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*The Bible Panorama may be used with any translation of the Bible*

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GERARD CHRISPIN

# THE BIBLE PANORAMA

Enjoying the whole Bible with a  
chapter-by-chapter guide

Second edition:

Revised and expanded complete with CD-ROM

## PART ONE

### **Surveying the scenery of Scripture**

Each chapter of each book of the Bible plainly  
summarised and explained

## PART TWO

### **Enjoying the unhindered view with confidence**

Practical topics about the Bible to help you  
trust and read it



*Dedication*

To Georgia, Anastasia, Clara, Harriet, Raphaela and India—  
the most precious six young ladies in my life—and to their parents,  
whom I love.

*Jesus loves me! This I know,  
For the Bible tells me so.  
Little ones to Him belong:  
They are weak but He is strong!*

*Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me!  
The Bible tells me so.*

Only in the Bible will they read of such a love as this.  
Only in the Lord Jesus Christ will they experience it for themselves.

# THE BIBLE PANORAMA

Enjoying the whole  
Bible with a chapter-by-  
chapter guide

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# THE BIBLE PANORAMA

## COMMENTS ON PART ONE AND PART TWO

**Foreword by Lord Mackay of Clashfern,**  
former Lord Chancellor of the United Kingdom

**T**he Bible is the fundamental book of the Christian faith. It is a very substantial collection of books written by many different people over a considerable tract of time which ended almost 2,000 years ago. Written originally principally in Hebrew and New Testament Greek, rather than classical Greek, it has been translated into English in a number of versions and into very many of the other languages of the world and has attained an unrivalled readership.

If one wishes to consider the Christian faith, it is important to read and understand at least to a degree what is written in the Bible. For the Christian, the Bible is the revelation by God of His will and purposes for the human race and, indeed, for the world.

I was brought up in a home where the Bible was read as part of an act of family worship morning and evening, and I have heard over the years many expositions of different parts of it. But there is always more to learn from it than one has learnt, even after a long life in which its reading has played an important role.

For those who have no acquaintance with the Bible, it is not easy to read without some guidance. This very substantial volume is written as an attempt to provide comprehensive guidance to anyone who wishes to read the Bible with appreciation and a degree of understanding in particular of its relevance to our lives today.

If one wishes to become familiar with a landscape, it is often useful to seek a hill or other high ground from which to view the layout and to put into relative position the various parts that one encounters at lower levels.

It would be easy for a person who took up the Bible and started to read it to become immersed in detail which might have the effect of mystifying the reader and discouraging further progress. Gerard Chrispin has sought to prevent this

obstacle to appreciation of the Bible by proceeding by way of overview so that the broad outlines of the various books that make up the Bible form an introduction to each book, which in no sense replaces the teaching of the Bible itself, but helps the reader to approach it with understanding. The underlining of the principal emphases that one encounters on entering the books, chapters and verses is complementary to this technique.

In addition, in Part Two, readers are helped to deal with the various challenges that they may encounter in reading the Scriptures, as, for example, the suggestion of contradictions or inaccuracies or the like occurring within the Bible, and other suggestions that might be made by those wishing to undermine the authority of the Scriptures as the ground of Christian faith.

Finally, I would mention the flexible reading scheme suggested to enable a person interested in the Scriptures to find his or her way through the Bible as a whole in a manner which would contribute to an overall understanding and appreciation of this precious book which has been the foundation of the faith of Christians down through the generations. Many generations of devout readers of the Scriptures have found in them the words of eternal life and I commend this volume, whose purpose is to lead people of our day to a like precious faith, to all who are prepared to give the Bible an opportunity to speak to them.

**Appreciation by Prof. Michael A G Haykin**

Principal, Toronto Baptist Seminary, Toronto, Canada, and writer

Ours is a curious day. On one hand, we are awash with Bible translations. Never before have there been so many available to so many English-speaking readers. And yet, ours is a day in which biblical illiteracy is rampant. This illiteracy is not simply limited, as one might expect, to the homes of unbelief, but is increasingly apparent in Evangelical contexts, both families and congregations. Having had the privilege to teach in various Bible college and seminary contexts over the past twenty-three years, I have been regularly shocked to find young men and women, raised in Christian homes, ignorant of some of the basic facts and the storyline of Scripture.

There are probably a variety of reasons for this state of biblical illiteracy in English-speaking Evangelicalism. The theological unravelling of Evangelicalism that is transpiring on both sides of the Atlantic and other parts of the English-speaking world is certainly a key factor. Stiff competition from other forms of media would be another. The transition from modernity to post-modernity, which also entails a shift from the word to the image, is also central. But whatever the reasons, we need tools to help God's people mine the riches of His Word.

Gerard Chrispin has given us such a tool in this panoramic study of Scripture. Actually, it would be more correct to say 'tools', for in this book there are several Bible helps that, if faithfully used, will get the reader into the Scriptures and learning their content, overarching structure, and central message. I was thrilled to see the emphasis on Christ as the heart of the Scriptures. He is the One, in the plan of God, who joins the Testaments together. Then, Gerard Chrispin's plain and succinct overviews of each of the books of the Bible will give the reader a solid grasp of what the Bible is saying in each of its various parts. And the advice regarding how to read God's Word is extremely helpful for not only novices in the Scriptures but also for those who have been on the Way awhile. I sincerely hope this excellent work gets a wide readership.

## Appreciation by Richard Cunningham

Director of Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF), UK

**T**he church in the UK has reached a very significant moment in history. For the first time in 250 years, the secularists are within touching distance of being able to destroy what is left of our Judeo-Christian heritage. The student radicals of the 1960s, who ushered us into our post-Christian era, are now in power. And these poachers-turned-gamekeepers now shape the political and cultural landscape with instincts that are actively hostile both to the Christian worldview and to those who love the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. But it is not enough simply to lament our predicament. The real issue is how will God's people respond? The church has developed a relatively recent tendency to compromise or to withdraw in the face of such opposition. To compromise the foundational truths, which have become so odious to our society (such as the Bible's teaching on sexuality, the uniqueness of Christ, and the realities of heaven and hell) is clearly not an option. But neither is withdrawal from our lost world which so desperately needs the salt and light of Christian witness.

We must equip the next generation of Christians to know and to love the Scriptures so deeply and thoroughly that they will be able to shun the twin temptations of withdrawal or compromise. Romans 12:1–2 tells us that we will only be able to discern God's will for how we should live in this world if we can both resist worldly conformity and actively renew our minds. Only then will we display the transforming, non-conforming living which Paul describes as acceptable spiritual worship.

This timely and impressive tome by Gerard Chrispin is a valuable tool to get us all into the Bible and all the Bible into us. Gerard once said to me, 'Read the Bible to get blessing, Richard, but read the whole Bible to get balance.' He said this in the context of encouraging me to read the whole Bible through in a year. How grateful I am for such a lead then and, through his book, such a practical help now to continue reading through the whole Bible.

We all need constant help to know what we believe and why we believe it. And the two sections of *The Bible Panorama* combine to achieve these twin goals of reading the Bible with understanding, and developing confidence in the truth of its contents. This is surely the right formula for avoiding compromise and withdrawal. May the Lord use this work to get His people back to daily, disciplined and thoughtful study of Scripture.

**Appreciation by David Harding**

Pastor of Milnrow Evangelical Church, Milnrow, Rochdale, UK, Director of Christian Answer, and writer

**T**here are two views of the Bible that are crucial to master before ever taking out the microscope: first, the overview, and second, the sense of progress in each book (largely related to the chapters). Gerard Crispin has wonderfully brought us both in this work. This devotional-discipleship commentary on each chapter is therefore complemented by Part Two, including the appendices, which gives that larger view and sense of unity and cohesion of the Scriptures as a single volume with a single main theme of salvation through faith in Christ.

## COMMENTS FROM CHRISTIAN LEADERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

### GENESIS—PROF. ANDY MCINTOSH

**Professor of Thermodynamics and Combustion Theory, University of Leeds, England, executive member of Christian Answer, executive member of Truth in Science, apologetics speaker, and writer**

In this most instructive overview of Genesis, and of the whole Bible, Gerard Chrispin brings out nuggets of truth which not only warm the heart of the young diligent reader, but also instruct the mind of the careful student. Summarising each chapter with major themes and headings, he leads us to an overall view of the unfolding drama of God's redemptive dealings with mankind. I am delighted to recommend this book as a companion to the new convert who wishes to understand the major themes in each book of the Bible, and also to the older believer seeking to gain a helpful breakdown for leading studies in the Scripture. This book should be on the shelf of every pastor and student of God's Word.

### EXODUS—REV. MARTIN HOLDT

**Pastor of Constantia Park Baptist Church, Pretoria, South Africa**

I was very pleased recently to read Exodus in *The Bible Panorama*. More than once, Jesus asked his hearers whether they understood what was read. Reading the Scriptures is important but understanding what you are reading is better, and that is what we are marvellously helped to do in this clear and most helpful overview of the Bible. I will personally commend this book over and over again. It will definitely awaken a fresh love for the Word of God.

### LEVITICUS—REV. ANDY PATERSON

**Senior Pastor, Kensington Baptist Church, Bristol, England and Past President of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, UK**

Leviticus jars with the modern mind. And so many believers quickly give the book a skim-reading with superficial attention. They fail to appreciate its riches or clear pointers to Christ. But here Gerard Chrispin provides an ideal introduction to its big teaching which will stimulate a deeper and more detailed examination. Preachers also will value the clear and memorable subject divisions.

### NUMBERS—REV. DR D. ERYL DAVIES

**Former Principal of Evangelical Theological College of Wales, Bryntirion, Wales, and writer**

I found *The Bible Panorama* on the book of Numbers an interesting, stimulating and helpful aid to understanding this part of God's inerrant Word. I enjoyed reading it and benefited from it.

**DEUTERONOMY—REV. DAVID CHANSKI**

**Pastor of Providence Reformed Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA**

Gerard Chrispin has produced a summary that will help to familiarise less experienced readers with the Bible's general contents and enable readers to navigate lengthy and more difficult portions of the Scriptures with greater ease. It will also serve to suggest useful outlines and lessons for Bible study leaders. I found the section on the chapters of Deuteronomy particularly helpful.

**JOSHUA—REV. DR NIGEL SCOTLAND**

**Lecturer in Church History, University of Gloucestershire, England, and writer**

A valuable, practical and condensed overview of each chapter in the Bible. I found Joshua clear and easy to follow. It will be a useful, quick and handy guide to the contents.

**JUDGES—REV. DR TROY L. PRITT**

**Associate Reformed Presbyterian Minister, Arkansas, USA**

I reviewed comments from *The Bible Panorama* on Judges in some detail. This book will be particularly valuable as a companion book to the Bible for the young Christian and for those who are reading through the whole Bible for the first time. It is reminiscent of the Geneva Bible Notes which are still much loved and much used several centuries later.

**RUTH—BRYAN STONEHOUSE**

**Former Executive Director, Scripture Gift Mission, London, England**

*The Bible Panorama* includes amazing detail as you journey through Ruth—extremely helpful and engaging. It will give you an appetite to journey through the Bible itself.

**1 & 2 SAMUEL—REV. DR JOHN SCOTT**

**CEO of Daylight Christian Prison Trust, former Minister of Chelmsford Evangelical Presbyterian Church, England, and writer**

Gerard Chrispin's panorama of 1 and 2 Samuel serves as a road map through this narrative section of the Old Testament. This will be a helpful aid to lead the new reader into meaningful Bible study.

**1 & 2 KINGS—DR PETER J. WILLIAMS**

**Warden of Tyndale College, Cambridge, and Executive Member of Missions Vacances, France and Belgium.**

We can be very grateful for Gerard Chrispin's clear, vivid, accurate and memorable overview of 1 and 2 Kings specifically and of the Bible as a whole. What makes this different from other attempts to make the Bible memorable is that the mnemonics carefully follow the text, without getting in its way. The book

contains enough detail to be useful, but does not lose sight of the overall message of each passage. I warmly commend this book to readers.

### **1 & 2 CHRONICLES—REV. SIMON J. ROBINSON**

**Senior Pastor Walton Evangelical Church, Chesterfield, England, and writer.**

1 and 2 Chronicles are two of the more difficult books of the Bible to read. Gerard Chrispin provides us with helpful overviews which get to the heart of the message of each book. This will be an invaluable tool for people who have just come to Christ and for those who have been Christians for some years.

### **EZRA—BISHOP FRANK RETIEF**

**Presiding Bishop of the Church of England in South Africa, Cape Town, South Africa, and writer**

Ezra and Nehemiah are so important to understanding the biblical flow of God's promise to Israel. At the end of Israel's exile, the people of God return to the promised land. But they are still slaves. They are conscious that another greater exodus awaits them and so they renew their covenant with God. This overview of Ezra is excellent. It divides up the book simply and logically, and enables the reader to follow the sequence of events the author describes. There is much material here for personal reflection or for preachers and teachers. Gerard Chrispin has done Christians everywhere a great service.

### **NEHEMIAH—MAJOR IAIN A. MACDONALD**

**Soldiers' and Airmen's Scripture Reading Association Representative for Scotland, Isle of Man and English Border.**

It is a privilege to commend such a clear, simple and fruitful overview of the Book of Nehemiah, laced with helpful practical application for our own day.

### **ESTHER—REV. DR ANDREW YOUNG**

**Principal, Grace Theological College, Auckland, New Zealand**

Having set the scene for each Bible book with a series of brief, insightful 'images', Gerard Chrispin guides readers through the text using carefully worded and colourful section headings. These bring into focus the content and significance of each section and at the same time provide a bridge to their application to life today. *The Bible Panorama* will not only help readers understand the message and relevance of the Bible, but will also provide expositors and Bible teachers with a wealth of suggestive outlines. I particularly enjoyed reading his overview of Esther.

### **JOB—REV. DOUG MCMASTERS**

**Pastor of Trinity Road Chapel, Tooting, London and USA Board Member of the Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones Trust**

A veritable 'Lonely Planet travel guide' to the book of Job, this helpful resource

brings clarity to this oft-misunderstood book. It skilfully unravels the tangled conversation between Job and his ‘friends’, allowing the forceful concepts of suffering and God’s sovereignty to emerge unfettered.

**PSALMS—REV. DR ACHILLE BLAIZE**

**Pastor of Leyton Evangelical Church, London, England**

For those who need a terse pithy summary of each Psalm, Gerard Chrispin’s basic outline will be an immediate help as well as a springboard to further and more in-depth study.

**PROVERBS—REV. CHRIS RICKETTS**

**Pastor of Sholing Independent Baptist Church, Southampton, England**

Like Gerard Chrispin, I have never been able to find a convincing schematic arrangement of the content of Proverbs—often great nuggets of truth seem to stand alone, unrelated to the surrounding verses. In view of this, he gives a useful brief summary of each chapter—a bit like a contents list. Somewhere in each chapter you will find these treasures. He then focuses on one theme, drawing out its salient points, encouraging us to dig deeper and examine the rest.

**ECCLESIASTES—RUDY DE VRIES**

**Executive Director of Cornerstone Bible Institute’s Prison Ministry, Canada**

This work is an excellent resource as a Bible-reading companion and as a beginning point in the study of Ecclesiastes. Chrispin’s brief, but pregnant, summary style, together with his alliterations, will help any student of the Word grasp and remember this book’s important message, which is aptly summarised by ‘The book of Ecclesiastes pleads for a Saviour.’

**SONG OF SOLOMON—PASTEUR TOM FOHNER**

**Pastor, Église Évangélique, Houlgate, France**

The allure of sexual promiscuity has produced a lot of discarded people. The Bible has much to say about real sexual pleasure. This study underscores the power of fidelity and sexual intimacy in marriage. Read it out loud if necessary. God desires this one thing for you and that is to guard your heart.

**ISAIAH—REV. PHILIP HACKING**

**Former vicar of Christ Church, Fulwood, Sheffield, England, and Chairman of Keswick Convention**

In a biblically-illiterate age we need stimulation. Good preaching should send people back to the Scriptures. Written summaries provide extra ammunition. To change the metaphor, the meal is more exciting than the menu, but a well-presented menu, such as *The Bible Panorama*, will encourage a good appetite.

**JEREMIAH—GEORGE VERWER****Founder of Operation Mobilisation, and writer**

The book of Jeremiah is a neglected and misunderstood book. *The Bible Panorama* is going to really open eyes and hearts about the powerful message of this book. Let's all make a commitment to spend more time in God's Word.

**LAMENTATIONS—DR JAMES M. RENIHAN****Dean and Associate Professor of Historical Theology, Institute of Reformed Baptist Studies at Westminster Seminary, Escondido, California, USA**

Reading some books of the Bible can be difficult—even for experienced Christians. Gerard Chrispin has provided a simple and very helpful outline of one of the more obscure and perhaps difficult prophetic books, Lamentations. After using this aid, the reader will understand the terrible nature of the destruction of Jerusalem, its root cause, and Jeremiah's response. Every Bible reader will benefit from this helpful tool.

**EZEKIEL—REV. JOSEPH FELL****Minister of Ebrington Presbyterian Church, Londonderry, Northern Ireland, and Clerk of the Derry and Strabane Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland**

Gerard Chrispin is a Bible teacher and Prison evangelist who spends his life telling the Bible story in an easy-to-understand way. His summary of Ezekiel is first class, very useful for all readers, and both readable and interesting for the beginner. The Bible is an ancient book written originally in languages unfamiliar to most people today. *The Bible Panorama* is an overview of the Bible to help the reader grasp its essential message. This book is a useful tool to help us unlock the revealed and saving truths contained in the Bible. I am sure that it will bless Christians seeking to understand the whole Bible better. I wish such a book had been available to me as a younger Christian.

**DANIEL—REV. NICO VAN DER WALT****Antipas Reformed Baptist Church, Pretoria, South Africa**

I suppose every pastor has a forty-inch shelf within arm's length of his desk. On my shelf I have two dozen books I use again and again. Among them are two Dutch books (The book of Snoek, 'Leerboek voor de Heilige Geschiedenis', and G.J. Vrijmoeth's 'Ken uw Bijbel'), which are similar to this book by Gerard Chrispin. I have just read the very useful comments on Daniel in *The Bible Panorama*. For a busy preacher, books like these, which can help you get a quick overview of a portion of Scripture within seconds or minutes, are worth their weight in gold. My shelf is full, so one of the old books will have to be demoted in order to make space for Chrispin.

**HOSEA—REV. ALUN MCNAB**

**Former Pastor of Dudley Baptist Church, England**

An ideal help, but without taking away the need for readers to think for themselves. It opens up the chapters of Hosea well, in a particularly helpful compact form. A real encouragement to read the Bible right through with a straightforward guide at hand.

**JOEL—ARCHBISHOP GREG VENABLES**

**Primate of the Southern Cone of the Church of England—Argentina, Ecuador, Peru, Paraguay and Bolivia**

Such clear and helpful writing on Joel and on the Bible is an encouragement at a time when many have abandoned the Bible and many others remain tragically ignorant of its message.

**AMOS—REV. DR LARRY SAUNDERS**

**Associate Pastor of The Toronto Free Presbyterian Church, and Administrator of The Whitefield Christian Schools, Toronto, Canada**

This overview of Amos is interesting, insightful and succinct. It is a valuable tool for the Bible student.

**OBADIAH—JOHN ROBERTS**

**Director of Day One Christian Ministries, and Director of The Lord's Day Observance Society, Leominster, England**

The Minor Prophets are probably the most neglected books of the Bible, yet they have so much to convey to this generation. Obadiah contains one chapter dealing with God's coming judgement upon Edom and looking towards Israel's triumph. Gerard Chrispin, as he also does with the other sixty-five books, makes Obadiah relevant for any person who wishes to delve into and understand the precious truths of Scripture. *The Bible Panorama* will be a valuable asset to both the young Christian and mature believer. A most useful tool to use alongside the Bible.

**JONAH—PHIL JOHNSON**

**Executive Director of Grace to You, California, USA, writer and editor**

Here's a wonderfully rich handbook for anyone seeking to understand what Jonah or any other book or chapter of the Bible means. Gerard Chrispin has assembled helpful overviews of every passage of Scripture, with clear outlines, that will give you a better grasp of Scripture, no matter where you are in your spiritual journey.

**MICAH—REV. MALCOLM MACLEOD**

**Minister of Shawbost Free Church, Isle of Lewis, Scotland, and Clerk of the Western Isles Presbytery, Scotland**

Gerard Chrispin has provided us with a succinct and encapsulating overview of

Micah's message. The 'court of law' scene into which he places his message sets God's controversy with His people in its covenantal context with its triadic theme of reproach, doom and hope. The theme of hope reaches to 'Bethlehem's Christ' and the 'last days'. An illustrative summary that provides an accessible point of entry to Micah's message. I commend it to new readers and serious readers of the Bible alike.

#### **NAHUM—STUART SHEPHERD**

**Crisis Management Consultant with SIL International and Crisis Consulting International, Waxhaw, North Carolina, USA**

I found the summary of the book of Nahum from *The Bible Panorama* very helpful and I look forward eagerly to using *The Bible Panorama* as an aid to Bible study in the future.

#### **HABAKKUK—MICHAEL PATON**

**Retired pastor and missionary, formerly in France and North Africa**

This summary of Habakkuk helps us in understanding the truth that God is always in control, even when evil seems to be winning. The prophet stresses God's care for His people. If they were to lose everything, His love for them would outweigh their loss. Gerard Chrispin brings these points out clearly, and I recommend this study.

#### **ZEPHANIAH—REV. RICO TICE**

**Curate at All Souls, Langham Place, London, UK, and course producer through Christianity Explored**

The great reality of life lies in the fact that sinful people live their lives before a holy God. This is a truth which we long to deny even in our churches and it is a reason that we must keep hearing the message of Zephaniah. I am delighted to recommend a resource which draws us back so clearly to reality.

#### **HAGGAI—MARK MULLINS**

**Barrister at Law, policy adviser with Christian Concern for Our Nation, elder of Finsbury Park Pentecostal Church, London, and former editor of *The Christian Lawyer***

Gerard Chrispin clearly brings out the lessons from this little jewel. The challenge for the twenty-first century Christian is easily discerned: are we more interested in building our own houses than helping rebuild the Lord's House? Are we too complacent to care? This little commentary will stir you to sit up and take note when you are next about to pass by this minor prophet!

#### **ZECHARIAH—REV. JOHN LITTLE**

**Chaplain at Her Majesty's Prison, Frankland, Durham, England**

Here we have a clear, concise, helpful and balanced guide to this neglected book. Zechariah's call to repentance and holiness is shown to be a vital message for

today. We see Jesus as the Branch, Priest, King and Shepherd. When I found myself differing from the author on minor points, I found that I needed to go back and look at the Scriptures afresh. For that I am thankful.

**MALACHI—REV. VAL ENGLISH**

**Minister of Portstewart Baptist Church, Portstewart, Northern Ireland**

This provides an excellent insight into the last Old Testament book. Before the silence of what is to be some four hundred years, the voice of Malachi rings out loud and clear. In it we capture something of the blessings of the past and move across the bridge to the future. Savour the message!

**MATTHEW—DR STEVE TAYLOR**

**Reader in Electrical Engineering and Electronics, University of Liverpool, England, and  
Chairman of United Beach Missions, UK and Europe**

This is an excellent and very helpful summary of Matthew's Gospel, which rightly divides the Word of Truth and presents helpful comments to explain the main themes of each chapter. The biblical text is broken down into headed sections—which I do find genuinely useful—with a brief expository comment on each. This makes *The Bible Panorama* ideal for preachers and for those who want an overview of a particular passage.

**MARK—BISHOP WALLACE BENN**

**Bishop of Lewes, England**

Gerard Chrispin has produced a very useful tool. It is in essence a concise summary of all the action in Mark's Gospel that also offers occasional little nuggets of helpful insight. In particular, its beauty is in its brevity. In just thirty minutes you have engaged with all of the events of Mark's Gospel. Reading it is undoubtedly half an hour well spent.

**LUKE—DR CARL VENN**

**General medical practitioner, Christian leader and preacher, Brynmawr, Wales**

I found the comments on Luke's Gospel extremely easy to read and I appreciated the alliterative signposts. I'm sure it will be helpful for preachers and students of the Bible alike.

**JOHN—REV. LARRY MAIB**

**Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church of Canoga Park, Los Angeles, USA**

The essence of good teaching is to take something complex and make it simple; to take something lengthy and state it precisely. This was the beauty of Jesus' teaching, and, in this work by Gerard Chrispin, the length and depth of the Gospel of John are crystallised in short headings and sentences for immediate understanding. I highly recommend this study guide for those who want the highest level of comprehension with a small amount of personal investment.

**ACTS—RAYMOND J. JONES****Chairman, New Tribes Mission of Canada**

In a clear, easily readable style, with helpful headings, Gerard Chrispin has reflected the soul-winning heart and eternal love of our Lord Jesus Christ shown in the lives and acts of His apostles.

**ROMANS—DR JOHN BLANCHARD****International evangelist, Bible teacher, writer and broadcaster**

If we think of the Bible as a range of mountains, Romans is the Himalayan range. In this excellent summary of its powerful message, Gerard Chrispin proves to be a sure-footed guide, leading us up the rugged pathways of truth to the places from which we get such glorious views of God's plan for his people.

**1 & 2 CORINTHIANS—REV. CONRAD MBEWE****Pastor of Kabwata Baptist Church, Lusaka, Zambia, and associate editor of *Reformation Zambia***

The breadth of subjects handled in 1 and 2 Corinthians is simply breathtaking! Where would the church of Christ be today were it not for these epistles? Like Atlas, they carry a world on their shoulders. Coming to grips with the contents of these two epistles has been made easier by Gerard Chrispin's excellent use of mnemonics in *The Bible Panorama*. New converts especially will love it!

**GALATIANS—REV. DR JACK SIN****Pastor of Maranatha Bible Presbyterian Church, Singapore, and Lecturer in Church History, Far Eastern Bible College, Singapore**

If one is looking for an efficient and readable summary of the Bible, here it is. The author has some insightful and enlightening comments and an accurate basic exposition of the books of the Bible that should enthuse and saturate the hearts and minds of redeemed men. A quick and meaningful survey of the books of the Bible in simple and practical terms for all preachers and lay people today. I found the comments on Galatians very helpful.

**EPHESIANS—REV. GEOFF THOMAS****Pastor of Alfred Place Baptist Church, Aberystwyth, Wales, and writer**

I read the summary of Ephesians and appreciated it very much. If you are someone new to the Bible, and 'all thumbs' or just intimidated as to how to begin to access a mini-library of sixty-six books—because that is what God has given us in the Scriptures—this panoramic vista by Gerard Chrispin will lead you with certainty through the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and lay a sound foundation for a life of growing understanding of the wonderful Word of God.

**PHILIPPIANS—REV. PHILIP CAMPBELL**

**Minister, Coleraine Congregational Church, Northern Ireland**

If the books of the Bible are like pictures in an art gallery, then Gerard Chrispin's *The Bible Panorama* allows the visitor to pause, stand in front of each masterpiece, and grasp the essence of what the 'Divine Artist' is saying. In his survey of Philippians, the purpose and key themes of the letter are accurately identified, and each chapter summary leaves the reader with a clear understanding of its teaching, and the preacher with some useful alliterated headings to 'borrow'! It is the kind of book I would like to have had as a young believer, and will use as a preacher!

**COLOSSIANS—REV. DR JOHN S. ROSS**

**Minister of Greyfriars Free Church of Scotland, Inverness, Scotland**

Colossians in *The Bible Panorama* enables readers to see the big picture of a book whose themes are hugely relevant today: the supremacy of Jesus Christ and the life-affirming liberty He brings, contrasted with the confusion of sentimental mysticism and depressing legalism. Gerard Chrispin's approach is refreshing, stimulating and sound.

**1 & 2 THESSALONIANS—REV. DR STUART OLYOTT**

**Former Pastoral Director of the Evangelical Movement of Wales, conference speaker, and writer**

I am enthusiastic about this book. If you want to read through the whole Bible, or to look into just a part of it, as here in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, it is always useful to have the big picture first. This is what Gerard Chrispin gives us, succinctly, attractively, accurately, and in a way that is easy to remember. Many will now study the Scriptures with new zest.

**1 & 2 TIMOTHY—TONY RUSTON**

**Former Director of the Martyn Lloyd-Jones Recording Trust and European Director of Grace to You**

What an excellent little summary this is, offering a secure and sound introduction to Paul's letters to Timothy. With a light touch, which misses none of the important teaching in these epistles, Gerard Chrispin has produced a commentary which gives the reader a good grasp of its subject. I'm sure all who read it will be encouraged to go on to further and deeper Bible study which, in this day and age, can only be a good thing.

**TITUS—STEVE WRIGHT**

**Barrister at Law, Director of Young Life, Northern Ireland and United Beach Missions, Ireland**

*The Bible Panorama* combines the need for an instantly helpful, thorough but concise guide to each chapter of the Bible with a spiritual and devotional summary of all its verses, clustered under relevant and striking headings. Greatly

helpful for anyone reading through the Bible for the first time, it also provides a valuable resource for those who, in teaching others, look for a ready reminder of each chapter's contents. I found the summary on Titus spiritually refreshing and practical. *The Bible Panorama* frame displays the biblical picture well, rather than competing with it for one's attention.

### **PHILEMON—ROBIN GRIFFITHS**

**Missionary in translation team in the New Tribes Mission Pwo Karen tribe, Thailand**

This overview of Philemon gives a refreshing and challenging summary of this oft-neglected book. It brings home the grace and graciousness of the gospel and the need for us as believers to see both, especially in our relationships with one another. The summary challenges us believers to accept one another as Christ accepts us, to have that godly love and concern for one another.

### **HEBREWS—TREVOR KNIGHT**

**Bible teacher, writer and former Director of Young Life, UK**

For anyone wanting an overview of any Bible book, helpful alliterated headings (as the author gives here in Hebrews in abundance) are like mountain peaks, which help us to get a better perspective of the whole landscape.

### **JAMES—REV. DAVID JACKMAN**

**Former President of Proclamation Trust, London, England, now involved in Bible teaching and training ministry in the UK and further afield, writer**

In this comprehensive, but focused, outline you will find: *Clarity* about the theme tunes of the letter of James, which bind it all together; *Certainty* that faith and works are not opposed; *Challenge* that our own faith proves itself to be alive by love and good works.

### **1 & 2 PETER—REV. WES MCNAB**

**Pastor of Slade Evangelical Church, London, England**

In days of moral laxity and doctrinal confusion and decay, an understanding of Peter's letters has never seemed more vital. This concise overview is an extremely helpful tool for unravelling Peter's message as we read it for ourselves. The vital themes of God's grace and our living hope through a knowledge of the truth are clearly revealed. They lead us on in plain terms how to live effective godly and transformed lives in the midst of assaults from outside and at times within the church. I wholeheartedly recommend these notes to get all Christians enthused about 1 & 2 Peter.

### **1, 2 & 3 JOHN—REV. IAN DENSHAM**

**Minister of Alexandra Road Congregational Church, Hemel Hempstead, England**

These outlines will be helpful to encourage those who are making their first attempts to study the Bible. Anything that can be used to encourage people to

‘give attention to reading’ that they might learn more of the truth of God’s grace is to be commended. May the Lord bless the publication of these outlines as His Word is spread.

**JUDE—REV. BOB AKROYD**

**Chaplain at Her Majesty’s Prison Edinburgh, Scotland**

We live in an age when many people do not read the Bible or know much about the message of Jesus. The church needs resources which explain, expound and apply the Word of God for this generation. I commend both this summary of the short but important letter of Jude and *The Bible Panorama* as it reaches out with the Word of God.

**REVELATION—DR JOHN MACARTHUR**

**Pastor of Grace Community Church, Los Angeles, USA, writer and broadcaster**

No student of Scripture should ever expect to truly understand the depth of a biblical book until he has understood the breadth of it. This overview sets in place the sweeping essential drama of the apocalypse and is, thus, the essential starting place for the believer who seeks to understand the rich treasure buried in the details.

**COMMENTS ON PART TWO OF THE BIBLE PANORAMA**

**PROF. EDGAR ANDREWS**

**Scientist, writer and former co-editor of Evangelical Times, Darlington, England**

Writing in a relaxed and readable style, Gerard Chrispin provides a ‘beginner’s guide’ to the Bible that deserves to be read by more than beginners! Of particular importance in Part Two is the chapter on ‘The central message of the Bible’ which demonstrates convincingly that the whole Bible points us to the glorious Person and saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**REV. JONATHAN STEPHEN**

**Director of Affinity, UK, Principal of the Evangelical Theological College of Wales, Bryntirion, Wales, Past President of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, UK and writer.**

Single-author Bible handbooks inevitably convey the personality and background of their writers. No wonder Gerard Chrispin’s *The Bible Panorama* is such a fascinating read! Part Two, in particular, is a box of delights—a veritable cornucopia of reasons why the Bible can be trusted. Here are simple and convincing apologetics for ordinary people.

I am neither academic nor intellectual. Sometimes I wish it were otherwise. I do struggle on occasions. But I am encouraged by recalling a 'brilliant' man who lectured me in law but who left me wondering what I had been listening to for the previous ninety minutes. I would have preferred to watch paint dry! By contrast another law lecturer—just a 'plain man'—taught me far more about the subject at a crucial time when I needed to pass to qualify! When the brilliant 'egg head' had left me cold and confused, the man who helped me was ordinary enough to understand how another very ordinary person thought. That is why he communicated so well.

My only qualification—apart from knowing the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour and being objectively and passionately convinced that the Bible is God's infallible, inspired and complete Word—is that I am just an 'ordinary' Christian. (Perhaps that is why my own ministry has developed in prison rather than in a seminary.) I hope my ordinariness helps me communicate with others who sometimes struggle with understanding some difficult things in the Bible.

How glad I am that, as a wayward and backsliding law student, God introduced me to Leeds Branch of Young Life ('YL') and soon after to United Beach Missions ('UBM'). I saw in those young adults a commitment to Christ and to spreading His gospel which I had never encountered before. More important still, I learned to respect, love, believe, read through and consider the Bible. I was also urged to *apply* it practically and personally and, although that has changed my life, I confess that many years later I am still struggling to do that as I ought to. What a gracious God of mercy and help we have!

If *The Bible Panorama* helps anyone to come to a settled confidence in and wonder at God's Word, and a desire to follow its teachings by God's grace, I shall be far happier than I can describe here.

This book started because YL and UBM taught me not only the urgency of having a daily quiet time (which I had heard recommended before elsewhere), but also *how* to read the Bible and pray. I started making the simplest of notes as I read through the Bible each year. I built up my own extremely fallible partial commentary—fallible because of my almost illegible writing as well as my own deficiency in understanding God's Word! But I persevered and God helped and blessed me until, about three years ago, I started putting my quiet time thoughts on tape which were then transcribed. *The Bible Panorama* was coming to birth.

The main emphasis of the book in Part One is to seek to teach (I hope clearly yet concisely) what each chapter of the Bible is about. This is not a verse-by-verse commentary, but all the verses are covered under linked headings. The vast majority of those headings are alliterated. One or two people, whom I respect greatly, have questioned the wisdom of that, but many more critics have told me they think it is beneficial and helpful. All I can say is that this is my style and I find it comes naturally to me. I have tried not to force the alliteration, though inevitably there have been a few times (remarkably few in fact) when I have had to stop and think again, or rework the headings. If you do not like 'what it says on the tin', I hope you will, nevertheless, enjoy the contents!

The emphasis of the book in Part Two is to encourage the reader to have full confidence in the Bible as God's inerrant Word, and to provide some alternative schemes to help to read it through at a pace appropriate to the reader. I hope I have included subjects that the 'ordinary Christian' encounters and has to address. I would have liked to have added a brief Christology of each book but I felt it was outside the immediate scope of *The Bible Panorama* and there is a chapter in Part Two which provides a summary. Also, as each chapter of the Bible is opened, I hope that the pre-eminence of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the key to and the message of the Bible, will be readily apparent.

This is the right place to thank so many people who have encouraged, criticised (usually constructively!) and helped me. Anthea Fryatt has cheerfully and meticulously helped to bring some order out of the chaos of the many tapes I sent to her, after first Amy Wilcox and then Becky Boxhall started me on that road. David Harding—whom I should call 'Faithful are the wounds of a friend' Harding—has always put his faithfulness to God's Word first and thereby proved yet again to be a great and dear pal to me. Jim Holmes of Day One has been tireless and efficient in so many ways of encouragement and assistance. Steve Devane has applied his usual flair to the question of presentation, and I am grateful. He has that special touch, whether designing an evangelistic booklet or a large tome. I have had four red-pen-wielding school teachers, and one wife of a school teacher who is just as thorough, who trawled and crawled their way through each chapter of my book (and therefore also through each chapter of the Bible) to seek to minimise my inevitable mistakes. Thank you, therefore, to Sarah Cooper, Sue Hawley, Judy Kitching, Tim Moore and Bill Scully—all of whom also learned much about Bible reading through the same fellowships that taught me before them. Special thanks, too, to Alison Graham and Suzanne Mitchell for their work in proof-reading and editing.

I am truly humbled by the kindness of an army of men of God to whom I look up and respect greatly and who have written 'sound bites' either about each chapter-by-chapter commentary of individual books of the Bible in Part One, or about my attempt to increase the ordinary person's trust in the Bible in the much shorter Part Two. I feel like a minnow supported by a shoal of surrounding whales. I know how busy some of these world-prominent Christian leaders are, and to think they have taken time to recommend this book—and at times to shape, amend and even edit it—leaves me, for once, speechless. I am so grateful. I hope that the endorsement of such sane and committed Bible believers will encourage Christians to engage with the aims of this book—that is, to read the Bible through and to keep reading it through.

Especially do I thank four of the busiest of them, who each read the *whole* book through before giving their written comments. Lord Mackay is not only a giant in terms of legal brilliance, spotless track record of integrity, and earnest endeavour both in the 'direct' kingdom of God and his salt-like influence on our septic society, but he is a gracious man who willingly gave his precious time to support this effort to help ordinary people read the whole Bible. Prof. Michael Haykin, a

prolific author and writer who is responsible for the oversight of one of the West's leading Bible-believing seminaries (in Toronto), could easily have said, 'Sorry, Gerard—I am too busy.' I am very grateful to him that he did not say that. Richard Cunningham is overloaded in his onerous privilege of seeking to encourage students at university and in the colleges also to be students of Christ and His word, a far more important task. Dave Harding amazes me. He is always so busy yet always makes time to help and encourage others. Many thanks to all four of them for their comments on the whole book.

Phillippa, my wife, best friend, most objective critic, and handmaid of the Lord, could also have said, with complete justification, that she was too busy to help. As well as tirelessly arranging our ongoing prison itinerary and coming with me all over the UK to support the preaching of the gospel in prisons and the teaching of the Bible in many other places, she has spent hours and hours of what we used to call 'free time', checking my work and checking the checkers' work too! I once got into trouble, when replying to a public question, 'Do you believe in the "second blessing"?' I replied that I had married her! I then vigorously refuted the criticism that I was being flippant. I have rarely said anything more serious. Thank you, Phillippa—my 'second blessing'.

*The Bible Panorama* is intended to help people to *read through* the whole Bible at a pace they select, by all means taking time to dwell at a particularly attractive 'picnic' spot en route, from time to time. The desire to help folks to read through is why there is the emphasis on the Bible reading schemes, for much of which I am grateful to the now glorified Robert Murray McCheyne, to IFES and to YL/UBM. Their schemes feature in the Appendices to this book.

I want Christians to *enjoy* reading through the Bible. The length taken to do so is for each person to decide individually: that is why I have suggested, in the Appendices, some alternative reading-through schemes with in-built flexibility. But there is no reason why a long time could not be taken on one book and a quicker pace adopted for another one.

However, no scheme, no human teacher, and no help in *how* to read the Bible can ever replace or rival the place of God's guidance through His Holy Spirit to make God's spiritual truth, encapsulated in the Bible, real to the reader. Hence my plea to you—and my reminder to myself—is to read the Bible with a repentant and cleansed heart and mind. Remember that God's Spirit who will lead us into all truth is the *Holy Spirit*. A desire for holiness is the best aid we can offer to understanding and being blessed by reading and studying the Bible. God's light of biblical illumination will be most evident in our minds where the curtains of our sin are drawn as widely open as they possibly can be. Submission to Christ is more important by far than intellectual ability, academic achievement or even evangelical tradition.

**Gerard A. Chrispin**

**T**he passion and mission behind *The Bible Panorama* which I share with the publishers is to encourage *everyone* to read the whole Bible through in a thoughtful, searching and regular way. This book is only a means to that end. This book was always intended to be used alongside personal reading of Scripture. C H Spurgeon's comment on how much light the Bible sheds on some commentaries may well apply if you use *The Bible Panorama* in your study of God's Word, or in preparing sermons, talks or group Bible studies.

In coming to a second edition, I thank God for His blessing on our mission to get the Bible read. Comments from people across life's spectrum in different countries have been so encouraging. A book is a feeble thing—just some printed pieces of paper put together. It hardly compares with the wonders or power of modern technology. Yet God has blessed books in the past and changed lives and communities through them. This is particularly true of *the Book*—the Bible—of course. Insofar as *The Bible Panorama* only seeks to be a handmaid to that Book—God's Book—and to motivate and help modern day 'ploughmen' to read it, please pray that it might contribute in some way to spiritual awakening in our lost, rebellious and needy society. Such spiritual life can only come as God works through His Word by His Holy Spirit. We *must* encourage and help people to read it.

God's Word—the 'inspired Word'—has no errors and needs no correcting. My feeble effort—which I call the 'perspired word'!—sadly cannot make that claim. Despite careful and repeated editing some errors always creep into man-made books. Happily, no deviant doctrine or significant error invaded the first edition. Digby James, Jim Holmes, Phillippa, and I have sought carefully to correct any errors and sometimes substitute better wording.

For those who seek to preach or teach, may I re-echo Paul's injunction to Timothy—'Preach the Word!' (2 Timothy 4:2). If this edition of *The Bible Panorama* helps anyone to do that better and to God's glory, I shall be delighted.

The second edition is completely revised, in that sense. It is also expanded by including a further reading scheme to Appendix 3, and two new Appendices. The added scheme in Appendix 3 enables you to read through the Bible in the probable chronological order in which the books were completed. Appendix 4, *The Biblical Basis for Good News*, is intended to help Christians who take in God's word to also give it out in explaining the gospel to others. I hope to develop it into a book and a course to help churches and Christians to do that, by God's grace. Appendix 5, *Use of The Bible Panorama in Family Devotions*, has grown from inputs from current readers of the book, who use it for family devotions. I hope it encourages other families to do the same

An exciting development with the second edition is the inclusion of a CD-ROM for those who want easy access to the whole of *The Bible Panorama* on their computers. I hope this will not only help in personal devotions but also aid those who prepare to share God's word with others.

**Gerard A. Chrispin**

# THE BIBLE PANORAMA

Enjoying the whole Bible with a  
chapter-by-chapter guide

**OLD TESTAMENT**

## PART ONE

### Surveying the scenery of Scripture


Each chapter of each book of the Bible plainly summarised and explained

GENESIS	30	2 CHRONICLES	181	DANIEL	352
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# GENESIS

## OVERVIEW


### PEOPLE AND PRELIMINARIES

 Genesis (fifty chapters) is the first of five books of the law (the ‘Pentateuch’) written by Moses. He wrote it at some time between 1445 and 1405 BC during the children of Israel’s desert wanderings and before entering the promised land. An estimate of the period covered by this book is 2,315 years.


### PLAN AND PURPOSE

 Written for Jews, Christians and all mankind, Genesis (‘beginnings’ or ‘origins’) contains timeless principles. God’s existence is eternal in the past, present and future. His character is unchanging. Recorded are the origins of the creation of the universe, the earth, animal and plant life, human life, the Sabbath, work, marriage, sin, death, suffering, conflict, sacrifice, judgement, salvation by faith, prayer, different languages, farming, and people groups. All principles of modern life are here.

### PROFILE AND PROGRESSION

 Creation (1:1–2:25); fact and results of sin and redemption foretold (3:1–24); children born and early civilisation (4:1–7:24); from judgement by the worldwide flood, to God’s confusion of languages at Babel (8:1–11:9); forefathers of God’s earthly people from Abraham to Joseph (11:10–50:26).

## PRINCIPLES AND PARTICULARS

 God’s character and power are manifested in His creation of the universe and the world, and everything in them, from nothing. We see here the origin of sin and man’s spreading sinfulness. God’s judgement and man’s consequent need of redemption are revealed. God’s concern for people is manifest, as is His provision for their salvation by faith in Him. Prophecies and types of Jesus Christ, as Saviour, are introduced. We learn how God can take and use people who trust and obey Him. Genesis is the seedbed of all God’s revelation in the Bible and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

# GENESIS

## CHAPTER ONE

**V 1: START** Genesis and the Bible begin with God who created everything. **V 2: SPIRIT** God’s Holy Spirit is there in the beginning, bringing order from chaos and light from darkness. **V 3–31: SEQUENCE** The order of God’s six-day creation is as follows: Day one—light; Day two—sky; Day three—land, including vegetation, and sea; Day four—sun, moon and stars; Day five—sea-life and birds; Day six—animals and finally man in His image as a special creation to rule over all living creatures and to benefit from God’s provision in His creation, which is ‘very good’.

## CHAPTER TWO

**V 1–3: SABBATH** After the completion of the first six days of creation God makes the Sabbath, one day in seven, as a holy day of rest and blessing. **V 4–6: SUPPLY** A mist supplies the earth with water. **V 7: SPECIAL** God gives the details of the special

creation of man, whom He creates from dust and breathes into his nostrils the breath of life. **V 8-9: SIGNIFICANT** It is significant that in the middle of the garden are the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **V 10-14: SITUATION** The geographical situation of the garden is given. **V 15-17: STIPULATION** God tells Adam to work to keep the garden and to eat what he likes, provided it is not from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because, if he does so, he will die. **V 18-25: SPOUSE** Adam gives names to all the living creatures. Then God gives Adam a spouse as a helper from one of his ribs.

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### CHAPTER THREE

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**V 1-3: DOUBT** Doubt is sown by the serpent about what God has said, first of all in Eve. The serpent is later identified as the Devil. **V 4-5: DENIAL** This leads to Satan's denying the truth of God's word and maligning God's character and motives. **V 6: DISOBEDIENCE** Eve and then Adam disobey when they see all the wrong reasons why they want to eat the fruit. **V 7-13a: DISASTER** Disaster follows; shame, guilt, hiding from God, and discord between human beings come in the chain of disobedience. **V 13b-15: DECEIVER** The serpent is also condemned and his final judgement foretold when he will be defeated by the woman's offspring, later revealed as the Lord Jesus Christ. **V 16-19: DESERVED** Both the woman and the man will suffer as a result; she will suffer in childbirth and be under the rule of her husband, and he will find work onerous. The ground is cursed. Thorns spring up. Man's physical body will return to dust. **V 20-21: DEATH** After the woman is given a name, Eve, God reveals that an animal must die in order to cover the nakedness and shame of Adam and Eve by animal skin. This is an early picture of covering

for our sin through a God-given sacrifice and shed blood. **V 22-24: DRIVEN** Finally, Adam and Eve are driven out from the Garden of Eden and permanently excluded. Sin excludes us from God's best blessings.

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### CHAPTER FOUR

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**V 1-2: SONS** The first two sons of Adam and Eve are Cain (who becomes a worker on the land) and Abel (who becomes a shepherd). **V 3-7: SACRIFICE** As an offering, Abel sacrifices his best sheep, which pleases God, but Cain's bloodless offering does not please Him. God warns Cain about sin. **V 8-12: SIN** Sin begins to spread through anger, jealousy and murder, and leads Cain to lie to God. God sees Cain's sin in murdering Abel, curses him, and makes him homeless. **V 13-15: SIGN** God puts a sign on Cain, by way of a mark, to protect him and prevent him being killed. **V 16-24: SETTLING** Cain and his descendants settle in the land of Nod on the east of Eden. **V 25-26a: SETH** Adam and Eve's third son is called Seth who later has a son called Enosh. He begins a godly line leading to Abraham, David and eventually Christ. **V 26b: START** This is the beginning of people calling on the name of the LORD.

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### CHAPTER FIVE

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**V 1-2: LIKENESS** God's creation of mankind in His spiritual likeness is stated. **V 3-5: LIFE** Adam's new and long life (though shorter than some who follow him soon) produces none of the degenerative factors evident in interbreeding that have caused human life to shorten since creation. He has other sons and daughters besides Cain, Abel and Seth, and they are the 'founding members' of the human race. **V 6-32: LIST** Adam's

early descendants, through Seth's line, are detailed. This brings us to Noah, about whom we read in the next few chapters.

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## CHAPTER SIX

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**V 1–4: GREAT GROWTH** The population grows, and godly men err in marrying ungodly women. **V 5–7: GOD'S GRIEF** God's grief at man's sinfulness causes Him to decide to destroy the whole earth (later revealed to be by flood). **V 8–22: GOD'S GRACE** God's grace is on Noah and his family. Noah walks with God. Provision is made for him and his family to escape the coming flood by constructing an ark, which will also preserve the animal kingdom. Noah will be sustained in the ark, and benefit from God's covenant. The same grace enables him to obey God.

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

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**V 1: COME** God tells Noah to enter the ark because his right standing and obedience (through his believing what God had said) have made him acceptable to God. **V 2–9: COMMAND** God then commands Noah to take the designated animals, clean and unclean, into the ark and Noah obeys. Later he will sacrifice the clean animals to God. **V 10–12: COMMENCEMENT** After entering the ark with his family and the animals, Noah waits for seven days until the flood commences. The rain lasts for forty days and forty nights. **V 13–16: CLOSED** God shuts the door of the ark behind Noah, his family and the animals. **V 17–24: CONSUMED** All life on the whole earth outside the ark is consumed, whereas those who trusted and obeyed God, by going into the ark, are saved. The earth is flooded for 150 days.

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

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**V 1–14: PATIENCE** God remembers Noah, his family, and animals in the ark, and stops the rain and the flood. As the waters recede after 150 days, Noah exercises diligence in seeing when it is safe to go out, yet patience in waiting for God and for the earth to dry. **V 15–19: PROMPTNESS** As soon as God tells Noah and his party to disembark with the animals, he does so. **V 20–21a: PLEASED** God is pleased with Noah's sacrifice of clean animals. **V 21b–22: PROMISE** This leads to His promise never to curse the earth again, never to destroy all living creatures again and to continue to give earth its harvests.

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## CHAPTER NINE

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**V 1–7: CLEAR COMMANDS** God now authorises the eating of flesh (but not with the blood) and gives Noah two instructions—to be fruitful and multiply, and not to murder because man is made in God's image. God decrees that any such murderer should have his blood shed by man. **V 8–17: COLOURFUL COVENANT** God vows never again to cut off all flesh by a flood and never to destroy the earth by flood. The sign of this is to be the rainbow in the sky. **V 18–27: CARELESS COMPROMISE** Noah gets drunk and lies naked in his tent and is seen by Ham. Because of Ham's disrespect for his father, and irresponsibility in broadcasting this to his brothers, God is displeased with him, and curses his line through Canaan, who is Ham's son. This curse is fulfilled in the later conquest by Joshua. Shem and Japheth are blessed for their right action in discreetly covering Noah. **V 28–29: COURSE COMPLETED** Noah lives for another three hundred and fifty years after the flood—nine hundred and fifty in total.

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**CHAPTER TEN**


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**V 1: FACT** That the global flood is factual is shown by the historical records of the genealogies which follow. **V 2–31: FAMILIES** Right from the start of creation and early history, God decrees that civilisation will be best served by family units. **V 32: FOUNDATION** The foundation of the population of today's entire human race dates back to this chapter.

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**CHAPTER ELEVEN**


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**V 1–2: COMMUNICATION** Initially the human race communicates in one language. **V 3–4: CONSPIRACY** Mankind conspires to get to heaven by its own efforts, via the Tower of Babel, for fear of being scattered around the earth. **V 5–9: CONFUSION** God comes down to confuse their rebellious efforts and scatters them around the earth with different languages. **V 10–26: CONTINUATION** The continuation of the human race is traced to Abram, through the descendants of Shem. **V 27–32: CHALDEA** Terah's genealogy continues and includes Abram, and his wife Sarai, moving to Ur of the Chaldeans.

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**CHAPTER TWELVE**


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**V 1–9: ABRAM'S BLESSING** God tells Abram to leave his country, that He will bless him by making him into a great nation, and that all peoples on earth will be blessed through him. At the age of 75 Abram obeys God and travels towards Negev in the south. **V 10–20: ABRAM'S BLAME** Even Abram hides behind a half-truth in order to avoid trouble in Egypt, instead of trusting God. Sarai is, in fact, his half-sister as well as his wife. Abram pretends that she is only his sister. God

overrules and protects Abram, who is sent out of the country by Pharaoh.

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**CHAPTER THIRTEEN**


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**V 1–4: DEVOTION** Note that material prosperity has not stopped Abram in his prayer-life as he journeys with Lot. **V 5–7: DISPUTE** Lot also has great possessions and livestock, and there is not enough room for them both. Their servants quarrel. **V 8–9: DEFERENCE** Abram generously offers Lot his choice of the land before them. **V 10–18a: DECISIONS** Despite the wickedness of Sodom, Lot chooses that lush valley area because it appeals to his desire for material prosperity, but God promises Abram great blessing in the less attractive hill country, and that his descendants will be impossible to number. **V 18b: DEVOTION** Abram builds an altar at Hebron showing again his desire to praise and worship.

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**CHAPTER FOURTEEN**


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**V 1–12: CAPTIVITY** The king of Sodom, in coalition with other kings, is defeated by another coalition. Lot is taken captive. **V 13–14: CRISIS** An escapee brings news of Lot's captivity to Abram who, in turn, takes his trained men to rescue Lot. **V 15–17: CONQUEST** Abram defeats Lot's captors and rescues him, his people and his possessions. **V 18–20: CHRIST** Melchizedek is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, and arguably an Old Testament appearance of Jesus Christ, known as a 'theophany'. Abram gives him a tithe of all he has. **V 21–24: CONSECRATION** Abram refuses to accept any gift from the king of Sodom for his rescue act. He seeks only God's provision.

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**CHAPTER FIFTEEN**

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**V 1: COMMUNICATION** God reassures Abram in a vision. **V 2-3: CONCERN** Abram is concerned that he and Sarai are childless. **V 4-5: COMFORT** God comforts Abram by showing him the stars and telling him that, just as he cannot count the stars because they are so numerous, neither will he be able to count his descendants, for exactly the same reason. **V 6: COUNTED** Because Abram believes God's promise, he is counted as righteous by and before God. The whole gospel principle of justification by faith is confirmed here. **V 7-21: CONFIRMATION** God confirms His promise by sacrifice and a covenant made with Abram.

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**CHAPTER SIXTEEN**

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**V 1-4a: UNBELIEF** Despite God's promise, Sarai and Abram proceed as if the promise will not be fulfilled. By agreement between them, Abram will have a child through Hagar, Sarai's maid, who becomes pregnant. **V 4b-5: UNSATISFACTORY** This leads to friction between Sarai and Hagar. **V 6: UNFAIR** With Abram's permission, Sarai deals harshly with Hagar, who flees from her. **V 7-14: UNCONDITIONAL** God shows His unconditional love for Hagar. He takes the initiative and sends the Angel of the LORD to find Hagar, speak to her and comfort her. He confirms that her son, to be called Ishmael, will survive and also father a great nation. **V 15-16: UNFOLDING** Watch the whole middle-eastern situation unfold, with the birth of Ishmael, the father of the Arab nations. Abram is eighty-six at this time.

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**CHAPTER SEVENTEEN**

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**V 1-8: PROMISE OF COVENANT** Abram, now ninety-nine years old, is promised a

covenant and a worldwide family for generations to come. He will become the father of many nations. God marks this by changing his name from Abram to Abraham. The land of Canaan is promised to Abraham as his possession. **V 9-14: PRACTICE OF CIRCUMCISION** The covenant will be confirmed by the circumcision of all male persons in the Israelite community, and will include Israelite baby boys when they are eight days old. Circumcision will become the sign of the covenant. **V 15-16: PROPHECY OF CHILDBEARING** Abraham will change the name of Sarai to Sarah to mark God's telling him that she will not only be a mother, but a mother of nations and the ancestor of many kings. **V 17-22: PRECISENESS OF CONFIRMATION** Abraham, unable to believe this, thinks it must be through Ishmael that God's promises will come true, so he asks that Ishmael might live. God confirms Ishmael will be a great nation, but Sarah's son to be, Isaac, will be the beneficiary of His covenant with Abraham. **V 23-27: PRIORITY OF COMMAND** Abraham trusts God and obeys His command, despite his fears, by circumcising all the males, including Ishmael and himself.

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**CHAPTER EIGHTEEN**

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**V 1-8: HOSPITALITY AND HURRY** Abraham gives hospitality to three men, who mysteriously are a manifestation of the LORD. We learn in chapter 19 that two are angels: could the third be an appearance of the LORD Himself in flesh? Abraham and Sarah hurry to provide them with food. **V 9-15: LAUGHING AND LYING** Sarah laughs when she overhears Abraham being told that they will have a son in their old age. When asked 'Is anything too hard for the LORD?' she lies about the fact that she had laughed. **V 16-**

**21: JUSTICE AND JUDGEMENT** God expects Abraham and his descendants to do what is right and just. He shares with Abraham the fact that the great wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah means the men are going to investigate first-hand with a view to judging Sodom and Gomorrah. **V 22–33: PLEADING FOR PEOPLE** After the three men leave, in a series of petitions Abraham pleads with God personally not to destroy Sodom. God's first response is that He will not destroy Sodom if fifty righteous men are found there. Abraham continues interceding and asks if there are fewer than fifty men—going in stages from forty-five to forty to thirty to twenty—will God spare Sodom? His intercession ceases when God confirms that He will not destroy Sodom if only ten righteous men can be found there.

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## CHAPTER NINETEEN

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**V 1–3: ANGELS' VISIT** God sends two men who are angels to visit wicked Sodom and to see Lot and his family. Lot offers them hospitality. **V 4–11: AWFUL VILENESS** The sexually perverted Sodomites demand to have sexual relations with the visiting men (not recognising them as angels). Lot rightly resists, but is no less vile in suggesting they abuse his two daughters instead. As the Sodomites attack Lot at the door of his house, the two angel guests strike the attackers with blindness. **V 12–14: ANGRY VENGEANCE** The guests then tell Lot that God will destroy Sodom, but when he seeks to tell his sons-in-law, they think he is joking. **V 15–17: ANGUISHED VACILLATION** While Lot lingers, he and his family are taken by the hand, through the LORD's mercy, and delivered from Sodom. They are told to escape up to the mountains to avoid destruction. **V 18–26: ABSENT VISION** Even then, Lot objects to

escaping to the mountains, having no vision of God's holiness, separation from sin, or the need for a complete escape. He chooses the inferior option of going to Zoar, while God destroys Sodom and Gomorrah and the rest of the plain with brimstone and fire. His wife also hankers after Sodom, looks back, and is turned into a pillar of salt. **V 27–29: ABRAHAM'S VICTORY** Lot's escape from Sodom and Gomorrah is attributed to the victory Abraham had in his early morning prayer before God. **V 30–38: APPALLING VICE** From Zoar, Lot and his two daughters go to live in a cave in the mountains. His daughters conspire to get him drunk in order to have sexual relationships with him. They succeed, and the children resulting from this immorality and incest become the fathers of the Moabite and the Ammonite nations. In the future, they will be a constant thorn in the flesh of the children of Israel because of their wicked practices. Sin breeds sin.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY

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**V 1–2: COMPROMISE** Through fear of death, Abraham compromises again by telling the half-truth that Sarah is his sister. In fact she is his half-sister but, far more important, she is his wife. Abimelech sends to take Sarah, not knowing this. **V 3–7: CONSCIENCE** God warns Abimelech that He will slay him because he is about to take Abraham's wife. Abimelech protests that his conscience is clear and his hands are clean. God tells him that provided he restores Sarah and asks Abraham to pray for him, he will be spared. **V 8–16: CONFRONTATION** Abimelech confronts Abraham with this situation and Abraham explains why he told the half-truth. Abimelech gives gifts to Abraham and restores Sarah to her husband. **V 17–18: CONCLUSION** Abraham prays to God for

Abimelech. God heals Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants who before had been made barren because Abimelech had taken Sarah, Abraham's wife.

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**CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE**

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**V 1-8: SON** As God has promised, Sarah bears Isaac to Abraham, who is one hundred years old. Abraham circumcises Isaac at eight days old as God has commanded him. On the day that Isaac is weaned, Abraham gives a feast. **V 9: SCOFFING** Ishmael, Hagar's son, scoffs at either Isaac, or Sarah, or both. **V 10-13: SOVEREIGNTY** Sarah reacts by wishing to cast out Hagar and Ishmael. Abraham is not pleased with this, but God tells him to go ahead because it is part of His plan to make Ishmael a nation, though not the nation that He has promised Abraham through Isaac. **V 14-16: SADNESS** Hagar and Ishmael are sent into the Wilderness of Beersheba and the water supply in the skin bottle is exhausted. Hagar weeps because she thinks Ishmael is going to die. **V 17-21: SUSTAINED** But God hears Ishmael's voice, speaks to Hagar confirming that Ishmael will father a great nation, opens her eyes, and provides a well of water which sustains and saves them both. Ishmael dwells in the Wilderness of Paran, and Hagar finds a wife for him from Egypt. **V 22-32: SWEAR** Abimelech gets Abraham to swear to deal well with him in the future. This is tested in a dispute over a well of water, resulting in them making a covenant together. **V 33-34: SUPPLICATION** Abraham plants a tamarisk tree to mark the covenant. He stays in the land of the Philistines a long time. He begins to call on the name of 'the LORD, the Everlasting God'.

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**CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO**

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**V 1-6: PROVING** God is to prove Abraham's faithfulness and obedience by telling him to take Isaac and sacrifice him. Abraham takes steps to obey Him. **V 7-8: POINTER** Abraham's reply to Isaac, about where the lamb for the burnt offering will come from, is a pointer to Jesus Christ, the 'Lamb of God', who later will be given for sinners. **V 9-12: PICTURE** Abraham's building an altar, putting wood on it, placing his son on that wood, and willingness to slay his beloved son pictures what will happen later at nearby Calvary to the Son of God Himself. The big difference is that the execution will not be stayed for Jesus. **V 13-14: PROVISION** God provides the ram, whose head is surrounded by thorns of a thicket. The ram will be the sacrifice in the Mount of the LORD. One day, Jesus will become a thorn-crowned sacrifice. **V 15-19: PROMISE** God renews His promise of blessing to Abraham, which is based on his obedience to God's word, which springs from faith in God's word. **V 20-24: PEOPLE** Abraham's family begins to grow.

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**CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE**

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**V 1-2: BEREAVEMENT** Sarah dies at the age of 127 years, and is mourned by Abraham. **V 3-18: BUSINESS** Abraham's grief does not prevent him proceeding with the business he has to do, that of negotiating for a burial place for Sarah. This he does with great dignity, honour, and success. **V 19-20: BURIAL** Sarah is buried by Abraham in the cave of the field of Machpelah near Mamre, at Hebron in Canaan.

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**CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR**

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**V 1-9: WISE SERVANT** Abraham sends his

distribution to the needy in Jerusalem. **V 5–9: COMING** Paul plans to come to them when his gospel work allows him the time. Currently he experiences both a wide open door for the gospel at Ephesus and opposition from ‘many’. **V 10–12: COMPANIONS** Paul commends Timothy to them. Despite pressure from Paul to go to Corinth, Apollos will come later at a convenient time. The apostle allows his co-labourer to make up his own mind. **V 13–14: COURAGE** Courage is urged on

the believers to stand firm and to act in love. **V 15–18: COMMENDATION** Paul also urges the church to support those Christians who work for the Lord and commends, with gratitude, Christians who provided personally what was lacking in the work. This probably includes financial giving. **V 19–24: CONCLUSION** The letter is concluded with greetings from churches in Asia, a serious warning to those who do not love Christ, and personal greetings from Paul.

## 2 CORINTHIANS

### OVERVIEW

#### PEOPLE AND PRELIMINARIES

✱ Paul wrote 2 Corinthians (thirteen chapters), en route between Ephesus and Corinth, probably between AD55 and AD57. It is his second of two letters to the church at Corinth and the third letter presented in the New Testament. **See comments on Romans and 1 Corinthians.**

#### PLAN AND PURPOSE


**i** Paul builds on and follows up his first letter to the Corinthian church in three main divisions, namely, Paul’s ministry seen in action, his appeal to give to others through Christian concern, and his defence of his God-given apostleship. As well as relating to the situation he addressed in his first letter, he also covers new ground. Whereas the first letter largely reveals Paul’s message, the second letter reveals even more of Paul’s character. Although written to a church, it is personal, giving his biographical details. Vital teachings and emphases are

viewed from all angles, such as: forgiveness towards penitent believers; what Christian service really is; some attributes of the triune God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; the meaning of the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross; the need for separation; teaching on God’s comfort in affliction; knowing His strength in weakness; the reason and outworking of Paul’s evangelistic zeal; Christian giving; an insight into Paul’s desire to major on God rather than on his own unusual personal experience; loving care for God’s church; and the need to stand firm for God when facing opposition.

#### PROFILE AND PROGRESSION

**☉** Paul’s introduction, change of plans, forgiveness for a restored backslider, **☉** nature and outworking of his ministry, the need to separate from evil, the need for reconciliation, the Corinthians’ repentance caused by the first letter (1:1–7:16); Christian giving to those in need in light of the example of the Macedonians and of Jesus Himself (8:1–9:15); Paul defends and vindicates his apostolic authority, citing his manifested signs of an apostle, and his preference to come to them gently next time (10:1–13:14).

## PRINCIPLES AND PARTICULARS

 The use of ‘comfort’, ‘comforted’ and similar words and phrases teaches how God comforts His people. Closely related is the encouragement coming from the knowledge that God’s strength is evident in our weakness, not excluded by it. The moving example of a major Christian leader impresses as we see his humility and bearing of hardship, rather than desiring affluence or seeking status. Accordingly, he delights to forgive a repentant Christian, and has a generous spirit regarding supporting other Christians. Yet, he is strong in advocating separation from evil and he marshals his arguments powerfully to vindicate his apostleship, because the glory of God and the gospel is at stake in both of those matters. A big heart for the gospel, for God and for people beats in this most effective preacher of the gospel and caring teacher of God’s word.

## 2 CORINTHIANS

### CHAPTER ONE

**V 1–2: SAINTS** Paul’s introduction to this letter is written to ‘all the saints who are in all Achaia’, as well as to the church at Corinth. **V 3–7: SUFFERING** God can comfort us in all our suffering and sorrows. We should pass on the comfort we receive to others who need it. **V 8–11: SALVATION** Despairing even of life at one time, Paul finds that God’s deliverance is past, present, and future for those who trust Him. It also results from the prayers of many people. **V 12–14: SINCERITY** Holiness with simple sincerity from God, according to His grace, is the basis of Paul’s dealing with the Corinthian church. **V 15–22: SEALED** Paul’s attitude

is positive when he says he will come to the Corinthians; he wishes to help and be helped. This reminds him that God is positive in His words and actions. That is why the Christian’s position is certain in Christ, who has sealed us by putting the Holy Spirit into our hearts. This ‘deposit payment’ of salvation guarantees that there is more to come. **V 23–24: SPARING** Paul says that he has stayed away from Corinth because, if he had come, he would have needed to deal with them firmly. He has spared them that. He does not seek to domineer but to work for their joy, faith and standing in Christ.

### CHAPTER TWO

**V 1–4: DISCIPLINE AND DISTRESS** Although both the Corinthian letters show that Paul is in agreement with disciplining an errant Christian, he is in sorrow and distress over any offender. **V 5–11: PUNISHMENT AND PARDON** Since the church’s disciplinary action against the offending Christian has led to his repentance, now is the time to forgive him and restore him into the fellowship. Failure to do this will play into Satan’s hands. **V 12–17: TITUS AND TRIUMPH** Paul’s former uneasiness, because he could not find out where Titus was, caused him to seek him in Macedonia, despite having an open door for the gospel at Troas. He really does care for his co-workers. He interrupts his narrative to thank God for the triumph God gives which enables him, though feeling his inadequacy, to share God’s word sincerely.

### CHAPTER THREE

**V 1–3: SELF-COMMENDATION** Paul refers to letters of introduction, often used to assure new churches that those coming to

them are authentic Christians. Initially, the false apostles commended themselves. Paul says he needs no letter of commendation when coming to the Corinthian church, because they themselves are his letter of commendation. They are saved because he has been there with the gospel. **V 4-6: SPIRIT'S CONFIDENCE** He quickly adds that his confidence is not based on self-effort, but on what the Holy Spirit has done. His confidence comes because of God's action through Christ. **V 7-11: STRIKING COMPARISON** He then compares the fading glory on Moses' face after the Ten Commandments were given, with the surpassing lasting glory through the gospel. The Ten Commandments condemn men, but the gospel saves them. **V 12-18: SUPERIOR COVENANT** The Old Testament covenant can never unveil a person's spiritual blindness. That only happens through God the Holy Spirit, when He gives understanding, transforming power, and glory through faith in Christ.

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#### CHAPTER FOUR

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**V 1: ENCOURAGED** God's mercy and commissioning for service encourage Paul not to lose heart. **V 2-6: ENLIGHTENED** Unlike unbelievers, Christians renounce the hidden and dark paths of shame because gospel light has shined in their hearts to give them a personal knowledge of God through Jesus Christ. Accordingly, they preach the Lordship of Jesus Christ to blind and lost sinners. **V 7-12: ENABLED** Despite crushing pressures from every side and persecution, Paul's willingness to die to self and to live for Christ means that God's resurrection life is at work in Paul to the glory of God. All Christians know the same truth when they trust the risen

Christ. **V 13-15: EMBOLDENED** The Christian knows that Jesus is risen from the dead and that he, too, will be raised one day to be present with his risen Lord. This encourages his faith and emboldens him to speak for Christ. **V 16-18: ENERGISED** Despite the temptation to be discouraged within, and the physical weakness of their bodies, God's servants know God's daily renewal and are motivated by the prospect of glory to come. They do not lose heart. Their current trials are light in comparison with the weight of that glory that will be theirs.

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#### CHAPTER FIVE

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**V 1-5: RESERVED!** Our bodies, the earthly dwelling place for our souls, are deteriorating. But Christians in Corinth then, or anywhere now, own the title deeds to an eternal home to come! Furthermore, there will be a new resurrection body to clothe us, in which we will enjoy our glorious privileges for ever. We have been given the Holy Spirit now as a guarantee of this glorious future blessing. **V 6-10: REWARDS** Notwithstanding the certainty of salvation in Christ through grace alone, and the fact of one day being present with the Lord in heaven, Paul reminds the Corinthians that they must appear before the 'judgement seat of Christ' where good or bad stewardship will receive its just and appropriate rewards. **V 11-15: RATIONALE** With that accountability in mind, Paul persuades men to turn to Christ. Christ's love compels him to do this, knowing that Christ 'died for all' and 'rose again'. These facts demand that lives be lived for Him. **V 16-21: RECONCILIATION** Those reconciled to God, through Christ, have become completely new people. Furthermore, they urge others to be reconciled to God.

The basis of that reconciliation is that the sinless and righteous Christ was made sin for sinful and unrighteous sinners, who trust Him, so that they are counted as sinless and righteous in Him.

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## CHAPTER SIX

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**V 1–2: PLEADING PREACHERS** Christian workers plead with people to accept God’s grace immediately and be saved. **V 3–10: TRANSPARENT TESTIMONY** The lifestyle of those serving God is to be transparent and spiritually minded. Their testimony, in the face of much hardship and opposition, should reflect God-enabled blamelessness, patience, perseverance, purity, knowledge, longsuffering, sacrifice, kindness, love, truthfulness, power, consistency, rejoicing, self-giving, generosity and contentment. **V 11–16: SCRIPTURAL SEPARATION** Paul appeals for open hearts and states it is illogical, inconsistent and unscriptural to compromise with worldliness and ungodliness. Christians are to walk with God, who indwells them, and this calls for clear separation from unbelievers in things that are doubtful or inconsistent. In this way they will have a clean walk with God. **V 17–18: FATHER’S FAMILY** As His children come out from uncleanness to separation, their Father calls them all to experience the blessings of being sons and daughters of ‘the Lord Almighty’. Their separation is in two parts—from sin and to God. Only in that way can the family likeness be noticed!

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

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**V 1: RESPONSE** In response to God’s promise of indwelling and the assurance of His fatherhood, Paul calls for cleansing and holiness to be sought and applied.

**V 2–5: RESTLESSNESS** Paul appeals for an open attitude towards his team and himself. He describes his restlessness on his last visit, when he had battles outside and fears inside. He was totally positive in his attitude, aspirations and dealings with them, but was obviously uneasy because he had to confront sin in the church at Corinth. **V 6–9: REJOICING** He rejoices that the hurtful things he had to say have brought them to repentance. God used the coming of Titus to Paul as an encouragement at that time. His arrival with good news of the offender’s repentance, and the church’s zeal for Paul, comforted him. **V 10–12: REPENTANCE** Paul underlines that truly godly sorrow leads to life-changing repentance, in contrast to worldly sorrow—perhaps he has mere emotional remorse and self-pity in mind here—which leads to spiritual death. Paul’s faithful dealing with the open sin shows his care for the church. **V 13–16: REFRESHMENT** Comfort, rejoicing, growing together and reverent obedience to God flow from the repentance. Titus is also refreshed in his spirit because of what God’s grace has done in that church, and how they received him.

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

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**V 1–7: SACRIFICIAL GIVING** Paul gratefully holds up as an example to the Corinthians the generous and sacrificial attitude and giving of the Macedonian church. They gave willingly, urgently, specifically and compassionately for needy brothers in Christ elsewhere. (We know from the first Corinthian letter that they gave to the poor Christians in Jerusalem.) But first they gave themselves. Then they were keen to give to others. Paul’s concern is to urge the Corinthians to do the same, both through

the encouragement of Titus and now through his own words. **V 8-9: SAVIOUR'S GRACE** The giving of Jesus is their, and our, example. He became poor through giving Himself for others, though no one had been richer than He. **V 10-15: SENSIBLE GUIDELINES** Paul urges that their year-long stated intention to give should now be accomplished. As long as a heart-willingness to give exists, the amount given is of secondary importance. Christians giving from their plenty should meet the needs of others who are poor and needy. **V 16-24: SENDING GIFT** Accountability, care and fellowship mean that Titus is chosen to carry the financial gift from Corinth to those poor saints in need in Jerusalem. He is accompanied by two members of the church, thus strengthening the accountability, care and fellowship.

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#### CHAPTER NINE

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**V 1-9: GENEROUS GIFT** Previously the Corinthians told Paul that they were ready to give generously to the needy Christians in Jerusalem. Now Paul urges them to put that good desire into practice, and helps them by sending Christians to them to help them to prepare the gift! He seeks generous, not grudging, giving. As with sowing seed and reaping a harvest, giving meanly produces a mean harvest and giving generously produces a generous one. God's grace not only helps people to give willingly, but is also a means by which God blesses them incidentally when they give to please Him. **V 10-15: GLORIFYING GIVING** Their giving meets the needs of poor Christians, causing the recipients to glorify God. It produces thanksgiving, prayer and praise, as the benefits both from the gospel and from their giving cause others to thank God

wholeheartedly. Paul reminds them of God's 'inestimable gift' to them. He gave His own Son.

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#### CHAPTER TEN

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**V 1-2: BOLDNESS** Paul says that if he has to come to deal with the sin of the church face to face, he will be as bold in his presence as he is in his letters. **V 3-6: BATTLE** Dealing with sin is part of spiritual warfare to be fought with God's help. It is not a physical war. The aim of this war is to pull down everything that opposes obedience to Christ in the life of the believer and to turn disobedience into obedience. **V 7-11: BUILDING** Paul's allegiance to Christ means that he must be hard on disobedient Christians at times, but he wants to build them up rather than tear them down. Whether by letter or in person, he will pursue this aim. **V 12-18: BOASTING** Paul's boasting has only been to distinguish himself from false apostles. No Christian should boast about self and self-achievement, but should 'glory in the LORD'. Only God's commendation counts.

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#### CHAPTER ELEVEN

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**V 1-3: CONCERNED** Paul does not want Satan to entice away or spoil the bride of Christ, His church. He shows his belief in the book of Genesis, when illustrating from Eve's temptation, by citing it as historical fact. **V 4-6: COUNTERFEITS** The false teachers and preachers present 'another Jesus', different from the Lord Jesus Christ, a 'different spirit', different from the Holy Spirit of God, and a 'different gospel', different from the gospel of God's grace and forgiveness through faith alone in Christ alone. Paul reminds them that he has proved his apostleship to them. **V 7-12:**

**COMPLIMENTARY** Out of love for the church, he labours for them in the gospel for no payment, so as not to be burdensome to them, and will continue to do so. This is not for his personal gain but for their welfare. **V 13–15: CORRUPT** The false apostles appear as true apostles of Christ and as ‘ministers of righteousness’, just as Satan himself appears as an angel of light. They are corrupt but their ‘end will be according to their works’. **V 16–33: CREDENTIALS** Paul is finally forced to show the church why he is a genuine apostle. He is made to enter into the foolishness of boasting, simply to reveal his apostolic pedigree, his God-given gifts, and his amazing sacrificial suffering as Christ’s servant. They need to realise that he is God’s genuine and authoritative apostle and they must heed his teaching. The sufferings Paul has experienced for Christ and His gospel have taken him to the boundary of life and death, and challenge every Christian to live and witness for the Lord, at personal cost.

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## CHAPTER TWELVE

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**V 1–6: COMPARISON** Paul continues in his assumed boasting just to make the comparison clear between him, a true apostle, and the false ‘super-apostles’. He prefers to boast about his weaknesses, however, which reveal God’s strength. He does not detail or boast about his own remarkable spiritual experience that has taken him fourteen years even to mention. **V 7–10: CONCEIT** Paul has a God-given affliction, a ‘thorn in the flesh’, to prevent him from becoming conceited about the revelations he received from God. On three occasions, he unsuccessfully requested its removal, but was told by

God that His grace was sufficient for him. Instead, he would experience God’s strength being perfected in his weakness.

**V 11–13: CLEAR** The distinctive and authenticating ‘signs, wonders and mighty deeds’ of a true apostle have been worked through Paul, clearly differentiating him from false apostles. The church witnessed those things. The only difference between the Corinthian church and other churches was that Paul did not rely on them for support. He asks them to forgive him for that! **V 14–21: CONCERN** Paul’s desire to sacrifice himself for the good of the church is obvious. He seeks to come to edify them, and again not to be supported financially by them. He is prepared to risk unpopularity and personal sadness, if necessary, in confronting unrepentant Corinthian Christians with the need to turn from their offending sins. He fears, in case various sins are tolerated and no repentance is shown. That would humble him and make him mourn.

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## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

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**V 1–6: EXAMINATION** Paul again states that he is willing to come and deal harshly with sin that has not been dealt with. That will prove that Christ speaks through him. However, he prefers that the Christians examine themselves before God to check their relationship with Christ. **V 7–10: EDIFICATION** In exhorting them to righteousness, he restates that he wants to build them up and not tear them down. **V 11–14: EXHORTATION** His closing greetings include exhortations to maturity, oneness with other Christians, experiencing God’s grace, and knowing God’s Holy Spirit among them.

# GALATIANS

## OVERVIEW

### PEOPLE AND PRELIMINARIES

✱ Paul wrote Galatians (six chapters), either in AD49 or AD50 (if written to the Celts in the north of Galatia), or possibly 54 AD or 55 AD (if written to southern Galatia). It is his fourth letter presented in the New Testament. **See comments on Romans.**

### PLAN AND PURPOSE

**i** Legalistic Judaizers are men who seek to undermine the gospel of God's grace in Christ by insisting on a mere external keeping of the law and its ordinances, majoring on their false belief that no one can be accepted by God unless he is circumcised. Thus they oppose Paul's apostolic insistence that salvation is by faith alone, in Christ alone, by His death alone, as revealed by God alone. They seek to discredit Paul, claiming he is inferior to other apostles, in order to annul his teaching. Galatians is written, therefore, both to vindicate Paul's authority as an historic apostle, through whom God reveals His word, and also clearly to restate and demonstrate that redemption can only be through the Lord Jesus Christ and His all-sufficient redemption purchased by His death on the cross. Paul's defence is not conducted for his own self-aggrandisement, but to contend for the divine origin and inspiration of his message.

### PROFILE AND PROGRESSION

☰ Paul's introduction, criticism of the Galatians' slide from grace, ☰ reminder of his credentials and proof of apostleship, and his equal standing with the apostle Peter in correcting him about legalism and contending for justification by faith alone (1:1–2:21); justification by faith—including the Spirit's presence and working, Abraham's pattern and covenant, the law and the curse, the principle of promise, Paul's appeal, the two covenants, Christian liberty and the fruit of the Spirit (3:1–5:26); responsibility to restore others, spiritual sowing, the cross rather than circumcision, and final greeting (6:1–18).

### PRINCIPLES AND PARTICULARS

☞ Under God's Holy Spirit, Paul blends personal, doctrinal and practical inputs. His emphases are: God has given him this authoritative message; Christ crucified is all the repentant sinner needs; and this must be worked out and made evident by sanctification in the practical arena of daily Christian living.

# GALATIANS

## CHAPTER ONE

**V 1–2: GREETING** In his greeting to the churches of Galatia, Paul stresses that his apostleship is God-given, and reminds them immediately of Christ's resurrection from the dead. One of the characteristics of an apostle is that he has seen the risen Lord personally. **V 3–5: GRACE** Paul wishes them God's grace and peace. He reminds them that the basis of

blessing is that Christ has died for our sins to ‘deliver us from this present evil age’. This was always in God’s will and for His glory. **V 6–10: GOSPEL** Paul is concerned about those who pervert the gospel of grace and turn others from it. Twice he states that anyone who perverts the gospel of Christ should be cursed. His concern is to please God and so fulfil his role as Christ’s servant. **V 11–24: GOD** In authenticating his apostleship, Paul makes it quite clear that his call as an apostle has come from God. He refers back to God’s work of grace in his life, marked by an immediate desire to preach the gospel to Gentiles. God revealed to him the same gospel that he revealed collectively to the apostles, as he found out three years later when he went to Jerusalem to see Peter and James, the Lord’s brother. God underlines his status as an apostle by the blessing that He gave to Paul’s ministry among the churches. No wonder God has been glorified in Paul.

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## CHAPTER TWO

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**V 1–5: CONFIRMATION** Fourteen years later, Paul, along with Barnabas and Titus, went to Jerusalem to meet the other apostles. He confirmed that the truth that he preached was given to him directly by God. It was the same truth that God had given to the other apostles. There was, right from the start, a real concern that no falseness, especially legalism, should creep into the doctrine and spoil the truth ‘even for an hour’. Titus, a Greek, was not compelled to undergo circumcision. That Jewish rite could never bestow salvation. **V 6–10: COMMISSION** God confirmed to Peter, James and John that Paul was His apostle. Accordingly they commissioned him, along with Barnabas, to take the

gospel to the Gentiles. They also were asked to remember the poor. **V 11–15: CONFRONTATION** Later, when Peter came to Antioch, Paul confronted him openly because Peter’s correct practice of eating with the Gentiles was suspended when Jews came along. Paul saw this as a hypocritical undermining of the gospel, which adversely affected the Jews and even his companion Barnabas. **V 16–21: CORRECTION** Paul insisted to them that it was only by grace in Christ that anyone could be saved, and that salvation could only come by personal faith in Him. In dying to justification by the works of the law, and living by faith in the Son of God, Paul taught that Christians should reflect the fact that salvation is by grace and not by the works of the law. The death of Christ and His risen life are fundamental to this. The false teaching of salvation by works empties the cross of Christ of its real meaning and purpose.

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## CHAPTER THREE

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**V 1–9: FOOLISHNESS AND FAITH** Paul now tells the Galatians that it is foolish to seek to be perfected in Christ by keeping Jewish legal observances. We are saved by faith and indwelt by the Holy Spirit because, like Abraham, we believe and trust in the promise of God. **V 10–14: CHRIST WAS CURSED** To attempt to be saved by keeping God’s law and then to fail would mean coming under the curse of God’s judgement on sin. But Christ has taken our sin and our curse when He died on the cross in our place. When we trust Him, we are forgiven, cleansed, and counted as righteous because He has been cursed in our place. God gives us His Spirit to confirm this. The principle is the same as that through which Abraham was blessed, namely receiving God’s promise through faith. **V 15–18:**

**PERMANENCE OF PROMISE** Paul stresses that there is only one spiritual seed of Abraham. It is not to do with Jewish nationality or race, but with trusting God's promise. In that sense, Abraham is the father of all who are justified by faith in God's promise, whether Jew or Gentile. The arrival of the law, 430 years after the promise to Abraham, cannot annul that fact. In Christ we are saved through trusting God's promise. **V 19–25: LAW IS LEGITIMATE** The law is not intended to make us righteous before God and cannot do so. It is not against the promises of God, but shows us our sin, so that it leads us to faith in Christ alone. Righteousness and salvation become ours only in Christ, as we trust Him, realising that we can do nothing to save ourselves. The law imprisons us, but faith in Christ sets us free. Just as a tutor would lead an infant to school for education, the law leads us to Christ for salvation. He is our mediator. **V 26–29: SONS IN SALVATION** Faith in Christ makes us sons of God and, as those who have believed Him, also Abraham's spiritual seed. We inherit that ancient promise in our crucified and living Saviour. So does every other Christian, irrespective of background, social status or gender.

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#### CHAPTER FOUR

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**V 1–5: ADOPTION** Paul states that through redemption Christians are adopted by God as His sons. An adopted child is brought from one family into another. We have been brought from the 'family' of condemnation to the 'family' of salvation in Christ. As such we are heirs who inherit His eternal blessings. **V 6–7: ABBA** Paul is quick to point out that this is not only a legal position, but that God's Spirit works in our hearts so that we know Him spiritually and

directly as 'Abba Father'. 'Abba' literally means 'daddy'. We are not slaves, but sons and heirs. **V 8–16: ASTRAY** Paul applies this truth and tells them of his concern, because having been saved by faith in Christ according to God's promise, they are now putting themselves into bondage by observing days, months, and seasons. They seek to fulfil unnecessary legalistic requirements either of a past and extinct ceremonial law, or of man-made laws. Paul observes the difference that this has made to their former conduct towards him. Previously he had been encouraged by their love and their caring warmth. Now he feels treated as an enemy because he insists on God's truth about salvation. **V 17–20: APOSTATE** The comparison between the false apostles, who seek to exclude the Galatian Christians from the grace of God, and Paul's fatherly concern is obvious. Nevertheless, he is prepared to act as a good father and reprimand them if necessary. **V 21–31: ABRAHAM** Paul refers to scriptural history. Abraham and Hagar (a slave) had a son, Ishmael. Abraham and Sarah, his wife, had the son God promised, namely Isaac. Paul illustrates two distinct and opposing covenants of law and of freedom, represented by the two different relationships, which underline what he teaches the Galatians in this chapter. As Isaac inherited God's promises to Abraham, so we inherit God's promises magnified to repentant sinners in Christ. Thus we are the free 'children of promise' and are born of the Spirit of God. We do not become God's children of promise through enslavement to the law or our works.

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#### CHAPTER FIVE

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**V 1–10: CIRCUMCISION** Paul develops the

principle and applies it to circumcision. Circumcision is the putting away of the flesh as a mark of entering the covenant of Israel. Paul says that this is now outdated and to continue to observe it would logically mean that the circumcised person needs to keep the whole law in order to be accepted. The Christian is counted righteous through faith in Christ. Sadly, the pernicious teaching of being saved by circumcision has hindered obedience to God's word and has grown like yeast in bread. **V 11-12: CROSS** Paul's insistence on preaching the cross has led to his persecution because it is an offence to those who wish to justify themselves rather than relying solely on what Jesus has done for them. So grave is this error that troubles the church, that Paul could wish them cut off. **V 13-15: CALLING** The gospel has called the Galatians to liberty. That liberty should be used lovingly to be a blessing to others and not in destructive in-fighting that evidently characterises their lives, and flows from the false teaching, as Paul writes. **V 16-18: COMMAND** The Galatians are commanded to 'walk in the Spirit'. Only in so doing can they conquer the lust of the flesh, because it is the Spirit, given through faith's response to God's promise, who gives liberty. Such a Spirit-led life cannot be achieved by seeking salvation by keeping the law. **V 19-23: CONTRAST** The evil of the works of the flesh are contrasted in detail with the goodness of the fruit of the Spirit borne by those who, turning from sin, trust Christ. There is no law against the fruit of the Spirit. **V 24-26: CRUCIFIED** Paradoxically those who have freedom in the Spirit are

those who count themselves as crucified with Christ and follow Him. This alone deals with conceit, strife, and envy.

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## CHAPTER SIX

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**V 1-5: BEARING BURDENS** The outworking of the previous teaching to the Galatians means that the Christian bears the burdens of others. This means a genuine desire to restore those who have gone astray, in a humble and gentle spirit, and a realistic assessment of one's own 'nothingness' apart from Christ. Self-examination is called for. **V 6-10: SOWING SEED** Generosity is a hallmark of a spiritually alive person. He will constantly support those in Christian work, sow generously God's word in his own life and in others' lives, and do good to others. He will reap a bountiful harvest and not lose heart. Christians are to be his special target of good works. **V 11-15: CHRIST'S CROSS** Paul adds a note in this letter in his own handwriting. Although those who insist on circumcision will continue to persecute Paul, he is determined that his only boasting will be in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. That cross not only deals with his sin: it deals with his heart. It crucifies Paul to the world, and the world to Paul. It has become the instrument making him into a new person. Circumcision can never do that. **V 16-18: WISE WALK** God's peace and mercy rest on those who walk with God. The apostle, seeing himself as crucified with Christ, prays for the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to be with the spirit of those who have received his crucial letter.

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## EPHESIANS

## OVERVIEW

## PEOPLE AND PRELIMINARIES


 Paul wrote Ephesians (six chapters), between AD60 and AD62, from Rome, during Paul's two years of custody. It is his fifth letter presented in the New Testament. **See comments on Romans.**

## PLAN AND PURPOSE


 The Ephesian church suffers from misguided teachers who insist on unscriptural and legalistic rules, such as forbidding marriage and abstinence from certain foods, and concentrating on fables and genealogies which go on and on. (Paul later writes to Timothy to instruct him to seek to rectify those errors in their false teaching.) The first half of the letter is doctrinal and is written to the Christians to correct the errors and teach sound doctrine by emphasising all that they have in the glorious Head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ. The second half is practical and encourages the outworking of God-honouring teaching in practical living. In so doing, important themes and issues are dealt with, including God's purpose and plans for His church. Key teaching is given on election, predestination, redemption through shed blood, the resurrection, the church as the body of Christ, salvation by God's grace through faith in Christ, working out what God works in, Christ as the cornerstone, God's plans to save Gentiles, true Christian oneness, the ascension, God's gifting to the church, sanctification and not grieving the Spirit, conduct in special relationships including

marriage, and the Christian armour. It is a letter of great encouragement and doctrinal depth.

## PROFILE AND PROGRESSION

 Paul's introductory greeting (1:1-2); the Christian's glorious standing in Christ through God's grace and will—including our position in glory, in predestination, in His riches, in His life, in His power, and in Christian oneness (1:3-3:21); the Christian's walk, worship and warfare, worked out in life—including church life, daily life, Spirit-filled life, life lived with others, life in spiritual conflict, and prayer life (4:1-6:20); Paul's final greeting (6:21-24).

## PRINCIPLES AND PARTICULARS

 The theme of 'in Christ' predominates, touching the Christian's heavenly status, predestination, redemption, spiritual riches, power, life, and oneness. Christ is put forth as our Head, our peace and our cornerstone. The results of being continually filled with the Holy Spirit, in Ephesians, compare with the injunction, in Galatians, to let God's Word dwell richly within. Sadly, the doctrinal truths and the practical exhortations did not have lasting effects. This is the church that the apostle John later revealed left its first love, despite the careful attention of the apostle Paul and all God's available resources in Christ for them. This is a warning to us all.

# THE BIBLE PANORAMA

Enjoying the whole Bible with a  
chapter-by-chapter guide

## PART TWO

### Enjoying the unhindered view with confidence

Practical topics about the Bible to help you trust and read it

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# What is the Bible?

## An overview

As shown in *Appendix 1*, as well as being a unique and single God-breathed book, the Bible is an amazing library of sixty-six books, divided into two Testaments, the Old and the New. The Old Testament traces the effect of sin on mankind from creation, follows Israel's formation and development as God's earthly people through its wanderings and entry into the promised land and its subsequent history, and looks forward to the coming to earth of the Lord Jesus Christ to redeem lost mankind. The New Testament starts with the miraculous conception and virgin birth of Jesus, chronicles His life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, and looks forward to His glorious second coming and to the events by which God will usher in an everlasting new heaven and a new earth. It records the birth, growth and missionary activity of the early church and contains vital teaching and instruction on practical living for Christians.

## The constituent parts of the Bible

Although elements of law, history, poetry, prophecy, gospel truth and Christian teaching are liberally scattered throughout this infallible and inspired revelation of God, the books of the Bible are broadly divisible as follows:

*Old Testament* (39)

*Law of Moses* (5)—these first five books are collectively known as the 'Pentateuch';

*Israel's history* (12)—from Jacob's call through the moves to and from Egypt, including their wilderness wanderings, being taken in successive captivities, and returning in stages to their land;

*Poetical books* (5)—which are nevertheless factually and spiritually accurate and profitable;

*Major prophets* (5)—dealing with God's forth-telling of His truth and foretelling of His plans to His people ('major' describes only the length of prophecies made);

*Minor prophets* (12)—exactly the same as the major prophets except that they are 'minor' only in the length of the prophecies made within them: their message is just as important and divinely inspired as the major prophets.

*New Testament* (27)

*Four Gospels* (4)—the birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ;

*Acts of the Apostles* (1)—the historical account of the birth, growth, evangelism and ministry of the early church;

*Church letters* (9)—teaching about Christian truth, daily living, right

behaviour and church leadership, contained in Holy Spirit-inspired apostolic letters to the churches;

*Other letters (12)*—cover the same principles and much similar ground in common with the church letters regarding Christian doctrine and living, but in both a pastoral context and to Jewish Christians scattered abroad;

*Revelation (1)*—God’s teaching of things that were, are now and are to come: tomorrow’s history in advance, shown to be under God’s glorious and sovereign control.

### **Too wonderful to pigeonhole!**

The helpful division of the books into categories (such as law, history, poetry and prophecy) is an observed division by men rather than a directive of God. Thus you will find that there are elements of those categories in the other divisions. For example, the first five books of the law are all historically accurate (as is the whole Bible) and contain some prophecy and poetry. Psalms, the historically accurate poetic book, contains prophecy and also statements which emphasise the truth of God’s law and our obligation to keep it. The divisions reflect general observations to help the Bible reader, and not exclusive categories to bind him or her. God’s word is far too wonderful to pigeonhole!

### **Different**

Just as the Lord Jesus Christ is different from all other leaders, religious or otherwise, so the Bible is different from all other books. Those leaders and those books are of earthly origin. The religious leaders are men (or women) with all the weaknesses and failures of sinful humanity, and all the other books, even religious ones, are written merely from a human point of view. Just as Jesus is the living Word of God, whose origin is from heaven (John 3:13; 1 Corinthians 15:47), so the Bible is the written Word of God, also of heavenly origin (2 Peter 1:18–19). Jesus came to earth from heaven, and took on the form of sinless manhood even though he was the offspring of a woman who was godly but nevertheless sinful. In the same way, the Bible was sent from heaven, put together on earth, and is infallible and God-breathed despite coming through the instrumentality of godly writers who were, nevertheless, sinners (2 Peter 1:21). In each case, God the Holy Spirit worked to produce God’s infallible word—the Lord Jesus as the living Word, and the Bible as the written word.

### **The Bible is ...**

Learned men have written large and profound books on what the Bible is! Here we are taking just a few paragraphs to focus on God’s marvellous word. We will see below that it is:

- A book/a library
- God-breathed/man-made
- Miraculous/practical

Unified/diversified

Loved/hated

Eternal/temporary

Judging/saving

Read/unread

In briefly considering those, remember that we are only scratching the surface!

### **The Bible is ... *a book/a library***

You can hold in your hand a single volume, in one of many languages and often in different translations and versions, of the whole of God's revealed will to men and women. That is exciting! Almighty God has given us a book to own, to read, to learn, to consult and to live by. It is an amazing book! And yet it is more than a book—it is a library! Those thirty-nine Old Testament and twenty-seven New Testament books, which make up the written Word of God, can be regarded as comprising various sections of God's library. As we have seen, that library is divided into sections dealing with subject matter as diverse as law and poetry, or history and prophecy. Just as there is a huge difference between this book of God and any other book, so there is an enormous difference between His library and all other libraries. There is no library in the world where all the books, being so different and written by different authors at different times, are in perfect harmony and accord with each other. This library, the Bible, has a perfect and infallible oneness without contradicting itself elsewhere, because it is God's library.

### **The Bible is ... *God-breathed/man-made***

The Bible claims to be breathed out by God (2 Timothy 3:16). That is what the word 'inspired' conveys. God wrote it. He inspired every original word that made up the Bible, in the original languages of Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic. That is why it is infallible: because God is infallible, and He is its author. Yet the Bible came to us through men. Like us, they were sinful and fallible. They could make mistakes and their knowledge and intelligence were limited, just as ours is today. Yet, because God the Holy Spirit came upon them and inspired them to write His word, God protected them and His written word from any errors in the words He gave them originally. (Obviously, in making translations it is not always possible to convey the depth of meaning that God gave in those original infallible words. However, careful translations by scholars of integrity from the oldest manuscripts give us the written Word of God today which is very close to the original meaning, at the least, and is usually completely on target.) The same Holy Spirit who caused the miraculous conception of the incarnate and perfect Son of God in the womb of Mary produced a miraculously infallible written word, the Bible, when the Holy Spirit came upon the thoughts and minds of those who penned Scripture. Did Jesus reflect some of the physical features of His biological mother? Perhaps. Certainly the books of the Bible reflect

different characteristics of their authors. Yet the Bible demonstrates the same faultlessness and infallibility as did the Word of God made man (Proverbs 30:5–6).

### **The Bible is ... *miraculous / practical***

Sometimes we use the word ‘miraculous’ too lightly. We usually mean that something has happened which was wonderful, unlikely and unexpected. But wonderful, unlikely and unexpected things can happen which are by no means ‘miraculous’. A miracle is when God personally steps into a situation to do something that otherwise just could not be done. That is why, for example, the creation of the world was miraculous, as was the incarnation and the resurrection of Jesus. Genuine Christian conversion is miraculous, also. By definition, no one could write ‘the word of God’ because it is ‘of God’ (Hebrews 4:12). By very nature, it is a miracle. God did what no one else could do. Only He had the power, the authority, the knowledge and the wisdom to write it. Yet the Bible is practical, too. Jesus lived among us as a practical man, despite also being ‘Immanuel’ or ‘God with us’ (Matthew 1:23). He worked with His hands, ate our food, walked our roads, talked our words—His miraculous nature and origin blended with His practical and sinless humanity. Similarly, the teaching of the written word from heaven, the Bible, is profitable in every possible practical situation in human life and equips the Christian to do good in every circumstance of life (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Thus it speaks to us in the home and in the workplace, in sorrow and in joy, in sickness and in health, in society or in solitude, in richness or in poverty, in youth or in old age, in life or in death, in success or in failure, and in the church or in the world. God speaks to us in every situation through His Self-revelation in the Bible.

### **The Bible is ... *unified / diversified***

The Bible is a running unity of God’s written revelation. Not only has it no contradictions, but all its separate themes are interconnected and in perfect harmony. Its themes dovetail perfectly together and run through the whole of its contents. No single theme takes away from or contradicts another one, though each theme is different. The balance held between them is perfect. All the major themes can be found in the very first book of the Bible, yet they are still being echoed and expanded in the last one, having been clearly demonstrated throughout the Old and the New Testaments. But despite this unity and harmony, the amazingly vast range of topics, historical accounts, principles, disciplines, teachings, problems, blessings, societies and people gives us the world’s most comprehensive and authoritative encyclopaedia which is never out of date. Unified diversity and diversified unity run together throughout God’s word. The infallible oneness of the Bible is seen supremely in the way it testifies to the centrality, person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the key. This theme will be developed more fully in Chapter 7.

### **The Bible is ... *loved/hated***

There has never been a book that is so loved by some, yet so hated by many others. You can understand why when you heed its message. God is love, and He wants His message of love in Christ to conquer our sinful hearts. We have rebelled against that love and, by nature, we love darkness rather than light because of our wickedness (John 3:19). There is a totally evil being, Satan, who manipulates an anti-God world system with the support of sinful human hearts. He hates the thought that the message of redeeming love and the cleansing blood of Christ should ransom lost sinners from the tyranny of sin. Thus whenever the Bible is preached and taught, there is a potential life and death struggle of a spiritual nature (Ephesians 6:12). That is why so many in the world, though giving much lip-service to the Bible, hate it and its message, and ridicule and oppose the preaching of the cross and resurrection of Christ. They hatefully rebel, no matter how refined or religious they may seem to be, against the biblical insistence that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of sinful, lost and dying men and women. Satan will even use religion, including nominal Christianity, to give his evil designs some respectability and acceptance among those he wishes to see and keep on the broad road to destruction (Matthew 7:13). The testimony of history is that religious people can be the fiercest and cruellest in their attacks on the Bible and on those who uphold its truths. On the other hand, those whose belief in the Bible's message has led them to forgiveness and new life in Christ so love the book from God that they will live and die to proclaim and follow it (Psalm 119:97-101). Among their number are many who, like the apostle Paul, once hated its message, but now have come to love the Bible because they have come to love its Author, God Himself. Do not be surprised at opposition if you take the Bible seriously—it is a much-hated as well as a much-loved book.

### **The Bible is ... *eternal/temporary***

God's word came from heaven and is settled in heaven (Psalm 119:89). Like an old building that was fashioned elsewhere and later reassembled at a given place after being transported there, the Bible fits together perfectly on earth because it was fashioned in heaven and brought down stone by stone, as God the Holy Spirit inspired the very words of the men who wrote it down. It is thus both eternal and temporary. How? Its truths are timeless and unchanging, because they come from and describe God, who is eternal and eternally consistent and changeless. Obviously, the *physical* books of paper, print, and cloth, board or leather that contain God's written word will one day decay or be destroyed. Although the Bibles we have in our homes and in our hands contain God's only, complete and final revelation of Himself to us on this side of eternity, that revelation contains only a whisper of the immeasurable depth, height, length, width and magnitude of the whole truth about God. Eternity will be needed to grasp that! It is rather like sending a birthday card to someone you love dearly. That card is true and right, but it only reveals the tip of the iceberg of the real love you have for that person.

How much more is that true of God! The Bible is His wonderful earthly ‘birthday card’. It is nothing, however, in comparison with the limitless love, mercy, grace and truth that He will show in eternity to those who have believed its message, repented from sin and trusted Christ.

### **The Bible is ... *judging / saving***

There is another parallel between Jesus, the living Word, and the Bible, the written word. Jesus will come again to judge those who do not trust Him as Saviour (2 Timothy 4:1). Lost mankind has only two alternatives: *either* become saved, *or* continue in condemnation (John 3:18). The difference between those two states is either knowing the Lord Jesus Christ as one’s personal Saviour, or facing Him as a personal Judge. So it is with the Bible. It is a signpost to salvation, actually able to make us wise to the extent that we trust its message of salvation and turn to Christ from our sins (2 Timothy 3:15). But it is also a signpost to judgement, revealing quite clearly that eternal judgement will follow the death of those refusing or neglecting to turn from their sins (Hebrews 9:27; Romans 1:18). Thus the Bible stands at the crossroads of unbelief and belief, of sinful pride and repentant trust, of continuing in sin and coming to forgiveness, of hell and heaven, of eternal death and eternal life, and of the broad way and the narrow way. When one has come to know Christ, the Bible continues to offer to the Christian the daily salvation from sin’s power that is open to those who trust its message and follow it. But it warns of personal shipwreck to those who will waste their lives through rebellion or neglect. The judgement seat of Christ will be the place where we Christians will know God’s assessment of how we stewarded God’s gifts of grace and how we responded to the wonderful truths of His word (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Once we have trusted Christ, we can never be lost eternally (John 10:27–29). However, we can bring much dishonour to God’s name and lose the blessing He wants for us and through us if we do not choose the ways of daily salvation by being filled with His word and revering it in our lives.

### **The Bible is ... *read / unread***

Unconverted people rarely read the Bible thirstily, seriously and continuously—if they did they would probably not remain unconverted for long! They prefer the movies, TV, soap operas, leisure pursuits, and other books to the Bible. They may occasionally be worried or frightened enough, or stung, or aroused to read God’s word, but generally non-Christians would rather tell you what is wrong with the Bible than read it! Christians understand that, because many of them were once also like that! Before Christ takes over in a person’s heart and life, any desire within for God is stunted and spoiled by our sin. There are, of course, some wonderful exceptions: some men, women and children do set their hearts to seek God, and read the Bible in their search for its Author. Such people will always be rewarded because God says that those who seek Him wholeheartedly really will find Him (Jeremiah 29:13) and thus be found by Him.

If you are not yet converted to Christ, consider the potential investment from the time you could set aside to read the Bible. Depending on your reading speed, you could read the whole Bible in a year if you spend about twenty minutes a day! If that is too much, why not consider devoting ten minutes a day to reading the New Testament? You will read it at least once in a year with time to spare! If the whole of your eternal future—in heaven with Christ, knowing God’s everlasting blessings, or in hell without Him, experiencing God’s everlasting judgement on your sin—depends on your response to the message of the Bible, then can you afford *not* to read it?

And what could possibly be more important to a Christian than knowing God better? How can you ever get to know Him better if you do not read, learn and apply His word to your life? You ought to study the Bible (2 Timothy 2:15) and plan to read it all through regularly and often. But how much time do we, who belong to Christ, spend in unnecessary and secondary things, which if not necessarily wrong will never bring blessing? Compare that with the time each week we spend reading God’s word, the Bible. Can we justify our conduct before the judgement seat of Christ when we give an account of the stewardship of our time, gifts and opportunities since we trusted the Christ of the Bible? Never has there been a book about which so much has been said, but which so few have read all the way through! May you join the blessed ranks of those, if you are not in those ranks already, who determine by God’s grace to read and know the *whole* of the Word of God!

### **My Bible in verse**

Roy Mohon’s cleverly written poem *My Bible* gives a helpful summary of the contents of God’s word. As with all brief summaries of the books of the Bible, including those in *The Bible Panorama*, the summary is not definitive and exhaustive but it is helpful. Sometimes readers of the Bible justifiably differ in how they summarise a book of the Bible. Each could be right. It is rather like describing a sparkling diamond, or trying to relay to another a beautiful sunset or breathtaking scenery: there are many different ways of doing it that are all equally valid! Roy Mohon’s poem follows:

#### *My Bible*

In Genesis the world was made by God’s almighty hand.  
 In Exodus the Hebrews marched to gain the Promised Land.  
 Leviticus contains the Law: holy and just and good.  
 Numbers records the tribes enrolled, all sons of Abraham’s blood.  
 Moses in Deuteronomy records God’s mighty deeds,  
 Brave Joshua into Canaan’s land, the host of Israel leads.  
 In Judges their rebellion oft provokes the Lord to smite,

But Ruth records the faith of one well pleasing in his sight.  
 In 1st and 2nd Samuel of Jesse's sons we read,  
 Ten tribes in 1st and 2nd Kings revolted from His seed.  
 The 1st and 2nd Chronicles see Judah captive made,  
 But Ezra leads a remnant back by Princely Cyrus' aid.  
 The city walls of Zion, Nehemiah built again,  
 While Esther saves her people from the plot of wicked men.  
 In Job we read how faith will live beneath affliction's rod,  
 And David's Psalms are precious songs for every child of God.  
 The Proverbs like a godly string of choicest pearls appear,  
 Ecclesiastes teaches how vain all things are here.  
 The mystic Song of Solomon exalts sweet Sharon's Rose,  
 While Christ the Saviour and the King the rapt Isaiah shows.  
 The warning Jeremiah apostate Israel scorns,  
 His plaintive Lamentations, then their awful downfall mourns.  
 Ezekiel tells in wondrous words of dazzling mysteries,  
 While Kings and Empires yet to come Daniel in vision sees.  
 Of judgement and of mercy Hosea loves to tell,  
 Joel describes the blessed days when God with man shall dwell.  
 Among Tekoa's herdsmen Amos receives his call,  
 While Obadiah prophesies of Edom's final fall.  
 Jonah becomes a type of Christ now risen from the dead  
 Who warns us that our judgement lies a few short days ahead.  
 Micah pronounces Israel lost—lost, but again restored.  
 Nahum declares on Nineveh just judgement shall be poured.  
 A view of Chaldea's coming doom Habakkuk's visions give,  
 Next Zephaniah warns the Jews to turn, repent and live.  
 Haggai wrote to those who saw the temple built again,  
 And Zechariah prophesied of Christ's triumphant reign.  
 Malachi was the last who touched the high prophetic chord,  
 Its final notes sublimely show the coming of the Lord.  
 Matthew and Mark and Luke and John the holy Gospel wrote  
 Describing how the Saviour died, His life and all He taught.  
 Acts proves how God the apostles owned with signs in every place,

While Paul in Romans teaches us how man is saved by grace.  
The Apostle in Corinthians instructs, exhorts, reproves,  
Galatians shows that faith in Christ alone the Father loves.  
Ephesians and Philippians tell what Christians ought to be,  
Colossians bids us live to God and for eternity.  
In Thessalonians we're taught the Lord will come from Heaven,  
In Timothy and Titus a Pastor's rule is given.  
Philemon marks a Christian's love which only Christians know,  
Hebrews reveals the gospel was prefigured by the Law.  
James teaches without holiness faith is vain and dead,  
And Peter points a narrow way in which the saints are led.  
John in his three epistles, on love delights to dwell,  
But Jude gives awful warning of judgement, wrath and hell.  
The Revelation prophesies of that tremendous day,  
When Christ—and Christ alone—shall be the trembling sinner's stay.

# Overviews and study helps

## The Holy Spirit and the purpose of this chapter

The best way to learn God's word is through the Holy Spirit leading us as, with yielded hearts and minds, we read the Bible itself and rely on God to speak to us. John chapters 14, 15 and 16 contain the key teaching of Jesus on the person and work of God the Holy Spirit. Our Lord and Saviour makes it quite clear that the Holy Spirit is 'the Spirit of truth' (John 14:17), that He will teach Christ's disciples all things they need to know and remind them of those things (John 14:26), that He comes from the Father and testifies about the Son (John 15:26), that He will guide His followers 'into all truth' which includes 'things to come' (John 16:13), and that He will declare to Christians the things of Christ (John 16:15). In learning God's word there is no substitute for the Holy Spirit of truth teaching committed disciples through God's word of truth.

Yet the same God also placed teachers of His word among His people in both Old Testament and New Testament times. So today, the Christian who wants to get the most out of his, or her, Bible should join a Bible-believing, Bible-teaching and Bible-honouring church where the ministry will be from and about the Word of God. But God has also given teaching talents to many who write good Christian books. We would do well to benefit from their ministry by supplementing our own reading and studying of the Bible with their books.

This brief chapter is simply intended to explain the place of the overviews in this book, and to suggest just a few reference books and study Bibles that might help someone needing initial guidance on that subject. More established Christians reading this book will probably have their own list, and this will be reflected on their bookshelves.

### Sixty-six overviews

In *The Bible Panorama*, sixty-six brief *overviews* are given—one for each book of the Bible. Each *overview* precedes the chapter-by-chapter explanation of the book of the Bible concerned in Part I of this book. But please remember that, while understanding an *overview* of each book is important and helpful, there is no substitute for reading the Bible itself! It is the Word of God! Let Him speak through His word to you.

### Only signposts!

It is outside the scope of this panoramic approach to each chapter of the Bible to provide a detailed background explanation of each of the sixty-six books, but rather to concentrate on the teaching itself in each chapter in the Bible. The *overviews* included in this book are very brief and intended to help you to 'see the next page of the map' on your privileged and exciting journey of reading through