



At some point, every person struggles with the question, “what is the meaning of life?” The book of Ecclesiastes helps us answer that question. Written from the perspective of “the preacher,” this book takes us through the lifelong journey of a man who tried to find that answer in every way possible. That man was most likely Solomon. He tried to find purpose his work and accomplishments; through fame, power and wisdom;

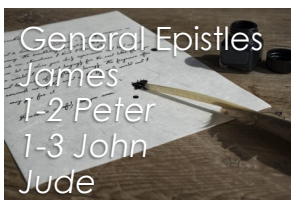
and through the pursuit of every pleasure imaginable. Every earthly endeavor leads to the same conclusion: “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!” In other words, nothing under the sun leads to true and lasting worth or happiness. Far from being a depressing book, Ecclesiastes helps us find real value without the wasted years of trial and error. Instead of seeking for worth in the temporal things of this life, the preacher concludes there is only one way of truly living a worthwhile life—by fearing God and keeping His commandments!

This past quarter you read the following five books of prophecy: Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah. These prophets were different men, from different times and different places, yet they all carried a message from God. Joel’s timeframe is unclear, but his message isn’t: it was time for the people to repent! Amos brought a searing message of judgment to rebellious Israel during her years of ease, pleasure, and sinfulness. Obadiah was tasked with a message of judgment against the nation of Edom—a case study of the truism “pride goes before destruction.” Jonah was called to preach to the great Assyrian city of Nineveh. Of course, Jonah attempted to escape his mission but found himself swallowed by a great fish. Finally, he obeyed and travelled to Nineveh where his brief but powerful message changed a city! Micah worked as a contemporary of Isaiah, and he brought forth a message of both warning and hope. He warned against the people’s sin and rebellion, but he also provided God’s promises of deliverance, especially through a Messiah to be born in Bethlehem!



Minor Prophets:

- Joel
- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Micah



Through the last couple of weeks during this past quarter, you read through the seven New Testament letters commonly known as the “general epistles.” These are the letters written by James, Peter, John, and Jude. James is most likely the half-brother of Jesus—a man who became a devout Christian and a pillar in the early church. His letter is intensely practical and often called “the Proverbs of the New Testament.” Peter wrote two letters to Christians dispersed in various areas. His first letter focused on the importance of enduring persecution from without, while his second letter addresses the danger of false teachers from within. The beloved apostle John penned three letters in addition to his gospel record and the book of Revelation. John’s letters highlight and build on key themes from his gospel, particularly the love, life, and light offered by Jesus, and how that should be experienced and lived out through obedience to the Lord. Jude is also likely a half-brother of Jesus, and writes a short but powerful letter encouraging Christians to “contend earnestly for the faith!” False doctrine and false practice can have no foothold in the church, and the truth must be defended!

“That You May Grow Thereby...”

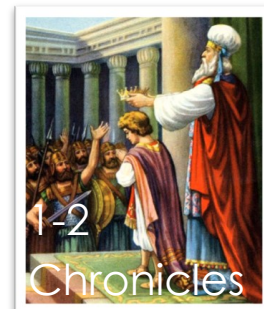
A weekly Bible reading plan



Seventh Quarter Review

Over the past 12 weeks you’ve worked through several books. You read First and Second Chronicles, and then the fourth and final gospel—the gospel according to John. You returned once more to the wisdom literature to learn from the book of Ecclesiastes, and then you encountered five of the minor prophets: Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah. Lastly, you spent a couple of weeks reading through the New Testament’s general epistles—the letters of James, First & Second Peter, First through Third John, and Jude. This week is designed to be a review week. This will give you a chance to catch up on any reading you missed or fell behind on, and it will give you a chance to re-read and review any sections you might like to revisit. Below and on the back are brief recaps of the books you’ve read this quarter.

First Chronicles begins with some important genealogies that trace back to the beginning of time. Following the genealogies, the majority of First Chronicles focuses on the story of King David. Following that, Second Chronicles follows the events of Solomon and the subsequent kings of Judah. Unlike Second Kings, Second Chronicles does not record the reigns of the kings of Israel. Instead, Chronicles focuses on the Davidic line of kings in Judah with a special emphasis on the Temple. Chronicles is an even more spiritually-focused work than Kings, and serves as a reminder of God’s promises—past, present and future. By retelling the past, Chronicles calls God’s people to live faithfully in the present while trusting in His promises for the future!



Like the Synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, & Luke), John’s gospel tells us the story of Jesus. It does so, however, in a unique way. Many accounts recorded in the other gospels are not found in John, and John records many unique events in his gospel record. John’s gospel focuses on Jesus as the eternal Word made flesh in order to reveal God’s glory, thus bringing light and life to mankind. John does this by focusing on seven signs (miracles) and seven discourses. He also records the seven “I am” statements of Jesus. The latter half of the gospel records Jesus’ final words with the disciples before His arrest, along with details about Jesus’s crucifixion and subsequent resurrection appearances to the disciples.



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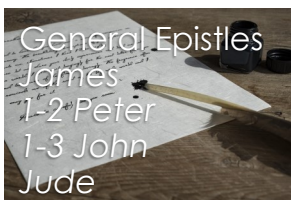
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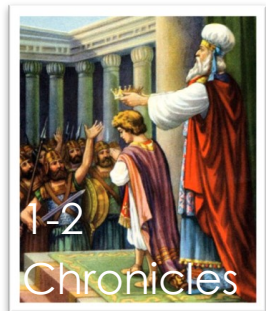


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