

# A Must for Your Library

## 2014 Bellview Lectureship Book: *Understanding the Will of the Lord*

*Doug Post*

Most students of the Bible have some kind of book collection or personal library, especially preachers. Some books are read once and placed back on the book shelf and forgotten, while others are read multiple times, becoming a steady reference tool for one's own personal studies. I believe this year's lectureship book, *Understanding the Will of the Lord*, serves both purposes. Not only is it a great book to read, providing insight to the unfolding nature of God's Word, the Bible, but it will definitely serve as a tremendous reference tool for anyone's personal book collection or library. In fact, it very well might become your "go to book" because it provides much insight to the various times and periods of Bible history, demonstrating how God's unfolding Will for mankind culminates with Jesus Christ, His church, and salvation from sin. The 2014 Bellview Lectureship book is 334 pages of well-written historical details concerning the three dispensations of the Bible. It is divided into 28 chapters of impressive scholarship. While much information is provided, it is by no means intimidating. The book is "reader friendly" for anyone wishing to learn more of the historical background of the Bible and for God's Will for their lives.

### **"Theme of the Bible"**

**by Wayne Blake**

The beginning chapter reminds that the overall theme of the Bible is God's plan for the redemption of man, summarized by reconciliation. Man sinned, separating himself from God (Isa. 59:1-2), becoming His enemy. However, through the sacrificial death of Christ upon the cross, and the shedding of His blood as an atonement for our sin, God provided a way for man to return to Him, to establishing friendship with God once gain. The writer also reminds us that while God provides reconciliation through Christ's blood, man still needs to obey Him, "yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel" (Col. 1:22-23). Our continued reconciliation is dependent upon our continued obedience to the faith—the Gospel.

### **"The Church in the Eternal Purpose of God"**

**by Gene Hill**

In this chapter we learn that *church* is defined as the "called out." It may also be defined as an assembly, denoting the idea of a group of people gathered for a purpose. The writer of this chapter points to Acts 19:39 for such usage, and rightly points out that to be the church we read about in the New Testament we must first be called by the Gospel (2 The. 2:13-14), and obey it (1 Pet. 4:17).

Church may refer to the universal church, all the saved (Mat. 16:18), or it may refer to a local congregation, where a smaller number out of the universal number gather for worship, instruction, and edification (1 Cor. 1:2). The writer demonstrates that the church was planned in eternity by the mind of God (Eph. 3:8-12; Acts 2:21). It was not an afterthought as some denominations teach. We also learn the church was purposed in that it is through the church that the Gospel is to be made known to a lost and dying world (Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46), thereby making known the “manifold wisdom of God” (Eph. 3:8-10). The writer also explains that the church was prophesied identifying such passages as Isaiah 2:2-3, Daniel 2:44, and Joel 2:28-29. The church was promised as well. Not only by referring to specific Old Testament prophecies, but also to the Lord’s promise of building His church (Mat. 16:18-19). Finally we learn the church was, indeed, established by various passages such as Mark 9:1, Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4-8, Acts 2:1-4. The kingdom was promised to come with power. Acts 2 reveals that the kingdom was established on the day of Pentecost, coming in power just as Jesus had promised.

### **“Arrangement of the Bible”**

**by Jerry C. Brewer**

Here we learn that the Bible is actually a library—a collection of 66 books, divided into the Old Testament (which has 39 books) and into the New Testament (which contains 27 books). The Old Testament has 5 subdivisions: Law, History, Wisdom Literature, Major Prophets, and Minor Prophets. The New Testament has 4 subdivisions: Biographical Books (Gospel Accounts), History, Epistles, and Prophecy. The writer reminds us that these 66 books were inspired or “God-breathed” (2 Tim. 3:16-17) and that God determined the canon of Scripture, that is, God made sure to preserve and protect the Scriptures that had been written. Lastly, we learn that the books of the Bible are not arranged in chronological order and that the division of the Bible into chapters and verses were not part of the original writings.

### **“Dispensations of Time”**

**by Dub McClish**

The writer introduces us to the concept of time. There is Personal Time, which is the time each individual has and experiences on earth, from birth to death. There is also Historic Time, which covers the history of mankind while on earth, from the beginning of time at Creation to the end of time, when the Lord comes again and the world is destroyed. With time comes Dispensations, which are certain periods of time having differing law systems and means of reconciliation and/or salvation. We learn that there are three major divisions of the Bible or dispensations: Patriarchal Dispensation, the Mosaic Dispensation, and the Christian Dispensation. However, the writer addresses various “Sub-Dispensations,” which are both original and creative: the Pre-Mosaic Dispensation, the Mosaic-Law-Forward Sub-Dispensation, the Pre-Matthew Sub-Dispensation, the John/Jesus Sub-Dispensation, the Miraculous Sub-Dispensation, and the Non-Miraculous Sub-Dispensation. In my estimation, the inclusion and the study of these “Sub Dispensations” found only in this chapter, and only in this book, is

worth the price of the book. The identification and application of these “Sub-Dispensations” is a tremendous way to better understand the three major Dispensations of the Bible.

### **“Patriarchal Dispensation”**

**by Michael Hatcher**

In this chapter we learn that Patriarchal is composed of three parts meaning, “father rule.” In this period of time, God was dealing directly with the head of the house rather than working through prophets and other men of God. The Patriarchal Dispensation was a divinely designed system having its own laws peculiar to its own people during that timeframe. We know that both sin and law have existed together in each Dispensation since “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4; Rom. 4:15). While each Dispensation had its own remedy for sin, based upon God’s Will for that particular Dispensation, the blood of Christ was needed for all three of these Bible time periods. The writer of this chapter points out that the Mosaic Dispensation was only for a select group of people, those having been called out of the Gentile world and from the Patriarchal Law. This means the Patriarchal Dispensational or system of law, did not end with the giving of the Law of Moses, but was still the law to which the entire Gentile world was subject to. The Law of Moses, under the Mosaic Dispensation, was a law only for the Jews (Deu. 5:1-3). I invite you to read and reflect on this chapter, as its writer does an excellent job of noting the necessary distinctions between the Patriarchal and Mosaic Dispensations.

### **“Mosaic Dispensation”**

**by Dub Mowery**

Here we are reminded that Moses and the Israelites came out of Egyptian bondage and that the law was given to Moses at Mt. Sinai. While the Law of Moses has as its foundation the first Ten Commandments, we know through Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy that many more laws were given and added for Israel to follow. The Mosaic Dispensation and the Law of Moses are so named, because God used Moses as His spokesman to address the people of Israel—God’s chosen people. The writer notes that the Mosaic Law remained in effect until the promised Seed would come, Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:19). The Mosaic Dispensation was the time period where God dealt primarily with the Jews, His chosen people. The Law of Moses, given to the Jews for this Dispensation, was only for the Jews, and it served as a “tutor” to bring the Jews to Christ. Moses taught that God would raise up a prophet from Israel, and He would be like the prophet Moses, and the people would, then, follow Him (Deu. 18:17-19). The prophet, of course, was Jesus Christ. The writer of this chapter reminds us of the importance of studying the Old Testament and the Law of Moses because of its many practical and applicable principles. While the Law of Moses was taken out of the way, being nailed to the cross (Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 2:14-15; cf. 2 Cor. 3), and while we live under the New Testament and under a different Dispensation, there is still much we can learn from the Old Testament and the Mosaic Dispensation. (Rom. 15:4).

## **“Christian Dispensation”**

**by Charles Pogue**

While the Mosaic Dispensation came to an end, the Law of Moses being nailed to the cross, the Christian Dispensation would begin on the day of Pentecost, when the Lord’s Will for mankind began to be exercised through the preaching of Christ’s ambassadors, the apostles (Acts 2). Within this section, we learn that the Christian Dispensation will end upon the Second Coming of Christ and the end of the world and of time (Mat. 24:35; John 5:24-28; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; 2 Pet. 3:10-13). We also learn that the Christian Dispensation is synonymous with the Bible term “last days.” We are living in the eschaton of time, or “last days” while waiting for the coming of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

## **“Ante-Diluvian Period”**

**by Roelf L. Ruffner, Sr.**

This is the period of life and times that took place from the beginning of Creation until the great, universal flood came. When man was finally created and began living in the Garden God had made for them, sin entered the world. While Adam and Eve are responsible for having sinned against God, they are not responsible for the sins and poor choices the rest of mankind has made (Eze. 18:19-24). The writer of this chapter rightly refers to this period of time as the “Downward Spiral of Humanity.” The family of man (that came from Adam and Eve) began to sin more and more, further separating themselves from their Creator (Isa. 59:1-2), and the wickedness of man was great upon the earth (Gen. 6:5-6). The writer then discusses the obedience of Noah, the building of the ark, and the coming of the great flood. With the shutting of the door of the ark by the hand of God, this period of time would finally come to an end by means of The Flood, and by the wrath of God.

## **“Post-Diluvian Period”**

**by Harrell Davidson**

This period of time begins after the waters of the flood had receded and end with the call of Abraham. Here we find Noah and his family finally stepping foot upon dry ground and offering God sacrifices. In Genesis 9:8-17, God makes a covenant with Noah specifically and with mankind in general that He will not ever destroy the earth again by water. Regarding this promise and covenant, the writer explains:

God is the source of this covenant (9:9, 12, 15, 17). The scope of the covenant was to include all animals as well as man (9:9-10). Its purpose was to ensure their safety (9:11). The pledge of this covenant is the rainbow (9:12-13). The meaning of this covenant is that God is faithful (9:14-15). The duration of it is as long as the earth shall be (9:16). The guarantee of it is God’s Word (9:17).

Noah and his family begin repopulating the earth and as their descendants multiply and spread out upon the earth, we find the beginnings of government being established and ordained of God, for man to govern himself over certain affairs of his life. This will be the case from Genesis 9:6 continuing till the end of the world (Rom. 13:1-4). The chapter closes with commenting on Genesis 10-11. Here we find a record that is historical because it involves the origin of nations. It is an account that is political, in that the peoples divided up and began to put forth their leaders to govern themselves. The record is also geographical in that

it shows where people scattered and settled, God setting up their boundaries (Acts 17:26). It is also biographical (Gen. 10:5-10).

### **“Patriarchal Period”**

**by Roelf L. Ruffner, Sr.**

This chapter concerns itself with the four primary Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Here we follow the lives of these Patriarchs, the events that transpired in their lives, and how their lives played a vital role in God’s scheme of human redemption. The focus of this chapter is in showcasing God’s providential care for His people and how He protected the Promised Seed (Gen. 3:15) through the lineage of Adam and through these four great Patriarchs.

### **“Period of Bondage”**

**by Dub Mowery**

While Joseph was sold into slavery and housed in Egypt, the actual bondage of the children of Israel did not begin until after the death of Joseph and the new Pharaoh had come to power (Exo. 1:5-14). The period of bondage is covered in Exodus 1-14. Because of the numerical growth of the children of Israel, the new Pharaoh became concerned that they might be on the verge of rising up against Egypt and enjoy freedom. So, the new Pharaoh worked the children of Israel much harder, becoming Israel’s brutal taskmaster. In controlling the population explosion, Pharaoh ordered the death of all the newborn male babies in Israel. The writer draws the riveting parallel between the Pharaoh failing to kill the baby Moses (type) and Herod failing to kill Jesus (antitype). The writer also points out that, somehow, and at some point, Moses became aware of his true identity (Heb. 11:23-27). We are then led through the time of Moses’ calling to lead God’s people (Exo. 3) and through the plagues against Egypt, where upon the 10<sup>th</sup> plague and the death of all the first born among the Egyptians, the Pharaoh decided to let children of Israel go. Of course, it also at this time that the Passover becomes identified with Israel, becoming a significant spiritual reminder of God’s love and care for His people, as well as the need to obey God’s commands (Exo. 12:3-12).

### **“Period of Wilderness Wanderings”**

**by Harrell Davidson**

This period begins with the Israel’s exodus from Egypt until the time they crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land. We are quickly introduced to the murmuring and complaining that was done by Israel during their Wilderness Wanderings. Complaining is a sure sign of a lack of faith and trust in the Lord. It is a sign that there is something amiss with the heart of a people. Some desired to return to the bondage they detested while in Egypt, rather than enjoying the freedom God had given them. Moses had to deal with this bad attitude of the people in an effective manner; otherwise, there would be mass dissent and division among God’s people. A disaster Moses, nor God, wanted. The next event of the Wilderness Wanderings was that of the 12 spies. God wanted them to take the land but they were reluctant in doing so because the enemy intimidated them. Ten spies said that they could not take the land; however, two spies (Joshua and Caleb), having enough faith in God, said they could. The journey progresses with the account of Korah’s rebellion and then the deaths of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. While Moses was Israel’s greatest figure,

prophet, and leader, he, too, had his failings and shortcomings. Because of his well-known sin of not obeying the Lord by striking the rock rather than speaking to it, he was unable to enter the Promised Land with the rest of Israel. A momentary lapse of Judgment and disobedience is a very serious matter with God.

### **“Period of Conquest”**

**by Ken Chumbley**

Joshua has replaced Moses as Israel’s leader. We get a glimpse of his faith and courage, being one of the 12 spies, and only one of two who had returned with an encouraging report for Moses. Joshua was a great military figure who leads Israel across the Jordan into the Promised Land. It is interesting how often God uses men associated with military throughout the Bible. In fact, the greatest faith Jesus ever witnessed was that of a soldier—a centurion (Mat. 8:10). Perhaps military men play such a dominant role in the Bible is due to their example of courage, devotion to a cause, discipline, and following orders or commands? Of course, one of the famous events in the life of Joshua during this period was that of the fall of Jericho. While the city walls miraculously fell by the power of God, it would not have occurred were it not for the faith of Joshua and Israel. Here we have an example of God’s grace being appropriated by man’s faith (Eph. 2:8-10). The Hebrews writer explains that Jericho fell by Israel’s faith (Heb. 11:30), and Bible faith is always conjoined with obedience. Without obedience, there is no faith! Other prominent accounts include the sin and death of Achan, the distribution of the land to the 12 tribes, and cities of refuge.

### **“Period of the Judges”**

**by John West**

After the death of Joshua, Israel was without a leader. However, God raised up certain leaders called Judges, who would lead Israel to both physical and spiritual victories. During this time-frame, the “dark ages” for the nation of Israel, the people rebelled: “In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Jud. 17:6). The period of Judges is marked with sin and rebellion, the rising of a judge, the repentance of the people, the judge leading Israel to victory, period of peace, and then the cycle repeats itself. These Judges were more of military leaders than actual Judges. The writer of this chapter informs us that there were three kinds of Judges: military leaders, priests, and prophets. The work of these Judges defines the very theme of this particular period in Israel—“God is in sovereign control and Israel’s sinful rebellion will be punished.” God’s plan and desires for His people will always come to fruition. We are introduced to the 15 Judges of Israel during this period, each one playing a significant role in bringing about God’s purposes for His people.

### **“Period of the United Kingdom”**

**by Paul Vaughn**

This 120-year period of time for Israel is a great one and is documented in 1 Samuel 11:31 through 1 Kings 12:1 and 1 Chronicles 5:10 through 2 Chronicles 9:31. While God was Israel’s true King, the people desired to be like the nations around them, desiring to be ruled by an earthly king—a man (1 Sam. 8:1-7; Deu. 17:14-20). There are three kings during this time frame: Saul, David, and Solomon. Israel at this time was a Theocracy, meaning there was a combination of both national (secular) and spiritual laws,

as well as national (secular) and spiritual leaders. While Solomon was a great leader for the nation of Israel, he lacked in the spiritual side of things, not leading his people closer to God. Saul ignored God's commands by making unauthorized sacrifice (1 Sam. 13:1-15), and by disobeying God in not completely destroying the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:1-26). Finally, Saul was rejected as king, committing suicide during battle (1 Sam. 31:16). David then reigned as king, having, previously, enjoyed a very successful life as a young man. One great experience concerning David, which all kids enjoy reading about, is the account of David killing the giant Philistine, Goliath. Of course, David was not immune from sin, for he committed some grievous sins, which cost the lives of innocent people, including Uriah the Hittite and Ahimelech and his family. The writer also points us to David being inspired by the Spirit to write Scripture (2 Sam. 23:2; Acts 1:16), including such notable prophetic passages as Psalm 22, Psalm 16:10, and Psalm 110, as well as other more notable passages, including Psalm 23 and 139. Finally, we come across Solomon, who started out as a humble man, asking for only wisdom from God (1 Kin. 3:9). Solomon was responsible for the building of the first temple of Israel, which was his father David's dream. Solomon was the one who both constructed and completed it, and in a very humble manner dedicated it to God (1 Kin. 8:27). However, Solomon became corrupted by sin and desire for pleasure. He married multiple wives and began worshipping their idols. He became more interested in material gain and wealth, than spiritual matters and obedience to God (1 Kin. 11:1-8).

### **"Period of the Divided Kingdom"**

**by David P. Brown**

The writer informs us that the kingdom became divided due to disobedience to God but that there were other factors that played a role in creating this division, including jealousy between the northern and southern kingdoms, idolatry, taxes, and greater economic burdens upon the people. The ten northern tribes would split from the two southern tribes creating a divided kingdom between north and south. King Jeroboam was the king of the north and Rehoboam the south. Jeroboam set other cities for the ten northern tribes to worship in, Bethel and Dan, forcing them to worship golden calves rather than the God of Israel. Not only did he change the worship, Jeroboam changed the god to be worshipped. He will always be known as the man who caused Israel to sin. It was during this time that the prophet Elijah spoke against Jeroboam and Israel's Baal worship. The most famous account was when he defeated the 450 prophets of Baal by calling down fire upon the altar of their idol (1 Kin. 18:19-39). There was a period of war and then a period of peace, followed by another period of war. The writer then introduces us to the prophets of God who both forth-told and foretold, faithfully declaring the Word of God. God sent writing prophets to the northern kingdom, which included Jonah, Amos, Hosea, and Micah. He also sent non-writing prophets such as Elijah, Elisha, Ahijah, Jehu, Micaiah, and Oded. Prophets sent to the southern kingdom were: Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Obadiah. The whole purpose of God sending these prophets out to the people was to bring about repentance and to have His people turn from sin. God's love demands repentance from sin, not continuation in sin!

## **“Period of Judah Alone”**

**by Wayne Blake**

After their brothers in the northern kingdom had gone into Assyrian captivity in 722 BC, the southern kingdom, Judah, still remained unified. The period of Judah Alone lasted roughly 136 years, from around 722 BC to 586 BC. After watching their brethren to the north go into captivity due to their disobedience to God, one would think that the southern kingdom would have learned something from the example of the northern kingdom, but they did not. They, too, rebelled against God. The period under consideration is recorded for us in 2 Kings 18-25 and 2 Chronicles 29-36. This chapter focuses on the southern kingdom’s leaders: Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah, and Gedaliah. Then our attention is given to the prophets of Judah, including, Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Daniel, and Ezekiel.

## **“Period of Exile”**

**by Doug Post**

In this section we learn that there were three deportations or phases of Judah going into captivity. The first phase or deportation began around 606-605 BC. The second phase began around 597 BC, while the third and final stage began around 587-586 BC (2 Chr. 36:5-8; Dan. 1:1-6). Following the third phase of deportation, Nebuchadnezzar had Solomon’s temple destroyed. This occurred during the 19th year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. Those taken captive back to Babylon enjoyed a measure of freedom while there. There were allowed to work, worship, and live as long they remained loyal to the Babylonian government. Although there was a measure of freedom, they still longed for Jerusalem and home (Psa. 137:1-9). The writer focuses our attention on three primary prophets of this period: Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel. We find Jeremiah, called the “weeping prophet,” because he was concerned for the spiritual welfare of his brethren. Clearly this is the attitude we should have toward our brethren who have decided to leave the authority of the Bible for their own desires. The attitude of Jeremiah is needed as it produces the zeal we sometimes lack in confronting our brethren and their error. We also learn that Daniel was taken captive as a young boy during the first deportation, while Ezekiel was taken captive during the second deportation.

## **“Period of Restoration”**

**by Jerry C. Brewer**

The ten northern tribes of Israel were gone forever, while the southern kingdom of Judah ceased existing as a nation. However, God did not forget His people. He had punished them for their sins and rebellion against Him, and was now ready to restore them. The Abrahamic Promises and the promise of God restoring His people, gave the people assurance once again. Ezekiel offered them hope, and his vision of the “valley of dry bones” was a prophetic illustration of how God would “resurrect” Judah from captivity (Eze. 36-37). We learn that the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther chronicle the return of Judah to their land. This restoration period lasted roughly 100 years.

There were three leaders leading three waves of return: Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Zerubbabel led the first group in restoring the temple. Nehemiah led the second in restoring the city walls of Jerusalem, while Ezra led the third group in restoring the Law of Moses and the worship practices of the people.

### **“Inter-Testament Period”**

**by Dub McClish**

This is the time period between the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, and the first book of the New Testament, Matthew. Or quite simply, the period was from Malachi to Christ. There is some 400 years of time during this particular period. Sometimes called the “period of silence” because there was no inspired teaching or prophecy occurring during this period. The Jews of that day declared that the Spirit had left Israel at this time. Of course, the next inspired prophet to come along would be John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Christ. The writer provides a detailed history lesson as it relates to the characters and events of this 400 years of silence. He begins with the Persian and Greek empires, giving attention to the times and culture ushered in by Alexander the Great, as well as to the Maccabean Revolt and Jewish independence. Then we are provided a glimpse of Jewish life under the control of the Roman Empire. It was during this period that many of the Apocryphal books were written, and it was also at this time that Jewish parties such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, and the Sanhedrin were formed, giving us their background as we read about them in the New Testament.

### **“Period of the Life of Christ”**

**by David P Brown**

The writer of the chapter begins by directing our attention to the coming of Christ and Paul’s quick summation of His Incarnate birth under the Law of Moses (Gal. 4:4-5), and so begins the Period of the life of Christ. While born under the Law of Moses, Rome was still in control of Israel. While Alexander the Great pushed Greek culture upon all those they had captured, Rome was not the same way. They allowed each of the captured nations to run their own affairs, have their own culture, and practice their own religion as long as they remained loyal subjects to Rome. During this period, the common language remained Greek, or Koine Greek, which was the common language of the people. As English serves the “common language” of the world to have world-wide communication, Greek served the people in the same manner during the first century. The writer then introduces to the early life of Jesus, which we get primarily from the Gospel accounts of the New Testament. Each account was written to provide adequate evidence of the Truth of Jesus Christ and the veracity of His message—the Gospel. As we journey through the major events of Jesus’ life, we are reminded of the works of the Master Teacher, through His ministries in Galilee, Judea, Perea, to the culmination of His death, burial, and resurrection in Jerusalem.

## **“Period of the Church”**

**by Gene Hill**

The church we read about on the pages of the New Testament is the Lord’s only church. While it was planned in eternity (Eph. 3:8-12), it was established on the Day of Pentecost, the account of which is found in Acts 2. The church is not Jewish, Catholic, or Protestant. It belongs to no one else but Christ as He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28), building it according to His own Will (Mat. 16:16-18; Acts 2:38-47). In this chapter we learn the church is established (built) in Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 2. Its builder is Jesus Christ and He has given it a mission (Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47), which is synonymous with making known the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. 3:10). We are introduced to the very first church of Christ in Acts 2:41-47. Here we see that Jesus building His church is a figure of speech, metonymy, for the teaching of the Gospel that saves and adds to His body (another figure) implying His people, to whom He has given the responsibility of teaching adding (building) souls upon the foundation of Christ (Luke 8:11-15; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38-47; Rom. 1:16-17; Eph. 4:4-6; Titus 2:11-15; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Cor. 3:4-17). Every soul baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27) is baptized into His body (1 Cor. 12:13), where salvation is (Eph. 5:23; 2 Tim. 2:10). In building this church (making new converts and keeping them saved) we must follow the one and only blueprint, summarized for us in Acts 2:41-47. There were no “other churches” and no denominations. They did not have experts, scholars, or professors telling them what church to go to. In fact, they did not even have a written document to which they could turn to learn from. All they had were inspired men instructing them by the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Peter stood up and preached a powerful sermon, by the Spirit, and as a result those having gladly received His word were baptized and added to His church. The blueprint calls for the proper content—the apostles’ doctrine or Gospel of Christ (Acts 2:42). To build and continue building His church, we must follow the right blueprint and the proper content of that blueprint (2 Tim. 2:15). The only way to remain as the Lord’s authentic church is to continue steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine (Acts 2:42; cf. John 8:31-32).

## **“Second Coming and Judgment”**

**by John West**

The writer rightly declares that while the Second Coming of Christ is a very prominent teaching in Scripture, it is also one of the most misunderstood doctrines. The most popular error espoused today is the Premillennial view of the end times and of the Second Coming of Christ. The major aspect of this doctrine is that Christ is coming again, and when He does, He will establish His kingdom. The writer correctly points out that such a view shows those who teach it “have absolutely no understanding concerning the kingdom” (p. 273). Repeatedly Christ preached that the kingdom of God is at hand. This means very close, not thousands of years into the future. He says He would build His church, and at the same time He mentions the kingdom. Therefore, church is synonymous with kingdom. He said some to whom He was addressing would be alive when the

kingdom came with power (Mark 9:1). The kingdom did come with power on Pentecost (Acts 2); therefore, we know that those to whom Christ spoke to in Mark 9:1 are not over 2000 years old, but were present when the kingdom or church had come. We know that first century Christians were translated into the kingdom (Col. 1:13) and that when Jesus comes again, He will actually deliver the kingdom back to the Father, not establish it (1 Cor. 15:24).

### **“God’s Scheme of Redemption”**

**by Charles Pogue**

The entrance of sin in the Garden of Eden, elicited God making an announcement concerning His scheme or a plan of redemption, which He devised in eternity (Acts 2:23; cf. Eph. 3:8-10) and which is recorded in Genesis 3:14-15. While God foreknew Adam and Eve would sin, He did not remove their free will. They still sinned by their own volition. His foreknowledge simply means God knew they would sin because He is omniscient, “all knowing.” In this chapter the writer also addresses the fact that the Old Testament or Covenant was much more than a mere Law, but that it foreshadowed the concept of redemption. The writer then takes us through the Old Testament showing how the scheme of human redemption unfolded along the way and how it was prophesied at the same time. The Old Testament law pointed mankind in the direction of the New Testament and the coming of the Savior of the world, Jesus the Christ. The blood of Jesus would be that which would be the remedy for sin (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Of course, this scheme of redemption required man’s response or obedience. Without man obeying that which God has assigned to Him, there can be no redemption through Christ’s blood. For the blood of Christ to cleanse from sin, one must obey (Heb. 5:9). A major step in the scheme or plan of redemption is that of baptism or immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). However, most in the religious world today neglect to teach this vital point, to the detriment of many souls. Obedience to the Gospel, which requires baptism, is indeed necessary for salvation (1 Pet. 4:17; cf., 3:21; Acts 2:38).

### **“Worship”**

**by Michael Hatcher**

In this chapter worship came to be understood as “worthiness of respect” and “reverence offered a divine beings or supernatural power, also an act expressing such reverence.” In the Old Testament the word carries the idea of “bowing down” and or “prostrating oneself.” The New Testament word, *proskuneo*, means, “to kiss toward.” In all of these, it is very clear that the concept of worship involves paying reverence, with the intended purpose of offering obeisance to Deity. It is an act demonstrated with forethought, premeditation, and intent focus. In other words, it is not something done by accident, or something done without thought and concentration, and with the intent of recognizing that God/Deity is the hope of our salvation. The writer alerts us to that fact that the God of the Bible, Jehovah our Creator, is worthy of worship. God Almighty is our life Giver and Sustainer. His nature is one of purity, holiness, and righteousness. He is the God of love who expresses Himself, in love, toward His creation. His love is demonstrated by the sacrificial offering of Jesus upon the

cross—for our sins! God is a God of deliverance. He loves to deliver that which responds and reciprocates in kind, being desirous of a relationship with His children. For Israel of old, God desired His children’s worship to be from their heart and to be done according to His Will. Knowing the greatness of God, worship will not only be sincere, but it will be the heart to please God, by desiring to accurately obey His Will regarding worship

### **“New Testament Worship”**

**by Ken Chumbley**

In understanding more about New Testament worship, we learn that all of life is not worship. Rather, worship always has a beginning point and ending point, involving intent. The writer of this chapter reveals that those advocating that all life is worship, typically gravitate to Romans 12:1 as their proof-text to make their point. Unfortunately, worship is not found in the text. Rather the word *latreuo* is used and means “service.” We are then exposed to the fact that New Testament worship must be authorized (Col. 3:17). To go beyond what is written (1 Cor. 4:6) or to add or take away from that which is taught in the New Testament pertaining to worship is to pervert not only the Scriptures but to pervert the worship God desires. To properly worship God, we must respect the authority of the New Testament. The writer then addresses the Lord’s Supper, its meaning, and the frequency of which it is to be taken—namely weekly or every first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). Singing, as an act of worship, is then discussed showing that God desires vocal music only. No other kind of music is to be used with reference to New Testament worship. We are to sing, vocal music only (Eph. 5:19), with the fruit of lips, (Heb. 13:15), accompanied with our heart (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:15). The instrument to be used with our singing is the human heart, nothing else. Since we are to be “singing” (*adontes*) and “playing” (*psallontes*...when used with *aeido*—“sing”—means “to play,” and literally “to pluck the strings of,” rendered also as “make melody”) in your heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:19). Other authorized acts of worship include teaching/preaching or proclaiming the faith or Gospel, and prayer. Another important act of worship is monetary giving or contribution. The Lord realized that while the church is comprised of the saved, and it is something of a spiritual nature, the church still must function in a world where money is necessary to operate and to accomplish many things. We need to understand that our worship must be done “in Spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

### **“How We Got the Bible”**

**by Doug Post**

The Bible came to man through a process. It involved revelation and inspiration. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (2 Tim. 3:16). The literal meaning is that Scripture, all of it, is “God-breathed” or God-Spirited,” meaning God breathed and or spirited out all Scripture. God revealed His Will to certain men (prophets and apostle) who in turn, spoke by inspiration (God supplying them the very words to speak) to the people. Therefore, it was through this process God revealed His Will or mind to mankind. The writer then discusses the concept of Canonization, which is the

process identifying what books belong in the Bible. Quite simply, when a prophet of God was recognized by the people as God's true spokesman, then whatever he wrote was also recognized as being from God and authoritative. So, these documents were immediately accepted as sacred and meeting the standard of Scripture. The same concept may be applied to New Testament Scripture. When the general population understood the apostles were speaking by the direction of the Spirit, being moved by God, then what they said was authoritative, being the commandment of the Lord (1 Cor. 14:37). The first century Christians, like the Jews of old, would immediately recognize authoritative writings of the apostles, placing them as Scripture. Of course, the first century church had miraculous gifts and one such gift was the discernment of spirits—being able to distinguish between false and fake documents and those that were true, authoritative, and from God.

**“The Whole of Man”  
by Paul Vaughn**

Man does not have the capacity to direct his own steps (Jer. 10:23; Pro. 14:12) nor does he have the ability to save himself. He must rely upon God for these things. The whole of man is to continue fearing God and continue keeping His commandments (Ecc. 12:13). Ecclesiastes was written by Solomon, who at the time of writing was a bitter old man. Throughout the book he mentions life under the sun as being worthless and vain. He realizes he has squandered away his life on wealth, women, and wine. Now at the close of his life, he sees that all his accomplishments were for naught. He recognizes the vain life he led, but he certainly knows for sure that what he did not do in his life was the very thing he needed to do—“fear God and keep His commandments.” Living a life “under the sun” was to live a materialistic lifestyle that was contrary to God. He lived “under the sun” instead of living “under the Son.” He spent his time feeding his self-centered pleasures rather than obeying His Creator. A life without God is nothing but vanity. With the invasion of sin into the world, through Adam and Eve, man got worse and worse. The people of the antediluvian world behaved in much the same way Solomon wrote about in Ecclesiastes. They served themselves and pleased themselves, without ever considering God as part of their lives. We are then led to the next example in Lot. He, too, had a worldly viewpoint rather than a spiritual one. Because he did, he lost everything. Achan was another example who prized earthly treasures above obedience to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The writer then entreats us to consider how wonderful our God is, and to understand how vain life is without God in it. The whole of man is to glorify God. As Jesus said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Mat. 16:24). Only when this is done will we ever glorify God.

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