 20 years of my life. I went to Sunday School and church where I was taught about God, but I was never introduced to Him personally. One day I heard the message of God’s love when someone introduced me to Jesus Christ and I came to know Him for myself. At that moment, I went from knowing about God, to knowing Him as my very own Savior, Lord, and Friend, and began to build a daily relationship with Him.

It all began with the knowledge of what God had done to restore mankind to fellowship by sending Jesus to die for my sins on the cross. By placing my faith in Jesus' finished atoning work on the cross, where He died as a substitute in my place, I entered into a personal relationship with Him.

## **How to Enter into This Relationship**

In John's Gospel we are given directions on how to become a child of God.



“***But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.***”  
—John 1:12

In this passage we can see four things:

- ***The opportunity to become the child of God is available to as many as will acknowledge the conditions of the verse.***
- ***A person must receive Him, Jesus, the Savior of the world.***
- ***One must place his belief for trust in Jesus' name. This means placing his faith in Christ's death as payment for his sin.***
- ***The result of these responses is that we become children of God.***

These four things will bring anyone into a personal relationship with God — he or she becomes a member of His family. This is the message which takes a person the eighteen inches from the head to the heart. Jesus called this being “born again.”

*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*  
—John 3:5

At this rebirth the Holy Spirit of God, the third person of the Trinity, comes to take up residence in our lives. God's Spirit comes to indwell the believer and assist him in his walk with God. Like Abraham we believe God for what He said He would do.

*He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore “it was*

*accounted to him for righteousness.” Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.*

— Romans 4:20-25

This means that we, like Abraham, are justified by faith and now have peace with God. We are free from the bondage of trying to work our way to heaven by our own efforts or good works. Paul reminds us of this in his words to the saints in Ephesus:

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

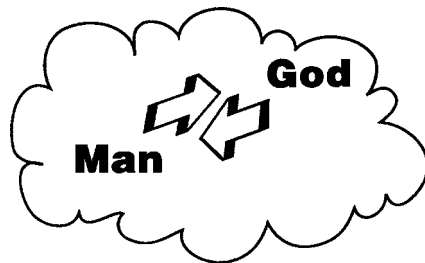
— Ephesians 2:8-10

There are some things we need to learn from this passage:

- ***We are saved by grace through faith.***
- ***This faith is not self-engendered.***
- ***It is a gift of God — not of works.***
- ***There is no place for boasting.***
- ***We were created to do good works that God had appointed for us to do.***
- ***Our good works can’t save us.***

## God Made Us and Loves Us

From our survey we learned that God created man, loved man, and had personal fellowship with Adam and Eve.



*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

— John 3:16

Jesus reminds us that “God so loved the world” and all that He had created. Mankind was God’s crowning work of creation, and we were made in His image for fellowship with God. The Bible records both this fellowship and God’s specific instruction to man about the Tree of Knowledge.

## **The Fact of Sin**

Man was told not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. This tree was forbidden to him.

*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*

— Genesis 2:17

By eating from the tree he would die. We know that both Adam and Eve ate of the tree in direct disobedience to God.

*So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.*

— Genesis 3:6

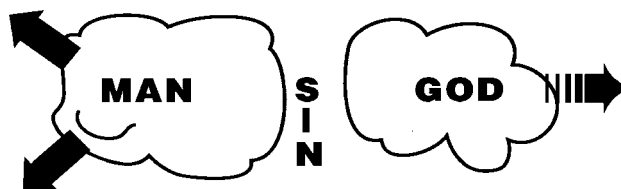
In the New Testament, Paul, speaking to this very issue, reminds us that all have sinned.

*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

— Romans 3:23

## **The Penalty of Sin**

From Genesis 2:17 we learned there was a penalty for man’s disobedience and sin. That penalty was death or spiritual separation from God. Sinful mankind could no longer have a personal fellowship with God. This is what Paul concludes three chapters later in Romans 6:23.



*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

— Romans 6:23

## **The Judgment of Sin**

In Genesis chapter 3, God confronted mankind for disobedience and sin. He spoke to the woman, Eve, who had an excuse.

*And the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*

— Genesis 3:13

Like our forefathers we each will some day be confronted with our own rebellion toward God. The Book of Hebrews teaches that each of us has an appointment with God for the purpose of judging our sin.

*And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.*

— Hebrews 9:27

## Christ Died for Us

We learned from Satan's curse that mankind was given an indirect promise of salvation. God promised to bring forth from the woman whom Satan had deceived, a Seed who would crush Satan's head or destroy what Satan had done to separate us from God. In the process Satan would bruise His heel (the first prophecy of Christ).

*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.*

— Genesis 3:15

In the New Testament we see this being fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Seed of the woman. Peter reminds us of it:

*For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.*

— 1 Peter 3:18

Paul also reminds us of this same truth in the Book of Romans:

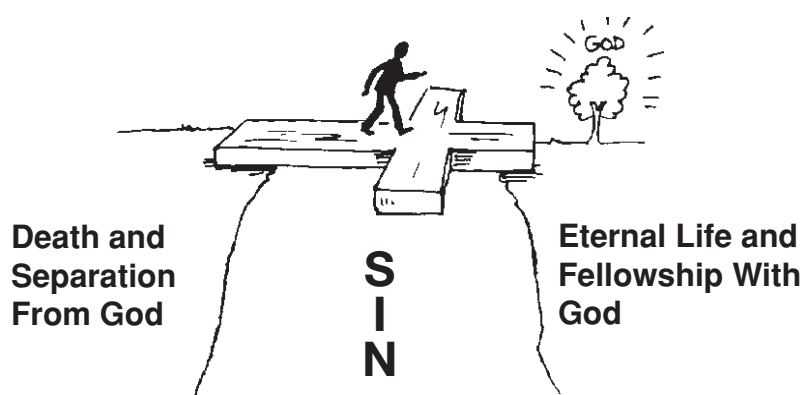
*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

— Romans 5:8

## You Must Receive Christ

To return to the original point: it is not knowledge *about* these things that draws us into a relationship with the Living God, but an act of obedience whereby we *receive* Christ. You must put your trust in what Jesus did on the cross for you, when He died as a substitute for your sin. You enter into a relationship with God by the way of the cross, as illustrated in the following diagram. The cross becomes your "bridge" to God, enabling you to enter into the most important relationship in life.





The way you enter into this relationship is through prayer. If you want to be restored to fellowship with God, pray a prayer such as this one (you must mean it in your heart):

***God, I admit that I am a sinner and I understand that my sin separates me from you. I believe that Jesus, being God, paid the penalty for all my sins when He died on the cross and rose from the dead.***

***Lord Jesus, thank you for dying for me. I ask you to forgive me of my sins. I repent of my ways and want to change the direction of my life. And now Lord Jesus, I open the door of my life and ask You to come into my life as Savior and Lord. I trust You alone for the forgiveness of my sins and the free gift of eternal life. Amen.***

## **Developing Your Relationship With God**

Once you have entered this relationship with God you must begin to develop it daily. Any mature relationship is built on the assurance of each other's commitment.

### **Assurance of Salvation**

Abraham wanted some kind of assurance that the promises would come to pass. We want that same assurance concerning our eternal destiny. Consider the following passages concerning the assurance of your relationship with God.

*And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.*

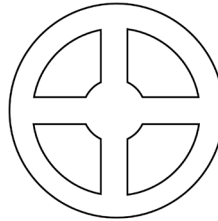
— 1 John 5:11-13

*And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one.*

—John 10:28-30

## Assurance of Growth

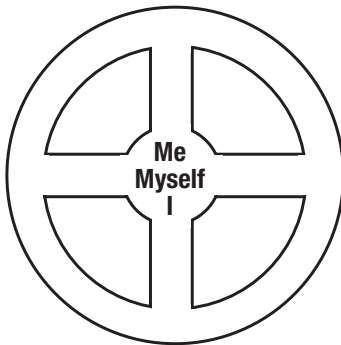
The Christian life is not complex. It can be understood by using the simple illustration of a wheel, which represents your life.



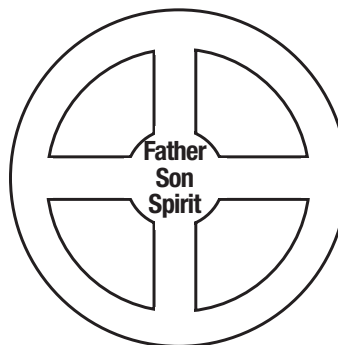
### The Hub

Before you came to Christ the hub of your wheel (your life) was controlled by an unholy trinity called “Me—Myself—I.” They led you down a path away from God. Jesus now must control this hub so that He may lead you into a relationship with God.

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### The Rim

This rim was once made up by acts of disobedience to the commandments of God. Now with Christ living in your life, He will help you live so this rim is characterized by obedience to the commandments of God. The primary way you will demonstrate your love to God is by keeping His commandments.



*He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.*

— John 14:21

## **The Vertical Spokes**

You will notice that the wheel has two spokes which are vertical. These two spokes are the keys to developing our relationship with God. These spokes represent the way we communicate with God, as well as the way He communicates with us. Our communication with God is through **prayer**; His communication with us is through His **Word**, the Bible. The Word and prayer are analogous to eating and breathing in the physical life.



## **The Word**

It is *difficult* to build a relationship with someone else without carrying on a dialogue with them. God initiated this dialogue when He used some 40 different people over a period of over 1,500 years to reveal to us the things that were on His heart.

**God chose to reveal His Word to us through the Holy Bible.** This book is God's "love letter" to us, His children. Here He reveals all that He wants us to know about Himself. Not only are we given careful instructions about where we came from, but we are also given instructions about the present conflicts in which we find ourselves daily. God, in His Word:

- **Declares His love for us, and lets us know how deeply He cares for us.**
- **Tells us about our sin after Satan had deceived Adam and Eve in the Garden and about His plan to rescue us from our sins.**

- Assures us that Christ's blood has paid the penalty for all our sins — past, present, and future.
- Warns us about Satan, our persistent, ever-present enemy, and gives us instructions on how we can overcome him.
- Assures us He is dwelling in us and empowering us to live in obedience.
- Tells us that He understands our struggle with sin and the propensity for our fallen bodies to be drawn to our old sinful nature.
- Reminds us of our brothers and sisters who have gone before us and of their struggle to overcome the enemy in their lives.
- Tells us that He is in absolute sovereign control over every situation that is allowed to touch our lives, and that if we keep our eyes on Him, He will bring us through — whatever the situation.
- Gives us purpose and direction for our lives by clearly commanding us as to our major responsibility on this earth — the fulfilling of Christ's Great Commission.
- Assures us that we will be together with Him throughout eternity, enjoying the rewards He will give us as a result of our faithful and obedient lives.

By spending time daily in His Word, God guides us in the Truth, reproves us when we are contemplating a wrong path, puts us back on the right path if we stray, and instructs us in the path that is His will for us (see 2 Timothy 3:16).

## **Prayer**

**Prayer** is the means by which God allows us to communicate with Him. Strong, healthy relationships are established through communication. If a new Christian is to build his relationship with God, they (he and God) must learn to talk with each other. If there is to be real fellowship — the kind God created us for — we must learn to communicate with Him.

Learning about God's grace, expressed by His love for us, makes it almost impossible for new Christians to remain silent. In my own experience, there were many things I wanted to communicate to God. I wanted to tell Him:

- How much I loved Him and appreciated what He had done to obtain my salvation.
- How sorry I was for ignoring Him for so many years of my life.
- How sorry I was for my sins and rebellion against the commandments which I so willfully violated.
- How I desired to turn my life around and live in accordance with His commandments.
- How I needed help and guidance, as well as power and strength, to live my life and obey His will for me.
- How I was afraid of disappointing Him by not being able to live up to the principles of the Bible.
- How grateful I was that for all eternity I would live with Him in heaven.
- How thankful I was to Him for sending Jesus to die for my sins.

To underscore — **DIALOGUE** is the key to any strong relationship, and two-way communication is the prime ingredient in a relationship with God.

In the presence of a personal interchange between a new Christian and God, it is hard for the enemy — Satan — to interfere with his life. It is when a believer is *not* developing this kind of intimate communication (through reading God's Word and praying) that the devil can have such a destructive force on the relationship. In this case, the new Christian would continue to drown in a sea of fear and despair.

The Word of God is our spiritual food; just as we must eat physically to survive, we must feed on God's "heavenly food" daily. And, just as we must breathe clean, pure air to sustain life, we must pray regularly to understand what God is trying to say to us in His Book about how to live our lives.

The Good News of the Gospel alone can deliver you from such hopelessness. Therefore, once the principles of the vertical spokes are established in your life — through the Word and prayer — His transforming power will begin to make you the kind of person God created you to be.

## The Horizontal Spokes

The moment you become a new person with Christ living in you, God begins to use you in reaching out to other friends who are without a relationship with God or to use you in helping others grow in their relationship to God. These horizontal spokes are called **Evangelism** and **Discipleship**. At this point the illustration is COMPLETED!



### Evangelism

When Jesus called disciples to Himself, He told them:

*...follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.*  
— Matthew 4:19

Once a person begins to experience the joy and peace of having a personal relationship with God, it will be only natural for him to want to share this experience with others who are still struggling, trying to find something that will give their lives meaning and purpose. *Man separated from the God who made and created him can never find the true meaning for life.*

### Discipleship

At the end of His ministry, Jesus commanded His disciples:

*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe (obey) all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*  
— Matthew 28:18-20

A believer grows in his relationship with God by communicating with Him through receiving His communication through the Word and prayer — the two **vertical spokes** we just reviewed in the Wheel. Many believers do not avail themselves of these vertical spokes. While talking *about* God, they never enter into a personal conversation *with* Him — everything in their Christian life is secondhand.

Once the vertical dimension of the Wheel is in place, God desires that new Christians begin to help others enter into a personal relationship with the Father through Jesus Christ (evangelism), then begin to help them grow and mature (discipleship) as they have. These are the **horizontal spokes** illustrated in the Wheel. Evangelism and discipling help keep Christians on the “cutting edge” of the faith; otherwise, the Bible knowledge gained pools and stagnates, resulting in a barren life.

If you have just begun your new walk of faith with Christ, and need help in taking your first steps, there are helpful Bible Study materials available to aid you. Simply call, write, or fax the *EQUIPPING THE SAINTS* office.

We also have an extensive discipleship training curriculum entitled *EQUIPPING THE SAINTS*<sup>™</sup>, which is being used in over 40 countries of the world. This program is designed to train individual Christians to do the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11–12). Information about this course is also available from the same source.

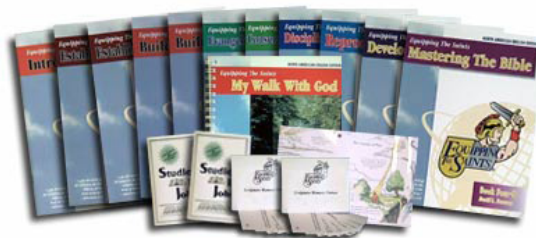
I sincerely hope that the material contained in *A Visual Survey of the Bible* has helped you grasp the Bible as a whole. My prayer is that you have embraced the Bible’s message for your own life, and that you are now better equipped to pass this information on to others to help them do the same. May God richly bless you.



## Other Publications by David L. Dawson

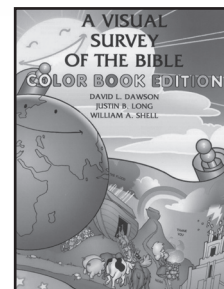
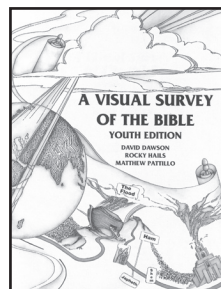
### ***Equipping the Saints***

ETS is a worldwide discipleship training program designed for one-on-one discipling or small groups. It is in use in over fifty countries of the world. Covering all the major principles of discipleship, ETS trains participants in their own personal walk with God and equips them to win and disciple others. This is a nine volume series with eight weeks of training per book.



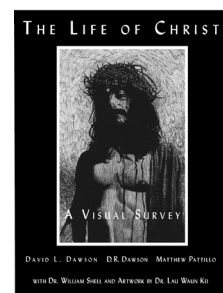
### ***A Visual Survey of the Bible***

The Bible made simple and illustrated. The Survey presents the central message of the Bible, arranging every major event in chronological order, with the aid of a beautiful 15-foot pictorial timeline. Available in Adult, Youth, and Color Book Editions.



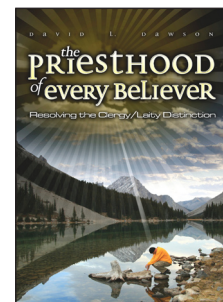
### ***The Life of Christ***

The 184 different events recorded by the Gospel writers are brought into chronological order to help us better understand who Christ was and what He came to do. *The Life of Christ* has a recorded account of when these events occurred on the calendar, and where they happened on the map, without outside interpretation or theological bias. Together with the accompanying visual outline, this narrative brings the fractured images of Jesus together to form an intimate and powerful historical portrait.



### ***The Priesthood of Every Believer***

A Christian's true identity is displaced when he is taught that church leaders (clergy) are the only real priests. This theology purports that the clergy are the activists in ministry and that laypeople are only there to offer support from the sidelines. The result is a loss of identity, and a loss of direction and purpose in life. Every believer needs to be able to articulate who he is, why he is here, and what he is supposed to be doing while on earth. The Priesthood of Every Believer helps resolve the distinction between clergy and laity restoring the reader to his or her God-given identity as a Priest of God and empowered for ministry.



**All Books are Available from:**

***Equipping The Saints Ministry***

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**Genesis 2:16-17**

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

NKJ

**1 Peter 3:18**

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.

NKJ

**Genesis 3:15**

And I will put enmity  
Between you and the woman,  
And between your seed and her Seed;  
He shall bruise your head,  
And you shall bruise His heel.

NKJ

**Genesis 12:1-3**

Now the LORD had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, from your family, and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

NKJ

**Deuteronomy 6:4-6 (The Shema)**

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

NKJ

**2 Samuel 7:12-16**

“When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.”

NKJ

**Isaiah 53:5-6**

But He was wounded for our transgressions,  
He was bruised for our iniquities;  
The chastisement for our peace was  
upon Him,  
And by His stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray;  
We have turned, every one, to his own way;  
And the LORD has laid on Him  
the iniquity of us all.

NKJ

**Jeremiah 31:31-33**

“Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah – not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them,” says the LORD. “But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” says the LORD: “I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

NKJ



**Matthew 1:21**

And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.

NKJ

**Acts 1:8**

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

NKJ

**Matthew 28:18-20**

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

NKJ

**Matthew 24:36-39**

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

NKJ

**John 1:12**

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.

NKJ



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# The Bible

## Made Simple and Illustrated

Many people think of the Bible as an assortment of stories which are somehow related to God, but *how* they are related is often unclear.

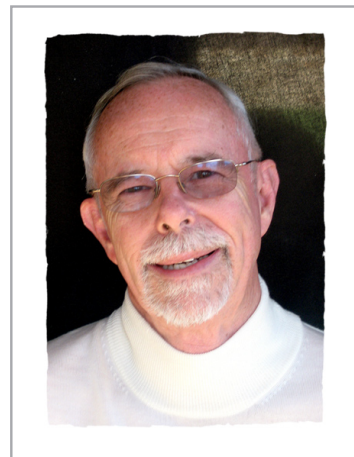
*A Visual Survey of the Bible* presents the central message of the Bible through the use of a beautiful 15-foot pictorial timeline. By arranging every major Biblical event in chronological order, anyone can trace the golden thread of God's redemptive plan for mankind.

The first two chapters of the book are overviews of God's promise to mankind. Chapter One traces the plan for man's salvation from Genesis to Malachi; Chapter Two continues the plan from Matthew to Revelation. The next eleven chapters add greater understanding and clarification by adding the details of how God used significant individuals of the Bible for the fulfillment of His plan for man's redemption.

Many have spent a lifetime trying unsuccessfully to comprehend the Bible's panoramic message. By combining simple language with attractive graphics, this visual survey allows the reader to grasp the Bible's comprehensive message in a matter of hours.

*A Visual Survey of the Bible* is an imperative for every student or teacher of the Bible.

**DAVID L. DAWSON**, Executive Director of Equipping The Saints™, has been involved in the training of disciples for the past fifty years. As a highly-effective communicator, Dave is an experienced teacher and conference speaker. He has taught ETS™ at Denver Conservative Baptist Seminary, Dallas Bible College, and at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, under Dr. Roy Fish. For twelve years he conducted a year-long internship on Equipping Church Members for the Field Education Department of Dallas Theological Seminary. Dave was the National Director for The Navigators for twelve years in Singapore. It was there that Equipping The Saints™ was developed to equip church members. Dave is the father of four grown children, and lives with his wife, Mary, in Dallas, Texas. He travels extensively throughout North America and overseas, in cooperation with mission agencies and other groups to develop the ETS work in national churches. ETS is currently being translated and printed in 33 languages, and is being used in 60 plus countries of the world.



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