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UNDERSTAND AN OVERVIEW
OF SCRIPTURE

Summary of the Bible

“Scripture is like a pair of spectacles which dispels
the darkness and gives us a clear view of God.”
John Calvin

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FUN FACTS

about the Bible

- The Bible is God's Word written over a period of about 1,600 years by more than 40 different human authors writing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:20-21)
- The word Bible comes from the Greek βιβλία (biblia) meaning "books."
- There are two parts – Old Testament (39 books) and New Testament (27 books) Testament means covenant or arrangement between two parties.
- God gave the Old Covenant to Moses for the people of Israel. (Exodus 24) Later, God announced through the prophet Jeremiah that He would make a New Covenant with His people. (Jeremiah 31:31-34)
- Jesus announced this New Covenant to His disciples at the Last Supper. (1 Corinthians 11:23-25)
- Today, all Christ-followers are required by God to live under the New Covenant or New Testament teachings.

"So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law." Galatians 3:24-25

- The Bible is all about JESUS!
- The Old Testament is an account of one nation. The New Testament is an account of one Man. The nation was founded and nurtured by God to bring the Man into the world.
- Since the Old Testament tells why God needed a plan to restore a relationship with humanity, and since the New Testament explains that Jesus was the plan, the point of the Bible can be summed up in one verse:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16, ESV).



TIMELINE

of the Bible

2100 BC - God establishes a covenant with Abraham

Abraham lived in what is now Iraq. God told him to move to Canaan, which later became Israel. Unlike many people, Abraham believed in the one true God. God rewarded Abraham's faith, making him the father of a great nation (Israel), and an ancestor to the Messiah (Jesus Christ).

"The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Genesis 12:1-3

2000 BC - Jacob (Israel) is born

Jacob, the son of Isaac, who was the son of Abraham, was born in Canaan. God changed Jacob's name to Israel. (Canaan is later renamed Israel, after Jacob). He had 12 sons, for whom the 12 Tribes of Israel were named: Gad, Asher, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin, Dan, and Naphtali

1900 BC - Joseph sold into slavery

Joseph, one of Jacob's (Israel's) 12 sons, was sold into slavery by his brothers who were jealous of him. Joseph ended up in Egypt, where he rose to power as a trusted assistant of a pharaoh. His father and brothers later left Canaan because of a famine, and moved to Egypt where they were later saved from harm by Joseph.

"But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of lives" (Genesis 50:19, NIV)

1446 BC - Exodus begins

The Hebrews, or Israelites (descendants of Jacob), were enslaved for 400 years in Egypt until Moses led them out of Egypt. Because of their lack of faith, they wandered around in the desert for 40 years. Moses then brought them to the border of Canaan, the land that God had previously promised to their forefather Abraham. (Exodus 12:40)



1406 BC – Israel becomes a sovereign country

After Moses died, Joshua led the Israelites into Canaan and began conquering the land, establishing the sovereign country of Israel for the first time in history. (Joshua 1:1-5)

1400 BC – Israel is ruled by judges, not kings

From about 1400 BC to 1050 BC, Israel was not ruled by kings, but instead, thought of God as their King and relied on judges to settle disputes.

1050 BC – Saul becomes Israel's first King

After about 350 years of being ruled by judges, the people of Israel demanded to have a king like their neighboring countries rather than trusting God as their King. Saul became king and reigned about 40 years.

1010 BC – David becomes King of Israel

David became king of Israel around 1010 BC and reigned for 40 years. David, unlike Saul, followed the commands of God. He made mistakes, but he repented of them and sought to please God. He expanded the size of Israel and ruled over surrounding territories. David is known for being a man after God's own heart.

970 BC – Solomon becomes King & builds Temple

Solomon, son of David, became king around 970 BC. He too reigned for about 40 years and built the Temple in honor of God. The work was completed around 960 BC, but Solomon eventually turned away from God and worshiped false gods.

926 BC – Israel becomes a divided Kingdom

Shortly after the reign of Solomon, Israel became a divided kingdom. The Southern Kingdom, called Judah, included the city of Jerusalem and the Temple. The Northern Kingdom continued to be called Israel, and the two were often at war with each other.

721 BC – Assyrians conquer northern Kingdom of Israel

The Assyrian Empire conquered the northern kingdom of Israel around 721 BC. The Assyrians tortured and decapitated many of the Israelites. They forced 10 of the 12 Tribes of Israel out of Israel and brought in foreigners. This was the beginning of what is known as the Exile.

612 BC – Babylon conquers Nineveh (Assyrian Empire)

The Assyrian Empire's capital city, Nineveh, was attacked by a coalition of Babylonians and others. As explained by the prophet Nahum, Nineveh was to be destroyed because of the Assyrian Empire's treatment of Israelites and other people..



605 BC – Babylon exerts influence over Judah

The neo-Babylonian Empire, under the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar, began forcing Judah into submission. Nebuchadnezzar took many Jews as captives to Babylon to ensure Judah's obedience.

597 BC – Babylon attacks Judah

The Babylonian army attacked Judah and took more Jews as captives to Babylon. Ezekiel, one of the captives, became a prophet of God. Ezekiel explained that God was allowing Babylon to punish Judah because the people had been unfaithful to Him..

586 BC – Babylon destroys Jerusalem and the Temple

Babylon attacked Judah again. This time, the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple that Solomon built, and more Jews were taken captive to Babylon.

539 BC – Cyrus the Great conquers Babylon

David became king of Israel around 1010 BC and reigned for 40 years. David, unlike Saul, followed the commands of God. He made mistakes, but he repented of them and sought to please God. He expanded the size of Israel and ruled over surrounding territories. David is known for being a man after God's own heart.

538 BC – Cyrus releases Jews from Babylonian Captivity

After conquering Babylon, Cyrus offered the Jews their freedom to leave Babylon and return to Judah. Cyrus' kingdom ruled over Judah and many other parts of the Middle East, but Cyrus allowed people more cultural and religious freedom than did the neo-Babylonian Empire.

536 BC – Work begins to rebuild the Temple

Some of the Jews in Babylon returned to Judah and began work to rebuild the Temple that had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC.

516 BC – Second Temple is dedicated

The Temple was consecrated for worship 70 years after the Babylonians had destroyed it.

333 BC – Greeks begin rule over land of Israel

The Greeks, under the leadership of Alexander the Great, defeated Persian armies in Macedonia. This marked the fall of the Medo-Persian Empire and the rise of the Grecian Empire.



332 BC – Alexander conquers Tyre (Phoenician Empire)

Alexander waged war against the island fortress of the Phoenician city of Tyre. He took rubble from the mainland of Tyre, built a walkway to the island, and then his forces conquered the island fortress bringing an end to the Phoenician Empire.

250 BC – The Old Testament was translated into Greek

A Greek ruler asked the Jews to translate all or part of the Old Testament into the Greek language. The translation is called the Septuagint.

175 BC – Greek ruler Antiochus Epiphanes torments the Jews

Greek ruler Antiochus Epiphanes, ruled Syria from about 175 BC to 164 BC. He reigned over Judah, defiled the Temple, and tried to destroy the Jewish religion

164 BC – Jews have independence

The Maccabees, a group of leaders of a Jewish rebel army, fought for Jewish independence, staged a revolt against the Greeks, and established the Hasmonean dynasty as well as sovereignty over all or part of the land of Israel for about 100 years.

63 BC – The Romans take over land of Israel

After the death of Alexander the Great, the Greek Empire was divided up and became weaker, while the Roman Empire became increasingly more powerful, and the Roman general, Pompey, seized control over the land of Israel.

Around 5 BC – Jesus born in Bethlehem

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, which fulfilled a prophecy delivered by the prophet Micah about 700 years beforehand. (Micah 5:2)

25 AD – Jesus begins his ministry

Jesus began His ministry when He was about 30 years old. He preached salvation, delivered prophecies, performed miracles, and announced that He was the Messiah (the Christ) who was promised by the prophets of the Old Testament, bringing salvation and eternal life to those who believe in Him. (John 3:16)

28 AD – Jesus is crucified and resurrected

Jesus was falsely accused of sedition against the Roman Empire and sent to Pontius Pilate, the Roman ruler of the land of the Jews, to be tried, convicted and crucified. But the Spirit of God raised Jesus from the dead, and His followers began evangelizing others, allowing Christianity to spread very quickly throughout the Roman Empire and eventually become the first religion to spread throughout the world.



70 AD – Romans destroy Jerusalem and Temple

The Roman Army, under Titus, destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple to suppress an uprising of the Jews. According to the historian Josephus, about 1.1 million Jews were killed and others were taken as slaves.

First Century AD – The Bible is completed

The New Testament, which describes the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, was completed, and the writing of the Bible, which began about 3,400 years ago during the time of Moses, came to an end.

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

Pentateuch (Law) – 5 books

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy

Historical – 12 books

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

Wisdom and Poetry – 5 books

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon

Prophetic – 17 books

Major Prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel

Minor Prophets – Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

The Gospel – 4 books

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

Historical – 1 book

Acts

Paul's Letters – 13 books

Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus, Philemon

Non-Pauline Letters (General Letters) – 8 books

Hebrews, James, I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John, III John, Jude

Apocalyptic – 1 book

Revelation

SUMMARY

of OT Books

PENTATEUCH

(First 5 books of the Old Testament - The Jewish Torah)

Genesis records the creation of the world by God, man's sinfulness and disobedience, and the earliest parts of God's plan to redeem mankind to Himself.

Exodus documents how God rescued Israel from Egypt and His instructions on how to act as a nation.

Leviticus contains God's instructions for Israel's priests and the entire nation on how to live spiritually and physically.

Numbers tells how God guaranteed the Israelites that the Promised Land would be theirs if they trusted Him, however, the Israelites initially refused to trust Him and were forced to wander in the wilderness for forty years until God gave them the opportunity to enter the Promised Land again.

Deuteronomy reminded the Israelites about what God had done for them and encouraged them to devote their lives to Him. It is also a reminder to us that we should thank God for what He has done for us and dedicate our lives to Him.

HISTORICAL BOOKS

Joshua records the events of Israel's entrance into Canaan—the Promised Land.

Judges tells about Israel's persistent rebellion against God and the consequences, and how God called upon twelve human judges to deliver Israel from their sin and captivity during those years. It is also a reminder to us that God always judges sin and provides forgiveness for those who seek it.

Ruth is a book about loyalty, faith, and love of God and humanity and demonstrates how an individual can remain faithful to God even when the rest of the world is corrupt.

I Samuel records the last days of the judges of Israel, the first days of the kings of Israel, and how Israel rejected God's leadership in favor of human leadership. It also reveals the stubbornness and evilness of the human heart and how God's true leadership should be followed.





II Samuel documents the life and reign of David as Israel's king and how God called him a man after His own heart although he had committed numerous and despicable sins. It also shows us that although we too are full of sin, we can still return to God and lead a godly life.

I Kings tells about the kings of the united kingdom of Israel and the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah, most of who were completely corrupt and led their kingdoms into sin. It also shows us the importance of godly leadership, and how God expects His leaders to take care of His people.

II Kings tells about the prophets who were sent to warn the kings and people about impending judgment for both leaders and nations if they refused to repent of their sins and return to God, how the nations of Israel and Judah were destroyed and led into captivity because of their disobedience, and how important it is to make God the ultimate leader of our lives.

I Chronicles details David's genealogy and summarizes the historical highlights of the kingdom of Israel. It also teaches us that God needs to be the center of our lives and is the only way to obtain eternal peace.

II Chronicles teaches us that rejecting God leads to destruction while obeying Him leads to salvation, and uses the history of the good kings of Israel and Judah to show how deference to God brings prosperity, and the history of the evil kings of Israel to show how defiance of God leads to judgment.

Ezra tells about how God kept His promise to restore the Jews to their homeland and how the priest Ezra led the first wave of Jews back to Israel and initiated the process of rebuilding their nation.

Nehemiah is the final Old Testament history book that records the events of the third wave of Jews to return to Israel and shows how God can use one man to accomplish His purposes.

Esther is an intriguing story of faith, courage, obedience, drama and romance, and although never mentions God by name, overwhelmingly shows that His Spirit is ever present and that His will shall always be done regardless of human plans.



WISDOM AND POETRY

Job teaches us that God is sovereign, the causes of suffering are not always known, people who follow God are not immune from suffering, and we cannot fully understand the mind of God.

Psalms is a poetic book of praise and worship to God and shows that the supreme purpose for man's existence is to exalt and give thanks to God.

Proverbs is a book of wisdom for everyday life that informs us that the source of wisdom is God, and that it is folly to look to anyone or anything else for truth.

Ecclesiastes teaches us that life is meaningless without God and contains much sadness, but those who believe and trust in God will ultimately be fulfilled.

Song of Solomon is a book that symbolically demonstrates God's love for His people; literally expresses the physical and emotional love between a man and a woman; poetically and graphically tells how physical and emotional love should be handled in courtship and marriage; and stresses that physical love is proper and God-ordained when confined to the oneness of marriage.

MAJOR PROPHETS

Isaiah warned the people of Israel that they must either turn from their sins or else face the judgment of God; foretold the coming of the Messiah as the ultimate sacrifice for all mankind validating the truthfulness of the Bible; and shows us that we need to follow God in our lives.

Jeremiah warned the people of Israel to repent of their sins and to ask God for His forgiveness and reminds us that even when no one will listen to His truth, we should still proclaim it.

Lamentations shows God's sorrow over the nation of Israel's sin, how we sadden Him and pave the way for self-destruction when we reject Him, and how true love cares for others.

Ezekiel warned the Israelites who were living in exile to repent of their sins, and it is also an encouragement to us that when we are in the midst of our enemies or experiencing trying times, we should hold fast to the Word of God and share it with others.

Daniel teaches us that we can serve God and be successful even when we are at the mercy of an immoral world and a corrupt society, and that we should never abandon our faith in God, even when our personal safety is endangered.



MINOR PROPHETS

Hosea is an allegorical and literal book about the love, commitment, and forgiveness of a prophet to his unfaithful wife and shows us how God forgives us when we commit adultery against Him by putting anything other than Him first in our lives.

Joel pronounced God's impending judgment for those who refused to leave their sinful life and shows us that there is mercy for those who repent and turn to God.

Amos tells us to be bold in declaring God's truth, even when it means risking our personal freedom or reputation and shows us how ordinary people can be used by God for His purposes; no one is too small to do His work.

Obadiah pronounced judgment against those who harm God's people and shows us that God cares for those who follow Him.

Jonah teaches us that we cannot escape God if He calls us to do His work and that He will not let evil go unpunished but is eager to forgive those who repent.

Micah shows us that God does not tolerate wicked behavior and that those who believe their actions have no consequences will eventually be destroyed, but He also offers forgiveness to those who ask Him for it and are willing to forsake their evil ways to follow Him.

Nahum shows us that even the mightiest of people and nations are not immune from God's judgment and power, and that He will defend His people and wipe out those who oppose Him.

Habakkuk offers hope to people in their time of need and shows us that even though evil often appears to rule the world, God is really in control.

Zephaniah urges people to follow God even when they experience times of prosperity, and also shows us that we are not responsible for our own wellbeing and will experience judgment when we ignore God in times of peace and affluence.

Haggai tells about the people of Israel, who after returning to their homeland from exile, were living in luxury and had forgotten that it was God who had freed them, and also challenges us to put God first in our lives.

Zechariah predicts the life of Christ and shows us that we are eternally saved because of Christ's sacrifice on the cross and resurrection from the dead.

Malachi is the final book of the Old Testament that foretells the birth of Christ, warns people to let go of their evil desires, and to follow God.



SUMMARY

of NT Books



THE GOSPELS

Matthew is the first book in the New Testament and the first of the four Gospels that cover the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God incarnate, and portrays Jesus as King and gives us practical ways to live in His kingdom today through the teachings of Jesus.

Mark is the second Gospel and focuses on the actions of Jesus; who He was, and His teachings, works, and miracles. Mark begins by showing that the predictions made hundreds of years earlier by the prophet Isaiah were fulfilled by Jesus.

Luke is the third Gospel and presents the most exhaustive account of Jesus' life and death and includes many accounts of the women He interacted with; affirms the dual aspects of Jesus' human and divine nature; and teaches that Jesus is the only way to Heaven and that no one can earn their salvation.

John is the fourth Gospel and is unique compared to the other Gospels by focusing on Jesus as God and that He has always existed; that Jesus is the Son of God and the only way to eternal salvation; that Jesus' death and resurrection provides our salvation from eternal damnation; and all must believe He paid the price for their sins, confess they are sinners, and ask for and receive His forgiveness in order to go to Heaven.

HISTORICAL

Acts begins where the Gospels end, and tells about the early Christian church and spreading of the Gospel message.

PAULINE LETTERS

Romans is a message about salvation, available to all who accept God's grace, and that people are destined for destruction unless they accept the forgiveness that is not deserved.

1 Corinthians reveals some problems in the early Christian church, how to avoid similar problems, and lead a holy life in an unholy world.



2 Corinthians teaches that the Christian faith will be attacked, and we must be ready to defend what we believe and profess and be careful that what we believe and profess is truthful.

Galatians teaches that customs and rituals are not necessary for salvation and that customs and rituals do not provide salvation.

Ephesians tells about the purpose of the Church, a united body of believers who strengthen each other and perform community worship and service to God.

Philippians celebrates the joy that Christians should have and the reasons to praise God.

Colossians refutes false teachings in the church and shows us that Christ is the supreme head of His Church and that all truth comes from Him.

1 Thessalonians teaches Christians to be strong in their faith in times of persecution and tells about the second coming of Christ and how we should prepare for it.

2 Thessalonians provides more information on the second coming of Christ and tells us that although Christ could return at any moment, no one knows when that moment will be.

1 Timothy gives instructions to church leaders and teaches how to administer and discipline a church.

2 Timothy is the Apostle Paul's final letter before His death that further instructs church leaders and encourages Christians in their walk with Christ.

Titus contains more instructions from Paul on how to be a good leader and a good Christian, how to avoid the pitfalls of faith, and how to be responsible and moral at all times.

Philemon reaffirms that all people are equal and that Christians especially should treat those who may be viewed by others as inferior, with respect and fairness.

NON-PAULINE LETTERS

Hebrews presents Christianity as the only true faith, Christ as all we need for salvation, how Jesus fulfills the Old Testament Covenant, and that we must put our trust in God.

James is a book that warns us to beware of hypocrisy, in others and in ourselves, and teaches us how to live the true Christian life.



1 **Peter** encourages Christians who are suffering persecution and difficult times, that although we may face earthly pain and suffering, we will find eternal peace if we put our faith in God.

2 **Peter** warns us to beware of false teachings and tells us that we have a responsibility to grow in our faith and knowledge of God.

1 **John** defends Christianity, cautions us to watch for people who try to lead us astray, and teaches us what our relationship with God should be.

2 **John** tells us to be wary of deceivers and emphasizes that Christians should live a life of truth and love.

3 **John** shows how simple acts of kindness, such as hospitality, should be a part of the Christian's walk with God, and how we should be sure to walk according to the true Gospel and not according to those who hinder God's work.

Jude warns us that we must never let our guard down and that we always need to be on the lookout for heretics and false teachings.

APOCALYPTIC

Revelation gives us insight into what is still yet to come when evil and those who don't know Christ will finally be destroyed and Christ followers will experience everlasting peace and happiness.

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WWW.FAITHJOURNEYWOMEN.COM



FAITHJOURNEYWOMEN@GMAIL.COM