

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT

For the Week of Aug 31 - Sept 4

January 5, 2014, we started a journey as a church body that took us on what we called “Connecting The Dots: A Journey Through the Old Testament.” In my thinking this was a fly over of the Old Testament chronologically. We said in the beginning that we would not hit everything. That would have taken 18 years rather than 18 months. Now we undertake a historical overview of the New Testament. Once again, we will not hit everything but certainly the high points. This will again be an 18 month journey. Beginning next week families with children 6th Grade and under will begin using “Old Story New” books and everyone else will use “The Dots Connected.” I hope you picked up your books and are ready to go. If not, they are available in the lobby on Sunday or during the week in the church office.

Day 1

First Read Hebrews 1:1-2

Like the opening words of Genesis this verse makes it clear this is about God and assumes that God is! This verse, again like Genesis 1:1 speaks of God speaking. In Genesis He spoke and all things were created. In Hebrews He spoke to us in the past in different times and in different ways. This means He spoke some to Moses, some to Abraham, and He spoke some to Joshua. This would continue on with all of the writers of the Old Testament. J. Vernon McGee says, “God did not give all of His truth to Abraham, but added to it as He dealt with different men through the years.”

He also spoke in different ways. He used historical, narrative, dreams, visions, poetry, promises and the law through about 40 authors over a period of 1500 years. He did all of this to set the stage for the most important speaking He would do. He spoke now, in these last days, to us by His Son. All of the Old Testament pointed to Jesus. It has been correctly stated, The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed and the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed. There are pictures and images in the Old Testament that are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. We will see in our journey through the New Testament that like the Old Testament, the New Testament is about Jesus and making Him known.

I hope you know Him. If so, give thanks to Him for the miracle of His word. If you do not know Him, open your mind and heart to the truth of God’s Word and be open to hear from Him and be saved.

Day 2

First Read John 5:39-47 and Luke 24:44-51

In the passages in John 5, Jesus is telling His listeners of His oneness with His Father. He offers several witnesses. The first is the witness of Him. Then He offers the witness of John the Baptist, then the witness of His works and the witness of His Father. The last is the witness of scripture. He tells them that searching the scriptures to find eternal life will not work because the scriptures are about Him and He is eternal life. He continues to let them know that their study and searching in scripture is in vain if it does not lead to faith in Him. Jesus tells them that if they really believed in Moses and his writings, they would believe in Him.

In the passage in Luke, Jesus appears to His disciples after the resurrection and gives them instructions. He lets them know that the scriptures, the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms were about Him and that they were all fulfilled in Him—His life, suffering, death and resurrection. He was the focus of all of the Old Testament writings.

We will see tomorrow that the writings of the New Testament give account of the life of Jesus. The remainder of the New Testament, after the Gospels, is about the spread of the gospel message—the good news of Jesus through His church and the prophecy of the end of history as we know it. Jesus is the focus and the prime mover of all of this. All glory, honor and praise are for Him and to Him.

Give Him praise and thanksgiving. He is the Whole Story in one Name—Jesus!

Day 3

First Read Acts 1:1-8

Sometimes we forget that Acts was written by the same person who wrote the Gospel according to Luke. Some see it as a two-volume set; correctly so, as the book of Acts picks up where Luke left off. Luke was writing a historical account for Theophilus. The first volume, The Gospel of Luke, was about “all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day He was

taken up.” He told Theophilus that “his former account” was from the beginning of Jesus’ earthly life until after His crucifixion and resurrection. Luke then told about Jesus’ last words to His disciples. Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit and that He would empower them to be His witnesses “in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Chapter two of Acts picks up with the disciples gathered together and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the message of the gospel so that the people gathered in Jerusalem, from many places, could understand what they were saying. This was the birth of the church. The remainder of Acts and the rest of the New Testament have to do with the spread of the gospel. In addition to the four Gospels and Acts there are fourteen letters of Paul (assuming Paul wrote Hebrews) seven general letters and Revelation. These are the 29 books of the New Testament.

We see the transition of Luke in Acts 1 brings the full springing forth of the New Testament message. The four gospels, including Luke along with Acts, open up the rest of the message of the New Testament. It is one message, miraculously given to us, in the entire Bible, both the Old and New Testaments. The message is all about the good news of Jesus Christ.

Day 4

First Read 2 Peter 1:16-21 and 1 John 1:1-4

Where did the Bible come from? Peter lets us know several things about what is written in the New Testament. First he makes it clear that he was not communicating fables. The word for ‘fables’ means ‘myths’ which are manufactured stories that have no basis in fact. The Roman world was filled with such stories about the gods and mere speculation that tried to explain the world and its origins. Instead of ‘fables’ Peter said that “we’ (meaning the others who wrote,) were doing so as eyewitnesses. Peter, in this context in particular, was writing about his experience on the Mount of Transfiguration. There he, along with James and John, saw Jesus appear with Moses and Elijah in an event known as the transfiguration. Peter wrote to share and leave with all of us the record of that experience. The writers of the New Testament wrote about what they had seen. They were eye witnesses of the things they wrote about. This was not hearsay but the experience of seeing, hearing and touching. John writes in 1 John that they were writing what they had experienced “That your joy may be full.”

Peter also says that that what they wrote was not, “by the will of man.” It was not their idea, but it came from another. Rather than coming from the will of man, their writings were not of private interpretation, not of the will of man but “holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” The word translated ‘private’ means ‘one’s own’ or ‘its own.’ The idea is that since scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit, it must “hang together.” Scripture goes together. With a verse you can just about prove anything you want. Scripture had a purpose and it is understood only in the context with the whole. No private interpretation, it is written by eyewitnesses, and inspired by the Holy Spirit. What a wonderful gift—the New Testament!

Day 5

First Read Romans 10:14-17 and 1 John 5:13

Scripture is given to us to produce faith. Paul writes to the believers in Rome and tells them that faith comes from hearing the Word of God. Do you want to grow your faith? Read and study the Bible. Dig in. That is what this journey is all about. We want to study and learn the Bible for the purpose of growing true, biblical faith. The next set of devotions will be in the first volume of “The Dots Connected.” You should have already picked one up in the lobby. Plan to do your part to grow your faith.

John tells us why he wrote. He says that he wrote “To you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal light.” There it is. The real purpose of the writings in the New Testament is so people can know that they have eternal life. Dig into scripture and allow the Lord God to cause His Word to give you real security. Faith comes from His Word. Security and confidence come from the Word of God.

The Word of God is not random. It is deliberate to grow you faith. Thank God for His Word--the very origin and foundation of your faith. God has given us the gift of His Word, both the living Word and the written.