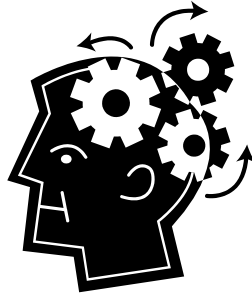


The 'Good Book' Book



Understand it



Love it



Be changed by it

Introduction

A Reason for this study-

"Question authority"; this phrase has become a battle cry for my generation, and with good reason. Throughout history, people have suffered by the hand of misplaced, inappropriate authority. It's no wonder then that people are sick of being told what to do and how to do it!

What happens when authority can no longer be trusted? Anger, dissention, disappointment and fear take root. People lose faith in everything; eventually, even in themselves! In spiritual terms, much of the world is already there. The situation seems desperate, but the world has been there before, and the Word of God has stood the test of time...

People need a reason to believe; a reason to trust; an unchangeable foundation to build upon. In this study I hope to present an understanding of the Bible for what it is; the pure authority of God spoken to man. The Bible is up to the test! It's refreshing in its honesty and commanding in its presence. It's able to be trusted and demands a response.

Please examine this defense of scripture but remember there is no way for me to fully present God's Word for what it is; amazing!

Sincerely,
Nathan Rockafellow

The Center of the Story

God's Word- Given by One Author, penned by 40 different men; 66 books in all,
containing 807,361 words with ONE unified story to tell!

- **Genesis 1:3-5, 26-31 & Genesis 3:8-24**

God exists, God creates the heavens and the earth by the power of His Word; light appears, and darkness is divided. Time begins with the first day and the first night. Mankind is created; a being unlike any other, in the image of God. Man sins- he disobeys his Maker and as a result, is separated from Perfection. Blood is shed to cover the naked truth- the darkness of sin.

- **John 1:1-5**

Sin's permanent solution, The Saviour Jesus Christ enters the world- His life is the light of men!

- **Luke 9:23**

Jesus said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be My follower, you must put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross daily and follow Me. If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for Me, you will find true life."

- **Revelation 20-21**

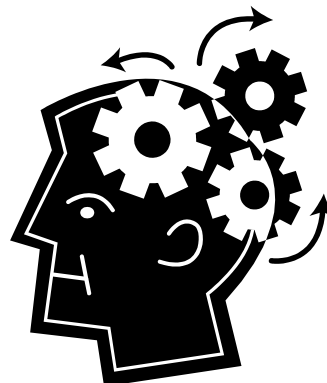
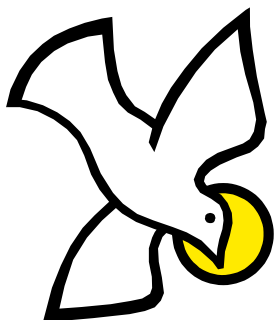
Darkness is forever destroyed!
The old story is complete, the new story begins!

"And the One sitting on the throne said, 'look I am making all things new.' And then He said to me, 'write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.' And He also said, 'It is finished. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give the springs of the water of life without change. All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be My children. But cowards who turn away from Me, and unbelievers, and the corrupt, and murderers, and the immoral, and those who practice witchcraft, and idol worshipers, and all liars- their doom is in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. This is the second death."

"Yes, I am coming soon. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the
Lord Jesus be with you all."

Revelation & Reason

The Bible is God's revelation to man.
Can Revelation and Reason co-exist?



Revelation:

- Dependant on the Word of God
- Cause and Effect
- Dependant on the Outside source
- Occupies the Supra Natural realm

Reason:

- Dependant on the Word of Man
- Effect and Cause
- Dependant on internal Logic
- Occupies the Natural realm

Revelation and Reason can co-exists as long as their order of importance remains unchanged.

When Revelation proceeds, there is no need to reject Reason.

Definitions- according to Webster's 1913

- '**Revelation**'- "The process by which God imparts truths which would otherwise remain unknown."
- '**Reason**'- "A sane or sound mind, right thinking."

2 Timothy 3:16; Romans 1:18-32

Is the Bible God's Inspired Revelation?

If The Bible is timeless truth; unlike anything else on earth, it must be INSPIRED from God.

Inspiration- "God's guiding man's pen to insure that His message is correctly written down." See 2 Timothy 3:16

How can we be sure? Look at the evidence!

"God is not a man, that He should lie. He is not a human, that He should change His mind. Has He ever spoken and failed to act? Has He ever promised and not carried it through?" Num. 23:19

- **Can the Bible back its own claims in the light of other historical accounts?**

**as a record of history-*

If we can back up the Historical record found in the Bible, we should be better suited to accept the Spiritual claims of the Bible.

**as prophetic-*

Foretold & Fulfilled: (There are too many to list; we will study those that center on the Messiah)

- **Has any part of the Bible been proven to be false, or is it simply hard to believe?**

If Lewis and Clark, the American explorers from 1804-1806 were told that a trip from Hartford Illinois to Astoria Oregon could be taken in just a matter of hours, they would say it was impossible. Why? Because from their perspective (pre-flight), that claim would be inconceivable. From a modern perspective (post-flight), we know without question that this trip is possible!

Many times the Bible seems from our perspective to be unbelievable, but it has never been proven to be unreliable!

Read 1 Corinthians 2:14

Fulfilled Prophecy

Examining Messianic Biblical Prophecy Foretold & Fulfilled-

** The Biblical Prophecy Research Center, online at <http://www.bprc.org> has supplied these thoughts on prophecies concerning the Messiah. I have included these here with permission.*

The Lineage and Location of Messiah

- Prophecy: Born of a Woman-

Some of the more interesting and surprising statements about the Messiah in the Old Testament are those concerning His lineage. There are very specific prophecies about this, each of which Jesus fulfilled. In talking to the serpent in [Genesis 3:15](#), God said, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel." This is taken by many as one of the earliest Messianic prophecies describing Satan's brief victory over Messiah and Messiah's ultimate victory over Satan. It is mentioned here because the offspring (Messiah) is described as being of the woman (Eve). This is extraordinary as the nation of Israel has always been patriarchal; people are mentioned in terms of their fathers, not their mothers. Because of this, many see this verse as also being a prophecy of Messiah's birth through a virgin. Bear this in mind, and see what the New Testament writes in [Galatians 4:4](#), "But when the right time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman..."

- The Promise of Abraham-

The Bible makes note of several other aspects of the earthly bloodline the Messiah will come from. In [Genesis 12:3](#), God is making a promise to Abram (later, Abraham) about the influence his descendants will have over the earth and says, "In you will all of the families of the earth be blessed." The Messiah would descend from Abraham as Messiah is the source of all true blessings. The bloodline is further refined to Isaac, son of Abraham in [Genesis 17:19](#) and [21:12](#), to Jacob, son of Isaac in [28:14](#) and to Judah, son of Jacob (or Israel) in [49:10](#). Matthew, in the first chapter of his [Gospel](#), begins his account of the life of Jesus by describing His lineage as coming from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob to Judah and so on. Luke echoes this lineage for Jesus in [Luke 3:33-34](#).

- From the throne of King David-

Building on the specificity of Messiah's lineage, God promises King David, through Nathan the prophet in [2 Samuel 7:12-13](#), that Messiah will not only come from his own bloodline, but will also inherit his throne. David's throne is again promised as the seat of Messiah's government in [Isaiah 9:6-7](#), and in [Jeremiah 23:5](#). Taking a look at the accounts of Jesus shows Him to be a descendant of King David in [Matthew 1:1](#), [1:6](#) and in [Luke 3:31](#). He is further described as heir to David's throne with power by Paul in [Romans 1:3-4](#). It is important to remember here that Paul was once a Pharisee, which in his time meant that he possessed a strong knowledge and understanding of the Old Testament. For him to claim Jesus as the foretold Messiah was a big deal! The Jewish leaders, his ex-companions, were *very* clear on Paul's position; they repeatedly tried to kill him for it.

- Born in Bethlehem/From Galilee-

Isaiah also tells us in [Isaiah 9:1](#) that Messiah's ministry would begin in the region of Galilee. All the gospels confirm to us that Jesus also began His ministry in Galilee. In [Matthew 4:12-17](#), Matthew goes so far as to claim that Jesus did so as direct fulfillment of the prophecy in [Isaiah 9:1](#).

Messiah Bears God's Attributes

Probably *the* most important claim the Old Testament makes about Messiah is that He is truly God.

- Eternal-

One aspect of God is that He is *eternal*. The prophet Micah tells us in [Micah 5:2](#) that the Messiah Himself is eternal when he, talking about Messiah, says, "...whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." Compare this to the claim of eternity Jesus made in the New Testament in [John 8:58](#), "The truth is, I existed before Abraham was even born!" In many other New Testament passages Jesus is described as the eternal Messiah ([Ephesians 1:3-14](#) and in [Colossians 1:15-19](#).)

- Divine-

Another aspect of the Messiah is that He is the true and only Son of God, being Himself God. The writers of Psalms and Proverbs make this link for us in [Psalms 2:7](#) and [Proverbs 30:4](#) "Who but God goes up to heaven and comes back down? Who holds the wind in His fist? Who wraps up the oceans in His cloak? Who has created the whole wide world? What is His name- and His Son's name...".

In [Luke 1:32](#), an angel of God is telling Mary that she is about to become the mother of Jesus and says to her, "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give to him the throne of his father, David." In [Matthew 3:17](#), God Himself speaks at the baptism of Jesus and says of Him, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

- Mighty God-

The Old Testament gets even clearer about the fact that Messiah is God, that God Himself will be the Messiah, that the name of the Messiah is *Y-H-W-H*. Read the description of Messiah in [Isaiah 9:6](#). There we read of a Son who will be given to govern the world. Of the five names listed that the Messiah will be known by, note that one of them is **Mighty God**. The prophet Jeremiah is even more blatant about applying the name of God to the Messiah in [Jeremiah 23:6](#). Of course, the question is, does the Bible apply God's name to Jesus? Noting that the name *Y-H-W-H* is above any other name in authority, read what Paul wrote about Jesus in [Philippians 2:9](#). There he writes that God gave Jesus "the name which is above every name."

What Messiah Will Be A

- The Prophet-

The Old Testament also describes several things the Messiah will do while here on earth. In [Deuteronomy 18:15](#), Moses is addressing the people of Israel, and tells them, “Yahweh your God will raise up to you a prophet from the midst of you, of your brothers, like me; to him you shall listen” identifying the Messiah as being a prophet just like Moses was. God assures us that it is the Messiah of whom Moses was speaking in verses [18-19](#) by the seriousness God places on those who will not listen to the coming prophet. Taking a look at the New Testament, John tells us in [John 7:40](#) that many Jews who heard Jesus really believed that He was the *prophet* Moses mentioned. Also, Luke quotes the words of the Apostle Peter in [Acts 3:19-22](#) who confirmed by his direct witness of Jesus that He was, in fact, *the prophet* Moses said was coming.

- Healer-

Isaiah describes in [Isaiah 61:1-2](#) some aspects of the ministry the Messiah will have. Compare this to the passage in [Luke 4:18](#) where Jesus not only quotes the Old Testament passage but also claims to be its fulfillment. More specifically, [Isaiah 35:5-6](#), describes a wonderful ministry of *healing* for any who need it. Jesus describes the works He has done in almost the exact same words in [Matthew 11:5](#). Over and over and over again, all throughout the gospels, Jesus *never* turned away anyone who needed healing, even when He knew they would not turn to Him ([Luke 17:12-19](#)). All this for the deep love He feels for each one of them, and each one of us. He healed us even at the cost of His own life.

- Man of Great Character-

In the Old Testament, there are many places where the character of Messiah is described. We see the same character traits exhibited by Jesus in the New Testament. In verses [40:11](#) and [42:3](#) of his book, Isaiah describes Messiah as demonstrating tenderness and compassion and in verse [12:15](#) of his gospel, Matthew says the same of Jesus when he relates that “Great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all.” As Matthew continues his narration, he even claims that what he is relating is the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy of verse [42:3](#). The Apostle Peter goes farther and claims that Jesus is completely without sin in [1 Peter 2:22](#) and that, by quoting it, this fulfills [Isaiah 53:9](#).

The Bible documents many more such parallels between the traits and actions of the Messiah and of Jesus. The following table shows just a few of these.

| The Messiah must... | Prophecy | Fulfillment by Jesus |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Bear the reproaches and sin of others | Isaiah 53:12 | Romans 15:3 |
| Be a priest | Psalms 110:4 | Hebrews 5:5-6, 6:20, 7:15-17 |
| Enter Jerusalem on a donkey | Zechariah 9:9 | Matthew 21:1-11 ; Mark 11:1-11 ; John 12:12-16 |
| Enter the Temple with authority | Malachi 3:1 | Matthew 21:12 ; John 2:13-22 |

These are only a few of the prophecies about the things the Messiah will do from the Old Testament along with the descriptions of how Jesus fulfilled them.

But, since a determined faker could try to mimic the prophecies about what the Messiah will do, let's have a look at prophecies which no human could bring off.

What Will Be Done To Messiah

The Old Testament speaks even more about the things which will be done to Messiah and things about His life over which *no ordinary human could have any control*. These are important to understand as most of them would be impossible for a false Messiah to fake since they would be out of a normal person's control. God loves us so much that He has given us the things to look for in Messiah in such a way that He cannot be impersonated successfully as long as we pay attention. These things make it quite clear that Jesus is the Messiah foretold by the Old Testament.

- Perfect Timing-

One of the first things to note in the Old Testament is that God tells us exactly when Messiah would come to earth! In [Daniel 9:24-26](#), he gives us a total of 69 "weeks" (a euphemism of the day meaning a period of 7 years) or 483 years after Jerusalem and its wall were commissioned to be rebuilt for when the Messiah would be "cut off" for our sins. The best archaeological evidence dates the rebuilding of Jerusalem at approximately 453 B.C. Four hundred and eighty three years after the city was rebuilt, Jesus was being crucified outside its walls. We are given the historical information we need to accurately place Jesus' birth in [Matthew 2:1, 16](#) and [19](#) and [Luke 3:1](#) and we know He was crucified 33 years later.

- Born of a Virgin-

Another trait about Messiah can be found in [Isaiah 7:14](#) where we are told that He will be born of a virgin. There are many who contest the use of the word "virgin", as the original Hebrew word simply means "young woman." However, the context of the usage of this word all throughout the rest of the Old Testament provides the connotation of an "unsullied reputation." Further proof of this lies in the Greek word chosen by the Jewish scholars who created the Septuagint (the original Greek Old Testament) written 200 years before Jesus was even born. They chose the Greek word *parthenos* which really does mean virgin. Matthew uses this word when he quotes Isaiah in [Matthew 1:23](#). The declaration of Jesus being born of a virgin may be found in [Matthew 1:18-Matthew 2:1](#) and in [Luke 1:26-35](#).

We are also promised a messenger, one who would come before the Messiah to announce His arrival. Read what Isaiah wrote in [Isaiah 40:3-5](#) and what Malachi wrote in [Malachi 3:1](#). Both are statements of this promise from God. In the New Testament, Matthew records the claim that John the Baptizer made that he was this messenger foretold by Isaiah. John the Baptizer even quotes the Old Testament prophet in [Matthew 3:1-3](#). Luke records in his gospel in [chapter 1, verse 17](#) the words of an angel speaking to John's father saying the same thing. Luke reiterates John as the fulfillment of Isaiah in [Luke 3:2-6](#).

- His Death-

At the other end of His earthly ministry, we are given several details about His execution. The Old Testament tells us that He will be "pierced." The prophet Zechariah associates this with the death of the Messiah in [12:10](#) and [Psalms 22:16](#) tells us that this piercing will be in the Messiah's hands and feet. In [Matthew 27:35](#) and [John 19:18](#), we are told that Jesus is executed by crucifixion, which requires the piercing of the hands and feet. Luke confirms in [24:39](#) the piercing really did happen by asking His disciples to inspect the holes *after* His resurrection. John even claims this as fulfillment of [Zechariah 12:10](#) in [John 19:34-37](#).

Despite the cruel nature of His execution, we are promised that none of the Messiah's bones would be broken. In the Law of Moses, we are told that the Passover lamb should not have any of its bones broken (see [Exodus 12:46](#) and [Numbers 9:12](#)). Since the Messiah is the ultimate Passover Lamb whose blood protects the doorposts of our hearts, then His bones must remain unbroken as well. This is reiterated in [Psalms 34:20](#). In [John 19:33-36](#) we are told how the Roman soldiers did not need to break any of Jesus' bones and that this was in direct fulfillment of the Scripture.

- His Resurrection-

We are promised that, after His death, Messiah will be raised from the dead in [Psalms 16:10](#) with support from [Isaiah 53:9-10](#) and [Psalms 2:7](#). The descriptions of the resurrection of Jesus are found in [Matthew 28:1-20](#) and [Acts 2:23-36](#) and [13:33-37](#) which quotes [Psalms 2:7](#). The Bible also promises that, after His resurrection, Messiah would ascend to heaven and sit at the right hand of God. The promise is found in [Psalms 16:11](#), [68:18](#) and [110:1](#) and Jesus is described as fulfilling this in [Luke 24:51](#), [Acts 1:9-11](#) and [7:55](#) and [Hebrews 1:3](#).

| The Messiah must... | Prophecy | Fulfillment by Jesus |
|--|---|---|
| Be born in Bethlehem | Micah 5:2 | Matthew 2:1 ; Luke 2:4-7 |
| Be adored by great persons | Psalms 72:10-11 | Matthew 2:1-11 |
| Be anointed with the Spirit of God | Isaiah 11:2 , 61:1 | Matthew 3:16 ; John 3:34 ; Acts 10:38 |
| Be hated without cause | Isaiah 49:7 | John 15:24-25 |
| Be undesired and rejected by His own people | Isaiah 53:2 , 63:3 | Mark 6:3 ; Luke 9:58 ; John 1:11 |
| Be plotted against by Jews and Gentiles together | Psalms 2:1-2 | Acts 4:27 |
| Be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver | Zechariah 11:12 | Matthew 26:14-16 |
| Have his price given for a potter's field | Zechariah 11:13 | Matthew 27:5-8 |
| Be forsaken by His disciples | Zechariah 13:7 | Matthew 26:31 , 56 |
| Be struck on the cheek | Micah 5:1 | Matthew 27:30 |
| Be spat on | Isaiah 50:6 | Matthew 26:67 , 27:30 |
| Be beaten | Isaiah 50:6 | Matthew 26:67 , 27:26 , 30 |
| Be considered a transgressor | Isaiah 53:12 | Matthew 27:38 |
| Be buried with the rich when dead | Isaiah 53:9 | Matthew 27:57-60 |
| Be sought after by Gentiles as well as Jews | Isaiah 11:10 , 42:1 | Acts 10:45-48 |
| Be accepted by the Gentiles | Isaiah 11:10 , 42:1-4 , 49:1-12 | Matthew 12:21 ; Acts 10:45 ; Romans 15:9-12 |

* Special thanks to Stephen at BPRC Ministries for sharing this study!

Psalms 22 and Isaiah 53

Perhaps most compelling are the Messianic prophecies found in Psalms 22 and Isaiah 53. Reading these chapters is like reading the Gospels, which were written centuries before hand!

Truly, Jesus Christ is the Messiah! Biblical prophecy has stood the test of time!

So Where Does All This Leave Us?

As described above, there is a significant amount of Biblical evidence which can lead us to only one conclusion. Jesus **is** the Messiah. He claimed it. It was claimed by others of Him. But more importantly, He *demonstrated* it by His fulfillment of every messianic prophecy we know of, leaving no room for doubt. The mathematical probability that a person could fulfill even the prophecies listed here is astronomical, yet Jesus did it.

To get a feel for the probabilities involved, consider this. Author and speaker Josh McDowell calculated the odds of Jesus fulfilling only eight of the Messianic prophecies as 1 out of 10^{17} (a one followed by 17 zeros). This is equivalent to covering the entire state of Texas with silver dollars two feet deep, marking one of them, mixing them all up and having a blind-folded person select the marked one at random the first time!!!

Only a few of the Messianic prophecies in the Bible have been presented here. There are many, many more, not including the prophecy were still waiting to see fulfilled! The most amazing fact is that NONE of the bibles prophacys have yet to disappoint!

With that kind of credibility, I choose to examine future prophecy with a confident expectation!

The Bible Map

Like a large grocery store, the Bible is diverse. Each book of the Bible, like each aisle of the store offers diverse information and teaching. Within each book are separate chapters, just as each aisle has many different shelves. With great diversity, it's amazing to know that each book and chapter compliments the next. There are no contradictory teachings in God's Word.

Each book, and each chapter is important, but not all books or chapters are particularly relevant for every teaching. The better we know the layout of our Bible, the better we will be able to find and use relevant teaching. What we need is a Bible Map...

Let's start with the two largest divisions in the Scripture-

The Old and New Testament.

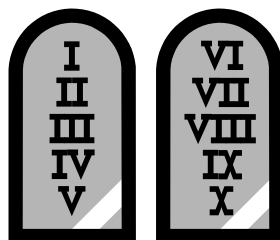
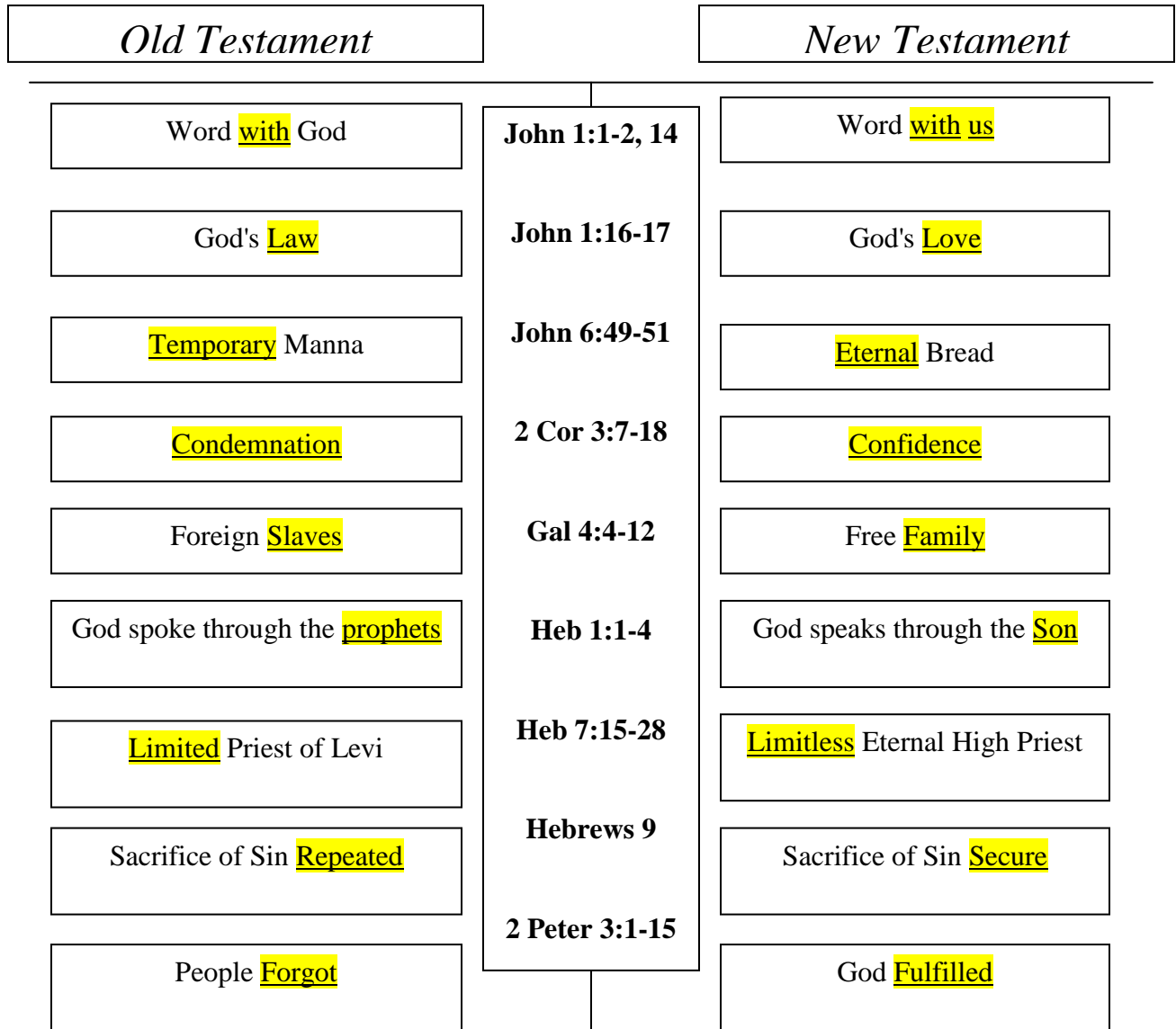
- What is the central teaching of the **Old Testament**?
 - Who were its authors?
 - Who is its audience?
-
- What is the central teaching of the **New Testament**?
 - Who were its authors?
 - Who is its audience?

Insert hand drawn Chronological OT
picture Bible pages

The Relationship between the Testaments

2 Timothy 3:16-17

“Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith...” 1 Timothy 3:16



The Old Testament-

The OT is the first 2/3rds of the Bible. It covers over 4000 years of history. With 39 books, it teaches the failure of man to stay right with God. God's Law instructs, but by our inability to obey, it also condemns every one. Pre-incarnate Jesus is seen in over 300 prophecies. From the Garden of Eden, the flood, the exile, the 10 Commandments, the Tabernacle, the Temple and the Passover Lamb, Jesus is woven into the Old Testament tapestry.

The Old Testament Scriptures are written in four styles. Some books contain more than one style. It's important to remember when reading the Bible that the books are not always listed in Chronological order:

- Law (nearly all O.T. books contain some part of God's Laws)
- History (Genesis - Esther)
- Poetry (Job - Song of Solomon)
- Prophecy (Isaiah - Malachi)

Genesis- "In the Beginning"

- Creation
- The fall of man (sin)
- Early years of Israel

Exodus- "Redemption- God saves"

- By God's power, Moses leads the people of Israel out of Egypt
- God gives His people His law (10 commandments) at Mt Sinai

Leviticus- "Worship"

- God gives the priests and people rules to live by
- "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy" (19:2)

Numbers- "The record of Wanderings- life in circles"

- 40 years in the wilderness
- Life just outside the Promise Land

Deuteronomy- "Covenant Renewal"

- Remember God's promise
- Personal responsibility
- What God has done, what God expects, what God will do

Joshua- "Victory and Responsibility"

- Israel takes the Promise Land
- Faith in action

Judges- "Up's and Down's"

- Backsliding and gracious deliverance
- Faith in one generation, rejection in the next

Ruth- "Preservation for God's faithful"

- Many worship false Gods, one worships the True God

1 Samuel- "Times of Change"

- God's chosen leader rejected, a king is appointed
- God's people want to be like the "other" people

2 Samuel- "King David, a man after God's own heart"

- Good times in Israel
- Humanity of man; the sin of David
- The grace of God to those who love Him

1 & 2 Kings- "Rise and Fall"

- Solomon is King
- A Temple for God
- Obedience and blessing (1 Kings 9:4-5)
- Apostasy and judgment (1 Kings 11:11)

1 Chronicles- "God's editorial on history"

- A look back at the royal line and reign of David

2 Chronicles- "Unity under God"

- The temple is central to life
- A closer look at Judah and its righteous kings

Ezra- "Restore and Reform"

- The temple of God is restored
- The faithful remnant struggle to reform their lives

Nehemiah- "Security and hard work"

- Jerusalem's city walls are rebuilt
- The Jews resettle

Esther- "God at work behind the scenes"

- The Jew Ester is used to save her nation and lead Persia as queen
- Haman conspires against the Jews and is hung in his gallows

Job- "Triumph through trial"

- Job loses family, friends and his health
- Job questions and cries out to God
- Job keeps a God perspective and submits to authority
- Job is blessed again

Psalms- "Songs from the heart"

- Prayers to God
- Prophecy of God's future provision

Proverbs- "Wisdom of man"

- Advice for daily living

Ecclesiastes "A life without God is no life at all"

- Life spent away from God is meaningless

Song of Solomon- *"True Love"*

- Love vs. Lust- the beauty of commitment and sexual intimacy between a husband and wife

Isaiah- *"Prophecy of the coming Savior- a call to come back"*

Jeremiah- *"God's rebellious people"*

- Deserving of God's anger
- Disaster ahead
- God still loves His people

Lamentations- *"God suffers when we suffer"*

- Consequence and mercy

Ezekiel- *"Announcing Judgment"*

- Israel needs a new heart and a new spirit

Daniel- *"God's Devine control"*

- True worship is personal worship
- God never abandons those who worship Him

Hosea- *"God loves the prostitute"*

- Guilty, yet God still loves

Joel- *"Plagues we bring upon our selves"*

- Promise of the Holy Spirit

Amos- *"Punishment for God's people"*

- Complacency and worthless religion

Obadiah- *"Punishment for those who appose God's people"*

Jonah- *"All can be saved"*

- Missionary journey- Jonah resists God's plan
- God loves the lost when the lost love Him

Micah- *"Judgment and pardon"*

- The Lord will be King

Nahum- *"Vengeance belongs to God"*

Habakkuk- *"Evil is on top today, but God will triumph"*

Zephaniah- *"Wake up and come back"*

- Judgment for some, joy for others

Haggai- *"Finish what you start- rebuilding the Temple"*

- priorities

Zechariah- *"Hope will come with Messiah"*

- visions of the coming Saviour

Malachi- *"All must Honor His name"*

Perspective Point-

Growing in God

Sometimes, reading the Bible becomes a task that simply overwhelms. Even reading this summary of the bible can be overwhelming! Portions of the OT can seem dry, but that's not the way it is suppose to be! When Scripture feels dry and irrelevant, take a brake and get some perspective:

The Student of the Bible must always remember that God's Word is PERSONAL! It was given by God to humanity as a testimony of God's person and as a foundation for life. But perhaps the biggest reason it has been given is so that we may be personally changed!

Confess & Come to God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ, the promised Savior of the soul!

Think thoroughly & thoughtfully as you read the Bible!

Live the Bible with Purity & Power!

And in life, stay as Grateful as God is Great!!

The Bible is God's love letter written to YOU!

Now it's your turn...

Write God a love note-

Moving from Head to Heart

It's not enough to KNOW God; we are to Grow in God:

- "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe- and tremble!" James 2:19
- "But **grown in the grace and** knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:18

Spiritual growth starts with DESIRE:

- "As newborn babes, **desire the pure milk of the Word**, that you may grow thereby." 1 Peter 2:2

Desire encourages LEARNING:

- **Do not conform** any longer to the pattern of the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Romans 12:2-3
- "...**put on the new** self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator." Colossians 3:10

How can we fill our minds with God's Word?

- Hear it! Romans 10:17
- Read it! Revelation 1:3
- Study it! Acts 17:11
- Memorize & Meditate on it! Psalms 119:11; 1:2

Then take the Word you have learned to Heart by living in the Spirit:

- "Your faith should **not be in the wisdom of men** but in the power of God." 1 Corinthians 2:5
- "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who **love Him.**" 1 Corinthians 2:9
- "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, **that we might know** the things that have been freely given to us by God." 1 Corinthians 2:12
- "**But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit**, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Not if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." Romans 8:9-11

The New Testament- God's evidence of Grace

Introduction to the NT:

The New Testament is God's beautiful revelation, giving perspective and complete understanding to the Old. It is not a contradiction to the Old, but rather an explanation through fulfilled prophecy.

Imagine the Old Testament as a person looking into the sky-



Why is she looking up? What is she looking at?
Why is she responding with open arms?

We are unable to answer these questions until we ourselves look up. We need to understand what's up there.

The New Testament is what's up there-
It's the reason, the hope, the big picture, the evidence of
God's grace!

Understanding the NT:

The NT begins with the four **Gospels**, also called the Books of 'Good News'. They are Good News because they tell of the birth, life, death and resurrection of the Savior- Jesus Christ!

The book of **Acts** follows the Gospels and gives details about the Church. Reading Acts is like watching scenes from a play. Each 'act' tells more about this true life story.

The books known as the **Epistles** written by the apostle Paul, Peter, James and John come next. These books are follow-up letters that teach, correct and encourage new churches and young believers.

The last book of the New Testament is **Revelation**, an apocalyptic book of prophecy. Revelation literally means the "final unveiling". It is the only book in the Bible that specifically offers a 'special blessing' to the person who reads and keeps its words.

Matthew- *"The life of Christ from a Jewish perspective"*

Mark- *"The life of Christ- in person, work and teaching"*

- Written to Christians in Rome and to believers everywhere

Luke- *"The life of Christ- a portrait of Jesus work"*

- Written by a Gentile physician

John- *"The life of Christ- God became man"*

Acts- *"Christian Roots- the beginning of the Church Age"*

- The sequel to the book of Luke

Romans- *"The big picture of Christian faith"*

- Fundamentals of Human Life
- Fundamentals of the Faith
- Fundamentals of New Life

1 & 2 Corinthians- *"Christians in a corrupt society"*

- The old life is gone, a new life has begun

Galatians- *"Freedom in Christ fulfils the Law"*

Ephesians- *"Growing strong in Christ- Spiritual Body Building"*

- Believers working together
- Parallels Colossians

Philippians- *"The source of True Joy"*

Colossians- *"Believers have all they need in Jesus"*

- Parallels Ephesians

1&2 Thessalonians- *"Christ will return"*

- A detailed explanation of Christ's second coming

1&2 Timothy- *"Encouragement and Instruction for a young Christian Leader"*

Titus- *"Instructions for a Sound Church"*

Philemon- *"Forgiveness- imitate Christ Jesus"*

Hebrews- *"The Old Testament explained"*

- *The Just shall live by faith*

James- *"Faith, Love, Wisdom and Wealth"*

- *A more practical than doctrinal guide to life*

1&2 Peter- *"Crave, Cry and Come to Christ- continue to grow"*

1,2,3 John- *"Love as a litmus test"*

- True faith
- Beware of false teachers
- Do not imitate what is evil, but what is good

Jude- *"Stay Alert"*

- Remember what you were taught
- Rescue those who have fallen

Revelation- *"A revealing from God to creation"*

- Visions of the end of this age

Insert hand drawn Chronological NT
picture Bible pages

Exploring the book of Acts

Life in the Spirit & the birth of the Ek Klesia/Church

The book of Acts is essential to the Christian seeking to understand life in the Holy Spirit and their place in the Lord's Church. Acts documents the birth and growth of all that Jesus promised to His followers; new life. This is where the words of Christ, "I will make you fishers of men" (Mark 1:17) come to fruition. The disciples are given the Holy Spirit at the end of the Gospels, but they grow in the Spirit through this book. They take the Good News to the Jewish community and many are saved. Gentiles too are brought into the family of God, and extraordinary works of power are performed by the Christ followers.

Where do you and I fit in the history of Faith?

What is our part in the story? This book holds the keys to understanding!

Some call this time period the "Dispensation of the Holy Spirit". A dispensation is an order or logical arrangement of time or events. Let's look at the events of this book chronologically, then, we will attempt to bring understanding them.

Insert hand drawn Chronological
ACTS picture Bible pages

Understanding the New Testament World:

Throughout the Old Testament, the Bible seems to center around the Nation of Israel. From its conception with Abraham to its occupation and loss, the Jewish community plays the starring roll. In the New Testament, the world is different. Israel is once again in bondage, but not under the occupation of one particular kingdom surrounded by other kingdoms. This time the known world is controlled by one empire, the Romans.

How did this happen and why is it important?

- 500 BC- the Latin's form the Republic of Rome.
 - 390 BC- the Gaul's invade and destroy the city of Rome.
 - 265BC- the Italics drive out the Gaul's and expand the borders and control of Italy.
 - 264-146 BC- the Punic Wars between Carthage and Rome. Hannibal attacks with elephants but Rome responds with the phalanx and running shoes.
 - 146 BC- Macedonia given over to Rome
 - 65-64BC- The Roman Republic dies- it was over extended.
 - 48-44 BC- Julius Cesar dissolves the consulate and declares himself as emperor.
 - 44-30 BC- civil war
- *200 years of peace- Pax Romana; interrupted by an insurrection of the Jews in AD 60 which was quickly crushed.

God used world conditions to prepare the way and to further the message of the Gospel!

The Holy Spirit- Our promised helper

Who is the Holy Spirit? - taken from "Pneumatology by Dr. Richard Fairman.

- The Holy Spirit possesses personality and deity. He has been active in every period of history. He functions as one with the Father and the Son.
- He gives council in truth, abilities, restrains sin and convicts. He is active in spiritual birth, growth and by giving gifts to Christians. He regenerates, indwells and seals, sanctifies, assures, guides, enables, fills, prays for the Christian and restrains the evil one in this world.

(Gen 1:2; Ex 31:2-3; Is 11:2-3; Mt 12:28; Jn 14:26, 16:8-11, 13-15; Acts 2; Rom 8:9, 13,14,16-17,26-17, 12:6-8; 1 Cor 2:10-13, 12:7,8-10,11,13,28,29-30; Eph 1:13-14, 4:7-8,11,12-16, 5:18; 2 Thess 2:6-8,13; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet 1:10-11; 2 Pet 1:21)

Metaphors of the Holy Spirit:

- *A Dove-* (Matthew 3:16). Symbolizes purity and heavenly origin.
- *Clothing-* (Luke 24:49). Symbolizes empowerment.
- *Wind-* (John 3:8). Symbolizes freedom, invisibility and sovereignty.
- *Water-* (John 7:38-39). Symbolizes His regenerative, refreshing work.
- *Fire-* (Acts 2:3). Symbolizes the refining work.
- *A Seal-* (Ephesians 1:13). Symbolizes ownership.
- *A Pledge-* (Ephesians 1:14). Symbolizes and guarantee of inheritance.
- *Oil-* (1 John 2:20). Symbolizes the giving of a gift.

Acts 1:8 "When the Holy Spirit comes upon you (apostles), you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere..."

Acts 2:38-39 "Each of you must turn from your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is to you and to your children, and even to the Gentiles- all to have been called by the Lord our God."

John 3:5-6 "The truth is, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from Heaven."

How does the Holy Spirit work?

Romans 8:26-27. "...the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."

The "groanings" of the Holy Spirit are similar to the way He speaks "deep within our hearts" (Romans 8:16). They are personal words spoken with such intimacy and care that they can't be expressed by a confined language!

Remember, the Holy Spirit was sent by Jesus Christ to be our "**Helper**" (John 14:6). The Spirit works in ways you and I cannot. That's why He is our Helper.

The Trinity of God is complimentary. The Father is our Creator and as a result, He is the righteous judge. The Son is our Saviour. He sacrificed His perfect life to bring us back to the Father. We lost that connection when sin entered the human heart. The Holy Spirit offers the continued work of Jesus the Son in our hearts.

Jesus made us right; the Holy Spirit keeps us right.

How? By pleading with the Judge and by marking us as His own.

2 Corinthians 2:9-12 speaks of the Holy Spirit as the One that makes sense of the deep secrets of God. He's like the believers own personal interpreter when they are in a foreign land trying to speak a language they don't understand.

Here's an analogy:

*Christian asks the Master of the well, "May I have some water, I'm dying of thirst"

*The master of the well (this is God the Father), speaks a holy language that Christian can't fully understand.

*The Holy Spirit, Christian's best friend and personal interpreter translates the request and speaks them to the master of the well. His words are like "groanings" not easily understood to Christian, but that's ok. Why? Because the Master of the well understands the Interpreter, and is now able to respond to the request.

*The master of the well offers water. In fact, He tells Christian to drink of it freely with no end! (John 4:14)

The Holy Spirit is MORE than our helper...

He also works in the Christian, gifting with abilities and understanding!

Signs of the Spirit- believers receive Spiritual Gifts:

"A spiritual gift is given to each of us as a means of helping the entire Church."

1 Corinthians 12:7

"When the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere- in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:8

What are spiritual gifts, and who are they for?

- Spiritual gifts are signs and wonders given to believers by God to be used for His intended purpose.

A Sign points the way and authenticates the message.

A Wonder brings astonishment; outside of human understanding.

Why would the Christian be given Signs and Wonders?

The resurrected Savior Jesus taught His followers the Great Commission (Matt 28:16-20), a mandate to take the Gospel good news to everyone everywhere. This would not be possible without the Holy Spirit gifting signs and wonders!

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God gave His children a job to do, then He gave them the ability to get it done!

Spiritual Gifts are enablers for service given by God for God's work. They are not talents or specialized ministries. All believers have at least one gift, but no one person possesses all the gifts.

The foundation of Spiritual Gifts is Love! The purpose of using Spiritual Gifts is to spread Love!

1 Corinthians 12:31 & 13:13

- Romans 12:6-8
- 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 28-31
- Ephesians 4:2-7, 11

"God has given gifts to each of you from His great variety of spiritual gifts. Manage them well so that God's generosity can flow through you."

1 Peter 4:10

What are the Spiritual Gifts? What gifts do I have as a believer?

"And now, dear brothers and sisters, I write about the special abilities the Holy Spirit gives to each of us, for I must correct your misunderstandings about them... Now there are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but it is the same Holy Spirit who is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service in the church, but it is the same Lord we are serving. There are different ways God works in our lives, but it is the same God who does the work through all of us. **A spiritual gift is given to each of us as means of helping the entire church.**

To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give **wise advice**; to another He gives the gift of **special knowledge**. The Spirit gives **special faith** to another and to someone else He gives the **power to heal the sick**. He gives one person the power to **perform miracles**, and to another the **ability to prophesy**, He gives someone else the **ability to know** whether it is really the Spirit of God or another spirit that is speaking. Still another person is given the ability to **speak in unknown languages**, and another is given the **ability to interpret what is being said**.

It is the one and only Holy Spirit who distributes these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have. The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up only one body. So it is with the body of Christ." 1 Cor. 12:1-14

Many resources are available today designed to help Christian Believers find their Spiritual Gifts. A quick search online for "Spiritual Gifts Inventory" reveals dozens of sites! These sites ask questions about persons perceived giftedness then calculate the results. Do they work? Maybe... But the most pure way of discovering your gift(s) is through hands on involvement. It's God's timeless chosen process for developing and honing our gifts!

Look at the life of Peter: *Matthew 16:18*

Who was he? A simple fisherman.

Was Peter a brave man? A man of great wisdom? A rock to those around him?

Perhaps Peter was some of those things to a lesser degree before he was given the Holy Spirit, but he blossomed as the brave, wise rock as the Holy Spirit grew in his life.

He walked and talked with Jesus, the very Son of God, but he grew most when his Lord sent him the Counselor. **As Peter ministered, he found his ministry.**

Look at Simon the Sorcerer: *Acts 8:9-24*

Spiritual gifts cannot be bought as Simon learned. They cannot be made by human hands, and will only be given when the heart is made right.

Discover your gifts:

- Start with clean hands & a pure heart through salvation.
- Ask for an opportunity to see your gift work for God's glory.
- Live a life of service in ministry

Making the Change

God's Word was given TO us to CHANGE us.

We have seen in this study that God's Word is profound and powerful, but we must also understand that God's Word is personal. This book of books was not written aimlessly. It was authored to breathe new life into humanity.

We must take the whole message of the Bible and apply it to our lives! But how? By reading it, studying it, learning from it and finally by building the actions of our lives on it.

In his book "How to study the Bible", author Tim LaHaye teaches that study of God's Word will:

- Lead us to and assure us of salvation
- Make the Christian stronger
- Give confidence and power in prayer
- Set us apart from sin- "you are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you" John 15:3
- Give joy
- Produce peace in life
- Guide in making important decisions in life
- Enable articulation of our faith
- Guarantee life success- "Do not let this book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."

If you are looking for change and haven't found it, begin by making the way:

"Listen! Make a highway for the Lord through the wilderness. Make a strait, smooth road through the desert for our God. Fill the valleys and level the hills. Straiten out the curves and smooth off the rough spots. THEN the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. The Lord has spoken!" Isaiah 40:3-5

BEFORE the Lord will help, we have got to get ready for Him. But how? Just like a road crew has to cut a path and clear the way for the paver, we have got to cut a road and clear the way for God in our lives. We can't willfully hold on to this world and expect to be transformed from it. When we do our best to clear the way, He will make a road to help us. Once that road is made, truckloads of God's love and guidance will make it way to us!!!

Don't worry about not being good enough or strong enough in the clean up process, because God said "I will strengthen and help you." Isaiah 41:10

Step One- Cry out and confess to the Lord.

"If we say we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth. But if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from every wrong. If we claim that we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that His Word has no place in our hearts." 1 John 1:8-10

Step Two- Break the ties of your heart to this world.

"No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other..." Matthew 6:24

Step Three- REMEMBER, God is already at work and He will continue that work in us!

The Apostle Paul reminded early Christians of that when he said, "I am sure that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again." Philippians 1:6

Now....

Pick up your Bible.

Read it with pure intention.

Handle it with a learners understanding.

It's God's Word to YOU.

Resources for Suggested Study:

- Tim Lahaye. "How to Study the Bible for Yourself"- Youth Edition. Harvest House Pub.
- Robert L. Thomas & Stanley N. Gundry. "The NIV Harmony of the Gospels." Harper Collins.
- John F. Walvoord & Roy B. Zuck. "The Bible Knowledge Commentary". Victor Books.
- Philip Wesley Comfort. "The Origin of the Bible." Tyndale House Pub.
- Dr. Willian Klein, Dr. Craig Blomberg, Dr. Robert Hubbard Jr. "Introduction to Biblical Interpretation." Word Pub.
- William Whiston. "The Works of Josephus." Heddrickson Pub.
- Josh McDowell. "Evidence that Demands a Verdict." Here's Life Pub.
- Paul E. Little. "Know What You Believe." Cook Communications.