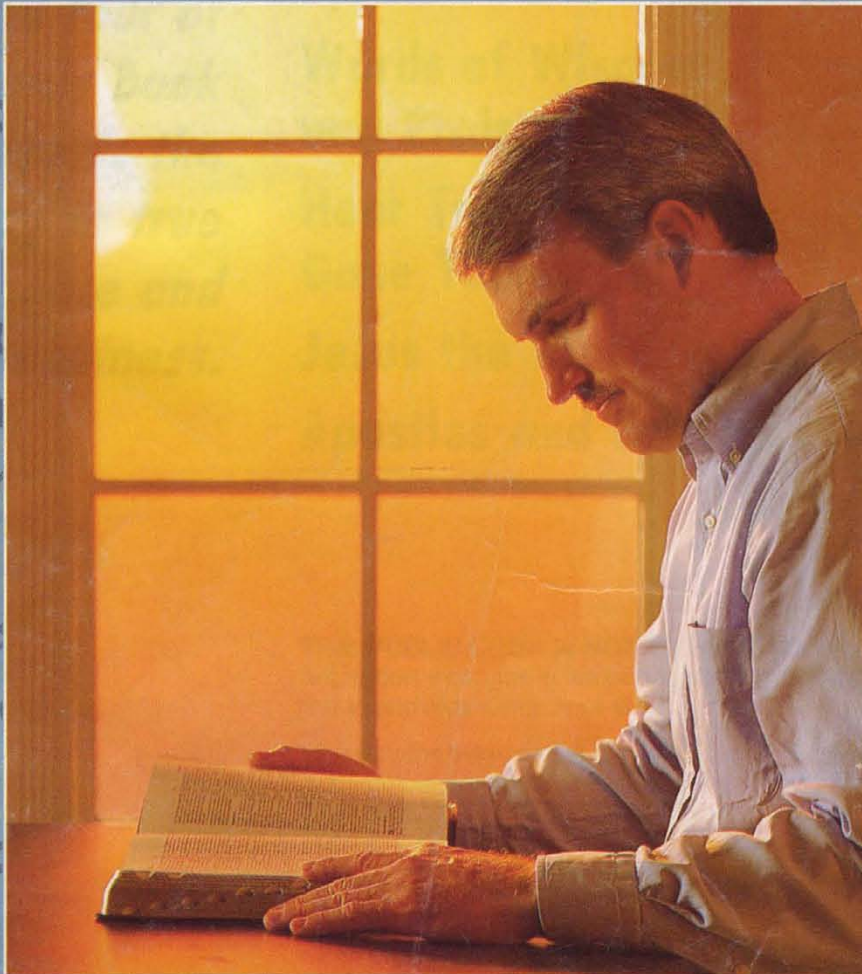


THE BIBLE



A GUIDED TOUR

The Bible

A GUIDED TOUR

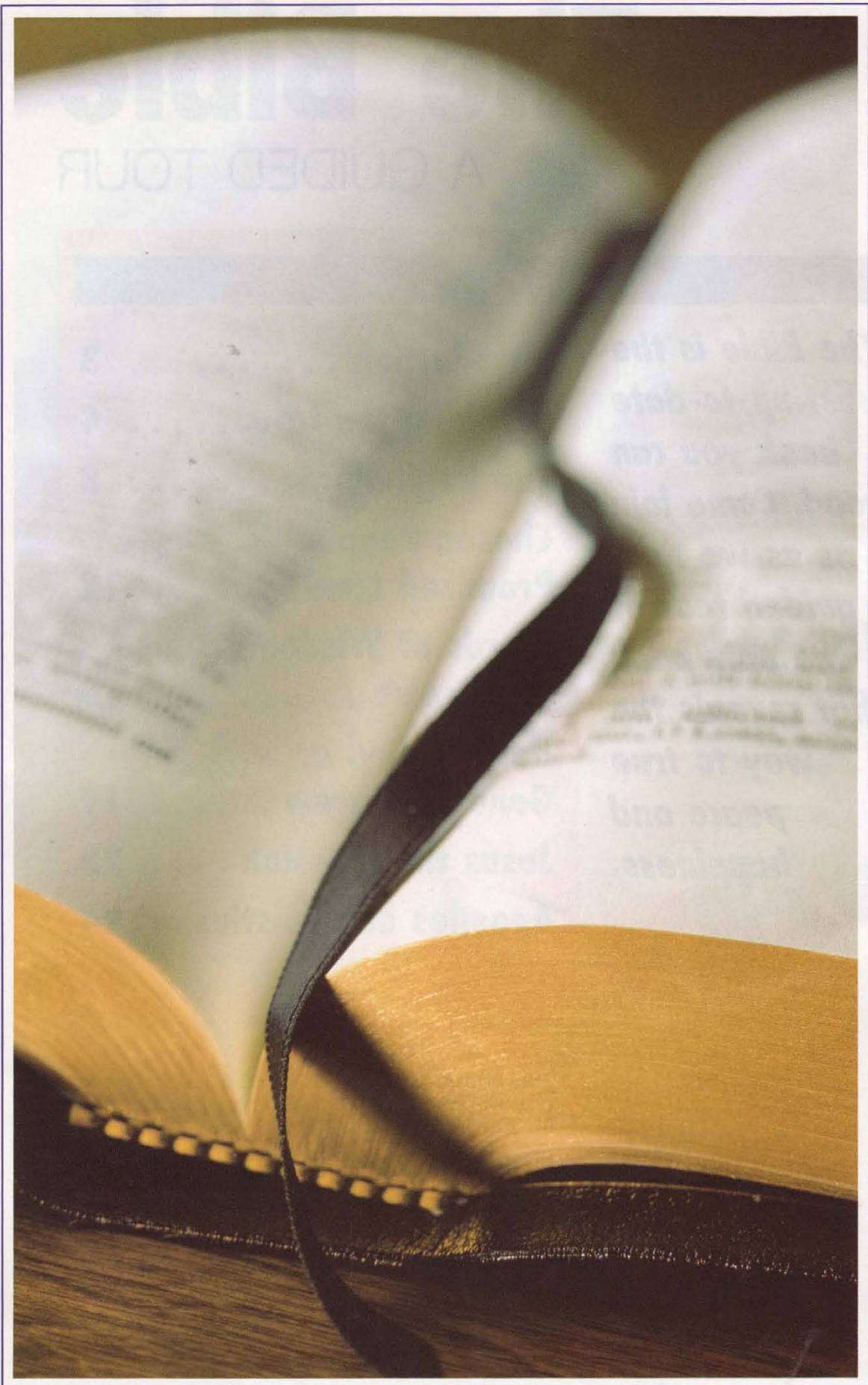
The Bible is the most up-to-date book you can read. Come join us as we take a guided tour of the only book that reveals the way to true peace and happiness.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

Most of us have a Bible, and we plan to read it one day. But we keep putting it off. Or maybe we start, but give up after reading a few chapters.

Why? Maybe because the Bible seems to be such an intimidating book. It even looks difficult to read, with its hundreds of pages of small type and old-fashioned, hard-to-understand language. This makes it seem imposing and dignified, but not very "user-friendly."

This booklet is designed to help you explore the Bible and see for yourself what it is like, what it is all about and how you can learn to use it.

Many of us, even if we're not particularly religious, still regard the Bible with almost superstitious awe. If we are asked to swear or affirm on one, we think twice before shading the truth. We feel uncomfortable about throwing away or even damaging a Bible. So most homes have at least one — probably more — around somewhere.

What's yours like? Is it a big, old family Bible, with heavy, embossed covers, brass corners and a stately title page telling you it was printed back in MDCCLXX, whatever that means? Maybe it's been in your family for generations, and now it's a treasured heirloom, stuffed with old newspaper clippings, funeral and birth notices and some wildflowers Great Grandma pressed between the pages back in 1920-something. You love this old book, and you wouldn't dream of parting with it. It's up there in the closet now, gathering respect, honor — and dust.

Perhaps your Bible has a white leather cover. You used it on your wedding day, but not much since.

Or is it one of those new paperback versions with a trendy title that makes it seem not so much like a Bible — until you try to read it?

The Bible is still a best-seller. Millions of copies are distributed every year in hundreds of different languages. It's a book we keep but don't read, one we often quote but don't understand, one we say we love but don't really like.

It may be the "good Book," but what is it good for?

Even many religious people know only a few famous passages like the Ten Commandments, the "Lord's

This brochure will help you explore the Bible and see for yourself what it is like, what it is all about and how you can learn to use it.

Prayer" and the "Sermon on the Mount." They have only a vague idea of what the rest of the Bible is about. They may know some of the stories, like the one about Noah and the Ark, or Abraham sacrificing Isaac, or Samson and Delilah, or David and Goliath. They've heard of Moses, Elijah, Paul and the scribes and Pharisees. But where — and how — do they all fit together? Or do they?

Is there indeed a story in this bewildering labyrinth of prophecies, psalms, proverbs, epistles and genealogies? How do you begin to discover what it is all about?

A good way to feel at home in unfamiliar territory is to take a guided tour. The guide can show you around, answer questions and point out interesting things along the way. You soon get an overview that helps put everything in perspective.

CHAPTER ONE

Breaking the Ice

Let's go through the Bible together from start to finish.

There is a lot of territory to cover, but we'll move quickly, since the goal is to give you an overview of the book. We'll pause from time to time during this tour to explain some things you might not otherwise understand.

(If our tour is a bit too basic for you at times, please bear with us. Some people on this tour may be opening the Bible for the first time in their lives.)

We can't explain everything, of course. The Bible is a big book, and its pages invite a lifetime of study. But this quick, introductory tour will help you

Bible you will be using is complete. Any Bible that contains all of the Old and New Testaments will be suitable for this quick tour of the Scriptures.

So if you're ready, let's start by looking at the cover. In addition to the words *Holy Bible*, you'll probably see a designation of which version you have.

If your Bible is older, it most likely is what is known as the **Authorized** or **King James** version, because it was prepared and published under the patronage of King James VI of England in 1611. Or your Bible may be an updated version of the Authorized known as the **Revised Standard Version**. Many popular, modern versions have been published, among them the **New International Version**, the **New King James** and the **New English Bible**, so you may have any one of dozens of different versions of the Bible.

We are using a New King James Version as our reference, since it is a good blend of contemporary and traditional. If you are using another version, you may find the wording slightly different, but all the other essential features will be the same.

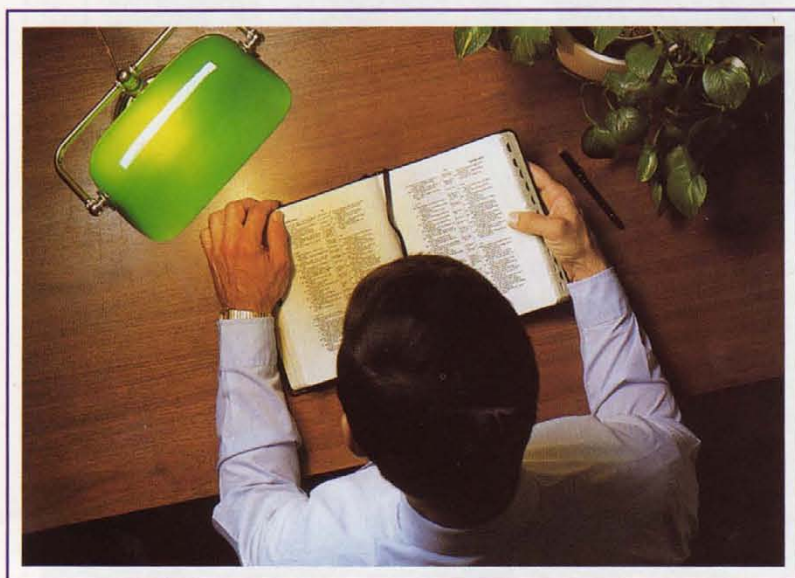
Now look at the title page. Under the title you'll see words such as *Containing the Old and New Testaments*, showing that the Bible is divided into two main parts.

The Old Testament tells of events from the creation of man to a time about 400 years before Jesus Christ was born. The central theme is the rags-to-riches-to-ruin story of ancient Israel, God's chosen people. These people lived in the ancient Middle East.

The New Testament, much shorter than the Old, contains the four gospels, each recounting the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. The gospels are followed by the

Acts of the Apostles, which tells the story of the first years of the Christian Church. The New Testament also includes many of the letters (known as "epistles") written by the apostles. It concludes with the Apocalypse or Book of Revelation.

Both testaments of the Bible are important. The writers of the New Testa-



THE BIBLE INVITES A LIFETIME OF STUDY

see how the Bible all fits together and how its basic themes are developed. When we're finished, these hundreds of pages of small print won't seem quite so mysterious. We hope this tour will whet your appetite to come back and explore more thoroughly.

4 It is important that you follow this tour with a Bible at hand. Make sure the



THE BIBLE LOOKS AT THE WORLD FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

ment presumed that their readers were familiar with the Old. In fact, you cannot fully understand the New Testament except in the light of what is in the Old, while the Old Testament is incomplete without the New.

You also may notice, on the title page, a paragraph that reads something like this: *Translated out of the original tongues and with the former translations diligently compared and revised.*

Hebrew and Aramaic were the original languages of the Old Testament. The New Testament was originally written in Greek. What you are looking at is a translation.

After the title page, you may find a list

explaining abbreviations and perhaps a pronunciation guide for some of the unfamiliar names and places. There may also be a few pages of introduction or a preface from the publishers. Most King James Bibles reproduce the letter of dedication by the translators in honor of their royal sponsor. These prefaces and forewords are interesting, but they are not part of the actual text of the Bible and need not detain us now.

Next, you should find a table of contents listing the various books of the Bible in order. The word *Bible* derives from a Greek word, *biblon*, which means "book." The Bible is actually a collection of different books written

FINDING YOUR WAY

From time to time on this tour, we will suggest you look at some short passages in the Bible. You will need to know how to find them. The Bible is a big book, and locating a specific passage, if you don't know how to look, can be like searching for a needle in a haystack.

The books have been further divided into chapters and verses. Thus any particular passage can be found easily. For example, **Deuteronomy**

4:7 refers to the seventh verse of the fourth chapter of the book of Deuteronomy. Some short (one-chapter) books are referred to only by verse numbers; **III John 4-6** refers you to the fourth through sixth verses of the third epistle of John.

When you come to a reference printed in bold in the text (**like this**), we suggest you find the passage and read it. It will make the tour more interesting and help you get the feeling and flavor of

the Bible. We have also placed additional scriptural references in the graphics. There is no need to stop and read all these references during the tour. They are there to help you follow along as we progress through the Bible and so you can find your place if you get lost. A good guide doesn't want to lose his tour group! You will also find these scriptural references helpful if you decide to explore some parts of the Bible more thoroughly later.

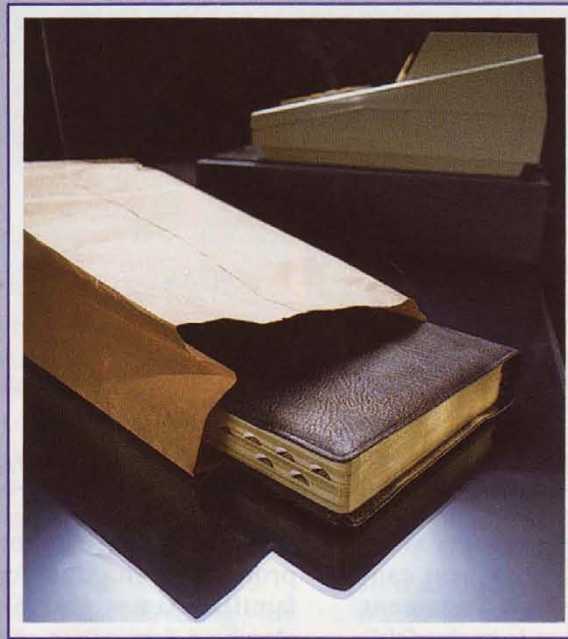
SO YOU'RE GOING TO BUY A BIBLE?

As we explained in the Introduction, almost any complete Bible can be used for this quick guided tour. But if you decide to study the Bible more seriously, you may soon want to buy a new one.

Buying a Bible used to be as easy as buying a model T Ford — you could have any color, providing it was black. Today, the religious section of your local bookstore has a bewildering array of Bibles. Which one is right for you?

Each of the many versions of the Bible has its strong and weak points. Some Bibles are **translations**, while others are **paraphrases** of the original languages. It is important to know the difference.

A paraphrase attempts to render the ancient scriptures



WHICH BIBLE IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

in clear, modern English. However, sometimes this clarity is achieved at the expense of literal accuracy.

A translation tries to stay as close as possible to the wording of the original lan-

guages, even if the resulting phrases sometimes sound a bit awkward to today's readers.

Some Bible versions have been designed for specialized study needs. They have features that help the more advanced student and can be useful once you have become more familiar with the Bible. There are also versions published by specific denominations. These tend to emphasize certain aspects of Scripture that seem to support particular doctrines. Again, this is sometimes achieved at the expense of literal accuracy.

If you want a sound, reliable Bible for everyday use, we recommend that you choose one of the popular, readily available translations.

The **King James Version** has been with us since 1611.

over a period of about 1,400 years by perhaps as many as 40 different authors. And yet the books consistently support each other in a coherent way.

This strongly indicates that these books, in many ways so different from each other, nevertheless spring from a common inspiration. That is one reason people who believe and trust the Bible recognize it as God's Word.

This book has been likened to an instruction manual from humanity's manufacturer. It boldly claims that God cre-

ated human life for a purpose. It tells us that God's plan for us extends far beyond our years of physical existence.

One of the best-known verses in the Bible is the so-called "golden verse" from the third chapter of the Gospel of John: "**For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life**" (John 3:16).

You've probably heard that before. But do you understand it? Why is

It is famous for its majestic language and is still the most quoted version of the Bible. However, you may find it rather old-fashioned and prefer a more modern version.

The **New King James Version** was published in 1983. This new translation preserves much of the style and precision of the KJV, but has modernized the language. Modern readers find it easier to read and understand. It is becoming very popular with Bible students in the English-speaking world.

The **New International Version** is a new translation published in 1978. Clear, readable language and helpful subheads and footnotes make the NIV suitable for the new Bible student.

Whatever translation you choose, make sure it has a strong binding. Clothbound and paperback Bibles are cheap, but they do not stand up to prolonged use. A leather-bound Bible is more expensive initially, but it will last a lifetime. Consider buying one with wide margins around the text. This provides room for notes you

might want to make as you read.

Other Reference Sources

Besides Bibles, you also will see in the bookstore many reasonably priced Bible-study aids. As you become more familiar with the Bible, you may want to add some of them to your personal library.

Two or three more versions of the Scriptures are useful for comparison and research. **Parallel Bibles**, in which several versions are printed side by side, are available.

Concordances, which are available for many of the translations, help you locate specific scriptures.

Bible dictionaries and **handbooks** explain unfamiliar terms.

Commentaries give you a complete, book-by-book, scripture-by-scripture explanation.

There are also several good **atlases** of Bible lands; these help bring the events of the Old and New Testaments to life.

What About Computer Bibles?

The latest thing in Bibles is a hand-held computer version. It looks more like a calculator than a

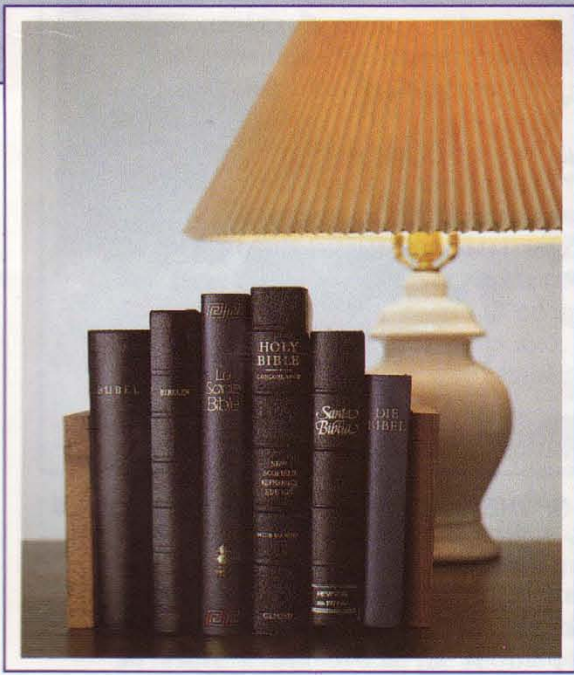
Bible, but it contains the complete biblical text.

Using a computer Bible, you can access any scripture almost instantly by entering the reference on the small keyboard. It can also be used as a concordance, and add-on features may soon make it possible to have more than one version of the Scriptures right in the palm of your hand.

These electronic Bibles are still rather expensive, but the price is certain to drop as they become more popular. Their big disadvantage is that they only display one scripture at a time.

We asked several of our staff to use a computer Bible for a while and give us their opinion. The verdict: They are compact and reliable study aids. For general reference work, they are quicker and more flexible than a standard concordance.

But computer Bibles, at least for the present, cannot replace a traditional, printed Bible. It would be almost impossible for a new student to become familiar with the overall scope of Scripture by accessing one verse at a time.



THE BIBLE IS THE WORLD'S BEST-SELLER

mankind perishing? How does believing in Jesus Christ give us everlasting life? What is everlasting life, anyway?

In another New Testament verse, the apostle Paul reminds a young man, "**From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus**" (II Timothy 3:15). In other words, the scriptures contain all we need to know to be saved. But saved from what? Saved for what?

Our tour of the Bible will look at these questions.

CHAPTER TWO

The Beginning

The first book of the Old Testament is **GENESIS**, often subtitled “The First Book of Moses.” The first revelation of God to ancient Israel was recorded by Moses.

Genesis means “beginning,” appropriate since this book contains a simple but profound account of the creation of the world. This is not intended to be a *scientific* explanation, but neither is it *unscientific*. The Bible tells us **that** God did it, not **how**.

When properly interpreted, scientific evidence can help us understand the details. When scientific evidence seems to contradict biblical revelation, one or the other, or perhaps both, have been misunderstood.

The Bible makes an important distinction between humans and other living creatures. The animals were made after their kind (**Genesis 1:25**) whereas man is made in the likeness and image of God (**verse 26**). Thus the Bible establishes from the first chapter that man is a unique creation, unlike anything else that exists.

God established an environment for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and gave them a choice between obedience to a way that would lead to life and disobedience that would lead to death. This choice was symbolized by two trees (**Genesis 2:17**).

After listening to the devil, Eve decided to eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree. Adam made the same decision. Their act led to banishment from the garden, leaving them to make their own way in the world, where they and their

descendants eventually “surely died.”

Adam and Eve were prototypes of us all. At this early time, and in this simple setting, they showed that humans, if allowed to choose whether to obey God, *could choose to disobey*.

Look at it from God’s point of view. God intended humans, created in his own image, to have everlasting life. He gave them free access to the tree of life, which symbolized that everlasting life.

These opening chapters of Genesis are vital to the rest of the story. They show us why mankind needs to be saved.

Adam and Eve’s decision to disobey set the course for the grim trail of war, hatred and strife that has marked human history. It has been estimated that of the last 5,000 years of man’s civilization only about 250 have been spent in relative peace. The human race has amply demonstrated that it cannot live in harmony.

We got off to a bad start in the Garden of Eden. Yet by the time we reach the last chapters of the Bible’s last book, we will see that in spite of our grim past and uncertain present, we humans face



“GOD SENT HIM OUT OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN” **GENESIS 3:23-24**

a positive future. God has a plan to save mankind, and the Bible tells us about that plan. It is, above all, a story of hope!

But we are getting ahead of ourselves. Let’s continue in Genesis. The human race became increasingly violent and corrupt over the next few hundred years. Eventually God intervened. God

instructed Noah to build an ark in which he, his immediate family and two of each kind of animal could be protected, while other life on earth perished in a great flood. After the Flood, it wasn't long before Noah's descendants rebelled again. God again thwarted man's rebellion by confusing his language, making it necessary for tribes to disperse.

of Isaac's son Jacob. When Jacob proved his faithfulness, God changed his name to *Israel* (**Genesis 35:10**), which means "prince of God." Israel had 12 sons; these sons and their descendants were known as "children of Israel." The remaining chapters detail how famine led the children of Israel to reside in Egypt.

The stage is set for the second book of the Bible.

Exodus

For some time after Joseph's death, the Israelites lived among the Egyptians. They prospered and grew until a later Pharaoh began to see them as a security risk and enslaved them (**Exodus 1:8-11**). God saw Israel's plight and intervened to bring them out of Egypt as his chosen people, to give them the land he had promised to their forefather, Abraham.

Leaving Egypt and slavery behind them, the Israelites arrived at Mt. Sinai, where God made an agree-

ment (or "covenant") with Israel. If Israel would obey God, they would be his chosen people (**Exodus 19:5-6**) and become an example for other nations. If, however, they chose to disobey, they would forfeit God's blessings.

Do you notice some parallels between this story and that of Adam and Eve? Israel also had a choice: Obey and everything will go well. Disobey and consequences are inevitable. It is a recurring theme throughout the Bible.

God's principles in the covenant between God and Israel are summarized in 10 great commandments.

Leviticus

The third book of Moses, Leviticus, records laws and statutes that would regulate life in the Promised Land. God was teaching these ancient people that sin has serious consequences. The ritual slaying of animals emphasized that the penalty of sin was death.

Numbers

The name of this book is derived from a census in which Moses numbered the



"BY YOU ISRAEL WILL BLESS" **GENESIS 48:20**

In its opening chapters, the Bible uses broad strokes to paint a picture of how and why mankind became estranged from God and embarked on a way of life that leads to death.

The Bible now narrows its focus to tell the rest of the story from the point of view of just one branch of the human family, the people of Israel. (Whenever we refer to "Israel" on this tour, we mean the people of *ancient* Israel who lived in the Middle East thousands of years ago, and not the Jewish state that was established in 1947.)

The history of Israel begins with Abraham. God ordered Abraham to leave his homeland and to journey towards a distant promised land that eventually would be given to him and his descendants as an inheritance.

God further promised Abraham that if he remained faithful, all the people of the earth would be blessed through him. God used Abraham and his family to play an important role in God's plan of salvation for the human race.

The story continues with the experiences of Abraham's son Isaac, and then

A NOT-SO-ANCIENT LAW

Some laws in the Old Testament may at first seem rather old-fashioned. But look again. Many of them confront the same issues that plague society today: crime, corruption, poverty, greed and even the destruction of the environment. Here are timeless, logical, commonsense principles that would help any people at any time build a fair and just society. These principles would provide a foundation on which national greatness could be built.

Notice, for example:

Exodus 21:35-36: "And if one man's ox hurts another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the money from it; and the dead ox they shall also divide. Or if it was known that the ox tended to thrust in time past, and its owner has not kept it confined, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead beast shall be his own."

Exodus 22:7: "If a man delivers to his neighbor money or articles to keep, and it is stolen out of the man's house, if the thief is found, he shall pay double."

Exodus 22:26-27: "If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will

be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious."

Leviticus 19:9-10: "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the

against it to take it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an ax against them; if you can eat of them, do not cut them down to use in the siege, for the tree of the field is man's food."

Deuteronomy 22:8: "When you build a new house, then you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring bloodguiltiness on your house if anyone falls from it."

Deuteronomy 22:6-7: "If a bird's nest happens to be before you along the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, with the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young: you shall surely let the mother go, and take the young for yourself, that it may be well with you and that you may prolong your days."

Deuteronomy

24:6: "No man shall take the lower or the upper millstone in pledge, for he takes one's living in pledge."

Deuteronomy 25:4: "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain."

Deuteronomy 25:14-15: "You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure, that your days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord your God is giving you."



TIMELESS PRINCIPLES FOR A JUST SOCIETY

gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the Lord your God."

Leviticus 19:15: "You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. But in righteousness you shall judge your neighbor."

Deuteronomy 20:19: "When you besiege a city for a long time, while making war



"AARON'S ROD SWALLOWED UP THEIR RODS" **EXODUS 7:12**

tribes as the journey began. It is as much a story of Israel's failures as it is their successes.

Even with continual evidence of God's support, the children of Israel lacked faith. Time and again on the journey through the wilderness, they complained. Some even threatened to return to Egypt.

The Bible is remarkably honest as a history. This makes it different from other nations' historical sagas. Patriotic epics usually glorify a people's strengths, while minimizing their failures and weaknesses. Not so the Bible. It is relentlessly realistic about the chosen people's lack of trust and confidence in their God.

After a year or so of wandering, Israel arrived on the frontier of the Promised Land. Moses sent scouts to survey the territory, but after 40 days most brought back a negative report. Most of the spies encouraged the people to return to Egypt.

This was an important lesson for Israel. God had promised he would guide Israel to success. But Israel had to learn

to trust him.

Because of Israel's lack of faith, God told Moses Israel would spend 40 more years wandering before they would enter the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy

The name of this last of the five books often referred to as the books of Moses comes from a Greek word meaning "second giving of the law."

Just before the Israelites entered the land, the aged Moses reminded them of their covenant with God. He rehearsed their prolonged lack of faith and explained again why they wandered in the desert for 40 years.

Moses carefully rehearsed the laws and statutes that were to undergird the new society. He encouraged the Israelites to remain faithful to God so that their new lives in the Promised Land would be successful (**Deuteronomy 30:19**).

At the age of 120, Moses, one of the great men of God, died (**Deuteronomy 34:5, 9**). Before Moses' death, God guided him to appoint Joshua as his successor.

CHAPTER THREE

Chosen People, Promised Land

Now we come to a section of the Bible known as the historical books. This section of the Bible follows the people of Israel as they moved into the Promised Land.

Joshua

Under the firm and faithful leadership of Joshua, the Israelites made steady



"THE WALL FELL DOWN FLAT" JOSHUA 6:20

progress in occupying their new territory. The seemingly impregnable city of Jericho fell miraculously into their hands. They were unable, however, to gain control of the fortress city of Jerusalem. It remained a stronghold of the Canaanites for many more centuries. Then, as now, this city was a coveted but difficult place to command. Before

Joshua died, he reminded the people what God had done and would continue to do for them if they remained faithful to the terms of the covenant (Joshua 24:13-14).

Judges

Israel's faithfulness did not continue. After Joshua and the pioneers who had shared the wilderness experience died, the tribes began to drift into idolatry (Judges 2:7-11). The book of Judges shows what happened over the next three centuries. It chronicles the tragic results of the chosen people's inability to remain faithful.

Whenever the Israelites forsook God and his commandments, they suffered oppression from the nations around. In desperation, the Israelites would call out to God to save them. God would appoint a strong leader (or "judge" — hence the name of the book) to drive out the oppressors.

This cycle of unfaithfulness, oppression, repentance and deliverance repeated several times.

The lives of several judges are featured. You may have heard of some, like Deborah, Gideon and Samson. Others such as Barak and Othniel are not so well known.

If you explore this book in detail, you will discover that the Bible always tells both sides of the story — good and bad. Israel agreed to obey God and become a good example to the nations around. But they were no better than anyone else. If they forsook God and his laws, they suffered the results — and became a *bad* example. They were a violent people living in a violent age.

By the end of the period of the judges, the Israelites were not much closer to occupying

the land than they were when Joshua died some 300 years earlier.

The incidents in this book point to an important lesson. Israel's mistake is summed up in the final verse of the last chapter: "**In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes**" (Judges 21:25).

Ruth

At that time when most people were doing what was right in their own eyes, the story of Ruth is a refreshing change. Ruth followed the God of Israel despite her national heritage (**Ruth 1:16**). Her inspiring example of doing what was right in God's eyes was rewarded in a remarkable way: From her marriage to Boaz came a line of descendants that included Israel's most famous kings, David and Solomon, a line that led to Jesus Christ.

I and II Samuel

The books of Samuel pick up the story where Judges left off.

Samuel was the spiritual and political leader used by God to guide the nation. Whereas other nations had a human king, Israel was a theocracy.

But the Israelites decided they wanted a king like other nations. A dismayed Samuel warned them of the consequences, but to no avail (**II Samuel 8:7**). Despite God's admonition, a monarchy was set up in which Saul, David and a long line of kings determined the fate of the nation.

God did not set up his covenant with Saul because of Saul's constant disobedience. He did establish his covenant with David.

Most people are acquainted with the faith of David in confronting the Philistine giant, Goliath (**I Samuel 17:37**). David demonstrated repeatedly that he was a man after God's own heart.

With David began what some have called the golden age of ancient Israel. For centuries the nation's position in the Promised Land had been precarious, surrounded as they were by belligerent and resentful enemies. David pushed these enemies back beyond the frontiers. Strategic Jerusalem was captured for the first time, and David made it his political and religious capital.

David was not a perfect leader, but his heart was right. Though his sins were many, David always repented sincerely, with his whole heart. He expressed



"SO DAVID PREVAILED OVER THE PHILISTINE" I SAMUEL 17:50

many of his deepest emotions in poetry and songs. Many of them are preserved in the book of Psalms. We will take a closer look at the book of Psalms in chapter four.

I and II Kings

Solomon inherited from his father David a rich and prosperous kingdom, with secure borders straddling the major trade routes between Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Under Solomon, Jerusalem became a showpiece city. He built palaces, parks, government buildings and a magnificent Temple in honor of God. But as

Solomon's wealth and reputation grew, he allowed his wives and concubines he had taken to turn him away from God. Solomon's life began with glittering success but ended in frustration and failure — and in the division of his kingdom.

Israel split into two kingdoms. The northern tribes retained the name *Israel*, while the southern tribes became known as the Kingdom of Judah.

Two separate lines of kings ruled Israel and Judah. A few of these kings proved faithful to God, but most led their nations further down the road to idolatry and ruin.

God sent prophets to remind his people of their covenant relationship with him. Among the early prophets were Elijah and Elisha. But, though accompanied by miracles, their warnings were scorned.

As Israel and Judah stumbled along, powerful empires stirred around them. To the southeast, Egypt, Israel's old oppressor, was still a force to be reckoned with. To the northeast, the Assyrians, a fierce and aggressive people, became the dominant power. Through the prophets, God warned Israel and Judah to change their ways or lose their inheritance.

God's people ignored His warnings.

In the late eighth century B.C., Assyria invaded the northern kingdom, taking most of the people into captivity and exile (**II Kings 17:6-7, 18**). The Assyrians then besieged Jerusalem, but Judah's king, Hezekiah, asked God for help. God miraculously turned the Assyrians back and saved Judah.

The southern kingdom limped along for another 120 years before being invaded, conquered and enslaved by the Babylonian empire.

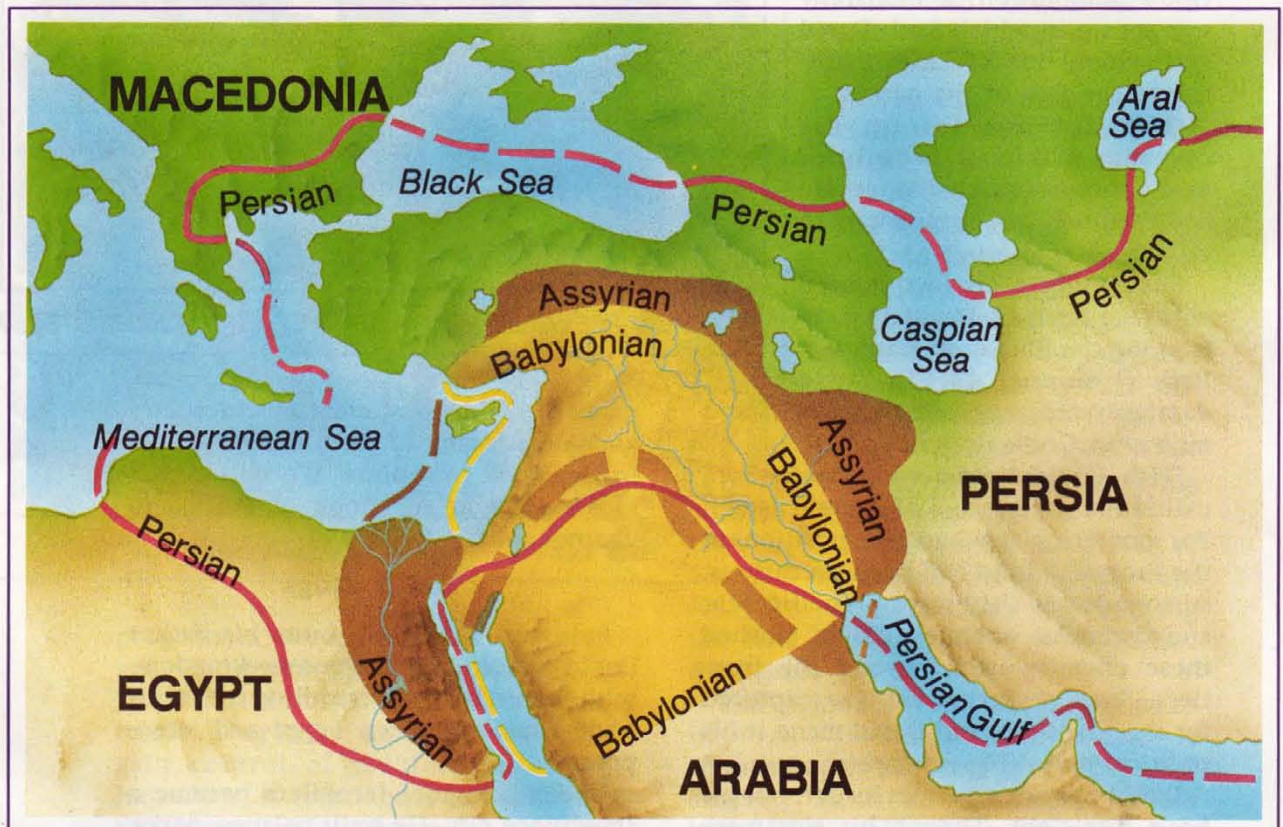
So the chosen people wound up back where they started — slaves and refugees. They failed to keep their covenant with God. Like Adam and Eve, they chose to disobey and suffered the consequences.

I and II Chronicles

Next in the Bible sequence we find the books of I and II Chronicles. They parallel the books of Samuel and Kings, paying special attention to the reigns of David, Solomon and the kings of Judah.

Ezra

In 539 B.C., the Babylonian Empire fell to a combined force of Medes and



ASSYRIA, BABYLON, PERSIA: DOMINANT ANCIENT KINGDOMS



"HE BROUGHT AGAINST THEM . . . THE CHALDEANS" **II CHRONICLES 36:17**

Persians. Unlike the Babylonians, who deported conquered peoples, the Persian emperors encouraged displaced populations to return to their homelands and reestablish their cultures.

The book of Ezra tells the story of the Jews who, by royal decree, returned to Judea and began to rebuild the Temple and restore the worship of God (**Ezra 1:2-3**).

When Ezra reached Jerusalem, he found that many of the people had drifted back into the errors of their ancestors. Would they ever learn (**Ezra 9:1-3**)? Ezra instituted a great revival in which he acknowledged his people's sins and asked God to renew the covenant.

Nehemiah

About this time, a Jew named Nehemiah attained a high position in the

Persian court. When he learned that the work of rebuilding Jerusalem had bogged down, he asked the emperor to allow him to help.

Nehemiah and Ezra worked together to restore the city. Ezra and Nehemiah, with Zerubbabel, helped the small community of Jews to establish themselves in and around Jerusalem.

Esther

Last among the Old Testament historical books is Esther, which relates how a courageous young Jewish woman saved her people from genocide in Persia. The book of Esther shows that God had not abandoned his people, even though they were in exile.

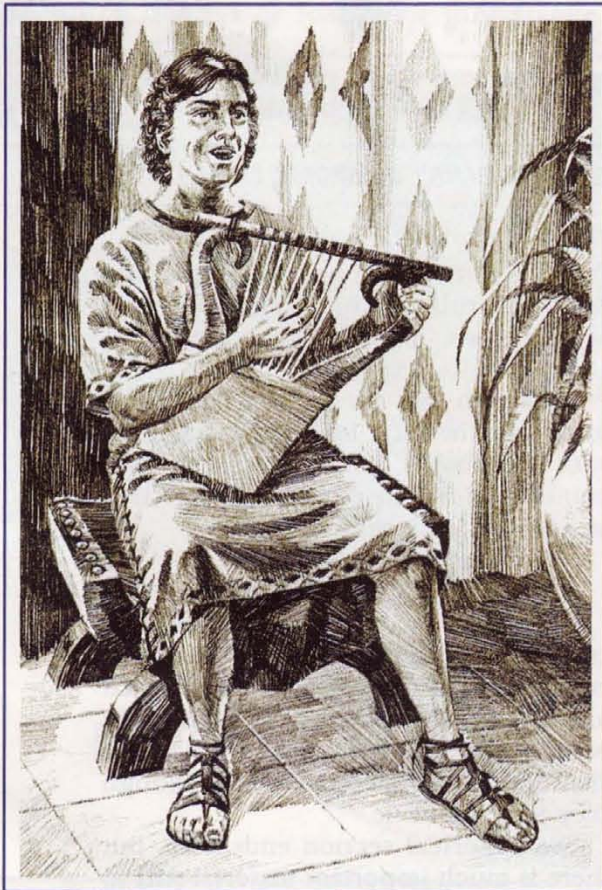
The historical section ends here, but there is much important material still to notice in the Old Testament. Stick around as we continue our tour!

CHAPTER FOUR

Words of Wisdom, and Praise

Now we arrive at the “poetical books” or “wisdom literature.” Whereas the historical books of the Old Testament followed the relationship between God and his chosen nation of Israel, this series of books shows how God also works with people on a personal level.

The wisdom books or writings are replete with spiritual insight and offer much inspiration and encouragement. Through the centuries, readers have re-



“PRAISE . . . WITH THE HARP” **PSALM 33:2**

ceived special comfort and direction from these books.

Job

First is the story of Job.

Job was a wealthy, God-fearing man, “blameless and upright” (**Job 1:8**). Satan accused him of being faithful to God only because of the prosperity he enjoyed. God allowed Satan to destroy Job’s possessions, his family and finally his health. Although in physical agony and mental despair, Job remained steadfast in his loyalty to God (**Job 2:10**).

A group of friends tried to comfort Job in a discourse that covers the next 35 chapters of the book. Their advice is exposed as inadequate and misleading. It was through God’s direct intervention that Job finally came to a deeper understanding of the will of God.

Psalms

The longest book in the Bible is a collection of poems, songs and prayers on a wide variety of subjects. Many of them were written by David, king of Israel.

The Psalms reflect many moods — happiness, fear, frustration, triumph, gratitude and even feelings of despair and defeat (**see box**). This book is a delightful and rewarding stop on our tour — an inspiring source of instruction, encouragement and comfort.

Proverbs

Proverbs is a collection of wise sayings, most of them compiled by Solomon. This book is a concentrated course in common sense, covering wealth, family relations, business ethics, getting along with others, personal success and much more. Some proverbs are humorous, others profound. Some may seem a bit obscure, requiring thought before their meaning becomes clear; others express common sense.

Proverbs, like Psalms, tends to become a personal part of the Bible for you. Come back and explore later.

Ecclesiastes

Next we find a short book with the strange name *Ecclesiastes*, a Greek word meaning “preacher” (traditionally Solomon).

Solomon, the leader of a strong and prosperous nation, was able to have and



"DIVIDE THE LIVING CHILD IN TWO" I KINGS 3:25

do everything he wanted, yet he did not find lasting satisfaction. Solomon concluded, correctly, that there is more to life than just this mortal existence. For ultimate fulfillment, man needs a personal relationship with God:

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

Song of Songs

The Song of Songs bears this name because of its poetic beauty. It is exquisite poetry about love and devotion between a man and a woman. Its consistent dramatic style has given it a place, in Old Testament studies, as reflecting the love between God and Israel and, in the context of the New Testament, as reflecting the love between Christ and the Church. The book is noted for both its artistic merits and the spiritual message it contains.

PSAMPLES FROM PSALMS

The book of Psalms has brought comfort and encouragement to people throughout the ages. Here are a few verses from the Bible's longest book:

- "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night" (1:1-2).
- "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer" (19:14).
- "Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking

guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it" (34:12-14).

- "Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass" (37:4-5).
- "Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance" (42:5).
- "O God, You know my foolishness; and my sins are not hidden from You" (69:5).
- "But I am poor and needy; make haste to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O Lord, do not delay" (70:5).
- "Praise the Lord! Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures

forever" (106:1).

- "Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart" (119:33-34).
- "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He gives His beloved sleep" (127:1-2).
- "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (133:1).
- "I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well" (139:14).

UNCOMMON SENSE

A gold mine of wisdom and common sense, the book of Proverbs is filled with witty, humorous and profound truths that can help us lead more productive and satisfying lives. Here are some examples:

- "Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, and so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man" (3:3-4).
- "As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to those who send him" (10:26).
- "Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad" (12:25).
- "Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished, but

he who gathers by labor will increase" (13:11).

- "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (14:12).
- "The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness" (16:31).
- "Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive" (17:28).
- "A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle" (18:19).
- "It is good for nothing, cries the buyer; but when he has gone his way, then he boasts" (20:14).
- "Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be

heard" (21:13).

- "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (22:6).
- "Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a bad tooth and a foot out of joint" (25:19).
- "Like a roaring lion and a charging bear is a wicked ruler over poor people" (28:15).
- "For as the churning of milk produces butter, and as wringing the nose produces blood, so the forcing of wrath produces strife" (30:33).
- "Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her; so he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life" (31:10-12).

CHAPTER FIVE

Hear Today, or Gone Tomorrow!

So far in this tour of the Bible, we have seen how people — even a blessed, chosen people — failed to obey God and his laws. If that were the whole story, the Bible would end on a dismal note. But there is much more.

We come now to the last major section of the Old Testament — the prophets. As Israel and Judah departed from their covenant relationship with God, God sent prophets to warn them of the consequences.

Seventeen books make up this section of the Old Testament. The longest of these are Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the “major prophets.” They are followed by Daniel and the 12 “minor prophets.” There is also the short book of Lamentations, which follows Jeremiah.

The prophets warned the nations to mend their ways to avert disaster (*Isaiah 1:16-17*). But they proclaimed hope

beyond the dark clouds on the horizon. They knew that the entire human family would one day live in harmony and accept God as supreme ruler (*Isaiah 2-4*).

The prophets showed that God would send a Deliverer, not a human deliverer like Samson or Gideon, but a descendant of David with supernatural power (*Isaiah 9:6-7*). He would come to rule all people and nations.

Through the prophets, God showed that his love and mercy were not diminished by his people’s unfaithfulness. Though Israel and Judah seemed determined to destroy themselves, God would save them and all mankind from the wreckage of human failures.

Jeremiah, for example, did not mince words when chastising the people (*Jeremiah 2:4-7*). They had mocked the covenant and would reap the consequences (*Jeremiah 18:15-17*). But, said Jeremiah, God would forgive them and cleanse them from their sins (*Jeremiah 33:7-8*).

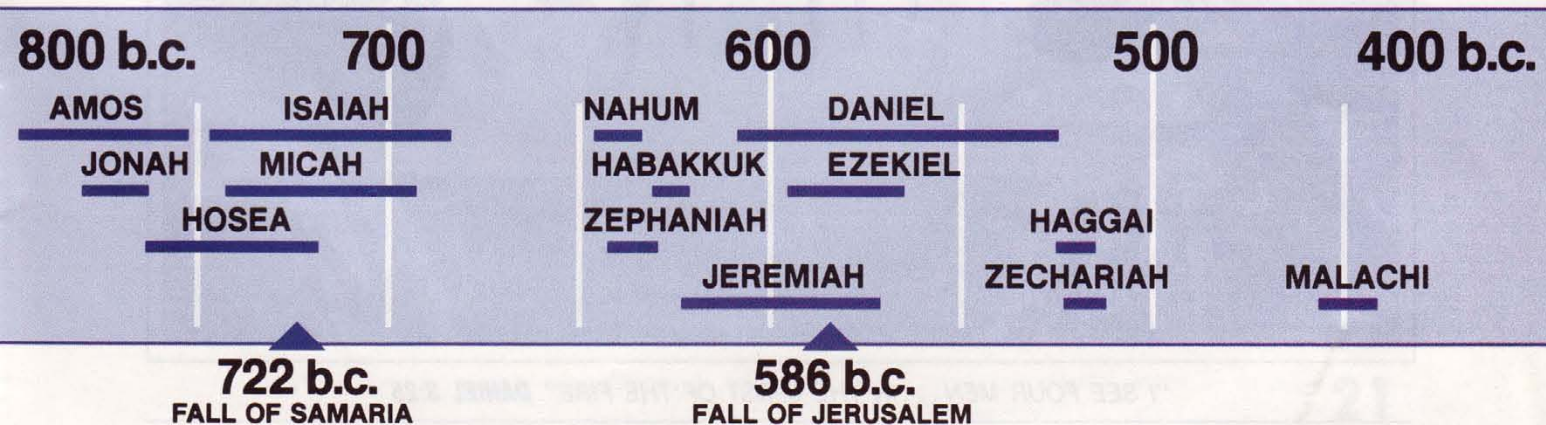
God also inspired Jeremiah to write the book of Lamentations. In an elegant and poetic style, Jeremiah depicted the awful consequences of Israel’s sin.

No one more sternly criticized the people’s behavior than Ezekiel (*Ezekiel 7:5-9*). Yet he also confidently predicted the restoration of Israel’s fortunes (*Ezekiel 36:24-28*). In most Bibles the book of Daniel appears next. For the purposes of this tour, however, we will first look at the group of books collectively known as the minor prophets.

Minor Prophets

These books are not minor because they are unimportant, but because they

THE PROPHETIC PERIOD. THE DATES OF JOEL AND OBADIAH ARE UNCERTAIN



are short. In the days when the Bible was written on a series of scrolls, these 12 short books were grouped together as one unit.

Hosea was the first of the “minor prophets.” His message underscored God’s love for Israel in spite of their unfaithfulness. He pleaded with them to return to God (**Hosea 14:1-3**).

Joel graphically described the “Day of the Lord,” a time of judgment on the whole world.

Amos spoke out strongly against corruption and social injustice.

Not all the prophets spoke to Israel. The one-chapter prophecy of **Obadiah** addressed Israel’s neighbor Edom.

Jonah is perhaps most famous for being swallowed by a great fish. He warned Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, to repent. Jonah’s mission showed that Israel’s potential enemies were also worthy of God’s mercy and compassion.

Micah spoke of the coming Messiah and even announced the town where he would be born (**Micah 5:2**).

About 150 years after Jonah, **Nahum**

predicted the fall of the Assyrian empire, which occurred in 612 B.C.

Habakkuk wrote just before the Babylonians invaded Judah. He urged his people to turn to God in faith for deliverance (**Habakkuk 2:2-4**).

Zephaniah saw beyond international turmoil to a world at peace under the Messiah’s rule.

Haggai and **Zechariah** were contemporaries of Zerubbabel, a leader of the Jews who returned from Persia to rebuild the temple. They encouraged the people to remain faithful and continue their work. Zechariah had a profound impact on the teachings of the New Testament, especially in foretelling the coming of the Messiah.

Malachi was the last of the minor prophets. He reminded the returned exiles about the coming Day of the Lord and about their ongoing responsibility to be ready for it (**Malachi 3:1**).

Now let’s turn our attention to the book of **Daniel**, an essential link between the Old Testament and the New.

Young Daniel was taken captive when



“I SEE FOUR MEN . . . IN THE MIDST OF THE FIRE” **DANIEL 3:25**

NON-CANONICAL BOOKS

Some versions of the Bible include a number of books often referred to as the Apocrypha. These books are not generally considered to be a part of the canon (recognized Scripture). They are of historical interest, but since most English Bibles do not include them, we list them here*:

*As listed in David Ewert's *From Ancient Tablets to Modern Translations: A General Introduction to the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: The Zondervan Corporation, 1983)
 †The numbering of these books depends on whether they are titled 1 and 2 Esdras or Ezra and Nehemiah.

Revised Standard Version

The Wisdom of Solomon
 Ecclesiasticus (Sirach)
 Tobit
 Judith
 1 Esdras
 1 Maccabees
 2 Maccabees
 Baruch
 The Letter of Jeremiah
 2 Esdras
 Additions to Esther
 The Prayer of Azariah
 (Song of Three Young Men)
 Susanna
 Bel and the Dragon
 The Prayer of Manasseh

Catholic Versions

Book of Wisdom
 Ecclesiasticus
 Tobias
 Judith
 3 Esdras or 1 Esdras
 1 Maccabees
 2 Maccabees
 Baruch, chapters 1-5
 Baruch, chapter 6
 4 Esdras or 2 Esdras
 Esther 10:4-16:24
 Daniel 3:24-90
 Daniel 13
 Daniel 14
 Prayer of Manasseh

Babylon attacked Judah. Through miraculous circumstances, he came to the attention of the Babylonian emperor, Nebuchadnezzar. When Nebuchadnezzar had a series of strange dreams, only Daniel could interpret them. Daniel showed that Nebuchadnezzar's mighty empire would fall. In its place a succession of three other empires would rise. Then, when the world was dominated by the last of these empires, God would send the Messiah to deliver his people and establish a kingdom that would bring the world peace (Daniel 2:44).

When we next meet the Jews in the Bible, they are a subject people of

Rome. In 537 B.C., the Babylonian Empire was crushed by the Persians under Cyrus. The Persians subsequently fell to the Greek armies of Alexander the Great in 331 B.C. In turn, the Greeks succumbed two centuries later to the rising power of Rome.

Indeed, as Daniel predicted, the Babylonian, Persian and Greek empires came and went. Rome was the fourth and last in the prophetic sequence. The Jews began to ask themselves: Was it time for the Messiah to come and lead his people to victory?

This was the world into which Jesus Christ was born.



CHAPTER SIX

Jesus the Messiah

Now we come to the New Testament. The title page probably includes the words of *Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*. The New Testament is made up of 27 separate books, beginning with the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and

six miles south of Jerusalem. However, he spent most of his life working as a carpenter in Nazareth, a town in the northern province of Galilee. At about the age of 30, Jesus began his active ministry. His powerful preaching, accompanied by miracles, soon attracted a popular following.

Jesus inevitably incurred the wrath of the religious authorities of the time. Jesus' message of love and humility exposed their hypocrisy, and they looked for ways to discredit him.

In spite of mounting opposition, Jesus continued to preach and heal. Among the common people he became a popular and controversial figure. Many thought he was the long-awaited Messiah. He talked of establishing the "kingdom of God" in which all people would live in peace and freedom.

But, instead of organizing a movement to overthrow the Romans, Jesus emphasized tolerance, peace, humility and submission to civil authorities. He spoke of God as his Father and often referred to himself as "the Son." He said he was the "bread of life" and promised that those who "ate his flesh" and "drank his blood" would have eternal life when he



"I MUST BE ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS" **LUKE 2:49**

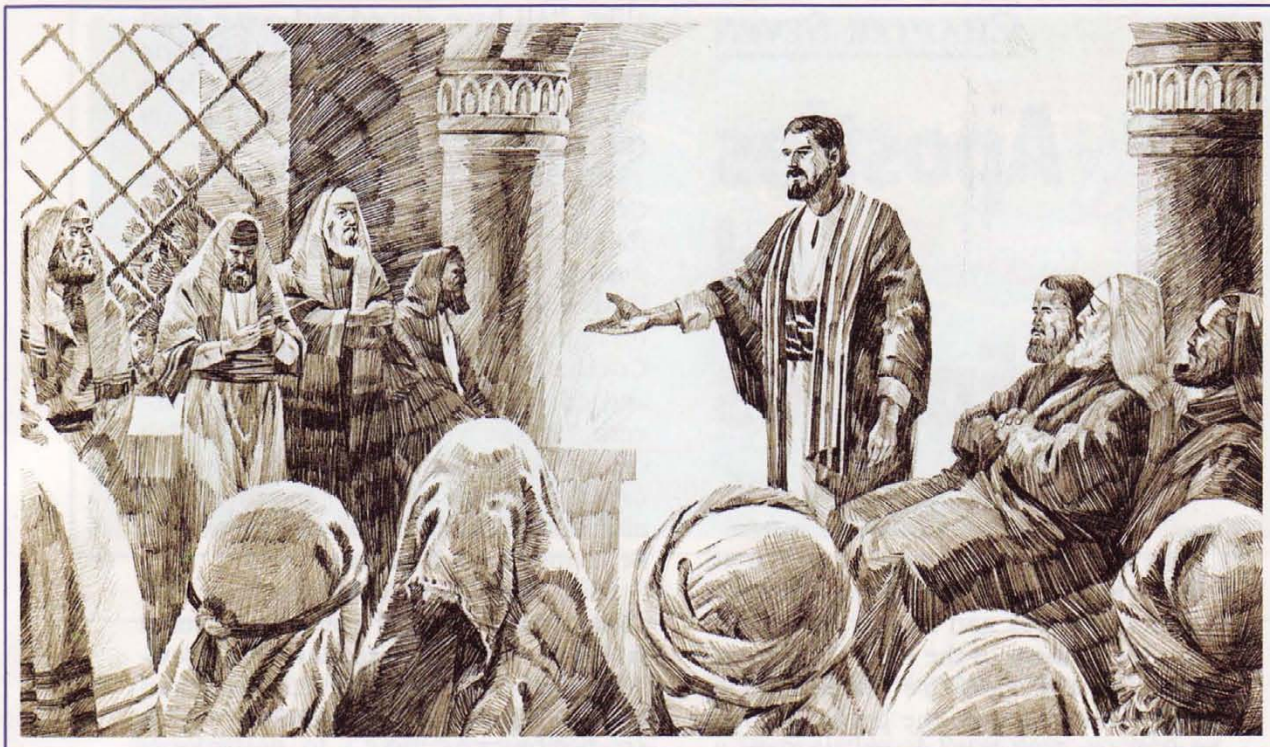
John. These gospels (*gospel* is an old English word meaning "good news") tell the story of Jesus Christ's life.

Jesus Christ is one of the best-known and yet least understood figures of all history. He lived on earth for only about 33 years, but he had a profound impact on what has happened since. Today, those who claim to follow his teaching make up the largest of the world's religions — nearly one and a half billion.

Each of the gospels tells the story from a slightly different point of view. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a village about



"I AM INNOCENT OF THE BLOOD" **MATTHEW 27:24**



"AND WHEN THERE HAD BEEN MUCH DISPUTE, PETER ROSE UP" ACTS 15:7

raised them up at "the last day." He said his kingdom was "not of this world," yet he assured those who followed him that they would rule with him. Most disconcerting of all was his insistence that he would die and then be raised from the dead.

Eventually, the authorities schemed to do away with Jesus. They arrested him, tried him for treason and crucified him. After his death, his disciples buried him and resigned themselves to continue their former lives.

Three days and three nights later, Jesus rose from the dead. At first the disciples could not believe what had happened. They had witnessed his death and burial. Now the resurrected Jesus was among them. Would he now restore the kingdom to Israel? they wondered (**Acts 1:6**).

The "time is not for you to know," Jesus responded (**Acts 1:7**). First there was work to be done. He gave them a commission (**Matthew 28:19-20**) and promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide and support them.

Christ then ascended to his Father in heaven, to return to earth at a time yet in the future.

The life and work of Jesus Christ are the central focus of the Bible.

Acts of the Apostles

A few weeks after Jesus' resurrection, on the Day of Pentecost, Jesus' assembled disciples received the Holy Spirit, as promised. Now, filled with spiritual understanding and power, the disciples realized that Jesus had come to rescue, not just a few downtrodden people in Judah, but rather the whole world. His goal was not physical liberation, but spiritual salvation.

The Holy Spirit opened the disciples' understanding to the full meaning of the prophecies concerning the Messiah. Enthusiastically, they began to spread the good news.

Much of the book of Acts is concerned with the work of the apostle Paul. After his conversion to Christianity, Paul traveled extensively within the Roman Empire, preaching the gospel and establishing churches. He was constantly persecuted and several times narrowly escaped with his life.

The apostles maintained contact with the new churches by letters, or "epistles."

CHAPTER SEVEN

Apostles and Epistles

The first Christians were Jews. But as Christianity spread, it reached people in the Greek and Roman world and introduced them to the Holy Scriptures.

One of the Church's hardest challenges was to accept the growing number of non-Jewish converts. At first it was hard even for some of the apostles to grasp that their new faith transcended their national, religious and cultural heritage. But God made this obvious



IN PRISON, PAUL WROTE TO THE CHURCHES UNDER HIS CARE

through the work of Peter and Paul (**Acts 10:34-35**). By the middle of the first century, Christianity had reached as far as Rome.

The church in Rome had Jewish and gentile converts, and in his **Epistle to the Romans** Paul admonished them all

alike. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" said Paul (**Romans 3:23**). Christ is the Savior of all, Jews and Gentiles, who put their trust in him (**Romans 3:29-30**).

The **first and second epistles to the Corinthians** were written by Paul to the church at Corinth, a major cosmopolitan center in Greece. Paul had to instruct the Corinthian Christians about recognizing various forms of sin (**I Corinthians 5:1-2**). Paul instructed and corrected in love, with deep concern for the young church. The 13th chapter of I Corinthians is sometimes called the "love chapter" because of its eloquent description of pure Christian behavior (**I Corinthians 13:4-7**).

In the **Epistle to the Galatians** Paul admonished the new converts to stand fast in the gospel (**Galatians 5:1**). Jewish legalism, especially circumcision, had been superseded by faith in Christ (**Galatians 3:26-29**).

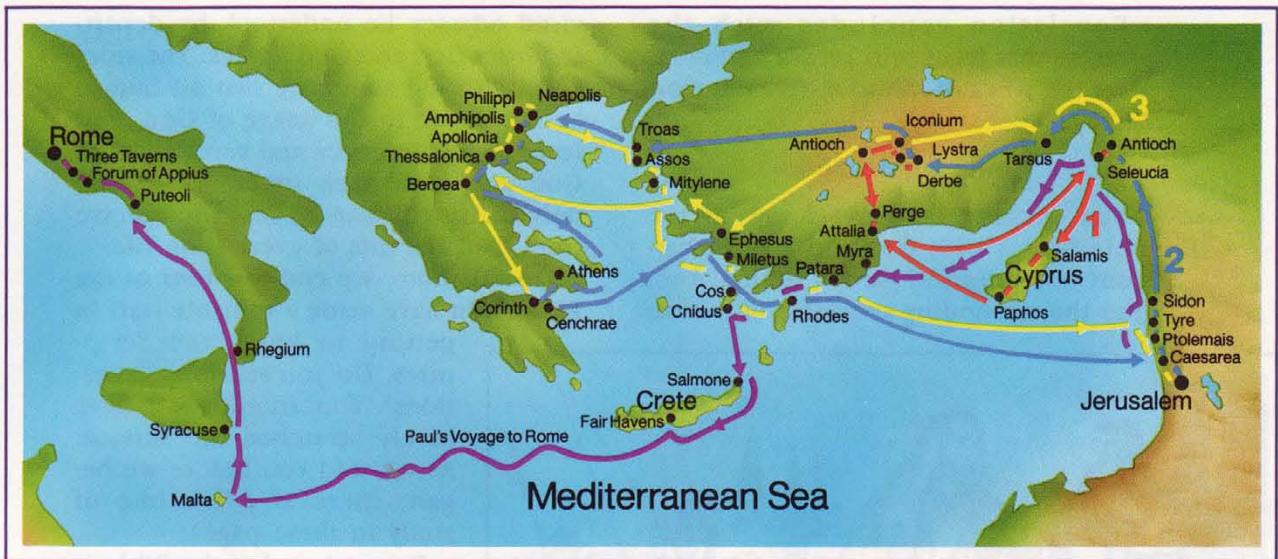
Ephesians was written to the church at Ephesus, the capital of the Roman province of Asia. References to Ephesus in the books of Acts and Revelation testify of the importance of this city (**Acts 19, Revelation 2:17**).

Philippians is a warm and personal letter of thanks to the first church Paul established on the continent of Europe. In this epistle, Paul expressed his appreciation for their monetary gift and encouraged them to remain faithful in the face of adversity (**Philippians 2:3-4**).

In the **Epistle to the Colossians**, Paul warned the brethren to resist the wrong ideas and practices that infiltrated the church in that region. Angel worship and ascetic practices were robbing Christians of the purity of the gospel. Paul stressed that Christians were complete in Jesus Christ, "who is the head

of all principality and power" (**Colossians 2:8-10**).

Christ's return was a main theme of Paul's two epistles to the church in the city of Thessalonica. In **I Thessalonians** Paul reminded the people to be ready for that event (**I Thessalonians**



PAUL'S PREACHING TOOK HIM THROUGHOUT THE GENTILE WORLD

5:2-4). But some members began to abandon their routine responsibilities in anticipation of Christ's immediate return. In **II Thessalonians** Paul reminded them to wait for Christ in a productive and law-abiding way (**II Thessalonians 3:11-13**).

The next three epistles, **I and II Timothy** and **Titus**, are known as the pastoral epistles. They were written to ministers to whom Paul had given charge over local congregations. These letters contain advice on church administration and the qualifications and duties of church leaders (**I Timothy 3:2-5**).

The short **Epistle to Philemon** is a personal letter from Paul to a member of the Church in Colossae concerning a slave who had run away. This little book provides an interesting glimpse into first-century society and is a good example of how Christians should treat one another.

Next you'll come to the **Epistle to the Hebrews**. This epistle was directed to Christians of Jewish background. The early Church was still greatly influenced by the customs of the Jewish faith. This book helped the Church to see how the Old Covenant, with all of its rituals, types and symbols, looked forward to fulfillment in Jesus Christ (**Hebrews 12:28**).

The next five books are known as general epistles. They were written to the Church in general, rather than to individual congregations.

James is an expressive book about

practical Christian living (**James 1:27**).

The epistles of Peter were written to the Church during a period of persecution. They offer encouragement to Christians to look forward in hope (**I Peter 1:6-7**).

The three epistles of John also encouraged Christians to remain steadfast in their faith. It had now been several decades since Jesus returned to heaven. As the years passed, false teaching began to affect the churches. These epistles were written at a time of great tension and strain in the Church and capture the urgency of the situation (**I John 2:18-19**).

The final epistle, **Jude**, is a fitting close to these letters. It is a reminder that in spite of the trials and tribulations that the Christian Church was suffering, its faith and patience would be rewarded (**Jude 24-25**).

Now we come to the last stop on our tour, the **Apocalypse** or **Book of Revelation**. Many people consider this to be the most enigmatic book in the Bible. Indeed, the colorful, glorious and often horrific visions, numbers, symbols and characters of the book of Revelation paint a complex and awe-inspiring panorama of the ultimate fulfillment of the purpose of God, including the events leading up to Christ's return, Christ's assumption of rulership over the world and hints about what lies beyond, into eternity, for the saved people of God.

Revelation concludes with the promise that Jesus will return and complete the Work of salvation (**Revelation 22:20**).

Come Again Soon!

The amazing book we know as the Bible begins with God and man in harmony in a beautiful garden setting. And, after the astounding spectacle of human

vised odyssey he undertook by departing from God and God's ways. The story ends with the assurance that all human beings, made in the image of God, will learn to live in peace and harmony with God and with each other. Then, and only then, will man be ready to receive from God the gift of everlasting life.

On this note, we end this tour of the Bible. You have made a valuable start in getting to know the Scriptures. Do you still have questions? You should. We have barely scratched the surface. As we told you before we began, there is a lifetime of study in these pages.

Remember that the Bible is a challenging book. You can't expect to understand everything all at once. Its contents will make you think and cause you to consider what you believe and how you live. As Paul wrote to Timothy, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (**II Timothy 3:16**).

There is enormous power in these books of the Bible. They can change your life, if you

let them. But that is a decision you must make for yourself.

We hope this guided tour has helped make the Bible a more interesting and valuable book and inspired you to continue studying it. Thank you for coming along!



APPIAN WAY: THE ROMANS WERE ROAD BUILDERS

history that is described thereafter, the book ends with God and man in harmony in a beautiful garden setting where the living waters of eternal life are freely available.

The Bible, in short, chronicles the story of God saving man from the ill-ad-