

GENESIS TO REVELATION (NT4225)

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This class follows the sweep of the Biblical story from the dawn of creation to the New Jerusalem. In ten days the group travels through millennia of time, looking at key parts of virtually every Biblical book from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation. Members of the class experience the Scriptures as words on the page are transformed into sight and sound through readings, music, drama, and hundreds of large screen photographs. During the ten days, class members create their own study Bibles and design materials for teaching the Biblical story in creative ways.

Resources

- A good study Bible that you can mark up (e.g., HarperCollins Study Bible or New Oxford Annotated Bible)
- C. R. Koester, *A Beginner's Guide to Reading the Bible* (provides an overview of the biblical story)
- Map packet (available in class and at the duplicating center in Gullixson lower level)
- Web sites on Paul's journeys and the cities of Revelation
<http://www.luthersem.edu/ckoester/paul/main.htm>
<http://www.luthersem.edu/ckoester/revelation/main.htm>
- Additional visuals (ancient artwork etc.) on the course site in MyLutherNet

Assignments

Listening: The main task is to work through as much of the Bible as possible in the time available. Each class period we will read through selected portions of a biblical book or books. Underline in your Bibles and take notes in the margins. This allows you to create your own study Bible.

The lectures will be posted online after class. Look under the course number (NT4225) on <http://www.luthersem.edu/ckoester/>

Reading/ Review: After the class period look back through the sections of the Bible that were covered that day. Fill in your notes in the margins. Jot down ideas. Don't worry if you don't review everything. **But be sure to look back over key sections.** You may find it helpful to review with someone else.

Writing: Each member of the class will write one small group Bible study. Instructions are given below. **Completed work due by noon Thursday Jan 22 (or sooner) in my P.O. box.** Students who are normally off-campus may email the study to me.

Genesis to Revelation Schedule

- Jan. 5 Creation to Babel
Abraham and Sarah
Isaac, Jacob, Joseph
- Jan. 6 Moses, Exodus, Sinai
Wilderness wanderings
Deuteronomy, Joshua
- Jan. 7 Judges, Ruth
Samuel & Saul (1 Samuel)
David's Reign (2 Samuel)
- Jan. 8 Solomon's Reign, Proverbs, Psalms
Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Kingdom Divides
Elijah & Elisha
- Jan. 9 Amos, Hosea, Fall of the North
Micah, Isaiah, Hezekiah
Josiah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Jeremiah
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- Jan. 12 Jeremiah (cont.), Fall of the South, Ezekiel
Obadiah, Lamentations, Habakkuk, Job
Haggai & Zechariah, Malachi, Ezra & Nehemiah, Joel, Jonah
- Jan. 13 Esther and Daniel
Between the Testaments: 1 Maccabees
Gospels (I): Jesus' birth and public ministry
- Jan. 14 Gospels (II): Jesus' death and resurrection
Acts 1-15
Acts 16-18, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Galatians

Jan. 15 1 & 2 Corinthians
Romans, Acts 19-28
Prison and Pastoral Epistles

Jan. 16 Hebrews, 1 Peter
James, Jude & 2 Peter, 1,2,3 John
Revelation

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK

Each member of the class will be aside to write one session of a Bible study that could be used in a congregational Bible survey for youth or adults. Pick **one** of the following books to focus on (all are short):

Ruth	1 Thessalonians
Ecclesiastes (chapters 1-3)	Colossians
Micah	James
Habakkuk	1 Peter

Before you begin:

- Imagine that your Bible study will be part of an ongoing overview of the Bible. You are writing just one session on one book for this longer series.
- Decide whether you want this study to be used for youth or adults and write it at the appropriate level.
- **SELECT** the verses, themes or key elements within the book that you want the group to look at carefully. No Bible study looks at everything. Finding a focus is crucial.
- Write this Bible study in such a way that you could give it to a small group leader to use.
- The study should include material for a session of about an hour in length. When written up it should be about 3-4 single spaced pages long (12 point type).

The Bible Study should include the following:

A. At the top of the page **identify the biblical passage** and give me a brief **description of the group** you are writing for (e.g., junior high, high school, young adult, women's group, men's group etc.). This information will help me picture the setting.

B. Provide **background information** on the biblical book for the group leader. Consult at least the following 3 sources (*see the next page*) before writing up this information and **list the three sources** in your study. Synthesize what you read and write it up in your own words:

- the notes in a study Bible (tell me which one you use)
- an article in one of the following Bible dictionaries or Bible encyclopedias (all in the library reference room: *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (**not** the one in BibleWorks), *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (the first two volumes have been published, other volumes are forthcoming)
- a commentary on your biblical book from one of the following commentary series: The New Interpreter's Bible, The Anchor Bible commentary series, The Word Biblical Commentary, or the Interpretation series. (The Interpretation series volumes are in the library stacks. All the others are in the library reference room.)

NOTE: Many online resources as well as the Bible dictionaries in the BibleWorks program are very outdated. They are available in digital form **because they are so old** that the makers of the programs can reissue them without worrying about the copyright. For example, Matthew Henry's commentary comes from the early 1700s (he was a British Puritan who died in 1714). Easton's Bible Dictionary was published in the 1800s, and the compiler of Fausset's Bible Dictionary died in 1910. When using any digital dictionary or commentary you need to know when it was written by searching the web for the original date of publication or the dates of the author.

NOTE on other internet sources: You may not cut and paste internet materials (except for images) into your papers. If you consult web resources you must summarize them in your own words and cite the source in your paper. Credit will not be given for cut-and-paste materials.

C. Write up a plan for the Bible study including the following elements

1. **An opening.** Ask what you want to happen in the first five minutes of the session. There might be a hymn, a prayer, sharing time, or an activity that will lead into the study itself.

2. **The study itself.** A congregational Bible study should operate on three main levels. These levels can be interwoven in the Bible study, but be intentional about doing some things at each level.

a. **Careful reading.** Include some exercises and discussion questions that help people notice things in the text. Some of this may seem like fill-in-the-blank, but a true Bible study has to involve careful reading.

b. **Interpretive points.** Look for ways to help people reflect on what they are reading. This goes a step beyond noticing a key word or point to thinking about what it means. Look for things that may be unclear, surprising, or troublesome.

c. *Explore implications for faith and life.* These are more open-ended sorts of questions, but when done well they bring together the Bible and contemporary life issues.

3. **A closing.** Think about what you want to do to conclude the session. Again, it might be a hymn, prayer, or an exercise that suits the theme of the session.

EXAMPLES: Here are some examples of the different levels indicated above. These are based on the book of Philemon.

Example of a careful reading question:

What does v. 1 tell us about Paul's situation? (answer: he is a prisoner of Jesus Christ)

Examples of additional information for the leader

(Be sure to include some of this kind of material in the study. You may know where a given question is supposed to go, but don't assume that others can read your mind!)

- *Clarification:* Paul calls himself a prisoner of Jesus Christ, but it becomes clear in vv. 10 and 13 that Paul is actually in prison.
- *Discussion suggestion:* You might have the group think about what prison conditions would have been like in Paul's time.
- *Additional background:* Prisons in Paul's time were typically stone rooms without windows. Often there was an outer chamber and an inner chamber. The inner chamber was darkest and used for maximum security. Prisoners frequently wore chains on their hands during the day and had their feet placed in stocks during the night. (One finds this kind of information in a Bible dictionary.)

Example of a follow-up interpretive question:

Sometimes Paul begins his letters by giving only his name and sometimes he introduces himself as an apostle. Why does he want his readers to know that he is a "prisoner"? How might that affect the way they read his letter?

Example of additional follow-up information for the leader:

You might point out that a word like “apostle” carries a sense of authority, so when Paul introduces himself as an apostle he might expect people to show him respect. Calling himself a prisoner is rather different. Since Paul was imprisoned for the sake of the gospel, and not for wrongdoing, his readers might show him sympathy or perhaps respect for his perseverance.

Example of an Opening Exercise that leads into the text:

Example of an opening activity: Give a slip of paper and a pencil to each person in the group. Tell them to write their name and three things about themselves on the slip of paper. Two of the things should be true (but probably not well known) and one should be false. Collect the slips of paper and have someone read what is written on each one. As each person’s slip is read, the group has to guess which item in this “introduction” is not true.

Follow-up discussion: When we introduce ourselves we often give our name and another piece of information. For example:

- I am _____’s mother/father
- I work at _____
- I go to school at _____

The way we introduce ourselves affects the way people relate to us. What difference does it make if people see you primarily as _____’s mother/father/sister/brother, or if they see you as an employee at the _____ company or as a student at _____ school?

Now let’s see how Paul introduces himself in Philemon 1 (continue with the kinds of questions listed above.)

Example of an exercise that gets at the central idea:

The key point in Philemon appears in vv. 15-16 where Paul asks that the owner receive this runaway slave back “no longer as a slave but as more than a slave, a beloved brother.” What is surprising is that Paul speaks of a movement from slavery to brotherhood rather than slavery to freedom as we might expect. This movement from bondage into new relationship would be an important focus for the session.

So you might do an exercise in which people have to give the opposite or counterpart of something:

brother (sister)	rich (poor)
husband (wife)	slave (most would say “free,” but Paul says “brother”)
woman (man)	

Note how what Paul says does not fit the pattern.

If Paul had told Philemon to receive Onesimus “no longer as a slave but as a free person,” what would be the implications?

What are the implications of telling Philemon to receive Onesimus “no longer as a slave but as a beloved brother”?

Examples of follow-up questions to explore faith and life:

If you think of a member of your own congregation primarily as a free person, how does that affect your relationship with that person?

If you think of a member of your congregation primarily as brother or a sister in the faith, how does that affect your relationship with that person?

Another example of an exercise that gets at the central idea:

Paul tells Philemon to “welcome him [Onesimus] as you would welcome me” (v. 17).

Begin with careful reading:

Initially try to discern how Philemon would have welcomed Paul. To do this, read through the letter and make a list of key words that describe Paul’s relationship to Philemon. (Examples might include the following.)

- v. 8 Paul could command Philemon
- v. 9 relationship of love
- v. 14 does not want to force Philemon to do anything
- v. 17 partner
- v. 19 Philemon owes Paul everything
- v. 20 brother

Example of follow-up questions to help interpretation:

Based on these key words and ideas, how would you expect Philemon to welcome Paul? (With respect, love, etc.)

What would it mean for a slave owner to receive his slave back in this way?