

## Lesson 1 – Overview of the 17 Time Periods

Text: Genesis 1-3; Revelation 21-22

Significant Figures and People: God, Satan, Adam, and Eve

Key Passages:

- Genesis 1:1 – In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
- Genesis 3:22-24 – The privilege of eating of the Tree of Life was taken away from man because of sin.
- Revelation 22:1-5 – The privilege of eating the Tree of Life will be regained by those who return to God.

Historical Summary:

In the beginning, God, an all-good, all-knowing, and all-powerful being, created the heavens and the earth. He created the sun, moon, stars, plants, and animals, but most importantly, He created man and woman in His image. God made a beautiful garden for the first man (Adam) and woman (Eve) in which to live as husband and wife. It was called the Garden of Eden. In this garden were two very special trees, the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam and Eve were allowed to eat from the Tree of Life, which gave eternal life. However, they were not permitted to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. In fact, it was the only thing in the entire garden from which Adam and Eve were not allowed to eat.

Satan, a powerful evil being, lied to Eve in order to convince her that eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was a good idea. She ate some of the tree's fruit and also shared it with Adam. The punishment for this sin was banishment from the Garden of Eden. God sent them out of the garden so they could not eat from the Tree of Life and have eternal life in their sinful condition.

In Revelation 22:14, it is revealed that those who have had their robes washed white (those who have obeyed Jesus) are allowed to eat from the Tree of Life again and live forever. The Tree of Life was taken away at the beginning of the Bible, but regained by the righteous at the end of the Bible. Everything between these two passages is extremely important information because it helps the readers to understand how to return to God. The Bible is like a treasure map which shows the path one needs to take in order to arrive at the Tree of Life.

There are 66 books in the Bible, 1,189 chapters, and over 31,000 verses in the Bible. Understanding and remembering such a large treasure map can be very challenging. The Bible can be divided up into enough different time periods to cover the entire Bible, but not too many that it is too hard to learn, remember, and share with other people. Seventeen time periods is just the right number. Dividing up the Bible in this way makes it easier to quickly put stories in order and to remember where a person, story, verse, or thought is in the Bible. By learning these 17 time periods, one can more easily use the map God has given to find the way back to the Tree of Life to live with God forever.

The 17 Time Periods of the Bible:

1. Before the Flood
  - a. Summary: God's creation, man, sinned and became separated from God.
  - b. Historical Text: Genesis 1-5
2. The Flood
  - a. Summary: All evil people on earth were killed by a flood. Only Noah and his family were saved.
  - b. Historical Text: Genesis 6-10
3. Scattering of the People
  - a. Summary: The people disobeyed God's commandments and were scattered.
  - b. Historical Text: Genesis 11
4. Patriarchs
  - a. Beginning: God made several important promises to Abraham.
  - b. Ending: The family of Israel (Jacob) moved to Egypt to escape the famine in Canaan.
  - c. Historical Text: Genesis 12-50

5. Exodus from Egypt
  - a. Beginning: The Israelites were enslaved by the Egyptians.
  - b. Ending: Just before entering the promised land of Canaan, the people rebelled against God.
  - c. Historical Text: Exodus - Numbers 13
6. Wandering in the Wilderness
  - a. Beginning: God punished the Israelites for their rebellion (40 years of wandering).
  - b. Ending: Joshua was instructed by the Commander of the Lord's army prior to invading Canaan.
  - c. Historical Text: Numbers 14 - Joshua 5
7. Invasion and Conquest of Canaan (Joshua 6-24)
  - a. Summary: Israel invaded and conquered Canaan from the wicked people living there.
  - b. Historical Text: Joshua 6-24
8. Judges
  - a. Beginning: The next generation in Israel did not obey God; judges were raised to help them.
  - b. Ending: The people rejected God's appointment of judges and demanded a king.
  - c. Historical Text: Judges - 1 Samuel 9
9. United Kingdom
  - a. Beginning: God allowed the people to have a king, appointing Saul to be their first king.
  - b. Ending: The 10 northern tribes rebelled against Rehoboam and formed their own nation.
  - c. Historical Text: 1 Samuel 10 - 1 Kings 11; 1 Chronicles - 2 Chronicles 9
10. Divided Kingdom
  - a. Summary: Israel and Judah existed until Israel, because of its evil, was destroyed by Assyria.
  - b. Historical Text: 1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings 17; 2 Chronicles 10-31
11. Judah Alone
  - a. Summary: Judah existed until it was taken into captivity by the Babylonian empire for its evil.
  - b. Historical Text: 2 Kings 18-25; 2 Chronicles 32-36
12. Captivity (Ezekiel, Daniel)
  - a. Summary: The people lived in captivity for 70 years.
  - b. Historical Text: Ezekiel, Daniel
13. Return from Captivity
  - a. Summary: The people (Jews) were allowed to return home to rebuild by the Medo-Persians.
  - b. Historical Text: Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther
14. Years of Silence
  - a. Summary: For approximately 400 years, God did not reveal His will to the people.
  - b. Historical Text: Not applicable
15. Life of Christ (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)
  - a. Summary: Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth in order to save all mankind from sin.
  - b. Historical Text: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
16. Early Church
  - a. Summary: Following Jesus' ascension, the church was established, and the Gospel was taught.
  - b. Historical Text: Acts
17. Letters to Christians
  - a. Summary: Various inspired writers wrote to Christians to encourage and teach them.
  - b. Historical Text: Romans – Revelation

#### Timing of the Prophetic Writings:

- Divided Kingdom: Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah
- Judah Alone: Zephaniah, Nahum, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk
- Captivity: Lamentations
- Return from Captivity: Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi