



## Putting the Puzzle Pieces Together

### First Series: "Setting the Corners"

#### Lesson #1: The Purpose and Nature of the Bible

### I. Introduction: Why study the Bible?

- A. To answer the three big questions of life.
  - 1. Where did I come from?
    - a. Made in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27)
    - b. Made as his people (Ps. 100:3)
  - 2. Why am I here?
    - a. To learn to fear God (Ecc. 12:13)
    - b. For His pleasure (Rev. 4:11)
  - 3. Where am I going?
    - a. Through faith in Christ, into everlasting life (Jn. 3:16-18)
    - b. House of the Lord forever (Ps. 23:1,6)
- B. To be able to assert why I believe my faith is the "right" one
- C. To obey the often repeated command to read and study His Word (Josh. 1:8, 2 Tim 2:15, Matt. 4:4, Rom. 10:13-17)

### II. Corner #1: The Purpose of the Bible

10,000 events, but one book. One history. One story!

- A. The Bible is a collection of 66 books (Hebrew Bible was arranged differently) written by 40 authors (fishermen, a scholar, a shepherd, a fig picker, a tax collector etc.) over a 1500 year period of time, from 3 continents, using 3 languages and the net result is one seamless message of redemption.
- B. It's a single book with two "testaments" or "covenants." They are inseparably related, "the New Testament is the Old concealed and the Old is the New revealed." (General Introduction to the Bible, p. 29)

The New Testament is closely connected to the Old Testament. Christ quotes from 22 different Old Testament books. He quotes Old Testament passages 19 times in

Matthew, 15 times in Mark, 25 times in Luke and 11 times in John. The book of Hebrews has some 85 Old Testament references!

- C. There are “sections” to the Bible.

OT: Law, History, Poetry, Prophecies

NT: Gospels, History, Epistles, Revelation

“...they form a meaningful and purposeful whole as they convey the progressive unfolding them of the bible in the person of Christ. The law gives the *foundation* for Christ, the history shows the *preparation* for Him. In poetry there is an *aspiration* for Christ and in prophecy and *expectation* of Him. The Gospels of the New Testament record the historical *manifestation* of Christ, the Acts relate the *propagation* of Christ, the Epistles give the *interpretation* of Him, and in Revelation is found the *consummation* of all things in Christ.” (General Introduction to the Bible, p. 29)

- D. John 20:31 “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

### III. Corner #2: The Nature of the Bible

- A. Special in its structure (see the Books of the Bible Chart)
- B. Special in its scope (see a Chronological Overview)
- C. Special because of its transmission (survival through time). There are over 5300 copies of the Greek New Testament existing today. That is 10 times more than any other book. (There are only 643 copies of Homer’s Iliad). It is the most published book of all time.
- D. Special because of what it teaches. The story lines are not flattering. It deals frankly with the sin of the characters.
- E. Special because of its predictions. For example, there are 360 predictions about birth and life of Jesus. 109 of which could only have been fulfilled by Christ.
- F. Special in how it speaks to science. Earth is round (Isa. 40:22), life is in the blood (Lev. 17:11), wind currents (Ecc. 1:6)

### IV. So what?

2 Tim. 3:15-17 “And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

We need to be “thoroughly equipped”:

Taught (doctrine) – understanding things taught by the Master

Rebuild (reproof) – having our faults revealed

Corrected – being straightened up again

Trained (instruction) – educated, nurtured along the way

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Why do you think it is important to know the context for Bible stories? Why can't they just "stand on their own?"
2. Why does the chronology of the Bible matter?
3. Can you put the purpose of the Bible into your own words?
4. What do you need to do this week to be more "thoroughly equipped?"