

This book covers the entire Bible, a week at a time, to accompany the reading of the Bible in one year. The Whole Truth can be read individually or it is excellent for teaching in a small group. It can be read or taught, year after year.

The Whole Truth: A Chronological Overview of the Entire Bible

By Judith B. Henry

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The Whole Truth

A Chronological Overview of the Entire Bible

"The Truth will make you free"

— Jesus, John 8:32



Inspired by God,
Written by Judith B. Henry

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2022

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The Whole Truth

Summary: The Whole Truth is a study tool to help read through the Bible in chronological order and to support the readers' understanding of the truths presented and better apply them to their everyday lives.

ISBN 978-1-64718-625-8

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data

Henry, Judith B.
The Whole Truth by Judith B. Henry
Library of Congress Control Number: 2020909597

Bible Study, Religious Studies, Christianity

Printed on acid-free paper.

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In the Beginning.....God

God is the Creator, the Beginning and Source of everything!

Genesis 1:1-3

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Genesis 1:1 NKJV

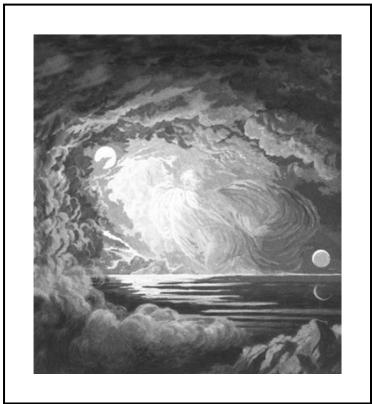
What was before the beginning? **GOD**. God was...and is...and always will be! This is a declaration of divine truth. If we can accept this first sentence of Scripture, there will be little difficulty in accepting *all* of God's Word.

"The earth was formless and empty; darkness covered the surface of the watery depths" Genesis 1:2a. HCSB

"...the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters." Genesis 1:2b HCSB

"Then God said, 'Let there be light', and there was light." Genesis 1:3 HCSB

"The Bible takes us back to the beginning of life as we know it, but it never suggests that God had a beginning. The concept of eternity is essential as we learn about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and basic Bible doctrines. As believers in Jesus Christ who saves us from our sin.



our hope and our belief is in an eternity that never ends, that is, an eternity spent with God. If "eternity-future" is openended at the end of life, it makes sense that it was open-ended prior to the time life began.

Scientists and great thinkers have tried to expand our thinking so that we might embrace concepts that would lead us to minimize God as the Divine Architect of the universe. Some theories tell us that the earth, galaxies, plant life, etc., evolved over billions of years out of what is known as "primordial ooze." Other theories explain the origin of the world occurred with an explosion, of gigantic proportions, called "The Big Bang" theory. Scripture tells us that God created the universe, from nothing, in seven days. Additional reading...Psalm 104, Psalm 8, John 1:1-5, John 8:58.



The First Work Week

Genesis 1

If God needed to work from a to-do list, it might have looked something like this:

Were the days of creation literal, 24-hour days? Those who say "yes" believe in a "young earth" that is thousands of years old. Others accept scientific evidence such as fossil records and carbon-dating and view the "days" of creation as time periods of undetermined length which would make our earth billions of years old. But our God is a mighty God! He IS capable of speaking all of creation into existence –

- either in an instant
- in 6 "super-days," each encompassing thousands of years... or

God began the work of creation by shaping and forming, just as a sculptor would do before starting the defining and finishing process of his masterpiece. He

Six literal, 24-hour days.

God's To Do List:

Monday: Light
Tuesday: Water
Wednesday:
Plants
Thursday: Sun,
Moon, Stars
Friday: Beasts
Saturday: Man

separated light from darkness; sky from water; then He gathered the water on the earth together to form the seas and the dry land where plants could grow. The heavenly bodies were created to give us light and to mark seasons. Next, birds and sea creatures were created with the capability to reproduce themselves, "according to their kinds." Finally, on the sixth day, land creatures were created. God's creation of humankind was different than all other creation. When it came time to create humans, God said, "Let Us make man in Our image," which we believe to mean that God's being encompasses a "three-in-one" Holy Trinity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We are not God; we are not like God. He is holy – we are not. A loose comparison might be like the difference between a painting of a person and the actual person.

God created everything...PERIOD...and after each day's work, He proclaimed it to be good. On the seventh day, He rested.

Just think what it must have been like for Adam and Eve to be in the most beautiful surroundings imaginable, plenty of food, with no need to worry about what to wear every day; being the perfect couple that never argued—never got sick...what could go wrong? The conclusion should have been: "...and they lived happily ever after." THE END



The Creation

James Weldon Johnson

nd God stepped out on space,
And he looked around and said:
I'm lonely-I'll make me a world.

And far as the eye of God could see Darkness covered everything, Blacker than a hundred midnights Down in a cypress swamp.

Then God smiled, And the light broke, And the darkness rolled up on one side, And the light stood shining on the other, And God said: That's good!

Then God reached out and took the light in His hands, And God rolled the light around in His hands Until He made the sun; And He set that sun a blazing in the heavens. And the light that was left from making the sun God gathered it up in a shining ball And flung it against the darkness, Spangling the night with the moon and stars. Then down between The darkness and the light He hurled the world; And God said: That's good!

Then God Himself stepped down-And the sun was on His right hand, And the moon was on His left; The stars were clustered about His head, And the earth was under His feet. And God walked, and where He trod His footsteps hollowed the valleys out And bulged the mountains up.

Then He stopped and looked and saw
That the earth was hot and barren.
So God stepped over to the edge of the world
And He spat out the seven seas-He batted His eyes, and the lightning flashed-He clapped His hands, and the thunders rolled-And the waters above the earth came down,
The cooling waters came down.

Then the green grass sprouted, And the little red flowers blossomed, The pine tree pointed his finger to the sky, And the oak spread out his arms, The lakes cuddled down in the hollows of the ground, And the rivers ran down to the sea; And God smiled again, And the rainbow appeared, And curled itself around His shoulder.

Then God raised His arm and He waved His hand
Over the sea and over the land,
And He said: Bring forth! Bring forth!
And quicker than God could drop His hand,
Fishes and fowls
And beasts and birds
Swam the rivers and the seas,
Roamed the forests and the woods,
And split the air with their wings.
And God said: That's good!

Then God walked around,
And God looked around
On all that He had made.
He looked at His sun,
And He looked at His moon,
And He looked at His little stars;
He looked on His world
With all its living things,
And God said: I'm lonely still.

Then God sat down--On the side of a hill where He could think; By a deep, wide river He sat down; With His head in His hands, God thought and thought, Till He thought: I'll make me a man!

Up from the bed of the river
God scooped the clay;
And by the bank of the river
He kneeled him down;
And there the great God Almighty
Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,
Who flung the stars to the most far corner of the night,
Who rounded the earth in the middle of His hand;
This great God,
Like a mammy bending over her baby,
Kneeled down in the dust
Toiling over a lump of clay

Then into it He blew the breath of life, And man became a living soul. Amen. Amen.

Till He shaped it in is His own image;

Week 1 The Rest of the Story

This is, indeed, the rest of the story...of humanity.

Fall Comes to Eden Genesis 3

The Garden of Eden is often referred to as Paradise, a place totally without sin. Some Bible scholars teach that at the end of time on this earth (after the return of Jesus), the New Earth that we will inhabit for eternity might be something like the Garden of Eden. It was God's perfect creation; His original plan in all areas of life: for godly marriage, for using the fruits of His creation wisely and for harmonious life among all His creatures.

Then, with no introduction, the serpent appeared in Paradise. The serpent symbolizes something both fascinating and loathsome. Scripture tells us he was cunning, but Adam and Eve, in their innocence, had no knowledge of evil. Eve had no reason to think it was even strange that an animal spoke to her. Note: In verse 1, the serpent did not use the divine name of God (the LORD God, or Yahweh), which suggests a subtle way to diminish the holiness of God.

The serpent <u>questioned</u> the instructions God had given Adam in Genesis 2:17 (NKJV) when He said, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." In Genesis 3:4 – 6, the serpent initiated a thought process in the mind of Eve to make her think that God was depriving them of something that would be good for them. As the serpent insinuated that God had an ulterior motive by withholding something from them, Eve's sense of "fair play" or entitlement, was activated. There was opportunity, then, to STOP...but

She saw the fruit...she reasoned...they both ate.

It was the first sin.

Immediately, the eyes of both of them were opened.

The serpent was right – deadly right – they <u>did_know</u> the difference between good and evil. This is the awful truth about an experienced liar – the lie is sprinkled with a bit of truth. For the first time in their lives, they realized that they were naked; they were ashamed (sin made them hate themselves) and they made coverings out of fig leaves.

This is the saddest part of all: The LORD God, the Creator of the Universe, came for an evening walk in the Garden and called out for Adam and Eve. Now that they had become "wise," they knew that sin had separated them from the fellowship they had previously enjoyed with God and that fellowship was replaced with fear. As God questioned them, excuses were offered, blame was cast but confession followed.

First, God turned to the serpent and pronounced judgment on him (verse 14 – 15). He didn't excuse Eve because she was deceived, but His judgment on the serpent was harsher. Adam's and Eve's punishment related to the basic elements of life for all of humankind: hard work, pain in childbirth and eventually, death. Specifically, for Adam and Eve, they were banished from the Garden of Eden, and were prohibited from returning by the placement of cherubim with flaming swords at the entry point, so that they wouldn't continue to eat of the fruit that grew on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.



God's Grace and Mercy Genesis 3:15 and 3:21

God never leaves us without hope! Genesis 3:15 contains the first promise of the Promised One – The Messiah – Jesus Christ, when it refers to "her Seed." Although Adam and Eve learned that they would not live on earth forever, there was to be a Messiah who would be "bruised" (would die) for their sins and ours. Finally, in verse 21, God took care of Adam's and Eve's immediate need when He made clothing for them out of animal skins – the first animal sacrifice.

Week 1 Brother Against Brother

Cain and Abel Genesis 4 - 5

Nr. and Nrs. Adam announce the birth of their son, Cain The first season of the year, 1993, B.C.

Even though Adam and Eve had been evicted, they got on with their lives. It's very possible that they had more children than Cain, Abel and later, Seth. After all, Adam lived for 930 years! What we *do* know for sure is that Cain became a farmer and Abel raised flocks. We're given a glimpse into their family life to see several events and to learn from them.

Cain and Abel made offerings to God. God was pleased with Abel's offering but not with Cain's offering. We're not told why. In the days of temple sacrifice, both animal and produce sacrifices were acceptable to God. In Hebrews 11:4 and 1 John 3:12, we're given a clue that Abel's offering was sincere, Cain's was not.

Regardless of the reason, Cain wasn't happy and it showed on his face (Ch. 4 verse 6 NKJV). Like a patient parent reasoning with a belligerent teenager, God questioned Cain about his attitude and warned that "sin lies at the door." How like our God! Compare this with 1 Corinthians 10:13.

Cain's anger got the better of him and as we read in v. 8 and he murdered his brother as they worked together in the field. Again, God questioned him, asking "where is your brother?" Cain, still belligerent, uttered the well-known reply, "I don't know, am I my brother's keeper?" People unfamiliar with its origin may not realize that it was a poor defense for the first murder of all time.

God didn't kill Cain, but caused the remainder of his life to be characterized by frustration and continual fear and wandering. Cain realized that he would be known as a murderer and that anyone who saw him would try to kill him. Again, God showed mercy and while He didn't remove the punishment, He put some sort of mark of protection on Cain.

Cain went on to build a city and got married. In verses 23 and 24, we learn that Cain was indeed, known for his violence many generations later by at least one of his descendants (who was also violent and was boastful).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What was it about Cain's offering that displeased God?
Why do you think God allowed Cain to continue to live after murdering his brother?
Where did Mrs. Cain come from?

What happened next was a population explosion! Chapter 5 reviews the genealogy of Adam to the birth of Noah.

P.S. Adam and Eve had at least one other son that we know about (there were probably many more plus daughters). This one was very important. His name was Seth, which is related to the Hebrew word meaning "to set" or "to place." In God's grand plan, this was to be the son to replace Abel (the son who was murdered) and is the one who completes the earthly genealogy of Jesus Christ. Read Luke 3:23 – 38.

Week 1 It Looks Like Rain

The Flood Genesis 6-7

Fast-forward a thousand years or so to Genesis 6 and we see that mankind had become totally depraved and evil. In verse 3 of Chapter 6, God said that he was losing patience with man. Up until this time, men had incredibly long lives. We'll see that after the flood, God decreased the length of man's lifespan from 800 – 900 years down to about 120 years.

- In fact, by the time of Noah's birth, God's "heart was filled with pain" over what had become of mankind—with the exception of Noah, a man "who found favor in the eyes of the Lord."
- God decided to deal with the sin problem by wiping the earth clean of all the wickedness.
- God confided His plan for destruction of the earth to Noah and laid out a survival plan for Noah and his family.
- Noah was to build the ark and to gather two of every living creature to take on the ark to continue each species. In the case of
 "clean" (those suitable for offering and for food) animals, God told Noah to take seven of each.
- God caused rain to fall on the earth for 40 days and 40 nights. In addition, Genesis 7:11 said "all the sources of the watery depths burst open" and "all the high mountains under the whole sky were covered" (7:19). HCSB
- Genesis 7:21 tells us that all inhabitants of the earth perished except for Noah and his family.
- But, God is eternally faithful! The first thing Noah did was to build an altar and offer a sacrifice to God. God smelled the sweetsmelling sacrifice (meaning that it was pleasing to Him) and God said in His heart that even though man is born evil, He would never again destroy all living creatures.

•	God made a covenant "in His heart":	What was that covenant?	 Genesis 8:21-2:





Did the Ark look like this? Probably not...

Most pictures we see of the Ark show a typical boat-shaped floating zoo, with animals hanging out all of the openings. Actually, the Ark was at least 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high—maybe a little larger. Each of its three decks was the size of one and a half football fields –plenty of room for people and animals.

No Comprende:

Tower of Babel Genesis 11

As people continued to populate the earth, wickedness increased. As they made discoveries about ways to use the raw materials provided them from the earth, they became smug and prideful. Nothing drives out the awareness of God more quickly than self-pride. One group decided they wanted to build a tower that reached into the heavens so as to "make a name for ourselves; otherwise, we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth." (Genesis 11:4 HCSB) Their overly-ambitious, self-centered efforts were causing them to lose sight of their Creator.

No Comprende, continued...

God had promised that He wouldn't send another flood to destroy the earth. He had given this new generation of people who populated the earth the freedom to honor Him, but their hearts were evil. God had a plan and it didn't include His creation glorifying itself. He reversed the very thing they were trying to avoid, that is, being scattered over the face of the earth. God confused their speech by giving them different languages. It wasn't long until people gave up on building the tower because they couldn't understand one another and the city spread out. The place became known as Babel.

DID YOU KNOW?

The word "Babel" is a word which sounds like the Hebrew word for "confused."

Babel is also the Hebrew name for Babylon where the story of the Tower is thought to have taken place. That land is what is known today as Iraq.

Though the word isn't used in the Bible, the Tower of Babel was probably like other towers of that time known as ziggurats. These buildings were tower-like structures with square foundations and steps up the sides, usually leading to a shrine on top to honor the peoples' gods.



MOMENTS IN TIME

Some obscure moments in Genesis that are worthy of mention:

-	The first record of a man marrying more than one wife (Genesis 4:19). What was his name?
_	We learn about the first musician (Genesis 4:21). What was his name?
-	One man didn't die, but God just "took him away" (Genesis 5:24). What was his name?
_	The life of the oldest person is recorded (Genesis 5:27). What was his name?

Check them out!

STUFF YOU SHOULD KNOW...from Genesis

We've only gotten started on our journey through God's Word. Bible scholars tell us that chronologically, the events of the book of Job occurred at this point in history – after Noah's family and most likely during the time of Abraham. For the next few days, we will be reading the book of Job and then we'll return to Genesis in Week 3. In the meantime, in the space of just eleven chapters, we've observed these attributes of God:

- ✓ God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent (all powerful, all-knowing, and all-present).
- ✓ God is eternal and His creativity never ends.
- ✓ God provided remedies for the various sin-problems we've encountered so far.



Stay tuned....Week Three: Abraham, Father of Many Nations; Sarah gives birth at age 90

The Gospels: The "Good News"

Meet the Authors



Matthew: A tax collector whose name was originally Levi but was changed to Matthew when he began to follow Jesus. He was literate and skilled in bookkeeping. There are more references to money in Matthew than any other Gospel. His hometown was Capernaum.

Purpose: To show to Jewish readers that Jesus is their Messiah and promised King.



Mark: Mark was a Jew whose Jewish name was John. He was the son of a Mary. He was a close companion of Peter and it is believed that Mark became a believer because of Peter's influence. In fact, it is believed that most of Mark's writings were written under Peter's supervision. Mark also accompanied Paul and Barnabas on some of their missionary journeys, many years later. Mark's approach to telling the story of Jesus is very concise and detailed.

Purpose: To portray Jesus as the Servant King.



Luke: Luke was a Gentile physician. Actually, he never met Jesus in person. As a physician, Luke gives us more detail about the physical aspects of Jesus' life, like His birth and growth to *perfect* manhood. Luke was probably converted later in his life and traveled some with Paul.

Purpose: To present Jesus as the Son of Man.



John: John is the son of Zebedee, the brother of James. He wrote not only the book of John but three epistles, I, 2 and 3 John, plus the book of Revelation. He liked to refer to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." John's gospel is the "must-read" book of the New Testament because it proclaims Jesus' deity.

Purpose: To proclaim Jesus as the Son of God.

Reading chronologically, it's easy to see the humanity of each divinely-inspired writer. It is interesting to notice how each man describes the life of Jesus by how he reports on or recalls activities and events that had an impact on each of them in a personal way. Some of the gospel writers recall every detail of an event while another writer might give two sentences to the same activity and another might not give it any notice at all. Isn't this just as it would be if there were four of any group of people, writing about events they had witnessed?

First, Let Me Introduce What I'm About to Say:

Luke 1:1 - 4

Luke began by explaining why he felt it was necessary for him to write an account of what many others had already attempted to write about. Luke was an "outsider." Not only was he a Gentile, he had never actually met Jesus.

John 1:1 - 18

John tells his readers about an aspect of Jesus that is essential for us to know: "In the beginning, the Word was already there. The Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1 NIRV

These eighteen verses at the beginning of John's book illustrate why the book of John is essential reading for believers and non-believers. John tells us how salvation came to us in human form. From Genesis on, the world needed to be fixed, that is, to be saved. God sent Jesus for that purpose.

Matthew 1: 1 - 17 and Luke 3:23 - 38

Both writers give us the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Matthew leads with that information, probably because it proves his point – that Jesus' lineage is just as it was prophesied. Luke just places it after Jesus' baptism, before he tells the rest of Jesus' story.

Mark

Mark has no preamble. He jumps right in with the record of John the Baptizer.

Announcements

A Childless Couple Conceives

Luke 1:5 - 25

Elizabeth and Zechariah were an older couple, living in Jerusalem during the reign of Herod, King of Judea. Zechariah was a temple priest. They were God-fearing people, but they were childless. Luke records how an angel appeared to Zechariah one day while he was going about his business in the temple. The angel announced that his wife, Elizabeth would give birth to a very unusual son; a man filled with the Holy Spirit – even in his mother's womb. That baby was John the Baptist – the cousin of Jesus and His forerunner.

Zechariah was amazed and said the equivalent of "you've got to be kidding!" to the angel, who promptly made him temporarily unable to speak. Sure enough though, Elizabeth conceived and in time gave birth to a baby whom they named John. After John was born, Zechariah received his ability to speak once again. He too, was filled with the Holy Spirit and praised God and prophesied about the Messiah's birth that was just about to occur.

The Birth of Jesus Announced Matthew 1: 18 - 25 and Luke 1:26 - 55

Mary, a very young woman (about 14) was engaged to a carpenter, Joseph. During the engagement period, she had been visited by an angel who told her that she, out of all women, had been chosen to be the earthly mother of the Son of God, the Messiah. As far back in history as the first century, people of the Israelite nation, they knew that a Messiah was to be born. Every Israelite (Jewish) woman hoped that she would be the virgin selected to conceive the Messiah. Mary was astonished and humbled when she heard the announcement.

Luke's account of the announcement of Jesus' birth tells the story from Mary's perspective (Matthew's account focuses on Joseph). The magnitude of the angel's message must have been so overwhelming that it was and is difficult to comprehend.

- † You, a virgin, will have a Son
- † His name will be Jesus
- † He will be the Son of the Most High and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father, David
- † He will rule over the house of Jacob and of His kingdom there will be no end
- † The Holy Spirit will come over you and the power of the Highest will overshadow you
- † He who is to be born will be called the Son of God

Joseph, Mary's fiancé, was troubled when he heard the news of Mary's pregnancy and privately thought that he would quietly dissolve the engagement. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and assured him that the Life that Mary was carrying in her womb was sent from the Holy Spirit; that He would be called JESUS and that He would save His people from their sins.

Christ is Born!

Matthew 1: 18 - 25 and Luke 2:1 - 20



There is no other event, in the history of the world, to equal this one! It is unique and it is holy!

Mary and Joseph had traveled about 90 miles, or a three-day trip on foot, from Nazareth to Bethlehem which was the home of Joseph's ancestors. Because it was the time of a census, there were no vacancies so Mary (in labor) and Joseph had no choice but to stay in an innkeeper's stable. The Savior of the world, King of Kings, Lord of Lords was born in borrowed accommodations in Bethlehem and He was laid in a feeding trough that served as His cradle.

That night shepherds in a nearby field were treated to the premier light show of all time! In the dark of an ordinary night an angel appeared to them, announcing the birth of the Savior of the world. The glory (God's presence) of the Lord shone all around that angel and he was joined by a host (or entourage) of angels, praising God. The shepherds were compelled to hurry to go see what the angels had told them. As soon as they saw Him, they knew that He was no ordinary baby and told everyone about what they had seen.



Jesus' First Visit to the Temple Luke 2:21 – 38

Jesus' parents, Mary and Joseph, were devout believers and followers of the Law. They were careful to complete all of the ceremonial rituals associated with the birth of a new baby. When they arrived at the temple, they were greeted by two very significant people, Simeon and Anna. Both were elderly and had been waiting for the birth of the Messiah. They both recognized that the eight-day old baby Jesus was that person. Scripture tells us that "the Holy Spirit was upon Simeon" and he prophesied how Salvation had come, not only to the Jews but to the Gentiles. Anna was a prophetess who served and lived at the temple. She talked to anyone who would listen to her tell about "The Consolation of Israel" (Jesus) who had finally come to bring redemption for all.



Matthew 2:1 - 12

Sometime after the birth of Jesus, possibly two years, wise men from the east (possibly from the Persian Empire) had studied the stars and Jewish texts* and determined that there would be a special star in the heavens at that particular time that would signify the birth of a special Jewish king. They made the long journey from the Far East to Bethlehem.

When they arrived in Jerusalem, they went to see King Herod (Roman ruler) at his temple to ask directions to the home of the new King of the Jews. Herod became very troubled at the prospect of a "new King" and summoned all of his chief priests and scribes. Their jobs were to be fully knowledgeable in all aspects of the Law, Jewish writings and prophecies – especially those concerning the long-awaited Messiah. Immediately, the chief priests quoted Micah 5:2, written over 700 years prior.

The Lord says, "Bethlehem, you might not be an important town in the nation of Judah. But out of you will come a Ruler over Israel for me. His family line goes back to the early years of your nation. It goes all the way back to days of long ago." Micah 5:2 NIRV

Herod secretly consulted with the wise men guests to find out what they knew about the star and sent them out to "find the young Child," giving them instructions that after they had found him to come back to tell him so that he could go worship Him, as well.

The wise men went on their way, guided by the star, and when the star stood still over the place where the Child was, the wise men stopped and went into the house. They saw the Child and fell down to worship Him. They brought valuable gifts to Him from the East of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. But, they were divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, but to return home by another way.

Matthew records five dreams of divine guidance that emphasize God's orchestration of perilous events. What were they?

1.	Matthew 1:20
2.	Matthew 2:12
3.	Matthew 2:13
4.	Matthew 2:19-20
5.	Matthew 2:22

^{*}Numbers 24:17 was one text they studied

Wise Men, continued...

When Herod learned that he had been outsmarted by the wise men, he flew into a rage and had all baby boys slaughtered that were two years old and under. (He used the information he'd gathered from the wise men concerning the age of the new baby King). This senseless slaughter fulfilled Jeremiah's prophecy, "The Lord says, 'A voice is heard in Ramah. It is the sound of crying and deep sadness. Rachel is crying over her children. She refuses to be comforted, because they are gone." Jeremiah 31:15 NIRV

Who is Rachel*and why is she crying? ______

*Rachel was the wife of Jacob, the "mother" of the Israelite nation. She was buried in Bethlehem. In Jeremiah, he prophesied that Rachel would "cry" over the exile of the Israelite nation. Matthew recalled that scripture from the writings of Jeremiah and applies it to this event of the wholesale slaughter of another group of Israelite children

Jesus, the Early Years Luke 2:40 - 50



All that Scripture tells us about Jesus as a boy is summarized in ten short verses and is told to us by the Gospel writer who was also a physician, Luke. We know that the story of Jesus' infancy ended because Luke tells us that the Child grew strong in body and wise in spirit and that the grace of God was on Him.

Did He ever refuse to eat His vegetables? Did He ever pick fights with His brothers and sisters? Was He ever just plain goofy? We can assume that because He was sinless, He at least didn't disrespect His parents or His siblings, but God created laughter and the human sense of humor, so yes, He might have been goofy at times, like all little boys. All that we know for sure is of an incident when Jesus was twelve years old.

Jesus went with His parents to Jerusalem, as all families did under Jewish law, three times a year (for Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles). When He was 12 and they made the pilgrimage for Passover, Jesus stayed behind in the temple in Jerusalem after the Feast was over.

Many families traveled on foot together and Jesus' parents didn't know that He was not with them. When they missed Him, they retraced their steps and *three days* later found Jesus in the temple, engaging the scholars in theological discussions. All who heard Him were "astonished" at His knowledge of Scripture. His mother was upset and hurt and probably said something along the lines of, "What do you think you're doing? Don't You know we've been out of our minds looking for You?" Jesus' first recorded words as God in human flesh were, "Why were you looking for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2:49 HCSB, NIRV, NIV) They had no idea what He was talking about. But He went on home with them and "lived obediently with them." He continued to grow and was blessed by both God and people.

Week 39 John, The Baptizer

Matthew 3:1 - 17 and Mark 1:2 - 11 and Luke 3:1 - 22 and John 1:19 - 34



John, Jesus' cousin, was His forerunner in every way; in birth, in ministry, and in death. He was chosen by God to prepare the way for Jesus' ministry. His was a lone voice in the Judean wilderness. For the first time in history, a man taught baptism of life-change leading to forgiveness of sin as described by Isaiah, the prophet in Isaiah 40:3. John's message was considered novel and radical. Why?

John's focus was clear and to the point. He told the people that they were sinners and that they should stop their evil practices, repent and be baptized. For the first time, they heard that being Jewish wasn't enough but that their hearts would have to change. He had no patience for those who

came out to the desert for a "good show." Many thought he might be the Christ, but he quickly set them straight, explaining that he was paving the way for the One who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit.

As John was baptizing, Jesus came from Galilee to where John was at the Jordan River to be baptized by John. Naturally, John didn't want to do that, saying that Jesus was the One who should be baptizing him. Jesus explained that by John baptizing Him, it was God's work, putting all things right – for all the centuries – right then, in that baptism. Immediately following Jesus' baptism, heavens opened and the Spirit of God descended like a dove and a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is my Son, and I love him. I am very pleased with him." Matthew 3:17 NIRV

(In Luke 3:19 - 20, Dr. Luke shares a little insight to the tragic end of John the Baptizer's story)

The Temptation of Christ

Matthew 4:1-11 and Mark 1:12, 13 and Luke 4:1-13 (NKJV)

After Jesus' baptism, He was led by the Holy Spirit to go into the desert. He stayed there for 40 days, and didn't eat anything for the whole time. Afterward, He was hungry and humanly speaking, He would have been a good candidate for temptation. The devil approached Him, playing on His hunger and said, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." Jesus said, quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord."

The devil came to Him a second time and led Him up where He could see all the kingdoms of the world in a moment's time. He lied to Jesus by saying that he had the power and authority over all those kingdoms and if Jesus would only bow down to worship him, he would turn it all over to Him. Jesus said, again quoting from Deuteronomy (6:13), "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve."

The devil tried a third and final time to tempt Jesus. He took Him to Jerusalem to the highest point of the temple and said, "If you are God's Son, throw Yourself down from here." Then the devil threw some Scripture back at Jesus, "For it is written, He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you" and "In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone." (Psalm 91:11, 12) Jesus said, "It has been said, You shall not tempt the LORD your God" (Deuteronomy 6:16)

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:

Notice how the temptations are very similar to Adam's temptation (Genesis 3:6) in 3 vulnerable areas of the human condition: 1. The lust of the flesh; 2. The lust of the eyes; 3. The pride of life. Following Charles Stanley's reminder, we must be on our guard against temptation at all times but particularly when we are: Hungry – Alone – Lonely – Tired In particular, when we are in any one of those conditions we should HALT, beware, and be prayerful so that we don't stumble and yield to temptation.

Week 52 The Great Tribulation

Opening of the Seven-sealed Book Revelation 6 – 8:1

First seal Rider on a white horse, 6:1, 2
Second seal Rider on a red horse, 6:3, 4
Third seal Rider on a black horse, 6:5, 6
Rider on a pale horse, 6:7, 8

Fifth seal Prayer of the martyred remnant, 6:9 - 11

Sixth seal Day of Wrath (beginning of the last half of the Great Tribulation) 6:12-17

Interlude - Chapter 7

During this interlude, before the judgments are unleashed, God prepares to seal a remnant (Jewish) of 144,000 of His servants with a mark on their foreheads. This number may be taken to be an actual number or a number that symbolizes completeness. Additionally, beginning in Revelation 7:9 – 17, we learn that another "great multitude which no one could number" was redeemed.

Seventh seal Introduction of the seven trumpets. "There was silence in heaven for about half an hour"

Seven Trumpets Revelation 8:2 - 11:19

"So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound."

First trumpet Trees and vegetation burnt, 8:7
Second trumpet Seas become blood, 8:8,9

Third trumpet Fresh water becomes bitter, 8:10,11
Sun, moon, stars struck, 8:12,13

Fifth trumpet Fallen star and plague of locusts, 9:1 – 12

Sixth trumpet Angels loosed at the river Euphrates, 9:13 - 21

Interlude - some mysteries recorded - Chapter 10:1 - 11:14

During this interlude, a mighty angel came on the scene. He was evidently colossal in size (see 10:1-3). When he cried out, seven thunders spoke, and John was prepared to write what was said but a voice from heaven told him to seal up what the seven thunders said. The mighty angel had a little book in his hand. A voice from heaven told John to take and eat the little book. The voice said it would be sweet in his mouth, but would make his stomach bitter. Then, in Chapter 11 John was given a reed like a measuring rod. Compare the similarities between these two scriptures and Ezekiel 2:9-3:3 and Ezekiel 40:3,5:40-48, where he measures the temple in his vision.

At this point, two witnesses appear on the scene and prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth. Whenever anyone tries to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouths and devours their enemies. They have the power to stop rain for the duration, to turn water into blood and strike the earth with plagues – at their desire.

When they finished their testimony, the beast from the bottomless pit overcame them and killed them. Their dead bodies lay in the streets and were viewed by all nations for 3 ½ days. All the nations were so happy they were dead that they had parties and gave gifts to one another (because the prophets had "tormented" people of the earth with their preaching. However, after 3 ½ days, the witnesses were resurrected and they ascended into heaven and all their enemies saw them. There was a massive earthquake and seven-thousand people were killed. The remainder was afraid and gave glory to God.

Week 52 The Kingdom Proclaimed

The Seventh Trumpet

"Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

Revelation 11:15 NKJV

We don't know if John had time to reflect or if the events were coming at him at an incomprehensible speed. If he had had time to think, he must have been turning mental handsprings, saying; "IT'S REAL, IT'S REALLY REAL, THE PROMISES ARE TRUE! John, the ancient scholar, knew the Scriptures and he might have reflected on these Old Testament verses that prophesied what he was seeing:

"The LORD shall reign forever and ever." Exodus 15:18 NKJV

"On that day a great trumpet will be blown, and those lost in the land of Assyria will come, as well as those dispersed in the land of Egypt; and they will worship the LORD at Jerusalem on the holy mountain." Isaiah 27:13 HCSB

"By Myself I have sworn; Truth has gone from My mouth, a word that will not be revoked: Every knee will bow to Me, every tongue will swear allegiance." Isaiah 45:23HCSB

At that time, the temple of God was opened in heaven and His presence was seen!

Seven Performers (or Signs) Revelation 12 - 13

In Revelation, a "sign" is a person or event that looks beyond itself to some greater significance.

- > The woman (Israel) Chapter 12:1,2
- > The red dragon (Satan) 12:3,4
- > The child of the woman (Jesus Christ) 12:5,6
- Michael, the archangel, wars with the dragon 12:7 12
- ➤ The dragon persecutes the woman 12:13-16
- ➤ Remnant of Israel 12:17
- ➤ Wild beast from the sea (political power and a person) 13:1 10
- ➤ Wild beast out of the earth (a religious leader) 13:11 18

Note: in Revelation 13:12 – 18, we read the outcome of what Paul described in 2 Thessalonians 2:8, 9 when he talked about "mass deception" and apostasy. John tells us about what will take place when the masses take the identifiable "proof of ownership and loyalty," known as "The Mark of the Beast," or 666. Observe that Satan is the master-counterfeiter in all things. He frequently comes up with something that is a close copy of one of God's original plans. Look back at Revelation 7:3 and 14:1. What sign did God originate for His servants that are alive during the Great Tribulation?

The End is in Sight! Revelation 14

By the "End," we're talking about the end of the Great Tribulation, John saw some very dramatic events:

- ➤ The Lamb standing on Mt. Zion with 144,000 souls, singing a song that no one else knew 14:1 5
- Proclamations of three angels -- 14:6 20
- Proclamation of the Gospel 14:6, 7
- Pronouncement of judgment on Babylon –14: 8
- Pronouncement of judgment on those who received the mark of the beast 14:9 12
- Praise for those who die in the Lord—14:13
- > Preview of Armageddon 14:14 20

Preparation for Final Judgment Revelation 15, 16

John saw another sign in heaven; seven marvelous angels having the seven last plagues, called the Bowl (or Vial) Judgments. The Tribulation saints (people who accept Christ and remain faithful during the Tribulation) worship God because He is holy. Then the temple of the tabernacle opened in heaven and the seven last plagues were poured out.

First vial Loathsome sores -- 16:2
Second vial Sea turns to blood - 16:3

Third vial Waters turn to blood – 16:4 – 7

Fourth vial Men are scorched with fire – 16:8, 9

Prifth vial Darkness and pain – 16:10, 11

Sixth vial: Euphrates River dried up – 16:12 – 16 (the kings of the earth are gathered together at Armageddon*)

Seventh vial: An earthquake of unprecedented proportions occurred – 16:17 - 21

"Babylon is Falling, is Falling" Revelation 17, 18

At long last, God will avenge "Babylon's" long history of iniquities and sinful works to the fullest extent because they did not glorify God. The mindset and lifestyle of "Babylon" will finally catch up with them, and will be completed in "one hour" (possibly one day); just as Darius the Mede invaded the actual city of Babylon and killed Belshazzar in Daniel 5:30, 31.

- > The first "Babylon," the apostate church, is judged. (Chapter 17)
- The second "Babylon," the world's political and commercial powers, will be destroyed while the kings of the earth look on and weep. (Chapter 18)

^{*}The place, Armageddon, is a Hebrew word literally meaning, "Mount of Megiddo."

Wedding Preparations

Revelation 19

John saw a great multitude plus twenty-four elders offering up glorious and magnificent praise to God for what He had done! He heard the voice of the multitude, like the sound of many waters and the sound of mighty thundering saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!" Revelation 19:6 NKJV

At long last, the plan of the ages is nearly complete! God has been preparing for this wedding for all time. In both the Old Testament (Hosea 2:19) and in the New Testament, (Ephesians 5:23, 32) God's people, the Church, are viewed as the Lord's betrothed bride.

The bride of Jesus Christ, symbolically, will wear a garment of the whitest, purest linen imaginable. The white garment symbolizes faithful obedience to God (Matthew 22:11, 12).

The marriage supper of the Lamb (Jesus) describes the most joyous time of feasting enjoyed by the Church and especially by the people who overcome who will reign with Jesus.



Then, John saw the heavens opened and there, on a white horse, was "THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS," ready for the final battle! Jesus Christ faced the beast, the kings of the earth and their armies who were gathered together, ready to go to battle against Him and His armies. John tells us: "But the beast was taken prisoner, and along with him the false prophet, who had performed the signs in his presence. He deceived those who accepted the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image with these signs. Both of them were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. The rest were killed with the sword that came from the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh." Revelation 19:20, 21 HCSB

The Millennium

Revelation 20:1 - 10

The Divine Plan is coming full circle! The dragon, "...that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan" Revelation 20:2 NKJV (i.e., one and the same as the being that had control of the serpent in the Garden of Eden – Genesis 3) will be bound for 1,000 years in a bottomless pit! During that time, the Tribulation Saints will reign with Christ. At the end of the thousand years, Satan will be released for a short time to go out to the four corners of the earth to deceive. He will purposefully do what he does best; gather many followers together, as many as the sands of the sea, and will surround the saints, thinking to prepare a battle against them. But a fire will come down from God out of heaven to devour all of them and they will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. That's where the beast and the false prophet will be. There, they will be tormented day and night forever and ever!



Week 52 Judgement

The Great White Throne Judgment

Revelation 20:11-15

The Great White Throne, where God sits, will be the scene of judgment of unbelievers. This judgement is different from what takes place at the Judgement Seat of Christ, which follows the Rapture. At the Judgement Seat of Christ, believers will receive rewards (crowns) based on their works. The salvation of these individuals was decided when each person accepted Christ as his or her Savior. Their salvation was not related to their works, but by simply believing that Jesus died for <u>all</u> their sins and that He arose on the third day, following His death, and returned to Heaven to reign with His Father. <u>Believers will not be part of the Great White Throne Judgement.</u>

At the Great White Throne Judgement, books will be opened (presumably the records of all works done in this life). Without Jesus, no one is able to meet God's standard of holiness "...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23 NKJV). Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. (Mark 16:16). At the Great White Throne Judgement, each unbeliever will account for the activities of his or her life, before Almighty God. Then another book will be opened; the Book of Life. John saw that, "...anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." Revelation 20:15 NKJV

Heaven...At Last!

Revelation 21 - 22

Only God could write the ultimate, consummate "happy ending." All of the elements are here in the last two chapters of Revelation:

- ➤ The new heaven and the new earth 21:1,2
- No tears, no death, no sorrow, no crying, no pain 21:4
- ➤ All things will be made new 21:5
- All the evil beings, emotions, actions will forever burn in the lake of fire and brimstone 21:8
- The beauty and grandeur of the New Jerusalem will defy human imagination 21:10 21
- ➤ The glory of God and the Lamb will illuminate the New Jerusalem 21:22 27
- > The river of life will flow eternally and the tree of life will produce fruit perpetually 22:1 5

This is His story; but it's not a story. It is the most true and most real event of all eternity, past and present. In the concluding verses, Jesus shares with us, through John, His final message: "Behold, I'm coming quickly!" Revelation 22:7 NKJV

Week 52 The TR(JTH ... A Review

Jesus said; "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. John 14:6. NKJV He was-- and is--and is to come! He is present in every situation. We've found His presence in every book of His Word.

In GENESIS, Jesus is the Ram at Abraham's altar

In EXODUS, He's the Passover Lamb

In LEVITICUS, He's the High Priest

In NUMBERS, He's the Cloud by day and Pillar of fire by night

In DEUTERONOMY, He's the City of our refuge

In JOSHUA, He's the Scarlet Thread out Rahab's window

In JUDGES, He is our Judge

In RUTH, He is our Kinsman-Redeemer

In 1st and 2nd Samuel, He's our wise prophet

In 1st and 2nd KINGS and CHRONICLES, He's our Reigning King

In EZRA, He is our Faithful Scribe

In NEHEMIAH, He's the Rebuilder of everything that is broken

And in ESTHER, He is the Mordecai sitting faithful at the gate

In JOB, He's our Redeemer that ever liveth

In PSALMS, He is my Shepherd and I shall not want

In PROVERBS and ECCLESIASTES, He's our Wisdom

And in the SONG OF SOLOMON, He's the Beautiful Bridegroom

In ISAIAH, He's the Suffering Servant

In JEREMIAH and LAMENTATIONS, it is Jesus that is the Weeping

Prophet

In EZEKIEL, He's the Wonderful Four-Faced Man

And in DANIEL, He is the Fourth Man in the midst of a fiery

furnace

In HOSEA, He is my Love that is forever faithful

In JOEL, He baptizes us with the Holy Spirit

In AMOS, He's our Burden Bearer

In OBADIAH, our Savior

And in JONAH, He is the Great Foreign Missionary that takes the

Word of God into all of the world

You go on and you see in MICAH, He is the Messenger with

beautiful feet

In NAHUM, He is the Avenger

In HABAKKUK, He is the Lord mighty to save

In HAGGAI, He is the Restorer of our lost heritage

In ZECHARIAH, He is our Fountain

And in MALACHI, He is the Son of Righteousness with healing in

His wings

In MATTHEW, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God

In MARK, He is the Miracle Worker

In LUKE, He's the Son of Man

And in JOHN, He is the Door by which every one of us must

enter

In ACTS, He is the Shining Light that appears to Saul on the $\,$

road to Damascus

In ROMANS, He is our Justifier

In 1st CORINTHIANS, our Resurrection

In 2nd CORINTHIANS, our Sin Bearer

In GALATIANS, He redeems us from the law

In EPHESIANS. He is our Unsearchable Riches

In PHILIPPIANS, He supplies our every need

And in COLOSSIANS, He's the Fullness of the Godhead

Bodily

In 1^{st} and 2^{nd} THESSALONIANS, He is the Mediator between

God and man

In TITUS, He is our Blessed Hope

In PHILEMON, He is a Friend that sticks closer than a

brother

And in HEBREWS, He's the Blood of the everlasting

covenant

In JAMES, it is the Lord that heals the sick

In 1st and 2nd PETER, He is the Chief Shepherd

In 1st, 2nd, and 3rd JOHN, it is Jesus who has the tenderness

of love

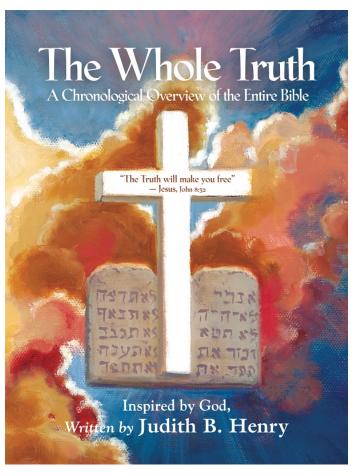
In JUDE, He is the Lord coming with 10,000 saints

And in REVELATION, lift up your eyes, Church, for your redemption draweth nigh, He is King of Kings and Lord of

Lords!

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