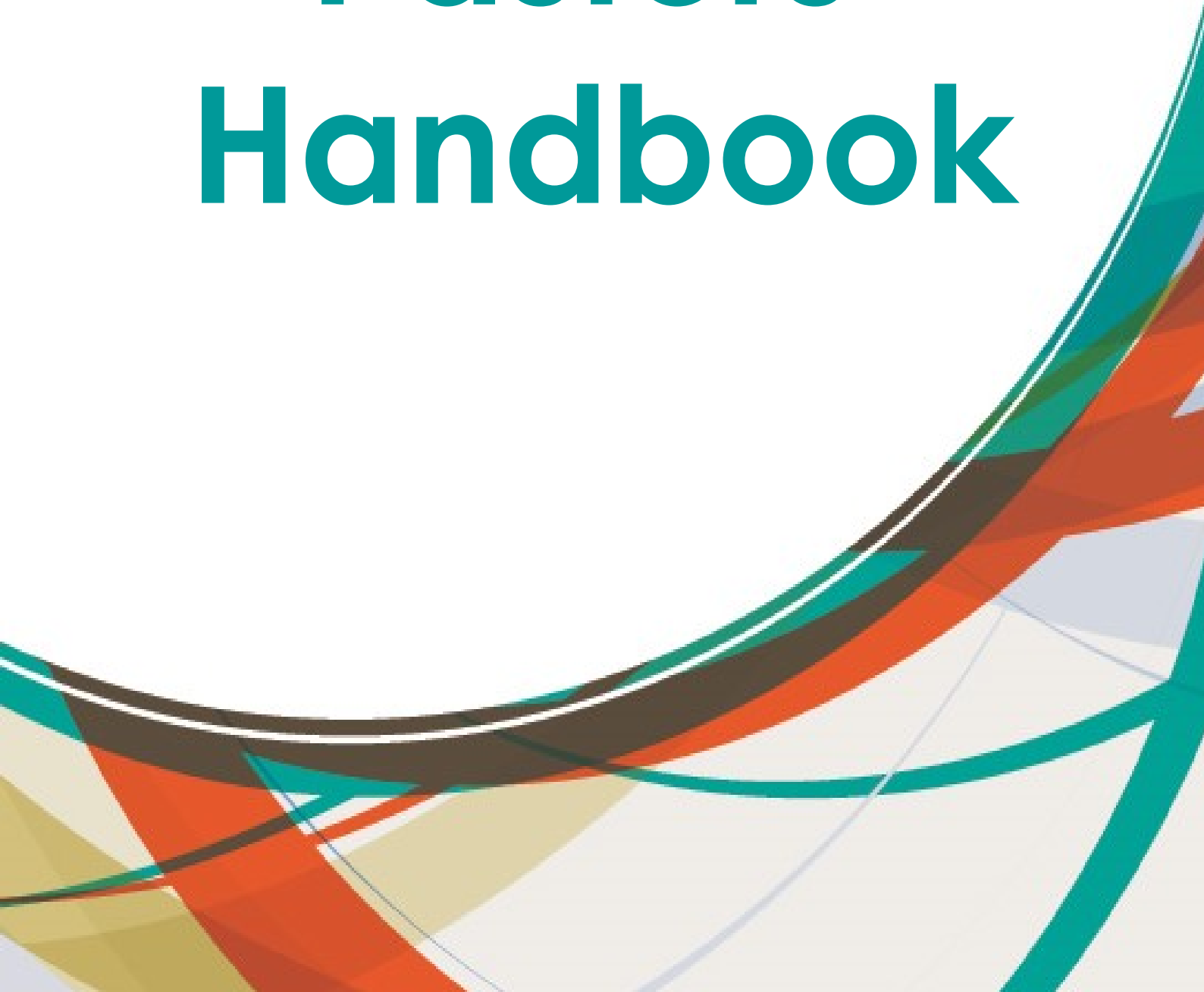




Pastors' Handbook



Living Hope Ministries

PASTORS' HANDBOOK

FOREWORD – RICHARD BRUNTON



The Lord impressed upon me some time ago to produce a handbook for the pastors with whom I work. When Elaine and I took on the pastoral responsibility for a small church in Sussex in 1974, I was given a book with orders of service. However it was not very practical and it was limited. A handbook for Living Hope was produced but now as part of the Living Hope Foundation for Ministry Course, it has been revised. We pray it will be useful to you.

SEVEN KEY LESSONS I HAVE LEARNED IN MINISTRY

Finding Christ

I became a Christian at the age of 13 years. I began preaching within weeks of that wonderful event, first in the open air, then later in a number of small churches around Fakenham, Norfolk. My early grasp of gospel essentials has been paramount in my Christian ministry. When we know how serious sin is, how we deserve God's judgement, how Christ died for us, taking our punishment, how He rose to be with us and sent His Spirit to empower us, we can never be the same! "Hallelujah! What a Saviour!"

God's call

It is vital in Christian ministry to have a testimony of God's call on your life. Many people are tempted to get involved in ministry and for some it may be a job, an escape from other things, a way of having a position that others look up to, even a way of making money or having power. That is not the call of God. The call of God is a call to humility, service, sacrifice and laying down one's life for the Lord Jesus and His people. As a young teenager God spoke to me through 2 Timothy 4:1-5 and 1 Peter 5:1-4. These passages came to me and as I read them, I knew inside, God was speaking to me. The call to preach the word and Christ crucified has been essential to me. My preoccupation is to bring the whole counsel of God. We do not need to be specialists in one doctrine but rather **Preach the Word!**

God's timing and God's shape

God calls and speaks but we must wait for His timing. God's preparation of us is vital. David was called and anointed to be king but he had to wait many years before the door opened for that to be fully realised. How long we wait is all in God's hands but wait we must, if we are to move in the Spirit and not in the flesh. We can have a call of God on our lives but patience and even trials can enable us to see the shape of our call. It may be ultimately to plant churches. It may be in the realm of the prophetic or evangelistic, or a Bible teacher, or a pastor. Let God determine the shape and emphasis of your call and never dictate to Him or limit Him. Simply trust and obey Him.

Walking with God

It is vital to maintain your personal walk with God. Our security must be in Him and not what we do for Him. We must be rooted in the word of God. The Cross and suffering of Jesus on our behalf must occupy the highest place in our awareness and our desire to serve Him. We must pray and seek the Lord. We must worship and praise Him. We must give generously to God's work.

We must listen to Him. This has for me been one of the hardest lessons. Listening very carefully, discerning His voice, listening to all that He has to say and not running with part of what He says, is very, very important.

Marriage

For those who are married the strength of your ministry will be determined by your relationship with your husband / wife. The most powerful picture painted of the church is the picture of marriage. Loving, submitting, sacrificing, cherishing and caring are worked out on the anvil of marriage. I believe there are many things about my ministry which when I give an account to God will not be consequential: the distances I have travelled, the numbers in the meetings, even the numbers who have responded. However without doubt I will answer to God for how I treated my wife. God is very interested about what others do not see. Many wives are so loyal that they would not share about neglect, feeling second best to the ministry and resources diverted from the family but God sees and He will hold us to account. My wife, Elaine is my best friend and truest critic. I have learned to let God develop and open up for her what is her ministry rather than enforce mine upon her. She is my helper whom God ordained to be cared for and also the enabler for me to be the best that I can be for Him.

Family

My children and grandchildren are very important if my ministry is to be effective. Being a good father is fundamental in the word of God. My children must receive my best pastoral care, love, discipline, shaping and nurturing. Personally I had the goal that my sons would always respect me but become very good friends. By God's grace, I have seen that. My daughters-in-law should feel loved and honoured and although one never replaces their parents, they should feel that wise counsel and godly care are always there for them. Our grandchildren should grow to love and value us for who we are rather than just know what we do.

Humility

A key lesson is to admit when you get it wrong. To say sorry to God, to your wife, to your children is so important. To cover up and pretend otherwise is folly. Of course there are many lessons learned and still to learn but these are some of the key things, after knowing and serving Jesus for over 50 years.

This handbook covers the following topics

- **Church membership** - this is another important subject and a good understanding of God's word helps us to be to be accountable as shepherds of the flock we have been given to care for, under the Great Shepherd Jesus.
- **Communion and Baptism** - Jesus directly and specifically commands these two areas. There are some practical considerations to reflect on so that these occasions are glorifying to the Lord and not mere ritual.
- **Ministry in the home** - people are always grateful for you to go to their homes rather than just come to the church.
- **Praying for the sick and deliverance ministry** - here are helpful biblical guidelines to enable you to minister effectively in these areas.
- **Dedication, Marriage, Funerals** Here are thoughts on the whole area of dedicating children, marriage and funerals. These key parts of life, which every pastor handles, need clear biblical understanding.
- **Ordination for ministry.** It is a privilege to be asked to produce guidelines for the ordination of a leader for Christian ministry. It can be adapted to suit your situation.

May God bless you and "equip you for every good work" for His glory.
2 Timothy 3 v17

CONTENT PAGE

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP	7
<i>What is church?</i>	7
<i>What it is not!</i>	7
<i>What about dominations?</i>	8
<i>Church is for all believers</i>	8
<i>Giving and receiving</i>	8
<i>Devoted to the fellowship of believers</i>	8
<i>Faithfulness and Loyalty</i>	9
<i>Loving Relationships</i>	9
<i>Resolving Conflicts</i>	9
<i>Leadership</i>	10
<i>The Elders</i>	10
<i>Deacons</i>	11
<i>Responding to leaders</i>	11
<i>Finding your place and discovering your gifts</i>	12
<i>Learn to serve</i>	12
<i>You are a priest</i>	12
<i>Taking your time</i>	12
<i>Practical Service</i>	13
COMMUNION.....	14
<i>Proclamation</i>	14
<i>Jesus is coming back</i>	14
<i>The body of Christ</i>	14
<i>Examine Your Heart</i>	14
<i>The new Covenant</i>	15
<i>Pastoral Points</i>	15
BAPTISM.....	17
<i>What is baptism?</i>	17
<i>Who should be baptised?</i>	17
<i>Why be baptised?</i>	17
<i>What does baptism mean?</i>	18
<i>When should baptism take place ?</i>	18
<i>Dress</i>	18
<i>Pastoral points</i>	18
MINISTRY IN THE HOME.....	19
<i>The value of ministry in the home</i>	19
<i>Making a visit</i>	19
<i>Blessing a home</i>	20
<i>Cleansing a home</i>	20
DELIVERANCE MINISTRY	22
<i>Prayer</i>	22
<i>Evangelism</i>	23
<i>Discerning where deliverance is necessary</i>	23
<i>Guidelines for ministry</i>	24
PRAYING FOR THE SICK.....	29

<i>Preparation for praying for the sick</i>	29
<i>Working in pairs or teams</i>	29
<i>Humility</i>	29
MINISTERING HEALING.....	30
<i>Taking time with people before we pray</i>	30
<i>The cause of the conditions:</i>	31
<i>Healing actions:</i>	31
<i>Practical suggestions</i>	32
<i>Sick believers</i>	33
<i>Sinners in the streets</i>	34
<i>The person who is not healed?</i>	34
<i>Establishing a prayer team</i>	34
<i>What qualities are desirable in a prayer team member</i>	348
THANKSGIVING AND PRESENTATION OF A NEW BORN CHILD.....	39
<i>An Outline of the 'Service of Thanksgiving and Presentation of Infants'</i> ..	40
FUNERALS OR THANKSGIVING SERVICES.....	42
<i>Before the service</i>	42
33 <i>The service</i>	42
<i>List of Possible readings</i>	43
<i>When a person is not a believer</i>	43
<i>Committal</i>	443
<i>After the service</i>	43
MARRIAGE.....	45
<i>Before the Service</i>	45
<i>At the Service</i>	45
<i>After the service</i>	466
<i>The Marriage Service</i>	46
THE ORIDINATION OF A MINISTER.....	48
<i>The ministers' task</i>	48

Living Hope Ministries

PASTORS' HANDBOOK

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

The New Testament talks about the universal church which encompasses all believers down the ages and the local church. The local church is a community of Christians in a given area at a particular time. How that local church expresses itself will depend on a number of factors. God is a God of variety and there are always varieties of style with differences of race and culture. Added to that, local believers may have a different, yet God-given emphasis or calling. But with all the diversity, the same principles come shining through. The similarities of true New Testament churches are more important than the differences. Established churches will be very different from new young churches but again the principles remain the same.

It is important for a believer to truly identify with a local church. The church needs to be a place where you feel safe and where the word of God that brought you to salvation is faithfully taught. It's a place where you can be challenged, stimulated and disciplined. It is also a place where you are able to develop the gifts that God has given you. It is a place where you can serve and give as well as a place for you to receive. Jesus Himself pointed out, that a house divided against itself cannot stand.

Our goal is not that a believer becomes committed to a local church but that they are committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. If they are committed to Him, they will naturally want to express that by identifying with a local group of believers.

What is church?

Church is not a building and should not be assessed by the amount of technical equipment or resources that it has. Church is people who love the Lord Jesus and who together recognise that they can present Jesus to their community more effectively than being left on their own. As a Christian you cannot opt out of church because it is part of God's plan for your future destiny! God is in you and everyone else who is a Christian. When you come together with other Christians, you meet with Christ.

What it is not!

It is not a religious club where you pay your tithe and obey the rules. It's a 'body' of committed people who have all found a new relationship with God and with one another. You don't choose the family you were born into and you can't be in God's family without being born again. The New Testament speaks of Christ as the head and the church as His body. (Colossians 1:8) We are people who share

His life and come under His control. As the parts of the human body are varied, so are we.

Jesus spoke of the universal church. -'I will build My church' (Matthew 16:18), meaning the universal church for whom Christ died (Ephesians 5:25) i.e. all believers regardless of label or race, past or present. It has a unity that is invisible but real. Meet a Christian even from another race or culture and immediately there is a oneness.

He also spoke of the local church -'Tell it to the church' (Matthew 18:17), must refer to a congregation who gather together, whether it's a city church (1 Corinthians 1:2) or a church in a house (Romans 16:5). It's a visible expression of committed people. Church in the New Testament is a company of 'born again' not simply religious people. It never refers to a building. N.B. Jesus promised that when the church met together, He would be there with them (Matthew 18:20).

What about denominations?

These have arisen in the history of the church and were not in God's original plan. Jesus only founded one church, one body, (Ephesians 4:4) to which all true Christians belong. Your loyalty is first to Christ and His universal church and then to the local church where He placed you. Open your heart to all believers and pray for them (Ephesians 6:18); be careful to avoid competitiveness. Don't be put off by 'labels'. One day we will all be united (John 17:20-21). Sometimes in history, some churches have lost their way and have failed to give Jesus and the word of God their proper place. A new church has been planted aiming to restore what was considered lost.

Church is for all believers

Some people say, you don't have to go to church to be a Christian. What they usually mean is, I am 'as good' as any churchgoer. Our natural body co-ordinates well. The body of Christ should do the same. Church is not just meetings! It's people in relationship. The New Testament doesn't say, 'Go to church and be a good person.' It says, in so many words, 'you Christians belong to each other.' (Romans 12:5), so get together (Ephesians 4:2-3).

Giving and receiving

This is what the church is all about. It's a principle of life that if you give, you will receive. Jesus said, "*Give, and it will be given to you...for the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*" (Luke 6:38). It's a sad reflection on the church that so often people come along simply to get something. A passive approach of attending church, judging the worship and the preacher and being preoccupied with ourselves is a bad place to be in. The first thing we need to understand is that God wants us to 'give ourselves' (2 Corinthians 8:5) to Him and to His people.

Devoted to the fellowship of believers.

This is what Jesus expects of His disciples. (Acts 2:42, Luke 14:33). Didn't He give Himself totally for us? (Galatians 2:20b). Your real attitude to Christ is seen by your attitude to His body, the church. You cannot be wholehearted to the one and half-hearted to the other (Matthew 25:40 – 1 John 4:20).

Faithfulness and Loyalty

Sadly today, these virtues are being lost in the home and in the work place. Even in the modern professing church, it is common for people to be here one day and gone the next. There are three ways that we can uphold these virtues: being faithful in meeting with your brothers and sisters to encourage them (Hebrews 10:25), being faithful in sharing your life, your time, your gifts, your money (Hebrews 13:16) and being faithful in submitting to the elders and leaders who are shepherds of the flock (Hebrews 13:17).

Loving Relationships

Church is all to do with getting along together – that is: relationships. We soon discover how essential relationships are if the church is to do its job. Love is the cement that holds the building together. We soon find that love gets tested and we are not as loving as we like to think we are. We have to learn to love people as they are, (that's the way God loves us) and they in turn must love us the way we are.

When we read the biblical description of love we realise how different real love is from the feelings we usually associate with the word. It's easy to love the lovely, especially when they love us, but what about the unlovely? What about those who are unloving to us? The church includes all kinds of people. Some of them you would never have chosen as your friends but God has chosen them for you, to shape you. The cement that holds the church together is not natural human love, but God's love. Love is His very character (1 John 4:7-8). When the Holy Spirit came to you, He brought that love to you (Romans 5:5). It's not just a warm feeling deep inside. It's not words without deeds (1 John 3:18). We must learn to love our brothers and sisters (Hebrews 10:24) by acts of thoughtfulness and unselfishness. It's not only your action you need to watch but your reactions to what others do to you or say about you. This is where love is put to the test. It's not just being kind to those you like but learning to love those you don't like, who may even irritate you. Think how Jesus expressed His love in this way on the cross (Luke 23:34). Where would we be without a forgiving God? (Hebrews 10:17). A forgiving spirit is what you must have in your heart, even before the other person says sorry. Jesus always taught that if you do not forgive your brother, you won't be forgiven by your Father in heaven (Matthew 6:4-15).

Resolving Conflicts

Jesus knew that there would sometimes be a breakdown in fellowship between believers, and so taught us how to deal with these situations. He gave us two examples:

When you know it's your fault (read Matthew 5:23-24)

Offering your gift means praying, worshipping or serving God. God's acceptance of your 'gift' must wait until you get things right, so go first and make up (be reconciled). Don't say, "It's half your fault", simply confess your part and leave the rest to God.

When you believe it's his fault (Read Matthew 18:15-17)

Sometimes in spite of how strongly you feel that you are innocent, the other person's perception may be different from yours. You may not be able to

satisfactorily get things resolved the first time. Taking one or two along with you the second time may help. Even if it is all his fault, your attitude must be right. Remember the goal is to deal with the problem and restore harmony. You are not trying to score points or prove that you are right. The key is having a forgiving spirit and maintaining unity.

According to this teaching of Jesus, you are the one to act when fellowship breaks down, always! If you are in the wrong you go and put things right. You won't have to answer to God for someone else's behaviour but you will have to answer for your own. (See Matthew 5:43-48).

Leadership

God might have arranged things so that we Christians get all our instructions from God direct and are responsible to Him alone but God has planned something very different. Though He does speak to us directly and personally, He also raised up leaders to act on His behalf. They have a very important part to play in teaching us God's will. The Bible often speaks of God's people as a flock and the leaders as the shepherds. How we respond to those whom God sets over us will have a great effect on our spiritual development. Every believer has to learn to recognize God's order of spiritual authority. When we are willing to submit to authority then we can be entrusted to have authority. In considering church membership it is vital that we look at the leaders in the church, what they do, and how God wants us to relate to them.

In every area of life, some people have to lead and that means authority. All authority comes from God and even governments are appointed by Him (Romans 13:1). When authority is lacking, there is disorder and evil (Judges 17:6). In the church God raises up leaders and equips them to care for God's people. In the New Testament church we read about Apostles who were the ones especially gifted to found new churches and help them to grow. There were also Prophets who had the gift to direct or correct God's people in a given location with a word that was specifically for them. Both these ministries were concerned with building up and uniting local churches. Evangelists reach out to bring new people to Christ and train the churches to do the same. These three gifts of leadership were operating in New Testament times to link churches together and promote unity but there were also local leaders, known as elders and deacons (Philippians 1:1).

The Elders

These men were also called 'overseers' translated 'bishops' in older versions although they were quite different from what we call bishops today. The most important quality in a leader is their desire to serve rather than assert. Elders have to be mature and stable men, able to teach. It is God who makes men elders (Acts 20:28).

Their task is to shepherd the flock of God (1 Peter 5:2).

1. Eldering

Any leader, called to be an elder, must be able to manage the church. Shepherds in Bible lands led the flock (John 10:4); they didn't drive from

behind! They set an example for people to follow (1 Peter 5:3) and they gave direction for the people as a whole to keep them on the right course. Sheep have to choose to come under a shepherd's authority. If a sheep won't submit, a shepherd can't lead. Although the elder may have to bring correction and discipline there is a mutual submission. That means the elder honours the people and must keep a humble spirit. Security and strength come when we all have a teachable spirit and focus on God's perspective. The elder is not more spiritual or more important; he is only a servant who has a gift from God to build up the church. That gift and calling must be honoured by the people.

2. Pastoring

An elder must be able to pastor people. A doctor tends sick people and in every flock there are sheep who are spiritually weak and sickly (1 Thessalonians 5:14). Elders are committed to getting sheep whole and strong. Sheep are easily attacked by robbers and wild animals. Paul told the elders at Ephesus, "*Guard yourselves and all the flock.*" Read Acts 20:28-31). Elders must watch over the flock as those who have to answer to the Chief Shepherd, Christ Himself (1 Peter 5:3-4).

3. Teaching

Again the shepherd must give the flock their food, which is teaching but also to lead them into green pastures (Psalm 23:2) where they can learn to feed themselves from God's word. Young Christians especially need what the Bible refers to as spiritual milk (1 Peter 2:2). Teaching may be given in a public preaching context but is also equally necessary in a small group setting or one-to-one (2 Timothy 2:2).

Deacons

The word "deacon" means servant. These are people who serve the church by assisting the elders and making their job easier. They may serve in a variety of ways according to their gift. Elders are always male (1 Timothy 3:2) but deacons may include women (Romans 16:1 – 1 Timothy 3:11 – see N.I.V. margin). Deacons do not rule or make decisions for the flock.

Responding to leaders

'Respect' them and 'hold them in highest regard in love because of their work' (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13). They have to work hard (verse 12). 'Obey' them and 'submit' to their authority (Hebrews 13:17). Obedience is an act, submission is an attitude. You can obey with a bad attitude. This could be a form of religious legalism and counter-productive. The letter kills but the spirit gives life. Be loyal and faithful. If you do this, the first two will follow. Grumbling and criticizing always spoil the fellowship. There is a serious warning in James 5:9 – *Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The judge is standing at the door.* If you have any difficulty with anything the elders say or do, you should always go and talk to them about it.

Finding your place and discovering your gifts

Church was never intended to be a show with a stage performer and an audience, plus a little bit of audience participation. Church does not consist of priest and people. It consists of people, of whom all are priests. Christ is the Head; the church is His many membered body. The purpose of your physical body is to express what your head is thinking but this requires that every part of your body is working properly and obeying the signals that the brain is transmitting. It's just like that in the body of Christ. You are now part of the body of Christ with a distinct role to play. There is a spiritual contribution that you can begin to make as well as the human skills and abilities which you can use. There are no spare parts in the body of Christ. You were handpicked for a special purpose that you might serve God on the earth (1 Thessalonians 1:9).

Children playing often argue over who is to be the leader and what part each will play. In the church, God chooses what each part shall do (1 Corinthians 12:28). Your role will be suited to your gifts and personality. As you grow spiritually, this will become clear to you. Meanwhile, whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

Learn to serve

More important than what we do, is how we do it. Motive is what drives us and we must guard against our own happiness and fulfilment. Our motive is to please the Lord and serve our fellow Christians. There is nothing wrong with being happy and fulfilled but serving God may not always guarantee these experiences.

Spiritual gifts are sovereignly given to us to serve the body and serving people is the path to promotion in Christ's Kingdom. Jesus said that He had come into the world to serve, not to be served (Matthew 20:25-28). Serving is love in action, a love that does not seek its own interest (1 Corinthians 13:5) but the interest of others (Philippians 2:4). The Holy Spirit is able to fill you with that love (Romans 5:5).

You are a priest

In the Old Testament, the priests were a special class of God's people qualified to offer sacrifices for the people who could not do that for themselves. As believers in Christ, we no longer need a priest between us and God as the Israelites did. We are all priests (Revelation 1:6) and so we have direct access to God (Ephesians 2:18). Being priests does not necessarily make us leaders but does qualify us to offer spiritual sacrifices (e.g. praise, worship, service) to God (1 Peter 2:5).

Taking your place

Each time that you pray or thank God on your own, you are acting as a priest. It may seem daunting to speak out a prayer in a public service but there are few things that will thrill your fellow Christians more than to hear you participate for the first time. As your confidence grows, you will want to share, testify, give thanks, or even use spiritual gifts in the congregation (1 Corinthians 14:26). As

you grow, the Holy Spirit will teach you when and how to participate under the authority of your leader.

Practical Service

Romans 12:7 – *If it is in serving, let him serve.* This includes practical ways as well as participating in meetings. There are so many practical things that need to be done within the life of the church. If God's love is in your heart, there will be many opportunities to meet the needs of others. Sometimes it will be a sacrifice rather than a pleasure but your reward will come from the Lord rather than from man. (Matthew 25:40)

In this short introduction we have looked at four main areas: what the church is, loving relationships, leadership and finding our place in the church. There are many other aspects that we could consider but space does not allow. The important principle is to communicate clearly to people wanting to join the church, what our vision and values are.

Living Hope Ministries

PASTORS' HANDBOOK

THE BREAKING OF BREAD

We know this simple meal historically came out of the Jewish Passover when Jesus took bread and wine at that meal and introduced a powerful and moving way that we could remember His sufferings and death on our behalf.

Luke 22:14 – 32 & I Corinthians 11: 17 - 34

Proclamation

I Corinthians 11:26. When we eat the bread and drink the wine, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

In this service, we proclaim to each other, to the world around and to the powers of darkness that Jesus has died for sins once and for all. This is a triumphant shout. It is a reverent and respectful declaration of Christ's victory. It is a time to declare that Jesus' death has conquered Satan and that His blood has fully dealt with our sin.

Jesus is coming back.

We remember Him in this way confidently, looking forward to a day when we will see Him and His pierced hands. Christ will return in glory! One day we shall see Him face to face and be with Him for ever! The fruit of His sufferings will then be complete.

The body of Christ

The word 'communion' means sharing, or having things in common. I Corinthians 10:16-17. When we share bread and wine together, we show we are united in a common need for the blessings of Christ's death. We are all needy people, brought together by our common experience of Jesus. At the foot of the cross, we are all in the same place. Whatever our culture, background or status, we are all needy people. His body was beaten and nailed to the tree for us. Now we are His body on earth and Jesus who is the same yesterday, today and forever, lives in us and demonstrates His divine power through us.

Examine your Heart

Chapter 11:27–29. We need to examine ourselves and realise that careless partaking of this meal will result in judgement.

What happened at Corinth was that some were sick, some were weak and others died!!

If you are doing something you know to be wrong and are unwilling to turn from it, you are disobeying God and should not take the bread and wine. Hebrews 10:26.

1 Corinthians 11:28 and 31. we must examine ourselves and the Holy Spirit can help us in this; we can pray in the words of Psalm 139:23-24.

We know our hearts can be deceitful and hard. Our prayer is to walk in the light of Jesus, knowing if we confess our sin He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us. 1 John 1: 7-9 We also recognise that our relationships with each other in the body of Christ must be good and pure. We dare not act as if others do not matter. It does matter to God how we relate to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The new Covenant

Jesus speaks of the new covenant. It is all of His grace, no longer bound by the law but wonderfully accepted because of what He has done.

This Covenant reminds us that we have responsibilities to live and care for one another, as Christ has loved us. Though we can do nothing to earn salvation, we can do much to avoid losing it and avoid mocking what the Lord has done in His humility and suffering on our behalf.

Pastoral Points

1. How often should we break bread? The Bible does not give us strict rules but something so important must be regular.
2. How do we conduct the service? Again there are no strict rules. The bread and wine are symbols; what they represent is the most important thing. The bread can come from one loaf but whether we all eat from that loaf or if it is prepared and divided beforehand, is not essential. Similarly what we drink can come from one source and still be in individual cups or one cup. The church across the world does not have the same view about the nature of what we drink (alcoholic wine or non-alcoholic wine). Again it is of greatest importance to recognise the blood of Jesus shed for our sin and deliverance from its punishment. That is paramount.
3. The early church celebrated communion in the context of a meal. Certainly for us the context of being family and having the same heavenly Father, purchased by the same blood of Jesus at the same cost, indwelt by the same Holy Spirit is the key. Whether we have a meal or not, the vital thing is to be focused on our Lord Jesus and what He has done for us remembering that He rose from the dead and is coming again.

4. It is important to aim to balance the seriousness of sin in the body of Christ, the unspeakable cost of Jesus' suffering and the joy of our salvation. Sometimes communion can be so morbid and painful that it is no blessing. However frivolity and carelessness have no part in this wonderful meal.
5. As Christ commanded this we can expect a blessing. This time is a time of obedience. "This do in remembrance of me". We do not deserve anything except judgement but God loves to bless obedience so expect His grace, forgiveness healing, deliverance and wonderful breakthroughs as a church and as individuals, when you gather to remember Him in the way He told us to, in Scripture.

Why bread and wine?

Both were readily available and still are accessible today.

Bread is produced after corn is crushed and Jesus' body was cruelly beaten and crucified for us.

Wine also is produced when grapes are crushed and the juice is released. So Jesus' blood was shed when He died for us.

Living Hope Ministries

PASTORS' HANDBOOK

BAPTISM

What is baptism?

We must be clear about what baptism is. It is when a person converted to Christ expresses faith by being dipped in water. The word 'baptise' means to plunge, sink, drench, drown or soak! This is why many churches baptise people by dipping them right under water. It was usually done this way in New Testament times and often in the open-air. E.g. Jesus' baptism Mark 1:9-11. Today people are baptised in the sea or river, or in a swimming pool. Some churches have their own pool in the church building. Baptism is also like a wedding, a public declaration of what has happened in the heart. It is a time to seal forever our commitment to Jesus.

Who should be baptised?

Baptism is a serious commitment so we have to balance an eagerness to baptise with a confidence that the person is really saved. It is for anyone who loves Jesus and knows Him as Saviour and Lord. There is no lower or higher age. The issue is whether there is clear faith and a testimony of commitment to Jesus. Baptism is always linked with faith in Jesus. Acts 18:8. Acts 2:41. Repentance & faith.

- Consider who does the baptising. The Bible does not make it a role only for leaders; others can be involved as long as they too have been baptised.

Why be baptised?

1) To obey Jesus' command.

Read Matthew 28:18-20. As a leader of course you are obeying the command of Jesus in baptising people as well the one being baptised.

2) To show your faith in Jesus.

By being baptised, you demonstrate publicly that you love Jesus and want to live for Him from Jesus' words in Mark 8:38. What will happen to the person who is ashamed of being known as a Christian? It wasn't until after this experience that Jesus went out to preach and heal. It was the same with Saul. See how he describes his conversion in Acts 22:6-16. Saul later came to be called Paul. What did he need to do before he began his work Acts 9:17?

3. To prepare to serve Jesus.

Matthew 3:16 reveals that the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus at His baptism and therefore the time that His ministry was about to begin. So being baptised and filled with the Holy Spirit comes before we begin to serve the Lord.

What does baptism mean?

It is the powerful declaration that Jesus died and rose again. Never underestimate what God will do at such a time!

1) **Washing away our sins.** What was Saul told to do in Acts 22:16? Also in Acts 2:38, what did Peter tell the crowds that they must do to have their sins forgiven? Just as a bath cleans the dirt from our bodies, so baptism shows that as Christians, we have been 'washed clean' from the effects of sin.

2) **Burying the old life.** Romans 6 & 2 Corinthians 5:17 When we join our lives to Jesus, God makes what happened to Him, apply to us. Colossians 2:12

3) **Drinking God's Holy Spirit.** Very often baptism in water is linked with being baptised with the Holy Spirit We see that the Holy Spirit came on Jesus and on Saul at their baptisms. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13.

4) **Joining the body of Christ.** The Bible describes the Christian family as the body of Christ. When you became a Christian, you became part of the Body. Baptism is a way of showing this publicly. See 1 Corinthians 12:12-13.

When should baptism take place?

As soon as possible! Most of the first Christians were converted and baptised on the same day. E.g. Acts 8:26- 40. Philip baptises an important Ethiopian official.

Dress

How do I dress for baptism? There are no strict rules but modesty, practical care and a change of clothes are important.

Pastoral points.

1. Is the person truly saved?
2. Is there an assurance of all sins forgiven?
3. Are there issues regarding the old life to be dealt with, e.g. immorality, divorce, and occult? You can only bury in baptism that which is dead.
4. Here is a suggested form of words that could be said. The heart is more important than just words but the following questions are useful:
 - Have you renounced Satan and all his works?
 - Have you repented of your sin?
 - Have you put your trust in Jesus as your Saviour and Lord?
 - On the confession of faith in Jesus as Lord and repentance towards God, we baptise you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Such a statement not only emphasises the Trinity but also Jesus' discipleship programme of immersing his followers in the understanding of the Fatherhood of God, the friendship & saving work of the Son and the power and comfort of the Holy Spirit.
5. After a baptism, pray for the candidates as very often, like Jesus, a time of testing awaits them.

Make a baptism an evangelistic opportunity. Believe for people to become Christians. Have in place a discipleship programme for the new convert to attend.

Living Hope Ministries

PASTORS' HANDBOOK

MINISTRY IN THE HOME

Much of the ministry in the New Testament took place in homes.

- Many times, Jesus visited a home, sometimes enjoying a meal. The occasion became a spontaneous teaching opportunity. See Mt.8.14-15; 9.10-13, 18-19,23-25; 26.6-13; Mk.1.29-31; Lk.7.36-50; 10.38-42; 14.1-24; 19.1-10; Jn.12. 1-8.
- Whenever Jesus sent out His disciples, they were instructed to visit the homes in the towns to which they were sent. See Mt.10.1-15; Mk.6.7-13; Lk.9.1-6; 10.1-12.
- In the days of the early Church, when there were no church buildings, much activity took place in homes. See Acts 2.46; 5.42; 10.22-48; 16.15, 32-34; 20.20; 21.8-11.
- There were even churches that met in a home, e.g. Rom.16.3-5; 1 Cor.16.19; Col.4.15; Philemon 1-2.

The value of ministry in the home

- People feel honoured if you visit them in their home.
- People feel more relaxed and are therefore more likely to open up to you.
- It is a more natural setting in which to enjoy food together, however simple the meal. It helps create a good atmosphere to talk easily about spiritual things.
- By visiting someone in their home, you can begin to discern spiritual or material needs. For example. How is their marriage? What about the children? Is the home well cared for? Are there any idols, fetishes or other evidence of ungodly practices? Does the family have enough to meet their basic needs?
- By visiting, you bring the presence and blessing of God into the home.

Making a visit

- In most cultures, it is acceptable simply to turn up at somebody's door; in others, it is essential to make an appointment. Similarly, in some it would be usual to take a small gift, in others this is not expected. Be respectful of local customs.
- First of all, greet the house when you arrive. Speak your blessing of peace upon it. See Mt.10.12-13; Lk.10.5-6.
- Eat whatever is set before you. See Lk.10.7-8; Mk.7.14-19; 1 Tim.4.3-5.
- Have a clear objective for your visit, whether the call is at their request or yours. If the family are not believers, steer the conversation around to

spiritual things. Be sensitive to how direct you can be. A good question to ask sometimes is, "Would you say you have ever committed your lives to Christ, or is it something you are still thinking about?" If they are believers, ask about their walk with God: Do you have a regular time to pray each day, or does it vary? Where are you reading in the Bible right now? What has been your biggest encouragement recently? What is your biggest challenge?

- Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit about anything that He might show you, or any word He might give through scripture or prophecy.
- It is good to end a visit with prayer – inviting any specific requests as well as sensing needs that the Holy Spirit may reveal to you.

Blessing a home

- When people move into a new home, it can be a great joy to bless the home in Jesus' Name. Read appropriate scriptures such as Psalm 127, Deut.6.1-9, Psalm 121, Eph. 3.14-21, and Phil.4.4-9.
- Go around the home with the family, praying a special blessing in each place - kitchen, living and sleeping areas, bathroom etc. Don't forget to pray around the grounds. Pray for the presence of Jesus to fill every part so that there is no room for the enemy or for the works of darkness. Speak the covering and protection of the blood of Christ over the home & everyone in it, applying the Blood to doorposts & lintels. See Exodus12.21-28.
- You can pray for the home always to be a place of warmth, welcome and hospitality to all who need it, but its doors always closed to what is ungodly, unholy or impure. You can pray for the provision of every need and for the desire to meet the needs of others. You can pray for harmony in marriage and family life, and that children will be brought up to love and honour the Lord. Pray that the home will be a haven of light and love, a refuge from the storms of life.
- Pray for all those things you long to see in your own home and family. The wonderful blessing of Numbers 6.24-26. Is always good to share.

Cleansing a home

Sometimes, because of what has happened in a home, there can be an evil presence or atmosphere. Death, suicide severe sickness can cause this. You have the authority in Christ to deal with this situation if it arises.

- First of all, you need to take the covering and protection of the blood of Jesus over your own life, making sure that you have repented of all known sin.
- Then you need to identify the nature of the problem. How and when does it manifest itself? Is it confined to a particular part of the house, or associated with a particular object or person? How long has it been going on? Is the disturbance linked to present or previous occupants of the house?
- Your aim is to find out who or what has given Satan ground to occupy in this household. Probable causes are gross sin of some kind, such as sexual immorality, drunkenness or violence; occult activity such as Spiritism,

divination or false religion. This may be down to the present or previous occupants, or to other family members.

- The key to release is openly to repent of any ungodly activity and to renounce the devil and all his works, specifically naming those practices which have been identified. It is very important to remove and to destroy any objects associated with sinful or occult activity. See Acts 19.17-20.
- Then forgiveness, cleansing and release can be pronounced over the person's life on the basis of God's promise in 1 John 1.7-9.
- Declare the Lordship and authority of Jesus Christ in the home and over all the works of darkness and command every spirit that is contrary to Jesus to leave immediately and never to return. Send such spirits to Jesus for Him to deal with.
- It is good to pray in this way throughout the house, particularly concentrating on those areas in which an evil presence or atmosphere has been identified. It can also be helpful to open doors and windows when commanding the spirits to leave. Having expelled the evil, it is very important to speak the blessing of Christ over the home and family & to pray for the Holy Spirit to fill every person & every part of the house.
- All the above assumes that you are dealing with believers. You can expel spirits from the home of someone who is not yet a Christian, but there is no guarantee that the spirits will not return. So it's very important to lead such a person to Christ. See Matthew 12.43-45.

Living Hope Ministries

PASTORS' HANDBOOK

DELIVERANCE MINISTRY

For three brief years in Israel, Christ personally proclaimed liberty to the captives, set the downtrodden free, and destroyed the devil's work. Since His ascension, He continues this work through the church, His body on earth. The Great Commission indicates that this should reach all nations and continue until the end of time. Deliverance covers many areas. You could argue that everybody needs deliverance; all unbelievers need once and for all deliverance from sin, guilt and death; all believers need daily deliverance from faults, mistakes and temptations and a few people need deliverance from enslavement to evil spirits. The church needs to emphasise the first two aspects of deliverance, without ignoring the third.

Then there is the much larger area of deliverance in society. The church is called to be salt, light and like a lamb among wolves, bringing changes in the world's thinking, behaviour and structures, by serving, sacrificing and praying.

The church's purpose is to worship God, but its mission is to proclaim Christ who is the Deliver. Her eyes should be fixed on Jesus, while her feet stamp on the works of Satan. We are focusing on the church's deliverance ministry to individuals, but always we must focus on Jesus and not His enemy, Satan.

Prayer

If a church expects to confront Satan then it needs to be thoroughly prepared by persistent, united prayer. In Mark 9:29 Jesus said that the difference between His disciples' failure and His own success was due to prayer and possibly fasting. If Christ needed preparatory prayer, then surely so must we. This should be the united prayer of the whole local church, not isolated individuals doing their own thing.

The deliverance ministry of Acts 5: 12-16 followed the united prayer in Acts 4: 24-30; the deliverance of the Philippian slave-girl in Acts 16: 16-18 follows on from a description of a riverside prayer meeting in verse 13, and verse 16 shows that this was not an isolated occurrence. If it is anticipated that deliverance will be necessary, then the local church should be alerted to pray before, during and after the expected time of ministry. This would be prayer for boldness, guidance, wisdom and brevity.

Evangelism

In the New Testament deliverance like healing, is always set in an evangelistic context, but this does not mean that all new converts need it! However thorough evangelism prevents later problems which may appear to require deliverance. All those turning to Christ should be encouraged, like those in 1 Thessalonians 1:9, to break with any form of idolatry so that they can become true servants of the real and living God. They need to see what practices are incompatible with their new state, repent of past involvement and promise future purity. They need to learn about and claim by faith and baptism, the freedom of God's forgiveness and they need a complete conversion so that they move from self-indulgence to be filled with God's Holy Spirit.

Discerning where deliverance is necessary.

One of the hardest questions to answer is, 'How can I tell whether a person requires deliverance?' The New Testament gives some pointers: those exorcised had a severe physical disability or they either had a permanent loss of self-control or a temporary loss of control when confronted by Christ. This loss of control was demonstrated by suicidal tendencies, unusual strength, violence, a vocal outburst involving supernatural knowledge, or a substantial change in voice. However, not all those with severe physical handicaps, not all those suffering from mental illness or epilepsy, need deliverance.

The most significant factor is a gross overreaction to the proclamation of Christ and particularly His death on the cross. In no way did Jesus hunt demons they could not help themselves reacting to his holy presence. I often wonder how many sermons the man in the synagogue in Capernaum had slept through until the day that Jesus appeared. Mark 1:21-28. He cries out in torment as the presence of Jesus fills the place. As members of the body of Christ we have a calling to destroy the works of Satan. On the rare occasions a person is brought to our attention with a demon which reacts to Christ in us, the demon may be causing the sufferer to lose self-control and exhibit some of the symptoms mentioned above. Boldness and a mixture of discernment and careful questions are our chief requirement.

Sometimes people request deliverance for themselves, but experience suggests that they inevitably need other help. I have never found anybody who asked for deliverance who actually needed it whereas people who are troubled by spirits often don't realise they need deliverance.

The moment we make up rules, God delights to present us with a person who breaks our man-made rule! However, I believe that it is foolish and unscriptural for deliverance to be attempted unless the New Testament symptoms are present. If there is any doubt whether deliverance is necessary, it is best to presume that it is not. Normally, as in the New Testament examples, it is obvious when a person needs this help and then there should be no hesitation.

God's grace and His sovereignty mean that He uses a great variety of people, methods and diagnosis, but that should not mean we pretend that the exceptional is normal. We should rejoice when God does something unusual,

but we should not then aim to repeat that experience or turn it into a principle. Of course God has been pleased to bless and use some of the deliverance methods used by Christians in the past, but all methods and ideas need to be continually reassessed against Scripture in order to be improved and refined. We all need to submit our varied experiences to the clear principles of Scripture and expect God to work within His revealed parameters.

Guidelines for ministry

The following are simple guidelines to help those new in ministry who are faced with a need for exorcism. They are not rules to be obeyed, but suggestions to be considered.

Do not be dictated to by circumstances or people

Our calling is to obey God, to do His will, and not to be pressurised or put upon by others. Obedience to God will sometimes mean not helping a sufferer and appearing to be heartless, just like Jesus at the pool of Bethesda, (John 5) and at other times obedience to God will mean instant and embarrassing action. In every situation we should be available to God, yet not presumptuous, ensuring that we ask God whether he wants to use us, or nobody, or someone else.

Do not be fearful

In the face of someone having a violent loss of self-control there will always be apprehension and distress, but our approach should be the same as our approach to death and dying. The Christian is not afraid of death, whereas the process of dying can, at times, be quite horrible. We have no need to fear the demon, the promise of Luke 10:19 are absolute, but the demonic reaction to Christ in us can be most unpleasant. If we are fearful, it is good to ask Christ to remove our fears and to fill us with His confidence. It is helpful to read aloud passages like Psalm 124 and 125, personalising them by substituting my name in the appropriate places.

Be well prepared yourself

If we know we are going to meet someone to pray for their deliverance of course we should prepare. We need to ensure that our total dependence is upon Christ and not any technique, object, form of words or pattern of ministry; that we have no bitterness, broken relationship or sin which has not been dealt with; that we have prayed and fasted; that we have asked for the Spirit's help; that we have a partner to work with, that the local church is praying; that we have deep compassion, patience and love for the sufferer and have reminded ourselves that probably confession, repentance and receiving God's forgiveness will be all that is necessary. It is important to add that some situations requiring ministry, we have not planned for. We have nothing to fear." Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." 1 John 4:4. Our readiness comes out of a heart for God, committed to honouring Him all the time.

Prepare the one needing deliverance.

If the person is in control of themselves, it is advisable to spend time helping them to relax, to explain what will happen at each stage of the ministry, to check that they are willing and honest, to underline that you will be speaking to the demon and not to them, and to ensure they know that the freedom will be

nothing to do with your partner and yourself, but everything to do with Jesus. It is often helpful to get the needy person to read aloud a New Testament exorcism story and some appropriate Psalms or Scripture passages.

Confession and renunciation:

The recipient of ministry often loses control to the demonic forces during this time of preparation especially when the Scriptures are read. If this happens, then you will need to move straight in to the deliverance commands mentioned below. However if there is no loss of self-control, the recipient should be encouraged to confess those sins which the Holy Spirit brings to mind; this is not an attempt to isolate the cause of the problem. It is to experience the power and freedom of God's forgiveness. It may be advisable for the recipient to go away and return at a later date, having spent time listening to the Holy Spirit for His identification of those things which need God's forgiveness. If this is so, it may be helpful to give a kind of prescription of Scripture passages to be read two or three times a day. It is good to give people a simple meditation about God's peace to use during this period.

Acts 19:18 stresses that the believers' confession was 'in detail', and experience suggests that to be fully set free from the power of sin by God's forgiveness, confession must be made in detail. Those helping should announce God's absolute forgiveness for each sin in turn.

If possible at this time, any books, objects or clothes which relate to the sins confessed and forgiven should be destroyed. If this is not possible, the intention should be established of destroying them at the first possible opportunity.

Authoritative commands

If and when the person loses control and the evil force reacts to Christ in you and your partner, or the person has a severe physical handicap which needs exorcism, then a few authoritative commands should be spoken (not shouted!). All commands are uttered on behalf of Jesus Christ and it should be understood by all participants that Christ is the exorcist, and we are merely His earthly representatives.

Only in the encounter with the crippled woman does Jesus appear to have conversed with the recipient. In all other instances his words were reserved for the evil force that was influencing the person. In addressing the demon, it appears that there were 5 elements to Jesus' words.

'Be bound'

Mark 1:25 and Luke 4:35, state that Jesus said 'Be quiet' to the unclean spirit, yet verse 26 shows the spirit giving a loud cry. Jesus was ordering the unclean spirit to be bound or to be restricted, and this involves silence but is not exclusively restricted to it. In Matthew 12:29, when teaching about exorcism, Jesus said, 'How can anyone make his way into a strong man's house and burgle his property unless he has tied up the strong man first? Only then can he burgle his house.' This is what Jesus did in the Capernaum synagogue and this is a preliminary stage to the ejection of the demon.

'Be rebuked'

Closely allied to this is the gospel writers' use of the verb to rebuke. It is used in Matthew 17:18, Mark 1:25, 9:25, Luke 4:35, 41 and 9:42 in relation to evil spirits, and in the same way in Luke 4:39 about the fever which affected Peter's mother-in-law. It is the use of this word that suggests the story is more like deliverance than a healing.

'Come out'

In the three stories of the Capernaum demoniac, the Gadarene demoniac and the epileptic demoniac, Jesus is reported as commanding, 'Come out of him!' This simple command was the basic phrase used by Christ in deliverance.

Questions that may be asked.

In Mark 5:9 Jesus asked, 'What is your name?' It is impossible to establish whether this was asked of the sufferer or the demon, but if we assume that it was addressed to the demon, we need to ask why Christ put this particular question. Jesus had already been unsuccessfully commanding the spirit to come out (this is similar to two-stage healing of the blind man in Mark 8:22-26) and I think that this question was a secondary means of attack.

In Biblical times the name and nature of a person were considered to be indistinguishable; to know a person's name was to know his nature. The ambiguous reply and reaction: "My name is Legion for there are many of us. And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the district", makes sense when it is realised that Jesus' words were intended to establish the nature of the demon, not just its name. This self-revelation was the demonic signal of defeat. Jesus' words of command which we can better understand as, 'Show your nature!' had sufficed. He didn't need to repeat the command 'Get out!'

Christ's second question was also asked after apparent failure. The disciples could not expel the demon and so the epileptic boy was brought to Jesus. Again the question has no point unless it was asked by Christ in an attempt to expose the nature of His adversary. His explanation in Mark 9 verse 29 seems to suggest that He had recognised a particular type of spirit.

'Don't return'

In Mark 9:25 Christ's final words to the evil spirit were 'and never enter him again'. In Matthew 12:43-45 and Luke 11:24-26 Christ had mentioned the possibility of evil spirits returning to a person after expulsion, and He seemed to place the onus of responsibility for preventing this from occurring on the sufferer himself. So why did Christ utter this command? I believe that the reason for the express prohibition of any demonic return in this particular case was because the sufferer was a young boy, and not yet of an age when he could personally ensure that the Holy Spirit was in complete control of his life. We have no record of Christ speaking this command to any adult sufferers.

At no stage did Jesus argue with a demon or even converse with one. If the demon made a fuss, it was first ordered to be bound and silent, then it was told to leave. If it did not leave, it was ordered to surrender by revealing its nature. And if the sufferer was a child the demon was prohibited from returning.

Expelling the demon

Firstly, the demon should be bound/rebuked/restricted, for example with the words, 'I bind you every evil spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and by the power of the Holy Spirit. I command you to be silent and still.' This is not only to prevent the demon from hurting the person, but also from affecting those who are ministering. The demon will try to bring disruption or confusion, a mental blankness or a sensation of drowsiness. The binding is to prevent this from happening, or to stop it when it has already begun.

Secondly, the demon should be ordered to leave, for example by saying, 'I command you, every evil spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and by the power of the Holy Spirit, to go from this person, whom you hold captive.' It may be necessary---as with Jesus and the Gadarene demoniac to repeat these commands more than once. If the person is still not in control of himself, it may be helpful to read some relevant verses, claim God's promise afresh, and cry out to Jesus to deliver the needy person. To pray and if you have it use the gift of tongues for a short while before repeating the two simple commands. If there is still no improvement after that, it is wise to order the demon to surrender by revealing its nature, and when it has done so, it may be necessary to repeat the commands, identify the character of the demon. For example, say, 'In the name of Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, I command you evil spirit which causes this person to injure himself by cutting his wrists, to go from him.

Some suggest that one should always order the demon not to return, but, as I have suggested this is only appropriate when the sufferer is a child. If the person is an adult, then whether the demon returns or not, depends on their response to Christ, their being baptised and their own pleading, for Jesus to anoint them with the Holy Spirit.

Others command the evil spirit to go to hell or the lake of fire, but as the New Testament teaches that this will not happen until the Day of Judgement, it must be a waste of words to say this. If it is felt necessary to direct the demon in any way, it is probably best to say something like this, 'I hand you over to Jesus Christ for Him to deal with you as He sees fit.'

After-care

The only after-care mentioned in the New Testament is Jesus' words to the Gadarene demoniac in Luke 8:39, 'Go back home and report all that God has done for you.' However, as Luke 11:24-26 teaches the possibility of ending up worse off after exorcism, clearly the person needs to be given some advice. It appears sensible that if he is not a believer, he should be encouraged to turn to Christ, believe, be baptised and receive the Holy Spirit. If he is a believer then he should be taught from the Bible about being baptised and filled with God's Spirit. He should be warned about the certainty of counterattacks by Satan, especially along the lines of old weaknesses, and taught how to resist temptation and claim God's Protection.

It is good that within twenty-four hours, there should be a check on the progress of the person ministered to. The leadership of the local church should see that support is available to encourage the one delivered, to keep walking with the Lord.

Protection

Luke 10:19 is a precious promise, but it only has meaning if beings exist whose aim is to hurt those committed to evangelistic mission and a simple lifestyle.

Satan is a destroyer, deceiver, despot and defamer, and through the ages Christians involved with exorcism, have felt the brunt of his anger. Psalm 91, 124 and 125 teach that God does keep us safe, but it is safety during an attack, not immunity from attack. Ephesians 6:17 mentions God's provisions of a helmet of salvation, but a helmet minimises the effects of a knock-out-blow; it does not eliminate the possibility of such a blow.

Satan's attacks are not only physical. He wages total warfare, aiming to tempt believers to ambition, pride, self-pity or self-condemnation, and it is easy to help hundreds of people and yet still succumb to one of his wiles. God's protection is greater than Satan's power, but His protection is given to the church. It is against the church that the gates of hell will not be able to prevail; no such promise exists for an isolated individual. Those who engage in the deliverance ministry, no matter how famous, are vulnerable if they are not rooted in and deeply committed to their local church. They are trying to fight outside the umbrella of God's safety. All those involved with deliverance must reach the point where 2 Corinthians 12:9 has become an abiding reality; they must recognise and be content with their weakness because their dependence is totally upon God's grace and God's power. God neither wants nor needs strong, powerful, knowledgeable followers; instead he desires little children who recognise His gentle voice, trust Him implicitly, obey Him wholeheartedly and rely on Him completely.

The church's ministry of deliverance does not depend on what we know about demons, but on whether Christ knows us. It depends on weak, ignorant, fallible humans who know that their Christ has fought and won the decisive battle over Satan, who know that in union with Christ, they can share in that victory and who never pretend that they can deliver a fly apart from him.

God calls all his children to receive His forgiveness, to resist His enemy, to pray daily for deliverance from the evil one and to share in Christ's triumph by being ready at all times to do nothing, or to speak a quiet word of warning, or to trample underfoot a foul spirit. But whatever He calls us to do, the mighty Deliverer Himself promises to be there for us, wherever and whenever it is.

I must stress that although I trust these guidelines are helpful, some of the most effective deliverance that I have witnessed is by friends abroad, just responding instinctively to the Holy Spirit. Knowing our God and being known by God is the most effective way to see the victory of Jesus manifest in someone's troubled life.

Living Hope Ministries

PASTORS' HANDBOOK

PRAYING FOR THE SICK

In the Old Testament, only those select few who had been anointed with the Holy Spirit – the prophets – were eligible for the healing ministry. Since Christ baptised the church in the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the healing ministry has been a possibility for all believers, whether male or female, black or white, Jew or Gentile, ordained or lay, old or young. The only stipulation is that the Christian believer has been anointed with the Holy Spirit. Some will be used in healing more than others, a few will receive a particular gift of healing but every member of God's prophetic people can be a channel of healing. We should avoid styles of ministry, which give the impression that only the ordained, the leaders, or a special few, can bring Christ's healing.

Preparation for praying for the sick

Prayer should include intercession for boldness along the lines of Acts 4:29-30, and silent listening, waiting for God's prompting about the ministry.

Prayer should be offered essentially for direction and guidance as to the who, how, when, where and what. The prayer should take place beforehand; its primary use is not during ministry.

Many find it helpful to add fasting to prayer. Those who are serious about a simple lifestyle and the evangelistic healing ministry will not neglect this discipline. Fasting need not only be abstinence from food and drink, but can be from anything that occupies our time, for example, sleep, sex, the media, speech and so on.

Working in pairs or teams

The principle of partnership pervades the Bible. Christ sent His followers to heal in pairs. The promises of Matthew 18: 19-20 are made to two or three, and not to one. It is a good pattern to minister healing in pairs and quite exceptional to minister on your own. The disciples learnt from being with Jesus when He healed and it is good preparation for us to join with another more experienced believer. This is the way to multiply the numbers of believers involved in healing.

Humility

Many are attracted to the healing ministry for wrong reasons. Compassion and obedience motivated Christ.

If we only want to see signs and wonders we will have been side-tracked. God is the healer and we are just vessels. God knows what has happened and pleasing Him is the important thing.

Living Hope Ministries

PASTORS' HANDBOOK

MINISTERING HEALING

Taking time with people before we pray

There are meetings where people respond to the word of God and desire prayer for healing.

However there are other times outside of meetings for which we can prepare well.

In ministry we need to listen both to God and to the person. This is enabled by creating a climate of quiet and privacy. Time and again Jesus silenced noise or moved into a private place before commencing ministry. We do well when we follow His example.

Jesus did not function only at a supernatural level, but also at the natural level of observation and deduction. He asked five normal and obvious questions (Mark 5:9, 8:22-26; 9:14-29; Luke 18:40-43; John 5:6) and if He needed to ask them, so will we.

'*What is your name?*' The exchange of names is more than mere politeness. It helps to ensure that the ministry is personal and loving.

'*What do you want me to do?*' This is better phrased as, '*What do you want God to do?*' It is an important question as it helps the sick to be specific in his request.

'*Do you want to be well?*' We need to check that the person is serious and that he is aware of the consequences of his healing.

'*How long has this been happening?*' Occasionally the circumstances and background of the ailment need to be investigated to ascertain the cause of the sickness.

'*Do you feel any different?*' We should establish whether or not anything has happened during our ministry.

We do not need all the medical details, for we are not operating as doctors. We only need to know in what way the person suffers and where it hurts. We should not focus on the size of the problem but concentrate on the greatness of God.

As well as questioning the sick person, it is always necessary to ask God whether anything else needs to be known. He may give us a picture or word to pass on, suggest a statement to make, or put a question into our minds. Sometimes He draws our attention to a non-physical cause, but most sickness and injuries are

plainly physical. If God tells us nothing, this means the person has told us everything that we need to know.

The cause of the condition:

The conditions of Abimelech, Miriam, Malchus, the man at the pool of Bethesda and the man let down through the roof, appear to have had their origin in sin, sin committed either by or against the individual. Many today would demand that Malchus forgave Peter before admitting any possibility of healing his severed right ear, but Jesus was silent about this and healed him unconditionally. Jesus did not insist on a lengthy confession from the unpleasant man at Bethesda. Instead Christ returned after the healing to urge the man, 'Now you are well again, be sure not to sin any more, or something worse may happen to you' (John 5:14). At times, as James 5:16 makes plain, there is an association between the person's confession of sin and his cure, but this is exceptional.

Some teach that a demon always lies behind every ailment, and so demand exorcism before healing can begin. This is true in the sense that death and sickness are the result of the serpent's activity in Eden, but the Scriptures clearly distinguish between exorcism of evil powers and physical healing, and this difference needs constant emphasis. Sometimes a person may be healed as a direct consequence of the expulsion of an evil power, for example the men in Matthew 9:32-34 and 12:22, but we should not make a general principle from these two isolated instances. In Luke 13:10 Jesus first ejected an evil power, then followed that by touching the woman to heal her bent back but normally He cured people without any reference to demonic presence or activity.

Healing actions:

There is a natural tendency in all of us to drift into habitual patterns of ministry. However, Jesus was unpredictable. He only did what the Father told Him and so His instructions vary with every individual. There are a number of different healing actions used by Jesus and the early church, and we would do well to follow their example of obedient variety and creativity.

Three points are particularly important. First, the laying of hands on the head of an individual is the biblical action appropriate to the ministry of blessing and not to the ministry of healing.

Secondly, prayer for healing should have taken place before ministry. Words of announcement or command, not words of petition or request, should be spoken during the ministry actions. If someone asks 'Please heal me', then commands like 'Be healed' are appropriate. If the prompting comes from God, a phrase similar to "Receive your healing" is relevant. Thirdly, God may prompt us to suggest a task for the sick person to perform, and normally the healing will be delayed until this has been completed, for example, Naaman, Miriam and the John 9 beggar.

Practical suggestions

The following suggestions are for those inexperienced in the healing ministry. This model should be constantly varied as the Spirit guides you along His own creative path.

Show Christ's love at all times. Smile, use Christian names and relax, for God will perform the miracle, not you.

Together with your partner, quietly confess and ask forgiveness of your sins. Only rarely does God work through dirty channels.

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you guidance, boldness and power. Keep your eyes open at all times. You are not praying. Christ and the apostles did not minister through closed eyes, and we can receive much necessary information by our observation of the sick person's reactions.

Listen to God and speak whatever He puts into your mind. He may tell you to command a parasitic growth to be removed, or a defective organ to be restored. He may ask you to give a pronouncement of faith or blessing. Keep on asking God questions and listening to His replies.

Ask God whether you should touch the sick person or not. If you are prompted to use the 'healing touch', gently place your hands on the clothing or skin nearest to affected part of the body. (Obviously this would be inappropriate in the case of ministry to the opposite sex).

Ask the person, 'Do you feel anything?' 'What is happening?' Ensure that he keeps you informed of the healing progress, or lack of it!

Watch for bodily reactions e.g. shaking, stiffening, variation in breathing, falling, warmth, tingling, hot spots, laughter, weeping, moist eyes, and so on. Though these reactions frequently indicate that God is at work, they are only the body's reaction to God's work; they are not in themselves a work of God. A severe reaction does not evidence a greater work, nor does the absence of any bodily reaction mean healing is not occurring. These things are no yardsticks of progress or success. A few may fall over, some shake, but most, as in the gospel accounts, evidence nothing. If a bodily reaction takes place, help the client to be comfortable, but ignore the reaction and press on with the ministry. The reaction normally ceases before the healing occurs, so do not stop ministering when the sick person stops manifesting.

Continually encourage and relax the sick person. Tell him of the presence, power and promises of God. Remind him that God made us to be self-healing: if we cut a finger it starts to heal automatically. Suggest a scriptural healing story for him to read out loud.

Maintain a flow of ministry between yourself, your partner, God and the sick person. Whilst one speaks aloud, the other listens to God and the speaker, pray silently for guidance, and watch the person. The lead should pass from one to another as the Spirit prompts and as common sense directs.

If you are blessed with the gift of tongues then silently use the gift. But if you are stuck and this is obvious to the sick person, use the gift audible and slowly. Explain beforehand to the sick person what you are about to do with words like, 'God has given me a language to use in prayer on those occasions when I do not know how to pray. Neither of us will know what I am praying, but be assured that it is the very best prayer that I could possibly pray for you in this situation as it will be God the Holy Spirit, Himself, providing the words I say.'

Stop ministering when the sick person is healed, or when the Holy Spirit tells you to, or when you can't think of anything else to say or do, or when the sick person asks you to stop, or when anyone appears tired. If the sick person is not fully healed, arrange to minister again in the near future, allowing time to elapse for further preparation, prayer and fasting.

All this appears to presuppose that the healing will be a long drawn out affair rather than an instantaneous miracle as recorded in the New Testament. Some people have a real problem with this. Why the delay? Why the apparent half-healings? Why the regressions? If we suggest that these are only due to our sin or lack of faith, it can seem as though we believe that we are personally involved in the mechanics of the healing but God works the miracle. He brings the cure. We can only announce it.

So why do we need to go on announcing it? There are many inadequate answers to these questions; sometimes it is more important to God to heal our pride than to heal the person that we are wanting to minister to; at other times His priority is to produce faith in us by developing our patience; and we must remember that this ministry is still being rediscovered after centuries of neglect. However another reason for delay is that we have foolishly allowed ourselves to be ensnared by the evil one into associating 'healing' with 'power'. We think God wants us to be powerful. We covet a 'power' ministry for our self and our church. And so God has to remind us that He wants us to be content with our weakness, ignorance and vulnerability, and that His strength and power can be seen only when wrapped around our human frailty and childlike simplicity. If we ache for God's name to be honoured by instant healings, we need to remember 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.

Sick Believers

This is the only section of the church's healing ministry where leaders have exclusive authority. James 5:14 states, 'If one of you is ill, he should send for the elders of the church, and they must anoint him with oil, in the name of the Lord and pray over him.' These verses have a limited application and are relevant only to two small groups of people: (i) the official leaders or elders of a local church; (ii) those believers who are too ill to attend services or visit the elders, and so need to have others contact the elders on their behalf.

James 5:14 does not authorise anointing by those who are not elders or leaders. It does not permit anointing by an individual priest or elder. It does not sanction the anointing of unbelievers, and it does not licence the anointing of believers who are not housebound or bedridden.

This verse indicates that those believers who are so ill that they are unable to leave their house should send for the elders---plural, not singular. This underlines the principle of partnership in healing. If there is only one ordained minister, he should not go alone but be accompanied by a leading and mature member of the church. The elders should visit the severely ill believer in his home, taking with them a small bottle of oil. They may pour a small amount of oil on the head, or make the sign of the cross on his forehead using the oil, whilst speaking some relevant words, for example, 'We anoint you with this oil in the name of Jesus Christ, that you may receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit to heal your sickness.... (name the ailment), Amen.

Anointing with oil is a symbol of the anointing with the Holy Spirit and, as such, should only take place once. If further ministry is necessary, it should feature only the healing touch and whatever words the Spirit suggests. The context of James 5:14 implies that confession of sin, forgiveness and faith-filled prayer should also take place at the time of anointing. Always remember Paul's words about sick Christians in 1 Corinthians 11:29-30

Sinners in the streets

This is where the focus of the church's healing ministry should always be. In Mark 16: 17-18 Jesus asserts: 'These are the signs that will be associated with believers: in my name...they will lay hands on the sick, who will recover.' Every believer who has been, and is, filled with the Holy Spirit should be available to God to be used to bring healing. We are able to sensitively offer prayer for unbelievers that they be healed. We have found many respond positively to knowing that they are prayed for and can be greatly blessed to hear a prayer which mentions them by name.

God wants our availability, our attention and our obedient action. When we receive a clear commission from God, it is good, if possible, to find someone to accompany us to pray with the person. When the offer to pray is made, people rarely refuse.

Sometimes God's prompting will be so urgent that we are called to bring healing in the street, on a bus or train.

We have nothing to lose except our reputation: the person will not get worse; he might get better. If we obey with sensitivity, gentleness, love and compassion, then the gift of our time and attention will in itself be therapeutic. The message that Christ cares will take root and begin to grow.

The person who is not healed?

There are at least four references in the New Testament which imply that not every sick person will be healed.

(2 Tim 4:20, 1 Tim 5:23, Gal 4: 13-14, Phil 2:27).

Disappointment is bound to face those who commit themselves to the church's ministry of healing.

There will be those who are not healed, those, whose initial healing lapses and those who are half-healed and then make no further progress. There are many

questions and few answers. Frequently we mishear God, and many times we act out of enthusiasm or in isolation. We do not pray enough, live simply or mix with unbelievers. We are ambitious, impatient and fascinated by phenomena.

We give up after a set-back, exaggerate with false claims, and worst of all, we blame the sick person for failure and pretend that his sin or lack of faith was the reason for the disappointment. Blame God if you must; blame yourself; but never, never blame the sick person.

In one sense it is not true that occasionally nothing happens. With God nothing is impossible, and if we recite His words and radiate His love then something must happen.

The gift of our time and attention, our words and our gestures, our prayers and caring all have healing value. This is not to escape the question of why no physical healing has taken place, but it is to avoid the pretence that nothing happened.

Sometimes, as with Abimelech, Miriam and the Shunammite woman, the appreciation of the healing is delayed and at other times, the actual healing is gradual, as with Naaman, the son of the Shunammite woman, and the Mark 8 Bethsaida, blind man. In cases like these there is no scriptural warrant for the teaching which suggests that sick people should thank God for something of which they are unsure and unaware. That is hypocrisy, not faith. The arrival of the miracle depends more on the prayers of us, the Christians, than it does on the sick person's faith. This strange teaching about faith has arisen only because of the emphasis on healing believers. How can we demand faith from an unbeliever? Christ did not.

Matthew 13:58 informs us that Jesus could not work many miracles in Nazareth because of the general lack faith, but the scriptures also suggest that Jesus found the presence of faith in the centurion and the haemorrhaging woman to be quite remarkable. There is no record that Christ ever informed a person they could not be healed because *they* lacked faith. The fact that a person came to Christ, requesting healing demonstrated their faith, and when we respond with obedience to a divine initiative, this evidences our faith. We do not need to imagine the person into being cured, or be thoroughly convinced that he will be healed (that is what the Bible means by hope, not faith). We are only called to speak God's words and perform His actions. On some occasions we may feel absolutely certain an individual will be healed, and they may be completely unaffected. Yet at other times we may be filled with doubt, and yet see blind eyes instantly restored. The whole area is a mystery!

Many people turn to the healing ministry only when a loved one is dying, and then see death as a failure. Death is often the perfect healing, and those who are involved in the church's healing ministry must have an adequate theology of death. Christ is as active in dying as He is in healing and there can be miraculous deaths as well as wonderful cures!

Establishing a prayer team

Appreciate the importance of praying for others.

Those serving as Prayer team members have a great responsibility to nourish the Church members in a way that they are refreshed and renewed and strengthened for the work of the kingdom. Intercessory Prayer is a high priestly calling. The word of God declares that we are a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:4), a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9), and a kingdom of priests (Revelation 1:9). The enemy seeks to “steal, kill, and destroy” (John 10:10) those who have committed to a life of prayer, and Satan wants nothing more than to make us ineffective and defeated.

"Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." (Hebrews 4:16).

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of him." (1 John 5: 14 – 15).

People's needs will be wide and varied. We have to be open to anything but pay extra attention to the sermon as the Word of God provokes a response in people's hearts.

- **Pray for one another and pray for unity**

It's good as possible to meet together to pray before the services. Prayer team members must be united. In order for our prayers to be effective and unhindered we must keep the unity of peace and fellowship. Strife in a prayer ministry will hinder the work of advancing the kingdom and the enemy will do all that he can to divide the ministry.

- **Create a safe environment**

Creating a safe environment is crucial. Through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in the ministry, a safe environment is created. When there is a safe environment, team members will be open to sharing needs with each other and this builds an atmosphere to listen to requests for prayer about situations affecting the lives of the body of Christ that are of extreme confidence and urgency.

- **Personal style**

Be aware of the style of ministry favoured by the leadership responsible for the direction of the meeting or conference and any specific instructions. The Tab has always encouraged prayer but there is a reticence about coming forward for prayer.

- **Establish the issue**

Ask questions in a non-confrontational manner (“what can I pray for?” - “how would you like me to pray?”) Note there is limited time.

- **Establish contact**

Men pray with men and women with women. When praying in pairs married couples and single sex pairs only. It is vital that any misunderstandings are avoided.

- **Listening**

Listen carefully to the person, “listen” to their body language, and be praying constantly, seeking wisdom, knowledge and discernment.

- **Avoid eccentricities**

Be natural not intense. There is no need to shake or shout or use “religious” language. If you pray in tongues do so silently. Never push, pull or apply physical pressure.

- **Watch**

Pray with eyes open watching the person, endeavouring to discern what the Holy Spirit is doing. Bless what you discern to be God’s work.

Speak to the person asking for prayer. Never be afraid to ask common sense questions. (“Do you understand God to be saying anything?” - “Are you aware of God doing anything?”) Continue or adjust your prayer accordingly. If you don’t know the person you are praying with, start by introducing yourselves, and ask for a brief outline of the prayer need. If appropriate, explain what will happen, i.e. that you are there to pray for them. If the need is a personal one, encourage them to be quiet and receive; although if they are bringing a concern for another person, offer them the opportunity to join in the prayer if they so wish (although they may prefer to leave that to you!)

- **Emphasize confidentiality**

Always remember the necessity of confidentiality within the ministry. No one wants to be a part of a team or ministry where people gossip and are not faithful in upholding the trust of others. God entrust us to each other’s care so remember, we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), and (1 Corinthians 10:12) “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” Obviously trust and confidentiality are key factors that largely determine the level of sharing and prayer that takes place. However be wary of people who will say I only want to talk to you. It is often wise to say I need to know that if necessary I will talk to the pastor or an elder.

- **The care of the team**

Prayer takes a lot of strength out of the intercessor.

- **Deliverance**

Occasionally a team member may feel they have discerned a need for deliverance ministry. Since sensitivity is of utmost importance, you must verify your feelings with the leadership before sharing your thoughts with the person concerned. If this arises it would not usually be appropriate for immediate action on the Sunday morning. It may be helpful to explain to the person you are praying with that they may benefit from additional prayer and that you would like, with their permission, to discuss the matter with the leadership and to

arrange further prayer time with them. Any necessary deliverance ministry will only be done under the leadership of one of the church leaders.

- **Healing**

It is vital to be cautious and discern what your faith level is regarding the need shared. Remember to be aware of James 5:16 which shows that some sicknesses are related to personal sin and to behaviour in the body of Christ. Hence repentance and putting things right with people we have wronged can go a long way to receiving the healing desired.

What qualities are desirable in a prayer team member?

The qualities required in this area are not unlike those necessary for all other aspects of ministry.

a. *One who has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.*

Only so can that person be a channel for God's love and power.

b. *One who has a heart to minister as a servant to others.*

Jesus ministered as a servant and so must His disciples. This will involve an attitude of service and it is good to be vigilant about personal details. Check that breath, body odour, attire, cleanliness of hands and fingernails are acceptable

c. *One who is committed to their own personal, continuing growth.*

Failure to grow is to try and serve out of one's poverty, not out of fullness. Being willing to prepare one's own heart for ministry in this area is vital. We expect the preacher to prepare for Sunday. We expect no less of those who are committed in this ministry of prayer. This personal growth also involves a willingness to face one's own journey and process of wholeness. If the person praying for another cannot face their own need (and, at times, their pain), they will not be able to face that reality in the person for whom they pray. In other words, we own the fact that we are "wounded healers".

d. *One who is open to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.*

It is the Holy Spirit who does the ministering and it is vital to be sensitive to His prompting.

e. *One who is committed to seeing people made whole in Christ.*

Knowing and believing that Christ is committed to wholeness in our lives is a pre-requisite for prayer ministry.

f. *One who is also able to receive ministry from others.*

To "wash the feet of others" in ministry is one thing: to allow others to serve us in the same way is equally indispensable. Not being able to receive from others may well disqualify us from giving to others. Read John 13:1-14 and ponder that principle again.

Living Hope Ministries

PASTORS' HANDBOOK

THANKSGIVING AND PRESENTATION OF A NEWBORN CHILD

In some Christian traditions babies are baptised. This does not happen in churches that affirm the principle of believers' baptism. Yet Christian parents want to acknowledge God's goodness when their children are born and are keen to seek the prayerful support of the church for the challenging task of parenthood.

This has led some churches to devise a simple service of dedication where thanks can be given for a new child and prayer can be offered for future blessing.

It is also very important not to overlook the possibility of praying for a child whose parents are not Christians but who want their child to receive something from God. I have found that sensitive discussion with parents can produce a service that in no way compromises the preacher but also avoids making unbelieving parents promise that which they cannot fulfil.

- This service does not usually stand alone as a separate event. It is best conducted during a main service of worship when the main congregation is gathered.
- Often a family will ask friends to read Scripture or pray with them during this service. This can help to affirm the importance of partnership with other believers in the whole process of nurturing a child.
- Many churches give a small gift of a Bible or Christian book to the child as an expression of their desire to see the child brought up to know and love the living God.
- This service is most meaningful when it is conducted for believers. The birth of a child however, is one of those times when a family may be open to think about their need of resources beyond their own. Sensitive done such a service, suitably adapted, can help a family who are not yet Christians, begin to explore what it might mean to have Jesus at the centre of their lives.
- Before the service it will be helpful if a church leader can visit the family to explain the service and the implications of the promises being made.
- These occasions are often well attended by friends and family. Therefore they present an opportunity to preach the gospel and affirm what the Bible has to say about the family.

An Outline of the 'Service of Thanksgiving and Presentation of Infants'

(This is an adapted version of the service that produced by the FIEC (Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches) in their Evangelical Ministers` Manual
This is not a service of baptism since that is an act to be undertaken by those who have acknowledged their sin and trusted Jesus as their Saviour personally. But we do believe, by the authority of the Bible, that we may bring our children to God and seek his blessing.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. (Deuteronomy 6:4-7)
People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them. (Mark 10:13-16)

We are here to:

- Thank God for the safe arrival of ##### and to acknowledge God's interest in ##### and the family.
- To seek God's blessing upon his life.
- To recognise the parents' responsibilities.
- To confess the church's responsibility to assist them by following this child with our prayers and example!

The parents should then stand and answer the following questions.

- "Do you acknowledge the claim of God upon this young life that is entrusted to your care?"

Answer – "We do"

- "Do you promise that by God's grace and strength you will surround this child with your love and prayers?"
- "That you will endeavour to give to him/her all the benefits of a Christian home?"
- "That you will instruct him/her in God's word and ways, showing Jesus in your lives through words and actions, in the hope that by His mercy, God will in due time lead her to repentance and faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?"

Answer – "We will"

(Alternate questions to for use with non-Christian Parents:

- *“Do you acknowledge the claim of God upon this young life, which He has entrusted, to your care?”*

Answer – “We do”

- *“Will you ensure that this child is taught the truths and duties of the Christian Faith and will you encourage him/her to join in the worship and life of the Christian Church?”*

Answer – “We will”

The following question will then be asked to the whole congregation:

- “As the local expression of God’s family here, do you promise to follow this child with your prayers, to the end that she may in time come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you promise to uphold the parents in prayer that God may grant wisdom and grace to them in their high and holy task of parenthood?”

If so, will you please stand?”

The baby should then be taken into the pastor's arms and after pronouncing the child's name, prayer can be offered for the child, the family and the church.

- Sometimes the church may want to have a meal after the service for family and friends who have visited. This can often be an opportunity to speak personally to those who have not yet become Christians.
- It is important also to follow up this service with a real prayerful interest in the child. The church also needs be partners with the parents in providing a context in which the child can learn about Jesus by word and example. Titus 2:7-8

Living Hope Ministries

PASTORS' HANDBOOK

FUNERALS AND THANKSGIVING SERVICES

Before the service

It is good to spend time with the bereaved family, providing support through prayer and practical advice on the arrangements for the service. One of the best preparations for such services, is time spent getting to know people before they die if this is possible. This provides a rich store from which the leader can draw, when conducting the service.

The service

The pastor shapes and leads the service in such a way that the setting allows those who attend, to thank God for the life of the person who has been taken. This may include some words of tribute that speak about the person, as in the words of tribute written for Saul and Jonathan by David - 1 Samuel 31.

The pastor may have his own grief to handle as well the grief of the congregation. Various people may bring tributes but most will not, so the Pastor is speaking on behalf of many. It is worth bearing in mind that even in a service for a believer, close family may not yet be Christians. One of these emotions is a sense of anger in the face of death. We may want to remind people that death is an unnatural and unwelcome intruder into God's world. The leader will set the mood and tone of the event, which is often a mingling of tears and smiles, grief and hope. During the service the leader will want to pray for the family that they may experience God's comfort.

The pastor will present the Christian hope contained in the gospel. The sermon is an opportunity to present the reality and seriousness of death and the hope held out in the gospel of life that even physical death cannot destroy.

These occasions are not generally times for lengthy and complex Bible expositions. Instead a brief, clear and memorable message that is sensitive to the needs of the hearers is more likely to be received and be of lasting value.

List of Possible readings

Deuteronomy 33:1, 26-29

Job 19:21-27

Isaiah 25:6-9, 40:1-11, 61:1-3

Lamentations 3:17-26, 3:31-38

Ezekiel 36:25-28

Daniel 12:1-3

Matthew 5:1-12, 11:25-30, 25:1-13, 25:31-46

Mark 5:22-24, 35-43, 15:33-39, 16:1-6

Luke 7:11-17, 12:35-40, 23:33, 39-43, 24:13-35.

John 5:19-25, 6:35-40, 6:51-58, 10:11-16, 27-29, 11:17-27, 12:23-28, 14:1-6, 17:24-26.

Acts 10:34-43, 20:17-38

Romans 5:1-11, 5:15-22, 6:3-12, 8:14-25, 8:31-39, 14:7-9.

1 Corinthians 13:4-13, 15:1-11, 15:12-19, 15:20-26, 15:35-43, 15:51-58.

2 Corinthians 1:2-5, 4:7-18, 5:1-9.

Ephesians 3:14-21.

Philippians 1:19-26, 3:8-21.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 5:1-11.

2 Timothy 1:8-12, 2:8-13.

Hebrews 10:19-25

1 Peter 1:3-9.

1 John 3:1-3.

Revelation 21:1-7.

Psalms 4, 5, 15, 16, 20, 23, 24, 26, 27, 30, 39, 41, 42, 43, 46, 56, 61, 63, 71, 84, 90, 91, 103, 106, 116, 118, 121, 130, 139, 142, 143, 146.

When a person is not a believer

We are not in the position to judge what has been going on in a person's heart. However we are told that 'by their fruits you will know them.' It helps no one for a person to be referred to as brother or sister when they made no claim to be a Christian. It is not our place to publicly exclude a person from the family of God or to artificially embrace them as a child of God when there was no evidence that they were one, or indeed wanted to be one!

Committal

The following is a suggested pattern of words that can be used at the service of committing a body to the grave, or with the words in brackets at the crematorium.

The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised!

Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last, I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive forever and ever. And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death is your victory, where O grave is your sting?... But thanks be to God – he gives us the victory through our Lord

Jesus Christ. Man born of woman has but a short time to live. Like a flower he blossoms and then withers; like a shadow he flees and never stays. In the midst of life we are in death; to whom can we turn for help but to you, O Lord. For you are gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.

Forasmuch as it has pleased Almighty God to take the soul of this our Brother/Sister (or in the case of an unbeliever dear one) here departed, we therefore commit his/her body to the ground (to be consumed – for cremation), ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection unto eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies, so that they will be like his glorious body.

*The Lord bless you and keep you. **The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.** The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Amen.*

After the Service

People are often so well supported at the early stage of bereavement that they manage very well but then find after a few weeks that they are forgotten. It is at this stage that the weight of their loss begins to feel very heavy. Churches need to be aware of this and put in place ongoing support for the bereaved.

Cremation

The practice of burning bodies has many associations with witchcraft and paganism. However it is hard to argue that in itself that cremation is right or wrong. Our bodies return to dust whether over years after burial or the swifter process of cremation. It is probably left to a matter of personal conscience however I personally am disturbed when people use cremation as a way of trying to avoid dwelling on the realities of death and seeking to get the process over as quickly as possible. Death is a sobering reality but also for the Christian a glorious release into the presence of our Saviour who loves us and gave Himself for us.

Jesus rose from the dead. Hallelujah!

Living Hope Ministries

PASTORS' HANDBOOK

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Before the Service

Most problems within marriage arise as a result of a faulty view of marriage. Time spent preparing couples for marriage is always time well spent. People spend a lot of money and time on secular matters but think that marriage is something that requires no preparation. Marriage is a picture of Christ and His Church so helpful subjects to be explored with engaged couples are:

- Oneness – what it means – good communication and listening to each other
- This is the time to discuss the couple's perspective on money, sex, family, time and Christian commitment.
- Roles within marriage – who will do what and why?
- Children. Do the couple both want children? How many children?
- Commitment – what does it mean to make an exclusive and permanent commitment to another person
- Your walk with God together as well as maintaining your personal walk with God. Prayer and time in the word of God needs talking through.

Bible passages like Genesis Chapter 1-2, Matthew 19:1-12 Ephesians 5:22-31, Colossians 3:18-19 and 1 Peter 3:1-7.

At the Service

We have a fair amount of freedom in the shape of such a service as there is not model ceremony given in the New Testament. The leader will want to:

- Affirm the importance of marriage and God's interest in the couple.
- Provide a context for the couple to make their promises to each other in the presence of witnesses before God.
- Spend time in prayer for God's blessing on the couple in the future.
- Draw attention to a biblical perspective on marriage.

Of course there are legal statements that must be made and confirmed. It is important to know what the law in a particular land requires and also who is empowered to conduct a legal wedding. Sometimes there is wisdom in having a legal ceremony followed by a Christian wedding. One obeys the law and the other gives freedom for promises and commitments which are expressly Christian

After the service

A couple beginning to live with each other after their marriage, will face many adjustments. This is a time when they may need some support and advice. Most married couples need an opportunity to take stock from time to time. Perhaps a visit to the couple shortly after the wedding may be good to check on how they are doing.

The Marriage Service

“We are met here today on a happy but serious occasion. We are here before God to witness the joining of ##### and ##### in the sacred bond of marriage. As we learn the reasons for which marriage was given and as we hear our friends make their vows, let all of us who are married be reminded again of the seriousness of our responsibilities before God and let this service also instruct all who are unmarried so that each of us may live purely and wisely according to God's will. This special relationship between a man and a woman did not come into being by man's wisdom, neither is it a mere invention or custom of civilisation. It came into being by the wisdom and direction of God, our Creator, and it was later confirmed as His will for us when Jesus Christ came to earth and attended a wedding with His disciples. It was at that wedding that He worked His first miracle, changing water into wine. The men chosen by Christ to be His apostles, moved by the Holy Spirit, wrote of marriage as good and honourable and to be respected by everybody. It is used to explain the relationship between Jesus Christ who is likened to a Bridegroom, and His true disciples who form the church, which is likened to a bride. Now since we may speak of marriage as ordained by God, clearly we must approach this service responsibly and thoughtfully, remembering that we are handling something that is important and precious in God's sight.”

“The purposes for which marriage are given are:

- That a man and woman might enjoy lifelong companionship, help and comfort from each other.
- That children may be conceived, born and raised within the security, stability and sanctity of the marriage bond.
- And finally, it is given for the good of society which can be strong and prosperous only where marriage and family life are held in honour. Into this holy estate ##### and ##### now come to be joined in marriage.

Therefore if anyone can show just cause why they may not be lawfully joined together, let them now speak, or else hereafter forever be silent.

Recognising that you stand in the presence of God who knows all things and before whom you must one day appear, I require and charge you both that if either of you know of any reason why you may not be lawfully joined together, you now confess it.”

The man will then repeat:

"I do solemnly declare / that I know not / of any lawful impediment / why I ##### / may not be joined in matrimony / to #####."

The woman will then repeat:

"I do solemnly declare / that I know not / of any lawful impediment / why I ##### / may not be joined in matrimony / to #####."

The minister will read Ephesians 5:21-31

Then he will ask the man and woman:

"Do you desire and intend to reflect in your marriage the relationship here described between Christ and his Church?" The man and woman reply – *"We will."*

The man will then repeat: *"I call upon these persons here present / to witness that I ##### / do take you ##### / to be my lawful wedded wife."*

The woman will then repeat: *"I call upon these persons here present / to witness that I ##### / do take you ##### / to be my lawful wedded husband."*

The minister will say to the man and the woman:

"Do you promise to be faithful to each other from this day forward whether that is easy or difficult whether you are rich or poor in health and illness? Will you love and honour each other as husband and wife until death parts you as God has directed?"

The man and the woman reply – *"We will."*

Where a ring is to be given, the man shall put it on the fourth finger of the woman's left hand and say: *"I give you this ring / as a token of the promises we have made / and as a sign of our love."*

Then the minister will say:

"As ##### and ##### have voluntarily and willingly bound themselves to each other in marriage by solemn promises before God and this congregation, I declare them to be husband and wife in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. What God has joined together let no man separate!"

Prayers are said for the couple.

Another reason for including marriage in the handbook is that as pastors, elders and leaders, we are committed to bringing the body of Christ for which we care, to maturity. We look forward to a wedding where the Lord Jesus and His bride will be united forever. We pray that God will strengthen you in your marriage and in your church.

Living Hope Ministries

PASTORS' HANDBOOK

THE ORDINATION OF A MINISTER

The Minister's task

Teaching the word of God in all its breadth
Preaching conversion to God through our Lord Jesus Christ
Caring for God's people that they may grow in grace, glorify Christ and become mature disciples of Christ
God's call is confirmed by His people's recognition.

Testimony of God's call to salvation and the ministry by the one desiring ordination

"Because the office to which you are now to be ordained is sacred and can only be fulfilled through humble reliance upon God, we ask you now in the name of God and this church:

Do you wholeheartedly and without reservation affirm your belief in the following doctrines of the Christian Faith?"

Here is a suggested Statement of Faith:

1. The one true God who lives eternally in three persons—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
2. The love, grace and sovereignty of God in creating, sustaining, ruling, redeeming and judging the world.
3. The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which are the written Word of God—fully trustworthy for faith and conduct.
4. The dignity of all people, made male and female in God's image to love, be holy and care for creation, yet corrupted by sin, which incurs divine wrath and judgement.

5. The incarnation of God's eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ—born of the virgin Mary, truly divine and truly human, yet without sin.

6. The atoning sacrifice of Christ on the Cross: dying in our place, paying the price of sin and defeating evil, so reconciling us with God.

7. The bodily resurrection of Christ, the first fruit of our resurrection; his ascension to the Father, and his reign and mediation as the only Saviour of the world.

8. The justification of sinners solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ.

9. The ministry of God the Holy Spirit, who leads us to repentance, unites us with Christ through new birth, empowers our discipleship and enables our witness.

10. The Church, the body of Christ both local and universal, the priesthood of all believers—given life by the Spirit and endowed with the Spirit's gifts to worship God and proclaim the gospel, promoting justice and love.

11. The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfil the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgement, bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal condemnation to the lost, and establish a new heaven and new earth.

“Do you believe in your heart that God has truly called you to pastoral oversight in the Church of the Living God?”

Answer: "I do."

“Do you promise to fulfil your charge faithfully, preaching and teaching God's Word, lifting up Christ crucified and risen from the dead. Will you lead His people in worship, caring for their spiritual welfare, and seeking to do the work of an evangelist?”

Answer: "God helping me, I do."

“Do you promise to be faithful in prayer and in the study of the Word of God, and to live in such a way as to be in all things an example to the believers?”

Answer: "By God's grace, I do."

“Do you also promise that from the base of the local church you will seek to fulfil your calling to the wider body of Christ in whatever way He calls you and wherever God sends you? Will you also continually seek the power of the Holy Spirit to strengthen you to serve our glorious Saviour Jesus?”

Answer: "With God's help, I will."

“Do you also promise to honour your wife as your helpmate chosen by God to stand with you in ministry?”

Answer: “With God's help, I will.”

Scripture readings:

“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood” Acts 20:28

“Set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. ¹³Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. ¹⁴Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.”

1 Timothy 4: 12, 13, 14

“Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; ³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.”

1 Peter 5:2, 3, 4.

A call to God's people.

“Those who recognise the call of God upon our brother to serve as a minister in the body of Christ and who promise to support him, pray for him and his wife in the years to come.”

“Please stand.”

Ordination prayer time

“In the Lord's name and in recognition of the gifts and calling of God given to you, we lay hands on you and hereby declare you ordained to the work of Christian ministry.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit we declare you to be ordained to the ministry of the Word of God.”

A time of Worship and Praise to God.



The Bible



Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

The following 18 lectures will help you gain insight into this book. The aim is that your appetite to know it better will increase and that you will live in the good of the Author's plan. There will be 9 lectures relating to The Old Testament, and 9 to The New Testament.

- Lecture 01. An overview of the Old Testament
- Lecture 02. An overview of the New Testament
- Lecture 03. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
- Lecture 04. Matthew, Mark, Luke.
- Lecture 05. Joshua, Judges, 1&2 Samuel
- Lecture 06. Gospel of John, Book of Acts
- Lecture 07. Romans, 1&2 Corinthians, Galatians and Ephesians.
- Lecture 08. Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians.
- Lecture 09. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea,
- Lecture 10. Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum.
- Lecture 11. 1&2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.
- Lecture 12. Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
- Lecture 13 Job, Psalms, Proverbs,
- Lecture 14. Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Ruth
- Lecture 15. Esther, Lamentations, Daniel,
- Lecture 16. Ezra, Nehemiah, 1&2 Chronicles.
- Lecture 17. Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter
- Lecture 18. 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Revelation

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

THE BOOKS OF THE LAW GENESIS - DEUTERONOMY

GENESIS

AUTHOR: MOSES

DATE: 1450-1410 B.C.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. God's Dealings with the Human Race Gen. 1-11
 - A. Creation Gen. 1-2
 - B. The Fall Gen. 3-5
 - C. The Flood and aftermath Gen. 6-11
- II. God's Dealings with Abraham's Family Gen. 12-50
 - A. Abraham Gen. 12-25
 - B. Isaac Gen. 22-27
 - C. Jacob and Esau Gen. 25-36
 - D. Joseph Gen. 37-50

Historical Setting: The book of Genesis covers the period from Adam to Joseph and it is set in the context of a Mesopotamian backdrop.

Key Event: Creation and the calling of Abraham

Key People: Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham,
Through these characters, the story of a plan of salvation begins to unfold and the bloodline of JESUS is already traceable.

Adam and Eve: The first man and woman created by God. They are important to the Genesis story because it is clearly assumed that because of them, sin entered into the human race and contaminated it. Adam was created in the image of God, but after the fall, that image became distorted.

Noah: Noah is another key person in the Genesis story; through him and his obedience to God, the human race is protected from extinction when God brings his judgement on the earth

Abraham: Abraham's life describes the pattern for engaging God in a relationship. The New Testament later describes him as our father in the sight of God. God promised that through him would come a mighty nation and that through that nation all the families of earth would be blessed. This promise is fulfilled in Jesus.

Key Themes: Creation and covenant.

Creation: The Bible makes it clear that God created the heavens and the earth. The Bible also maintains that God holds the world together with his mighty power. Increasingly, the old debate between science and the Biblical account is receding. Many scientists accept the biblical order and we continue to discover what an amazing place this earth is.

Covenant - The theme of covenant forms the pattern of relationship that existed between God and the people he chose. The covenant idea was a concept widespread during the time of Abraham. It is believed that God took an existing current idea and designed it as the hallmark of his relationship with his people.

Key Chapters: Genesis 1 and 12 - God is the Creator and everything springs from his initiative.

The division in Genesis - Genesis is divided into two unequal sections. The first section, chapters 1-11, deals with beginnings. It focuses on the beginning of the human race, the beginning of a relationship with God and the beginning of that relationship with God breaking up. The second section, chapters 12-50 focus on the origin of the people of God with special attention placed on the patriarchs.

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

EXODUS

AUTHOR: MOSES

DATE: 1450 B.C.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. The Story of Deliverance Ex. 1-19
 - A. Moses' call Ex. 1-4
 - B. Miracles Ex. 5-13
 - C. On to Sinai Ex. 14-19
- II. God's Design for a Holy Community Ex. 20-40
 - A. Laws for living Ex. 20-23
 - B. Provision for worship Ex. 24-40

Title: The title 'Exodus' comes from the name the Greek translators gave to the book. The name means 'going out' and it relates to the journey of the people of Israel from Egypt.

Historical setting: It is very difficult to determine the accurate historical setting for the book of Exodus for various reasons.

- The events took place in the second millennium B.C.
- The book contains no historical reference i.e. the kings of Egypt are merely called by their title 'Pharaoh' and not by their name.
- There is no document apart from the Bible that has been discovered that relates specifically to Israel's time in Egypt. This might be because the Egyptians did not record the humiliating defeat suffered at the hands of their former slaves
- The writer of Exodus is more interested in theology than history

However the importance of the event in shaping the history of the people of Israel shows how significant the events were to the nation of Israel.

Key Events: The Passover ,the Crossing of the Red sea and Mount Sinai

Main Themes

The Revelation of God - The book of Exodus starts with the relationship that develops between God and Israel. This relationship starts with the experience Moses had with the burning bush **(3:1-4:17)**. Moses becomes the mediator between God and Israel but it is God who always takes the initiative to reveal himself.

Covenant and Worship - The theme that started with Abraham in Genesis is now applied to a whole nation. The covenant was like a contract signed between two people entering into a relationship or partnership **(19-24)**. The tabernacle is built according to heaven's specification and becomes the focal point for the presence of God among his people.

Obedience - The theme of obedience runs strongly through the book of Exodus. Moses had to obey God and confront Pharaoh. Pharaoh lost his life, the life of his son and his army because of his disobedience. The Israelites safely came out of Egypt when they obeyed and performed the Passover ceremony. Obedience was at the heart of the covenant relationship between God and Israel. **(19:8, 24:3,7)**

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

LEVITICUS

AUTHOR: MOSES

DATE: 1445-1444 B.C.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Worship as Sacrifice and OfferingLev. 1-7
- II. Worship as Dedicated ServiceLev. 8-10
- III. Worship as SeparationLev. 11-15
- IV. Worship as Assurance of SalvationLev. 16-17
- V. Worship as a Life of HolinessLev. 18-22
- VI. Worship as Personal CommitmentLev. 23-27

Historical Setting: At the foot of Mt. Sinai, God reveals guidelines for holy living for his people.

Key Event: The Day of Atonement. This was an ordinance established by God for the people of Israel to be reconciled back to God once a year.

Key Theme: Worshipping God in the awareness of his Holiness

This book introduces in more detail the sacrifices that the people offered as an expression of their repentance towards God and their desire to remain in covenant with him. Many practical rules and guidelines are given for their health as a nation.

The message that cries out from Leviticus is the holiness of God. "You must be holy because I am holy" - Lev. 19:1, 2. Sin must be dealt with and the sacrificial system points to Christ who alone can deal with sin forever.

There is an emphasis on celebration. Instructions are given for festivals where thanksgiving, praise and worship are offered to God.

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

NUMBERS

AUTHOR: MOSES

DATE: 1450-1410 B.C.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. At Sinai Num. 1-9
 - A. Organising the camp Num. 1-4
 - B. Cleansing and dedication Num. 5-9
- II. The Lost Generation Num. 10-19
 - A. The journey to Kadesh Num. 10-12
 - B. Israel's disobedience Num. 13-14
 - C. Years of wandering Num. 15-19
- III. The New Generation Num. 20-36
 - A. Kadesh to Moab Num. 20-21
 - B. Balaam Num. 22-25
 - C. Preparation for victory Num. 26-30
 - D. Promises of victory Num. 31-36

Historical Setting: The story unfolds in the vast wilderness of the Sinai area.

The Division of Numbers: The book of Numbers is divided into three sections.

The **chapters 1-10** deal with preparation to enter into the Promised Land. The tribes are numbered and Israel is prepared to come into God's presence and to possess God's inheritance. **Chapters 11-25** reveal how disobedience and lack of faith in God led to a whole generation being lost. This generation of Israelites spent forty years wandering in the desert and **chapters 26-36** are basically the new generation and its preparation to enter the Promised Land.

Key Events: Judgement on Miriam and Aaron Ch.12. Judgement on Korah Ch.16. Salvation from snake bite Ch.21.

Key Theme:

The word of God - Chapters 1-10 state that everything was done according to the word of God. Israel enjoyed God's specific blessing **6:22-27**. Numbers demonstrates the power and confidence that come from God's word.

- Joshua and Caleb's boldness came from God's promise that he would give them the land.
- Balaam was unable to resist God's word of blessing and blessed Israel rather than cursed them. **Chapters 24:13**

- God's word was unchanging. When God declared that the Israelite who disobeyed, would not enter the Promised Land, it came to pass. **Chapters 14:20-35**

Apostasy - The term apostasy mean 'standing away from' In Numbers it describes Israel's standing away from its covenant relationship with God. Israel had seen the glory of God and the certainty of the Promised Land but they refused to hear the word of God. **Chapter 14.**

Judgement - Those who knowingly reject God do not go unpunished. Even though God forgave them, he could not overlook the contempt they had shown him **14:18-23.**

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

DEUTERONOMY

AUTHOR: MOSES

DATE: 1407-1406 B.C.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Moses' Review of History Deut. 1-4
 - A. What God has done for Israel Deut. 1-3
 - B. How Israel is to respond Deut. 4
- II. Moses' Presentation of the Treaty with God Deut. 5-28
 - A. Fundamental principles of relationship Deut.5-11
 - B. Specific examples of requirements Deut. 12-26
 - C. Challenge to personal commitment Deut. 27-28
- III. Moses' Exhortation to Complete Commitment Deut. 29-30
- IV. Moses' Last Acts Deut. 31-34

Historical Setting: The people are on the east side of the Jordan with Canaan in view. Moses is about to hand over leadership to Joshua and here he delivers a farewell address to prepare the Israelites for their entrance into Canaan. The address Moses gave was a renewal of the covenant.

Key Event: The people are receiving instruction prior to Joshua taking charge.

Key Theme: This book is a summary of the grace and kindness of God whose plan is for His people to possess the land.

Moses wanted the people to realise that if they did things God's way then there would be many blessings and promises but a turning away from God would lead to curses and despair.

This book as we have commented, calls us to remember who God is and what he has done. **Deuteronomy 8:2**

There is a review of the Ten Commandments, laws for proper worship, laws for ruling the nation, laws for human relationships, and the consequences of obedience and disobedience. **Deuteronomy 28.**

Blessings of prosperity, being revered by the nations, and being the head and not the tail are promised if they listen and obey God (**chapter 28:13**). Curses of failure, disease, war, drought and defeat by enemies, sowing much and reaping little and others because of failure to listen to the Lord.

Moses called the people to commitment - **Deuteronomy 29.**" Look today I have set before you, life and death. Choose life."

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

THE HISTORY BOOKS. JOSHUA - 2 SAMUEL

These books are the exciting story of how Joshua leads God's people Israel into the Promised Land and how King David becomes the greatest of the kings of Israel. There are many powerful accounts of outstanding characters who by faith, see the enemies of God's people overcome.

JOSHUA

DATE: 1406 B.C.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Preparation for War Josh. 1-5
- II. The Military Campaign Josh. 6-12
- III. The Division of the Land Josh. 13-21
- IV. Joshua's Call to Commitment Josh. 22-24

Historical Setting: At the time of Israel going into the Promised Land, many of the superpowers were relatively weak. The Hittites had faded from the scene and neither Babylon nor Egypt could maintain a military presence in Canaan. The Assyrians would not start sending in armies until centuries later. As the nation moved towards the Promised Land, only Edom offered resistance and Moab was forced to let Israel pass through her land.

The book of Joshua gives us the history of Israel's moving out and the conquest of the Promised Land.

Key Events: Entering and conquering the land of Canaan.

Key People: Joshua, Rahab, Achan, Caleb.

Key Themes:

Boldness, courage, listening to God's tactics. Joshua was an outstanding military leader and a strong spiritual man. He was willing to listen to God and was willing to correct things when they went wrong.

Discussion point: Most Christians will be appalled at the notion of destroying one race of people so another could occupy their land but this is what happens in the book of Joshua. Israel moved into a land that was already occupied and chased out the inhabitants. However they believed they were carrying out God's mandate. How will you defend the Israelite's position?

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

JUDGES

DATE: 1375 - 1040 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Causes of the Judges Era Jud. 1:1-3:6
- II. Conditions During the Judges Jud. 3:7-16:31
Seven Cycles of Oppression/Deliverance
 1. Othniel Jud. 3:7
 2. Eglon Jud. 3:12-31
 3. Deborah and Barak Jud. 4:1-5:31
 4. Gideon Jud. 6:1-8:32
 5. Tola and Jair..... Jud. 8:33-10:5
 6. Jephthah Jud. 10:6-12:15
 7. Samson Jud. 13:1-16:31
- III. Human Consequences of the Judges` Era Jud. 17:1-21:25

Historical Setting: The time of settling into the land but before kings are appointed in Israel.

Key Events: The life of Gideon. The life of Samson.

Key People: Gideon, Samson, Deborah, Barak

Key Themes:

This book introduces us to a cycle of events which reveal the mercy of God and the fickleness of his people. The cycle runs from the people falling into sin and calling on God for a deliverer. God mercifully raises up a deliverer and the people overcome their enemies and are revived spiritually. However, after a while complacency sets in and the people fall into the hands of their enemies and the need to cry out for a deliverer begins again.

Key Chapter: Judges 6. God is with His mighty man even though Gideon feels so weak.

Key Verse: Judges 17:6. *'In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.'*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

RUTH

AUTHOR: UNKNOWN

DATE: 1375-1050 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Ruth remains loyal to Naomi Ruth 1
- II. Ruth works in Boaz's field Ruth 2
- III. Ruth submits to Naomi's plan Ruth 3
- IV. Ruth & Boaz are married Ruth 4

Historical Setting: A dark time in Israel's history just after the Judges.

Key Events: Ruth's promise to remain loyal to her mother-in-law after losing her two sons and husband. Ruth marries Boaz and comes into the Royal line which will lead to Jesus.

Key People: Ruth, Naomi, Boaz

Key Themes:

This wonderful story reveals the faithfulness of God, kindness, integrity, protection and prosperous blessing.

The principle of redemption is clearly laid out in the book of Ruth.

The grandfather of great King David is born to Ruth and a Moabite comes by God's grace into the royal line which will lead to Jesus.

Key Chapter: Chapter 4: Boaz redeems Ruth and becomes a "type of Christ".

Key Verse: Ruth 4 v14: *'The women said to Naomi: "Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a kinsman-redeemer. . . .'*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

1 SAMUEL

DATE: 1050-931 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Eli and Samuel 1 Sam. 1-7
- II. Samuel and Saul 1 Sam. 8-15
- III. Saul and David 1 Sam. 16-31

Historical Setting: This book describes the transition from the time of the Judges (Samuel is the last Judge) to Kings. Samuel was born 1105 BC. The call of Samuel coming at a time when the word of the Lord was rare, is a special story to consider. Ch.3

Key Event: The call of Samuel. The anointing of Saul. The anointing of David. David and Goliath. Saul and Jonathan's death.

Key People: Eli, Hannah, Samuel, Saul, David

Key Themes: 1 Samuel shows the establishment of kingship in Israel and a moving away from a theocracy (God's rule)

The consequence of disobedience - Eli and his response to God's word and Saul and his response to God's word. These two incidents demonstrate the importance God places on obedience to his command.

The choosing and empowering of David and faith in God.

Key Chapter: 1 Samuel 17

Key Verse: 1 Samuel 16:17. *'So Saul said to his attendants, find someone who plays well and bring him to me'*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

2 SAMUEL

DATE: 930 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. David's Triumphs2 Sam. 1-10
- II. David's Troubles2 Sam. 11-20
- III. Other Stories of David2 Sam. 21-24

Historical Setting:

This book records the reign of David and shows the effectiveness of his leadership. David's kingdom will only be outshone by Jesus himself.

Key Events: David and Bathsheba. Absalom's treachery.

Key People: David, Joab, Nathan, Absalom

Key Themes:

David's successes: ch. 1-10. David becomes king of Judah, then Israel and then he conquers surrounding nations.

David's Struggles: ch. 11-24. David and Bathsheba. Turmoil in David's family and Absalom's. The story of David and Bathsheba is pivotal because the consequences are grave. However, Solomon is born out of this relationship. National rebellion and the last years of David's reign.

Key Chapter: 2 Samuel 22

Key Verse: 2 Samuel 5:12. *'And David knew that the Lord had established him as king over Israel and had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.'*

Discussion point: What does the story of David and Bathsheba tell you about God's sovereignty especially in relation to Solomon?

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

1 KINGS

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. The accession and reign of Solomon1 Kings 1 – 11
- II. The divided kingdom and the accession of Ahab 1 Kings 12 – 16
- III. The Prophet Elijah 1 Kings 17 – 22

Historical setting: Most modern scholars give the end of the seventh century as the probable date for both 1 and 2 Kings to have been written. Some also argue that they were one book.

The record as mentioned above is of David's death and Solomon coming to the throne. Solomon's wealth and early success are seen and the visit of the Queen of Sheba recognising God's blessing of Solomon went beyond the record she had heard. The division of David's kingdom into Judah, two tribes, and Israel, 10 tribes, is a sorry record of the consequences of sin, rebellion and turning away from God.

Elijah stands out as powerful contrast as a man seeking to walk with God while most of the kings fall deeper into sin.

Key event: The division of the kingdom

Key people: Solomon and Elijah

Key themes: The completion of the temple

The visit of the Queen of Sheba

The allowance of foreign wives to bring their gods into Israel with them

Elijah's pronouncement of the judgement of God

The defeat of the prophets of Baal

Key chapter: 1 Kings 18

Key verse: 1 Kings 18:36-37 " O Lord the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel , today let it be known that thou art God in Israel and that I am your servant and that I have done all these things according to your word. Answer me O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that thou O Lord are God and that you have turned their heart back again."

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

2 KINGS

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Elijah2 Kings 1 – 2:1-11 Elijah
- II. Elisha 2 Kings 2:12- 13
- III. The decline and subsequent fall of the Northern Kingdom..... 2 Kings 14 – 17
- IV. Hezekiah – Josiah 2 Kings 18-23
- V. The last days of the Southern kingdom Judah 2 Kings 24-25

Historical setting: The end of the seventh century is the probable date for both 1 and 2 Kings to have been written. It has been argued that they were one book. The books of 1 and 2 Kings cover four centuries. Prophets like Amos, Hosea and Jeremiah are seeking to bring the people back to God. Some scholars believe Jeremiah wrote this book. It is a feasible argument that Isaiah wrote up to the time of Hezekiah and Jeremiah completed it.

Key event: The ministry of Elisha. There are thirty two records of the miraculous in Elisha's ministry. The most significant could be argued as the healing of the Syrian, Naaman chapter 5.

The other key event is when Hezekiah asks for healing and a longer life where the sun is turned backwards. Chapter 20

Key people: Elisha, Hezekiah, Josiah

Key themes: God still speaks and God still judges regardless of his people's receptiveness.

God is still a God of miracles

In the midst of many ungodly kings is the record of Josiah who seeks to bring in reforms. chapter 23

Key chapter: Chapter 4 where Elisha sees miraculous provision, barrenness healed, a boy raised from the dead and bread multiplied for 100 men.

Key verse 2 Kings 23:25 "There was no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might according to all the law of Moses, neither after him arose there any like him." (A.V.)

Key verse: 2 Kings 22:2 "And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left."

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

I CHRONICLES

AUTHOR: EZRA

DATE: 430 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Names and genealogiesI Chron. 1:1-10:14
- II. The Divided KingdomI Chron. 11:1-29:30

Historical Setting: The book was written 430 BC recording events between 1000-960 BC. This book parallels 2 Samuel and is a commentary on it. The religious history of Judah and Israel is emphasised.

Key Events: David's success shows the reward of being a man after God's own heart. God fulfils His promise to bless those who trust and are faithful to Him. The Reign Of David. Chapter 10-29. David becomes king over all Israel. He brings the Ark to Jerusalem.

The story of Uzza inspires fear and a sense of the holiness of God.(Chapter 13). David's exploits in the military field are detailed.

David's preparations for the building of the temple. David accepts that he will not build the temple (Chapter 17).

Key People: David, Solomon

Key Themes: The Genealogies Of Israel. Chapter 1-9. Ancestry of the nation, the tribes of Israel and returnees from exile in Babylon. Some of the names are well known and some are not. Every life is valued by God and He knows why each is included.

True worship: The Ark coming to the Tabernacle and plans for building the temple illustrate the importance of worship to God and for His people.

Key Chapter: I Chronicles 17. God's Promise to David.

Key Verse: I Chronicles 14:2. *'And David knew that the Lord had established him as king over Israel and that his kingdom had been highly exalted for the sake of his people.'*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

2 CHRONICLES

AUTHOR: EZRA

DATE: 430 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Solomon, the Temple Builder2 Chron. 1-9
- II. Roll Call of Judah's Kings2 Chron. 10-36

Historical Setting:

The book was written 430 BC recording events 970-586 BC. This book parallels 1&2 Kings and acts as a commentary on them. Righteous kings are highlighted and evil kings are exposed.

Key Events: The Reign Of Solomon. Chapters 1-9. Solomon's request for wisdom, his building and dedicating of the temple and his riches and fame are reiterated in this section.

The Kingdom Of Judah. Chapters 10-36.

The nation of Israel is split. Apostasy and reform.

The exile of Judah to Babylon.

Key People: Solomon, Queen of Sheba, Hezekiah, Josiah.

Key Themes: "If my people." This has become a revival text and remains how God longs to fill the temple of His church with His Spirit and glory.

The building of the temple.

The place and power of prayer.

The consequences of disobeying God.

Key Chapter: 2 Chronicles 7

Key Verse: 2 Chronicles 7:12-14. *"I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple for sacrifices.*

"When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

THE HISTORY BOOKS EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

These books cover how a remnant come back during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah and a rebuilding process begins.

EZRA

AUTHOR: NOT STATED

DATE: 450 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. The Exiles return Ezra 1-2
- II. The Temple Is rebuilt Ezra 3-6
- III. Ezra teaches God's Law Ezra 7-10

Historical Setting: This book records the beginning of a return to the land of Israel

Key Events: The beginning of restoring the temple. Ezra weeps and prays for the nation – Ch. 9.

Key People: Cyrus, Zerubbabel, Haggai, Zechariah, Darius, Artaxerxes, Ezra

Key Themes: Author not stated but probably Ezra. This book reveals the faithfulness of God as He keeps His promise to restore the people to the land.

The Return Led By Zerubbabel. Chapters 1-6

The Return Led By Ezra. Chapters 7-10. Ezra opposes intermarriage and he reads the law to the people. The word of God strengthens the people and prepares them for the work of restoration.

God has used heathen kings to bring about His purposes. Cyrus allows some Jews to go back (about 50,000). Ezra helps to establish worship at the temple that Zerubbabel had rebuilt. Ezra's weeping and prayer for the nation is answered as God sends a time of revival.

Key Chapter: Ezra 6

Key Verses: Ezra 6:21-22. *'So the Israelites who had returned from the exile ate it, together with all who had separated themselves from the unclean practices of their Gentile neighbours in order to seek the Lord, the God of Israel. For seven days they celebrated with joy the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because the Lord had filled them with joy by changing the attitude of the king of Assyria, so that he assisted them in the work on the house of God, the God of Israel.'*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

NEHEMIAH

AUTHOR: NOT STATED

DATE: 445-432 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Nehemiah rebuilds Jerusalem's WallsNeh. 1:1-7:3
- II. Nehemiah Institutes ReformsNeh. 7:4-10:39
- III. Nehemiah repopulates JerusalemNeh. 11-13

Historical Setting: Author not stated but probably Nehemiah wrote the book with Ezra's support. Nehemiah is allowed by King Artaxerxes to return to Jerusalem about 445 BC. He rebuilds the walls of the city and leads the people into a time of renewal.

Key Events: Ezra renews the covenant and Nehemiah establishes policies. Nehemiah had to overcome considerable opposition and taunts from the enemy but he pulls through refusing to be distracted. Chapter 6 reveals the confidence that Nehemiah has in his God.

Key People: Nehemiah, Ezra, Sanballat, Tobiah

Key Themes: Leadership/Union; Rebuilding/Prayer. Nehemiah demonstrates great leadership skills. He knew God's call and used teamwork, planning and great courage to get the job done. He worked with the people and led them, not driving them.

Key Chapter: Nehemiah 6

Key Verses: Nehemiah 2:18; *'I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me and what the king has said to me. They replied "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work.'*

6:15-16; *'So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their confidence, because they realised that this work had been done with the help of our God.'*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

ESTHER

AUTHOR: UNKNOWN

DATE: UNKNOWN

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Esther becomes Queen of Persia Es. 1-2
- II. Haman's hatred of Mordecai Es. 3-5
- III. Haman's Downfall Es. 6-8
- IV. The Victory of the Jews Es. 9-10

Historical Setting: The book of Esther is unique for its failure to mention God. Yet its messages of God shine clearly through as the story unfolds. The events happen about 30 years prior to Nehemiah. Queen Vashti is banished for refusing to obey her husband. Esther is chosen from among the Jewish captives to be a new Queen for the King.

The Feast of 'Purim' is celebrated today remembering the deliverance of God's people. Esther faced possible death for intervening but was persuaded by the words "you have come to the kingdom for such as a time as this".

Key Events: The attempt to destroy God's people is thwarted.

Key People: Esther, Mordecai, Ahasuerus, Haman

Key Themes: God's sovereignty - He has the right people in the right place at the right time.

Key Chapter: Esther 4

Key Verse: Esther 4:14. '*... For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?*'

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

JOB

AUTHOR: UNKNOWN

DATE: UNKNOWN

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Disasters strike Righteous Job Job 1-3
- II. Job dialogues with Three Friends Job 4-31
 - A. Did God cause Job's suffering? Job 4-14
 - B. Do the wicked really suffer? Job 15-21
 - C. Had Job committed hidden sins? Job 22-31
- III. Elihu breaks the impasse Job 32-37
- IV. God speaks out Job 38-42

Historical Setting: Author is unknown but could possibly be Job, Moses or Solomon. The language used in the book of Job is full and beautifully descriptive. The story of Job illustrates well the sovereignty of God and that the righteous do suffer. They are not exempt because of their special relationship with God. Job was probably a contemporary with the patriarchs and so lived approximately 2000-1800 BC. Some believe this book to be the oldest of the Bible.

Key Events: Job Is Tested. **(chapters 1-2).** Job was a very wealthy man and a family man. He also enjoyed good health. All these things were taken from him. Suddenly he and his wife are left with nothing but at this stage he worships God and he does not sin saying 'shall we not accept good from God and trouble'.

Job's Comforters give their Insight. **(chapters 3-31).** In some ways these men offer a sterner test than all the previous difficulties. They have preconceived ideas as to why Job is suffering and a key conclusion is that he must have sin that he needs to repent of and matters to put right. This is not always the case and in Job's story the Bible makes it very clear that Job was not being punished because of personal sins committed.

Insights of a young man. **(chapters 32-27).** This person hearing the others offers his view. He concludes that Job had allowed pride to come in and so God was punishing him in order to humble him. While it is true that God uses suffering to purify our lives that is an insufficient explanation and cannot account for every incident of suffering and why some appear to suffer much more than others.

God speaks to Job. **(chapter 38-41).** The words that God speaks is not an answer as such but it is very powerful. Basically Job is to consider the wonder of God's creation and realise that he cannot question a God of such greatness and power. We can only marvel at who God is and worship Him.

God restores Job. **(chapter 42)**. Having learned that to have God and nothing else is sufficient, God gives many good things to Job. He prayed for his friends and the Lord prospered him greatly.

Key People: Job, His comforters

Key Themes: God is sovereign and Satan is under His control. Suffering cannot be explained but God is God.

Key Chapters: (Job 41 & 42)

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

THE POETIC AND WISDOM SECTION

The books in this section are:

PSALMS, PROVERBS, ECCLESIASTES, SONG OF SOLOMON

This section contains wonderful literature which is well written and inspiring in its content. David in the Psalms has full rein to express his worship creatively. Solomon reveals the gift of wisdom but also the sadness of a man out of touch with God and the heart of a romantic.

PSALMS

AUTHOR: SEVERAL

DATE: 1440 BC - 586 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Book I..... Psalms 1-41
- II. Book II..... Psalms 42-72
- III. Book III..... Psalms 73-89
- IV. Book IV..... Psalms 90-106
- V. Book V..... Psalms 107-150

Historical Setting: They were written at different times in Israel's history but mostly during the reign of King David.

Key Events: As they were written at different times in history, not describing events but responding to situations and especially to God.

Key People: David

Key Themes: The Psalms are a wonderful record of every human emotion being expressed to God. The range of joy and ecstasy to despair, anger and depression are all in the Psalms. People are being real in their walk with God, sometimes understanding and enjoying His goodness and sometimes confused and hurt by events of life.

Seventy three of the Psalms were written by David, twelve by Asaph, nine by the Sons of Korah, two by Solomon. Heman, with the Sons of Korah, Ethan and Moses wrote one. Two of anonymous ones the New Testament attributes to David.

The Psalms were the Jewish song book and Jesus sang them. After the supper they sang a hymn and it was likely it was a Psalm.

The themes of praise, power, forgiveness and trust are reflected in the Psalms.

The Psalms can be divided into five books; their key theme is Worship:

Book One: 1-41. These contain themes similar to the book of Genesis. Man's fall and redemption.

Book Two: 42-72. As Exodus describes the nation of Israel coming out of slavery, so the theme of being rescued is seen in these Psalms.

Book Three: 73-89. Levitical themes like the Tabernacle and God's holiness are reflected in these Psalms. Worshipping God who is holy, coming to His temple and turning to Him is important.

Book Four: 90-106. Numbers describes the relationship of Israel to other nations. Israel's king was over them all and He is our king.

Book Five: 107-150. Deuteronomy is concerned with God and His word. Many of these Psalms reflect a love for the word of God.

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

PROVERBS

AUTHOR: SOLOMON

DATE: 970 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. In Praise of Wisdom..... Prov. 1-9
- II. Proverbs of Solomon..... Prov. 10:1-22:16
- III. Words of Wise Men Prov. 22:17-24:33
- IV. More Proverbs of Solomon..... Prov. 25-29
- V. Words of Agur..... Prov. 30
- VI. Words of King Lemuel..... Prov. 31:1-9
- VII. Wifely Excellence Prov. 31:10-31

Historical Setting: The vast majority of the wise sayings come from Solomon during his reign as King of Israel. In thought and vocabulary, style, and themes the biblical proverbs are similar to Egyptian and Babylonian wisdom literature, dating a millennium before Solomon, and to Phoenician writings from 14th century Ugarit. This not only supports the biblical dating of Proverbs to Solomon's time, but also suggests that the issues explored in Proverbs reflect a common interest of all peoples for advice on how to live wisely and well.

Key Events: The type of writing is not descriptive on any particular event.

Key People: Solomon

Key Themes: Proverbs is practical wisdom for living our lives in a way that pleases God; these observations apply to all human beings, not just to the believer. It is not complicated but the core and root of wisdom are the fear of the Lord. 1:7.

Among the many themes in Proverbs:

Wisdom for young menCh. 1-9 ... e.g. 1:4

Wisdom for all peopleCh. 10-24 e.g. 1:2-3

Wisdom for leaders.....Ch. 25-31 e.g. 1:5-6

The fear of the Lord..... e.g. 10:27; 14:26-27

The wise man is compared to the fool..... e.g..... 10:8

The righteous and the wicked e.g. 10:20-21

Words and the tongue e.g. 18:4

Family..... e.g. 30:17; 20:11

Laziness and hard work..... e.g. 6:6

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

ECCLESIASTES

AUTHOR: SOLOMON

DATE: 935 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Prologue: Life Is Meaningless Ecc. 1:1-11
- II. Proof: Meaningless demonstrated Ecc. 1:12-6:12
- III. Preferences: Making the Best of a Meaningless Life .. Ecc. 7:1-12:8
- IV. Epilogue: Call to fear God Ecc. 12:9-14

Historical Setting: This book was probably written towards the end of Solomon's life. He reflects upon a time when he reigned supremely and yet so much had slipped. He allowed the worship of idols, brought in by his foreign wives. He describes life without God. Meaningless and full of vanity.

Key Events: Solomon is coming to the end of his life, a sad man.

Key People: Solomon

Key Themes: Meaning in life is not found in knowledge, money, pleasure, work or popularity. It can only be found in God. There are two key scriptures worth highlighting.

Chapter 5:1-2. Be careful when you enter the house of God. Listen, be still; think before you speak. God is not blessed with hasty statements or rash promises.

Chapter 12:1. Remember your creator when you are young. Those who build a good foundation in early years have an advantage. It is harder to change as you get older.

Key Chapter: Ecclesiastes 12

Key Verse: Ecclesiastes 12:13-14. *'Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgement, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.'*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

SONG OF SONGS

AUTHOR: SOLOMON

DATE: 970 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Falling in Love Song. 1:1-2:7
- II. Growing Desire Song. 2:8-3:5
- III. Wedding Song Song. 3:6-5:1
- IV. Separation Song. 5:2-8:4
- V. United Again Song. 8:5-14

Historical Setting: Early in Solomon's reign, a love story unfolds in Israel set in the Shulammitte woman's garden and the king's palace.

Key Events: The marriage of two lovers.

Key People: Solomon, the Shulammitte woman

Key Themes: This book is a love story. It illustrates the love between a bridegroom and his bride, it affirms the sanctity of marriage and it shows the love that God has for His people.

The book makes it clear that sexual experience is pleasing to God; it is not sordid or wrong. However, like any gift it must not be abused and found a right context to function in.

Key Chapter: Song of Songs 2

Key Verses:

Ch 2:4. *'He has taken me to the banquet hall, and his banner over me is love.'*

Ch 2:16. *'My lover is mine and I am his.'*

Ch 6:13. *'... , come back, O Shulammitte; ... that we may gaze on you!'*

Ch 8:6-7. *'... for love is strong as death, ... many waters cannot quench love; . . .'*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

ISAIAH

AUTHOR: ISAIAH

DATE: 700 BC & 681 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Visions of Judgement Isa. 1-35
 - A. Israel's Holy One Isa. 1-6
 - B. Book of Immanuel Isa. 7-12
 - C. Oracles of judgement Isa. 13-24
 - D. Judgement and deliverance Isa. 25-35
- II. Historical Interlude Isa. 36-39
- III. Visions of Splendour Isa. 40-66
 - A. Beyond the Exile Isa. 40-48
 - B. Messiah: God's Servant Isa. 49-55
 - C. Redemption Isa. 56-59
 - D. Restoration Isa. 60-66

Historical Setting: Isaiah lived through a pivotal period of his nation's history, the second half of the 8th century BC, which saw the rise of written prophecy, but also the downfall and disappearance of the greater part of Israel. The death of King Uzziah in 740 BC meant the end of an Indian summer which both Judah and Israel had enjoyed for some 50 years. The rest of the century was dominated by empire seeking Assyrian kings, who would uproot and transplant whole populations, punishing any sign of rebellion with prompt and hideous reprisals.

Key Events: As a prophet he is speaking into events rather than describing them. The key for him is meeting God in the temple.

Time: Isaiah began his ministry during the expansion of the Assyrian empire and the decline of Israel. Under King Tiglath-Pileser 3 the Assyrians swept westward into Aram (Syria) and Canaan. The King of Aram and Israel put pressure on Ahaz king of Judah to join them in forming a coalition, but Ahaz chose instead to ask Tiglath-Pileser for help (**see 2 Kings 16**) a decision that Isaiah condemned (**chapters 7**). He predicted the fall of Judah.

Key Themes: The prophet is calling Judah back to God. His prophesy covers a wide range of issues and has been referred to as a mini Bible. Isaiah's most significant prophecies are those concerning the birth, ministry, death and resurrection and returning reign of the Messiah.

Key Chapter:

Chapter 6: Isaiah meets with the holiness of God and hears His call.

Chapter 9: The Wonderful Counsellor is promised

Chapter 11: The righteous reign.

Chapter 35: The joy of the redeemed.

Chapter 40: Strength for the weary.

Chapter 53: The Servant who suffers for us.

Chapter 61: The year of the Lord's favour.

Chapter 65: New heavens and new earth.

Key Verse: Isaiah 1:18. *“Come now, let us reason together,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

JEREMIAH

AUTHOR: JEREMIAH

DATE: 627-586 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Jeremiah's MissionJer. 1-10
- II. The Broken Covenant.....Jer. 11-20
- III. Judgement at Hand.....Jer. 21-29
- IV. New Covenant Promises.....Jer. 30-38
- V. Jerusalem FallenJer. 39-51
- VI. Historical Appendix.....Jer. 52

Historical Setting: Jeremiah prophesies as the nation of Judah slides towards destruction and occupation by the Babylonians.

Key Events: Jeremiah's call to serve God

Time: Jeremiah began prophesying halfway through the reign of Josiah and continued throughout the reigns of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah (**2 Kings 22-24**)

Key Themes: Jeremiah is called to urge the people of God to return to Him. His ministry will be of necessity, destructive but then constructive.

Jeremiah is bold to speak of the word of God, knowing the rejection it would bring. He is aware that the people are but clay in God's hand and that they need to humble themselves or be judged.

He is also aware, by the revelation of God, that God has a new covenant in store and God will be writing on people's hearts the way He wants them to live.

Key Chapters:

Chapter 1:.....The call of Jeremiah 'Do not be afraid'

Chapter 18:.....The potter's house

Chapter 23:.....The righteous branch

Chapter 29:.....Good plans

Chapter 31:.....New covenant, new heart.

Key Verse: Jeremiah 29:11. *"... For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future ..."*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

LAMENTATIONS

AUTHOR: JEREMIAH

DATE: 586 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. The Deserted City..... Lam. 1
- II. The Rejected City Lam. 2
- III. Call for self-examination Lam. 3
- IV. Past glory remembered Lam. 4
- V. Prayer for Restoration Lam. 5

Historical Setting: Jerusalem has been destroyed by Babylon and her people lulled or taken into captivity.

Key Events: The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

Key People: Jeremiah

Key Themes: God's judgement but also his mercy. This book helps us to see the heart of God is affected by our sin and its consequences. The weeping prophet shows the sadness of living with less than God's best. Jerusalem has fallen and although anger is satisfied, there is a pleading for mercy.

Key Chapter: Lamentations 3

Key Verses: Lamentations 3:22-23. *"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness."*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

EZEKIEL

AUTHOR: EZEKIEL

DATE: 571 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Ezekiel's Call Ezek. 1-3
- II. Judah's Judgement Ezek. 4-24
 - A. A watchman's warnings Ezek. 4-7
 - B. God's glory departs Ezek. 8-11
 - C. Excuses condemned..... Ezek. 12-19
 - D. Leadership's faults Ezek. 20-24
- III. Foreign nations' fate Ezek. 25-33
- IV. Future Blessings..... Ezek. 34-48
 - A. Restoration of God's People Ezek. 34-39
 - B. Restoration of worship..... Ezek. 40-48

Historical Setting: Ezekiel prophesies to those already exiled in Babylon after the defeat of Jehoiachin.

Key Events: For Ezekiel, his call in (Ch. 1) and the revelation of the Temple (Ch 47), were overwhelming experiences of the glory of God.

Time: Ezekiel lived during a time of international upheaval. The Assyrian empire which conquered Israel was beginning to crumble. The capital, Nineveh soon fell into the hands of a combined Babylonian` and Medes` force. Three years later Pharaoh Neco 2 of Egypt marched North to assist Assyria and try to assert Egypt's influence in the Palestine region again. At Megiddo, King Josiah of Judah attempted to intercept the Egyptian force, but was crushed and killed (**2 Kings 23:29-30**)

Jehoahaz ruled for 3 months and was replaced by Neco's choice, Jehoiakim, who became his vassal in Jerusalem. The Egyptian army was soon crushed by the Babylonians and Nebuchadnezzar was installed as the new Babylonian king. Soon afterward Jehoiakim, who was a vassal to Nebuchadnezzar rebelled against hm;. this rebellion led to the subduing of Jerusalem and the sending of 10,000 Jews into exile (2 King 24:14). This group included Ezekiel.

Key Themes: Ezekiel announces God's judgement on Israel and other nations. He foresees the salvation of God's people. He was a Jewish street preacher for about 22 years. He illustrated his message with dramatic object lessons. He lay on his side for 390 days eating only one eight ounce meal per day. He shaved his head and beard.

He showed no sorrow when his wife died, as a sign for Israel not to mourn for Jerusalem

He is described as a watchman for God's people and was a fearless preacher of God's truth.

Key Chapters:

Chapter 1-3:..... Ezekiel's vision of God and his call.

Chapter 28: Powerful description of Satan in the garden.

Chapter 34: Poor shepherding

Chapter 37: Valley of Dry Bones (Death - Exceedingly great army)

Chapter 47: The River of God

Key Verse: Ezekiel 36:24-26. *“For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

DANIEL

AUTHOR: DANIEL

DATE: 535 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. The steadfast fidelity of Daniel and his companionsDan. 1
- II. Nebuchadnezzar's Vision of the Image made of four metalsDan. 2
- III. Nebuchadnezzar's Golden Idol and the Fiery FurnaceDan. 3
- IV. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of the Ruined Tree and Its meaningDan. 4
- V. Belshazzar's Doom Announced by the Handwriting on the WallDan. 5
- VI. Decree of Darius and the Den of LionsDan. 6
- VII. Daniel's Dream of Four Beasts depicting Four World EmpiresDan. 7
- VIII. Daniel's Vision of the Ram and Goat NationsDan. 8
- IX. Daniel's Vision of the Seventy Weeks of Gentile SupremacyDan. 9
- X. Vision of God's Glory Introducing Outline of Coming EventsDan. 10
- XI. Prophecies of the Immediate FutureDan. 11:1-35
 - A. Greece's Conquest of Medo-Persia.....Dan. 11:1-3
 - B. The Decay of the Grecian EmpireDan. 11:4-35
 1. The Wars between Egypt and Syria.....Dan. 11:4-20
 2. The Reign of Wicked Antiochus EpiphanesDan. 11:21-35
- XII. Prophecies of the Distant FutureDan. 11:36-12:13
 - A. The AntichristDan. 11:36-45
 - B. The Great TribulationDan. 12

Historical Setting: Daniel is one of a number of Jews who are faithful to God despite living in captivity. He is seen to be righteous, faithful, obedient and uncompromising in relation to his worship of God.

Key Events: Still to come, the return of Christ is heralded in this prophecy.

Key People: Daniel, Darius and Nebuchadnezzar

Key Themes: God's care and love for those who are His;
God's sovereign power over the elements i.e. fire, lions, kings;
God's foreknowledge i.e. prophecies into the future, dreams etc.
The blessings of those who live righteously.

Ch. 7-12 reveal the sovereignty of God who works out His purposes despite men's apparent power. Visions, rams, he-goat, prayer for repentance, seventy-seven weeks, Antichrist all feature in this section.

Key Chapters:

Ch. 1 Daniel will only obey God not idols.

Ch. 2 Nebuchadnezzar's dream is interpreted.

Ch. 3 The fiery furnace is overcome.

Ch. 6 Delivered from lions.

Ch. 9 Daniel's intercessory prayer.

Key Verse: Daniel 11:32. ' . . . , but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.'

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

HOSEA

AUTHOR: HOSEA

DATE: 715 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Israel's UnfaithfulnessHosea 1-3
- II. God's Indictment of Israel.....Hosea 4-6
- III. Israel's Punishment.....Hosea 7-10
- IV. Israel's RestorationHosea 11-14

Historical Setting: Hosea's ministry takes place at the end of the reign of Jeroboam II, just before the fall of Samaria. Six kings after Jeroboam II reigned within 25 years (**2 kings 15:8-17:41**). Four of these kings were murdered by their successor while in office, and one (**Hoshea**) was captured in battle.

Key Events: The unfaithful wife is loved and wanted by Hosea as God desires unfaithful Israel to repent.

Key People: Hosea and his wife Gomer

Key Themes: The first part of the book uses Hosea's family life as a symbol to convey the message the prophet received from God for Israel. God ordered Hosea to marry a prostitute, Gomer and their three children became symbolic of God's message to Israel.

Hosea foretold the Assyrian invasion of the Northern Kingdom and the fall of Samaria.

The purpose of all this, of course, was to picture God's relationship with Israel. The nation had proved unfaithful, living in idolatry and moral wickedness.

Key Chapters:

- Ch. 1 God's call to Hosea.
- Ch. 6 The call to repentance.
- Ch. 11 God's love for a sinful people.
- Ch. 14 Restoring a sinful rebellious people.

Key Verse: Hosea 14:4. *"I will heal their weariness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them."*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

JOEL

AUTHOR: JOEL

DATE: 835-796 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. The Plague of Locusts Joel 1:1-12
- II. A Call to Repentance Joel 1:13-20
- III. A Preview of Judgement Joel 2
- IV. Judah Restored Joel 3

Historical Setting: God's people had turned to idolatry and had become prosperous but complacent. Joel warns this will lead to God's judgement.

Key Events: This clearly is the plague of locusts which heralded God's judgement.

Key theme: A call to repent. In his vision of the locust, he calls old and young (1:2-3), drunkards (1:5) farmers (1:11) priests (1:13) to repent.

He describes the locust as the Lord's army and sees in their coming that the day of the Lord is near.

His prophecy is quoted a great deal because Peter refers to parts of it on the Day of Pentecost. The outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh is still being fulfilled today. Joel urges Judah to repent and turn back to God.

He warns of terrible judgement but reminds them that God's heart is to forgive the penitent and pour out His Spirit without measure.

The Day of the Locusts . Ch. 1-2:27

The Day of the Lord Ch. 2:27-3

Key Chapter: Joel 2. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Locusts devour and destroy but God's Spirit will bring revelation and prepare the way for final judgement.

Key Verse: Joel 2:12-13. *"Even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning." Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for his is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.'*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

AMOS

AUTHOR: AMOS

DATE: 760-750 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Oracles of Judgement Amos 1-6
 - a) against the nations Amos 1:1-2:5
 - b) against Israel..... Amos 2:6-6:14
- II. Visions of Judgement Amos 7:1-9:10
- III. A Prediction of Renewal Amos 9:11-15

Historical Setting: Amos prophesied during the reign of Uzziah over Judah and Jeroboam II over Israel. Both North (Israel) and South (Judah) were enjoying great prosperity and had reached new political and military heights (**2 Kings 14:23-15:7**). It was a time of idolatry, luxurious living, immorality, injustice and oppression of the poor.

God's people were enjoying a degree of prosperity but judgement through the Assyrians is coming because of the gross injustice they allow.

Key Events: The vision Amos had of impending judgement

Key Themes: The dominant theme in the book of Amos is a call for social justice as a true sign of faith in God

He prophesied about God's judgement through the Assyrians because of their gross injustice

He warned them of God bringing His plumb line of justice and righteousness to bear.

The people are behaving corruptly and are short-changing in their business dealings.

Short-term material prosperity is nothing compared to long-term spiritual ruin so Repent! Complacency is a deadly enemy.

Key Chapters:

Ch. 5 Seek God and live. Desire justice

Ch. 7 God's plumb line

Ch. 9 Israel's restoration

Key Verse: Amos 5:24. *'But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!'*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

OBADIAH

AUTHOR: OBADIAH

DATE: UNCLEAR

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Edom's Pride to be abased Obad. 1-4
- II. Destruction of Edom Obad. 4-9
 - A. The Completeness of the Plunder Obad. 5, 6
 - B. The Betrayal of Edom's Allies Obad. 7
 - C. The Destruction of Edom's Leaders Obad. 8, 9
- III. Reasons for Edom's Downfall Obad. 10-14
- IV. Edom's Judgement is retributive Obad. 15, 16

Historical Setting: Obadiah's name means servant of the Lord or worshipper of Jehovah. It is unclear when he wrote the book but it is believed it was about 853-841 BC or 627-586 BC.

Key Events: There is no key event but a prophetic word of coming judgement

Key People: Obadiah, the Edomites

Key Themes: Obadiah is a prophecy of destruction, directed at Edom, a land across the Jordan River from Judah that was populated by descendants of Jacob's brother, Esau.

The Edomites who had been a thorn in the flesh to Israel would be judged. Obadiah said the Edomites collaborated with foreign invaders of Judah and mistreated Jerusalem's survivors; a charge which fits six occasions in Judah's history!

They were proud and arrogant but nevertheless no match for Almighty God. Edom faced destruction. God's chosen people would be restored.

Key Chapter: The Book has only one chapter

Key Verse: Obadiah v.15. *“The day of the Lord is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head. . . .”*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

JONAH

AUTHOR: JONAH

DATE: 785-760 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. The Disobedience of the Prophet Jonah 1
 - A. Jonah's Missionary Call Jonah 1:1,2
 - B. Jonah's Flight to Tarshish Jonah 1:3
 - C. The Storm at Sea Jonah 1:4-10
 - D. Jonah Thrown overboard & swallowed by a great Fish Jonah 1:11-17
- II. The Deliverance of the Prophet Jonah 2
 - A. Jonah's Prayer Jonah 2:1-9
 - B. God's Answer Jonah 2:10
- III. The Declaration of God's Message through the Prophet. Jonah 3
 - A. The Threat of Judgement Jonah 3:1-4
 - B. The city-wide Repentance Jonah 3:5-9
 - C. The Judgement averted Jonah 3:10
- IV. The Displeasure of the Prophet Jonah 4
 - A. Jonah's petulant Prayer Jonah 4:1-3
 - B. God's Searching question Jonah 4:4
 - C. Jonah Sulking outside the City Jonah 4:5
 - D. Object Lesson on God's Sovereign Mercy Jonah 4:6-11

Historical Setting: In 2 Kings 14:25, we learn that Jonah's home was in Gath Hopher, in Galilee. He prophesied during the days when Assyria was threatening the Northern Kingdom, Israel. He ministered under Jereboam II.

Key Events: God sent him to preach repentance to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. Jonah disobeyed God by trying to run to Tarshish; on his way he encounters God's divine judgement and succumbs to God.

He went to Nineveh and told them about God's judgement and the people repented, which did not please Jonah.

Key Themes: Obedience, disobedience, God's Sovereignty, God's Compassion

Key Chapter: Jonah 3 The people of Nineveh turn from their evil ways

Key Verse: Jonah 4:11. *'But Nineveh has more than one hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?'*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

MICAH

AUTHOR: MICAH

DATE: 742-687 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Prediction of Wrath against Israel and Judah Micah 1
- II. The Doom of the wealthy Oppressors Micah 2:1-11
- III. The Promise of Restoration Micah 2:12,13
- IV. Denunciation of Rulers, False Prophets and Priests Micah 3
- V. The Glory of Christ's Millennial Reign..... Micah 4
- VI. The Promise of the Messiah's Coming Micah 5
- VII. Israel on Trial Micah 6
- VIII. The Nation bewails its sad state Micah 7:1-10
- IX. Future Blessing for Israel Micah 7:11-20

Historical Setting: Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah and Hosea (**Hosea 1:1**) Amos. He prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah in the South. Israel had turned her back on God and Micah prophesied the downfall of its capital, Samaria (**chapter 1:5-7**) and prophesied the inevitable fall of Judah (**chapters 1:9-16**)

Three significant historical events occurred during the time of Micah:

1. Tiglath-Pileser 3 of Assyria led a military campaign against Aram (Syria), Philistia and parts of Israel and Judah. According to (**2 Kings 15:29**) the Northern kingdom lost most of its territory.
2. Samaria fell and the Northern Kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyria
3. Judah joined a revolt against Assyria and was overrun by King Sennacherib and his army. Jerusalem however was spared.

Key Events: The prediction that Bethlehem would be the birthplace of the Messiah

Key Themes: His prophetic utterance concerning Bethlehem and the Messiah is the most outstanding portion of this prophecy. The prophet urges people to repent and get ready for the Messiah whom God will surely send. In Him is the plan and purpose of God to restore His people Israel.

Micah denounces rulers, priests and prophets, dishonesty, money grabbing, exploitation of the helpless and sham religion. But a bright hope is coming!

Ch 1-2. The Capital cities are on trial.

Ch 3-5. The Leaders are on trial.

Ch 6-7. The People are on trial.

God loves His people to worship and love Him, not just offer empty sacrifices.

Key Chapters: Micah 5.....The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem.

Micah 7.....Israel will rise.

Key Verse: Micah 5:2. *“ . . . But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

NAHUM

AUTHOR: NAHUM

DATE: 742-687 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. The Character of God, the Judge Nahum 1:1-8
- II. Certainty of the Doom of Nineveh Nahum 1:9-15
- III. Description of the Siege of Nineveh Nahum 2:1-12
- IV. God's Determination to Destroy the City Nahum 2:13-3:19

Historical Setting: Assyria had already destroyed Samaria, resulting in the captivity of Israel, which posed a great threat to Judah. King Sennacherib made Nineveh the capital of the Assyrian empire. Jonah had announced the destruction of Nineveh earlier on (**Jonah 3:4**), but the people had repented and the destruction was averted.

However, Nineveh soon reverted to its wicked ways and Nahum prophesied concerning its fall. This book could be regarded as the sequel to Jonah. Nahum prophesies after the fall of Thebes about the destruction of Nineveh.

Key Events: Nahum's prophecy will happen even though the Ninevites have been shown mercy before.

Key People: The people of Nineveh, and the people of Judah

Key Theme: The theme is again picked up that God rules and reigns and that He judges sin. Nahum prophesied against Nineveh. The prophet, a citizen of Judah, predicted the city's fall and vividly described the manner in which it was actually taken. The time for mercy, as in the day of Jonah, has passed and now judgement is coming.

Key Chapter: Nahum 1 - God is Awesome

Key Verse: Nahum 1:7. *'The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him, . . .*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

HABAKKUK

AUTHOR: HABAKKUK

DATE: 612-588 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. The Prophet's Problems and God's Solutions.....Hab. 1:1-2:20
- A. The First Problem and SolutionHab. 1:1-11
1. Problem: Gods' seeming Indifference to Judah's Iniquities. Hab. 1:1-4
2. Solution: Gods' Judgement through the Chaldean Invasion.Hab. 1:5-11
- B. The Second Problem and Solution.....Hab. 1:12-2:20
1. Problem: God's Employment of the more wicked Chaldeans to Render JudgementHab. 1:12-2:1
2. Solution: The Impending Downfall of the Chaldeans. Hab. 2:2-2:20
- II. The Prophet's Prayer.....Hab. 3:1-19
- A. A Petition for MercyHab. 3:1, 2
- B. A Vision of GodHab. 3:3-15
1. God in His Majesty.....Hab. 3:3, 4
2. God in His PowerHab. 3:5-15
- C. A Declaration of TrustHab. 3:16-19

Historical Setting: Habakkuk wrote in the time of the godly King Josiah. Babylon is emerging fast and this kingdom will be used as a vehicle by God to bring judgement on His people.

Key Events: Habakkuk realises that God is sovereign and will use even the heathen for His purposes.

Key People: The people of Babylon, Habakkuk

Key Theme: His message is not directed at Israel ; it contains a dialogue between Habakkuk and God.

The prophet was deeply troubled by the injustices prevailing in Judah's society despite a religious revival. Habakkuk reminds us that God is in control despite the apparent triumph of evil.

Job and the writer of Psalm 73 would have understood Habakkuk's dilemma. It is hard to understand why God's people suffer when the arrogant and wicked thrive. However, God is God and He is working out His purposes.

Key Chapter: Ch. 3. Having shared honestly with God his concerns and questions, he prays for God to move in mercy. Habakkuk's prayer in ch. 3. is an example of his love and trust in the Lord

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

ZEPHANIAH

AUTHOR: ZEPHANIAH

DATE: 640-621 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. God's Determination to execute Judgement..... Zeph. 1
 - A. on All the Earth..... Zeph. 1:1-3
 - B. on Judah and Jerusalem because of Idolatry Zeph. 1:4-6
 - C. The Day of the Lord under the Figure of a Sacrifice ... Zeph. 1:7-13
 - 1. Guests: Judah's Enemies..... Zeph. 1:7
 - 2. Victims: Wicked People of Judah Zeph. 1:8-13
 - D. The Terror of the Day of the Lord..... Zeph. 1:14-18
- II. Judah is called to Repent Zeph. 2:1-3
- III. The Doom of Gentile Nations Zeph. 2:4-15
 - A. The Philistines Zeph. 2:4-7
 - B. The Moabites and Ammonites Zeph. 2:8-11
 - C. The Ethiopians Zeph. 2:12
 - D. The Assyrians and especially the City of Nineveh Zeph. 2:13-15
- IV. Woe pronounced on Jerusalem Zeph. 3:1-7
 - A. Disobedience, Unresponsiveness, Unbelief, Impenitence Zeph. 3:1, 2
 - B. Greed of the Princes and the Judges Zeph. 3:3
 - C. Levity & Treachery of the Prophets and Sacrilege of the Priests Zeph. 3:4
 - D. The Lord's Presence of Judgement Zeph. 3:5-7
- V. Message of Comfort to the Faithful Remnant Zeph. 3:8-20
 - A. Destruction of Wicked Gentiles..... Zeph. 3:8
 - B. Conversion of the Remaining Nations..... Zeph. 3:9
 - C. Restoration of Dispersed Israel..... Zeph. 3:10-13
 - D. Rejoicing over the Second Advent of Christ..... Zeph. 3:14-17
 - E. What God Will Do for His People..... Zeph. 3:18-20

Historical Setting: Zephaniah prophesies at the time of Josiah who seeks to bring godly reforms in a nation previously dominated by evil living. **(see 2 Kings 22:1-23:30)**. Zephaniah himself seems to have been of royal blood tracing his ancestry to King Hezekiah. **(chapters 1:1)**

Key People: Zephaniah, Josiah

Key Theme: He seeks to shake people out of complacency and warn them to return to God or face judgement. Judah must be different to other nations or she faces judgement with the other nations.

Key Chapter: Zephaniah 3 - The Lord, Mighty to save.

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

HAGGAI

AUTHOR: HAGGAI

DATE: 520 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. The First Message: A word of RebukeHag. 1:1-15
 - A. IntroductionHag. 1:1
 - B. A Rebuke for sinful IndifferenceHag. 1:2-6
 - C. An Exhortation to Resume the Work.....Hag. 1:7-11
 - D. The Enthusiastic ResponseHag. 1:12-15
- II. The Second Message: A Word of Encouragement.....Hag. 2:1-9
 - A. Introduction.....Hag. 2:1, 2
 - B. An Encouragement to BuildHag. 2:3-5
 - C. A Promise of Future Glory.....Hag. 2:6-9
- III. The Third Message: A Word of PromiseHag. 2:10-19
 - A. Introduction.....Hag. 2:10
 - B. The Corrupting Effect of SinHag. 2:11-14
 - C. The Promise of Future BlessingHag. 2:15-19
- IV. The Fourth Message: A word of ProphecyHag. 2:20-23
 - A. Introduction.....Hag. 2:20
 - B. The Overthrow of Gentile Kingdoms.....Hag. 2:21, 22
 - C. The Restoration of David's ThroneHag. 2:23

Historical Setting: Cyrus king of Persia, issued a decree allowing all the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:2-4). Led by Zerubbabel, 50,000 Jews went back to Jerusalem and began working on the temple.

Key Events: The moves to rebuild the temple of God.

Key Theme: The Israelite returned to Jerusalem only to find it in ruins and a drought upon the land.

After a 16 year struggle, lethargy, both social and spiritual, had set in and it is into this situation Haggai spoke. He calls the people to build God's house and not their own.

Four times the prophet comes to the people of God. Hard times are because of wrong priorities. The glorious temple of Solomon was history but God would bring a latter time 'glory', which would be wonderful to see. Working on the temple alone would not please God, right hearts are most important.

Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, in the royal line is to receive the precious Messianic promises. **(chapters 2:21-23)**

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

ZECHARIAH

AUTHOR: ZECHARIAH

DATE: 520-480 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Opening Exhortation Zech. 1:1-6
- II. Section 1: A Series of Eight VisionsZech. 1:7-6:15
 - 1. The Man among The Myrtle trees, And The drove of HorsesZech. 1:7-17
 - 2. The Four Horns and the Four CraftsmenZech. 1:18-21
 - 3. The Man with the measuring Line.....Zech. 2
 - 4. The Cleansing Of The High PriestZech. 3
 - 5. The Golden Lampstand, And the Two Olive TreesZech. 4
 - 6. The Flying Scroll..... Zech. 5:1-4
 - 7. The Woman in the Basket..... Zech. 5:5-11
 - 8. The Four Chariots and the Crowning of the High Priest Zech. 6:1-15
- III. Section 2: The Answer to the Deputation from Bethel concerning the Fasts. In the End the Fasts shall become Festivals..... Zech. 7-8
- IV. Section 3: Prediction concerning a period of the History of the Jews and a Vision of the Ultimate Triumph of God's Kingdom Zech. 9-14
 - Messianic Element** - The Kingly MessiahZech. 9:9-13:7
 - a..... First Coming In Lowliness Zech. 9:9
 - b.....The Prince Of Peace Zech. 9:10
 - c.CrucifiedZech. 12:10
 - d..... A Shepherd Forsaken by His sheep Zech. 13:7
 - Choice Selection**..... Zech. 4:6-13-1
 - 1. The Secret of Success In spiritual Enterprises Zech. 4:6-10
 - 2. The Coming of the Prince of Peace Zech. 9:9-10
 - 3. The Fountain of CleansingZech. 13:1

Historical Setting: This book was written over a period of time: chapters 1-8 were written between 520-518 and chapters 9-14 around 480. Zechariah along with Haggai encourages the completion of the temple.

Key Events: Completing the temple and looking forward to the Messiah coming

Key People: Joshua, Zerubbabel

Key Theme: Although Zechariah has only 14 chapters it is quoted forty times in the New Testament; it is the most Christ-centred of all the Minor Prophets. The symbolic visions, plus his messages and revelations, all enhance the importance

of this book. Zechariah prophesies the entry into Jerusalem of Jesus on a donkey. The people who have returned from exile must get on with the job of restoring the temple. The Messiah is coming and ultimately His rule and reign will restore everything according to God's word.

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

MALACHI

AUTHOR: MALACHI

DATE: 430 BC

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. The Lord's Charges against Israel, their Replies, and His Threatened JudgementsMal. 1:1-3:15
 - A. IngratitudeMal. 1:1-5
 - B. Sacrilege by the Priests.....Mal. 1:6-14
 - C. Condemnation of the PriestsMal. 2:1-9
 - D. Divorce and Mixed MarriagesMal. 2:10-16
 - E. Denial of God's Holiness and Justice.....Mal. 2:17
 - F. Parenthesis: Messiah's Coming in Judgement.....Mal. 3:1-6
 - G. The Backsliding of the PeopleMal. 3:7
 - H. Robbing God of Tithes and OfferingsMal. 3:8-12
 - I. False Charges against GodMal. 3:13-15
- II. The Blessing of the Remnant and the Judgement of the WickedMal. 3:16-4:6
 - A. The Restoration of the Faithful RemnantMal. 3:16-18
 - B. The Judgement of the Wicked.....Mal. 4:1
 - C. The Coming of the Messiah to the RemnantMal. 4:2,3
 - D. Closing Exhortation to Obedience, with Promise of the Coming of Elijah the Prophet.....Mal. 4:4-6

Historical Setting: The people have begun to return to the land and rebuild but their complacency needs a strong prophetic rebuke.

Key Events: The prediction of John the Baptist, paving the way for Jesus

Key People: Malachi and the Priests

Key Theme: Malachi is the last of the Minor Prophets; his name means 'my messenger'. He was faced with the failure of the priests of Judah to fear God and to serve the people conscientiously during difficult times. This contributed to Judah's indifference toward the will of God. The people blamed the supposed unfaithfulness of the Lord for their social and economic troubles and not their own unfaithfulness to God and each other. This showed in the way in which they offered their sacrifices.

Malachi told the people that they must offer God the best and not the poorest, weakest offering they thought they could get away with. They must not rob God. They must bring the full tithe into the storehouse, because the blessing

God can pour out is overwhelming. He also encourages faithfulness in marriage.

This is the last time God pleads with His people in the Old Testament period. After this there will be silence for four centuries until God's purpose is fulfilled. The Messiah is coming and His forerunner, who is John the Baptist, will prepare the way.

Key Chapter: Malachi 4

Key Verses: Malachi 2:17 *'You have wearied the Lord with your words. "How have we wearied Him?" you ask. By saying, "All who do evil are good in the eyes of the Lord, and he is pleased with them" or "Where is the God of justice?"*

Malachi 3:8 *"Will a man rob God?" Yet you rob me. But you ask, "How do we rob you?" In tithes and offerings.'*

Malachi 4:6 *'He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers.'*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

New Testament

The Synoptic Gospel

There are four Gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They were written at different times. The earliest was Mark about 45 A D. We need to remember that the order in which books appear in the Bible is not necessarily the order in which they were written.

The beginning of Gospel writing coincides with the end of the first Christian era. As eyewitnesses and ministers of the word were removed by death so the value of a written record was felt much more acutely. Obviously God was using these natural circumstances to bring about His word in written form and indeed as John was to write, He brought back to their memories details and events which their natural mind would otherwise have forgotten.

SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

A study of Matthew, Mark and Luke reveals that there is a considerable amount of material that is common to all three. The substance of 606 out of the 661 verses of Mark reappear in abridged form in Matthew; some 380 of the 661 verses of Mark reappear in Luke. Only 31 verses of Mark have no parallel in Matthew or Luke. About 300 verses of Matthew have no parallel in any of the other Gospels and the same is true of 520 verses in Luke. Material which appears in Matthew and Luke but not in Mark has been referred to as "Q". The fact remains that wherever Matthew, Mark and Luke got their material from for the Gospels, the whole matter was watched over by the Holy Spirit. We read today God's Word which He used man to write. The synoptic are descriptive and they give us an overview of the birth, life, teaching, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE LAND OF THE GOSPELS

Palestine is about the size of Wales. The coastal plain, central mountains, the Jordan rift and desert made for great variety in a small area. We can only speculate how many miles Jesus must have walked in this hot climate as He went from town to town and village to village. How long did it take to climb to a quiet place to seek God's face in prayer?

Israel, remarkably, has not changed so much over the last two centuries and those who visit do not find it difficult to imagine the events that the Gospels describe.

POLITICAL CLIMATE

By New Testament times the Jewish people had lived under foreign occupation for about 500 years since returning to their own land. Under Greek rule they had adopted the Greek language of the empire. This was to prove very significant as the New Testament was to be written in Greek, a rich language and a relatively common language of the day.

In 190 BC the Greek, Antiochus the Great was defeated by the Romans and Israel was under their rule. The Jews were allowed to keep their religion and even a king, but Rome had the final word, hence the role of Pontius Pilate.

Jesus was born into this background with Augustus as Roman Emperor. The Romans collected taxes and dispensed justice ruthlessly. Feelings ran high against the Romans so Jesus did not want to precipitate trouble with constant public claims to be the Messiah. Such claims would have easily been understood.

JEWISH RELIGIOUS GROUPS

The **Pharisees** were a strict sect, legalistic and with a tendency to introduce their own nit-picking rules. Many were godly men but some were so self-righteous they ended getting firm rebukes from Jesus.

The **Sadducees** came mostly from families of priests. They were not as strict as the Pharisees.

The **Scribes** were not a sect but experts in the Law. They were teachers who interpreted the Law and applied it to everyday life.

The **Zealots** were red hot nationalists dedicated to throwing out the Romans.

THE CONTENT OF THE SYNOPTIC

Generally speaking.

The Gospels record the eternal being, human ancestry, birth, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Son of Man. They give us a selection of incidents and do not claim to give us everything Jesus said and did.

1. All reveal a unique personality that we need to know.
 2. All record the ministry of John the Baptist.
 3. All record the feeding of the five thousand.
 4. All record the betrayal by Judas; the denial by Peter; the trial; crucifixion, and literal resurrection of Christ.
 5. All record the resurrection ministry of Christ.
- All point forward to Jesus' Second Coming.

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

MATTHEW

AUTHOR: MATTHEW

DATE: AD 60-65

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. The Origin and Infancy of Jesus the Messiah Matt. 1-2:23
- II. The Beginning of the Ministry of Jesus the Messiah Matt. 3-4
- III. The Ethics of the Kingdom of God. The Beatitudes Matt. 5-7
- IV. Jesus the Doer of Mighty Works Matt. 8-9:34
- V. Jesus and His Mission Preachers Matt. 9:35-10:42
- VI. The Claims of Jesus the Messiah Matt. 11-12
- VII. Seven Parables of the Kingdom of Heaven Matt. 13:1-52
- VIII. The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth and the
Martyrdom of John the BaptistMatt. 13:53-14:12
- IX. Withdrawal of Jesus from Herd's DominionMatt. 14:13-17:27
- X. Life in the Messianic CommunityMatt. 18
- XI. The Journey to Jerusalem Matt. 19-20
- XII. The Messiah's Challenge to Jerusalem Matt. 21-22
- XIII. Denunciation of the Scribes and PhariseesMatt. 23
- XIV. The Fall of Jerusalem,
and the coming of the Son of ManMatt. 24
- XV. Three Parables of JudgementMatt. 25
- XVI. The Passion Narrative Matt. 26-27
- XVII. The Resurrection of Jesus and Post-Resurrection Narratives
The Great Commission. Go and make DisciplesMatt. 28

Historical Setting: Jesus was born in Bethlehem during the Roman occupation of Palestine. His life and ministry all happen under Roman rule and His crucifixion was according to Roman execution methods. Palestine had a limited amount of self-government under Roman control, hence King Herod.

Key Events: The birth of Jesus; The Sermon on the Mount; The death of Jesus; The resurrection of Jesus; The commission of Jesus.

The purpose of Matthew: The Gospel of Matthew is written to a Jewish audience and Matthew's special interest is to show that:

- **Jesus was the Messiah:** Matthew continually repeats the saying 'all this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophets' (**1:22; 2:15,17,23; 4:14; 8:17.**)

- **Jews and the church** : Matthew writes as if his audience were familiar with the Jewish faith. It is only in this Gospel that the message of the Cross is limited 'to the lost sheep of Israel' (**10:6;15:24**). Matthew is also very anti-Jew, denouncing their leaders. Matthew has a love-hate relationship towards Israel, evidence of someone that has found in Jesus, the true meaning of the Jewish faith

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

MARK

DATE: AD 55-65

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. The Manifestation of the Servant-SonMark. 1:1-11
- II. The Servant-Son is TestedMark. 1:12-13
- III. The Servant-Son at WorkMark. 1:14-13:37
- IV. The Servant-Son Obedient to the Point of DeathMark. 14-15
- V. The Ministry of the Risen Servant-Son, in Authority Mark. 16

Historical Setting: Jesus was born in Bethlehem during the Roman occupation of Palestine. His life and ministry all happen under Roman rule and His crucifixion was according to Roman execution methods. Palestine had a limited amount of self-government under Roman control, hence King Herod. The Roman Empire is ripe for the Gospel.

The first Gospel - Mark is believed to be the first of the four Gospels. It is generally believed that Matthew and Luke used Mark as a resource for their own writing. It is believed that Mark's Gospel was something unique because never had so many of the stories of Jesus been put together into the form we now know as the Gospel.

The purpose of the Gospel

Mark wrote his Gospel for different reasons, even though all was to lead people to understand what Jesus had done for them; some of the reasons he wrote it were:

- **To give non- Jewish people (Gentiles) the opportunity to hear the Gospel**
- **To encourage Christians who were going through a difficult time**
- **To argue for the reliability of the Christian faith**
- **To explain how important the death of Jesus was**

Mark is reckoned to have contact with Peter and derived much information from him regarding the life of Christ. Mark had a rough missionary experience with Paul but recovered well and wrote this Gospel full of conviction that Jesus is God. Mark depicts Jesus as the Servant. Jesus is seen as the mighty worker serving his Father. Mark mentions more miracles than sermons of Jesus. Mark is in five principal divisions.

There is some discussion regarding the last verses of Mark 16:9-20. Nothing here contradicts the rest of Scripture and whether they were added out of context or

not, they demonstrate the **acts** which highlight signs and wonders following the preaching of the word.

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

LUKE

DATE: AD 60

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. The IntroductionLuke. 1:1-4
- II. The Human Relationships of Jesus.....Luke. 1:5-2
- III. The Baptism, Ancestry and Testing of JesusLuke. 3-4:13
- IV. The Ministry of the Prophet-Man in GalileeLuke. 4:14-9:50
- V. The Journey of the Son of Man from
Galilee to Jerusalem.....Luke. 9:51-19:44
- VI. The Rejection and Sacrifice of the Son of ManLuke. 19:45-23
- VII. The Resurrection, Resurrection Ministry, Ascension.....Luke. 24

Historical Setting: Jesus was born in Bethlehem during the Roman occupation of Palestine. His life and ministry all happen under Roman rule and His crucifixion was according to Roman execution methods. Palestine had a limited amount of self-government under Roman control, hence King Herod. Luke wrote from Rome or possibly Caesarea.

The purpose of Luke -Luke is different from the other Gospels. He is the only known Gentile to have a book in the New Testament. This Gospel seems to have been written for well-educated and sophisticated Roman and Greek citizens.

What Luke wanted to achieve can be summed up in about four points:

- Luke is interested in telling the story of Jesus in the context of history, showing that the story of Jesus was just a continuation of God's past dealings with his people, Israel.
- Luke wanted to show people that Jesus came to 'seek and save the lost' **(19:10)** Luke tries to show that the coming of the kingdom meant God was working in and through Jesus.
- Luke stresses the humanity of God and recalls several miracles of Jesus and some of the best loved parables in the Bible e.g. the prodigal son.
- Luke wanted to show that the death of Christ was the normal path, set out for Jesus to secure salvation for the lost. In this Luke emphasised the generosity of God, but shows that this grace is not cheap; sinners must be willing to repent and leave their life of sin. **Luke 14:25-35**

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

JOHN

DATE: AD 85-90

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Prologue John 1:1-18
- II. Jesus, the Life Giver John 1:19-4:42
- III. Jesus, Healer and Judge John 4:43-5:47
- IV. Jesus, the Bread of Life John 6
- V. Jesus, Living Water and Light of Life John 7-8
- VI. Jesus, Shepherd of Mankind John 9-10
- VII. Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life John 11:1-54
- VIII. Jesus, the Triumphant King John 11:55-12:50
- IX. Jesus, the Life of the Church John 13-17
- X. Jesus, Life from Death John 18-21

Historical Setting: Unlike the other Gospel, was written after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and before John was exiled to Patmos.

The purpose of John's Gospel

In John 20:31 ***'But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name'*** We can clearly see from this verse that John's intentions were evangelistic. He wanted people to understand who Jesus was and what he had done. He wanted people to know that Jesus was the Son of God, hence, a lot of reference to the divinity of Christ. All of the miracles of Jesus pointed to who he was.

- **Water into wine. Ch. 2**
- **The Official's son. Ch.4**
- **Man at the Pool. Ch. 5**
- **Five thousand fed. Jesus walks on the water. Ch. 6**
- **The blind man. Ch. 9**
- **Raising Lazarus from the dead. Ch. 11**
- **The Resurrection story. Ch. 20-21**

John wanted people to know that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah (**Chapters 7:26-27; 10:24**) To John, Jesus was the fulfilment of the Messianic hope of the Jewish people.

1:41 'the first thing Andrew did was to find Simon and tell him, 'we have found the Messiah.'

4:29 'Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could this be the Christ?'

11:27 'Yes, Lord', she told him 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.'

The 'I AM's' declare powerfully His uniqueness:

- 1. I AM the bread of life. 6:35**
- 2. I AM the light of the world. 8:12**
- 3. I AM the door. 10:9**
- 4. I AM the good shepherd. 10:11**
- 5. I AM the resurrection and the life. 11:25**
- 6. I AM THE WAY THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE. 14:6**
- 7. I AM the true vine. 15:1**

John and the synoptic gospels

When you compare John with the synoptic Gospels, you will immediately notice a considerable difference.

1. A large amount of information found in the synoptic is absent from John's Gospel, while information in John's Gospel is not in the synoptic.
2. While the synoptic Gospels concentrate on the ministry of Jesus in Galilee, John's attention is fixed on the ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem.
3. While Jesus speaks in parables in the synoptic Gospels, in John's Gospel, it is more discourse and dialogues.
4. There are also differences in the chronological order of the events leading to Jesus death.

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

ACTS

AUTHOR: LUKE

DATE: AD 63-70

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Preparation for mission Acts 1
- II. Power Acts 2
- III. Mission to the Jews Acts 3-12
- IV. Mission to the Gentiles Acts 13-20
- V. Paul's Imprisonment Acts 21-28

Historical Setting: The birth and development of the Early Church in the 1st Century AD. The book covers a period of about thirty years and we know that Luke has painstakingly researched events when the church is born and is to be engulfed in persecution but is triumphant.

Key Events:

1. The Ascension of Jesus. Ch. 1
2. The Coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Ch. 2
3. The Appointment of Deacons. Ch. 6
4. Revival in Samaria. Ch. 8
5. Paul's Conversion. Ch. 9
6. Cornelius and the Gentiles. Ch. 10
7. Missionary journeys. Ch. 13-28

The purpose of Acts

The book of Acts is the bridge between what Jesus did in the Gospels and what he began to do with his church after he ascended into heaven. The purpose of the book can be summarized from the statement in

Chapter 1:8 "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth"

Luke basically goes on to show how the Gospel expanded from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. Acts presents also:

- The historic basis of the Christian origin. It speaks of the founding of the church and how it grew.
- The defence Christians gave in an established culture with its own teaching and ideas **(4:8-12; 25:8-11)**

- The strength of the Church in the face of bitter persecution shows that the church had supernatural backing to have grown the way it did.

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

AN OVERVIEW OF THE EPISTLES

The letters of the New Testament make up about one third of it. They tell us what the apostles taught and give us an insight into some of the challenges that the early Christians faced. Many of those challenges are faced by us today in some form or other.

Clearly Paul is the instrument God used for the majority of the letters. He is first introduced to us in the book of Acts as one who fiercely persecuted the church but later became one of its most enterprising missionaries. After Paul became a Christian, he travelled throughout the Mediterranean sharing the good news about Jesus. As part of his ministry he wrote many letters to Christian churches, answering their questions, encouraging them and teaching them how to live the Christian lifestyle.

PAUL'S LETTERS:

Paul is responsible for 13 letters; Hebrews is anonymous; James and Jude wrote one each and Peter wrote two and John wrote three.

Paul's letters fall naturally into four groups:

- 1 **1 & 2 Thessalonians** were probably the earliest and announce Christ's return
 - 2 **Romans, Galatians** and **1 & 2 Corinthians** emphasise the Gospel which Paul preached.
 - 3 **Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians** and **Philemon** were written from prison.
 - 4 Pastoral letters were written to **Timothy, 1 & 2 Timothy** and **Titus**.
- The other letters can be grouped under the heading 'General letters'. **Hebrews** tends to stand on its own and **2 & 3 John** are addressed to a specific person or church.

The Gospel Letters:

When writing to the Galatians, Paul is concerned that folk are turning to another gospel. He writes showing how the Gospel came to him and confronts those who would seek to add to it.

Paul had become aware of the problems that the Corinthians were having and wrote to answer some of the matters raised. He asserts here that despite great weakness, he will preach Christ and Him crucified.

Paul's letter to the Romans is a powerful, theological treatise where the theme of righteousness by faith is expounded. The practical outworkings of this truth

are shared and the love of God in sending His Son to die for us, is powerfully proclaimed.

The Prison Letters

We know that Paul was imprisoned and that some of that time he had quite a lot of freedom to write and live his life. Writing to the Ephesians and the Colossians, clear positive teaching about the person of Christ and the doctrine of the Church were able to combat the growing number of heresies which came upon the scene.

Philemon receives a letter from Paul, encouraging him to forgive Onesimus, the runaway slave.

Philippians prepares the way for Timothy's visit and Paul expresses his appreciation for their practical support.

The Pastoral Letters

Timothy and Titus have been given some weighty responsibilities in church leadership. Paul writes to encourage them and gives instruction that can help them build the church and seek out godly leadership to leave in charge of the local church.

THE GENERAL LETTERS

1 Peter - seeks to encourage suffering Christians. The main encouragement is to consider the sufferings of Jesus.

2 Peter - warns against a heresy which encouraged immorality and seeks to protect the Christian against the forces of evil which would love to threaten church-life.

1, 2, & 3 John - Docetism, a heresy which regarded Christ as a heavenly being, incapable of suffering, and so denied His incarnation, was beginning to take root and spread. These letters uphold that Jesus is God in human form and the only way of salvation.

James - tends to be very practical, giving encouragement and warning. There is a particularly powerful section about the use of the tongue.

Jude - Again a concern about heresy is shared but the might power of God to keep us from falling, is taught.

THE BACKGROUND TO THE LETTERS

Old Testament - The letter writers were familiar with the Old Testament and use some of the language and imagery of it.

Hellenism. Greek influence was strong in some of the places Paul preached and it is here that the very clever mind that Paul had, was used to share the wisdom of God being superior to men.

Paganism. The New Testament Church grew up in a very pagan society. Immorality and idol worship were rife, presenting a very clear challenge for the new believers to turn from this, to live God's way.

Judaism. The Pharisees' attitudes that Jesus faced were present but Paul often began his city mission in the synagogue.

THE MAIN THEMES OF THE LETTERS

God is Holy .He is sovereign. He is Father. He is Creator and Author of the new creation and He is the one who reconciles.

Christ is God in human form. He is the Messiah; He is Lord. He gave up the heavenly sphere to save us, He is the exact image of the living God.

Man desperately needs saving from the corrupt society in which he lives, but also from the corruption in himself. The new life which Christ offers to those who repent and put their faith in Him, is to be expressed by being an active participant in the local church. From that place Christ will reach out to the immediate locality and the world.

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

ROMANS

AUTHOR: PAUL

DATE: AD 57

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. IntroductionRom. 1;1-17
- II. Righteousness: Man's Great NeedRom. 1:18-3:20
- III. Righteousness as God's GiftRom. 3:21-5:21
- IV. Righteousness Living TodayRom. 6-8
- V. Righteousness in HistoryRom. 9-11
- VI. Righteousness in CommunityRom. 12-16

Historical Setting: Paul in preparation for a visit to Rome, writes this letter. Paul had always wanted to go to Rome. He could not have realised that his eventual arrival would be as a prisoner.

The purpose of Romans

Paul says very little about his purpose for writing this letter. The only way we can find out why Romans was written is to understand Paul's circumstance at the time of writing.

Paul

- He might have written to Rome to introduce himself and raise support for his mission to Spain.
- He might have written to explain his theological stand knowing he was going to be visiting soon and especially just after having a running with the Corinthian church and the wrong report spreading among the Romans about him. **(Romans 3:8)**.
- He might have written Romans, as simply a preparation speech to be given with the collection he was taking to Jerusalem.

Key Themes:

The Gospel: Romans 1-11 tell us the Gospel which Paul preached, describe the sinfulness of man and the work of grace which restores us to a holy God.

The great theme of Romans is faith in Christ as the only ground of man's acceptance by God. He treats all men alike whether Jew or Gentile. The impact of Romans has been to inspire great men like Augustus, Luther, Bunyan and Wesley. The fire of God, lit by the Roman Christians, caused them to be used by God to help shape the history of the Church.

The Gospel and Israel: Romans 9-11. Romans is written in an orderly way rather like a lawyer arguing a case. As a Jew, Paul was concerned about the fate of his people. He encourages them to come through Christ and to know that God has not forgotten them.

Christian believers have roots in the Old Testament Jewish world and we owe a great deal to God who achieved and revealed so much through the saints of Old Testament times. Paul prays that Israel will be saved and experience the power of the Cross which he describes in the earlier chapters.

Christian Living: Romans 12-16. Paul exhorts believers to behave in a godly manner.

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

1 CORINTHIANS

AUTHOR: PAUL

DATE: AD 55

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction	1 Cor. 1:1-9
II. Divisions in the Church	1 Cor. 1:10-4:21
III. Discipline of the Immoral	1 Cor. 5-6
IV. Divorce and Marriage	1 Cor. 7
V. Doctrinal Disputes	1 Cor. 8:1-11:1
VI. Conducting Worship	1 Cor. 11:2-34
VII. Defining Spirituality	1 Cor. 12-14
VIII. Understanding Resurrection	1 Cor. 15
IX. Conclusion	1 Cor. 16

Historical Setting: Paul is thought to have written this letter during his 3rd missionary journey, to deal with serious issues at Corinth that were threatening its progress.

The purpose of Corinthians:

1. He wrote this letter to clarify an earlier letter he had written (**chapters 5:9-11**)
2. He also wanted to respond to a report he had heard from Chloe's household about the church in Corinth (**chapters 1:10-12**).
3. He wanted to answer questions that the Corinthians had sent to him. (**chapter 7:1**).
4. He wanted to deal with criticism levied at his ministry. (**Chapters 4:1-18**)

There were a number of problems in the Corinthian church which Paul needed to address. Some issues he was directly aware of and some had been conveyed by messages and messengers.

Paul needed to lay down a clear apostolic line to which they needed to respond.

- There is concern regarding a partisan approach to leadership.
- They were tolerating sexual sin.
- They were flirting with the Lord's supper.
- They were abusing spiritual gifts.
- They were doubting the Resurrection.

But they were still God's people whom He loved and wanted to bring to maturity.

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

2 CORINTHIANS

AUTHOR: PAUL

DATE: AD 55-57

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Personal Items 2 Cor. 1-2
- II. New Covenant Ministry 2 Cor. 3-13
 - A. Principles 2 Cor. 3-5
 - B. Practice 2 Cor. 6-7
 - C. Giving 2 Cor. 8-9
 - D. Authority 2 Cor. 10-13

Historical Setting:

After writing 1 Corinthians, Timothy made a visit to Corinth and came back with disturbing news about events in Corinth. This made Paul change the plan he had outlined in **1 Corinthians 16:5-9** and travelled straight for Corinth.

However, when Paul arrived, he found himself the object of a hurtful attack, **(chapters 2:5; 7:12)**, made by a certain individual and the Corinthians did not come to his support. This proved to be a painful visit for Paul and the Corinthians and he had to change his travel plans once again and instead of returning to Corinth after the projected visit to Macedonia, he went back to Ephesus **(chapters 1:23; 2:1)**.

Once back in Ephesus, Paul writes the "heavy letter", the one that is now lost. It seems Paul told them in this letter to take action against the troublemakers in their midst **(chapters 2:3-4; 7:8; 12)**.

Most likely this letter was carried by Titus, indicating Paul's restlessness to meet with him and hence leaving the ministry in Troas and going to Macedonia. In Macedonia he got embroiled in the bitter persecution facing the church **(chapters 7:5)** but the coming of Titus was a great relief especially hearing of the Corinthians' zeal to demonstrate their loyalty to him by punishing the one who had caused so much hurt. **(chapters 7:6-7)**.

It is on the back of Titus that Paul now writes 2 Corinthians.

Key Themes: 2 Corinthians is a very intense and personal letter from the pen of the apostle Paul. Paul speaks plainly to the people but clearly he loves them greatly.

- The cost of being an apostle of Jesus Christ
- Dealing with false teachers.
- The importance of giving
- The role and authority of an apostle

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

OVERVIEW OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

GALATIANS

AUTHOR: PAUL

DATE: AD 49

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Paul's Apostleship Gal. 1-2
- II. Salvation and Faith Gal. 3-4
- III. Godliness and the Spirit Gal. 5-6

Historical Setting: Paul writes to the churches in Galatia to speak into the growing problem of how much Jewish ritual was appropriate and inappropriate.

The purpose of Galatian

Paul's reason for writing this letter is stated clearly in the first chapter of the book.

"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel - which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and trying to pervert the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Basically Paul's main reason for writing this Gospel is to prevent the Galatians from abandoning the Gospel of truth and becoming apostate. This is done in three different sections.

The first part of the book is defending the divine origin of the Gospel **(1:1; 11-12; 2:6-9)**

In the second part of the book Paul uses the Old Testament as his defence, to show that God's promise to Abraham was by faith and not by works. (This is important because those who opposed him had a Jewish background).

The third part of the book basically spells out the practical outworking of the Gospel.

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

EPHESIANS

AUTHOR: PAUL

DATE: AD 49

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. God's Living Church Eph. 1-2
- II. The Church as the Body and God's Family Eph. 3:1-4:16
- III. The Christian's Life of Love Eph. 4:17-6:24

Historical Setting: Paul writes from Rome during his time of imprisonment to encourage and strengthen believers.

The purpose of Ephesians

This letter was not written to face any particularly false teaching, but to encourage the mainly Gentile church.

Key themes

Paul's purpose in writing to the Ephesians is that they might have a greater revelation of the work of God in their lives. He goes into some detail to explain what God has done for them in the salvation planned before creation and executed in history with the appearance of Jesus.

He also speaks of the Church as the mystery of God silently being planned but gradually being revealed to the world. The church is seen in the relationship that a man and his wife should enjoy in Christian marriage. The church and the saints that make up its numbers are under tremendous spiritual attack and so should be well armed with the armour God supplies.

- Understanding in relation to Christ, God's eternal purpose for the church
- The reconciliation of individuals to God as an act of grace **(2:1-10)**
- The reconciliation of individuals to one another because Christ's death has broken the barrier
- The church as God's manifold wisdom to all authority **(3:7-13)**
- The giving of gifts for God's service in the church

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

PHILIPPIANS

AUTHOR: PAUL

DATE: AD 61

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Introduction Phil. 1:1-11
- II. Paul's Imprisonment Phil. 1:12-30
- III. Imitating Christ's Humility Phil. 2:1-18
- IV. News of Epaphroditus Phil. 2:19-30
- V. Warnings Phil. 3:1-4:1
- VI. Personal Exhortations Phil. 4:2-9
- VII. Thanks and Farewell Phil. 4:10-23

Historical Setting: The first chapter makes it clear that Paul was in prison when he wrote the book of Philippians (**chapters 1:12-26**). From the record in Acts we know that Paul had periods of imprisonment in Rome and Caesarea (**Acts 24:27**).

The purpose of Philippians

Paul wrote this letter to encourage a church that was so dear to him and close to his heart. As we read through this book, you find numbers of reasons why Paul wrote this letter.

1. He wanted the Philippians to know that his imprisonment had not in any way weakened the Gospel (**chapters 1:12-26**)
2. He wanted to explain why he was sending Epaphroditus back when he should have remained with Paul to help.
3. He wanted to encourage them not to allow a party spirit rob them of their unity and encouraged them to live in a way that fosters the unity of the Spirit. (**chapters 2:1-11**)
4. He wanted to educate them about a wrong idea of perfection and materialism among Christians (**chapters 3:12-21**).
5. He wanted to acknowledge the gift they had sent to him (**chapters 4:10, 14-18**)

Key themes

The person of Jesus (chapters 2:1-11)
Righteousness by faith (Chapters 3:4-10)

The noun 'joy' or the verb 'rejoice' are mentioned sixteen times. Joy in prayer (**chapters 1:4**); joy in the proclamation of the Gospel (**Chapters 1:18**) joy in suffering (**chapters 2:17**).

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

COLOSSIANS

AUTHOR: PAUL

DATE: AD 60

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Prayers for the ColossiansCol. 1:1-14
- II. The Pre-eminence of ChristCol. 1:15-29
- III. Exposure of ErrorsCol. 2
- IV. The Life of HolinessCol. 3:1-4:1
- V. Final Words and GreetingsCol. 4:2-18

Historical Setting: Epaphras paid Paul a visit in Rome and informed him of the state of the churches in the Lycus Valley. While most of what he said was encouraging, he brought a report of a new teaching sweeping through the Colossian church which was heretical. Paul who was in prison writes to encourage the believers.

The purpose of Colossians

To thoroughly refute the Colossians` heresy . This was done by a presentation of the supremacy of Christ.

- He is the image of God (chapters 1:15)
- The Creator (chapters 1:16)
- The Sustainer of all things (chapters 1:17)
- The Head of the church (chapters 1:18)
- The Firstborn from the dead i.e. first to be resurrected to live (Chapters 1:18)
- The Fulness of deity lived in his bodily form (Chapters 1:19; 2:9)
- The Reconciler (chapters 1:20-22).

The Colossian heresy

The Colossian heresy is not defined in the letter; the only way we can detect what it might have been, is by looking at Paul's counter argument. Here is some of what is believed to have been the 'heresy' that Paul spoke against:

The spirit of religious ceremonies - This held to strict rules about the kind of food and drink that was permissible and about religious festivals (**chapters 2:16-17**) and circumcision (**chapters 2:11; 3:11**)

Asceticism - A self-imposed worship of do's and don'ts (**Chapters 2:21, 23**)

Angel worship - (chapters 2:18)

Wrong teaching on Christ - (chapters 1:15-20; 2:2-3,9)

Secret knowledge - The Gnostics boasted about their secret knowledge that was exclusive, hence Paul's emphasis on "Christ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom" **(chapters 2:2-3)**

Human tradition - This seems to fall into two categories Jewish and Gnostic. It has been said that the Colossians` heresy was a mixture of an extreme form of Judaism and the beginnings of Gnosticism **(chapters 2:4,8)**

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

1 THESSALONIANS

AUTHOR: PAUL

DATE: AD 51

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Introduction 1 Thess. 1
- II. A Relationship described 1 Thess. 2-3
- III. Exhortation and Conclusion 1 Thess. 4-5

Historical Setting: Many believe this was Paul's first letter hence the early date. Paul and Silas fled from Thessalonica because of Jewish opposition to the Gospel and went to Berea (**Acts 17:10**). When the Jews heard Paul was in Berea, they came after him and he had to flee to Athens (**Acts 17:14**). Timothy later joined Paul and was sent back to Thessalonica (**1 Thess. 3:1-5**). Paul then moved on to Corinth where Silas and Timothy came to join him. It is after the report from Timothy that 1 Thessalonians was written. (**1 Thess. 3:6**)

The purpose of 1 Thessalonians

Paul had left new converts abruptly because of persecution with very little support in the midst of persecution. 1 Thessalonians was written to strengthen, encourage and inform.

- He wanted to encourage them in their trials (**chapters 3:3-5**)
- He wanted to give instruction concerning godly living (**Chapters 4:1-8**)
- He wanted to communicate a work ethic to the Thessalonian converts (**chapters 4:11-12**)
- He wanted to give them instruction concerning the fate of those who die before the return of Christ. (**chapters 4:13,14**)

Key themes

Eschatology (Doctrine of the last things) Ref (Chapters 1:9-10; 2:19-20; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:23-24)

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

2 THESSALONIANS

AUTHOR: PAUL

DATE: AD 51 OR 52

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. God's Justice..... 2 Thess. 1
- II. The Man of Lawlessness 2 Thess. 2
- III. The Command to Work..... 2 Thess. 3

Historical Setting: Paul writes a follow up letter to clear up some of the confusion relating to Jesus' coming.

The purpose of 2 Thessalonians

The situation in the church is still the same from the first letter and Paul's reason was pretty much the same as the first letter. He wrote

- To encourage persecuted Christians (**Chapter 1:4-10**)
- To encourage the believers to be diligent in their faith and work for a living (**Chapters 2:13-3:15**)
- To correct certain misunderstanding that had developed concerning the return of Christ (**chapters 2:1-12**)

Key themes

The theme is the same as the first book. It deals primarily with the subject of eschatology. 38% of this book deals with this subject.

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

1 TIMOTHY

AUTHOR: PAUL

DATE: AD 64

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Salutations 1 Tim. 1:1, 2
- II. Paul's Charge to Timothy 1 Tim. 1:3-20
 - A. Charge to silence false teachers..... 1 Tim. 1:3-11
 - B. Thanksgiving for the true grace of God..... 1 Tim. 1:12-17
 - C. Restatement of the charge of Timothy 1 Tim. 1:18-20
- III. Instructions concerning Church Life 1 Tim. 2:1-3:16
 - A. Regarding prayer 1 Tim. 2:1-7
 - B. Regarding men and women 1 Tim. 2:8-15
 - C. Regarding Elders and Deacons 1 Tim. 3:1-13
 - D. Regarding conduct in the Church 1 Tim. 3:14-16
- IV. Apostasy in the Church..... 1 Tim. 4:1-16
 - A. Warning against the impending Apostasy 1 Tim. 4:1-5
 - B. Positive instruction in view of the impending Apostasy 1 Tim. 6:6-16
- V. Specific Instructions concerning various Classes of Believers 1 Tim. 5:1-6:2
 - A. Different age groups 1 Tim. 5:1,2
 - B. Widows 1 Tim. 5:3-16
 - C. Elders..... 1 Tim. 17-25
 - D. Bondservants and Masters..... 1 Tim. 6:1,2
- VI. False Teachers and the Love of Money 1 Tim. 6:3-10
- VII. Closing Charges to Timothy 1 Tim. 6:11-21

Historical Setting: Paul writes just prior to imprisonment at about the time of Nero burning Rome.

The purpose of 1 Timothy

This is the first of the pastoral letters that Paul wrote. The aims of this particular letter is spelt out in chapter three of this book

***'Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.'* (Chapters 3:14-15)**

Paul wanted to instruct Timothy to:

- Develop the ministry he had committed into his hands. **(chapters 1:3,18)**
- Help him refute false teaching that was trying to gain a foothold in the Ephesian church **(chapters 1:3-7; 4:1-8; 6:3-5, 20-21)**
- Encourage him to work out the running of God's household effectively **(chapters 3:1-13; 5:17-25)**

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

2 TIMOTHY

AUTHOR: PAUL

DATE: AD 64

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Introductory Greeting to Timothy 2 Tim. 1:1-5
- II. Exhortations to Timothy..... 2 Tim. 1:6-2:13
 - A. to Fidelity 2 Tim. 1:6-18
 - B. to Endurance 2 Tim. 2:1-13
- III. Fidelity versus Apostasy 2 Tim. 2:14-4:8
 - A. Faithfulness to true Christianity 2 Tim. 2:14-26
 - B. The coming Apostasy..... 2 Tim. 3:1-13
 - C. The man of God's resource in view of the Apostasy 2 Tim. 3:14-4:8
- IV. Personal Requests and Remarks 2 Tim. 4:9-22

Historical Setting: Paul writes from prison to exhort Timothy to fulfil his calling

The purpose of 2 Timothy

Paul's reason for writing this letter was an urgent request to Timothy to come and join him. This letter is written specially for Timothy.

In this letter Paul communicates his loneliness. "**Everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes**" **Chapters 1:15**. Demas had deserted him (**Chapters 4:10**). Crescens, Titus and Tychicus were away (**chapters 4:10-12**) and only Luke was with him . Paul basically longed for Timothy his fellow worker in the Lord's company.

Paul was also concerned about the church that was undergoing Nero's persecution at this time. He encourages Timothy to carry on with the work of the Gospel and if necessary, to suffer for it (**Chapters 1:8; 2:30**)

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

TITUS

AUTHOR: PAUL

DATE: AD 64

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Salutation.....Titus 1:1-4
- II. Elders in the CongregationTitus 1:5-9
- III. Error in the CongregationTitus 1:10-16
- IV. Exercise in the CongregationTitus 2:1-15
- V. Exhortation in the Congregation.....Titus 3:1-11
- VI. Conclusion.....Titus 3:12-15

Historical Setting: Paul writes to Titus probably from Macedonia between his Roman imprisonment.

The purpose of Titus

The church in Crete was planted by Paul and Timothy when they visited the island. Titus was left in charge of the church. This letter was written to encourage Titus and to give him instructions on how to conduct the affairs of the church. This letter was sent by Zenas and Apollos (3:13).

Paul wrote to Titus to counsel and exhort him concerning ministerial duties and doctrines.

He also talked about the importance of good works.

Titus was encouraged to live a righteous life that was different from those around him because the Cretans were very ungodly people (**chapters 1:5-12**)

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

PHILEMON

AUTHOR: PAUL

DATE: AD 60

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Salutation.....Phile. vv. 1-3
- II. Paul's Thanksgiving and Prayer for Philemon.....Phile. vv. 4-7
- III. Paul's Plea for OnesimusPhile. vv. 8-20
- IV. Closing remarks.....Phile. vv. 21-25

Historical Setting: Paul writes from prison to Philemon, a believer in the region of Colosse and was a slave owner. One of his slaves, Onesimus, had stolen from him and run away, a crime which was punishable by death under Roman law. Onesimus met Paul on his journeys and became a Christian and decided to go back to his master.

Paul writes this letter urging Philemon to treat Onesimus as a brother and forgive him.

The purpose of Philemon

This book has only one chapter and describes the relationship that God desires between Apostle Paul, the master Philemon and the servant Onesimus.

The book demonstrates three things in particular:

1. The apostle exercises authority lovingly not heavily.
2. Philemon is a man who refreshes the saints but like all of us, forgiving is costly.
3. Onesimus is useful to God and Paul even though his behaviour could have easily led to the accusation of being useless.

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

HEBREWS

AUTHOR: UNKNOWN

DATE: BEFORE AD 70

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. IntroductionHeb. 1:1-4
- II. A Superior Nature.....Heb. 1:5-2:18
- III. A Superior RevelationHeb. 3:1-4:13
- IV. A Superior PriesthoodHeb. 4:14-7:28
- V. A Superior CovenantHeb. 8-9
- VI. A Superior Sacrifice.....Heb. 10
- VII. Response to Jesus.....Heb. 11:1-13:19
- VIII. Conclusion.....Heb. 13:20-25

Historical Setting: Jewish Christians are suffering terrible persecution in the run-up to the destruction of the temple AD 70 and some of them are beginning to think of going back to Judaism.

AD 70?

The reason for believing that this letter was written around AD 70 is because information in the letter show that the recipients had been Christians for some time (chapters 5:12) and they had experienced persecution for a while (10:32-34); some of their original leaders had passed away (13:7). The destruction of the temple took place in AD 70 but there is no reference to that incident in the book of Hebrews. The author of the book wrote as if all the rituals were still going on (9:6-9) hence the belief that it was written before AD 70.

The purpose of the book of Hebrews

It was written to testify to the supremacy of Jesus Christ in comparison to the Old Testament laws and rituals.

It was written to encourage the recipients not to give up and drift back into Judaism (2:1-4)

It was written to show how the Christian age surpassed that of the Old Testament era.

The importance of faith in our relationship with God (chapter 11)

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

THE LETTERS FROM JAMES TO 2 PETER

JAMES

AUTHOR: JAMES

DATE AD 49

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Salutation.....James 1:1
- II. Trials and TemptationsJames 1:2-17
- III. The Word of GodJames 1:18-27
- IV. Condemnation of PartialityJames 2:1-13
- V. Faith and Works.....James 2:14-26
- VI. The Tongue: Its Use and Abuse.....James 3:1-12
- VII. Wisdom: The True and the FalseJames 3:13-18
- VIII. Covetousness: Its Cause and CureJames 4
- IX. The Rich and their coming RemorseJames 5:1-6
- X. Exhortation to Patience.....James 5:7-12
- XI. Prayer and the Healing of the SickJames 5:13-20

Historical Setting: James was the brother of Jesus. He was a leader in the Jerusalem church. This book is one of the oldest in the New Testament and has a strong Jewish flavour. He writes to encourage persecuted Christians who were once part of the Jerusalem church. The Letter is probably before the Council at Jerusalem AD 50.

The purpose of James` Letter

To instruct the people of God about godly living and conduct

To show that faith that doesn't express itself in action is no real faith.

Key Themes

James is talking mainly to believers and draws heavily on the 'Sermon on the Mount'. He issues instructions more profusely than any of the other writers. In the short space of 108 verses, there are fifty-four commands (imperative forms). James desires to see right Christian behaviour.

The issue of 'Faith and Works' is a controversial one in James and Luther considered this 'an epistle of straw', but he failed to see the point that James was making. James is concerned that our faith should express itself in practical ways. He knows that wisdom comes from God and that God will give it liberally to those who ask Him.

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

1 PETER

AUTHOR: PETER

DATE AD 62-64

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. The Believer's Privileges and Duties..... 1 Peter 1:1-2:10
 - A. Salutation 1 Peter 1;1,2
 - B. His position as a believer..... 1 Peter 1:3-12
 - C. His conduct in the light of his position 1 Peter 1:13-2:3
 - D. His privileges in the new house and priesthood .. 1 Peter 2:4-10
- II. The Believer's Relationships..... 1 Peter 2:11-4:6
 - A. As a pilgrim in relation to the world 1 Peter 2:11,12
 - B. As a citizen in relation to government 1 Peter 2:13-17
 - C. As a servant in relation to his master 1 Peter 2:18-25
 - D. As a wife in relation to her husband 1 Peter 3:1-6
 - E. As a husband in relation to his wife 1 Peter 3:7
 - F. As a brother in relation to the fellowship..... 1 Peter 3:8
 - G. As a sufferer in relation to persecutors 1 Peter 3:9-4:6
- III. The Believer's Service and Suffering 1 Peter 4:7-5:14
 - A. Urgent imperatives for the last days 1 Peter 4:7-11
 - B. Exhortations and explanations concerning sufferings 1 Peter 4:12-19
 - C. Exhortations and salutations..... 1 Peter 5:1-14

Historical Setting: Peter is most probably writing about the time of Nero's persecutions around AD 60.

The purpose of 1 Peter

Peter seems to have two commands of Jesus in mind when he wrote this letter...

1. To encourage and strengthen the saints (Luke 22:32)
2. To feed the people of God (John 21:15-17)

This book is full of doctrinal teaching, aimed at strengthening and nourishing God's people.

The doctrine of God (1:18-19)

The doctrine of Christ (2:2--24)

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit (4:14)

Doctrine of Scripture (1:11)

Doctrine of the Church (2:4-8)

Doctrine of the last days (4:7-11)**Key Themes:** Peter desires to encourage Christians who are scattered to stand firm in the evil day. He speaks powerfully of the redeeming blood of Christ. He refers to the people of God as the living stones being built into a spiritual house. He writes that when we suffer for Christ and Him alone, not through our

carelessness, then we will be blessed indeed. He describes the qualities of a Shepherd of God's people.

Key Chapter: 1 Peter 2

Key Verse: 1 Peter 2:24. *'He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.'*

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

2 PETER

AUTHOR: PETER

DATE AD 67

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. Qualities of a Christian.....2 Peter 1
- II. False Teachers.....2 Peter 2
- III. Christ's Return.....2 Peter 3

Historical Setting: Peter writes from Rome about AD 67 with a consciousness that his own time on earth is nearing the end. It is believed that this letter was written in the latter part of the first century

The Purpose of 2 Peter

Peter knew his time was short and was concerned that his friends should carry on growing in their Christian walk (**chapter 1:5-11**)

To know how to deal with false teachers and evildoers who are in the church. (**chapters 2:1; 3:3-4**)

To encourage watchfulness in view of the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (**chapter 3**)

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

1 JOHN

AUTHOR: JOHN

DATE AD 85-90

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- I. The Realities of the Christian Life 1 John 1:1-2:17
 - A. Recognising the Word of Life 1 John 1:1-4
 - B. Understanding the Character of God 1 John 1:5-7
 - C. Experiencing a New Kind of Fellowship..... 1 John 1:8-10
 - D. Learning from Jesus..... 1 John 2:1-17
 - 1. Learning How to Live..... 1 John 2:1-6
 - 2. Learning How to Love 1 John 2:6-17
- II. The Manifestation of the Christian Life..... 1 John 2:18-28
 - A. Warning against Antichrists..... 1 John 2:18, 19
 - B. Saints Anointed 1 John 2:20, 21
 - C. Saints Assured..... 1 John 2:22-28
- III. The Tests of the Christian Life 1 John 2:29-3:24
 - A. The Test of Righteousness..... 1 John 2:29-3:12
 - B. The Test of Love..... 1 John 3:13-18
 - C. The Test of Obedience..... 1 John 3:19-24
- IV. The Assurance of the Christian Life 1 John 4:1-5:21
 - A. A Word of Instruction..... 1 John 4:1-6
 - B. A Word of Love 1 John 4:7-21
 - C. A Word of Faith 1 John 5:1-12
 - D. A Word of Victory 1 John 5:13-17
 - E. A Word of Confidence..... 1 John 5:18-21

Historical Setting: This book was written by John who was a first cousin of Jesus (his mother was Salome, a sister of Mary, Matthew 27:56). John writes as an older man getting towards the end of his life, about AD 90; this letter was written to believers in Jesus Christ (chapters 2:12-14) and because John spent the last days of his life in the province of Asia, it is assumed that this letter was a circular letter to the churches in Asia Minor, written while he was in Ephesus.

The purpose of 1 John

It is clear from John's letter that the recipients were facing a form of false teaching that denied the incarnation of Christ. This was an early form of Gnostic teaching which encouraged people to throw off all moral restraint. This group claimed to have special understanding of spiritual matters. John wrote this letter with two purposes in mind.

1. To expose the false teachers (chapters 2:26). He did this by showing the lack of righteous fruit in their lives, especially their lack of love for other Christians (chapters 3:14-15)
2. To give the Christians assurance of their salvation in Christ. (Chapters 5:13)

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

2 JOHN

AUTHOR: JOHN

DATE AD 90

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2 John vv. 1-3
I. A New Reason for Rejoicing	2 John v. 4
II. A New Level of Life	2 John vv. 5, 6
III. A New Source of Danger	2 John v. 7
IV. A New Basis of Appeal	2 John v. 8
V. The Manifestation of the Christian Life.....	2 John vv. 9-11
Conclusion.....	2 John vv. 12, 13

Historical Setting: About the same time as the first book was written.

The purpose of 2 John

This book was written to the 'chosen lady' which probably means a church. Some of the themes in the first book are also present in this second book.

Christians should love one another and obey God (verses 5-6) and how to treat false teachers (verse 10)

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

3 JOHN

AUTHOR: JOHN

DATE AD 90

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3 John vv. 1, 2
I. A Word of Appreciation.....	3 John vv. 3-8
II. A Word of Denunciation	3 John vv. 9, 10
III. A Word of Instruction	3 John v. 11
IV. A Word of Praise.....	3 John v. 12
Conclusion	3 John vv. 13, 14

Historical Setting: John's third letter wrote about AD 90 from Ephesus.

The purpose of 3 John

John wrote this letter around the same time and this time, it is to commend one of his workers to staying true to the faith. This letter was written to:

1. Expose Diotrephes and his teaching
2. To encourage Gaius and commend his work in the Lord

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

THE LETTERS FROM JUDE TO REVELATION

JUDE

AUTHOR: JUDE

DATE AD 65

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- Introduction Jude vv. 1, 2
- I. The Purpose of the Epistle Jude vv. 3, 4
- II. The Prophecies of the Doom of the Ungodly Jude vv. 5-19
 - A. Three Examples and Commentary Jude vv. 5-10
 - B. Three More Examples and Additional Commentary Jude vv. 11-13
 - C. Prophecy of Enoch and Commentary Jude vv. 14-16
 - D. Prophecy of the Apostles Jude vv. 17-19
- III. The Challenge to Believers Jude vv. 20-23
- Conclusion Jude vv. 24, 25

Historical Setting: Jude writes with warnings and encouragements amidst a growing background of heresy.

The purpose of Jude

This book and 2 Peter 2 seem to describe similar situations; they were both written to the same person. The reason for writing was to:

Warn believers about certain men who were false teachers (verse 4). These men were trying to convince believers that being saved by grace gave them the licence to sin since their sins would no longer be held against them.

He also writes to encourage believers to persevere and encourage them to be strong in God.

Living Hope Ministries

The Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

REVELATION

AUTHOR: JOHN

DATE AD 95

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- Introduction Rev. 1:1-3
- I. A Vision of the Glorified Christ Rev. 1:4-20
- A. The Trinitarian Greeting Rev. 1:4-6
- B. The Promise of Christ's Return.....Rev. 1:7, 8
- C. The Glory of Christ..... Rev. 1:9-18
- D. The Mandate and the Key Rev. 1:19, 20
- II. A Message to the Churches Rev. 2:103:22
- A. To Ephesus Rev. 2:1-7
- B. To Smyrna Rev. 2:8-11
- C. To Pergamos Rev. 2:12-17
- D. To Thyatira Rev. 2:18-29
- E. To Sardis Rev. 3:1-6
- F. To Philadelphia Rev. 3:7-13
- G. To Laodicea Rev. 3:14-22
- III. An Unveiling of the Future Rev. 4:1-22:5
- A. A Heavenly Scene Rev. 4:1-5:14
1. The twenty-four Elders Rev. 4:1-4
2. The Cherubim..... Rev. 4:5-11
3. The Seven-Sealed Book Rev. 5:1-4
4. The Lion of Judah Rev. 5:5-14
- B. The Seal Judgements Rev. 6:1-8:1
1. The Four Horsemen Rev. 6:1-8
2. The Martyr Seal..... Rev. 6:9-11
3. The Sixth Seal..... Rev. 6:12-17
4. The Sealing of the 144,000 Israelites Rev. 7:1-8
5. The Identification of Gentile Believers Rev. 7:9-17
6. The Opening of the Seventh Seal Rev. 8:1
- C. The Trumpet Judgements Rev. 8:2-11:19
1. The First Four Trumpets Rev. 8:2-13
2. The Fifth Trumpet of Demonic Oppression Rev. 9:1-12
3. The Sixth Trumpet of Eastern Invasion Rev. 9:13-21
4. The Voice of the Seven Thunders..... Rev. 10:1-6
5. The Bittersweet Scroll Rev. 10:7-11
6. Two Amazing Witnesses Rev. 11:1-14
7. The Seventh Trumpet..... Rev. 11:15-19

D. An Interpretative Interlude.....	Rev. 12:1-14-20
1. A Woman, a Child, and a Dragon.....	Rev. 12:1-7
2. The Beast out of the Sea.....	Rev. 13:1-10
3. The Beast out of the Land.....	Rev. 13:11-18
4. The 144,000 in Heaven.....	Rev. 14:1-7
5. The Announcement of the Demise of Babylon.....	Rev. 14:8-13
6. A Vision of Armageddon.....	Rev. 14:14-20
E. The Bowls of Wrath Judgements.....	Rev. 15:1-16:21
1. The Presentation of the Bowls to the Angels.....	Rev. 15:1-8
2. The First Five Bowls of Wrath.....	Rev. 16:1-11
3. The Sixth Bowl of Wrath - An Unholy Trinity.....	Rev. 16:12-16
4. The Seventh Bowl of Wrath - Consummation.....	Rev. 16:17-21
F. The Judgement of Apostate Religion.....	Rev. 17:1-8
1. The Scarlet Woman.....	Rev. 17:1-7
2. The Beast which Carries Her.....	Rev. 17:8-18
G. The Judgement of Great Babylon.....	Rev. 18:1-24
H. The Return of Christ.....	Rev. 19:1-21
1. The Marriage of the Lamb.....	Rev. 19:1-10
2. The Triumph of the Christ.....	Rev. 19:11-16
3. The Demise of the Beast.....	Rev. 19:17-21
I. The Millennial Age.....	Rev. 20:1-10
1. The Binding of Satan.....	Rev. 20:1-3
2. The Reigning of Believers of Christ.....	Rev. 20:4-6
3. Gog and Magog: The Final Rebellion.....	Rev. 20:7-10
J. The Judgement of the Great White Throne.....	Rev. 20:11-15
K. The Heavenly Kingdom.....	Rev. 21:1-22:5
1. Heavenly Relationships.....	Rev. 21:1-7
2. Heavenly Exclusions.....	Rev. 21:8
3. Heavenly Beauties.....	Rev. 21:9-27
4. Heavenly Provisions.....	Rev. 22:1-5
Concluding Invitation.....	Rev. 22:6-21

Historical Setting: Rome was beginning to enforce emperor worship. A belief that Caesar was Lord not Jesus. This led to increasing hostility between Christianity and the authorities. John writes in exile on the Island of Patmos. His powerful visions and the revelation he is given are contained in this momentous book.

The purpose of Revelation

John writes to encourage the believers in their faith and to give them courage to face the Anti Christ's force in the world, by being a faithful witness Jesus, the one and true Saviour of the world. John did this by emphasising:

1. The sovereignty of God in Christ (chapters 1:8; 5:5-14)

2. That the satanic nature of the Roman emperor demands to be worshipped as God. This demand was to reach its climax by the manifestation of the final Anti Christ.
3. The judgement of God on those who follow a false prophet rather than Christ
4. The final battle between the forces of darkness and Christ

Revelation is a book of visions. John makes it clear by not being over concerned about harmonising details but that it is the main thrust of each picture which is important. Visions should be treated as people treat parables. This means looking at the whole picture and perceiving the main idea.

The central message is **Jesus returning for his Bride.**