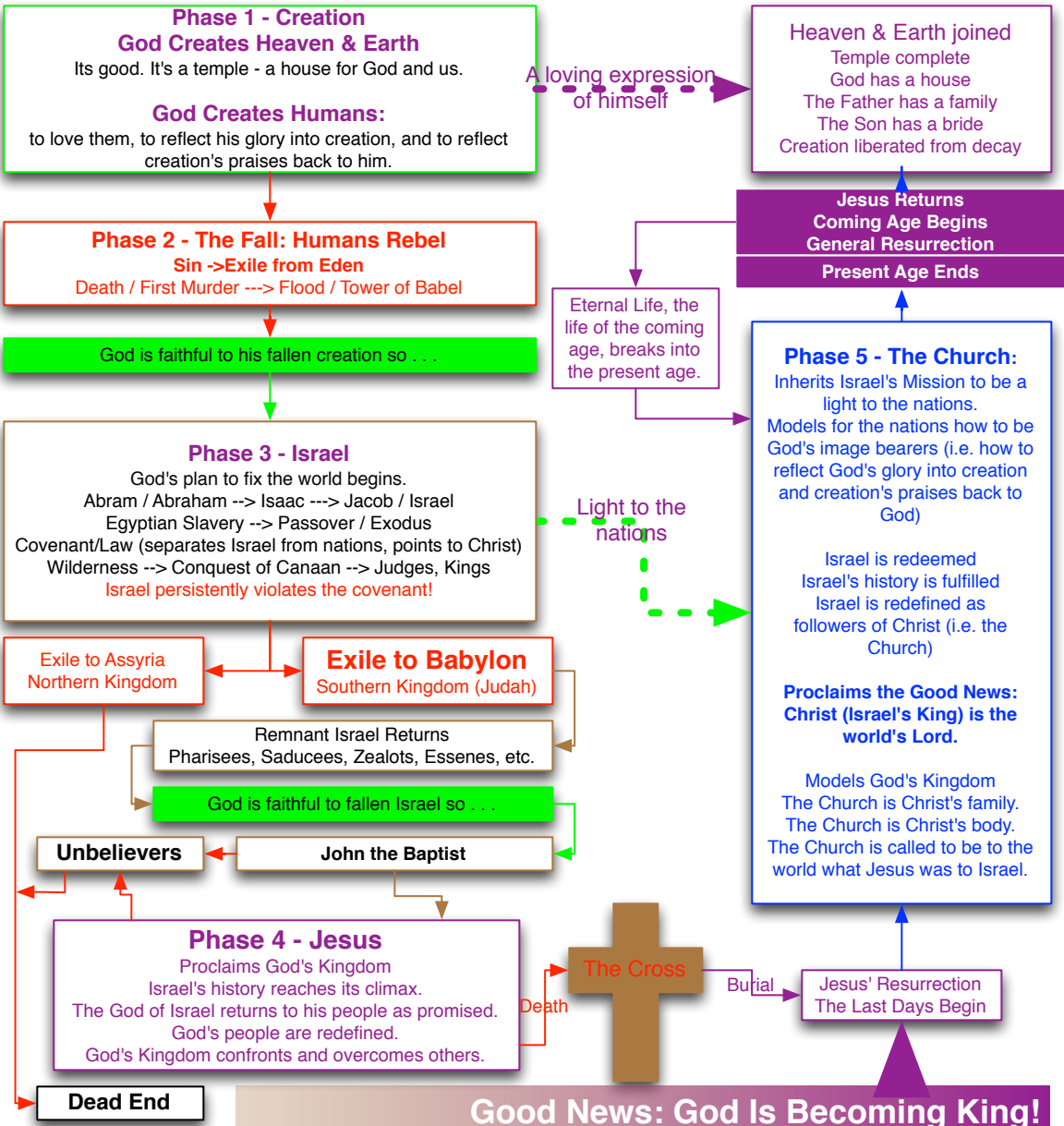




God Is Faithful:

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Inspired by the N.T. Wright presentation at the Missional Reading of Scripture Conference, Calvin Theological Seminary, November 20-21, 2013





Life Church

The Big Picture - Draft V8

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Purpose

This document was developed to provide helpful background for our sermons. It certainly doesn't cover everything - not even everything that we consider important! In order to keep it short enough for use during church services, we have omitted some important topics (e.g. Prayer, Worship, Evangelism, Discipleship).

Although this document does rearrange biblical truth into categories, it is not a systematic theology document. We developed it because we recognize that many of the people who visit us have some significant past church experience. Especially, for people in this category, we want to be as clear as possible about the way in which we use biblical words and the way in which we approach the Bible - hence this document. Human beings are "wired" for stories. Even the doctrines that many Bible students study are themselves what N. T. Wright refers to as "portable stories". Our hope is that by focusing on the overall story that the Bible tells, you will be better able to put it to work in your life.

Please let us know if you find anything written here confusing or problematic!

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Questions To Ponder

As you review this document it may be helpful to keep the following questions in mind:

- How can the Bible be authoritative?
- What do you know about Jesus? Is what you know based on the Bible?
- Are you getting to know Jesus for yourself?
- What's God like? What's the best way for us to understand him?
- What's God's eternal purpose - what's he up to?
- What is righteousness?
- Is Heaven far away, or is it very close?
- ▼ World View Questions by N. T. Wright
 - Who are we?
 - Where are we?
 - What's the problem?
 - What's the solution?
 - What time is it?

Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (Safe, Satisfied, and Successful)?- Not Quite The Gospel

The five points below reflect what much of the American population believes - even people who claim to be Christians. This “package” is not what we teach at Life Church, but if you are coming to us from this background, we want you to be prepared to have this view challenged.

- 1 A God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life on earth.
- 2 God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
- 3 The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
- 4 God does not need to be particularly involved in one’s life except when he is needed to resolve a problem.
- 5 Good people go to heaven when they die.

Scripture Belief Scale

As you read various Bible passages, ask yourself where you fit on the scale below:

- 1 I’ve never read or heard of this text before.
- 2 I don’t believe or agree with this text.
- 3 I can’t see how this text could possibly be true.
- 4 I have difficulty seeing how this text could possibly be true.
- 5 I can see how this text might be true.
- 6 I think this text is true and I can see how I might apply it to my life.
- 7 I think this text is true and I’m planning to apply it to my life.
- 8 I’m applying this text to my life.
- 9 Those who know me well would say that I live consistently with this text.
- 10 Those who know me at all would say that I live consistently with this text.

Mission

At Life Church our mission is to teach people:

- to enjoy knowing Jesus without fear, inadequacy, guilt, or shame, Acts 2:41-47; Acts 4:31-37; Romans 8:28-39; Hebrews 4:14-16; 1John 4:13-18
- to follow him together as his family, Mark 10:23-31; Acts 2:41-47; Acts 4:31-37

- to function together as his body,
Romans 12:1-16; 1Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:7-16
- and to work together to expand his kingdom and glorify him.
Matthew 5:13-14; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:41-47; Acts 5:12-16

Target audience

Our target audience is not so much the unchurched as the unloved: the rejected and neglected.

- Are you a Christian? Consider following Jesus with us.
- Not sure? We can help you figure it out!
- Curious? We welcome your questions.
- ▼ It doesn't matter what your background is:
 - Churched - Very familiar with church and the Bible.
 - Unchurched
 - De-churched - possibly after experiencing rejection and/or neglect.
 - High status
 - Low status - and possibly feeling unloved.
- Jesus wants everyone!
Matthew 11:28-30; John 3:14-21; 1Timothy 2:1-7; 2Peter 3:1-9

Big Picture

Phase 1 - Creation

- ▼ God creates Heaven & Earth.
Genesis 1 - 2
 - It's "good".
 - It's a temple, a house for God and humans to meet.
 - This finds its ultimate fulfillment in Revelation 21 - 22.
- ▼ God creates human beings to reflect his glory into creation.
Genesis 1 - 11
 - Image of God - reflecting his glory into creation.
Genesis 1:26-31
 - It's "very good".
Genesis 1
 - God, in his faithfulness, determines to redeem human beings and thereby reclaim creation.
 - This finds its ultimate fulfillment in Revelation 21 - 22.

Phase 2 - Humans rebel

Genesis 3 - 11

- Sin, Exile from Eden
Genesis 3
- Death, First Murder
Genesis 4
- Flood
Genesis 6 - 8
- Tower of Babel
Genesis 11
- But God is faithful to his fallen creation so . . .

Phase 3 - God chooses Israel to be a light to the Gentiles.

God's plan to fix the world begins: Genesis 12 - Malachi

▼ Light to the Gentiles.

Genesis 12:1-3, 22:15-18

- Abram/Abraham → Isaac → Jacob/Israel
Genesis 12 - 50
- Egyptian Slavery
Exodus 1 - 4

▼ Passover / Exodus

Exodus 5 - 18

▼ Covenant / Law

Exodus 19 - Numbers 13

- Keep Israel separate from the nations.
Leviticus 18:24-30, 20:22-26; Deuteronomy 4:1-8, 18:9
- Lead Israel to Christ
Galatians 3:15-25
- Wilderness
Numbers 14 - Deuteronomy 34
- Conquest of Canaan
Joshua
- Judges, Kings
Judges - 2 Chronicles; Isaiah; Jeremiah; Hosea; Joel; Amos; Obadiah; Jonah;
Micah; Nahum; Habakkuk; Zephaniah
- Persistent covenant violations
Exodus - 2 Chronicles; Isaiah; Jeremiah

▼ Exile

- Exile to Assyria: Northern Kingdom
2Kings 17
- Exile to Babylon: Southern Kingdom (Judah)
2Kings 24 - 25; 2Chronicles 36; Esther; Jeremiah; Lamentations; Ezekiel; Daniel
- Return from captivity
Ezra - Nehemiah; Haggai; Zechariah
- Remnant Israel
Malachi
- God, in his faithfulness, determines to redeem Israel, and thereby reclaim human beings and thereby reclaim creation.

Phase 4 - Jesus (God Gets Personally Involved)

Matthew; Mark; Luke; John

- John the Baptist
Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 1 - 3; John 1
- ▼ Jesus
 - The Cross
 - Death, Burial, Atonement
 - ▼ Resurrection - **The Last Days Begin!**
 - The life of the coming age (eternal life) breaks into present age.
 - ▼ In Christ
 - Israel's history reaches its climax.
 - The God of Israel returns to his people.
 - God's people are redefined as those who follow him.
 - God's Kingdom confronts and overcomes the world's kingdoms.
Daniel 2; Daniel 7; Revelation 11:15
- Good News: God Has Become King!
Isaiah 52:1-10; 61:1-9; Matthew 3:1-2, 4:12-17, 23; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 2:8-11, 4:14-19, 8:1

Phase 5 - The Church

- ▼ Jesus & Israel
 - Israel is redeemed
 - Israel's history is fulfilled
Matthew 5:17-18
 - Israel is redefined as followers of Christ (i.e. the Church).
Matthew 5:19-20, 7:15-29, 12:46-50, 19:16-30; John 17; Galatians 3:26-29

▼ Jesus & The Church (Redeemed Israel)

- Church
 - The Church Inherits Israel's mission to be the light of the world.
Matthew 5:13-16; Luke 2:25-32;
 - The Church Proclaims the Good News that Christ (Israel's King) is the world's Lord.
Acts 5:41-42, 8:12,35, 10:34-43, 11:19-21,
- ▼ The Church Models God's Kingdom
- The Church is Christ's family.
Hebrews 2:10-18
 - The Church is Christ's body.
Romans 12:3-8; 1Corinthians 12
 - The Church is called to be to the world what Jesus was to Israel.
John 20:19-23
 - The Church (redeemed Israel) is now the light of the world.

▼ God's Image Restored

- Reclaims humanity's mission to reflect God's glory into creation.
Colossians 3:5-10

Heaven & Earth Fulfilled

▼ Jesus Returns

Acts 1:1-11; 1Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 1:7-8

- Present Age Ends
Matthew 13:36-43, 28:18-20; Mark 10:23-30
- Coming Age Begins
Mark 10:23-30; Luke 20:27-40

▼ General Resurrection

- Creation liberated from decay.
Romans 8:18-27
- Heaven and Earth joined.
Revelation 22

▼ Coming Age

- God has a house.
- The Father has a family.
- The Son has a bride.
- Eternal Life (the life of the coming age)
1John 1:1-2

Quick Definitions

age to come

The time after Jesus returns (this present age).

apostle

Someone sent on a mission for a king or other authority.

baptism

- **John's baptism**
Immersion in water overseen by John the Baptist as a public expression of repentance and commitment to the coming King (i.e. Jesus).
- **Christian baptism**
Immersion in water as a public expression of commitment to following Jesus.
- **Baptism with the Holy Spirit**
The immersion of all of Jesus' followers in the Holy Spirit that took place on Pentecost ten days after Jesus ascended to the Father.

Bible

See the next section.

Christ

Transliteration of the Greek word **χριστος** (sounds like Christos) meaning anointed one and referring to the expected Jewish King who would liberate them from foreign domination. Equivalent to Messiah.

Church

See the next section.

circumcision

The removal of the foreskin of the penis. Many other cultures practiced circumcision - usually as a puberty rite of passage. Jews circumcised their boys 8 days after birth as a sign of their covenant connection to the patriarch Abraham.

covenant

A binding agreement between two parties.

demons

Spiritual beings that, under certain circumstances, can torment and exercise strong influence over people.

disciple

A committed follower of a teacher.

eternal life

Common translation of a Greek phrase meaning the “life of the age (to come)”. It refers to the life that characterizes the “age to come” (with God as its source) residing in people in “this present age”.

faith

Strong belief in someone or something that produces demonstrable results.

gentiles

A translation of a Hebrew word meaning “nations”. It refers to those not descended from Abraham’s grandson Jacob (renamed “Israel” by the Lord).

glory

Goodness, etc. Moses asked God to show him his glory. When God did so in Exodus 33, he proclaimed his name and his goodness.

God

See the next section.

Good News

The announcement that the God of Israel was fulfilling his promise to end their exile and return to them - Isaiah 52:1-10; 61:1-9; Mark 1:14-15

This term was also used by the Romans to refer to the ascension of a new emperor to the throne or to the emperor’s birthday.

See the next section.

grace

“The empowering presence of God that enables us to be who he created us to be and to do what he called us to do.” - Pastor James Ryle

heaven

The “headquarters” from which God runs the universe. It is not a physical location in our universe - it exists outside of our “space”, but should not be thought of as “far away” either. Heaven is intimately connected with earth and they “intersect” at special times (i.e. worship). The 1st century Jews believed that heaven and earth were joined together at the Temple.

Holy Spirit

God reveals himself as three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are distinct and co-equal, and yet they are not three Gods, but one.

Jesus

See the next section.

John the Baptist

A prophet who announced God’s coming government to Israel in order to prepare them for the coming Messiah. He baptized those who accepted his message as a sign of their commitment to the coming ruler of that government - the Christ or Messiah.

judgment

The act of sorting out right from wrong and correcting evil and injustice. Although people can participate in judgment, it is ultimately God's responsibility and will come to fulfillment when Jesus returns.

justice

A state of right relationship between God and people. See "righteousness".

Justification

The process of being brought into right relationship with God. See "righteousness"

Kingdom of God

God's government. It extends from heaven, to earth through those who obey him (i.e. followers of Jesus).

Kingdom of Heaven

A polite way of referring to the "Kingdom of God". Jews used this term in order to avoid using God's name (and the risk of using his name in vain).

last days

The time period between Jesus' resurrection (30 A.D. ?) and his return. We have been in the last days for almost 2000 years.

Messiah

Transliteration of the Hebrew word (sounds like Mashiach) meaning anointed one and referring to the expected Jewish King who would liberate them from foreign domination. Equivalent to Christ.

Pharisees

A group of Jews who hoped to speed God's redemption of Israel by promoting a holiness lifestyle for all Jews to follow.

present age

The timeframe we live in - prior to Jesus' return.

rabbi

A Jewish religious teacher. Rabbis recruited followers called disciples.

resurrection

The return to bodily life AFTER death. Jesus raised many people from the dead, but they eventually died again. After Jesus returns there will be a general resurrection of the dead to fully bodily life, followed by judgment and, for those who follow Jesus,

righteousness

A state of right relationship with God and being part of his covenant family. See "justice".

sabbath

The final day of the 7-day week during which Jews abstained from all normal work (e.g. farming, cooking, cleaning, etc.). In the Jewish calendar the day runs from sundown to

sundown. Accordingly, the sabbath began at sundown on Friday and ended at sundown on Saturday.

Satan

From a Hebrew word meaning “accuser”, Satan refers to a spiritual being created by God who often serves as a sort of “prosecuting attorney” pointing out the faults in our lives. This may have been a legitimate role at one time, but at some point in the past Satan overstepped his bounds and became the great enemy of God’s plan for humanity. He has already been defeated through Jesus’ death on the cross and will eventually be consigned to the burning lake.

Son of God

This is a messianic title - the Jews thought of their King (i.e. “anointed one” or messiah) as God’s son. When Peter first applied this term to Jesus it was not at that time a reference to Jesus’ divinity.

Son of Man

This is also a messianic title drawn from Daniel 7 which describes “one like a son of man” (i.e. a human being) being ushered into God’s presence and receiving honor and glory together with God. It thus implies divinity on the part of the Son of Man.

soul

An individual personality - normally contained in a body.

spirit

The immaterial aspect of our life that is capable of connecting with God. Derived from the Hebrew and Greek words for “breath” or “wind”.

God, You, The World, The Good News

God

- God is in a class by himself; He created everything else that exists.
Genesis 1 - 2; John 3:16
- God loves us and he is faithful!
John 3:16; Hebrews 10:19-23
- ▼ He created us:
 - to rule creation on his behalf,
 - to reflect his glory into the world and the world's praises back to him.
- Humanity is in rebellion against God, but God is solving this problem.
- Jesus reveals who God really is.
Matthew 11:25-30; John 1: 1-18; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3

You and the World

- God created you as a soul with a body for interacting with the material world and a spirit for interacting with God.
- ▼ Humanity's rebellion against God has affected you and everyone else:
 - It has damaged our ability to bear God's image.
 - It has damaged every aspect of who we are.
 - It has left the world in bondage to decay.
Romans 8:18-22
- God has a plan to fix our rebellion and reclaim the world.
Romans 8; Colossians 1:24-27

The Good News (i.e. the Gospel)

Through Jesus God has become king and his Kingdom is within your grasp!

- God created a wonderful world, but human rebellion has broken it.
Genesis 1 - 2; Psalm 8; Genesis 3 - 6; Romans 1:18-32; Romans 8:18-27
- God is recreating the world through his kingdom (government).
Ephesians 1:3-10; Matthew 25:31-46; Hebrews 12:25-29; Revelation 21:1 - 22:5
- God's kingdom is a family that he wants us to join!
Matthew 12:46-50; Ephesians 3:14-15; Hebrews 2:10-15; 1Peter 4:17-19; Revelation 22:1-5
- We join God's family on his terms by repenting and following Jesus!
Matthew 4:17-22; Matthew 17:1-8; Luke 9:23-25; John 6:25-29; John 10:22-30

The Bible

Overview

- ▼ The Bible uniquely and authoritatively:
 - reveals God to us.
 - equips us to carry out God's purpose in the world.
- ▼ The Bible comprises:
 - 39 books of the Old (or First) Testament written in Hebrew and Aramaic,
 - 27 books of the New Testament written in Greek.
 - 66 books (total) written over a 1500 year period by about 40 authors in their own languages and from their own perspectives and cultures.
- The writers were inspired (i.e. they wrote what God wanted them to write).
- We don't have any of the original manuscripts - only copies.
- We have enough copies to accurately reconstruct the originals (many more copies than exist for any other ancient documents).
- To use a Bible passage we must "enter the writer's mind", allowing the original languages, literary context, and history to reveal what a passage meant to its original audience **BEFORE** we apply it to ourselves.
- ▼ **Study the Bible!** If you can't read it in the original languages, use a modern version in your own language. Ignore chapter, verse, and subtitle divisions.
 - At Life Church we use mostly the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible so that you can read it in modern English. You may have been accustomed to reading or hearing the King James Version of the Bible, which uses older English (with words like "thee" , "thou", "thine", "believeth", etc.). Don't be alarmed - the passages are really from the Bible!
 - As we mentioned above, the Bible was originally written in three ancient languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
 - None of the people in the Bible, and none of the people who God used to write it spoke English.
 - English did not even exist as a language when the Bible was written.

- The King James Version, first published in 1611, was a translation of the Bible from its original languages into the every day English that people used back then - over 400 years ago! They didn't just speak that way in church - they spoke that way with everyone.
- The King James Version was "modernized" in 1769, but, even so, English has certainly changed a lot since then! **We believe that if you're reading an English translation of the Bible it ought to be up to date - written in the English you speak every day. God wants you to understand his Word so that you can put it into practice!**
- Bible verses can only be properly understood in their context.
- ▼ The words in a Bible passage are best understood from their meaning in the passage's original language and the way in which those original language words are used:
 - elsewhere in the same book,
 - elsewhere by the same biblical author,
 - elsewhere by other biblical authors.
- Bible passages use prose, poetry, history, metaphor. Some are figurative; others are literal. Much of the Bible is narrative. All of it is inspired by God.
2Timothy 3:15-17
- ▼ The Bible covers the following phases of God's interaction with us:
 - From Creation to the Fall
 - From the Fall to the Flood
 - From the Flood to Abraham
 - From Abraham to the Exodus
 - From the Exodus to the Exile
 - From the Exile to the birth of Jesus
 - The life of Jesus - birth, ministry, death, burial, resurrection
 - From the Resurrection to Jesus' Return
- The Bible must be understood in the light of God's unchanged purpose of ruling his creation in love through people who genuinely follow Jesus.
- ▼ The Bible was not written so much to solve our problems, but more so to make us better problem solvers.

- You don't look for specific foods to eat to help you make more money, improve your marriage, or become a better parent. Instead, you eat in order to maintain your overall health so that you will be better able to address your finances, marriage, parenting, etc. In the same way, you need to feed on the Bible in order to maintain your total well-being so that you will be better able to address the various specific issues in your life (primarily by cooperating with what God wants to accomplish in your life).

The Bible - Old Testament

- Covers creation, humanity's rebellion, and God's plan to fix everything.
- Jesus is the authoritative interpreter of the Old Testament! - Matthew 5 - 7
- ▼ The Old Testament covers 3 phases of God's interaction with people:
 - ▼ Phase 1 - Creation
 - ▼ From Creation to the Fall (Genesis 1 - 3)
 - God creates heaven and earth with people as his representatives.
 - God creates Adam and Eve, the first people, to be a part of his family.
 - ▼ Phase 2 - The Fall
 - ▼ From the Fall to the Flood (Genesis 3 - 6)
 - Adam and Eve choose independence from God by eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God banishes them from Eden.
 - The first murder happens; people continue pursuing independence.
 - God, punishes them with the flood, but preserves Noah's family.
 - ▼ From the Flood to Abraham (2000 B.C.?) (Genesis 6 - 12)
 - Despite the flood, people keep pursuing independence.
 - ▼ Phase 3 - Israel
 - ▼ From Abraham to the Exodus (1450 B.C.?) (Genesis 12 - Exodus 14)
 - God launches his redemption plan through Abraham.

- God promises that all nations would be blessed through Abraham.
- Israel inherits God's promise to Abraham (their forefather).
- The Israelites become slaves in Egypt.
- ▼ From the Exodus (1450 B.C.?) to the Exile (Exodus 15 - 2 Chronicles)
Note - 1 Chronicles through 2 Chronicles parallel 1 Samuel through 2 Kings. The following prophetic book also cover this period: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai
 - ▼ God rescues Israel and makes a covenant with them; he promises:
Deuteronomy 28, 29
 - to give them the land of Canaan (modern Palestine)
 - to bless them for obedience
 - to punish them for disobedience
 - when they have ultimately failed, he will change their hearts, restore them, and establish a new and permanent covenant with them.
Deuteronomy 30
 - Israel repeatedly fails to obey. God eventually exiles them from Canaan to Assyria and to Babylon.
- ▼ From the Exile (590 B.C.) to the birth of Jesus (Ezra - Nehemiah)
Also: Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, Malachi
 - God restores Israel to their land, but does not restore their sovereignty.
 - Hope: God will eventually restore the Jews and establish his Kingdom.
- ▼ How do we use the Old Testament?
 - The Old Testament was not originally written to humanity in general. It was written to Israel (eventually known as the Jews) - the specific people whom God established to be channels of blessing to the whole world.

- The Jews in the early church recognized that God was not requiring gentiles (i.e. non-Jews) to directly apply the Old Testament to their lives.
Acts 10 - 11; Acts 15; Acts 17:16-34; Galatians
- The Old Testament narratives serve as examples to us as we deal with both old and new situations and as the foundation for the story that God is still writing through us.
1 Corinthians 10:1-13; Hebrews 11 - 12
- Because Jesus reveals who God really is, we have to understand the Old Testament in light of Jesus and the New Testament
Matthew 5 - 7; Matthew 11:25-30;
- The Old Testament is God's Word
Isaiah 55:6-11; Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2Peter 1:20-21

The Bible - New Testament

- God establishes his government through Jesus, and extends it through Jesus' followers as they plant local churches.
- Church leaders write letters to guide churches and individuals. Some prove useful enough to be copied and shared repeatedly. These are eventually preserved in our New Testament.
- The New Testament letters are not arranged chronologically, but rather in order of decreasing length by author. The likely chronological order is: Galatians, James, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Romans, Mark, Matthew, Luke, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians, 1 Timothy, Acts, Hebrews, Titus, John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, 1 Peter, 2 Timothy, 2 Peter, Jude, Revelation
- ▼ The New Testament covers 2 phases of God's interaction with people:
 - ▼ Phase 4 - Jesus
 - ▼ The life of Jesus (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)
 - Jesus' birth (4 B.C.?), ministry, death, burial, resurrection
 - Jesus announces God's Kingdom and recruits followers.
 - Jesus shows who God really is and what God Kingdom looks like.
 - Jesus pronounces God's judgement on the Temple and its leadership.

- Jesus is arrested and condemned by Jewish leaders for acknowledging himself to be the Messiah or Christ (i.e. the King) and handed over to the Romans for execution.
- Jesus is tried by the Roman governor for rebellion against Rome (i.e. claiming to be a king). Although the governor finds him innocent, he crucifies Jesus to appease the Jewish leaders.
- Jesus dies and is buried (Good Friday).
- ▼ From the Resurrection (26 A.D.?) to the' Ascension (Acts)
 - Jesus rises bodily from the dead on the 3rd day (Easter).
 - Jesus appears to his disciples to instruct them.
 - Jesus commissions his disciples to spread the movement.
 - Jesus rises to sit at God's right hand - promising to return eventually.
- ▼ Phase 5 - The Church
 - The Holy Spirit empowers the disciples on Pentecost.
 - Empowered by the Spirit, the disciples preach the good news of the Kingdom, make disciples, and plant churches.
 - The movement spreads from Jews to gentiles.
 - God raises up additional apostles (e.g. Paul) who plant churches throughout much of the Roman world.
 - Christianity spreads throughout the rest of the world.
 - You bring the good news to the people God has prepared for you!

Jesus & The Church

Jesus

- Jesus is God's eternal, unique son and the fullest possible expression of God to humanity. He is the Christ, or Messiah - God's Chosen King who proclaimed God's Kingdom. He reveals who God really is.
Matthew 11:25-30; Colossians 1:15-23; Hebrews 1:1-4
- The four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) tell the story of his death for our sins, burial, and resurrection in fulfillment of the Old Testament. - 1Corinthians 15
- The Jews (who understood themselves to be God's covenant people) used the Romans (whom the Jews understood to be godless pagans) to put Jesus (God's Son) to death. In this way human sin reached its climax in the crucifixion of Jesus.
- After being seen and touched by witnesses he ascended to God the Father where he continues to lead his church until he returns to consummate his Kingdom. - 1Corinthians 15
- Jesus has redefined Israel as those who follow him and are therefore "in Christ".
John 10:14-16; Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 2:11-22
- God raised Jesus from the dead as Israel's true king, the world's true lord, and the foundation of his new family.
Acts 2:14-36; Galatians 3:26-29;

Following Jesus

- Christ in you the hope of glory.
Colossians 1:24-27
- ▼ The Bible uses many terms to describe those who follow Jesus: believer, born again, Christian, disciple, saint, saved.
 - **Believer** - someone who believes or has faith in Jesus and therefore follows him.
John 4:39-41; Acts 2:44-47; Acts 4:31-32; Galatians 6:9-10; James 2:1
 - **Born again** - those who believe in Jesus are born again from God's Spirit. You must be born again to see or enter the Kingdom of God.
John 3:1-21
 - **Christian** - means "belonging to Christ"
"The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch" - Acts 11:19-26

- **Disciples** - those who are trained by the one they are following.
Matthew 5:1-2; Acts 6:1-7; Acts 9:1-31; Acts 11:19-26; Acts 18:23
- **Saints** - those who are “sanctified”, or set apart for God’s use.
Romans 1:1-8; Ephesians 1:1-2; Philippians 1:1-2
- **Saved** - those who by following Jesus have been rescued from this world and God’s wrath.
Luke 8:12 (Luke 8:4-15; John 10:1-9; Acts 2:17-21; Acts 4:8-12; Romans 10:1-13)
- Those who belong to Jesus (i.e. “Christians”) hear his voice and follow him, empowered by the Holy Spirit.
John 10:22-30; John 14:15-31; John 16:5-16
- Only those who follow Jesus in a public, verifiable way are Christians. Merely going to church or claiming to follow Jesus is not enough!
Matthew 7:21-29; Matthew 21:28-32; Acts 5:1-11
- ▼ In Acts chapter 2:1-40 we read about the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church and Peter’s subsequent spirit-led sermon. The people’s response shows us what following Jesus looks like:
They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. - Acts 2:42
 - Bible teaching and study
 - Fellowship
 - The Lord’s Supper / Communion
 - Prayer
 - The rest of the chapter (Acts 2:43-47) shows them worshipping together, sharing what they had like family, and experiencing God’s supernatural power.
- We have been called to be to the world what Jesus was to Israel. The disciples were building for the Kingdom even though they wouldn’t understand how everything fit together until after Jesus’ resurrection. Similarly, we are building for the Kingdom, but we won’t understand how everything fits until Jesus returns.
John 20:21-23; Colossians 1:24-27

The Church

- The Greek word "ekklesia", translated "church" in the New Testament, means assembly. It was not a religious word, and is NEVER a building, but rather described town meetings.

- The Church comprises all followers of Jesus everywhere. Followers meet regularly in local churches - Acts 2:42-47. The Church is the visible expression of God's government.