

# Plain Talk About the Books of the Bible

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## *Planning To Read the Bible*

Anywhere you read in the Bible is good, but Bible reading need not be haphazard. The following plan is not rigid. It can be varied but this can serve as a systematic approach. It is important to do your reading in a Bible you do not mind marking.

*First*, read the *Gospel of Matthew*. Pay attention to what is written about Jesus of Nazareth. Mark out in the margin the beginning and the end of any section that tells of any incident.

Put yourself in the place of the people who are written about so that you can hear the words said by Jesus of Nazareth and note what He did. Also note what the people did, and what happened.

Don't take time to figure out what is obscure to you. You can come back to that. Read on.

*Second*, read the *Acts of the Apostles*. Mark the beginning and the end of the account of each incident. Pay attention to the work of the Holy Spirit. It would be good to mark your Bible each time the Holy Spirit is mentioned. Do not get bogged down in the long speeches, and do not take too long with what you cannot understand.

*Third*, read the *Gospel of Mark*. Mark this in the same way that you marked Matthew.

*Fourth*, read the *Acts of the Apostles* again. This time look closely at what is written about the early Church. Also mark important names. Mark the instances of praying that are recorded.

*Fifth*, read the *Gospel of Luke*. Notice and mark each miracle or supernatural occurrence. Also mark each parable. Mark each instance of opposition to Jesus of Nazareth. (You may want to use 3 colors: one for "miracles," another for the "parables," and a third for "opposition.")

*Sixth*, read the *Acts of the Apostles* yet again. This book is so important because it is the only account of the origin of the first Christians. A person could never guess what is really true about a Christian unless he read the *Acts* carefully. This time mark each instance of opposition to the Gospel. In chapters 1-12 notice what Peter does. From chapter 13 to the end of the book notice what Paul does.

*Seventh*, read the *Gospel of John*. Look for figures of speech, names, or titles given to the Lord Jesus Christ, and underscore or circle each in a special color. For example, in John 1:1 underscore or circle "the Word." Do this each time this term occurs. In John 1:29 underscore or circle "the Lamb of God." Keep this up as you read through the book. I would not mark "Jesus", but mark each use of all other names, titles, etc. Also take note of each instance of anyone coming to faith or turning away from Jesus of Nazareth. Use different colors so as to mark contrast between faith and unbelief.

*Eighth*, read again the *Acts of the Apostles*. You will have now read each of the four Gospels, and your reading the Acts four times is a good way to get a grasp of the basic truth of WHAT a Christian really is. This time take notice of each sermon or speech. Take time to note a topic or principle idea for each. For example, what is Peter saying at Pentecost in Acts 2:14-36?

Also mark each instance of anyone coming to Christ and each instance of anyone turning away from the Gospel. Note the name of any individual and the description of any group. Use contrasting colors as you did in John.

By now you should have a good grasp of what the Bible says about Jesus of Nazareth and about the first Christians. And you will know something about these five books in the New Testament. Do not try to do all this at one time or in a few days. Plan some sort of regular schedule, such as 15 minutes a day. There is no reason why you should not know what is in the Bible. It was given for you, and such reading

will strengthen your faith.

At this time you could find it very helpful to have a reliable Bible Handbook, and also a Bible Dictionary and a Bible Atlas. I prefer a Handbook to a Commentary. A Commentary contains a scholar's explanation of what you read in the Bible, whereas a good Handbook simply gathers together for you the data and the ideas that are to be found as you read the books. Before you even try to explain the Bible it is most important that you become familiar with what is actually written. Just reading the Bible will feed your soul (Revelation 1:3).

If you are following this procedure as I have outlined it, I would now suggest that as you go on you read a book in the Old Testament and then a book in the New Testament, alternately. Start with Genesis by reading that book. Then read in a Bible Handbook about Genesis. If you have a Bible Dictionary consult it about strange words, names, places. Use your Bible Atlas to locate countries, mountains, rivers. When you have studied in this fashion to get an idea of what is actually set forth in Genesis, then read Genesis once more rapidly to tie it all together in your mind. Then read a New Testament book, alternating between a Gospel and an Epistle.

You may want to sketch an outline of the order in which you will be reading the various books of the Bible. If you are following my suggestions above, after you have finished your careful reading of the Gospels and the Acts you may have a schedule something like this, so that you will read in order: Genesis, Matthew, Exodus, Acts, Leviticus, Mark, Numbers, Romans, Deuteronomy, Luke, Joshua, I Corinthians, Judges and Ruth, John, I Samuel, II Corinthians, II Samuel, Matthew, I Kings, Galatians, and so on.

By now you will begin to recognize the major divisions of the Bible, such as the Pentateuch, the historical, the poetical, the prophetic books in the Old Testament; the Gospels, the historical (Acts), the epistles and the prophetic (Revelation) books in the New Testament. You will learn where to turn according to your interest or need. For the language of prayer read the Psalms. To understand human conduct read Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. For closer fellowship with the Lord Jesus read the Gospels. To cultivate confidence in prayer read the Acts. To understand the life of a Christian read the epistles.

To approach reading the Bible intelligently, worship God as you read. Remember God inspired the writing of the Bible. He is the living God and He is ready to help me to understand and to believe in what I read. So when you take the Bible to read, confess your sins. Admit before God that you have not been, and you have not done, as you ought. Remember Christ Jesus died for you and is now praying for you. Remember He has given His Holy Spirit to help you to see His will and to energize you to obey Him. In so remembering, and trusting, and following by obeying His will, you will learn more and more. Thus the Bible will be "a lamp to your feet and a light on your pathway."

### ***The Bible, What It Is***

The Bible is a volume of 66 little books which tell how God will save man through His Son, Jesus Christ. These books differ in length, style, subject matter - but they agree in one central theme: The Person and the work of Jesus Christ.

God is invisible. He is Spirit and He deals with men in Spirit and in truth. He revealed His will to certain men whom He chose to be His servants, who should be His spokesmen to all men. These were known as "prophets." They communicated their message to other men by speaking and by writing. Their message was known as "the Word of God," and their writings were known as "The Scriptures."

The message of the prophets was not something they thought of in their own wisdom. God sent His Holy Spirit to move these men to think and to write what He wanted to reveal. (II Peter 1:21). Paul told Timothy, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (II Timothy 3:16).

No one knows for sure who wrote the various portions of Scripture. Nor is it known when or where they were written. They are like medicine, in that no one needs to know the name of the druggist who filled the prescription: it is the medicine that matters.

### ***The Bible: How It Can Be Understood***

The Bible reveals truth about God who is invisible. It tells the story of Creation which no man saw as it happened. It reveals truth about Spiritual beings who have never been seen by men. It describes what would be acceptable to God who is not like man, whose thoughts are not our thoughts, and whose ways are not known to man. It tells what God will do in the future which is beyond anything man has known. How can it ever be understood?

The actual plan of all the Bible tells is simple. A child could grasp the ideas set forth. But to be understood by man it must be believed. To bring the story from being a fable to a record of what is actually real, the reader must have the help of the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit so affects the willing heart that the things which are written become actual in experience. What would seem like a story of 'events which are distant or future becomes an experience in which the reader is a participant and an eye witness.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (I Corinthians 2:9-10). Jesus of Nazareth said that "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine . . ." (John 7:17).

The real meaning of the Bible will remain hidden from the consciousness of the unbelieving and the disobedient. Only the willing heart will ever know the truth.

### ***The Bible: Whom It Is For***

The Bible is a revelation of what God will do for such as believe in Him, obeying Him, and is written for men who will listen sincerely and humbly. The fact is that God will save whosoever believeth in Him. A man can only believe what he has heard and understood. In kindness and mercy God sends witnesses who will tell men what God promises. The Scriptures are given to men so that the promises of God may be known.

Since "all have sinned" the Bible is actually given for sinners. Anyone reading the Scriptures may realize his own sinfulness but also will come to know the promises of God offering salvation to souls lost in sin.

When the sinner accepts Christ he is "born again" by the Word and by the Holy Spirit. This babe in Christ needs nourishment which is given in the Scriptures. In believing response to the promises of God the Christian will grow "in grace and knowledge," becoming more and more fruitful to the glory of God.

Thus the Bible is for men; but especially for those who have believed the Gospel, who have accepted Christ and who are now serving Him.

### ***Old Testament History***

The first 17 books of the Old Testament record events that happened in history from the Creation of the World until the restoration of Israel after the captivity in Babylon. Though historical in style these books do not present a history. In the first 11 chapters of Genesis there is a broad sketch of Creation, the Fall of Man, Judgment in the Flood and the dispersion of man over the earth after the Tower of Babel. The rest of Genesis tells of four generations of the family of Abraham. After 400 years in Egypt the children of Israel were brought out to go across the desert into Canaan, which had been promised to them. This Exodus was the greatest single event in the Old Testament. After living in the land of Canaan for about 400 years in tribal fashion, God began to reveal His plan to achieve the realization of His promise of blessing given to Abraham, through His chosen Messiah who would rule as King.

The history of Israel under the kings demonstrated the failure of man, even called men with the blessing of God, to achieve perfect obedience. God promised to send one chosen by Him, called the Messiah, who would perfectly obey God and lead His people into the promised blessing.

The other books of the Old Testament were written during the time of the Kings and reveal truth about living in godly obedience and trust.

### ***The Bible – Old Testament – The Pentateuch***

The first five books of the Bible are often called "The Pentateuch." This big strange word is of Greek origin and means "The Five Books," which often are called the five books of Moses. They do not claim to be written by Moses but tradition does say that Moses is the author.

The New Testament speaks of them as the Writings of Moses.

Jesus of Nazareth asked: "If ye will not believe his writings, how will ye believe my words?"

Genesis is the book of beginnings. The first 11 chapters tell about the Creation of the World, and the history of man until the Tower of Babel. This includes the Fall of Man and the Flood. The rest of the book tells about the Patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.

Exodus tells the story of the Exodus of Israel out of Egypt, with the Passover, the Crossing of the Red Sea, Mount Sinai, and the building of the Tabernacle.

Leviticus tells primarily about the proper procedures of worship which Israel should follow as they came to worship God.

Numbers tells of the wanderings of the Children of Israel as they came to Kadesh Barnea and then spent thirty-eight more years in the desert.

Deuteronomy tells of coming up to Canaan from the side of the Arabian desert and records three major addresses by Moses as he prepared Israel to enter the land of Canaan. This book ends with the death of Moses.

The next book, Joshua, is sometimes included with these five and this portion is then called "The Hexateuch."

## ***The Bible: Old Testament – History, Poetry, Prophecy***

After the Pentateuch the next 12 books in our Canon of Scripture deals with the history of Israel from the time they settled in the land of Canaan until they returned after the captivity in Babylon.

Joshua is sometimes grouped with the first five because Joshua was above all else the deputy of Moses, and simply carried out the plans Moses had projected.

Judges is a record of things that happened in about four hundred years of living in the land.

Ruth is a sweet story of an event that happened during this time.

I and II Samuel and I and II Kings are sometimes called the "Four Books of Kings." I Samuel tells about Samuel the last judge and Saul the first King. II Samuel tells the story of David, the greatest king Israel ever had. I and II Kings continues the history of Israel from the time of Solomon, through the division of the Nation, to the destruction of Israel and then the captivity of Judah.

I and II Chronicles are like parallel reading on the history of Israel from the Creation of Man until the end of the Babylonian Captivity.

Ezra and Nehemiah tell the story of the Restoration of the Jews and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple.

Esther is another personal story of events that happened during the time of the captivity.

The Poetical Books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon are grouped together because of their poetical form, their philosophical and devotional style. They were not all written in the same period of history.

The Prophetical Books are the writings of some of the prophets that appeared in the time of the Kings. The division into Major and Minor Prophets is entirely a matter of custom probably based on convenience of reference.

## ***The Bible: New Testament - The Gospels And The Acts***

The division of the Bible into Old Testament and New Testament is based on the fact that the history of God's revelation to man reveals that God deals with man first according to His Law, which was given to Moses on Mount Sinai in the Ten Words. This was known as the Old Covenant and proved that man could not ever satisfy the righteous demands of God's holiness by his own efforts. During the time of God's dealing with Israel He revealed that He would send a chosen Servant, the Messiah, who could deliver His people from their sins and their enemies by His own righteous life and vicarious death. On the basis of what the Messiah would do, God would deal with His people in a new way called the New Covenant.

The New Covenant was activated by the Son of God who became incarnate as Jesus of Nazareth, who lived in perfect obedience to His Father and offered Himself as a perfect Sacrifice on Calvary's Cross. After being in the grave three days He rose from the dead and showed Himself to be really alive for the space of forty days. Then He ascended into Heaven where He is now interceding for His people and from whence He will come in God's time to complete God's Plan by judging the quick and the dead and manifesting the Kingdom of God in its fullness.

The Four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, tell about the earthly career of Jesus of Nazareth. The Acts of the Apostles tell of the history of the Early Christians until the imprisonment of Paul in Rome.

## ***The Bible: New Testament - The Epistles And The Revelation***

After the pouring out of the Holy Spirit into the hearts of the believers at Pentecost, the disciples of Jesus Christ went into all the world to preach the Gospel to all nations. As persons believed the Gospel and accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and the Holy Spirit became operative in them according to the New Covenant, God gave certain persons to serve Him in teaching and in shepherding the new believers. Such men were known as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Some of these wrote their messages which have been preserved as the epistles of the New Testament.

The first nine epistles are known as the Church Epistles of Paul - Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and I and II Thessalonians. In these Paul has written messages addressed to several churches as named. The next four epistles are known as the Pastoral Epistles of Paul - I and II Timothy, Titus and Philemon. In these Paul wrote to individuals as a pastor would speak to one of his flock. After this are eight epistles known as the General Epistles, the Epistles to the Hebrews, James, I and II Peter, I, II and III John, and Jude. The last book in the Bible is known as The Revelation. In these 22 epistles is to be found the fuller explanation of the operation of the New Covenant by the working of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers.

### ***Genesis***

Genesis is the book of beginnings. It opens with the account of the Creation of the World and of Man in the image of God. In chapter 3 is the record of the beginnings of Sin by Adam and Eve in the garden. Here is also the beginning of salvation by the grace of God. And here also is the beginning of prophecy about the coming Savior as the Seed of the Woman.

In chapter 4 is the account of the beginning of violence when Cain killed Abel.

In chapters 6-9 is the account of the beginning of judgment when God sent the Flood. Here is also the account of the beginning of deliverance from judgment when Noah was delivered in the ark.

In chapter 11 can be seen the beginning of community enterprise in the Tower of Babel. Here also is to be found the beginning of alienation when men became strangers and scattered. And so in Genesis 1-11 we have the account of the origin of the world as we know it today.

In chapter 12 is recorded the Call of Abraham and this is the beginning of the Covenant of Abraham in which blessing is received by men who believe in the promises of God. The rest of the book is the story of the Patriarchs – Abraham, the father of the faithful and those involved with him: Lot, his nephew; Hagar, his second wife; Ishamel, his son from Hagar; Sarah, his wife; Isaac, the child of promise.

Isaac whose great wisdom was that he walked in the footsteps of his father, Abraham.

Jacob whose name was changed to Israel.

Joseph who became the savior of his people.

#### **Genesis "Beginnings"**

1-11 Creation To Tower of Babel

1-2 Nature of World and of Man

3 Fall of Man

4 Cain and Abel

5-10 Noah and the Flood  
11 Tower of Babel  
12-50 The Patriarchs  
12-25 Abraham  
21-35 Isaac  
25-50 Jacob

## *Exodus*

After the children of Israel had lived in Egypt about 400 years the time of the promise God had given to Abraham drew nigh, when He would give the land of Canaan to the Seed of Abraham.

In the book of Exodus is given the account of how the Hebrews were abused by the Egyptians until they cried to God for deliverance.

God prepared and called Moses to lead them out of Egypt. Pharaoh was not willing that they should go. Using Moses as His servant, God sent plagues until Pharaoh consented to let the children of Israel go after the death of the first born.

Israel was delivered from that plague in the Passover.

At the Crossing of the Red Sea Pharaoh was destroyed.

Guided by a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, Israel journeyed across the desert.

God showed His grace and mercy in caring for Israel as they travelled.

At Mount Sinai Moses received the Law which showed how God's people should live, and instructions about the Tabernacle which showed how God's people should worship.

Then there is the record of how the people brought the materials needed, how certain persons with special skills were appointed to build the Tabernacle exactly "as the Lord commanded Moses."

When the Tabernacle was finished, with all the furniture in place, the Shekinah Glory filled the Tabernacle showing the approval of God.

### The Exodus "Deliverance"

1-11 Conflict between Moses and Pharaoh  
12-13 The Passover  
14 Crossing the Red Sea  
15-19 From Red Sea to Mount Sinai  
20-40 At Mount Sinai

## *Leviticus*

After the children of Israel under the leadership of Moses had built the Tabernacle according to the pattern shown to him on the Mount, instructions were revealed as to the procedures of worship and of living in the will of God. The book of Leviticus outlines the offerings to be brought by the priests on behalf of the people, and gives the details, regulations and requirements to be observed by both priests and people that they might qualify for the blessing of God.

The concept of "clean and unclean" was emphasized in the consciousness of the people by many regulations which specified what should be done in the interests of health, hygiene and social righteousness. This was important because the blessing of God involved His presence among them, and He was holy; therefore the people must be "clean."

Detailed regulations about public procedures resulted in a calendar of special events, such as feasts and fasts as well as stipulations about the use of the land, the supervision of economic practices providing for the relief of the poor at the expense of the rich. This was also involved in the implications of the presence of God in their midst.

This book is a manual of procedures that were designed to structure the life, private and public, and the worship of the children of Israel, who were being brought into the Promised Land by the grace and the power of God, that it would be possible for God to be in their midst.

## Leviticus "Holiness"

- 1-7 The Offerings
- 8-10 Consecration of the Priests
- 11-20 Clean and Unclean
- 21-22 Regulations for the Priests
- 23 Regulations for the Feasts
- 24-27 Regulations for Living

## *Numbers*

The book of Numbers gets its name from the contents of the book. The first four chapters give the report of the census taken of the children of Israel as they left Mount Sinai on their journey to Canaan. The membership of the twelve tribes and the tribe of Levi was recorded by families and the total numbers noted for each tribe respectively. Hence the name of the book was "Numbers."

After several chapters of special instructions given to the priests for their guidance in their leadership of the people, the further journey story across the desert is set forth. As the people travelled they manifested their discontent about various conditions by murmuring and complaining. In each case they were chastened by discipline in the will of God.

Several incidents of rebellion against the leadership of Moses occurred which were reported together with the way in which God dealt with the rebels in each case.

When Israel came to Kadesh Barnea after about two years of journeying from Egypt they failed to enter the land as directed because of their unbelief. This was the Great Provocation which angered God and resulted in their being turned back into the desert. There they wandered for thirty-eight more years until that whole generation of mature men died without ever entering the Promised Land. Joshua and Caleb were the two exceptions because they had urged the people to go forward despite the obvious difficulties trusting in God, who would help them to conquer their opposition.

Moses himself sinned in impatience so that he never could enter Canaan, though he was permitted to see it.

This whole book is a sober testimony to the fact that a person may believe in God enough to begin a life of obedience, and yet fail to arrive at the fulness of blessing because of unbelief.

## Numbers "Wandering in the Desert"

- 1-10 Preparation for Departure From Sinai
- 11-12 Complaining and Discipline
- 13-14 At Kadesh Barnea
- 15-25 Wandering in the Desert
- 26-36 Preparation to Enter the Land

### *Deuteronomy*

This book also gets its name from the contents.

Moses gave to Israel the tablets of stone on which were the Ten Words of the Law when they were encamped around Mount Sinai. More than thirty-eight years later a new generation is about to enter the promised land of Canaan. The older generation who had received the Law at Mount Sinai were now dead, except Joshua and Caleb.

Moses repeated giving the Law to the new generation that they might have the inspiration. This is recorded in this book called "Deuteronomy," which in Greek means "the second Law."

This book is largely composed of three major addresses. In the first address Moses reviewed the history of the Exodus and solemnly repeated the Ten Words to this new generation, as he had given it nearly forty years before to their fathers.

The second address explained the meaning of the Ten Words and gave gracious promises of blessing upon obedience and solemn warning as to the dire consequences that would follow any failure to obey.

The third address was an urgent admonition to this new generation to profit by seeing the results of the mistakes of the older generation and to be obedient to the Word of God.

## Deuteronomy "Repeating the Law"

- 1-4 Review of journey
- 5-26 Second Giving of the Law
- 27-34 Warning and Admonition

### *Joshua*

This book is called "Joshua" not because he wrote it, but because he is the principal actor in the events recorded.

Joshua served Moses as a sort of deputy. He was the military leader of Israel, as well as a personal aid to Moses in practical matters. He was with Moses on Mount Sinai. He was one of the spies sent to survey the land before Israel attempted to enter. He joined Caleb in voicing confidence that with God's help they could enter the land and defeat the Canaanites.

God told Moses to appoint Joshua as his successor. When Moses died, Joshua immediately assumed

the leadership, having received from God instruction to follow the law of appropriation, with the promise "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given you."

Joshua's career of conquest is told in this book. His bold frontal attack brought victory by faith at Jericho. But he was unprepared for defeat at Ai, and feared disaster unless God would help Israel. God told him how to deal with secret sin. After judging Achan and achieving a belated victory at Ai, he was tricked into making an unwise agreement to allow the city of Gibeon to escape destruction. In this he followed his own judgment and committed himself to trust in deceitful men, "and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord."

Joshua realized the campaign to conquer Canaan would not be finished in his lifetime, so he divided the whole country among the tribes before his death, with instructions as to how to proceed toward complete victory.

In making arrangements for living in the land, Joshua set aside certain cities to be cities of refuge where accused persons could be protected from vengeful relatives of victims of criminal assault.

Joshua also supervised arrangements to provide cities in which the Levites could live.

Special attention was given to the situation involving Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh, to whom the land east of the Jordan had been assigned.

When all his arrangements were completed, Joshua faithfully warned the Israelites to remain true to their commitment to God that they might continue to receive His blessing.

## Joshua "Entering the Land"

- 1-5 Preparation For Entering the Land
- 6-12 Conquest of the Land
- 13-22 Division of the Land
- 23-24 Joshua's Final Message

## *Judges*

The book of Judges records certain selected events occurring in about 400 years of Israel's history after the life of Joshua.

When the Israelites took possession of Canaan they came as twelve tribes, each acting under its own leadership.

From time to time several tribes would join under some common leader to face some common enemy – but no permanent central government existed. The unity of the nation was grounded in its ancestry, all being the descendants of Jacob; and was kept alive in its worship, all following the leadership of the tribe of Levi, who were the priests for the entire nation.

Because of failure to carry out the instructions given by Joshua the tribes respectively did not destroy the original inhabitants, the Canaanites, but allowed some of these to live in the land as servants. In time these Canaanites influenced the children of Israel to forget God and to join in pagan ideas and practices.

When such apostasy occurred, God would withhold His grace and help from Israel. They would then be overcome and enslaved by the Canaanites. In their bondage the Israelites would suffer until they called on God in repentance. In mercy God would raise up from among them a judge who would lead the people to return to God. Then God would bless them to have victory over their enemies and the land

would have peace.

This cycle of events occurred again and again during this period, but the spiritual and moral life of the children of Israel was steadily deteriorating.

"In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

## Judges "Living in the Land"

- 1-2 Failure of Tribes to Obey Instructions
- 3-16 Oppression and Deliverance
- 17-21 Decline of Morale in Israel

### *Ruth*

This book is a story telling how Ruth, a Moabitess, became the great-grandmother of David. This happened during the time of the Judges.

Because of famine Elimelech and Naomi, of the tribe of Judah, went to live in the land of Moab with their two sons. While there, Elimelech died and the two sons married two maidens in that land. When the two sons died, Naomi told her daughters-in-law to go home to their families because she was about to return to the land of Judah. One of these was Ruth who requested the privilege of staying with Naomi.

In time Naomi sent Ruth to glean in the harvest fields of her kinsman, Boaz. Boaz noticed Ruth among the gleaners and fell in love with her. When Naomi saw that Boaz was attracted to Ruth she arranged to have Ruth visit Boaz where he was sleeping.

Rather than to expose Ruth for intruding upon his privacy, Boaz made her his wife.

In this way Ruth not only became the great-grandmother of David, the greatest king Israel ever had, but she became one of the ancestors of the promised Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God.

This simple story conveys much truth to the reader of Scripture. The grace of God was available to Gentiles as well as to Jews. The providence of God can overrule local circumstances to make all things work together for good to them who are called according to His purpose.

### Ruth "Chosen to Be the Bride"

- 1 Ruth Deciding
- 2 Ruth Serving
- 3 Ruth Waiting
- 4 Ruth Rewarded

### *I Samuel*

First Samuel is the first of four books of history reporting events that happened from the time of the last of the judges, Samuel, until the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. These books are sometimes called the Four Books of Kings. In our Bible they are I and II Samuel and I and II Kings.

The "First Samuel" presents principally selected events in the careers of the last Judge, Samuel, and of Saul, the first king.

The birth of Samuel is an unusual testimony of the power of earnest persevering prayer. Hannah prayed for a son for personal reasons and her request was granted, and she gave birth to a son who became one of the greatest servants of God in Israel.

The training of the child Samuel is a classic demonstration of the power of faithful child nurture. The example of the sons of Eli is an eloquent testimony that God is no respecter of persons. The failure of the sons of Samuel enforces this truth. When Israel insisted on having a king, even though Samuel wisely advised against this, God granted their request, and instructed Samuel to collaborate in finding a king, against his own superior judgment.

Saul was chosen and anointed to be king even though he was from a small tribe. He began his reign with marked success, but in impatience and in disobedience he disqualified himself so that another king was chosen to rule after he was gone.

Samuel found and anointed David while he was still a lad. Despite Saul's jealousy, and treacherous hostility, David conducted himself bravely and wisely above reproach, because of his obedience to God.

## I Samuel "The King Is Anointed"

1-8 Samuel as Judge

9-12 Saul as King

13-15 Failure of Saul

16-31 David Anointed to Be King

## *II Samuel*

The events recorded in II Samuel follow in the history of Israel after the defeat of Saul in battle and his death as a suicide. Since Jonathan, the heir apparent, was slain in the same battle, the throne was vacant after the death of Saul.

Judah promptly crowned David as king, but the rest of Israel made Ishbosheth, a son of Saul, king to succeed Saul. A bitter civil war was waged between the house of David, led by Joab, and the house of Saul, led by Abner. In time Abner felt such strife was unwise and came to make peace with David. Joab treacherously slew Abner, but the pact of peace was verified after the forces of the house of Saul had been defeated in battle.

David showed great wisdom and true statesmanship in uniting the whole nation under his leadership. He treated the defeated northern tribes with respect and fairness. He built Jerusalem as his citadel, and then launched a campaign against hostile neighbors, subduing them until the land of Israel enjoyed peace and prosperity.

David's sin with Bathsheba marred his excellent record. Though he was forgiven this sin, he was troubled by rebellion in his own family. This book records the exploits of David, with the great support of his wonderful friends and the bitter hostility of his enemies.

David was not permitted to build the Temple which he wanted to do, but he did receive a covenant from God pledging dominion over all forever to his seed.

## II Samuel "The Throne Is Established"

- 1-5 David Crowned as King
- 6-10 David Establishes His Throne
- 11-12 David's Sin Against Uriah the Hittite
- 13-24 David's Troubles

### *I Kings*

I Kings continues the historical record of events in the history of Israel after the reign of David through the time of Jehosaphat.

Solomon, the son of David, appointed by his father to be king began his reign wisely. He built the temple which David had planned and carried out his father's instructions in the administration of national affairs. He made peace with neighboring nations and brought great prosperity to Israel.

But Solomon allowed the influence of his many pagan wives to cause him to tolerate pagan worship in the land. This resulted in judgment from God, who raised up enemies against Solomon so that his later years were troubled by strife.

Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, succeeded to the throne but proved to be incapable of the leadership needed in that hour. Jeroboam, a popular agitator against the government, who had been exiled by Solomon, was asked to return from Egypt to lead the ten northern tribes in their rebellion against Rehoboam.

In his attempt to establish his own throne, Jeroboam projected a substitute form of worship which would make it unnecessary for his people to go to the temple in Jerusalem to worship. He built a rival altar and authorized priests of his own choosing, so turning the ten tribes away from the God of Israel, and thus causing Israel to sin.

There was continual conflict between Judah and Israel, though sometimes their leaders formed alliance against some common enemy.

Although Jehosaphat, king of Judah, was a godly capable man, he "joined affinity" with Ahab, king of Israel, who was an evil man. In mercy and grace God watched over Jehosaphat to protect him, even though he had been foolish in his association with the evil kings of Israel.

## I Kings "The Nation Is Divided"

- 1 David Appoints Solomon as King
- 2-11 Career of Solomon
- 12-22 Division of Kingdom

### *II Kings*

This is the fourth and last book, recording events in the history of Israel, from the death of Jehosaphat until the Captivity of Babylon. In the days of Rehoboam the nation had been divided into a northern

group of ten tribes, called Israel, whose capital city was Samaria, and a southern group of two tribes, called Judah, whose capital city was Jerusalem.

Generally, the kings of Judah were godly men. The kings of Israel were all evil, and in that nation pagan ideas were readily accepted. God, in His mercy, sent great prophets to warn Israel of their inevitable destruction, if they did not repent and turn to Him. Despite the ministry of such servants of God as Micaiah, Elijah and Elisha, Israel remained incorrigible, and in His time God raised up Assyria to invade and destroy Israel, carrying the people away as captives. This destruction was permanent.

The kings of Judah because of foolish association with the kings of Israel permitted Baal worship to come into their land. But God raised up Jehu to become King of Israel, who destroyed Baal worship in Israel. Also in Judah God raised up the priest Jehoiada, who led in drastic measures to stamp out Baal worship in the southern nation.

But Judah was not able to maintain consistent obedience to God. Despite revivals under Hezekiah and Josiah the nation also became incorrigible. God raised up Babylon to capture Jerusalem, destroying the Temple, and carrying the people away as captives.

## II Kings "The Nation Is Destroyed"

1-8 Elijah and Elisha

9-17 History of Israel Till Fall of Samaria

18-25 History of Judah Till Fall of Jerusalem

## *I Chronicles*

The two books called "Chronicles" are a puzzle to students of the Bible. They record events occurring in the history of Israel from the time of the first King Saul until the restoration after the Captivity in Babylon. Yet there seems to be no attempt to present a history of the nation. There are notable omissions in the record of what happened to Israel, whereas some events receive special attention. Thus these two books report events occurring during the same time as those reported in the books of I and II Samuel and I and II Kings. Some of the same events are reported, although the accounts are obviously independent of each other. It is interesting to note that though generally differing in details noted, there is no actual contradiction in the facts as they are told.

I Chronicles begins with genealogies through nine chapters, yet there is no mention of Samuel. One short chapter tells about the death of Saul. Nineteen chapters are devoted to the reign of David, but there is no mention of Bathsheba or of David's sin. There is no mention of Absalom or his rebellion. Much attention is given to David's preparation to build the temple.

In the Hebrew canon of the Old Testament, the two books of Chronicles are placed in the appendix.

It has been suggested that in those days one record of notable events was kept in the king's court, where the record would be before the view of all the people. This might well be the four books of history called the books of the kings. Another record may have been kept in the hands of the Levites who would have special interest in the affairs of Judah, and especially of David and his household, and whose report of the affairs of David may well reflect the mind of God who forgave David his sin and purged it off the record.

## I Chronicles "Called to Rule"

1-9 Genealogies  
10 Death of Saul  
11-29 Reign of David

## *II Chronicles*

II Chronicles notes events that happened after the death of David and especially in Judah after the division of the nation. The building of the Temple by Solomon is given special attention, as is the report of Solomon's prayer in dedicating the Temple. The glory of Solomon's prosperity and his great wisdom are emphasized.

Various incidents are recorded showing how God blessed the Temple and Jerusalem and Judah, because His name had been put there. Jehosaphat's good reign and his foolish alliance with Ahab is reported, with notations of the admonition and warnings given by the prophets who did not approve such friendly relationship with ungodly men.

The infiltration of Baal Worship through the influence of Jezebel and Athaliah is briefly noted and the function of Jehu and Jehoiada in destroying this pagan error is briefly but clearly recorded.

The subsequent history of the two nations is briefly recorded but special attention is given to Hezekiah and his godly efforts to turn the people to the true worship of God. The wickedness of Manasseh and the godly efforts of Josiah are briefly reported, together with a brief account of the events which culminated in the Fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple.

The two series of records in the books of Kings and books of Chronicles are different from each other – but they do not contradict each other in any matter of record.

## II Chronicles "From Glory to Grief"

1-9 Reign of Solomon  
10-36 Division and Destruction of the Nation

## *Ezra*

The two books of Ezra and Nehemiah deal with the restoration of the Jews to the land of Canaan after their captivity in Babylon.

When the people of Israel showed themselves to be incorrigible in their disobedience to God, the judgment of God came upon them. First, the northern nation of the ten tribes called Israel fell before Assyria and was permanently destroyed. The people were carried away as captives, except the poorer people who lived as laborers in their home land. Other people were brought in to live in Canaan who intermarried with the remaining Israelites, and came to be known as Samaritans.

Later the southern nation of two tribes called Judah fell before Babylon, who destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, and carried the people away as captives for seventy years.

After the time of the Captivity was past Cyrus, king of Persia who had conquered Babylon, released the Israelites and permitted them to return to the land of Judah if they wished to do so. Not all, but some did return to rebuild that which had been destroyed.

The book of Ezra tells of this return under the leadership of Ezra the priest, Nehemiah and Zerubbabel.

This book records the decision of Cyrus to release the Jews, and the tabulation of those who returned with the equipment they brought. It tells about the beginning of the rebuilding of temple and of the opposition which halted the work. Then it reports the preaching of Haggai and the repeated permission from Persia by Darius to continue the rebuilding. The leadership of Ezra in bringing another contingent of Jews, together with his leadership in bringing the people to return to the sincere worship of God, is also included.

## Ezra "Return of the Remnant"

1-6 First Return of Jews and Rebuilding of the Temple  
7-10 Ministry of Ezra

## *Nehemiah*

Nehemiah held a trusted position in the king's court among the Persians. But when he heard of the ruined condition of Jerusalem he felt a strong desire to return and to help in rebuilding so that it would be "no longer a reproach."

Having gained permission from the king, and a letter of authorization to enable him to secure materials needed in rebuilding, Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem. First he carefully surveyed the extent of the ruins and then challenged the Jews who had already returned to undertake to rebuild the walls.

With careful organization Nehemiah led an inspired people in the task of rebuilding. Opposition was encountered again and again but Nehemiah was not to be dissuaded. When it came to his notice that abuses were being carried on among the Jews, Nehemiah openly insisted on their correction. Despite persistent opposition the aroused Jews completed the rebuilding of the walls.

Arrangements were then made that Ezra should read the law publicly to the people, and with the help of many teachers the law should be explained to the people.

Nehemiah then led the Jews to make a covenant with God, and recorded the names of all who pledged themselves to obey God.

When disobedience became known, Nehemiah insisted upon repentance and consistent conduct before God.

## Nehemiah "Rebuilding Jerusalem"

1-7 Nehemiah Leads in Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem  
8-10 Great Revival Under Ezra  
11-13 Conditions in Judah After the Return of the Jews

## *Esther*

Esther is the story of an event that occurred while the Jews were yet captive under the rule of the Persians. This story centers around a Jewish maiden by the name of Esther who was chosen because of her beauty to be the bride of the king. Her uncle, Mordecai, was a wise man greatly respected in the community and by his loyalty in exposing a plot to harm the king, had won the king's favor.

Haman had been promoted to the place of the King's Advisor. In flattering the king he had decreed that all men should bow before the king and himself as the King's Advisor. This Mordecai would not do because he would bow down only before his God. Haman was offended and planned to destroy Mordecai.

He prompted the king to sign a decree that any who would not bow down to the king, and thus in effect worship him, should be put to death. This would involve all the Jews, and so would include Mordecai.

When Mordecai became aware of this plot he sent word to Esther to point out her opportunity to speak to the king directly about this peril to all the Jews, including herself. Despite the risk of being rejected Esther approached the king and told him of the situation. The king issued an order authorizing the Jews to arm themselves for self-defense. Then the king hanged Haman on the gallows he had personally erected to hang Mordecai.

This book gives an insight into conditions under which the Jews lived as captives. It is notable that the name of God does not appear in the book, though the reality of faith in Him and of His grace is obvious throughout.

### Esther "God's Watch-Care Over His Own"

1-2 Esther Chosen to Be Queen

3-7 Esther Delivers the Jews

8-10 Enemies of the Jews Are Destroyed

## *Job*

Job is one of the two books in the Bible dealing with a problem in philosophy. Every culture has a system of philosophy by which people explain their experiences. Hebrew culture is based on the reality and the sovereignty of God; the Creator, Sustainer, and judge of all the earth. For the Hebrew God was a Person, Almighty, Holy and just, who exercised His control over all things, so that all things that happened could be understood as being the will of God.

This idea of God being Almighty and Just creates a problem in understanding human experience: how shall one understand the suffering of the righteous? This is a form of the more basic question of the problem of evil: if God is good why is evil permitted?

The book of Job is developed around the career of the man Job, who is described as a righteous, godly man who suffered the loss of property, loved ones and finally health. The reader of the book is told that all this happened in the course of spiritual conflict between Satan and God. God pointed to Job as an example of obedient faithfulness to the will of God. Satan intimated that Job was obedient because it was profitable to be so. God then gave Satan permission to test Job by taking away all but his life.

The book presents a dialogue in which four friends of Job try to explain Job's suffering as being the natural consequence of his own sin or ignorance. Job defends himself by reasoning that what they say is not true. If his sin were involved, why did God not forgive him?

When his accusers are silenced the Lord Himself speaks to Job, chiding him for trying to understand the ways of God, which are far beyond man's scope of knowledge. Job humbly confesses that he is utterly unable and unworthy to understand. The basic question is never answered – because it is beyond human comprehension – but the trusting soul is richly blessed.

## Job "The Suffering of the Righteous"

- 1-2 Job and His Troubles
- 3-31 Job and His Friends
- 32-37 Address by Elihu
- 38-41 Addresses by the Lord
- 41 Job's Blessing

## *Psalms*

This book has been called "The Song Book of Israel." It is a collection of 150 poems written at various unknown times by different authors, many unknown. David, called "the sweet Psalmist of Israel", is generally held to be the principal author, but it seems evident that some were written before David's time and some as late as the Babylonian Captivity.

The Scriptures do not at any place emphasize the authorship, the circumstances at the time of writing, nor the immediate historic bearing of any portion of the Bible. The text in itself "as it is written" is the significant feature.

This is particularly obvious in the Psalms, which are written as expressions of meditation, praise and prayer in the worship exercises of some believing soul.

The 150 Psalms are often divided into five groups or books which are sometimes seen as parallel to the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses.

It has been said that every phase of human emotion can be found in the Psalms, and for this reason they are helpful in promoting worship in the heart of any believer at any time in any situation.

Psalms that are quoted in the New Testament as referring to Christ are known as the Messianic Psalms.

Some psalms give expression to judgment and condemnation of the enemies of God and His people: these are known as the Imprecatory Psalms.

This portion of Scripture has brought comfort to God's people in trouble, and inspiration to praise for people being blessed. They are obviously suited primarily to hearts that believe in God.

## Psalms "Praise the Lord"

- 1-41 Psalms by David
- 42-72 Historical Psalms
- 73-89 Liturgical or Ritualistic Psalms

## *Proverbs*

This book is a collection of apt expressions of insight into the course of human affairs. These expressions do not directly reveal the salvation plan or program of God as set forth in Christ, but they reveal the operation of natural processes that are grounded in the Law of God.

They are useful in thought because they state succinctly and simply, profound truths which could be learned in the course of experience, but which in a proverb are made available to anyone when that expression of observation has been stated.

The book has no overall plan – though some grouping of certain parts can be noted.

Traditionally it is considered that Solomon was the author of the larger portion of this collection, but just how many of the proverbs were written by him cannot be firmly established. Several other possible authors are mentioned in the text, but the principle to keep in mind is that the Word "as it is written" is what helps the soul.

Many persons have noted how the 31 chapters fit the length of the month in days, and have set up the program of reading each day the particular chapter of Proverbs that has that number; e.g., on the 9th day of the month, read Proverbs chapter 9.

Any mind equipped in memory with these proverbs can readily be wise in understanding, and in interpreting human experience.

### Proverbs "The Benefits of Wisdom"

- 1-9 Commendation of Wisdom
- 10-22 Contrasts and Observations
- 23-24 Exhortations and Warnings
- 25-29 Comparisons and Contrasts
- 30-31 Descriptions

## *Ecclesiastes*

This is the other book of Philosophical discussion in the Canon of Scripture, and is thus a companion to the book of Job. Just as Job was developed in discussion of "Why do the righteous suffer?", so Ecclesiastes raises one basic philosophical question: "What is the greatest good?"

It is generally held that Solomon is the young king who seems to have written this book as his personal memoirs. The text seems to report how this young man, gifted and wealthy, began the search for the greatest good through pragmatic experimentation.

Ecclesiastes is the most nearly modern in tone of any book in the Bible. It actually demonstrates the technique of scientific research. Having raised the question as to what is the greatest good, the young man proceeds to research by experiment.

First he sought wisdom through acquiring knowledge as the key to true happiness, but soon

discovered that increased knowledge only increased sorrow.

Then he sought satisfaction in folly, indulging himself in all such foolishness as his wealth and position made possible. But he soon saw that the sad results of folly far outweighed any temporary pleasures. He saw that wisdom exceeded folly, but neither could assure blessedness.

Then he applied himself to work, and in this he found some real satisfaction but not anything permanent. Even if in work wealth was accumulated, this could be dissipated by foolishness later.

The book then reports many of his observations, as if they were notes he had made during his research. These statements show penetrating insight into the course of events, but never do find the answer to his quest.

In the last chapter he advises that man should "fear God and keep his commandments" – but it is significant this was not discovered in his research!

## Ecclesiastes "The Greatest Good"

1-4 Vanities of Life

5-7 Practical Wisdom

8-11 Rules for a Happy Life

12 Conclusion of Search for the Good

## *Song of Solomon*

The Song of Solomon is often considered as the most surprising in the Bible. When read, it hardly seems to be of such material as to warrant inclusion in Scripture. It is in the form of a love poem and gives expression to the thoughts of a man and a woman deeply in love with each other.

As the name indicates, it is commonly assumed that the young man involved in the poem was Solomon himself. No one has offered any acceptable suggestion as to which of his wives the young woman might be. But here again is demonstrated the fact that Scripture is not a report of the biographical or historical Song of Solomon events of specific persons or periods of time. It is the text that matters.

Many students of the Bible take this book as an expression of the emotions of true love, and see in this poem a description of the total affection of the Church as the Bride of Christ, and of Christ as the Bridegroom who loved His Church.

In various parts of the world where man-woman relations are known only on a low physical plane these expressions of personal joy and commitment are actually helpful to better understanding of the potentialities of human relationships.

## Song of Solomon "The Beloved"

– is best read as if one were looking at a painting.

– at least three interpretations can be seen.

1. Love of Solomon for a maid he would take as his wife
2. Love of God for His covenant people – Israel.
3. Love of Christ for His heavenly Bride – the Church.

## *Isaiah*

Isaiah has been called "the Prince of the Prophets." He is mentioned in the historical books and evidently served many years as a prophet.

The book naturally falls into two parts, chapters 1-39 and chapters 40-66. The first 5 chapters are a description of the spiritual condition of Judah during the time that Isaiah preached. Chapter 6 tells of his call and commission as a prophet during the days of apostasy. Isaiah foresaw the destruction of Jerusalem but he could also see the coming of Christ bringing salvation in the will of God.

Chapters 7-12 set forth his preaching to his generation which was doomed to judgment.

In chapters 13-35 Isaiah preached to the surrounding nations in which he predicted judgment to be followed by the work of God in grace as He fulfills His promises.

Chapters 36-39 are an historical parenthesis telling of the reign of Hezekiah.

In his prediction of coming judgment Isaiah pointed out that some persons would repent and turn to God to receive His promises: these he called the Remnant.

Chapters 40-66 can well be understood as messages preached to the Remnant.

Peter says (1 Peter 1:10-12) the prophets foretold the blessing God would bring through Christ, but did not understand all that would happen. Here we can see that Isaiah is predicting what living in the grace of God will be like though he himself was living before that time.

### Isaiah "The Truth of God in a World of Sin"

- 1-5 Spiritual Condition of Israel
- 6 Isaiah's Call and Commission
- 7-12 The Syrian Crisis
- 13-27 Messages to the Nations
- 28-35 Messages to Israel
- 36-39 The Assyrian Crisis
- 40-66 Messages to the Remnant

## *Jeremiah*

Jeremiah has often been called "the weeping Prophet," and also the prophet of pessimism and gloom. Such characteristics were not so much a matter of personal temperament as the result of the times in which he lived. Jeremiah preached during the time of the Fall and Destruction of Jerusalem. Thus it fell to his lot to predict the disaster which would now befall Judah because of their incorrigible sinfulness.

It was not pessimism in his own spirit but integrity as a prophet that caused him to tell of the collapse of the nation. At the same time Jeremiah predicted Israel would be restored. He personally purchased property that would belong to his family when the people returned to their land.

He called upon the people to repent and warned them of destruction if they did not. They refused to repent and the judgment fell upon them as he said. He called upon the rulers to submit to Babylon and warned them of personal destruction if they refused. They did not submit and they were destroyed.

Jeremiah preached to the surrounding nations warning them that even if Israel were temporarily dispersed they would be gathered again in the Will of God, and all who joined them in repentant

obedience to God would be blessed.

He predicted the coming of Christ and the activation of the New Covenant in which the Kingdom of God would be established.

## Jeremiah "The Truth of God in an Hour of Calamity"

- 1 Call of Jeremiah
- 2-6 Spiritual Condition of Judah
- 7-25 Messages to Judah
- 26-38 Messages About Invasion by Babylon
- 39-44 Ministry of Jeremiah after Fall of Jerusalem
- 45-51 Messages to the Nations
- 52 Historical Appendix

### *Lamentations*

As the title implies, this is a book of messages of lamenting expressions of sorrow because of the disastrous destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of pagan enemies. God had in judgment forsaken His city to the wrath of other nations.

It is so natural to think that if God loved His people He would never allow them to suffer distress – but this actually is an error. "Whom He loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." God is too faithful in watching over the welfare of His people to allow them to persist in sin. The only way a foolish person can be taught is by "the rod of correction."

But God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Even though He will chastise the wayward, He Himself is "touched with all the feelings of our infirmities."

Jeremiah was a weeping prophet because the people he loved were due to suffer so much because of their own sinfulness. Because of the distress of God's people under the hand of God the enemies of Israel actually rejoiced. This drew from Jeremiah imprecations in which he called upon God to visit upon these enemies that destruction which they in their own sinfulness were worthy to receive.

### Lamentations "Mourning For Jerusalem"

5 elegies of lament as Jeremiah foresaw the destruction of Jerusalem.

### *Ezekiel*

After Israel had been defeated and Jerusalem had been destroyed, the people were carried away captive by Babylon. One such contingent of captives were settled by the river Chebar where they lived as prisoners of war.

Exiled from their native land, with Jerusalem and the temple in ruins, these captives became bitter and hard-hearted in despair and doubt. They knew they were supposed to be the people of God but now

they were forsaken and at the mercy of their enemies. Unbelief and rebellion was rampant among them.

Ezekiel was called to preach to these captives and to interpret to them the real reason for their distress.

He was prepared for his ministry by visions of the glory of God. These visions are so described that they are practically inconceivable. Descriptions seem to contradict themselves and yet elements are clearly obvious that would imply the majesty and sovereignty of God. While it might be that the ways of God are past finding out, it was still obvious that God was on the throne, bringing His will to pass.

In visions Ezekiel was shown that the distress of Israel was due to their sin against God. Despite the present situation God would eventually restore and rebuild the Temple to His own glory. No one could presume upon God's grace, but He would eventually carry out His promises. Ezekiel was a powerful preacher who battled head-strong unbelief without success.

### Ezekiel "The Truth of God in a Night of Despair"

- 1-11 Preparation, Call and Commission of Ezekiel
- 12-24 Messages Interpreting the Plight of the Jews
- 25-32 Messages to Other Nations
- 33-48 Messages Predicting the Future of Israel

### *Daniel*

Daniel was one of the captives who had been brought to Babylon. He was one of the young Hebrews chosen to receive special training by the Babylonians because of his personal gifts and ability. He became a servant of the government in the capacity of Superintendent of Civil Service. Today we would speak of him as a layman.

The book of Daniel is not included among the prophets in the Hebrew Bible. It is placed in the appendix. However, Jesus of Nazareth referred to him as "Daniel the prophet" (Mark 13:14).

The book includes many visions together with interpretation of some of the visions.

One of the visions presents a view of history that shows the sovereignty of God who is working to bring His will to pass.

There is a clear prediction that one day God will set up the Kingdom of Heaven under the rule of the Messiah, which shall prevail over all other kingdoms and bring the whole world in obedience to the will of God.

The books of Ezekiel and Daniel were written during the captivity and are marked by visions which would be quite unintelligible to the rulers of that day. Among the prophets Zechariah was written about this time and is similar in its style of cryptic visions.

### Daniel "The Truth of God in a Time of Crisis"

- 1-6 Daniel's History and Testimony
- 7-12 Daniel's Visions of the Kingdom of God

## *Hosea*

Hosea was a prophet who lived at the same time as Isaiah. Israel, as the people of God, were disobedient and wandering away from God in those days. Hosea preached to them about the everlasting love of God, and was used in his own domestic affairs to illustrate the truth of God.

Hosea married and was the father of several children. His wife became unfaithful to him and left his home to live as a harlot. Years later when her beauty was gone so that no one desired her, Hosea bought her on the open market as if she were a slave and restored her as his wife in his home. Such behavior was astonishing and incredible to the people then, and to this day in the history of Bible study there have been scholars who could not believe such conduct could be really true in historical fact.

But this is precisely the message of Hosea. Even though Israel had proven to be unfaithful to God, He abideth faithful to Himself and to His own promise. This incident may well be the inspiration of the common use by the prophets of the idea of adultery when referring to the waywardness of God's people when they worship other gods.

Hosea preached by example and word that God abideth faithful to His Word regardless of how His people may fall into waywardness.

### Hosea "Everlasting Love"

- 1-3 Domestic Affairs of Hosea
- 4-8 Israel Has Sinned
- 9-10 Israel Will Be Chastened
- 11-13 Israel Is Loved With an Everlasting Love
- 14 Israel Will Be Restored in the Grace of God

## *Amos*

Amos is one of the contemporaries of Isaiah, together with Hosea and Micah. He was called to a rather unusual ministry in that though he was born in the southern nation of Judah, he was sent to preach to the northern nation of Israel. Another unique feature was that he was not considered to be one of the prophets in his own time, nor even the son of a prophet. Actually he seems to have been a farmer, called away from his rural tasks and commissioned to bring his message to a strange people, among whom he was not welcome.

The book presents a classic approach in preaching. In bringing a message of judgment because of their sin, Amos began by announcing judgment upon other nations. First he proclaimed the judgment of God upon the pagan nations at some distance from Israel. Then he told about judgment upon some who were nearer. Finally he pronounced judgment upon Judah: and only then did he directly confront Israel with an indictment of their evil ways.

Students commonly notice that Amos pointed out the social injustices that were common in Israel. It should be noted that this was done to show how wayward and evil the nation had become. It was because Israel was unfaithful to God that they fell into the sin of social oppression.

Amos pointed out that God would not seek to bring Israel back to Him by chastening, but by the preaching of the Law of God as a plumb line to reveal their wickedness. Because they were incorrigible

God would destroy the nation – but in the end He would restore to Himself all who repented and turned to Him.

## Amos "God Deals With Sin"

1-2 Nations Are Judged

3-6 Israel is Condemned

7-9 Warnings About the judgment of God and  
Promise of Future Blessing

## *Obadiah*

Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament. It records the message of the prophet Obadiah about Edom. Edom is the nation that descended from Esau, who was the twin brother of Jacob from whom the nation of Israel descended. Thus the Edomites were kinsfolk of Israel in the flesh.

The background for this book was the attitude and the action of Edom toward Israel in the course of history. When Israel was journeying from Egypt to Canaan, Edom refused to allow them passage through their land, forcing Israel to detour around their country. When Israel was attacked by enemies, Edom refused to aid. When Israel was retreating in the face of a stronger foe, Edom refused to allow them to find a haven or refuge among them. In all their conduct Edom was motivated by pride.

Obadiah saw that the time would come when an invading enemy would destroy Edom. At that time Edom would find no help nor deliverance. Their fate would be utter destruction. In contrast, Israel would be delivered and restored to their land. All their possessions which had been taken would be restored, and Israel would enjoy victory and peace.

This is the Classic Message re: all enemies of Israel.

## Obadiah "Edom Is Doomed"

Pride Caused Edom's Sin

Edom Refused to Aid Judah

Proud Nations Will Be Destroyed

But Judah Will Be Saved

## *Jonah*

Jonah is probably one of the best known books in the old Testament because of the dramatic story of the career of the prophet Jonah. The story is the book. Jonah had been commissioned to go to Nineveh and tell that city of the impending judgment of God which would result in its destruction. The prophet was unwilling to go on this mission, and in rebellion started across the sea in an opposite direction. God in providence brought a severe storm which threatened to sink the ship. The sailors threw Jonah overboard to free the ship from the curse that was upon the prophet. God had prepared a whale which

swallowed Jonah. Jonah repented while in the whale, and was then vomited out on the shore. After this, Jonah obeyed His commission and preached to Nineveh. The city hearkened to his message and repented before God. Then God did not destroy that city.

Jonah was troubled because God seemed to be inconsistent, in that He did not do what He had said He intended to do. Using the example of a vine that served as shade to Jonah, God showed Jonah that as he was affected by the change of circumstances which followed when the vine was withered, so it was not unreasonable for God to be affected by the change of conduct which followed when Nineveh repented.

The book has a classic message about (1) the sovereignty of God; (2) the interest of God in the Gentiles; (3) the willingness of God to respect the repentance of the Gentiles as proper ground for the exercise of His grace. Jonah is the outstanding message about Foreign Missions in the Old Testament.

## Jonah "The Mercy of God"

1-2 Jonah's First Call and Flight

3 Jonah's Second Call and Obedience

4 Jonah's Distress and God's Mercy

## *Micah*

Micah is a book containing the message of the prophet Micah. He lived at the same time as Isaiah, Hosea and Amos.

He addressed his messages to all Israel, both the northern and southern nations. Though divided into two nations, Israel and Judah, the people of Israel were all disobedient to God and doomed to judgment. The condition of disobedience to God was common in all classes of society. The worship of God was superficial and unworthy of Him. Relationships between the people themselves were blemished with dishonesty and featured by oppression and abuse. Religious leaders were insincere, judges lacked integrity and the poor were robbed and abused.

Such conduct was utterly unacceptable to God who would in judgment destroy both nations.

However, in His integrity, God would keep His Covenant Promise by saving a Remnant who would hear His Word and obey Him.

In due time, God would restore the Remnant to all that had been promised to Abraham. He would do this through the ministry of His Messiah, who would redeem and save all who would turn to God in repentance through Him.

The complete demoralization of Israel in sin would justify the judgment of God which would inevitably come, but God is compassionate and He will keep His promise to save all who will turn to Him.

## Micah "Judgment Leads to Mercy"

1-3 Judgment Upon Sin Will Come

4-5 God Will Help His People

6-7 Israel Will Turn to God and Be Blessed

## *Nahum*

Nahum is a short book of three chapters, composed of the message of the prophet Nahum, directed toward the city of Nineveh. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, and any message to Nineveh was actually a message to the nation of Assyria.

This book is best understood when it is remembered that at this time the people of Israel were suffering oppression from Assyria. The Old Testament presents the record to show that when God's people obeyed Him they could triumph over their enemies and live in peace. But when Israel forgot God and turned to other sources for help and leadership, even though they had the promises of God, they would be judged. God would withdraw His favor from His people and would raise up enemies who would defeat, enslave and oppress Israel.

Assyria was one of these pagan conquerors, who oppressed God's people. The Assyrians did not realize their success was due to the judgment of God upon Israel, and in their pride and vanity they ascribed special powers to themselves.

Nahum was given the Word of the Lord that Assyria would be defeated. Nineveh, proud as being the greatest city in the world, would be utterly destroyed. The power of Assyria would be completely shattered.

God would not forget His promises to His people. God would restore Israel forever. The present slavery of Israel was only temporary – God would bless His people in glory.

### Nahum "Nineveh Shall Be Destroyed"

- 1 God Will Judge Sinful Nations
- 2 Destruction of Nineveh Is Described
- 3 Sins of Nineveh Are Described

## *Habakkuk*

Habakkuk is another short book of three chapters, composed of the message of the prophet Habakkuk who lived at the same time as Jeremiah. The general theme of the message is, first, the perplexity of the prophet over the prevailing wickedness of Judah and God's tolerance of such waywardness; and then, his perplexity over God's procedure in allowing a wicked pagan nation to defeat and enslave God's people.

Despite great military strength, Babylon could never have defeated the people of God unless God had permitted this. Habakkuk is puzzled and grieved to see Babylon, a pagan power, overcome Judah who were the people of God.

Then the prophet sees a great truth. God's righteous judgment will never be changed. He will bring His judgment upon sin wherever it is found anywhere among any people. Israel will not escape. But for all who respond to His Word with repentant obedience God will not hold His anger forever.

God will keep His promises. He may permit His people to be defeated and overcome by pagan invaders but He will not forsake His people forever. In His time He will restore and bless with joy, but the enemies shall be utterly and permanently destroyed.

The message is classic – this is true always for believers anywhere: God is not mocked: He will do His will.

## Habakkuk "Faith in Time of Trouble"

- 1 Distress Troubles the Prophet
- 2 God Reveals His Promise
- 3 The Prophet Rejoices in Faith

### *Zephaniah*

Zephaniah is another short book of three chapters, composed of the message of the prophet Zephaniah, who also lived at the same time as Jeremiah. The general theme of the book is the pronouncement of the sure judgment of God in dealing with sin among men. Some persons are the people of God because of certain promises God gave to His people in former generations, but God is no respecter of persons. Sin is sin, and God will not tolerate its presence.

Pagans would naturally in pride sin against their Creator, but God's people, even with the Word of God in hand, will turn away from God in pride, in self-will, actually seeking help from pagans. Despite God's grace and faithfulness in sending prophets to declare God's will and to warn of God's coming judgment, His people actually tolerated pagan ideas and sought help from human sources. This showed they were incorrigible, and brought upon them the sure judgment of God.

But the grace of God provided that anyone who repented of the evil and turned to God should be delivered from the penalty and the power of sin. Such believers should be brought into the fellowship of God, having been made in regeneration fully agreeable to obeying His will.

### Zephaniah "God Will Judge Sin"

- 1 God Will Judge Sinful People
- 2-3 God's People Will Repent and Be Saved

### *Haggai*

Haggai is a short book of two chapters composed of the message of Haggai to God's people some time after they had returned to the land of Judah from Babylon. When the Jews came back to Jerusalem they faced the task of rebuilding the city. They had to rebuild their houses, the walls of the city and the Temple. They rebuilt their houses first and worked to re-establish themselves in the land. When they met opposition to the rebuilding of the Temple they stopped this work.

Haggai preached the Word of God to arouse them to finish rebuilding the Temple. The people claimed that lack of prosperous returns from crops was the reason for not finishing the work. Haggai insisted it was the failure to finish their rebuilding that caused the poor crops. He claimed they were well able to do the work.

Under his inspiration, the leaders of the people were aroused to resume and finish the task of rebuilding. Haggai preached that God would bless their obedience by bringing greater glory into the second temple, which was not so pretentious, than ever came to the grand temple of Solomon that had

been destroyed by the armies of Babylon.

Haggai emphasized the promise of God that all enemies would be overthrown and that the government of the Son of David, the Messiah, would be over all.

## Haggai "Repentance Leads to Blessing"

- 1 Failure to Obey God Is Rebuked
- 2 Obedience to God Is Blessed

## *Zechariah*

Zechariah is composed of messages from Zechariah to the Jews after they had returned to Jerusalem from Babylon. He lived at the same time as Haggai and faced the same problem of inspiring the Jews to complete the rebuilding of the Temple.

But Zechariah saw this as much more than simply a reconstruction of a public building. To be sure, the temple was in ruins and the immediate practical problem was the rebuilding of this place of worship. But the greater, deeper meaning was involved in the eternal purpose of God in His will to glorify His Son.

The historical record of Israel set forth in Old Testament Scripture was actually intended to reveal the truth about Salvation by Christ, the Son of God. Man was not is not able to obey God acceptably in his flesh, in himself. But God in grace, by sending the Messiah to redeem and to deliver, makes it possible for sinful man to be saved into the blessing of God.

The record shows that Israel as a people was incorrigibly sinful. Judgment was inevitable. But the grace of God provided a Messiah who would fulfill the requirements of the law in perfect obedience, and enable God to fulfill His promises.

Having fulfilled all the requirements in His own perfect obedience, Christ could bring into blessing anyone who turned to Him in repentance and complete obedience. Serving as High Priest, Christ would make perfect atonement for all who accepted Him, and serving as King He would bring all His people into total obedience.

Zechariah revealed this aspect of God's will in the use of visions, which, like parables, derive their meaning from the spiritual context in which they occurred.

## Zechariah "The Future Is in God's Hands"

- 1-6 Eight Visions Encouraging Repentance
- 7-8 The True Meaning of Obedience
- 9-14 Visions of Messiah and His Kingdom

## *Malachi*

Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament, is composed of messages of the prophet to Israel, which point out the general ungodliness that marked the life of that nation. This is not preaching against sin in general, nor about sin among all men. These messages are directed toward the people who have been blessed by God and favored by Him, and are now disobeying Him in sin.

The Old Testament is based on the Law, as set forth in the Ten Words on Mount Sinai, and the whole system of guidance ministered by the priests and carried forth in the Temple worship. Israel had been called where Edom had been rejected. The Lord had been set forth as the God of Israel to be honored and obeyed. Worthy obedience to God was guided in the ritual of worship led by the Levites. But Israel had wilfully perverted every response to God.

The priests polluted their offerings.

They profaned the Covenant with Levi by not being truthful.

They encouraged apostasy from God to idol worship.

In teaching, they actually twisted the Word of God to teach falsely.

They misled the people by doubletalk in teaching.

They misused the tithe to "rob" God.

They interpreted the Word and the Acts of God in such a way as to foster unbelief.

Against such widespread universal sin, God will send His own Salvation through His own Servant, the Christ.

### Malachi "Vain Religion Is Condemned"

1-2 Lack of Love Will Disqualify

3-4 God Will Send Messiah to Do His Will

### *The New Testament: What It Means*

The New Testament gets its name from prophecies in the Old Testament that predicted God would work in a new way to bring His blessing to man. God had created the world and man, and had put man in the world to live. In his living, man did not do the will of God but acted according to his own desires. This is called sin and caused death to come upon the children of men. But the grace of God provided a way in which the sinner could be delivered from the curse of death into the life of God.

Sin was real but the grace of God is greater than sin. This grace is available for all men, but is operative only in those who yield themselves into the will of God, trusting Him and obeying Him. Abraham obeyed God and received the promise that in his seed all nations would be blessed. Generations later, this promise was repeated to David with the further revelation that one of his seed should become King of Kings and Lord of all. This one would be the Anointed One, the Messiah, and He would perfectly obey God and would bring God's people to blessing and peace.

All this was fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth who was born of a virgin as the incarnate Son of God. After living in perfect obedience as Jesus of Nazareth, He offered Himself as a sacrifice to provide forgiveness of sin. God raised Him from the dead and gave Him all authority over all His creation. The glorified

Christ Jesus sent His Holy Spirit into His believers enabling them to have fellowship with God and to have joy and peace in believing. This was the New Covenant in which the believer becomes a child of God.

### ***The New Testament: Whom It Is About***

The Bible tells the truth about God's plan to create beings who would live in fellowship and communion with Himself. After God created man in His own image and put him in this world, man sinned against God and was condemned to death. In grace God redeemed man and called man to come to receive the benefits of salvation as a free gift on the basis of a substitutionary sacrifice.

God called Abraham and gave him and his seed the promise of blessing on the condition of obedience. The descendants of Abraham became known as the children of Israel. Despite every opportunity and much blessing, Israel proved to be incorrigibly sinful. The prophets predicted that God would accomplish His original purpose in a new way.

God would send a chosen Servant to be the One who would live perfectly and would give Himself to save whosoever would come to Him, by dying for them and being raised into newness of life. This person was Jesus of Nazareth who came to do the will of God in saving lost souls who would believe.

The New Testament tells the story of His life on earth, His death, resurrection and present ministry, and the lives of those who believed in Him. Then it explains much of what happens in the living experiences of those who now accept Christ as Savior and Lord. The New Testament, like the whole Bible, tells mainly the truth about Jesus Christ.

### ***The New Testament: What Is In It***

The New Testament begins with the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Each of these presents an image of Jesus Christ, different from each other but not in contradiction. They are not biographies. There is no record of anything from the time Jesus of Nazareth was twelve until He was about thirty years of age. Apparently nothing happened in that period that had any bearing on what He came to do. The one event receiving major attention was His death and resurrection.

These books are followed by the book of "The Acts of the Apostles" which tells about events in the history of the early Christians. Much about the nature of Christian life and experience can be learned in reading and studying this book.

The next nine books are the Church epistles of Paul. They are letters written by Paul to Christians in the cities where he had ministered, dealing with problems of living in Christ. They are useful today wherever similar situations exist or are developing. To understand the epistles it is essential to keep in mind they were written by a man who believed that Jesus Christ was alive, and that He is coming again to judge.

The next four books are short letters written to individuals, as indicated by the names of each respectively.

The next eight books are called the General Epistles. They were written by several authors to all believers in a general way.

The last book in the Bible is a book of prophecy written at a time when the Christians were facing persecution.

## *Matthew*

Matthew is the first of the four Gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Sometimes the question is asked as to why there are four Gospels. It is admitted they are different, but no one ever claims there is any contradiction. When it is considered that these are not photographs but rather, portraits, it is easy to understand.

In painting portraits of Teddy Roosevelt there could be one of a Range Captain of the "Rough Riders"; one of an author; one of the President of the U.S.; and one of a big game hunter in Africa. Each would be a true portrait. Each would be distinctively different. But not one would contradict the other.

The four Gospels are separately distinctive in that each portrays the events in the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth to show one aspect of the work and the meaning of Jesus Christ.

Matthew seems clearly to show Jesus of Nazareth as the true Son of David who is to be King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. The wise men came looking for Him, who had been born King of the Jews. He was accused before Pilate as being a rival of Caesar because He said He was a King.

Throughout this book Jesus of Nazareth refers to the fulfillment of the plan of God as the Kingdom of Heaven / the Kingdom of God.

### Matthew: "The King"

- 1-4 The Coming of The King
- 5-15 The Proclamation of The Kingdom
- 16-27 The Suffering of The King
- 28 The Triumph of The King

## *Mark*

Mark seems to show clearly that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Servant of God. His birth is not noted or described. His genealogy is not mentioned. This benefits the lowly role of Him who made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant.

In Mark the events recorded are short and direct. There is no explanation or interpretation of the actual facts as recorded.

That this is not a biography can be seen in that there is no reference to the thirty years He lived on earth before John the Baptist began to preach. Also of the 16 chapters in the book, the last 6 deal with the last week of His life on earth. Even when considering that Mark tells only about His public ministry, it is impressive that the first 10 chapters tell of incidents in about 3 years of service whereas the last 6 chapters tell of incidents occurring during the last week.

Mark has been called the Gospel of Action. It records only one long discourse given by Jesus of Nazareth, and that is not explanation but rather prediction of what will happen at the end of the world. Mark records 18 miracles but only 4 parables in the ministry of the Lord. He makes it impressive that Jesus of Nazareth exercised the power of God in all the supernatural works which He did.

## Mark: "The Servant"

- 1 The Servant Is Put to Work
- 2-9 The Servant at Work
- 10-13 The Servant Prepares for Death
- 14-15 The Servant Is Obedient unto Death
- 16 The Servant Triumphs

## *Luke*

Luke is the one Gospel written by a man who was not born a Jew. It is possible that Luke had not seen Jesus of Nazareth. It appears that he joined the company of witnesses to Jesus Christ when they were venturing to enter into Macedonia to preach the Gospel there.

Apparently Luke was a physician and thus he would listen to the testimony of the believers who told of what Jesus of Nazareth had done, with a mind trained to note exactly what happened in the course of the events being reported.

It seems significant that the Gospel of Luke gives the most complete and careful report of just what happened at the time of the Virgin Birth, and also what happened at the time of the Resurrection. It could be expected that each of these events would be most fascinating to a doctor. There is a fitness about this being the report of a doctor since it could be expected that his research would be competent and thorough.

The record written by any other person could be just as factual and just as true but the fact that this was written by a doctor is impressive.

Throughout this Gospel Jesus of Nazareth is seen dealing with men and their needs, showing "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost."

## Luke: "The Savior"

- 1-3 The Savior's Coming
- 4-9 The Savior's Work and Teaching in Galilee
- 10-19 The Savior's Work and Teaching from Galilee to Jerusalem
- 20-21 The Savior's Work and Teaching in Jerusalem
- 22-23 The Savior's Suffering
- 24 The Savior Is Glorified

## *John*

John is the Gospel that sets forth evidence that Jesus of Nazareth was the incarnation of God. It opens with the affirmation that the Word of God, which from before the beginning of Creation was with God and was God Himself, was made flesh and dwelt among men as Jesus of Nazareth.

There is no reference to Bethlehem nor to His Jewish genealogy. But there is repeated and varied

references to His Deity.

"I am" is an expression known in Jewish culture as referring to Jehovah God. Jesus of Nazareth used it again and again to identify Himself, clearly making the assertion "Before Abraham was, I am."

Certain supernatural works are recorded to give evidence that He was truly the Son of God with power. John admits that no attempt is made to record all the signs and wonders done by Jesus of Nazareth, but asserts certain illustrations have been chosen to enable the reader to believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God.

In this Gospel more is told about the Holy Spirit than in any of the others.

### John: "The Son of God"

1:1-18 The Incarnation of The Son of God

1-12 The Public Ministry of The Son of God

13-17 The Private Ministry of The Son of God with His Disciples

18-19 The Suffering and Death of The Son of God

20-21 The Resurrection and Appearing After Death of The Son of God

### *The Acts of The Apostles*

The Acts of The Apostles is a record of what happened in the time after the ascension into heaven of Jesus Christ. As the name indicates, the focus of attention is upon the Christians who lived in the world after Jesus Christ was taken into heaven.

The book begins with the preparation of the believers for the coming of the Holy Spirit, who was poured out into the hearts of the disciples on the day of Pentecost. With the coming of the Holy Spirit the disciples began witnessing to the truth of Jesus Christ.

The witness was given first in Jerusalem, where signs and wonders were done in the name of Christ Jesus. Then Philip went down into Samaria and preached so that many Samaritans believed.

Led by the Holy Spirit the disciples, led by Peter and John, witnessed to the Gentiles, so that many believed.

Barnabas called Saul to help him preach and teach in Antioch. From here the Holy Spirit sent Barnabas and Saul to go to distant cities. Saul became Paul the great Apostle to the Gentiles and eventually preached the Gospel in Rome, even though he was a prisoner.

### The Acts of The Apostles "The Gospel in The World"

1-2 Preparation of The Witnesses

3-7 Power of The Witnesses

8-12 Propagation of The Gospel "in Judea and Samaria"

13-18 Promotion of The Gospel "Unto the Ends of the Earth"

## *Romans*

The epistle to the Christians in Rome is recognized as the important doctrinal discussion in Paul's writings. The first part of this letter deals with the fact of sin being found everywhere so that it is true to say "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

Then Paul states the Gospel in its simplest form pointing out that it is the plan of God to save whosoever will turn to Him and accept His promise in Christ Jesus. This is justification and it is grounded in the grace of God, who is willing and able to save as many as will come to Him through Christ.

When the soul is reconciled to God in Christ, He gives the Holy Spirit to the believer. The Holy Spirit will bring the will of Christ into active operation in the believer and will give grace to the believer which will enable him to walk in the will of God. This is Sanctification.

As the believer walks in obedience, as led by the indwelling Holy Spirit in the will of the Lord, there is much joy in the Lord and fruit bearing in the life. This is Glorification, and is the will of God for all, "whosoever believeth in Him."

### Romans "The Gospel of God"

1:1-7 Salutation

1:8-3:20 All men need righteousness before God

3:31-4:25 All men may have the righteousness of God by faith in Christ

5-8 All men who are thus justified will be finally sanctified

9-11 The Jews missed this great blessing from God

12-16 Believers must yield themselves into the Will of God that they may be glorified

## *I Corinthians*

I Corinthians was written by the Apostle Paul to the Christians in Corinth where Paul had been as a missionary. After he had won these persons to accept Christ Jesus, both Peter and Apollos had ministered to them in the Gospel.

As new believers they had much to learn about living in the will of God. When a person accepts Christ Jesus as Savior and Lord he is born again and becomes a child of God in the Spirit. As long as he lives in this world in his physical body he is still a child of Adam in the flesh. Thus the believer has two natures: flesh and spirit.

In the flesh the Christian has habits and values that are human. When he accepts Christ he is minded to do the will of God, but he still may not realize he has habits and customs that are carnal in origin and nature.

Continuing to act in a carnal way would be a blemish in the life of a believer, and would need to be corrected. The Corinthian believers wanted to honor the Lord, and Paul wrote this letter of instruction to show them the carnal nature of their faults and to point out how corrections could be made by yielding to the indwelling Holy Spirit in obeying the will of the living Lord.

## I Corinthians "Immature Conduct Causes Problems"

- 1-4 Divisive loyalties to individual preachers are childish
- 5 Toleration of open sin is a blemish in the Church
- 6:1-8 Contentiousness is not worthy of a Christian
- 7 Domestic relations should be guided by the Holy Spirit
- 8-10 Christian liberty should not be abused
- 11:1-16 Feminism is unbecoming in the Church
- 11:17-34 Conduct at the Lord's Supper is spiritually important
- 12-14 Spiritual excellence is gained through love
- 15 Doctrine of the Resurrection is true and vital
- 16 Personal admonitions

## *II Corinthians*

II Corinthians was written by Paul the Apostle to the Christians in Corinth to explain more fully the practical bearing of the Gospel in the life of a believer. Just as I Corinthians dealt mainly with the blemishes which had appeared in the life and thought of the new believers in Corinth, so this second letter deals primarily with the description of the characteristics of a mature Christian.

Paul uses himself as an example. This is not a matter of arrogance or pride, but it is recognition of fact. Paul knew in his own heart how sincerely he wanted the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen him. And he knew that his experience would be normal for any person walking by faith.

Righteous conduct would never result from personal effort as by works of law but as a result of believing in the living Lord. Such faith would be generated in the worship of the living Lord.

Paul warned the Corinthian Christians to avoid fellowship with insincere persons, urging them to fix their attention upon the living Lord in heaven.

## II Corinthians "Saved To Serve"

Christians are saved to serve

- 1:1-11 through suffering
- 1:12-24 by being in the Will of God
  - 2 by being quick to forgive
  - 3 by beholding Jesus Christ in worship
  - 4 through suffering in self-denial
  - 5 through expecting to go to heaven
  - 6 through separation from ungodly influences
  - 7 through diligent repentance
- 8-9 through liberal generosity
- 10-11:15 through vigilance against error
- 11:16-33 through respect for faithful leaders
  - 12 through quiet trust in God's grace
  - 13 through self-examination

## *Galatians*

The epistle to the Galatians was written by Paul as a pastoral letter to be read in the several churches existing in the region of Galatia. The purpose of the letter was to clarify the spiritual process which would produce fruit-bearing conduct.

The natural man readily thinks he must personally produce fruit by his own efforts. Jewish influence gave the impression that keeping the regulations of the law as set forth by the priests, including circumcision, observance of special days, etc., would result in godly living.

Paul pointed out that these Christians had accepted Christ by faith, trusting in the grace of God, and now insists that it is this principle that will produce spiritual fruit. He recognizes the law is useful as a schoolmaster to bring the soul to Christ, but emphasizes that Christ is the end of the law for everyone that believes.

Flesh and Spirit are both in the experience of the Christian but they are contrary to each other. The intelligent believer will set himself to walk in the Spirit and thus be delivered from the flesh.

The classic description of true spiritual experience is Paul's own testimony "I am crucified with Christ yet . . . Christ liveth in me."

### Galatians "Saved By Faith"

Christians are saved by faith, not by works of the law

- 1 This is what Paul preached, and his Gospel was true
- 2 This is what the Old Testament taught
- 3 This is what the Christians had experienced
- 4 This is true about becoming spiritual
- 5 This does not mean one will be careless about his conduct

## *Ephesians*

The epistle to the Ephesians is another of the great doctrinal discussions which Paul wrote to the churches where he had served as pastor. The purpose of the letter seems to be to show the relationships which exist in the new life the believer has in Christ Jesus.

First, Paul emphasizes that all the benefits which come to the believer come directly as a result of what God does. Not only has God forgiven the sins of the believer but He has planned to bring the believer into personal communion with Himself.

This is done by His power in translating the believer out of this world into eternal relationship with Himself. God gives His own eternal life to the believer, and also gives His Holy Spirit to bless and to help the Christian.

By having His One Spirit dwelling in each believer God builds all believers into a unity like a body, of which Christ Jesus is the Head and the believers are the members. The believers are also members of one another. This unity consists of the members who have been regenerated by the Spirit and adopted as children of God into one family.

Because these relationships are real the believers should be careful to walk in the Spirit, seeking to find ways to bring their personal conduct into peaceable, loving fellowship with each other.

## Ephesians "The Church Is the Body of Christ"

- 1 The Church has all spiritual blessings through Christ
- 2:1-18 The Church grows through understanding the work of Christ
- 2:19-3:12 The Church is built by God through faith
- 3:13-4:6 The Church is strengthened by Christ dwelling in the heart
- 4:7-16 The Church should be edified by the faithful service of its members
- 4:17-6:9 The Church should walk pleasing to God
- 6:10-24 The Church should be on guard against Satan

## *Philippians*

The epistle to the Philippians was written by Paul to a company of new converts who were in danger of discouragement because of his own fate, and also in danger of being persecuted. Paul realized what a shock it would be to these young converts to see himself, the Apostle of Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, the Lord of Glory, arrested as a common criminal, and kept in jail with the possibility of being put to death.

Paul evidently wrote to strengthen their spirit and to bolster their morale. He stated his own conviction that God would certainly watch over them. Then he pointed out that his being put in prison had actually spread the Gospel. In fact, if they killed him, folks would talk about Jesus Christ to whom he personally witnessed; and if they did not kill him, he would talk about Jesus Christ. So in either way the name of Jesus Christ would be spread abroad.

So Paul wrote to strengthen them. He praised them for their record in witnessing. He urged them to humbly and meekly promote goodwill among the brethren, by having the mind of Christ as their own attitude. He urged them to be humble like Jesus of Nazareth, considerate of each other like Timothy, zealous in service like Epaphroditus, and consecrated like Paul himself. By praying about everything they could live with confidence.

## Philippians "Blessedness Is in Fellowship with Christ"

- 1 Paul exhorts believers to be of good cheer
- 2:1-4 Paul urges believers to keep a godly frame of mind
- 2:5-18 – with humility – as Jesus Christ
- 2:19-24 – with concern for others – as Timothy
- 2:25-30 – with zeal – as Epaphroditus
- 3:1-21 – with consecration – as Paul
- 4:1-5 Paul urges believers to rejoice
- 4:6-7 – in prayer
- 4:8-9 – in virtue
- 4:10-23 – in contentment

## *Colossians*

The epistle to the Christians who lived at Colossae was written probably about the time of the letter to the Ephesians. The general structure of these two epistles is very similar, and the contents of each are much alike.

It is commonly thought that in the city of Colossae there had been considerable teaching spread abroad that would deny that Jesus of Nazareth was actually God. These teachers would accept Him as worthy of worship and esteem, but would not want to acknowledge Him as God.

Paul makes a special point of emphasizing the preeminence of Christ in all creation, leaving no room for any reduction of His significance. He then goes on to emphasize that it is the fact that the living Lord is active in the believer that makes living by faith possible.

Paul recognizes there are teachers who attempt to produce godly living by ascetic self-discipline and mystic spiritual activities. He has no hesitation to repudiate these.

He calls upon believers to focus their interest and their attention upon the invisible realities of heaven and urges them to live humbly and faithfully, putting their whole trust in Christ.

### Colossians "Christ Is Over All"

- 1:1-13 Salutation
- 1-14-20 Doctrine - Christ is preeminent in all the universe
- 1:21-29 - Christ is in the believer
- 2:1-23 - Christ is all the believer needs
- 3:1-4 Duty - set your affection on things above
- 3:5-9 - put off the old
- 3:10-4:6 - put on the new
- 4:7-18 Greetings

## *I Thessalonians*

I Thessalonians was written by the Apostle Paul to set out to the believers in Thessalonica what is involved in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Such description would help these converts from heathenism to understand both their privileges and their possibilities as Christians.

Paul had preached in Thessalonica for about three weeks when intense opposition from the Jews caused him to leave. Doubtless there had been little time to show what happens when a person accepts Christ, but in this epistle there is a full discussion.

Paul points out that the life in Christ begins when the soul accepts the Gospel of Jesus Christ as he himself preached. He took himself as an example of true evangelism and reminded them that his message was not approved by everyone. He had been shamefully treated by hostile opposition but he had persisted in preaching that they might hear and believe.

It was their response by faith that brought them into the grace of God. When they realized how God loved them, their hearts were filled with love toward God and man, so that their conduct was marked by self-control that they might help others. Death bringing separation from loved ones need not be feared

because such separation would be only temporary. The Christian has the prospect of living forever with Christ and His own.

## I Thessalonians "The Model Church"

- 1 This Church had been established by model evangelism
- 2 Paul had served as a model pastor
- 3 Their faith was firmly centered in Jesus Christ
- 4:1-12 Their love led them to sanctification in conduct
  - clean
  - controlled
  - industrious
- 4:13-5:28 Their hope was grounded in the return of Jesus Christ

## *II Thessalonians*

II Thessalonians was written by Paul to correct some false impressions which may have been caused by his first epistle. In his first letter to the Christians in Thessalonica, Paul emphasized the truth that Jesus Christ is coming again, at which time there will be an end to this world as it now exists. Some of the believers got the impression this return would be so soon that normal activities which required long-range planning could well be ignored.

This resulted in careless, irresponsible neglect of normal duties, so that the reputation of Christians was being dishonored among men.

Paul stated clearly that the Lord would return in person from heaven "with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." But he urged the Christians not to be disturbed over any idea this return would occur immediately. He pointed out that a certain degree of apostasy must first take place.

In the meantime, believers should keep in mind the will of the Lord that in love toward God and Man they should maintain good works to the glory of the Lord.

## II Thessalonians "The Return of the Lord"

- 1:1-12 The Lord Jesus Christ will return
- 2:1-8 The return of the Lord should not excite people as to the time of the event
- 2:9-17 The return of the Lord can easily be mistaken
- 3:1-18 The cure for mistaken opinions about the return of the Lord is diligent work

## *I Timothy*

The first epistle to Timothy was written by the Apostle Paul to his young fellow-laborer, who had been left in charge of the church at Ephesus. In the plan of God, believers are helped in their living

experiences by the ministry of certain persons to whom the Holy Spirit gives some gift of ability to help others. Thus a Christian is ready to look for and to listen to guidance as he faces the problems of living. This very disposition to heed the word of leaders makes it possible there may be mistakes in conduct resulting from wrong guidance. For this reason, Paul put Timothy in charge of the church at Ephesus and commissioned him to keep the people from error and loss.

Paul bluntly warned Timothy that false teachers have become active who base their doctrine upon their own interpretations of Scriptures in which they stress the law of God. Paul admits the law has a valid function to expose sin, but points out it is utterly invalid to produce spiritual life, and uses his own testimony as evidence. It is not interpreting the law that will help the soul, but yielding one's self into the love of God.

After urging that Christians be diligent in praying for all persons, Paul instructs Timothy both as to godly character in the examples of the church leaders and as to ungodly practices he should avoid.

## I Timothy "The Right Ways of Christian Living"

- 1 Right Doctrine
- 2 Right Practices
- 3 Right Order
- 4 Right Living
- 5 Right Conduct
- 6 Right Attitude

## *II Timothy*

The second epistle to Timothy is even more definite in warning against errors and fruitless practices which threaten the spiritual life of believers. Paul begins his letter by emphasizing the sound origin of Timothy's faith. When error is common, it is very important that a Christian keep in mind those things which belong to the basic convictions which he has in his heart. In Timothy's case, he had the great advantage of having a believing grandmother and a believing mother. Paul himself was encouraged about the future of Timothy's own faith when he remembered the faith in his family. Paul urged Timothy to remember with all appreciation this origin of his own confidence, and then instructed him how to develop and to strengthen his own grasp of the truth. Timothy should be bold to hold fast the form of sound words which he had learned from Paul. He should be willing to discipline himself even as he studied the Scriptures to be able to hold himself to a straight course in his understanding. By avoiding foolish questions and turning away from vain, foolish persons, he should remember what he had learned from the Scriptures and should definitely preach the Word at all times in every situation.

## II Timothy "Preach the Word"

- 1-2 Exhortation
- 3 Warning
- 4 Confidence in the face of death

## *Titus*

The epistle to Titus was written by Paul the Apostle to a young minister who has been placed in charge of a congregation of new converts in a situation that made godly living difficult to achieve. This is the only instance in Paul's writings where he comments on conditions in the community that could affect Christians. It is true that he outlines definite characteristics which should be maintained by the leaders, but this is not much different than the guidance he gave to Timothy. Such could be common spiritual problems wherever natural persons become believers in Christ.

But when he comments on the native traits of the Cretans and implies these would call for strict discipline, he opens the door to see that community customs can affect the reception of the Gospel. The conclusion is clear: when converts are won to believing in Christ Jesus in a community where the common attitude is lax and careless, believers need to be urged to be grave and sincere in their personal commitment to the Lord who gave Himself to die that they might have eternal life.

### Titus "Church Order"

- 1 Qualifications and Duties of Church Officers
- 2-3 Instructions in Practical Godliness

## *Philemon*

The epistle to Philemon is a striking example of the kind of pastoral work a minister of the Gospel would do among the Christians under his care. Paul wrote to a fellow believer who was active in witnessing for Christ to exhort him to act in a certain way toward one of his own servants.

The fact seems to be that one of the slaves belonging to a Christian called Philemon had committed theft and then had run away as a fugitive. The slave was Onesimus. In his travels he came to Rome, where he met Paul, and was converted to accept Christ Jesus. As a regenerated child of God, he was guided by Paul to return to his master and resume his service from which he had fled.

Paul then wrote this letter to Philemon, urging him to receive the penitent Onesimus and reinstate him without punishment. Paul offered to reimburse Philemon for whatever loss he had suffered because of the theft by Onesimus.

Paul grounds his appeal on the fact that such grace on the part of Philemon would be consistent with the Gospel of Christ, and would glorify the name of Christ, who had given Himself for Philemon.

### Philemon "An Appeal for Charity"

A personal letter to a godly, generous Christian requesting charity on behalf of a converted runaway slave.

## *Hebrews*

The epistle to the Hebrews is a very important discussion of the truth that believers in Jesus Christ should exercise their faith to the achievement of complete consecration. The origin of the title is obscure because there is no reference to Jewish ideas as such in the letter itself.

The whole line of thought focuses attention upon the danger that believers who have accepted Christ and know they have been forgiven, may stop short of personal commitment to communion with the living Lord and to obedience in His will that they might bear fruit to the glory of God.

The epistle is developed in interpretation of Old Testament Scriptures which showed the truth in the events which occurred in the history of Israel. Salvation is a movement with a beginning in the turning to Christ which we call "conversion," and with an end in the communion with Christ which we call "consecration."

Israel began by coming out of Egypt as led by Moses, but later provoked God at Kadesh Barnea by not entering the land as directed by Moses because of unbelief. This inglorious fate was possible in the experience of a Christian but could be avoided if the believer would be diligent to respond in obedience to have fellowship with Christ in complete self-denial and in looking for the blessing of the Father in communion with Him.

### Hebrews "The New Covenant Is Better"

- 1-2 Because Jesus Christ is better than angels
- 3-4 Because Jesus Christ is better than Moses
- 5-6 Because Jesus Christ is better than Aaron
- 7 Because Christ's priesthood is better than Levi
- 8 Because the promise in the New Covenant is better
- 9 Because heaven is better than the tabernacle
- 10 Because the New Covenant means obedience from the heart
- 11-13 Because the New Covenant works by faith

## *James*

James is an epistle written to Christians scattered out from Jerusalem, in which instruction is given to guide believers into fruitful living. There is no one problem held up for interpretation nor for solution. The general tone is that of giving guidance so that effectual living can be the result.

This letter is very much like a gardener's manual in which there are many items mentioned that could be hindrances to spiritual life but which could be handled to remove their threat to blessing from God. Just as a gardener has weeds to hoe and branches to prune, so a Christian may find there are things a believer might do that would hinder blessing, and things he ought to do if he wants blessing.

James did not consider such hindrances to be necessarily evil. Often the removing of the hindrance would prove to be the very thing that would advance spiritual operation in his soul.

James felt that believing in the Lord included not only confidence in what Christ had done, but also obedience to what God wanted the believer to do. Whereas God is the One who does all things that are a blessing to the soul, it is also true that the believer must commit himself into obedience to the living God.

## James "Real Faith Is Practical"

- 1 The Work of Patience
- 2 The Work of Faith
- 3 The Work of Wisdom
- 4 The Work of Humility
- 5 The Work of Prayer

### *I Peter*

I Peter is an epistle written to Christians living in Asia Minor to guide them and to comfort them when they will be persecuted. To become a believer, a person must deny self and accept the will of God in all circumstances and situations. Accepting Christ means that the person is deliberately giving up his own freedom of choice to do as he pleases in order to yield himself into obedience to the will of the living Lord. The natural suffering involved is aggravated by other persons who deliberately do what will bring hurt and distress to the Christian. Peter knew that such would be the fate of many believers, and he wrote to strengthen their faith and to comfort them with assurance of the goodness of God.

Persecution will come, but God is faithful to keep the believers through all trials by His grace. Suffering may be disheartening, but God has promised to save all who trust in Him. The Christian should be an obedient child and keep himself entirely committed to obedience to the will of God. He should feed on the Word of God that his faith might grow. He should realize that God has plans to use him in His will and so remember that he belongs to God. The Christian should be especially careful to avoid seeking his own satisfaction but should submit himself in every circumstance as in the will of God.

Suffering will come, but it is better to suffer while doing the will of God than to suffer because one is willful and disobedient. What happens in this world is not the final nor the eternal outcome for the Christian: God will watch over him here and bless him richly forever.

### I Peter "Grace Leads Into Right Conduct"

- 1: 1-12 Thanksgiving for the blessings of Grace
- 1:13-5:14 Instructions for believers to have right relations
  - 1:13-25 – toward God
  - 2:1-12 – toward self
  - 2:13-5:14 – toward others
    - 2:13-17 – in civil matters
    - 2:18-25 – in industrial matters
    - 3:1-7 – in domestic matters
    - 3:8-4:19 – in general affairs
    - 5:1-14 – in Church activities

## *II Peter*

II Peter is an epistle written to Christians who are faced with the dangers of having no strength in themselves and of being misled by false teachers who promote error. Becoming a Christian begins by accepting Christ Jesus by faith, but this involves the believer in obedient response to the living Lord in all phases of his personal experience. Peter writes to urge Christians to persist in their commitment to obey the will of God.

Believing the Gospel is primary and basic, but this is more than mental assent to accept the message as true: it means that the believer yields himself into the will of God in all things. He will not only believe the facts about what Jesus Christ has done, is doing and will do, but he will act in such a way that his conduct is good, intelligent, self-controlled, steadfast and showing godliness, brotherly kindness and charity. In this way he need never fear the danger of being "barren nor unfruitful," but he can expect the full blessing of God.

The Christian can be encouraged by remembering the testimony of the apostles who personally saw and knew Jesus of Nazareth. He can also be strengthened by noting the Scriptures which were written for his learning.

False teachers will beset the believers with deceitful ideas, but the Christian can remember that God is able to save him from all such perils.

In fact, God will in due time judge this whole world to destroy it, but He will bring a new heaven and a new earth for the believer.

### II Peter "Healthy Spiritual Living"

- 1 Progress in Christian living is possible
- 2 False teachers are a real peril
- 3 The second coming of Christ is important

## *I John*

I John was written to Christians to encourage them to commit themselves without misgivings into the love of God as manifested in Jesus Christ. This letter has special meaning for any soul who is troubled about not really being saved.

John begins by reminding his readers that he personally saw, knew and walked with the incarnate Word of God. He knows that fellowship with God is possible and that anyone who is willing to come to the light will be accepted of God.

Sin is the first great threat to the assurance of a Christian but it can be removed. When the believer confesses his sin, God forgives and cleanses him through the blood of Christ. Sin is wrong and a Christian should not commit sin; but the living Lord in heaven now is interceding on behalf of the believer, and God will keep the Christian in His mercy and grace.

The believer is called to share in the glory of communion with God, and he can be sure that God will be faithful to His promises. The Christian should not allow his own doubts to hinder his complete trust in God. If the believer will act in love toward God and toward man, he will know in himself that he is accepted by God.

## I John "Salvation Is Real"

Those who have eternal life will live

1 – in light

2 – in righteousness

3-4 – in love

5 – in faith

Those who live such lives may know

5:11-13 – they have eternal life

5:14-15 – their prayers will be answered

5:16-19 – God's people do not live in vain

5:20 – they belong to Christ

## *II John*

II John is a letter written to a Christian who was in danger of being deceived by false teachers.

It is significant to note that in the New Testament there is a distinct note of warning against error and deception in each of the "second" epistles.

I Corinthians is a letter of correction in which Paul discusses one blemish in conduct after another in the life of the Christians in Corinth. Such admonition could seem heavy to bear by the young Christians who were so gifted as the Corinthian Christians were.

II Corinthians is written by Paul to emphasize that he really had the authority as an apostle to write as he did. He argues evidence of his apostolic role which the Corinthians themselves knew to be true. Then he openly charges those who oppose him as being "Ministers of Satan" and concludes by reminding the Corinthians of his own sufferings in service which showed his integrity.

I Thessalonians is the outstanding letter dealing with the return of the Lord. But His precious truth had been perverted to mislead some believers.

II Thessalonians is a sharp rebuke to any who will misrepresent the truth of the return of the Lord.

I Peter was written to encourage Christians to be holy in conduct in the face of peril or persecution.

II Peter is a sharp denunciation of false teachers who apparently were leading Christians to think that empty formalism would be enough.

I John was written to show Christians the blessedness of communion with the living Lord.

II John warns Christians to have no dealings whatever with anybody who teaches anything else.

## II John "Beware of Error"

## *III John*

III John is a letter of commendation written to a Christian who had helped other believers by his hospitality.

To be a Christian in this world is to be a stranger in a strange land. Because the believer lives his life in

the conscious presence of God and refers all his own acts and decisions to the living Lord for guidance and approval, he is often looked upon as an alien by those who do not share his faith. This hostility will often result in a Christian being bereft of the common courtesies and aids, which men commonly share with each other. For this reason it is so important that Christians who can do so should help Christians who are in need.

This is especially true in the case of those who devote themselves to the ministry of the Gospel. It is not to be expected that servants of the Gospel will be supported by men who do not believe in the Lord. This means that Christians should be willing and ready to help in supporting those who teach and preach the Gospel.

Because the minister of the Gospel is so dependent upon such support from the brethren, it is particularly hard when any oppose him.

### III John "Help the Good Ministers"

#### *Jude*

Jude is an epistle of warning written to Christians to bring to their attention the danger of being misled by some within their own company who are not obedient to the will of God. It seems that Christians are particularly in danger because they may be so unsuspecting. When a soul comes to Christ in repentant confession of his own sin and commits himself humbly in all sincerity to a genuine obedience, he is like a child. He is inclined to think others will be as sincere as he is. But unfortunately this is not true. The Scriptures record the dangerous fact that deceivers mingle with believers and are a threat to their blessedness.

Jude bluntly warns Christians that such deceivers are to be found among believers. He points out that such has been the case in the history of God's people and then reminds them that God will judge and destroy such false leaders and all who follow them. Jude calls upon true believers to beware of such subversion and with great care to keep themselves "in the love of God looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Jude urges Christians to be charitable and quick to rescue such as may be victims of such deception. This note of warning is most salutary to all believers.

#### Jude "Avoid False Prophets"

1:1-16 The Fate of Wicked Disturbers

1:17-25 How to Contend for the Faith

#### *Revelation*

The Revelation is the last book in the Bible and is for many persons the most difficult to understand. It is the one book which promises blessing to those who read and hear and "keep those things which are written therein." Despite the admitted obscurity of much that is in it, this book has always fascinated Christians and many times in the history of the Church has provided comfort and encouragement to

Christians facing hardship and persecution.

This book was written by John on the isle of Patmos, where he was a prisoner because of his evangelical witness and ministry. It was addressed to congregations in Asia Minor who were in danger of severe persecution.

The body of the book is a report of certain visions in which John was shown the glory of the living Lord, the will of the Lord about the Churches' named in the vision, the scene in heaven where the Lamb that was slain sits on the throne, and the great conflict between Satan and the Word of God over the souls of men who believe in the grace of God, which culminates in final, complete victory by the Son of God to the glory of God.

## The Revelation "The Glorious Future"

- 1 Introduction - The Vision of The Glorified Son of God
- 2-3 The Seven Churches
- 4-7 The Seven Seals
- 8-9 The Seven Trumpets
- 10-14 The Seven Mystic Figures
- 15-18 The Seven Vials
- 19-21 The Final Conflicts and Triumph
- 22 The Epilogue – Conclusion with Invitation