

OPEN THE BIBLE

KEY POINTS

•

The Bible is not 66 individual books; but one complete story of God's love and redemption.

2

Within the Bible there are several types of writings, and it is important to understand the differences. Each book was written for a specific purpose; and understanding the purpose helps us to fully embrace the author's teaching.

3

Far too often the Bible is taught (and therefore understood) in snippets with a common theme. It is easy to miss the continuity of the story and how it applies to our lives. Understanding the structure and connectivity of the parts of the Bible can help reduce intimidation.

Note: As mentioned in the video, not every book of the Bible is covered in these lessons.

WHY READ...

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."

- 2 Timothy 2:15

"All Scripture is Godbreathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17

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WHY WE NEED THE BIBLE

Word of God that teaches us the basis of our beliefs

More than just reading through

Understanding Educating Avoiding intimidation Correcting

WHERE ARE YOU IN THE BIBLE?

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth...The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints.

> Amen - Genesis 1:1 - Revelation, 22:21

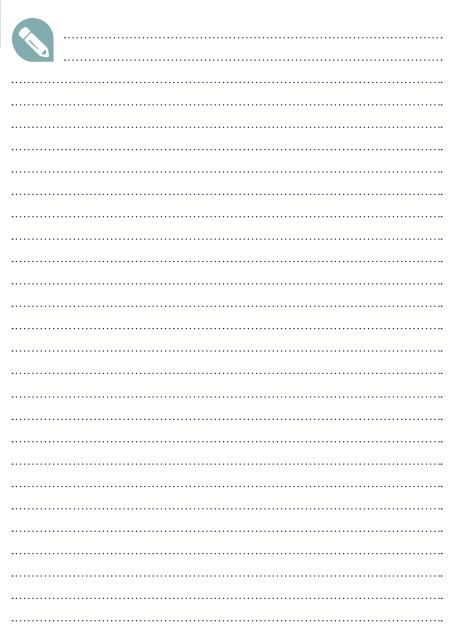
BIBLE BASICS

- There are 66 books in the Bible: 39 in the Old Testament & 27 in the New Testament, "Testament" means covenant. or contract.
- The Catholic Bible includes the Apocrypha.
- Written under inspiration of the Holy Spirit by over 40 different authors.
- Written over a period of some 1,500 years, from around 1450 B.C. (the time of Moses) to about 100 A.D. (following the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ).
- Written in 3 languages: Hebrew (OT), Aramaic (very little OT) and Greek (NT).
- Greek translation of the OT in 3rd-2nd century BC (Septuagint)
- The Bible is the best selling book of all time.

HOW DID THE NEW TESTAMENT COME TOGETHER?

- No "formal" meeting or gathering
- Certain documents were being read alongside "Old Testament" - think of reference to "Scripture" in Timothy 3:16-17
- Organization began in response to heretics Marcion
- Early 4th Century still did not include "disputed books" (James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, Revelation?)
- Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, listed the 27 in 367AD
- What about the other books?
 - Questions of authorship
 - Questions of authority
 - Questions of doctrinal accuracy (Gospel of Thomas)
 - Some that were close include: The Didache, Gospel of Peter, Shepherd of Hermas, Epistle of Barnabas, etc.

NOTES





THE REFORMATION

- John Wycliffe was a predecessor to the Protestant Reformation and produced the first Bible translated into English in 1384. (133 years before Martin Luther)
- Gutenberg invents movable type in 1439.
- Martin Luther writes the Ninety-Five Theses in 1517. He also argued "a simple layman armed with Scripture is greater than the mightiest pope without it"
- One of the five pillars of the Protestant Reformation was "Sola Scriptura" or "by Scripture alone."
- 1539 the "Great Bible" was ordered to be put in every church in England.
- 1604 King James ordered a new translation that was finished in 1611. It contained all 66 books and the Apocrypha.

TRANSLATIONS

- The number of printed English translations and paraphrases of the Bible, whether complete or not, is about 900.
- It has been translated into over 500 different languages.
- Translation vs. paraphrase:
 - A translation/formal equivalence attempts to communicate as "wordfor-word" or as "thought-for-thought" as possible.
 - A paraphrase is a retelling of something in your own words. A paraphrase takes the meaning of a verse or passage of Scripture and attempts to express the meaning in "plain language."



NOTES





FORMAL EQUIVALENCE

DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE



NASB "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance."

ESV "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness."

NRSV "My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance."

NIV "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance."

CEV "My friends, be glad, even if you have a lot of trouble. You know that you learn to endure by having your faith tested."

Message "Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors."

THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN STUDYING THE BIBLE

It was written for a different culture

The authors wrote for different purposes/audiences

The authors wrote in different styles

Not intended to be comprehensive – John 21:25 "Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written."

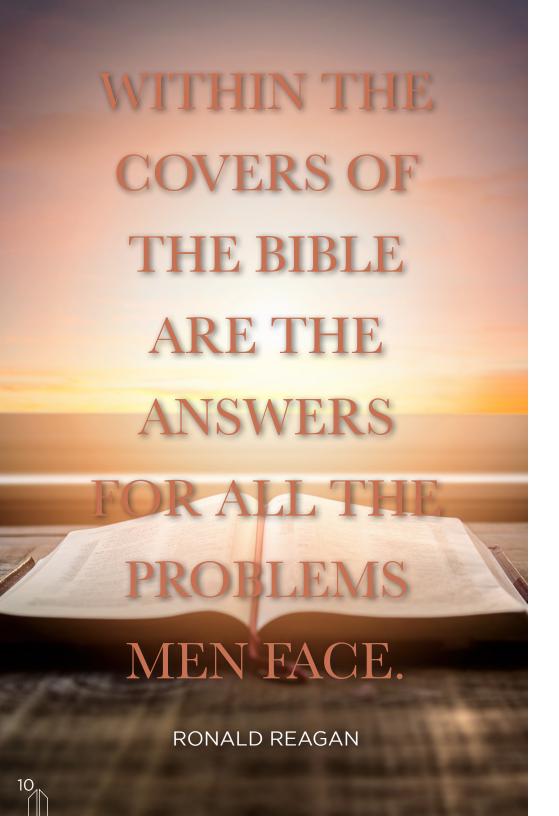
Not written as a compilation

You have biases - study the Bible to learn your beliefs, not confirm your beliefs

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What do you find most intimidating about the Bible?

What do you most want to learn from this class?
How do you think incorporating Bible reading will help you in your Christian walk?

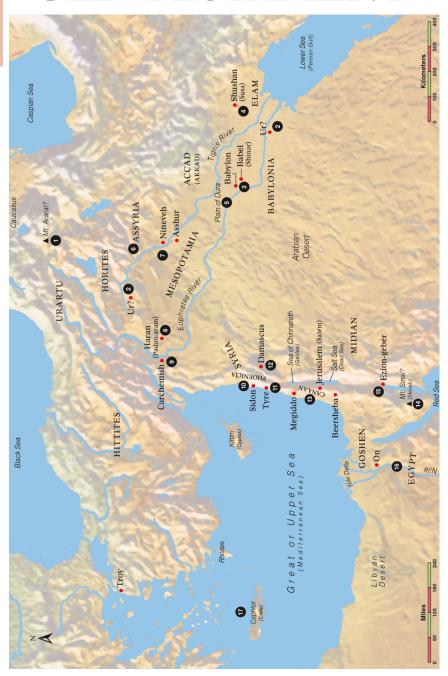


WHAT IS THE PENTATEUCH/TORAH?

- The first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)
- What are some other names?
 - Law
 - Torah (Hebrew word for "law, instruction, or teaching")
- Who wrote it?
 - Moses?
- Collection of authors (J -Yahwist, E Elohist, P - Priestly, D- Deuteronomist)
- A word about oral traditions
- How is this treated by the Jewish faith?
- How do Christians treat it?

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THE WORLD OF THE OLD TESTAME





GENESIS

- "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth..."
- How should we read the creation story...
 - Literally
 - Allegorically
- What is a covenant?
- Walkthrough (Primeval hist. 1-11:27, Ancestral hist. 11:28-50:26)
- Creation 1-5
- Noah 6-11, 9:8-17 (covenant) other flood stories
- Tower of Babel 11:1-9
- Abraham (multiple covenants, Ishmael, 17 (Covenant), Sacrifice of Isaac
- Isaac Father of Jacob and Esau, 27 the blessing of Jacob
- Jacob/Israel (29-31 Rachel/Leah (12 tribes), Returning home, 32:22 - wrestling with God,
- Joseph 37:5 dream, 39 Joseph's faithfulness, 40-41 Joesph saves Egypt, 42-50 saves his family (45:4-8)

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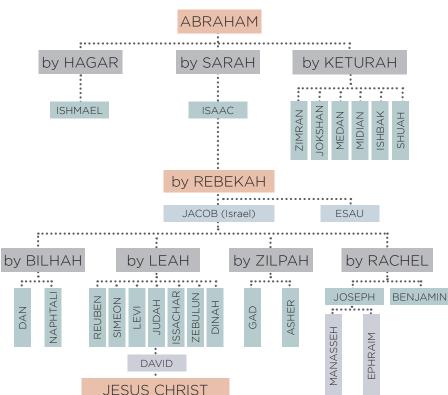
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LINEAGE FROM ABRAHAM TO JESUS



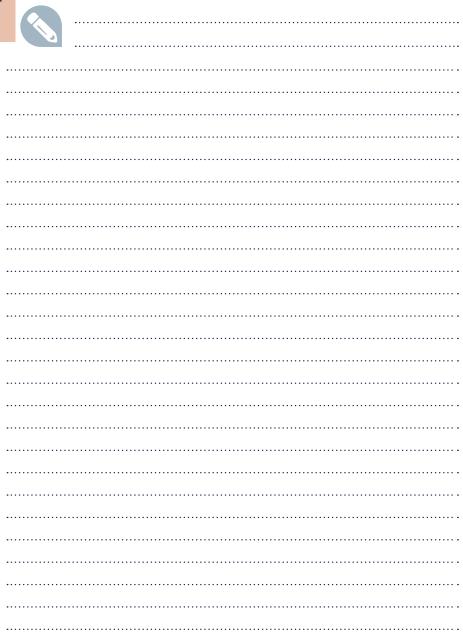
EXODUS

- 1-2 Enslavement and Moses' story
- 3-4 God's directions to Moses (and Aaron)
- 6:6-8 (covenant)
- 7-10 Plagues
- 11-15 Passover and Exodus
- 16 ("how much farther?"), bread from Heaven
- 18:17-24 Establishment of Judges
- 19 Mt. Sinai
- 20 Decalogue, Ten Commandments
- 21-24:6 Instructions to Moses
- 24:7-18 Covenant and tablets of stone
- 25-27 Instructions on the Tabernacle
- 28-29 Aaron and his sons as priests
- 32 The Golden Calf or "Can't I leave you alone for one second"
- 33 Go to the promised land
- 35-40 The creation of the Tabernacle.

LEVITICUS

- Primarily the religious ritual and law
- Five sections (1-7 sacrifice, 8-10 dedication of the Tabernacle, 11-16 ritual purity, 17-26 holiness collection, 27 extra
- 613 Laws
- Many are still prevalent in Jewish practices.

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NUMBERS

- From Mt. Sinai to the edge of the promised
- 3-4 Designation of the Levites
- 6 Vow of the Nazirites
- 13-14 Spying on the land and the return Get lost!
- War, rebellion, rules, repeat
- Preparing for the promised land

DEUTERONOMY

- Four parts
- 1. First discourse of Moses (1-4:43) historical recap
- 2. Second discourse of Moses (4:44-28:68) review of the law and covenant
- 3. Third discourse of Moses (29.1-30:20) ratification of the covenant
- 4. Death of Moses (31:1-34:12)

UNDERSTANDING THE CULTURE

- Culture is the biggest inhibitor to us understanding the Old Testament.
- Epic of Eden by Sandra Richter

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Despite the cultural differences, how do you see our own lives, actions, and faith in the lives of the Israelites? How does God's covenants with Abraham relate to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and our role as disciples?

How does the Mosaic covenant at Mt. Sinai relate to the new covenant through Jesus (See Jeremiah 31:31-34, Matthew 26:27-28)

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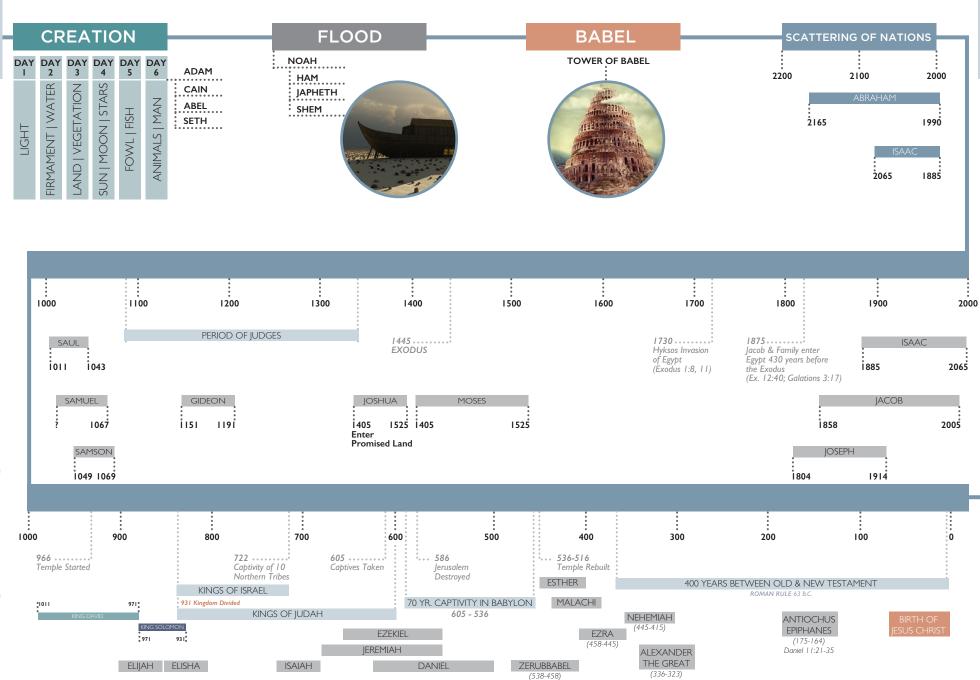
Recommendation: The book <u>Epic of Eden</u> by Sandra Richter is very accessible to understand many important aspects of the OT; including culture, covenant, and content. Anyone interested might want to read this book along with, or before, reading the OT

"THE BIBLE WILL KEEP
YOU FROM SIN,
OR SIN WILL KEEP
YOU FROM THE BIBLE."

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OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY, POETRY, AND PROPHECY





HISTORY

JOSHUA

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- Written sometime in 1500-1300 BC
- This is the completion of the Exodus, when the Nation of Israel gets the land promised to them.
- Joshua has taken over for Moses
- Chapters 1-12 entry into the promised land, and defeat of those located there (holy war).
- Chapters 13-22 ordering of the land and the people (allocation of land)
- Chapters 23-24 renewal of the covenant and Joshua's death

JUDGES

- Covers the period between Joshua and the Monarchy (up to 300+ years)
- Israel was disobedient (failing to get rid of previous tribes, worshiping their gods) so the Lord gave them judges.
- What were judges? They were leaders raised up by God and empowered with the Holy Spirit
- Judges is a downward spiral (Israel does evil, God is angry and allows foreign oppression, Israel repents, God offers a deliverer (Judge), submission of the enemy/peace, repeat)
- Names you know Deborah, Gideon, Samson

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1 & 2 SAMUEL

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- Transition from the last Judge (Samuel) to Saul (beginning of monarchy) to David.
- Why does Israel want a king?
- Israel wanted to be like other nations/have someone lead in battle
- Samuel warned them this was a bad idea
- Saul Only king a short time before he failed to keep faith with God, Samuel informs him his kingship is limited. God sought a man after his own heart.
- After Saul, David becomes king.

1 & 2 KINGS

- Solomon becomes king
- Solomon is a good king (at first) and builds the Temple
- Solomon did not stay faithful (worshipped the gods of his wives), and it was prophesied that the kingdom would be divided.
- Jeroboam rebelled against Solomon.
- God gave Jeroboam 10 tribes, Rehoboam (Solomon's son) had the other two.
- The Nation of Israel was divided. The northern nation (Israel) was led by Jeroboam and the southern nation (Judah) by Rehoboam.
- The majority of the kings (for both nations) were terrible.
- During this time we see two of the most famous prophets -Elijah and Elisha. Both were prophets to the nation of Israel.
- 2 Kings 17:3-6 Assyria defeats Israel (end of the northern nation of Israel) (722-21)
- 2 Kings 25 Babylon defeats Judah, destroys the Temple, and takes her people into exile (586)
- So begins the Babylonian Exile.

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1&2 CHRONICLES

- Written later, and comprehensive of much of the history of Israel until the end of exile (the last chapter briefly mentions Cyrus's decree letting the Jews return home.
- Covers much of the same material as 1 & 2 Kings

EZRA & NEHEMIAH

- Historically, these were one text.
- Begins with the decree of Cyrus (Persia had defeated Babylon) allowing the Jew to return to Jerusalem.
- These books follow the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the building of the Second Temple
- Nehemiah takes over as Jewish governor. Is responsible for building the walls.

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POETRY & WISDOM BOOKS

- This section contains the widest variety of writings (date, purpose, style)
- Wisdom literature (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes) focuses generally on universal human concerns. Limited/no focus on the covenant or the Nation of Israel.
- Love poetry (Song of Songs)
- Temple liturgy (majority of Psalms)

JOB

- The theme is the injustice of suffering
 - The problem of suffering is one of significant focus in theology. Theodicy is the term for the explanation of suffering in light of God's goodness. In spite of its focus on suffering, Job doesn't give many answers (but does quash some erroneous beliefs)
- The three friends speak of the belief of "retribution theology." God blesses the righteous and curses the wicked. Therefore. Job must be a sinner.
- Job does not claim perfection, but questions the justice of God. He wants an interview with God. The general question is who is right, or who is wise.
- Job gets the interview with God. God doesn't justify himself, but clarifies God alone is wise.
- Job repents and is blessed by God.
- Notably, though he questioned God, he never cursed him.
- Retribution theology, the argument that if you suffer, it must be retribution for sin. (John 9:2)

PSALMS

- It is difficult to place historically, as it is a collection, and some are not historically specific.
- If we rely on the titles, they range from Moses (Ps. 90) to the post-exilic period (Ps. 126) but don't rely solely on the titles.
- Collection probably developed over time (see note after Ps. 72)
- Individual Psalms may have also developed over time (see Ps. 69)
- Do not get bogged down in historical application, but appreciate the beauty and message of each Psalm.
- Not the teaching of God (like that given through the Prophets) but the prayers of his people.
- Genre of Psalms
- Hymns of joy (often in time of harmonious relation with God Ps. 100)
- Hymns of lament (often times of distance with God- Psalm 70)
- Hymns of Thanksgiving (reunification Psalm 18)
- Psalms of Confidence (trust in God Psalm 23)
- Psalms of Remembrance (God's acts in the pastPsalm 78)
- Wisdom Psalms (Ps. 1)
- Provides a rich, if not ordered theology
- If you want a deeper dive, get a good resource to walk you through
- For now, read each one individually, taking the time to stop and reflect.





PROPHETS

- "The prophets have a gueer way of talking, like people who instead of proceeding in an orderly manner, ramble off from one thing to the next so that you cannot make head or tail of them or see what they are getting at" - Martin Luther
- This is God talking to his people
- Covers the period from 700s-500 BCE not ordered chronologically or by nation.
- 5 Major, 12 Minor (based on length), there is overlap of their ministries
- These were usually oral pronouncements that were then preserved in writing by the prophet or a scribe.
- Not the only Prophets. Many others without separate books (Elijah and Elisha are examples). Not exclusively male - 2 Kings 22:14, Judges 4:4
- This is where we see the majority of prophesies about Christ.

WHY WE READ THE **OLD TESTAMENT**

- The story of God's creation and redemption of his people is inclusive of the entire history
- These are the teachings and history relied on by the early church
- These are the Scriptures that Jesus taught
- Everything wasn't reset at the birth of Christ
- The OT predicts Christ
- The overall teaching of faith, repentance, etc. are just as applicable today

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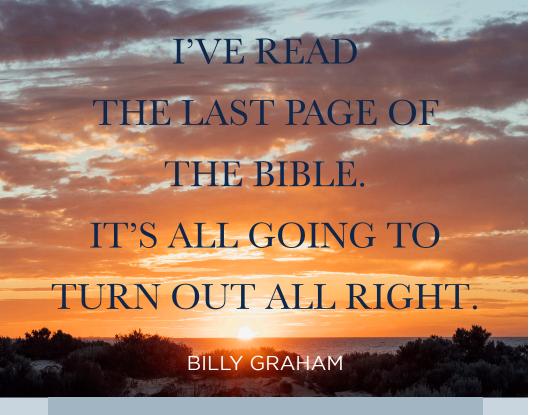
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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How do you see the various types of Psalms reflected in your prayer life?	How do the words of the Prophets still apply to our daily life?
	How do we see Christ fulfill the predictions of the Prophets?
What are some modern examples of idols in our culture?	Tion do we see chirst famili the predictions of the Frophets:
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TAKE AWAY

The failings of the Israelites are not unique, not are we immune from similar failings within our own context and culture.

The Old Testament is the story of the Israelites leading to the incarnation of Christ.

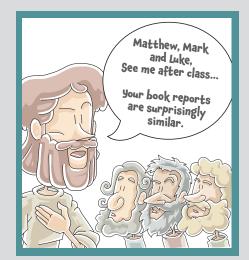
There are **valuable lessons in the wisdom literature** that are generally applicable to our lives.

The Psalms represent an **opportunity to connect**with the past through common prayer

God promised them a Messiah that would redeem them: and we have it with Jesus.

THE GOSPELS

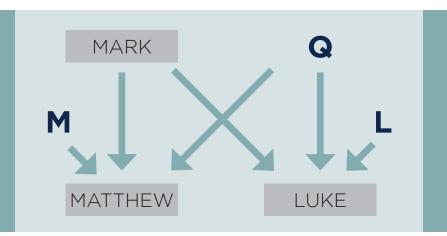
- What does "Gospel" mean? It means "good news"
- Greek is "evangelion" (verb is "evangelizo")
- "I am telling the good news." This is where we get "evangelize"
- We are telling someone the good news of God and his son, Jesus Christ
- This was common for big announcements (military victories, Augustus's birth)
- Gospels are narratives but what does that mean?
 - Sometimes people will call them histories, biographies, or historiographies
 - Just know it was written for a purpose to tell a story of "why or how" as opposed to "what" (which is what we think of history)
 - Everything the writer included is for a reason
 - It is important to let every writer tell his own story (don't assume facts from the other gospels) - but recognize they are a part of a larger whole.
 - How to better understand them resources (study bible), learn the culture, review cross-references (ex. Mark 5:25 - Lev. 15:25, Mark 4:39 - Psalm 89:9)



Synoptic Gospels

(se näptik gäspelz), *n.* The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which describe events from a similar point of view.

- Why are they ordered Matthew, Mark. Luke, John? This is the order they were originally thought to have been written.
- Now, most scholars believe Mark was written first, followed by Matthew. Luke. and John.
- But, why so similar?



THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

- Matthew, Mark and Luke are known as the "Synoptic Gospels" - means "common view or viewed together"
- Most scholars believe Mark was written first and was used by Matthew and Luke. This is called Markan Priority. There are striking commonalities in the original Greek. There are only 30 verses unique to Mark - Don't stress about the differences!
- Many scholars (not all) believe there was a different source Matthew and Luke used for the materials that are different than Mark Q is from "Quelle" which is German for "source"
- There may have been other materials (oral or written) that Matthew and Luke used (four source model)



MARK

- Also known as John Mark. Was an associate and chronicler of Peter - this is supported from early church documents (Acts 12:10 - Peter escapes and goes to Mark's mom's house, may have been the streaker in 14:51)
- Believed to be written between 55-70 CE (AD) the letters of Paul would have been circulating
- Audience often thought to be for gentiles (explains Jewish culture 7:24) but it would make sense that it was meant for Roman Christians and Jews at the same time.
- Cultural issues are important and would have been understood by Jews (applicable to all gospels). Examples - difficulty with teaching about unclean foods (7:17-19, see Acts 10), feelings towards tax/toll collectors (they were religious outcasts), Honor/shame (not our culture, 3:21, Challenge-riposte 12:14-17)
- Why is Mark important It was first, It set the style for the gospel narrative (a format where we come to know Jesus)
- Jesus is the Messiah promised in Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Boldest intro of the Synoptic Gospels.
- The Gospels are about Jesus, but they are about God first. Mark is telling of God's intervention in history. 1:14 "Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the good news of God.
- Mark portrays Jesus as both a powerful teacher and a suffering servant (he must be both 10:45)
- It is a Passion-narrative. Pharisees are plotting to destroy in Chapter 3.
- Sacrifice, suffering, and death would have resonated with the readers (Rome burns in 64 and starts persecution of Christians (taking up their cross 8:34) would have been more than metaphorical)

MARK

- Two parts
 - Powerful teacher 1:1 8:26. Many miracles and most of the teaching
 - Suffering Messiah not what the disciples expected
- Early manuscripts do not include Mark 16:9-20

MATTHEW

- Matthew was a toll collector and is one of the Disciples. He is assumed to be the same as Levi (Mk 2:13-17),
- Probably written after 70 CE (closer to 80 CE)
- Not the first chronologically, but a good transition from the OT.
 - Draws more on Hebrew Scriptures than other Gospels (shows a great respect for Judaism, but not the leaders)
- Emphasizes the fulfilling of OT prophecy
- Gospel most relied on by the early church
- Inclusion of the birth narrative and resurrection presents a more complete story.
- Matthew has the highest percentage of writing devoted to the teachings of Jesus
- It is the Gospel most focused on the church.
 - Only gospel to use the word ἐκκλησία (ecclesia) which means "church"
- Focuses on church discipline, liturgical practices, and mission.
- Specific Teachings
 - Birth Narrative
 - a. Contains the genealogy back to Abraham
 - b. Contains the story of Jesus escaping to Egypt
 - Sermon on the Mount

- Fundamental teachings of Jesus
- How to witness, what is sin, forgiveness, who is your neighbor, how to pray, how to give, dangers of money, ...
- 11:28-30 "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light"
- The Parables of net gathering fish, pearl of great price, treasure in the field, laborers in the vineyard, the unforgiving servant.
- The Primacy of Peter
- The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats
- The Great Commission
- Many others

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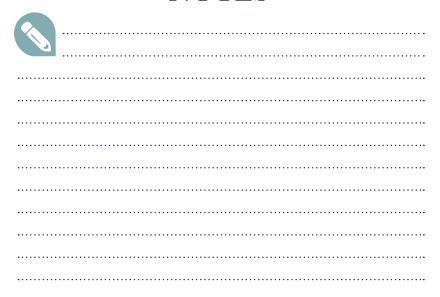
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LUKE & ACTS

- Likely a physician (mentioned in Colossians & Timothy)
- Sometimes a companion of Paul (uses "we" language in Acts 16:10-17, 20:5-15, etc.)
- Never actually named as the author but no real debate
- Most prolific writer of NT
- Wrote Luke and Acts (probably divided for length scroll)
- Historically considered a Gentile Christian (no evidence)
- Often gets overlooked despite the fact that many of the stories you know (Greatest Hits") are only in Luke. (Good Samaritan, Prodigal son, Rich man and Lazarus, Road to Emmaus)
- Why is Luke the only one who tells them? They fit in with his narrative.



NOTES



LUKE

- · How is it divided
 - 1:1-4:13 (Intro, Birth Narrative, and Prep for Ministry)
 - 4:14-9:50 (Ministry in Galilee)
 - 9:51-19:48 (The Journey to Jerusalem)
- 20:1-24:53 (Jerusalem, Crucifixion, Resurrection)
- Birth Narrative so important
 - Christmas!!!!
 - Peanuts Christmas (Linus drops his blanket at 2:8-14)
 - Shows a parallelism between John and Jesus
 - Many ties back to Scripture (shows a continuous line from Israel to Jesus to Acts)
 - Luke lays out his themes in the Songs Mary's Song (Magnificat), Zechariah's Song (Benedictus), Simeon's Song (no name).
 - God is savior God is the ultimate source of salvation. Jesus is the instrument of this salvation. Σ ωτηρια (salvation) is used 10 times in Luke-Acts, but none in Mark/Matthew.
 - Mary talks of God as Savior
 - Zachariah does too John is subordinate to Jesus's role
 - Lifting up the lowly/bringing down the powerful
 - a. Mary's song lays this out this is what he will do
 as savior. 1:51-53 we will see this throughout this
 narrative (not just financial the lost, the outcasts,
 vocation, family, those on the fringe, look at Elizabeth)
 19:10 sums this up "For the Son of Man came to seek
 and save the lost"
 - A light to the Gentiles -Simeon's Song 2:29-32
 - Think of these as you read Luke!



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How do you see different characteristics of Jesus in the	How do the three Gospels reach different audiences?
different Gospels?	
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Why is it important to read all three?	How could you incorporate the Gospels into your daily worship?
Why is it important to read all three?	
Why is it important to read all three?	
	daily worship?

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TAKE AWAY

UNDERSTANDING THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF
JESUS IS IMPERATIVE TO OUR CHRISTIAN WALK.

JESUS IS NOT A CHARACTER FROM A BOOK;
BUT IS THE MESSIAH, FULLY HUMAN AND FULLY
DIVINE, COME TO EARTH TO REDEEM US FROM

OUR SINS. WHILE CERTAIN VERSES AND

STORIES REFLECT HIS CHARACTER, YOU MUST
READ ABOUT HIS LIFE AND HIS TEACHINGS TO
FULLY UNDERSTAND WHO HE IS AND WHAT
HE HAS DONE FOR US. KNOWING THE GOSPELS
IS INTEGRAL TO OUR LIFE AS CHRISTIANS.



The Bible says that all things work together for the good of those who love the Lord and are called according to his purpose. I believe that. Because I've seen it all work.

- Tyler Perry

JOHN & ACTS

KEY THEMES

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How John's gospel differs from the Synoptic Gospels, and why he wrote it.

2

The
development and
geographic
expansion of the
early Church.
His disciples to
heal others

3

The discipleship of Gentiles, and the internal problems/conflict it caused.

JOHN was the Gospel writer that was closest to Christ. He (along with Peter and James) were in the inner circle. With his Gospel, he focuses on the divine nature of Christ. It is a much more spiritual Gospel, and in conjunction with the Synoptic Gospels it presents the fully-realized nature of Christ.

ACTS presents the continuation of Christ's message as it rapidly expands both geographically and ethnically. This is the history of the early Church. We see the joys and pains. Paul's ministry to the Gentiles serves a source of immense growth; but also conflict within the Church. Acts continues to be an example of the importance of discipleship and how conflict can be resolved within the church.

GOSPEL

JOHN

- Probably the "beloved disciple", definitely part of the inner circle
- Most scholars think the Gospel was written around 90 CE
- Only disciple that was not martyred.
- Contains some similarities with the Synoptic Gospels, so most scholars believe he was familiar with them. Some argue that because the Synoptics already existed, John wanted to tell the more spiritual story of Jesus
- John makes many references to "the Jews." This has been used through the years to support anti-Semitism. Upon closer examination it appears the references are to the leaders, not a broad statement about all Jews (which they were)
- Purpose So that the reader will believe in Jesus and have eternal life "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" 20:30-31 Not written for those that were witnesses, but for those that came after.
- Purpose To show that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of Man, the Son of God, King of Israel; but he is more. He is the logos (Word), he was with God from the beginning, and he was God.
 - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." - John 1:1-5
 - "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the

- earth... And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light." - Genesis 1:1-3
- "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" - John 1:14
- Jesus was both man and God. He can't be understood through a simple biography.
- 1:1-18 Prologue
- 1:19-12:50 Signs he is the revelation of the Father, scene of many bitter disputes
- 13:1-20:31 The glory of Jesus is revealed to those who accept him.
- 21:1-25 Post-resurrection appearance.
- Interesting aspects to John (brief sample)
 - John uses the term "Father" for God in relation to Jesus 120 times (emphasizing divinity)
 - The Passion does not reflect agony
 - Jesus never casts out demons
 - Many of the stories show a division between those that are believing and drawing closer and those that are falling away.
 - a. "He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" 1:11-12
 - b. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ... Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. 3:16,18



2



JOHN

- Seven "I am" statements He is the one bringing revelation from God. Remember God's said "I am who I am" (Exodus 3:14) (see also 8:24, 8:58)
- "I am the bread of life" (6:35)
- "I am the light of the world" (8:12, 9:5)
- "I am the gate for the sheep" (10:7)
- "I am the good shepherd" (10:11)
- "I am the resurrection and the life" (11:25)
- "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6)
- "I am the true vine and my Father is the vine grower" (15:1)
- Seven signs (John does not call them miracles)
 - Changing water into wine (2:1-11)
- Healing the official's son (4:46-54)
- Healing the paralytic (5:1-15)
- Feeding the 5000 (6:5-14) only one in all four Gospels
- Walking on water (6:16-24)
- Healing the blind man (9:1-7)
- Raising of Lazarus (11:1-45

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HISTORY

ACTS

- The Church referred to as "The Acts of the Apostles" even though Peter is the only Apostle whose acts are included in any detail.
- But Luke shows the continuity of the message of Jesus through the disciples' leadership in the early Church.
- The date of authorship varies, but is often thought to be late 1st Century
- Its placement (not with Luke) acts a transition from the Gospels to the letters, acts as the transition of the presentation of the Gospels to the Gentiles, provides a bigger picture basis of the events of the letters.
- Acts is the story of Jesus's message serving as the basis of the Church; and the expansion of the ministry to the Gentiles.
- The first half of the book focuses on Peter in Jerusalem, and the second half on Paul's missionary journeys.
- Acts is both a historical document (not in the way we expect a history) and a theological instruction to the Church.
- 1:1-26 Preparations
- 2:1-6:7 Witness of the disciples in Jerusalem
- 6:8-15:35 Expansion of the mission beyond Jerusalem
- 15:36-20:38 Paul's mission
- 21:1 28:31 Paul imprisoned and on trial

- Notable events:
 - 1:6-11 Ascension and guarantee of the Spirit
 - 2:1-27 Coming of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost, 7th Sunday after Easter), Peter's sermon, fellowship of believers
 - 6:8-7:60 Arrest, speech, and stoning of Stephen
 - 8:26-40 Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch
 - 9:1-31 Conversion of Saul
 - 0:1-11:18 Conversion of Cornelius, 10:34 Message to Gentiles, 10:44 Holy Spirit comes to Gentiles
 - Chapter 11 Peter's report to the Church
 - 12:1-19 James killed and Peter imprisoned
 - 13.1 Begins Paul's missionary journeys
 - Chapter 15 Jerusalem Council
 - Chapter 21 28 Paul's arrest and imprisonment



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What differences do you see in the content of John and the Synoptic Gospels?
What does it mean to receive Christ and believe in his name (John 1:12)?
(John 1:12)?

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	e differences today?	
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What can the early disputes in the church teach us about how

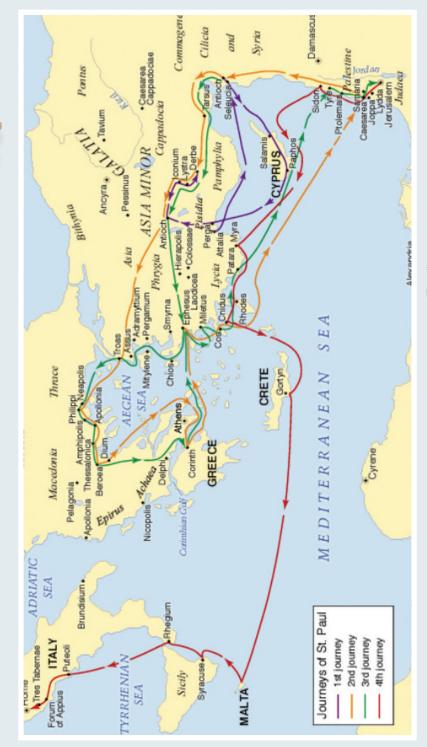
TAKE AWAY

Understanding the divinity of Christ is paramount to fully realizing his nature. John's gospel explains the "why" of Christ's sacrifice. It is where we understand the true importance of faithfully submitting to Christ's lordship.

Each person can make a difference with their discipleship. Whether a person is speaking to huge crowds (Peter), expanding the message of Christ to those who don't know it (Paul to the Gentiles), or in a one-on-one encounter (Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch).

THE LETTERS

The letters present much of the theology of the Church. This is the application of the Gospel to the lives and problems of those that were following Christ. Many things that Paul writes about are analogous to what people deal with today. People may no longer argue about the requirement of circumcision, but the dichotomy between the teaching of Christ and the teaching of the world is as prevalent as ever.



THE LETTERS OR EPISTLES

- Generally the oldest documents in the New Testament. 1 Thessalonians is often dated before 50 CE.
- 13 are attributed to Paul
- 1 is unknown (Hebrews)
- 7 to Apostles (Peter, John, James, Jude).
- There are a lot of discussions about who actually wrote certain letters. Paul, for example, had several associates and some materials may not have been originally written by him. The early Church included these documents in the Canon despite questions of authorship. It is the content, not the author that counts.
- There are letters that are referenced that we don't have.
- The letters are the theology established by the early church.
- Style of Hellenistic letters
- - Opening (identification of sender, receiver, greeting, wellwishes)
 - Body (intention of letter, why letter was written, how recipient should respond)
 - Closing (wishes for recipient, greetings from third parties)

PAUL

- Converted on the road to Damascus. (Acts 9)
- Much of his missionary work is to Gentiles
- Probably the most important theologian
- Argued the importance of being free of the Jewish Law
- Argued extensively for the importance of grace not works
- Wrote on the importance and role of the Holy Spirit in our lives

- The message of Christ is universal (to all). "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" - Gal. 3:28
- Message of living together in unity, morality, repentance.
- Provided lessons of structure for the Church.
- Remember that Paul was often addressing problems in specific churches. Certain teachings are more cultural than doctrinal (1 Cor. 33-35, 1 Tim. 2:12, see other comments on women - his associates)

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PAUL'S LETTERS TO CHURCHES

- Letters written to specific churches or groups of people
- Romans addresses problems in the church (law vs. faith, divisions in Jewish and Gentile Christians), how to live.
- 1 & 2 Corinthians addressed to wealthy port city (hedonistic). Addresses the difference between worldly standards and the standards of Christ.
- Galatians written to respond to incorrect teaching. Includes the fruit of the Spirit (5:22-23)
- Ephesians Grace is through faith not works, all share in God's blessings (message to Gentiles), how to live
- Philippians Thanking the church, share in Christ's sufferings
- Colossians addresses people teaching Jewish Law, universal message of Christ
- 1 & 2 Thessalonians thanks the church, teaching on morality, be prepared for the coming of Jesus

PAUL'S LETTERS TO INDIVIDUALS

- 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus (Pastoral Epistles)
 - Teaches the governance and behavior of Christian communities and their leaders.
 - 1 Timothy written to Timothy (companion of Paul mentioned in other letters) generally related to church governance (true and false teaching, Church order). (controversial teachings 2:11-15, 6:1-2)
 - 2 Timothy Paul appears closer to death, handing wisdom on. Notes to be bold in proclaiming the Bible, uses himself as example, expect sufferings, and expect troublemakers. (3:16-17)
- Titus Specific to the ministry on Crete, commissions Titus to fix problems in the church and appoint Elders.
- Philemon letter asking Philemon to free his slave Onesimus. It has been misused to justify slavery

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HEBREWS

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- Unknown author (used to be attributed to Paul, although many questioned), very well-written
- Written to an audience that has been persecuted, and some have lost faith. More of a sermon than a letter.
- Written as an exhortation of the superiority of Jesus to Jewish tradition.
- 15% is quotations from the Old Testament (most of any NT book)
- Divisions
 - 1:5-4:13 Superiority of Jesus the Son
- 4:14-7:28 Superiority of Jesus as High Priest
- 8:1-10:18 Superiority of Jesus' ministry
- 10:19-13:19 Necessity of faithfulness

GENERAL EPISTLES

- General, because they are not directed to a specific group
- James practical wisdom (parallels with Proverbs) advice on suffering, faith requiring works, taming the tongue, etc.
- 1 & 2 Peter addressed to the universal church, call to holy living, suffering for your faith, rejects false teachings
- 1, 2, & 3 John How to live/love, reject false teachings denying the resurrection
- Jude fight for the faith, maintain morality

REVELATION

- Also known as the Apocalypse of John
- Was a controversial addition to Canon for some.
- Interpreted in many ways
 - Literal prophecy
- Current hope for suffering and oppression.
- Symbolic for every time and place to envision a universe transformed.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Are there any teachings that you have a problem with, or that seem to only apply within the context of the time?

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What issues were being faced by the church that are similar to what we see today?

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How could you incorporate the Gospels into your daily worship?

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READING OPTIONS

- 1. Read the Bible in Canonical Order
- 2. Read the Bible in Chronological Order
- 3. Start with 12 Sample (Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Job, Joshua, Psalms, Isaiah, Matthew or Luke, John, Acts, Romans, Hebrews)

TAKE AWAY

God can use anyone. Paul was a Pharisee who oversaw the persecution of Christians. Through a relationship with Christ, he became an early leader of the church; and the primary force behind spreading the message to the Gentiles.

The things that keep us away form a genuine relationship with Christ have changed little in the last 2000 years. While the worldly teachings have changed, their existence has not. Read the letters with an introspective look at how the things and people the writers are warning about are still prevalent today.

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