

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Session Fourteen

March 4, 2020

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Keys to Understanding the Bible Better First Assembly of God / Pastor Dan Betzer

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: [17] That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

As I mentioned in my weekend messages, I love books. One of my favorite is the Rand McNally road map. Yes, I trust it more than my car's GPS. That dear sister has led me astray more than once. However, that good old Atlas has been right on. But, the best and last of all is God's Word - a sure guide to all things in life.

The greatest guidebook on the planet is the Bible. But, I've heard this many times: "The Bible is hard to understand. I don't even know where to start."

66 books, thousands of pages, spanning thousands of years... it's all just too much. In this study, I offer you some help in reading and understanding the Bible.

A basic understanding of the history of mankind would be a great help to you. History is the most revealing and exciting study, outside of the Bible itself, that you could ever make.

For example:

THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all happened under these emperors of Rome: **Julius Caesar** (Israel under bondage by Rome); **Caesar Augustus** (who became the leader shortly after the assassination of Julius Caesar - March 15, 44 BC - The Ides of March); “There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus...” **Nero** ruled during Paul’s lifetime and assassination; **Caligula** ruled a short two years after Paul died and was assassinated by his own people and **Claudius** ruled when the persecution hit hard in Israel. (His wife Messaline, the grand niece of Augustus, never saw a man she didn’t want. Claudius had her beheaded after the last of her adulteries.

One of the best emperors was **VESPASIAN** who erected the Coliseum in Rome, whose two sons followed him on the throne – **Titus** (fairly good) and **Domitian** (a devil who banished the Apostle John to the island of Patmos).

THE PEOPLE ABOUT WHOM YOU READ IN SCRIPTURE
WERE REAL MEN AND WOMEN, GOOD AND BAD,
WHO LIVED ON THIS EARTH JUST AS YOU DO!

But, that just covers the Gospels - Matthew through John and the book of Acts. **How do I comprehend the rest of Scripture?**

THE TORAH OR ‘PENTATEUCH’ BOOKS

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy

Genesis - the beginning of everything from creation to the life of Joseph
Exodus - (exit) from Egypt of the Jews, led by Moses - around 1450
Leviticus - God gives Israel the law; by way of keeping it could be saved. (The Levites)
Numbers - The Israelites are numbered and sent to the Promised Land
Deuteronomy - More of the law under Moses’ leadership

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

Joshua through Esther

Joshua succeeded Moses as Israel's leader and brought the people into Canaan (or the Promised Land)

Esther - became the Queen of Persia around 480 BC (Persia became the second colossal empire God prophesied - after Babylon)

* Joshua

* Judges (cycles)

* Ruth

* I and II Samuel (David)

* I and II Kings (Israel splits over taxes) two kingdoms: Israel and Judah

* I and II Chronicles Solomon

* Ezra (Exile)

* Nehemiah

* Esther

THE POETIC BOOKS

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon

The book of Job was written by various authors and is the story of a man who lost everything in life but his faith in God. It is one of the oldest books in all of the Bible.

Psalms was written primarily by King David.

The other historical books were written primarily by King Solomon somewhere around 900-1000 BC.

1 **THE MAJOR PROPHETS**

2 Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel

3
4 These books are called major NOT BECAUSE THEY WERE MORE
5 IMPORTANT, BUT SIMPLY BECAUSE OF THEIR LENGTH.

6
7 Written 500-600 BC as warnings to both kingdoms - Judah and Israel
8 EXPLAINED by great prophets.

9
10 *In 732 BC Judah fell to the Assyrians and in 586 Israel fell to*
11 *the Babylonians.*

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15 **THE MINOR PROPHETS**

16 Hosea through Malachi

17
18 These final 12 books were written during perilous times by those who
19 bore their names...

20
21 MALACHI WAS THE LAST BOOK OF THE OLD TESTAMENT -
22 AFTER WHICH THERE WAS A 400-YEAR SILENCE FROM GOD.

23
24 The Greek and Roman empires thrived. Think of such heroes as
25 Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Pompey, Cleopatra and others living
26 during this time.

27
28 Near the end of the 400 years came the event of the ages... Jesus Christ
29 was born in Bethlehem.

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32
33 **THE GOSPELS**

34 Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – the story of Jesus

THE ACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH THE APOSTLES

Mainly Peter and Paul's ministry and the establishment of the church

Two main churches, Jerusalem and Antioch of Syria, were the ringleaders of the Christian movement in its early day, while the church in Rome had so much baggage that it never really met its potential. As Pastor here for over 32 years, I have tried to mold First Assembly of God in the way of Antioch, the great missions launching church.

THE EPISTLES – LETTERS FROM THE APOSTLES

Romans through Jude

What is an epistle? (No, it is not the wife of an apostle!) The word epistle comes from the Greek word *epistole*, which means “letter” or “message.” Who wrote these letters? Founders of the churches in Rome, Thessalonica, Corinth and others. Most epistles followed a sort of format. Most of Paul's letters began with an introduction that identified his name and those of any associates. The intro is followed by the main body of the letter and often concluded with a general blessing and personal notes to individuals within the church receiving the letter.

The epistles are all found in the New Testament and include 21 of the New Testament's 27 books from Romans to Jude. The exception to the above would be the Pastoral Epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus were written to church leaders. The other eight books or epistles are referred to as General Epistles and include many teachings regarding practices within the early church.

REVELATION

Written by Apostle/Pastor John from his vision on the Island of Patmos

Revelation means unveiling... Christ reveals what will happen in the end time.