

*In
Search
of*

Truth and Right

Tim Henderson, Editor

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"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." Philipians 4:8 (NASB-U)

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"What do we study next?"

By: Timothy R. Henderson

A question oft asked as a class approaches the end of the current study, whether it be a verse by verse study of a book in the Bible or a class book. Often times the answer is, "the next book in the Bible". But is this the best way to choose our studies?

Think about this, let's say that we have been in a study of the book of Song of Solomon. Now, we've had an interesting amount of discussion of this love letter from Solomon, where do we go next? Well to the next book of the Bible – Isaiah, right? But is that the best course of study? Do you realize you are jumping through 200 years of history – Solomon ruled approx. 961 – 922 BC, Isaiah prophesied around 725-700 BC. What happened during those 200 years? My how things have changed. During the days of Solomon the people of God were one united kingdom, the nation of Israel. But Isaiah is prophesying to the nations of Israel and Judah. Where did Judah come from? Is this a proper progression to make? Doesn't a study such as this leave huge gaps in the students knowledge?

"Oh, but that's just one instance of that occurring," some might say. Really, what about the book of Job? Most scholar's agree that Job occurred during the Patriarchal period – a period covered in the book of Genesis, but in doing a book by book study you travel from the Patriarchal period through the majority of the Mosaical period, viewing the United Kingdom of Israel and the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah through the books of 1 & 2 Samuel through 1 & 2 Chronicles. In Ezra and Nehemiah we read of the Jews returning from captivity, we've been through the Babylonian captivity and the Medo-Persians are now the ruling party. Esther tells us the story of a Jewish maiden placed in a situation of power with the choice of remaining silent and watching the Jews be destroyed by the wicked plans of Haman, or risking her own life by approaching the king, her husband, on behalf of the Jews. Then we move from Esther into the next book, Job. There is no nation of Judah, there are no Medo-Persians, there isn't even a nation of Israel, in fact we don't read of any group of people as God's "chosen people". God is dealing with the heads of the family – obviously going back in time approximately 1,000 years to the days of the Patriarchs again.

"Well that's just two instances, you are stretching to make your point." No my friend, the books of prophecy jump all over the timeline. Let's look at a chronological progression of the books of prophecy – Obadiah prophesies concerning Edom and is believed to have lived any

TIMES OF SERVICES	
SUNDAY	
Bible Classes*	10:00 AM
AM Worship	10:45 AM
PM Worship	6:30 PM
WEDNESDAY	
Bible Classes*	7:00 PM
(* Bible Classes for All Ages)	

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time from 845 to 586 BC; Joel prophesies to the nation of Judah around 835 to 815 BC, at this same time Elisha is prophesying to the nation of Israel; Jonah comes in next, going to Ninevah around 790-780 BC; the next prophets are Amos (760-750 BC) and Hosea (755-710 BC) in Israel; and Isaiah (740-680 BC) and Micah (739-686 BC) to the southern kingdom of Judah; by this time the northern kingdom of Israel has fallen to the Assyrian empire and no longer figures in the Bible story as a kingdom. We then skip forward about 50 or so years to come across Nahum around 664-612 BC; Zephaniah – 640-628 BC; Habakkuk – 609-597 BC; Jeremiah 626-580 BC; Ezekiel – 587-565 BC; Daniel – 605-530 BC; and Haggai and Zechariah around 520 BC; and close out the Old Testament around 430-400 BC with Malachi. (Please note that the years given are approximate.) With this we see that doing a book by book study of the Prophets covers a period of time of over 400 years, multiple nations and going book by book would jump back and forth through time. To make this clearer, look at the two lists I have provided; one is the normal progression of the Prophets as found in your Bibles, the other is following the chronological time of their prophecies. But please remember, some of these were prophesying at the same time.

Biblical order:

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

Chronological order

Obadiah
Joel
Jonah
Amos
Hosea
Isaiah
Micah
Nahum
Zephaniah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Habakkuk
Ezekiel
Daniel
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

Now, when we look at them chronologically and in truth the logical order, we can see that a book by book study of the Old Testament is not the best way, but is in fact the most confusing way once you get to the books of 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicles, which cover the same period of time. Most of the books after that jump from time period to time period.

Oh, but the New Testament, that is one that we can study book by book and get a proper Chronological understanding of the events in the New Testament. Really? What about the first four books, they all cover the exact same period of time – the life and teachings of Jesus. When you finish Matthew and begin Mark you are going back in time over 30 years, when you finish Mark and begin Luke you are going back in time over 30 years again, by

the time you have studied the book of John, you have studied the same 33 year period four times from four different points of view and have wasted valuable study time by studying identical passages multiple times but separated by months or even years. Are you really going to tell me that is the best way?

Once we work our way to the Epistles, it's the books of the prophets all over again. They are not in chronological order. The books of James and 1 & 2 Thessalonians are some of the earliest epistles, but they are contained in the middle and end of the list. Let's compare again:

As listed in the Bible:

Romans
1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians
1 Timothy
2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James

Chronological order:

James—48 AD
1 Thessalonians—49-54 AD
2 Thessalonians—50-54 AD
Galatians—50-55 AD
1 Corinthians—56 AD
2 Corinthians—56 AD
Romans—57 AD
Philemon—60 AD
Ephesians—60-64 AD
Philippians—60-64 AD
Colossians—60-64 AD
Hebrews—60-69 AD
Jude—60-95 AD
1 Timothy—64 AD
Titus—64 AD

Today's Sermon:

*While I was
passing through*

Acts 17:16-28

Bible continued:

1 Peter
2 Peter
1 John
2 John
3 John
Jude

Chronological continued:

1 Peter—64-65 AD
2 Peter—64-70 AD
2 Timothy—65-67 AD
1 John—85-95 AD
2 John—85-95 AD
3 John—85-95 AD

The interesting thing with this is that you are not only jumping around in time, but you are jumping from group to individual to group. Different situations, problems and topics.

Unfortunately, this has been the method of study in many

congregations for many years, and just as unfortunate, many members of those congregations have a very poor understanding of the Bible story. They know some characters and some places, but they oftentimes do not know exactly where they fit in.

What do we study next? A difficult question, but one that needs to be answered. Perhaps it is time to leave behind the method that has failed in the past and try to study the Bible anew, beginning with a chronological study, then progressing with a more in depth study of the prophets after having already learned where they belong in the timeline of the Scriptures. Let's study the lives of the authors of the epistles of the New Testament then look at the letters they wrote, having a clearer understanding of the problems faced.

We must put more thought in our Bible classes that are offered in the local congregation. What would we think of a school that taught of man walking on the moon, then went back in time to study about Christopher Columbus and the discovery of the new world, then ran even further back and studied the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Rome and Greece, following up with a study of the Civil War and the war on terror. Isn't that what we are doing to the Bible?

We must be more careful in how we teach from the Scriptures. As teachers we are held to a higher standard, as leaders in the Lord's church we are held to a higher standard. We are not responsible with whether or not individuals study and progress, but we are responsible that we have taken the role of teaching carefully and make sure that we provide a cohesive and comprehensive study of the word of God. The question for us today is – "Are we doing that?"

News N Notes

Remember these in your prayers:

- Joseph Morriss, Nancy Morriss' son
- Darla Elsken's brother,
- Lucille Harless, Dave Harless' mother
- Blake Headen, Alberta's husband.
- Blake Swanson, Dorothy Lancaster's grandson
- Virginia Malick, Peggy Miller's mother
- Trudell Tennant
- Bud and Merl Frey
- Tammy Garrison, Zeda Goddard's daughter
- Audrio Gaudio, Nancy Morris' great-granddaughter
- Marie Roberts, & Ed's father, Jim Roberts.
- Ila Marshall, Harold Marshall's mother
- Cary & Grace Lancaster

Nursing Home:

- Pauline Sellers
- Ethel Mahan

Shut-ins:

- Josephine Clow
- Mabel Fleming
- Pauline Midcap