

The **BIG** Picture

INTRODUCTION:

A 4 week overview of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The goal of the study is to familiarize the learner with the key historical, conceptual and theological themes throughout the scriptures. Our goal will be to understand the God of the Bible, His creation of mankind, His historical interventions into our lives and how we may have “relationship” with Him resulting in a privileged position of “Son-ship” which brings with it, salvation.

WEEKLY OUTLINE:

July 7, 99 GENESIS

July 14, 99 EXODUS – MALACHI

July 21, 99 GOSPELS and THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

July 28, 99 EPISTLES – THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

THE BIBLE ITSELF:

- ◆ Hebrew & Aramaic
- ◆ Written from 1,400 – 400 BC
- ◆ Sacred scriptures of the Jews
- ◆ Dead Sea Scrolls validate accuracy.

MAJOR PERIODS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT:

- ◆ Pre-patriarchal 10,000 / 5,000 – 2,100 BC
- ◆ Patriarchal 2100 – 1800 BC
- ◆ Egyptian Captivity / exodus / wanderings 1776 –1406 BC
- ◆ Conquest of land / occupation / Judges as leaders 1406-1950 BC
- ◆ United Monarchy 1010 – 931 BC
- ◆ Divided Monarchy 931 – 586 BC
- ◆ Babylonian Exile / 70 year captivity 586 – 535 BC
- ◆ Return and Restoration of Judah (first called “Jews”) 535- 424 BC
- ◆ Inter-testamental Period 435 – John The Baptist
See Chart 17

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PRE- PATRIARCHAL PERIOD: Genesis 1-11

CREATION:

- ◆ Genesis 1: Cosmological approach. Entire universe. Large view.
- ◆ Genesis 2: Anthropological approach. Creation of man. Focus view.
- ◆ Order different than evolutionary theory.
- ◆ Man made in Image and Likeness of God.
- ◆ Man superior to all creation.
- ◆ Plurality within Godhead indicated.
- ◆ Male and female in union is God's design.
- ◆ All living beings vegetarian.
- ◆ Mature earth created with balances of nature immediately in existence.
- ◆ God only gave us 2 chapters regarding creation. Creation is merely a "stage" upon which the relationship between God and man is played out.

Other references: Hebrews 11:3, II Peter 3:5, John 1:1-18,
Colossians 1:9-23

THE FALL AND THE CURSE: Genesis 3

- ◆ God's commands were challenged.
- ◆ Rationalization / will to choose / sin
- ◆ "The Curse"
 - Of the serpent: Ultimate destruction of Satan (Revelation 12)
 - Of the Woman: Pain in childbirth, desire to rule over husband, but husband will rule over her (tension), death.
 - Of the Man: Ground cursed, toil, sweat for food, physical death.
- ◆ God killed an innocent animal, the first sacrifice for skin coverings.
- ◆ Expulsion from garden to prevent them from eating from the tree of life in their fallen state. (Note Revelation 22:1-4)

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EARTH POPULATED, WICKEDNESS AND FLOOD. Genesis 4-8

- ◆ Sacrifice is observed, God shows preference to animal sacrifice vs. plant offerings.
- ◆ Mankind and animals become carnivorous, tension between animals and man becomes evident.
- ◆ Continual evil in the hearts of men
- ◆ Righteousness of Noah
- ◆ Construction of the Arc
- ◆ Flood's length was one year.
- ◆ Eight people survived: Noah, Shem, Ham, Japeth + wives (Shem = semites or "Semitic")
- ◆ God's covenant with Noah: The earth will never be destroyed by water again. Sign of Covenant: Rainbow

TOWER OF BABEL, LANGUAGES = CONFUSION, DESPERSION, NATIONS CREATED. Genesis 9-11

- ◆ Same language with desire to localize and unify (building a tower) in direct contradiction to God's command to spread across the earth.
- ◆ Different languages introduced by God causing confusion, dispersion, separation and ultimately racial distinction.
- ◆ Ham: Africa / Arabia
- ◆ Japeth: South & Central Asia / Europe
- ◆ Shem: Mesopotamia / Persia

PATRIARCHAL PERIOD: Genesis 12-50

Note:

The Holy Spirit's inspiration of Moses, directed him to write 11 chapters about which mankind would like to know much more... especially in our scientific era. 39 chapters are devoted to 3 men and their families and God's relationship with them. God's priority is evident.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM: Genesis 12-18

Key Texts: 12: 1-9, 13: 14-18, 15: 1- 6, 15:7-21, 16:11-12, 17:1-8, 17:9-21

- ◆ Abram's name shall be great.
- ◆ A great nation will arise from him.

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- ◆ Land would be given to this nation.
- ◆ God blesses those who bless this nation and curses those who curse it.
- ◆ The land will be an everlasting possession.
- ◆ Through this nation all the nations will be blessed.
- ◆ Sarai's name changed to Sarah "Princess".
- ◆ Abram's name changed from "Exalted Father" to Abraham, "Father of a multitude".
- ◆ Sarah's hand maiden Hagar, gave birth to Ishmael, the father of the Arabs.
- ◆ The child through whom the covenant would be realized was born when Abraham was 100 and Sarah was very old as well. The child's name was Isaac.
- ◆ Circumcision was a perpetual "sign" of the covenant throughout all generations.
- ◆ This nation would be in bondage for 400 years.
- ◆ When told all of these promises, "Abraham believed God and He reckoned it to him as righteousness." 15:6 (See Romans 4:3, Gal. 3:6, James 2:23)

ABRAHAM'S DESCENDANTS:

- ◆ Isaac married Rebecca, their children are Esau and Jacob.
- ◆ Jacob is the covenant child, though he is younger.
- ◆ Jacob has two wives, Rachel and Leah. They bear 12 sons, who become the figure heads of the 12 tribes of Israel.
- ◆ Jacob wrestles with an angel (the Lord) and his name is changed to "Israel"... "He who strives with God".
- ◆ Joseph is the favored one, and hated by his 11 brothers and is sold into slavery. This providentially becomes the way that God prepares a way for Israel and his sons and wives to go to Egypt where they will stay for 400+ years. 70 people are with Israel as they join Joseph in Egypt.

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Egyptian Captivity / Exodus / wanderings 1776 –1406 BC

Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy

- ◆ 70 people turn into over a million in 400+ years in the security of a protective family member (Joseph) who is a high ranking member of the court of Pharaoh the Egyptian King.
- ◆ “There arose a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph!” The Hebrews were enslaved and mistreated and Moses and his brother Aaron were chosen by God to lead the Jews out of Egypt.
- ◆ God reveals Himself as YAHWEH = “I AM!”
- ◆ Pharaoh’s heart was hardened by God and he resisted Moses demand to “Let my people go!” Miracles and 10 plagues ensued at the hand of Moses with the culmination being the death of the firstborn in the land of anyone that didn’t have blood smeared on the doorpost of the house. The “death angel” sent by God would *pass over* the houses so prepared. This drastic action drove the Egyptians to let their slave labor force leave the country. The Egyptian army later followed them in anger and were drowned in the Red sea after Israel walked through on dry ground. Passover, is still celebrated by Jews every year.
NOTE: This is one of the 3 major periods of “Miracles” in the Bible. Miracles always accompanied periods of revelation and Scripture writing.
- ◆ They were led by God to Mt. Sinai in the wilderness where this new nation was given The Law which included civil, moral and elaborate ceremonial laws including a Priesthood (Arron + Tribe of Levi) and a portable place of worship, the Tabernacle. Here they worshipped God and offered offerings for sin by means of animal sacrifice and grain offerings. A Theocracy (Theocratic = God at Head) form of Government is born.
- ◆ Failure to believe and act upon God’s direction led God to punish them by wandering in the wilderness for 40 years waiting for the Exodus generation to “die off” (1,000,000 / 40 years = 25,000 deaths / year) so that only their children would enter the “promised land”.
- ◆ The Law was repeated again to this new generation (Deuteronomy = Second Law) and the people were ready to enter Caanan.
- ◆ Because of one act of disobedience, Moses was not allowed to enter the promised land. Joshua, his protégé, takes the lead. NOTE: To whom much is given, much is required.”
- ◆ The Holy Spirit dwells in the Tabernacle in the Holy of Holies

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Conquest of Land / Occupation / Judges as leaders 1406-1950 BC

Joshua, Judges, I Samuel

- ◆ Joshua leads them into the land. In a series of military battles, God is both judging evil nations and giving land to His people. While being clearly instructed to drive out every man woman and child, they did not do so. These people's evil practices and perverted religions including child sacrifice and religious sexual practices became a "snare" to the people of Israel. God calls them harlots and adulterers. Punishment by means of oppression from enemies, problems and pestilence would often bring the errant Israel to their knees before God. He would then restore and bless them. Leaders called "judges" would arise and bring leadership. This cycle occurred 7 major times during the period of the Judges.
- ◆ Eventually, the people of Israel decide that they want a human king just like the surrounding nations. God is offended at their rejection of His Theocracy, but gives them their wish to teach them a lesson. Namely, human leaders will always bring disappointment!

United Monarchy 1010 – 931 BC

II Samuel, I & II Kings, I & II Chronicles, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon (Songs).

- ◆ Saul became the first king. Due to bad behavior, he was dethroned by God and David (unrelated by blood) became second King. His son Solomon became the third King. David and Solomon wrote of their fears, frustrations, life lessons, joys and praises to God. These writings inspired by the Holy Spirit, became a part of our Scriptures.
- ◆ This was a time of military warfare with other nations, peace and internal conflicts. Spiritual highs and lows were evident. Solomon built a permanent Temple to replace the Tabernacle and it is within the dedication of the Temple that the often quoted scripture is given by God.

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“If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and heal their land.” II Chron. 7:13-14
This verse applies to Israel within their own land around 1000 BC and does not apply to Christians 3,000 years later living in hundreds of countries around the world.

- ◆ Solomon’s son Rehoboam, allows his ego and bad counsel from young advisors to cause him to rebuff the leaders from the 10 northern tribes who in turn “secede” from the Union. The 10 northern tribes are called “Israel” and the 2 southern tribes (Judah and Benjamin) are called “Judah”.
- ◆ Various prophets spoke during this time. See chart 17.

Divided Monarchy 931 – 586 BC

- ◆ Israel has a succession of many kings from many different families. Murder, evil, infidelity, war and strife characterize this period.
- ◆ Judah experiences much of the same sad moral decline, yet with one major difference, through many kings, the family line remains unbroken so as to have an uninterrupted Messianic line from the tribe of Judah.
- ◆ The 10 northern tribes are taken captive by the Assyrians in 722 BC and drop out of sight at this time.
- ◆ Over 115 years later, the 2 southern tribes are taken captive by Babylon in 605 BC.
- ◆ See northern and southern prophets activity on Chart 17.

Babylonian Exile / 70 year captivity 586 – 535 BC

Jeremiah & Lamentations

- ◆ Daniel and friends are taken captive for 70 years. Faith is kept by a small remnant of faithful believers who ultimately lead Judah (Tribe) back to Judah (location). God always preserves His “covenant people”.
- ◆ They return to their land speaking the language of the Babylonians, Aramaic. This becomes the “lingua franca” (common language) and was spoken by Jesus and His generation.

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Note: Amidst statements of despair, doom and gloom, the prophets also gave HOPE to the people of Israel. They promised of a future glorious day in which there would be a Kingdom of Theocratic rule in which Israel would be the center of world wide leadership by a coming deliverer (Messiah) who would cleanse the world from the guilt of sin (remember The Curse), rule righteously, free Israel from oppression by destroying corrupt Gentile governments and provide salvation to the Gentile nations.

Psalm 2, II Samuel 7:1-16, Isaiah 9:1-7, Isaiah 61:1-9 cf. Luke 4:16-21, Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Zechariah 12:1-14, Daniel

The disciples of Christ were so aware of this O.T. promise that they directly asked Jesus the following question in Matthew 24:3, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?” When asked to teach the disciples to pray, one of the prayer requests of which Jesus spoke was “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” This is to be a Hope for the Christian as well as the Jew. NOTE: The disciples saw salvation and deliverance as *one event* as They interpreted Old Testament prophecies. Little did they know that 2,000 + years would separate the first advent (coming) from the second advent.

Return and Restoration of Judah (first called “Jews”) 535- 424 BC

- ◆ Under the leadership of Ezra & Nehemiah, Judah returns to the Land. Jerusalem is rebuilt and restored. They still must be guided and goaded by prophets into spiritual awareness and sensitivity.
- ◆ They are told by Malachi to wait and listen for “a voice of one crying in the wilderness”. Over 400 years later, this voice would be John the Baptizer who would point to and introduce the Messiah (Jesus).

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Inter-testamental Period 435 – John The Baptist

- ◆ 400 “silent years” with no prophets.
- ◆ Through Josephus a Jewish historian, Apocryphal books, Greek and Roman writings, we learn about this period. This includes it’s characteristics of oppression, invasion, battles and bloodshed.
- ◆ A faithful remnant guarded the sacred writings, the O.T. Canon was completed by Ezra... The Law, The Writings and The Prophets.
- ◆ There was a period of Jewish independence from the end of the Greek period in 167 BC – 63 BC. When the Romans took over, the Maccabees family was prominent. A division of religious leaders took place in which the following groups became prominent... the Pharasees, Sadducees and Essenes. The Oral Law developed (Mishnah) which added many laws and rules.
- ◆ “The hostility of Judaism to Christ and the Gospel cannot be explained as a clash between Judaism and Christianity, it was rather a clash between the Judaism perverted through four centuries of history since Ezra.”
E.H. Merrill

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THE GOSPELS AND THE ACTS OF APOSTLES:

- ◆ The incarnation of God in human flesh (John 1) took place within the nation of Israel and within the “era” of the Old Testament. Thus the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) are not within the “Church age”. Jesus came to seek and to save the “lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:5-7).” His involvement with Gentiles was minimal and not the focus of His ministry. The Gospels are a recording of Jesus’ encounter with Israel.
- ◆ When John the Baptist saw Jesus, He proclaimed, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29).” The Jews would thoroughly understand the concept of sacrifice, thus the words of John would have meaning to them.
- ◆ As Gentiles and as Christians, we must be careful how we read the Gospels with respect to “context”. All scripture is only correctly interpreted when it is accurately understood within its historical context. Some of the statements, promises, warnings etc., may not apply to the Christian in the Church era.
- ◆ In His 3 ½ year ministry, Jesus clashed with the religious leaders as He confronted their perversion of the Law of God in which they had added many laws which Jesus said would “weigh men down with heavy burdens hard to bear (Luke 11:46).” It was the religious leaders who decided to turn Jesus over to the Romans and bring charges that were of a “capital” nature so as to bring about capital punishment and death of this “troublemaker”.
- ◆ Jesus “came unto His own, but His own did not receive Him (John 1:11-12).” Ultimately, the leaders and people of Israel were looking more for political and economic victory which would come about as a result of the “Kingdom” being established by the Messiah. When Jesus did not indicate that this “first coming” was the time for the establishment of the earthly Kingdom rule per se, many were disappointed and abandoned Him because the hand of the Roman government was heavy and they wanted relief. At the end of His 3 ½ year ministry only 120 people were committed followers at the actual beginning of the Church era in Acts 2.

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- ◆ When Jesus died on the cross at the hand of the Romans, it was really God sacrificing His Son (the innocent) for the world (the guilty) so that our sin might be forgiven. This was true and consistent with the entire Old Testament concept of sacrifice. He “came into the world to save sinners (I Timothy 1:12-17).” We become Christians (Jew or Gentile) when embrace this truth on a personal basis cf. John 3:16, I Timothy 2:1-7.
- ◆ The Apostles were instructed “to make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of The Father and of The Son and of The Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all I commanded you and Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20 We are to respond to the same marching orders and it is our responsibility to lead people to Christ and on to maturity until He comes again to establish His earthly Kingdom for 1000 years.
- ◆ Jesus arose from the dead as a miracle / proof that His claims of Deity were in fact true. He ascended into heaven where He is seated at the right hand of the Father. The Apostles watched Him rise into heaven and were promised that He would one day descend again in the same way as He ascended (Acts 1:1-11).
- ◆ Jesus performed miracles to substantiate his verbal claims as to His Deity and Messiah. Remember, miracles always accompanied the major periods of revelation. His 11 disciples (followers) + 1 were appointed as “apostles” which means “sent ones”, which function with “power of attorney” and can authoritatively act, speak and perform on behalf of the one sending them. Thus they spoke with God ordained authority, performed miracles and authored the New Testament (John 14:26). To reject their word was to reject God. Thus, the Acts of the Apostles was simply that, namely a recording of their deeds or actions, not a blueprint for us to follow today (the Pentecostal / Charismatic view). Mark 16:14-20, Hebrews 2:3-4.

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- ◆ On the day of Pentecost (a Jewish feast 50 days after Passover celebrating first fruits), the Holy Spirit descended upon and indwelt the 120. As He did, they spoke in the languages (tongues) of all of the attendees of the feast. This provided the “credibility” and after Peter preached the Gospel, 3,000 Jews became the first Christians and “The Church” was born. The Holy Spirit’s indwelling of the believer as the Temple of The Holy Spirit was a *radical* change from the indwelling of a physical building. This was evidenced by visible dramatic signs and miracles.
- ◆ This Church at Jerusalem made up of Jewish believers including the Apostles became the leading Church which provided guidance and counsel to other believers and new emerging churches all over the Gentile world. This also brought conflict, for the Jews didn’t associate with Gentiles in the Old Testament. This was a new problem to resolve.
- ◆ The early Church did not have New Testaments to carry around with them. They didn’t have guidance and instruction from a book of scriptures as we do. They had the Apostles and Prophets as well as “revelatory” gifts which provided guidance and direction to this early fledgling church. These special gifts and persons provided the “foundation” for the building of this new Church (Ephesians 2:20).
- ◆ In the book of The Acts (actions and activity) of the Apostles, the early Church was made up of Jewish converts to Christianity. Actually, they were Jews who believed that Jesus was their Messiah, namely the fulfillment of the O.T. prophecies. In Acts 1-12, the Church is based in Jerusalem and Peter rises to a position of being the leading Apostle. This is where the Catholic Church develops its idea of a “Pope”. The Papacy is an office in which one human being is the earthly Vicar of Christ or direct spokesman of Christ. This is an office which they believe has a human successor in the Papal lineage throughout all generations. Protestants would agree that Peter was a spokesman of Christ as also were the other 11 Apostles. While Peter was an influential leader who distinguished himself amongst the other 11, there is no Biblical instruction as to the concept of the Papacy.

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- ◆ There are some Protestant denominations which are usually Pentecostal or Charismatic in nature who believe that the office or position of the Apostle and Prophet are still operational today. Thus they believe that we should see in the church today the “same Acts of the Apostles” taking place regularly amongst churches around the world. I view the Apostles / Prophets as part of a special “era” within the Church age.
- ◆ As they went out, the Apostles performed signs to “confirm” their verbal Gospel presentation. Mark 16 and Hebrews 2:2-4
- ◆ God told Peter to reach out to the Gentiles and preach the Gospel to them. An “Act of an Apostle” that was resisted at first by the Jewish Jerusalem Church. Paul, a Jewish Pharisee dramatically converted by Christ, became an Apostle by the direct appointment of Christ. Paul was responsible for planting many churches amongst the Gentiles over an intense 10 year ministry.
- ◆ When Paul or other missionaries left a church to travel on, they appointed Elders as leaders of the local church. The letters they wrote to the various churches and individuals are called “epistles”.

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THE EPISTLES AND THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST:

- ◆ All people who died in the Old Testament era went “down” to Sheol. It was divided into 2 sides, Hades and Paradise or Abraham’s Bosom. After Christ was crucified, he went to Sheol and “preached to the spirits in prison”, and then led the host of captives from the good side “up” to heaven. Now when people die, they go “up” to heaven. Luke 16:19 – 31, Ephesians 4:7-10, I Peter 3:18-22
- ◆ “The Church” is made up of all people (Jew and Gentile) from Pentecost to the removal of the Church from the earth in the Rapture which precedes the wrath of God. Believers are to congregate together in local churches, grow, win the lost and wait for Christ’s return (I Thes. 1:10).
- ◆ We have an enemy who is Satan who opposes all that God is and says. We are to recognize this and put on spiritual armor to combat him as we stand in the privileged position of being God’s sons (Ephesians 6).
- ◆ At the Judgment Seat of Christ, we will be rewarded for our service and faithful usage of our spiritual gifts. This is a rewards based event which involves our giving an account and being rewarded for our good deeds. A part of that reward is position of service within the 1000 year kingdom (II Corinthians 5:10).
- ◆ False teachers will try to confuse the Church, especially in the latter days when demons will introduce destructive heresies. The writings of Paul are hard to understand and the “untaught and unstable” distort them (II Peter 3:14-18 , I Timothy 4:1, II Timothy 4:3).
- ◆ When the Church is removed via the Rapture, the Antichrist will emerge and assault Israel. God will protect Israel, punish the Gentile nations and when Christ returns to Israel to fulfill His promises of long ago, those who are left in Israel will be saved. God will set up Christ’s Kingdom for 1000 years while Satan is bound and imprisoned for that time.
- ◆ After the 1000 years, Satan is released and he gathers people from around the world to oppose Christ. There is a final battle (Gog and Magog) and Satan and the False Prophet are thrown alive into the Lake of Fire (Hades / Hell) the hot part of Sheol. They are tormented forever.
- ◆ All people (not apart of the Church or Saved Israel) will stand before God at the Great White Throne Judgment. They will be judged according to their deeds and there apparently is “varying degrees” of punishment within Hell.
- ◆ The current earth and the entire universe will be destroyed and will be burned up. We will be apart of a New Heaven and a New Earth forever.