

Telling HIStory 2024:

Session 1:

Thank you to the Awaken Worship team for coming to preach the word in song.

It is so great to see so many ladies here from all over the shore and Va Beach. I am not going to do a big intro here about myself or how today came about, we will touch on that in the afternoon session, but I want to open with a few verses that motivate me to encourage women to make God's word a priority in their life, and then we are going to get straight to God's word.

**2 Tim 3:1-7 3 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. 6 For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, 7 always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.**

**Why Is it important to understand the Bible from Genesis to Revelation? Because we don't want to be the kind of women described in those verses, insecure, taken advantage of.** The Bible says I AM the same yesterday, today and forever more. If the same God who loves you enough to send Jesus to die for your sins is the same God of

the Old Testament. Why would we ignore the majority of the scriptures in this book?

**What makes the Bible so hard to understand?** I think so often it is because we sit down to read it with wrong motives. When we sit down to read the Bible, what is that really what we're seeking? I think often, if we're honest, we are seeking a word about ourselves. We want to know how to make our marriage, our workplace, or some other aspect of our lives better, or to have peace in the midst of anxiety, or just keep up with another person. We are trying to figure out how this book applies to us. Rather than what it teaches us about a Holy God.

I'm going to do my best today to give you not only an understanding of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. But also, hopefully a hunger to read it for yourself in a way that seeks to know and love God better. To fulfill your purpose, to know Him and make Him known.

So, to that end **let's begin by addressing something that makes it difficult to understand the Bible if you sit down to read it start to finish. That is the actual structure of it.** Rather than being one story from beginning to end in a chronological order, it is put together by categories. If we look at the Old Testament. We have a 5-12-5-5-12 structure. You have five books of the law, 12 books of history, five books of wisdom and poetry. Five major prophets and 12 minor prophets. When we go to the structure of the New Testament. It's 4-1-21-1. So, you have four gospels, one history book, 21 letters. And a final book of prophecy.

So, if you sit down to read the Bible starting in Genesis, with the exception of Job, it is in chronological order for the first six books. But then as you get further on into the Old Testament, it becomes confusing because some of the history books are telling the same stories but from a Spiritual perspective v a historical perspective. Then,

as you are reading what the prophets are speaking about for 17 books, they're actually speaking about events that you've read about much further back in the OT during the history books. **These divisions do have a purpose in helping us to know God and what he's been doing from the beginning of time.**

**We get an idea in the books of the law how God creates the universe and calls a people to himself.**

- **And in the books of history he is forming those people into a nation.**
- **And then in the books of wisdom and poetry, he's providing them wisdom for everyday life.**
- **And in the prophets, He is speaking to his people who are in trouble.**
- **In the Gospels, God takes on flesh and dwells with his people.**
- **In the book of Acts, which is the only book of history in the New Testament, God sends his people out on mission to share what he's done.**
- **In the letters, God is giving instructions to his people living in community in the church.**
- **And in Revelation, God reveals to us how he will triumph over evil to live with his people forever and ultimately return back to the beginning, dwelling with His creation in perfection.**

**It is a story of creation, rebellion, redemption, and re-creation.**

I find the easier way to read the Bible, start to finish, is to try to see what God has been doing in specific time, to do this you can get a **Chronological Bible**. This is where publishers have undertaken to try

and order the events of the Bible as they occur and sometimes that becomes a hard read just because it's repetitive because numerous. different books of the Bible contain the same events but are told from different perspectives with different details such as. First Kings, First Chronicles. Second King, Second Chronicles and The Gospels, and many of the prophets speak during the same time, and people like Nehemiah and Ezra live as contemporaries right the end of the OT, yet you read about them months ago if you are on a daily reading plan, then the bulk of the letters are written during the book of Acts, but wait I said I was going to try to make this easier to understand, so to that end, let's get started.

**I'm going to begin at the beginning in Genesis chapter one. Genesis literally means beginning. And it is here. That we meet the one that has no beginning and no end. Who set all of this in place.** I will spend a good amount of time in Genesis because it is foundational.

**Genesis 1** reveals much to us, verse one says in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The Beginning, in this context, meaning, the beginning of the Earth as we know it, because God has no beginning and no end. The Bible is very clear about this. This verse in chapter one, puts in context just who our God is, first off, God Elohim, plural. And this is clear, in the beginning as we see God the Father speaking, God the Spirit hovering over the water in the dark, formless void expanse of an earth that had not been created. We know from John 1 and Colossians 1 that Jesus is there as well, we will hit that in the New Testament, but never miss that the entire Old Testament is pointing to this Messiah who was with God in the beginning and is God, in whom all things are created.

**Some key truths in Genesis 1, creation is spoken by God creation is dependent on God, and creation is revealing who God is. The whole**

**thing is about God. If you have any doubt about that, realize. That in 31 verses God is mentioned 31 times.** This book is not about us. It is about God revealing himself to his humanity. There are too many details to get into just in this first chapter, especially given that we are going to do a fly over of the entire Bible today, but there is something I want you to file away for thought and study later.

**The Holy Spirit inspires Moses to write this book as the first of 5 books of the Law: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. He wrote these books to a people coming out of 400 years of slavery in Egypt to reveal to them who their God is and who He expected them to be in response to that. To the original hearers of this book, they are coming out of a land that worships the sun God as supreme.** Let us just note here how God debunks that as well as so many other thoughts that they would have had about creation and the world around them. Have you ever looked at the creation story and realized that God spoke light, and there was day and night, seas and plants bearing all kinds of fruit and vegetation, and yielding seed according to their own kinds before he set the sun and moon in place? Right here we are reminded that the sun is not a god. And that God's creation, despite what we might think, is not dependent on the sun or us, but only God.

We will see when we get to Revelation in heaven there is no need for sun, because Jesus, God the Son, is the source of light. Everything God creates is good, and we are reminded of this all through chapter one. Why is that? Because God is good, and nothing that he creates is not good. **We see in verse 27 that God creates man in his own image. In the image of God, he created them, male and female He created them and he blessed them and he said to them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heaven, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.**

**Genesis 2**, unpacks details of chapter 1, God gives man work to do, a reminder to us that work is not part of the curse, he gives him a boundary, he lets him name all the animals, creating in him a desire for a partner suitable for himself, and then God grants him his wish because again he is good and loving. So, we have the first couple, Adam and Eve, living in paradise, all their needs met, walking daily with God.

And as we turn **to Chapter 3**, we see Eve with a choice. Do I listen to God or do I listen to Satan? Don't miss this ladies, Satan's tactics have not changed since the garden. As Eve stands looking at the tree that she has been forbidden to eat from by this good God, who has given her everything that she needs, Satan causes her to question God's goodness and his motives. **He begins with the question the liar always asks, the one that causes us to doubt God's word, "did God really say?"** and then he goes on to tell her that God is a liar and she can be her own god. **"You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it. Your eyes will be open and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."** Verse six says, so when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and it was a delight to the eyes, and the tree was desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. **Satan has been a liar and a murderer from the beginning. Those are God's words in the New Testament, and we see them here.** No, they did not die a physical death that day, but they died a spiritual death. As they put together, the fig leaves to attempt to cover their shame, God gives them the opportunity to confess as he comes to them in the garden and they're hiding. But rather than confession, they begin to play the blame game, Adam blaming God for the woman he gave him, Eve blaming the serpent.

**God in His mercy here, even in the curse, promises a Savior in 3:15- as he says to Satan, "I will put enmity between you and the woman and**

**between your offspring and her offspring, he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”** Then God himself makes the first animal sacrifice of the OT as he makes for them garments of skin. **As we see God cast them out of the garden forever, don’t miss the great mercy in this action. Had he left them there and they had eaten from the tree of life, they would have remained in that sinful state eternally.**

**AS WOMEN, LET THIS STORY ALWAYS REMIND US WILL I LIVE BY WHAT I SEE OR BY EVERY WORD GOD GIVES ME?**

The very next chapter brings us the story of their first children. Abel comes to God in God’s way, Cain in the way he wants to. As the Lord always does, he gives the sinner a chance to confess and repent, but Cain does not and we see him murder his brother out of jealous anger.

**By Chapter 6, we see how far man has wandered from the garden in these words, “the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually and that the Lord regretted that he made man on the earth and it grieved his heart.”**

God decides that he is going to wipe man from the face of the earth, but there is one man who finds favor with God, Noah. This is what the Bible says about him, “he was a righteous man, blameless in his generation, who walked with God.” God shares his plan with this man, and gives him instructions, and the Bible says “Noah did all that God commanded him” (6:22) After the flood, God makes a covenant with Noah and commands him and his family the same as he did for Adam and Eve, to be fruitful and multiply and to subdue the earth. He promises never to flood the earth again, and gives his covenant sign, the rainbow. We are given the name of Noah’s sons and even before we read about what Ham did when Noah got drunk, we are told he is the father of Canaan. Again, sometimes studying the Bible is hard

because we are unable to hear it as the original audience did. If you don't already know, Canaan is an enemy to Israel, and the land that God promises to Abraham and tells Joshua to drive out all the inhabitants of.

In the record of the descendants of Noah in Ch 10, we learn how the nations spread abroad after the flood.

**Then the tower of Babel story. Ch 11 documents that instead of being obedient to the Lord to fill the earth, the people come together to build a tower to reach the heavens and glorify themselves instead of the Lord. The Lord confuses their languages and scatters them. After this, we get the genealogy of Noah's son Shem, why now? Because this is the line the Messiah will come from, and from this genealogy we meet Abram, a man living in a polytheistic land Ur of the Chaldeans, which we will later come to know as Babylon.**

**Ch 12 is the beginning of God calling a covenant people to himself. Abram and Sarai (who we will come to know as Abraham and Sarah) are a 75 and 65 yo childless couple when God calls Abram to leave everything he has to go to a land he does not know, to become the father of many nations in whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**

(13-50) The remainder of Genesis is God's faithfulness to this Covenant despite all the mistakes that his people make. The condensed version is Abraham has Isaac, Isaac has Jacob (whom we later come to know as Israel) And Jacob has 12 sons from whom we get the 12 tribes of Israel. At the end of the book of Genesis, we find the Israelites living in Egypt and Jacob on his deathbed blessing his sons, prophesying about each tribe, which lets us know that the Messiah will come through the tribe of Judah (49:10) and the death of Jacob and his favorite son Joseph.



**In Exodus we find the Israelites enslaved in Egypt** (which God had told Abraham would happen for 400 years (Gen 15:13). We meet Moses who God uses to deliver the nation as God exhibits his authority over Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt, the institution of the Passover, crossing the Red Sea, manna from heaven, water from a rock in the midst of a grumbling people, God at Mt Sinai, **and we see God give His people an identity. God begins the 10 commandments with letting them know that he set them free! “I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Exo 20:2).**

While Moses is gathering instructions about community life and worship, the people tire of waiting a God they cannot see and instead choose to make and worship a golden calf. We see one of numerous times that Moses intercedes for the people to our merciful God and the renewal of the covenant. We see the construction of the tabernacle, the ark, and the institution of all facets of worship in great detail. Exodus ends with the glory of the Lord filling the tabernacle and Moses, the representative of God’s people cannot go in. Here we have it, the whole OT pointing to this need for a Savior, how do an unholy people dwell with a Holy God.

**Leviticus, the book of the law, takes place in the course of 1 month while the people are camped at Mt. Sinai. It opens with specific instructions which may seem strange to us but reminder that this is a direct continuation of Exodus. This book is just explaining how the people of Israel can live in relationship with a Holy God. They must draw near to him through sacrifice.** In Ch 16 we see the day of atonement. The forgiveness of sin by substitution. This directly points to the Messiah Jesus Christ, and what he would do.

**When we have a hard time understanding the NT book of Hebrews, it is because we don’t understand these first 5 books. (*Hebrews 9&10*)**

***Jesus is a better priest than Aaron, Jesus offers a better sacrifice, Jesus provides us with better access to God.***

**As we move on to Numbers**, we see the people called into a relationship with God, sin, grumble, and face the consequences. Arguably, the most significant event occurs in Ch 13, when Moses sends 12 men to spy out the land of Canaan which God has promised to give them. 10 of the 12 let their fear drive their report,

**yes the land is flowing with milk and honey, but the cities are fortified, the men are like giants and we can't overtake them. Once again, man living by what he sees rather than by what God has told him. Thus begins the 40 years of wilderness wandering until all that generation dies except the 2 faithful spies, Joshua and Caleb.**

## **JOB**

**Before we continue with the story of the Israelites, lets pause to take a look at a piece of wisdom literature, the book of Job. Most scholars place the book of Job in the time of the patriarchs because of Job's great age, the fact that he has camels, and that there is no mention of mosaic law, (he functions as a priest for his own household). Job is a very hard read, but it is an important piece of wisdom literature because it shows us how people interpret suffering and all of life, either by**

- 1. observation and experience**
- 2. tradition**
- 3. human reasoning**
- 4. or how we all should (and why this is placed with the wisdom literature) by the Revelation of God.**

**I believe Job is a real man, not just an allegory, why? Because the Lord Himself holds him up as an example of righteousness with Noah and**

**Daniel through the prophet Ezekiel (found in Ch 14) and James holds him up as an example of patience**

**The book of Joshua** opens with God telling Joshua not to be afraid, that He is with him and that the Law should be his anchor to make his path successful. They spend the 1<sup>st</sup> 7 years conquering the land and the remainder of Joshua's life inhabiting it, but

**they fail to drive out all the people of the land, and so when we enter the book of Judges, there is no biblical literacy and we have a 350 yr period characterized by the Scripture. "In those days, there was no King in Israel and everyone did what was right in their own eyes."** There is a sin cycle repeated over and over the people sin, God lets them fall to the hand of their enemies, they cry out for help, God sends a judge, they are set free, they begin sinning again.

It is during this dark period that the 4-chapter book of **Ruth** occurs. Ruth and Boaz living in this era, but making God honoring choices, show us that God is still moving His plan forward. Boaz is Ruth's kinsman redeemer (back to Leviticus and the laws that seem weird to us but are our God's way of caring for His people). The book ends with a short genealogy showing that **Ruth gives birth to the grandfather of king David, of whose line will come the Messiah.**

As we continue through the history of God's people we come to **1 Samuel where we meet the barren Hannah**. She exhibits great faith, cries out to the Lord and he gives her a **son Samuel, one of the great OT prophets and the last judge. He anoints the first 2 kings of Israel, Saul and David**. We see early on in the book how far Israel has wandered with the priest taking advantage of the people and God allowing the ark to be captured by the Philistines. Samuel walks in the way of the Lord, but his sons do not. When he becomes old, the people

demand a king- **“let us have a king to judge us like all the nations” 8:6.** This was another failure on their part, they were meant to be a Theocracy, with God as their king, but they wanted to look like all the other nations, there is a lesson here for us. Samuel warns them, but they cannot be swayed. Saul is anointed king, outwardly he has the appearance of a king, but he shows that his heart is not for God and the kingdom is taken from him and given to David. David is far from perfect, you might know he commits adultery and then has the husband or the woman killed, and yet the Bible says he is a man after God’s own heart. Why is that? When he is confronted about his sin, he confesses and repents, turns from it back to God to follow him again. Many of the psalms are written by David, you see this repentant heart in 32 and 51. David’s house is marked by bloodshed and so despite the fact that he wants to build a temple for the Lord, God tells him he cannot, but that his son will. **David has lots of sons, but it is Solomon who reigns and builds the temple. God gives him wisdom and riches beyond compare, he is a writer of a good deal of wisdom literature, some of which we find in the Bible: Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, and some of the proverbs, but his ultimate failure is he marries numerous wives and has 900 concubines and they are pagans who turn his heart away from God to their idols. After his reign, his son Rehoboam takes the throne, and the kingdom is divided.**

There are 10 northern tribes which are called through the Bible Israel and 2 southern tribes called Judah. **The books of 1st/2nd kings & 1st/2nd chronicles tell the stories of these kings and the people, beginning before the kingdom divides. The time after the kingdom divides is characterized by blatant disregard by the people for God’s law, sexual sin, and idol worship. It is during this time God sends prophets to speak to the people and warn them to turn from their sinful ways and turn back to Him, after 200 years of patience God**

sends the Assyrians to take Israel (the 10 northern tribes) into captivity. Judah continues to have glimmers of hope such as king Josiah whose workers find the book of the law when they are repairing the Temple, and begin to tear down all the high places, but these glimmers are short lived and the prophet Jeremiah comes to preach 70 years of captivity by their enemies, the king and the people refuse to listen and Babylon indeed in 586 BC king Nebuchadnezzar and his army destroy the temple and carry the people of Judah and many of the sacred vessels back to Babylon. During these 70 years of captivity, we continue to hear God speak through his prophets, and then God in His faithfulness causes a pagan king to let the captives go back to rebuild their wall, their homes, the house of worship, and he even gives them the means to do it. It is here we meet a faithful priest and scribe, Ezra and cupbearer to a pagan king Nehemiah whose compassion sends him to head the rebuilding of the wall.

They encourage the people to learn from what has happened and follow the Lord wholeheartedly, leaving their idols behind. In Nehemiah chapter 8, **we see a beautiful picture as they gather the entire community for a reading of the law, reminder that is the first 5 books of our Bible**, the Scripture says the whole community gathered, and there were those who went through and explained to the people what they were hearing, and in response they weep as they realize how far away they are, but the leaders encourage them not to weep, because this is a Holy day, and on the 2nd day of reading, they realize they are to be celebrating the feast of booths, so they respond to God's word and for seven days read from the book of the law, and respond to the Lord in a way the Bible says had not happened since Joshua was their leader about 900ish years ago.

**The OT wraps up with the prophet Malachi. It is written like a court case where the Lord shows them all their sins, and how do repent of**

**them, and even in this there is a promise of the Messiah to come and of the prophet Elijah. I love the reminder in 3:6, I the Lord do not change, therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. When God makes a covenant, He is faithful when we are not.**

### **The Silent Years**

**Never forget, as we turn the page from the OT to the NT, 400 years elapse. During this time God is silent fulfilling the words of the prophet Amos. 8:11 “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord God, “when I will send a famine on the land—not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.”**

During this time schools arise where scribes begin to interpret the word of God, the Pharisees and the Sadducees arise. The world leadership changes several times and Israel falls under the control of Greece, Egypt, and finally Rome. Greek becomes the common language and the Hebrew Scriptures are translated into that which gives us the Septuagint (LXX).

### **New Testament**

**The silence is broken when the angel Gabriel visits the priest Zachariah during his temple duties to tell him that he and his elderly barren wife are going to have a baby who will be in the spirit of Elijah and prepare the coming of the Lord.**

#### **Gospels:**

The first 4 books of the NT are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John called the Gospels which means the Good News. They all tell of the Messiah, Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. They are told with many of the

same stories with different perspectives and details, which sometimes seem to contradict each other, but they do not. They are named for the men who wrote them. I would suggest that they are geared toward different audiences. **Matthew** (an Apostle-Levi, the tax collector) is geared to the Jews, he is always referring to the genealogy, the fulfillment of Scripture, and uses a lot of references to the OT. **Mark is geared to a Roman** audience, it is the short, miracle packed Gospel, constantly seeking to prove the Messiahship of Jesus through what he did on earth. Many people think Mark's Gospel was supplied by Peter to him since he was not present for many of the details and they were very close (1Peter 5:31).

**Luke is the only Gentile writer in the Bible. He was a doctor; his Gospel is geared toward all people. He tells stories about the marginalized in society, including women, never miss the Jesus, God, the Bible elevate women in a society that did not.**

Luke does not begin his genealogy with the chosen Abraham, but with Adam, reminding us that all people can come to salvation through faith.

Finally, there is John, a much later writing by the Apostle John, he gives such hindsight. He explains a lot of things that the disciples did not understand at the time, he makes his purpose clear, that people would come to Christ and be saved, He lets us know once saved that we are children of God and that eternal life begins at the day of salvation.

**All of the gospels tell different stories from different perspectives, but they all have the same message,** Jesus lived a sinless life, did miracles no one else could, and does everything to please God, proving that he is the perfect once and for all, substitutionary Lamb of God that the whole OT has been pointing to. All of the Gospels tell of the death and resurrection of Jesus as this is the act that proves he is the

Messiah. This is what separates Christianity from the other world religions. Our leader is not dead. He died, rose again, and lives inside of each of his believers as the Holy Spirit. If you want to know what God is like, you need to read and study the Gospels, not just snippets taught or preached, but the books as a whole.

**Jesus said if you have seen me you have seen the Father. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. (Col 1:15a). John 1 reminds us that Jesus was there with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit at the formation of the world. In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him and without him not anything that was made was made.**

### **Acts:**

The book of Acts opens with the ascension of Jesus, as a continuation of Luke's Gospel, Acts is the history of the church and how Christianity spread throughout the known world. Luke opens with the reminder that after Jesus' death, he rose and walked with and taught his disciples many things for 40 more days (a time of transformation in the Bible). He told them to wait in Jerusalem for the gift of the Holy Spirit and the purpose of that gift, to receive power and to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, and as he ascends into heaven and those on the ground are watching, two angels ask them why they are staring, and reassure them Jesus is coming back the same way they saw him go (on the clouds). We see them receive the gift of the Holy Spirit about 10 days later during the celebration of the day of Pentecost. And we see the power of the Holy Spirit as Peter who previously was so fearful that he denied even knowing Jesus 3 times stands up and boldly preaches the Gospel leading 3,000 people to follow Christ. The church is formed and we see the body together



sharing everything, doing miracles, preaching, and facing a great deal of persecution for sharing Jesus. **Don't ever miss the fact in the book of Acts that as the church faces persecution it grows! We see the pillars of the church (Peter, James, and John) remain at Jerusalem, but the gospel spreads through men like Paul, Silas, Barnabas, Timothy, and Phillip. The book of Acts closes with the Apostle Paul in prison for preaching the gospel, reminding us of the cost for following Jesus, but also the sovereignty of God.** All throughout the book we see that those following God are arrested, beaten, Stephen and James are martyred, God had said back in Acts 9:15-16, at Paul's calling that he would bring his name to gentiles and kings, and that he would show him how much he would suffer for the name of the Lord. As Paul left for Jerusalem (the place that led to his imprisonment) from Ephesus the church had tears and asked him not to go, but Paul said that despite the fact that the Holy Spirit had revealed to him that chains and afflictions awaited him in every city, he was to go (20:23). The Holy Spirit gives us the power to have this kind of dedication to the One that died for us.

## **Letters**

It is during the time of the book of Acts that almost all of the letters (the 21 books between Acts and Revelation) are written. 13 of them are written by the Apostle Paul who is out on mission sharing the Gospel and planting churches. **They are called the Pauline epistles/letters and span Romans thru Philemon.** If you are new to Bible study, these names seem overwhelming, what are these books? Each is just a letter written to either a church or an individual to show them how to follow Christ. **Some are written to correct a problem that is happening in the church, and some are just instruction or encouragement. They are ALL beneficial to us today or the Holy Spirit would not have inspired Paul to write them or to include them in the book we hold today that has survived all the generations till today.**

**These letters give us the basis of our faith and how we should live it out in Scriptures like “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, God proves his love for us in this, that while we were still sinners Christ died for us, and if we believe in our heart that Jesus is Lord and confess with our mouth that God raised him from the dead we will be saved, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, it is no longer us who live but Christ who lives in us and the live we lead, is not for ourselves, but for Christ who died for us. We should rejoice always, being thankful in all circumstances, we should have the mind of Christ, we should take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. We should not be conformed to the patterns of this world but be transformed by the renewing of our mind.**

They teach us how to handle problems in the church and how to pick Godly leaders. **The general letters begin with the book of Hebrews whose author is anonymous, but the message is timeless. It is addressed to the Hebrew Christians who were tempted to return to the old system of Temple worship. It not only reminds us not to turn back to our old ways of worship before we knew Christ, it shows us how Christ fulfilled all the Old Testament foreshadowing about the Messiah and that he is the perfect High priest once and for all.**

**The remainder of the NT letters are named for who they are written by and continue to remind us of how to walk out our faith in phrases like be doers of the word, not hearers only, faith without works is dead, as he is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, put away all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander, crave pure spiritual milk, by His divine**

power, he has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 P 1:3), grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (3:18), God is light and in Him there is no darkness, if we say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness we are a liar (1J 1), abide in Him, love one another, abide in the teaching of Christ, do not receive false teachers, (2J), Support fellow workers (3J), contend for the faith that was delivered, pray in the Holy Spirit, have mercy on those who doubt, save others by snatching them out of the fire (Jude), and countless others.

## **Revelation**

**This brings us to the end which is the New Beginning.** This is where God makes all things new, back to where it was before man sinned. John writes the book of Revelation from the island of Patmos where he has been exiled. It is about 60 years since the crucifixion. He is the last remaining Apostle; all the others have been martyred for their faith and church tradition says they had tried to martyr John by boiling him in oil but when he did not die they exiled him there. **Jesus begins by giving him letters to 7 churches, these are contained in the first 3 chapters and should be read in all churches for us to examine ourselves to find were we are and are not pleasing the heart of God.** In chapters 4 and 5 John visits the throne room of heaven, so much to learn and study. I will not attempt to explain anything in Chapters 6-19, but it is a series of visions of how judgement will be poured out at the end times. Many scholars have undertaken explanations of this book and there is a lot of controversy about the specifics of what it means, when it will happen, and whether the church will still be here or not. **This I know, when the disciples were asking Jesus when all these things would take place in Matt 24, he told them a lot of things but ultimately, he told them that only the Father knows and, in the meantime, the believers should be faithfully doing what they are called to.** I have no objection to people

studying these chapters, they are there for us as is the rest of Scripture to learn. I do object with spending so much time debating the details that we miss what God has given us to do today.

**Chapters 20-21 Show us the final demise of our enemy Satan, the final judgment, and our beautiful new home. Read the following:**

**21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." 6 And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. 22 And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. 27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.**

**Creation, Rebellion, Redemption, Recreation**

**This is HIS story**

**Let us pray!**