

SURVEYING

THE



SCRIPTURE

**Lessons Presenting A
Thematic Overview Of The Bible**

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Surveying The Scripture

A Thematic Overview Of The Bible

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Surveying The Scripture

A Thematic Overview Of The Bible

Lesson 1 – General Introduction

Introduction

Surveyors perform a vital function in land development. Before anything specific can be done, the “lay of the land” must be considered so that objectives of the developer are congruent with what the land offers. Such a concept maximizes land potential. It also provides for us an analogy that will produce a greater understanding and appreciation of Divine truth. Think of the Scripture as land that is to be surveyed.

As children of God, disciples of Jesus Christ, and students of eternal truth, it behooves us to know as much about the Bible as possible. Such a devotion should not be limited to facts one may find in the Bible, memorizing the “steps” one must take to gain salvation, or any other “identifying marks” of the Lord’s church. These are important to know, but these alone won’t suffice in our efforts to “rightly divide” or “handle accurately” the word of truth (**cp. 2 Tim. 2:15**).

For our own salvation, we must always strive to become more familiar with the Bible so that we “grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ” (**Eph. 4:15 – NASV**). For the salvation of others, we must know as much of heaven’s message to “be able to teach others also” (**2 Tim. 2:2 – NASV**).

Purpose

The purpose of this series of studies is to give us a greater view of the Bible’s “big picture.” While it is right and proper to study individual books, it is also prudent at times to take a step back and try to envision, or survey, how the individual books (the “trees”) collectively blend together to form the Bible’s overall message (the “forest”).

Only after we have gained this bigger picture will the Bible’s teaching on individual moral and doctrinal subjects take on their full meaning in our lives. Only then will we understand how such teaching, and God’s expectations for us pursuant to that teaching, folds into God’s overall plan for our redemption.

As a way to illustrate such a purpose, consider the Jews and their reluctance to accept Christianity. Paul taught that the Jews had an “advantage” (**Rom. 3:1-2**). Jesus, in speaking with the Jews, chastised them for their rejection of Him, and held them accountable for their rejection of several “witnesses” to His claim as being God’s Son. One such “witness” was the Old Testament (**Jn. 5:39, 46**). Now, wouldn’t it seem the Jews would have been the **easiest** to convert to Christ? Why? Because of their familiarity of the Old Testament. And wouldn’t it seem the Gentiles would be the **hardest** to reach with the gospel because of their hardened pagan lifestyle and unfamiliarity with the Scripture? Yet, the Bible records that the Gentiles were always more eager to listen to the apostles and “receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls” (**Jas. 1:21; cp. Acts 13:42-45**).

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Clearly, we can see the expectation God had for the Jews in knowing and applying the “bigger picture” contained in the Old Testament. Likewise, God has committed complete revelation to man’s trust today, initially to chosen apostles, and through them, to us (**cp. 2 Cor. 5:18-20; Eph. 3:3-5**). We are duty bound to view and grasp the message of this “big picture” to save ourselves , and also to share it with others for their salvation.

Approach

Admittedly, we will not be examining every verse of every chapter of every book in the Bible. One doesn’t have to go to such an extent to achieve our stated purpose.

Our approach will be a simple one. We will view the Bible as God’s message to humanity in terms of how He has conveyed it down through the ages. This approach divides the Bible into its 3 distinct time periods, or dispensations. Understanding certain passages, or books, relative to each dispensation allows the Bible to take on this “big picture” image. Thereafter, anytime one would open the Bible to any particular book, he would know exactly “where he is” with respect to God’s overall dealings with man.

We’ll begin to see the Bible not as several disjointed books put together, but rather as **1** overall message from God. Only in such a view can the Bible be fully appreciated and understood. Though God has chosen to deliver this message differently in each of humanity’s dispensations (**cp. Heb. 1:1-2**), the central message from God has never changed. Consider the following summation:

The Main Message Of The Bible	»»»	The redemption of man from his sin
The Answer To Man’s Sin Problem	»»»	Jesus Christ

Tools Needed For This Course

Only 3...your Bible, a willing heart, and the chart on the following page. The chart represents how we will view the Bible as the forest. While in each dispensation we’ll spend time in selected books, building our perspective on the collective teaching of the Scripture rather than only focusing on one individual book.

There will be some questions given out in advance for each lesson. Answering these questions will allow the student to come to class prepared to discuss the lesson planned for each session.

Once we have completed this course, hopefully we’ll have realized three main objectives:

- ◆ we will have instilled in all of us a greater love for God, what He has done to rectify our lost pitiful condition, and His willingness to share His message with us
- ◆ we will have successfully “surveyed the Scripture” and gained a greater appreciation for the Bible as a whole and how it relates to us today
- ◆ we will be better equipped to go out and teach the lost the soul saving message of the gospel

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

(2 Tim. 2:15)

The Old Testament

- ◆ Thirty-nine books
- ◆ Thirty different writers
- ◆ Over 1400 years in writing
- ◆ Covering over 4,000 years of history

Five Divisions

- Law (5)
- History (12)
- Poetry (5)
- Major Prophets (5)
- Minor Prophets (12)

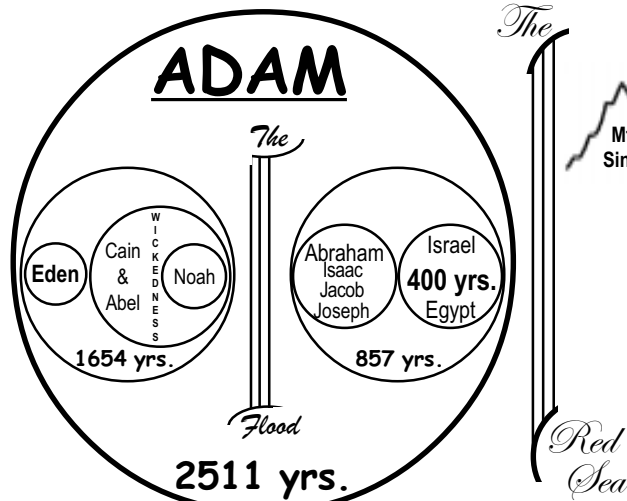
The New Testament

- ◆ Twenty-seven books
- ◆ At least 8 different writers
- ◆ Less than 100 years in writing

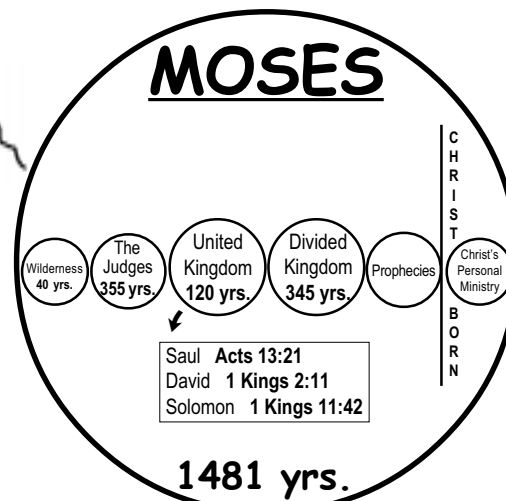
Four Divisions

- Biography (4)
- History (1)
- Letters (21)
- Prophecy (1)

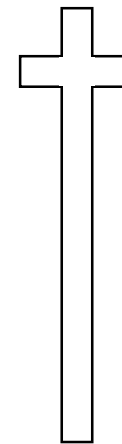
PATRIARCHAL



MOSAICAL



Heb. 9:15-17



CHRISTIAN



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Lesson 2

The Patriarchal Dispensation



When God spoke to *families*
through the head, or patriarch

1. Define "patriarch." Name some of the "patriarchs" to whom God spoke. (see also Acts 7:8)
2. In what books of the Bible does this time period occur?
3. What does "Genesis" mean? What are some of the "firsts" or "origins" recorded in this book?
4. **The First Sin (Gen. 3)**
 - a. What had been God's original command to the man & woman? (2:15-17)
 - b. Who was the "serpent" in v. 1? (cp. Rev. 12:9) What did he do? (vv. 1, 4-5; 1 Tim. 2:14)
 - c. Did the woman understand God's instructions? (vv. 2-3)
 - d. What did the woman do? (v. 6) What were the results? (v. 7)
 - e. Of what characteristic of God does v. 11 remind us?
 - f. What predictable human reaction to failure is given in vv. 11-13
 - g. Summarize God's punishments in vv. 14-19. What is especially important about v. 15?
The serpent The woman The man
 - h. What painful truths are taught in vv. 22-24?

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5. Cain & Abel (Gen. 4)

- a. What is recorded in **vv. 3-5**? How does **Rom. 10:17** & **Heb. 11:4** help our understanding?
- b. What principle about sin are we taught in **vv. 6-7**? (**cp. Rom. 6:16; 1 Pet. 5:8**)
- c. What did Cain do to Abel? (**v. 8**) Why? (**cp. 1 Jn. 3:10-12**)

6. Noah & The Flood (Gen. 6)

- a. What was the “state of humanity” in Noah’s day? (**v. 5**)
- b. What did God think about man whom He had made? (**v. 6**)
- c. What was God’s judgment regarding man? (**v. 7**)
- d. Was there an exception? (**v. 8**)
- e. What one primary characteristic described Noah? (**v. 22; cp. Heb. 11:7**)

7. The Promises To Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. 12-35)

- a. What did God command Abram to do? (**12:1; cp. Heb. 11:8**)
- b. What promises were made to Abram? (**12:1-3**) Do any of these carry Messianic implications? If so, where is it taught in the Bible?
- c. What else was promised to Abram? (**15:1-5**)
- d. How did Sarai react? (**16:1-3**)
- e. What finally happened in **21:1-5**? What did this begin to fulfill?
- f. Who was born to Isaac in **25:20-26**?
- g. What significant event is recorded in **25:27-34**?
- h. What was repeated to Isaac in **26:1-6**?

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- i. What significant event is recorded in **27:1-40**?
 - j. What is recorded in **29:31 – 30:24** and **35:16-19**?
 - k. What was repeated to Jacob in **35:9-12**?
- 8. Joseph and God's Providence (Gen. 37-50)**
- a. What were the relations between Joseph and his brothers? (**37:3-4**)
 - b. What fueled their hatred and what did they do to him? (**37:5-11, 18-28**)
 - c. What other adversities did Joseph endure? (**39:1 – 40:23**)
 - d. What events finally led to Joseph's elevation? (**41:1-57**)
 - e. What bearing did all these events have on God's plans for Israel? (**42:1 – 45:7**) What would have been the results had not God so acted providentially?
- 9. Israel In Egypt (Ex. 1-14)**
- a. What was different now than Israel living in Egypt in Joseph's day? (**1:8**)
 - b. What was the Egyptian policy toward the Hebrews? (**1:9-22; cp. Gen. 15:13**) Was it effective?
 - c. Who was born under such a rule (**2:1-10**) How was he kept alive?
 - d. What changed his life at the age of 40? (**Acts 7:23-29**) How long was he in Midian? (**Acts 7:30**)
 - e. What plans did God have for Moses? (**3:1-10**)
 - f. How did these plans work themselves out? (**4:1 – 11:8**)
 - g. What eventually happens to Israel? (**12:40-41**)
 - h. How did Israel finally become free? (**14:31**)

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Lesson 3

The Mosaic Dispensation



When God spoke to the *nation* of Israel through His mediator Moses

1. What distinguishes the way in which God spoke in this dispensation from the previous one? (cp. Lk. 16:29-31; 24:27; Jn. 1:45; Acts 26:22; 28:23)
2. What books of the Bible are covered by this time period?
3. **Bringing Israel To Sinai (Ex. 15-20)**
 - a. Of what disposition did the people show themselves to be? (15:22-25; 16:2-3, 13-30)
 - b. What challenge did God give to Israel at Sinai? (19:5-6)
 - c. What is recorded in Ex. 20? Who heard God on this occasion? (cp. Deut. 5:4-5, 22-27)
4. **Israel At Sinai (Ex. 21 – Num. 10)**
 - a. What types of laws are recorded in Ex. 21-24?
 - b. What is recorded in Ex. 25-27, 30?
 - c. What is recorded in Ex. 28-29?
 - d. What tragedy is recorded in Ex. 32? What was God's first reaction, and how did Moses factor into God's final decision? How did Moses react when he saw the people?
 - e. What is recorded in Ex. 36-40?
 - f. What seems to be the overall theme of **Leviticus**?
 - g. How serious did God view the priests' duties? (Lev. 10:1-3)
 - h. What is recorded in Num. 1:2?

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Lesson 3

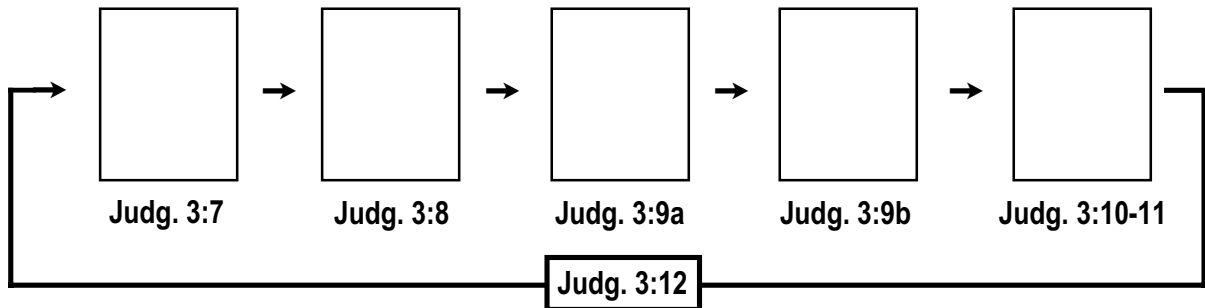
- i. What significant event is recorded in **Num. 10:11-13**?
 - j. How long was Israel at Mt. Sinai? (**cp. Ex. 19:1; Num. 10:11; 33:3**)
5. **Israel's Wilderness Wanderings (Num. 13 – Deut. 34)**
- a. What tragedy is recorded in **Num. 13-14**?
 - b. What was God's judgment on Israel? (**14:26-35**)
 - c. What tragedy is recorded in **Num. 20:2-12, 24**?
 - d. What is the setting of Deuteronomy? (**1:1; 3:29; 4:46**)
 - e. What does "*Deuteronomy*" mean? What purpose does this book serve?
 - f. What is recorded in **Deut. 34**?
 - g. How long did it take for Moses to give these sermons? (**Deut. 1:3; 34:8; Josh. 4:19**)
6. **The Conquering Of Canaan (Joshua)**
- a. What were God's instructions to Joshua? (**1:1-9**)
 - b. What is recorded in **2-12**?
 - c. What lesson(s) do we learn from the capture of Jericho? (**Josh. 6**)
 - d. What is recorded in **13-22**?
 - e. How do these events relate to **Gen. 12:1** and **Gen. 26:3**?
 - f. What was Joshua's final charge to Israel? (**24:14-15**)
 - g. What do we learn from **Josh. 24:31**?

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7. The Period Of The Judges (Judges – Ruth)

- What sad truth is recorded in **Judg. 2:6-10**?
- Using the chart below, and **Judg. 3:7-12** as an example, write the “cycle” that characterizes Israel during the days of the Judges.



- Judg. 17:6** seems to be the thematic statement of Judges. What does it say?
- Were there any “bright spots” during this period? (**Ruth 1:1**)
- How does this book show devotion to God in the midst of overall spiritual decay? (**1:16; 2:4**)
- What else does the book of Ruth provide? (**4:18-22; cp. Mt. 1:5**)

8. The United Kingdom (1 Sam. 8 – 1 Kings 11)

- What was Israel's tragic request? (**1 Sam. 8:5**) What was God's original idea? (**Ex. 19:5**)
- Who was Israel's first king? (**1 Sam. 10:17-24**)
- What happened to his reign? (**1 Sam. 15:1-23**) How long did he reign? (**Acts 13:21**)
- Who was chosen to be king next? Why did God choose him? (**1 Sam. 16:7; Acts 13:22**)
- Despite being thus described, was David perfect before God? (**cp. 2 Sam. 6; 11-12**)
- What contributions to the Scripture did David make?
- Who was chosen to be king next? Why did God choose him? (**2 Sam. 7:12-16**)

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- h. Characterize Solomon's early years as king **(1 Kings 3:3-14)**
- i. What contributions to the Scripture did Solomon make during his faithful years?
- j. What did God have Solomon do for Israel? **(1 Kings 6)**
- k. Did Solomon always remain this faithful? **(1 Kings 11:1-10)** What would eventually result from this transgression? **(1 Kings 11:11-13)** Who would receive the resultant proportions of Solomon's kingdom? **(1 Kings 11:28-36)**
- l. What contributions to the Scripture did Solomon make after his repentance?

9. The Divided Kingdom (1 Kings 12 – 2 Kings 25)

- a. What had been God's instructions to Jeroboam? **(1 Kings 11:37-38)**
- b. Through what events did Jeroboam receive a kingdom? **(1 Kings 12:1-16)**
- c. What path did Jeroboam choose in light of God's instructions to him? **(1 Kings 12:25-33)**
- d. What was the prevalent sin in both kingdoms until their demise?
- e. Several lessons can be learned from incidents recorded during the days of the Divided Kingdom. Read the following 2 accounts, and list any lesson(s) we can learn.
 - ◆ *Elijah on Mt. Carmel* **(1 Kings 18:1-40)**
 - ◆ *Naaman* **(2 Kings 5:1-14)**
- f. What did God do during the days of the Divided Kingdom to try and bring His people back to Him in repentance? **(Jer. 26:1-6)**
- g. Why did the Northern Kingdom (Israel) eventually fall? **(2 Kings 17:7-18)**
- h. What benefit should there have been for the Southern Kingdom (Judah) in observing the fall of the Northern Kingdom (Israel)? **(Jer. 3:6-10)**

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- i. Why did the Southern Kingdom (Judah) eventually fall? (**2 Kings 25:1-17; 2 Chron. 36:11-17**)
- j. What one over-arching lesson about God do we learn during this time period? (**cp. Ex. 20:2-6**)

10. The Prophecies (Isaiah – Malachi)

- a. For each prophet, list the audience to whom he prophesied and the basic message.

Pre-Exilic

Isaiah _____

Jeremiah _____

Hosea _____

Joel _____

Amos _____

Obadiah _____

Jonah _____

Micah _____

Nahum _____

Habakkuk _____

Zephaniah _____

Exilic

Ezekiel _____

Daniel _____

Post-Exilic

Haggai _____

Zechariah _____

Malachi _____

- b. What other Old Testament books occur during the times of the Post-Exilic prophets?

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- c. There are numerous prophecies concerning Jesus. Write the subject matter of each prophecy listed below and where we find its New Testament fulfillment.

Isa. 7:14 _____

Psa. 22:1-18 _____

Isa. 53:9 _____

Psa. 16:10 _____

Psa. 110:1 _____

2 Sam. 7:12-13 _____

Psa. 110:4 _____

Deut. 18:15-19 _____

11. The Personal Ministry of Jesus Christ (Matthew – John)

- a. How can the gospels be summarized? (**Acts 1:1**)
- b. What event “publicly declared Him” and precipitated His ministry? (**Mt. 3:13-17; Lk. 3:21-22**)
- c. What did Jesus do to facilitate His teaching? (**Mt. 9:35 – 10:15; Mk. 3:13-15**)
- d. What claim did Jesus Himself make? (**Jn. 8:24, 58**) How does it fit into the overall message of the Bible? (**Jn. 5:45-47**)
- e. Under what limitations did Jesus conduct His ministry? (**Jn. 12:48-50**)
- f. How was His ministry connected to the Law of Moses? (**Mt. 5:17-20**)

12. The Death & Resurrection of Jesus Christ

- a. In what two ways did the death of Christ affect the Law of Moses? (**Gal. 3:10; Col. 2:14**)
- b. Besides ending the first covenant, what else was accomplished by the death of Jesus? (**Heb. 9:15-17**)

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- c. How did the resurrection of Jesus harmonize with the claims He made about Himself? **(Rom. 1:1-4)** *[see again question 11d on previous page]*

- d. What personal implication does the resurrection of Christ have for each of us today? **(1 Cor. 15:50-57)**

- e. What other victory was realized by Christ being raised from the dead? **(Mt. 16:13-18)**

- f. What was “ushered in” because of the resurrection of Christ? **(Col. 1:13-14)**

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Lesson 4

The Christian Dispensation



When God speaks to *all men*
through Christ, His Son & final Spokesman

1. Origin Of The New Testament Kingdom

- a. Was the church in existence in Old Testament days? (Heb. 10:1; 1 Pet. 1:10-12)
- b. What prophecies were spoken about it? (Isa. 2:2-3; Mic. 4:1-2; Dan. 2:31-35)
- c. When are the "last days"? (Acts 2:16-17; Heb. 1:1-2)
- d. Who first heralded its coming? (Mt. 3:1-3) Was he in this kingdom? (Mt. 11:2, 11; Mk. 6:17-18)
- e. Was this kingdom existing when Jesus was on earth? (Mk. 1:14-15; Mt. 6:10; 16:18; Acts 1:6)
- f. When did the New Testament kingdom begin? (Lk. 24:47-49; Acts 2:1-4, 37-38; 11:15)

2. Identifying The New Testament Kingdom

List below the different ways in which the New Testament identifies the last dispensation recorded in the Scripture. With each descriptive phrase, and using the other passages given, also write what is emphasized by its use. [*The first one is done for you*]

- a. **1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Cor. 8:6; Heb. 3:6; 2:11; Rom. 8:15-17**
The house of God → God is Father; Christ is Son over house; we are children, brethren, & heirs
- b. **Col. 1:13; Heb. 12:28; Lk. 19:14; Eph. 2:19; 1 Cor. 9:21**
- c. **Eph. 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 12:12-27**
- d. **1 Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:4-5**
- e. **Mt. 13:3-9; Lk. 8:11; 1 Cor. 3:6; Mt. 9:37-38; 20:1-16**

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Lesson 4

3. Becoming A Member Of The New Testament Kingdom (Acts)

- a. What were the first instructions given to those who showed interest? (**Acts 2:38**)

- b. Did the apostles' teaching on becoming a member of this kingdom agree with what Jesus taught? Complete the comparison below.

<u>Jesus</u>	<u>The Apostles</u>
Belief (Jn. 8:24)	Belief
Repentance (Lk. 13:3,5)	Repentance
Confession (Mt. 10:32-33)	Confession
Baptism (Mk. 16:16)	Baptism
Faithfulness (Rev. 2:10)	Faithfulness

- c. Was it possible for a member of this kingdom to go back to sin? How was that to be rectified? (**Acts 8:9-13, 18-24**)

 - d. Was this kingdom only for the Jews, or for everyone of all nations? (**Acts 10:34-48**)

 - e. Was there any continuing correlation between the Law of Moses and Jesus' New Testament church? (**Acts 15:1-21**)
- ### 4. Living As A Member Of The New Testament Kingdom (Romans – Jude)
- a. How do we know the contents of these letters are from God? (**1 Cor. 2; Eph. 3:1-5**)

 - b. List below some of the teachings found in these letters. Answer this question in the categories given, and give the passage(s) that support your answer.

Doctrinal (Toward God)

Civil (Toward Governments)

Domestic (Toward Family)

Moral (Toward Others)

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5. Prophecy During The New Testament Kingdom (Revelation)

- a. Who did God use to write the last book of the Bible? (1:1)
- b. Despite the differing interpretations of the Revelation, can we all agree on the book's overall theme? (17:14; 20:10; cp. Rom. 8:37)
- c. Using the chart below, show how the Revelation completes the Bible's thematic message that was begun in Genesis. [chart from Derrel Shaw, "New Testament Books Outlined", pp. 122-123]

Genesis	Revelation
In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (1:1)	(21:1)
The darkness He called night (1:5)	(21:25)
God made the the sun and the moon, the 2 great lights (1:16)	(21:23)
In the day that you eat from it you shall surely die (2:17)	(21:4)
Satan appears as the deceiver of mankind (3:1)	(20:10)
A garden in which defilement entered (3:6-7)	(21:27)
I will greatly multiply your pain (3:16)	(21:4)
Cursed is the ground because of you (3:17)	(22:3)
They were driven from God's presence (3:24)	(22:4)
Access to the Tree of Life disinherited in Adam (3:24)	(22:14)