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a *Grace Notes* course

## Foundations 200

Historical Overview of the Bible; Old Testament Survey; New Testament Survey

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Foundations 201

*Grace Notes*

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## **Foundations 201**

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## Preface

Foundations is a study program that was designed to assist the new student of the Word of God to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet 3:18).” Therefore, the emphasis throughout the Foundation study program is not only to understand the significance and depth of God’s Word but also to aid the student in the development of his own spiritual life.

Foundations is also designed so that it may easily be taught to others once the student has absorbed the principles into his own soul. It is a valuable tool for “making disciples” in fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20).

This first Segment of Foundations (Foundations I) contains a basic introduction to the Bible, fifteen principles of interpretation, and studies on how to prepare a Bible lesson. This is designed to teach the student how to “Study” the Scriptures and then to effectively teach others.

Segment Two contains a book-by-book “Survey” of God’s Word

Segment Three is an introduction to some of the basic doctrines of Scripture, the “System.”

Foundations will also assist the advanced student to more fully understand God’s Word. Care has been taken to challenge any student, no matter their level of knowledge, to further research the Holy Scriptures.

All Scripture quotations (unless indicated) are from The New American Standard Bible, as this translation follows more closely the original Greek and Hebrew languages used by the authors of Scripture.

## Personal Preparation

### Six Principles Of Personal Preparation For Bible Study

#### 1. Believe In Jesus Christ

Personal preparation in the study of the Scripture cannot be overemphasized. The student must first believe in Jesus Christ as his Savior because the “natural man” (the man without Christ) cannot

accept or understand the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:14). Therefore, salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8-9). The Spirit of God allows the student of the Word to discern spiritual things.

#### 2. Accept That The Bible Is Divinely Inspired

God’s Word proclaims itself to be divinely inspired (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Any study of the Word ought to begin by acknowledging that fact. No “leap” of faith is necessary; just a mere acceptance of the fact that the Bible is true and accurate.

#### 3. Pray

Prayer is necessary to understand Scripture. God’s Word instructs that if anyone lacks wisdom, and asks for it, God will give it freely (James 1:5). Sincere prayer for correct knowledge and discernment will be answered because these things are clearly within God’s will (1 John 5:14 compare [cf.] Matthew 7:7-8).

#### 4. Study Diligently And Have Patience

Since many passages of God’s Word are not readily understood, diligence and patience are necessary when studying (2 Timothy 2:15). When we, as limited human beings, attempt to understand the unlimited mind of God, we must be aware that even a competent grasp will take some time.

#### 5. Consistently Confess Your Sins

It is also important to confess sin consistently, permitting God to cleanse our lives, so that a greater fellowship with Him may be attained (1 John 1:6-10). Realizing the need to confess our sins keeps us consistently sensitive to any thought, speech, or action that is not in accord with God’s will.

#### 6. Be Willing To Live God's Will

The Lord Jesus Christ said, “*if anyone is willing to do His [God’s] will, he shall know of the teaching*” (John 7:17). If the objective is to develop a relationship with the Living God, then any knowledge gained ought to support and clarify that relationship. Knowledge without love results

in pride (1 Corinthians 8:1). If your objective is simply an intellectual quest and not a relationship with the Living God, then the knowledge you gain will be lacking and distorted.

### Five Benefits Of Personal Bible Study From God's Word

#### 1. Greater Faith

The greatest theologian of the Church, the apostle Paul, said of himself that he, ***“walked by faith and not by sight”*** (2 Corinthians 5:7). We all enter into salvation by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9); and according to Paul, just as we have entered, so are we to walk (Colossians 2:6-7).

#### 2. New Knowledge

There is new knowledge to be gained from God's Word as we ***“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”*** (2 Peter 3:14-18). This knowledge leads us to a greater appreciation of His grace. But along with growing in knowledge, we grow in faith as we “hear” God's Word through the Scriptures (Romans 10:17) and trust Him for everything.

#### 3. Purification Of Our Life

God's Word is necessary for the purification of our lives because His Word is Truth (John 17:17). Although we are Believers, we do have problems with sin in our lives (1 John 1:6-10), so we must learn God's Word in order to determine what sin(s) may be present. We then can pray intelligently for healing and cleansing (Psalms 51). Please note that Christians have often “added to” God's Word and made these additions a basis of righteousness. This is called “legalism,” which means that men have made their own laws the standard of righteousness. The Lord Jesus Christ clearly challenged this practice (Mark 7:1-13), so we must be careful to pay careful attention to God's stated standards.

#### 4. Power In Ministry

With the Holy Spirit at work in our lives as we study the “mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:14-16), there will be power in our ministry (Ephesians 2:10). We are in a war with Satan and his forces, therefore we need power beyond our

own strength and ability (Ephesians 6:10-18). The power comes from our submission to God's will because it is God who is at work in us, ***“to will and to work His good pleasure”*** (Philippians 2:13).

#### 5. Equipment For Service

With this knowledge of God's Word, we can practice the truth in the name of the Lord Jesus (Colossians 3:16-17), and proclaim it to a lost and dying world (John 17:17-19; Hebrews 5:12). A primary objective for the communication of God's Word is, ***“equipping the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ”*** (Ephesians 4:11-13). To “equip” others requires that we must first be equipped ourselves.

### The Bible

#### 1. The Written Word Of God

The Bible is not simply a common book. It was written by more than forty authors whose lives spanned over 1,500 years. Jesus Christ called it “The Book” (Hebrews 10:7). Without it man cannot know the absolute standard of righteousness, nor the need for grace in his life. God chose to have His words written down so that His standards would be clear. The written Word is accepted by faith and proven by history (events that have already occurred). Man speaks to God through prayer. God primarily speaks to man through His written Word.

The great majority of people use translations of the Bible from the original languages of Scripture. Most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew. The only exceptions are found in the Book of Daniel - chapters 2 through 7, and in the Book of Ezra - chapters 4 through 7. These chapters were written in a sister language to the Hebrew called Aramaic, which was the language spoken by most of the Jews at the time these books were written. All of the New Testament is written in Koine (common) Greek.

The chapter and verse breaks were added by man after initial inspiration to make it easier to find various passages. Thus, they are not inspired by God, but they do serve a valuable purpose in

helping us to understand how these sections have been traditionally understood.

## 2. The Inspired Word Of God.

Every single part of the Bible is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16-17), and is thus profitable. "Inspiration" is more than human genius, illumination and revelation, because it is divinely initiated. It is "God's breath" expressing itself through a human personality.

## 3. The Revelation Of The Living Word Of God

The Bible is the written revelation of the Living Word of God - our Lord Jesus Christ. "Revelation" means to give new information. "Illumination" occurs when the Holy Spirit, at work inside us, makes "Revelation" understandable for the student of the Word. The written Word is not the Living Word; it is the divine description of the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 4:12 cf. John 5:39-47).

These are important distinctions to make. The paper and ink do not contain the power, but the Power behind the paper and ink is the Spirit of God making the difference in people's lives. To view the words as powerful in and of themselves, without being awestruck by the Author (Hebrews 12:2), misses the point.

## Organization Of The Bible

### The Two Major Divisions

The Bible is divided into two Testaments, the Old and the New.

There are 66 total books, 39 in the Old Testament, written by over 30 different authors, and 27 in the New Testament, written by 10 authors. There are 1,189 chapters, 929 in the Old Testament, and 260 chapters in the New Testament. The Old Testament contains 23,214 verses; the New Testament contains 7,959 verses (for a total of 31,173 verses of Scripture).

A "testament" is a covenant or contract in which something of value has been offered by one person, then accepted by another person. For example, when someone desires to purchase any product, an offer is made and then accepted or rejected. Once the offer is accepted, a covenant or

contract has been made. The covenant contains promises that are to govern the relationship between the two parties. A good example of a covenant is found in the vows taken for marriage. These vows are a covenant between the bride and the groom acting as the foundation of the relationship.

The Old Testament contains the original covenants that God made with man concerning the coming Messiah. Later in our study we will examine these covenants.

### The Five Divisions Of The Old Testament

The Old Testament is grouped as follows

- A. The Law, called the "Torah" (in Hebrew) or "Pentateuch" (in Greek it means "five books"), is comprised of five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
- B. Historical books (twelve): Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther.
- C. Poetical books (five): Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon.
- D. Major Prophets (five): Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel.
- E. Minor Prophets (twelve): Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

### The Three Divisions Of The New Testament

The New Testament documents the arrival of the Messiah, and contains the new covenant made thereafter.

There is, of course, a variety of topics within the books. The historical books, for example, contain some prophecy (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21), just as the book of prophecy contains some epistles (Revelation 2-3). The general designation of any book is based simply on its overall content. The New Testament is grouped into three divisions, as follows

- A. The five Historical books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts.

- B. The Historical books are followed by twenty-one Epistles (letters): Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, Hebrews, James and Jude.
- C. There is one book of Prophecy: Revelation.

## Historical Review

The beauty of God's Word is in part due to its internal consistency, even though it was written by so many different authors over such a long period of time. History looks at events that happened in the past.

The sequence of the events outlined below shows a marvelous motion through the unfolding, and then the folding up of human history. By looking at these major events, we can clearly trace the introduction and conclusion of such a marvelous story. We can also gain some clear insights into a question philosophers have been asking for centuries: "Why are we here?"

The following overview is designed to be just that, an overview. We will spend the rest of our lives filling in the details. For now, let us learn from the major historical events that God has placed in front of us. Later in this lesson, we'll see an excellent overview of God's wonderfully consistent plan.

## Description Of The Events

### 1. Creation

In the beginning of the Bible, Genesis documents the original creation of the heavens and earth (Genesis 1:1; 2 Peter 3:6). At the end of the Book in Revelation, the original creation is destroyed, making way for the creation of a "New Heaven and New Earth" (Revelation 21-22).

### 2. Satan's Rebellion

Sometime before the creation of man, Satan rebelled against God (Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28). The purpose of this first rebellion is intricately woven throughout the Scriptures; and all of the ramifications of this conflict are not

easily understood. What is understood is that a war has been raging between God and Satan since before man's creation (Revelation 12) and that Satan's final rebellion will occur after the 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ on earth, just before the creation of the new heaven and earth (Revelation 20:7-10).

### 3. Earth And Man

God prepared the earth to be inhabited by man (Genesis 1:2-2:3: as a footnote, the words "formless" [Hebrew TOHU] and "void" [Hebrew BOHU] mean, "uninhabitable," and, "void of population," respectively). The problem is that there was an invader, Satan, who continually sought to challenge God. When the Lord imprisons Satan for the duration of the future Millennial Kingdom (1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ, see Revelation 20:1-3), He will once again perfect earth for man (Isaiah 60-66).

### 4. The First And Last Adam

The first man, Adam, was designed to be the head over all creation (Genesis 1:28; 2:4-25). He was placed in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and keep it. The "Last Adam," the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:45), will establish a literal physical Headship for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:4). He is "last" in the sense that there is no one else who will come into existence as a perfect being.

### 5. Man's Battle With Satan

When Adam "fell" in the Garden of Eden, he became subject to Satan, the "ruler of this world" (Genesis 3; John 12:31; 16:11). God will later subject Satan to Christ just before the Millennial Kingdom begins (Revelation 20:1-3).

### 6. All Of Mankind Judged

God permits man to descend into evil, but He will eventually deal with all mankind. In Genesis 4-10 we find the background that led to the great Flood, which occurred because of God's displeasure with mankind's disobedience (Genesis 6:1-13). God will again deal with all mankind when Jesus Christ returns at the Second Advent, after the seven-year period of Tribulation. At that time He will separate the remainder of mankind into the "sheep

(Believers),” and the “goats (unbelievers)” (Matthew 25:31-46).

### 7. Babylon

After the Flood of Noah the earth was repopulated, but soon people began again to turn in the wrong direction - away from God. In Babylon, they constructed the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11), which was indicative of their attempt to save themselves. They thought that if they could build a tower high enough, they could escape God’s wrath (such as that of the Flood) by ascending to heaven. The foundation they built the tower upon was a religion known as “humanism,” which supposes that man can save himself through religious and/or economic means. Beliefs such as this are the basis of all the world’s religious systems. Only Christianity realizes that man can’t save himself, therefore man needs a Savior. Some humanistic attitudes are displayed in the Bible by those who stood in opposition to the Living God. These attitudes were found in the Babylon of the past (Isaiah 47) and Tyre (Ezekiel 26-27) and remain with us today. The same attitudes are found in the world’s religions, which believe that man ascends to godhood in stages and thus saves himself. During the Tribulation, God will destroy the Babylonian organizations that have been created (Revelation 17-18).

### 8. Israel

After dispersing the people from Babel and distributing various languages to the nations, the Lord called Abraham to be the founder of a new nation, Israel (Genesis 12). Through the miraculous conception of his son, Isaac, and the birth of his grandson, Jacob, the promise made to Abraham about the Messiah was continued (Genesis 22:1-18; 28:14). The people of Israel were eventually removed from their land and dispersed throughout the world for their idolatrous practices, but the Lord’s promises remained. Israel will be supernaturally regathered after the Tribulation and blessed with the Millennial Kingdom (Matthew 24:29-31).

### 9. The Advents Of Jesus Christ

The First Advent of Jesus Christ took place at the perfect time in God’s plan for history (1 Timothy

2:6). The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John relate the wonderful history of Jesus’ birth, ministry, death, burial and resurrection. Jesus Christ was clearly the “Suffering Servant” so beautifully foretold in Isaiah 53. The Second Advent of Jesus Christ will take place after the Tribulation, when Christ actually sets foot on the earth again and conquers His enemies (Zechariah 14:1-8; Revelation 19:11-19), thus ushering in the Millennial Kingdom. This time He will come as the “Conquering King.”

### 10. Opposing Ministries

The Gospels also beautifully portray the public ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John). Christ’s ministry was one of service to others (Matthew 20:28). This is in clear contrast to the ministry of the Antichrist (also known as the “man of lawlessness”) who will have a “ministry” of self-service, seeking to draw all attention and worship to himself (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; Revelation 6-16).

### 11. The Church

After the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ to the right hand of God the Father, the Church was “called out” to spread the good news of forgiveness of sins through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Acts of the Apostles). The Church bears the responsibility for “making disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:18-20), until she is “called” up for the marriage to her Lord the Bridegroom (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; Revelation 19:7-10).

### A Chronological Overview

Students of the Bible must know the sequence, dates and relationship of several key historical events. Accordingly, this section provides three chronologies. The first lists ten major events found in the Bible and their dates, summarizing the importance of each. The second chronology focuses on key Old Testament events and identifies the books of the Bible that address them. The third lists the sequence of books in the New Testament.

Dates that have “BC” after them refer to the years “before Christ.” Those that have “AD” refer to the

years after Christ (AD was taken from the Latin, Anno Domini, which means “in the year of our Lord)

The dates given are based on a literal interpretation of God’s Word. Many people who have studied God’s Word have arrived at different dates for reasons too numerous to mention at this time. Please do not let this be a distraction. Learning the sequence of events is the most important part of this section.

## Ten Major Events And Their Dates

### 1. The Fall Of Adam (3898 BC)

A literal interpretation of the genealogies (sequences of birth) that are given in God’s Word lets us arrive at a date around 3898 BC for the fall of Adam. The Biblical chronology is given in such a way that we must work forward from the starting point of Adam and also work backward from the 4th year of Solomon (1 Kings 6:1). The Bible gives us information concerning the years between major events. As we connect Biblical events with known dates in secular history, we can then put secular and Biblical history together.

### 2. The Flood Of Noah (2242 BC).

When we follow the genealogy of Genesis 5, we find that a span of 1,656 years elapsed from the fall of Adam to the Flood of Noah. This gives us a date of 2242 BC

### 3. The Promise To Abraham (1875 BC).

The genealogy given to us in Genesis 11:10-26 establishes that Abraham was born 292 years after the Flood, or 1948 years after Adam. This would indicate that he was born in 1950 BC We learn from Genesis 12:4 that Abraham was 75 years old when he received the promise from God that became the Abrahamic Covenant. This would mean that the promise was made in 1875 BC

### 4. The Exodus Of Israel (1445 BC).

Genesis 12-50 reveals to us information concerning the direct descendants of Abraham. The children of Jacob (Abraham’s grandson) moved to Egypt where they were eventually enslaved by the Egyptians (Exodus 1). God delivered them from Egyptian slavery by the hand of Moses. The apostle Paul tells us that a span of

430 years had passed from the promise to Abraham to the giving of The Law (Galatians 3:17). This dates the Exodus in 1445 BC or 2,378 years after Adam.

### 5. The Fourth Year Of Solomon (965 BC).

Solomon was the third king of Israel, following his father David and King Saul. In 1 Kings 6:1 we are told that 480 years had elapsed from the Exodus to the fourth year of Solomon when he began to build the Temple. This lets us calculate the date as 965 BC or 2,858 years after Adam.

We are able to date the fourth year of Solomon from other historical records. This lets us establish a fixed date by which we may work backwards and establish the dates previously mentioned for the Exodus, the Promise to Abraham, The Flood of Noah and Adam. Man has been forced by archaeological discoveries made in the last 100 years to make some adjustments to the BC dates of secular history. This is part of the reason for the differences found in various dating systems.

### 6. The Fall Of The Northern Kingdom (721 BC).

After the death of Solomon, Israel split into two separate kingdoms which became known as the “Northern Kingdom” or Israel, and the “Southern Kingdom” or Judah. The Northern Kingdom fell to the Assyrian Empire in 721 BC and ceased to be a kingdom.

### 7. The Fall Of The Southern Kingdom (586 BC).

The Southern Kingdom fell to the Babylonian Empire in 586 BC and was taken into exile for 70 years before the Israelites were allowed to return to their homeland in 516 BC

### 8. The Birth Of Jesus Christ (1 BC).

The “BC” and “AD” system of dating was not developed until the sixth century after our Lord came. It was designed to reference all historical dates to His birth. When the Church established this system, it was based on an incorrect understanding of when King Herod lived (who was mentioned in the Bible as being in power when Jesus was born, Luke 1:5). Much later it was discovered that a mistake of 1 or 2 years had been made, but the system was already well established

so instead of trying to change all the dates that had previously been established with new dates, it was decided to just say that Jesus was born in 1 or 2 BC

There is a difference between the Julian Calendar which begins January 1 and the Jewish Calendar which begins in September. This is the reason you may see dates written as “1-2 BC” or “966-965 BC”

### **9. The Death, Burial And Resurrection Of Jesus Christ (AD 32-33).**

The majority of Bible scholars establish the date of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ at AD 32-33.

### **10. The Last Book Of The Bible (AD 96).**

This date is related to the apostle John’s exile to the Isle of Patmos (Revelation 1:9), during the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian, where the Bible was completed (Revelation 22:18-19).

## **Chronology Of The Old Testament Books**

### **1. Adam To The Flood (3898-2242 BC)**

Genesis 1-5.

### **2. The Flood To The Promise To Abraham (2242-1875 BC)**

Genesis 6-12.

### **3. The Promise To Abraham To The Exodus (1875-1445 BC).**

Genesis 12-50; Book of Job.

### **4. The Exodus To The 4th Year Of Solomon (1445-965 BC).**

Exodus.

Leviticus.

Numbers.

Deuteronomy.

Joshua.

Judges

Ruth.

1 Samuel.

2 Samuel.

1 Kings 1-5.

Psalms.

1 Chronicles.

### **5. The 4th Year Of Solomon To The Fall Of Judah (965-586 BC).**

1 Kings 6-22.

2 Kings.

2 Chronicles.

Proverbs.

Ecclesiastes.

Song of Solomon.

Obadiah.

Joel.

Jonah.

Amos.

Hosea.

Micah.

Isaiah.

Nahum.

Zephaniah

Habakkuk

### **6. The Period Of The Babylonian Exile (586-516 BC).**

Jeremiah.

Lamentations.

Ezekiel.

Daniel.

### **7. After The Babylonian Exile To The Close Of The Old Testament (516-400 BC).**

Ezra.

Nehemiah.

Zechariah.

Haggai.

Malachi.

## Chronology Of The New Testament Books

The sequence in which the authors wrote the various inspired New Testament books (referred to as inscripturation) is generally viewed to be as follows

### 1. History Of The Life Of Christ And The Early Church (AD 55-85).

Matthew

Luke

Mark

John

Acts.

### 2. Epistles For The Church (AD 46 - 85).

James.

Galatians.

1 Thessalonians.

2 Thessalonians.

1 Corinthians.

2 Corinthians.

Romans.

Philemon.

Ephesians.

Colossians.

Philippians.

1 Timothy.

Titus.

2 Timothy.

Hebrews.

1 Peter.

2 Peter.

Jude.

1 John.

2 John.

3 John.

### 3. Prophecy (AD 96).

Revelation.

## Preparing To Study The Bible

In the last two sections we were introduced to the importance of knowing significant events that occurred in the past (Section 3) as well as the sequence in which they occurred (Section 4). We were laying a foundation to help answer an important question one must ask when studying

the Bible: "When?" As we seek to understand the Bible, we find ourselves constantly searching for answers to questions that are important to "*handling accurately the word of truth*" (2 Timothy 2:15). God invites us to bring all of our questions to Him (Matthew 7:7-8).

The basic questions that we must ask of every verse are very simple: **who, what, when, where, why, and how?** The answers must be considered while keeping in mind the two primary questions concerning the Christian Life: How does this help us develop a close, personal relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:10), and, how then shall we live (John 7:17)?

### Six Basic Questions For Every Verse

#### 1. "WHO?"

As we ask the question, "who" we are seeking to determine who is speaking and to whom it is addressed. One example is found in Genesis 22:2 when God told Abraham to sacrifice his son, his only son, to Him. In this case, God spoke directly to Abraham, not anyone else. Therefore, we, as hearers of the Word, are not obligated to keep that command.

#### 2. "WHAT?"

"What" deals with the reality of the thing being said. Jesus Christ is referred to in Revelation 5 as "the Lamb." This does not mean that He is a shaggy, four-footed creature, but refers to His sacrifice for sin (John 1:29) which is the "reality."

#### 3. "WHEN?"

The "when" question refers us to the time frame to which a particular passage may refer. For instance, Abraham's marriage to his half sister Sarah might be interpreted as immoral until the reader understands that this marriage occurred before the giving of the Mosaic Law, which forbade such practice. Since personal sin is not an issue when there is no law (Romans 4:15), we conclude that in Abraham's case, incestuous marriage was not sin. Clear answers to the question "when" are crucial to complete understanding.

#### 4. "WHERE?"

"Where" deals with the geography and culture in which a passage was written. Frequently in the Bible we find the phrase "up to Jerusalem." In many cultures, the phrase "up to" has come to mean to travel north. However, the Biblical intent has to do with elevation and not direction. When Jesus came from Galilee and was going "up to Jerusalem," He was actually traveling south, but going higher up in elevation.

#### 5. "WHY?"

The "why" question is often the most difficult question to answer. The answer is most often found through studying other passages. If one reads the phrase in Isaiah 7:14 which says, **"Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel,"** an obvious question would be "why a virgin?" We might just answer the question with, "that's the way God wanted to do it." That answer, while correct, is not complete.

As we look for the answer we will find the passage in Romans 5 that addresses the effect the sin of Adam had on the human race. We find that through the man, Adam, each member of the human race is given a Sin Nature. If Jesus had an earthly father, He too would have had a Sin Nature. The answer to "why", in this case, is crucial to Christ's qualifications to pay for sin.

#### 6. "HOW?"

The question of "how" is often difficult to answer as well. We might ask, "How did Jesus walk on water?" The answer is simply that He depended upon the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:18). We also might ask, "How does God control history when mankind has the freedom of choice?" That question is not as easily answered and we will explore it later in our study.

#### Two Important Personal Questions

##### 1. How Does This Help Us Develop A Close, Personal Relationship With Our Lord Jesus Christ?

This is one of the most important questions we can ask. The knowledge that we have gained through

the study of God's Word must be united with faith (Hebrews 11:6), so that our relationship with the Lord will grow. We must trust God's Word as accurate and dependable. The result will be a relationship with the Lord that is grounded in His love and is beyond human knowledge. The apostle Paul said it clearly in Ephesians 3:14-19 when he wrote

***"For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God."***

If we are simply studying God's Word for intellectual reasons and not seeking to grow in our love for God and others (Mark 12:29-31), we are becoming arrogant (1 Corinthians 8:1). The apostle Paul, who knew more theology than any other man on earth (2 Corinthians 12:1-4), expressed his greatest desire in saying, ***"that I may know Him"*** (Philippians 3:10). Paul, as a Pharisee, had already been on an intellectual journey, but, as a Christian, he began to pursue a vital relationship with the Living God.

Look for God's promises, and trust them, so that you might ***"grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"*** (2 Peter 3:18).

##### 2. How Then Shall We Live?

Once we come to understand the meaning of the verses we are studying, we must seek to understand how it applies to everyday life. We are given a beautiful example of this concept in Hebrews 12:1-3. Verses 1 and 2 state

***"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for***

the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

The illustration the writer of Hebrews chose in these two verses is that of running a race. People in the stands are watching (the heroes of Chapter 11). The race is for speed and distance, and to the victor goes the seat of honor. The contestant removes any additional weight that would slow him down, or any obstacles that could trip him up. His eyes are on the finish line, where the One (Jesus Christ) who has already run His race, and won, stands. Potential joy becomes more important than any fatigue experienced, so the runner endures.

Then, in verse 3, the writer applies the two verses to our lives as he writes

“For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.”

When we face trials and opposition, pain and sorrow, shame and disgrace for the cause of Christ, we are to consider our Leader and be encouraged by Him! Realize that, ***“we do not have a great high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin”*** (Hebrews 4:15).

### **What If We Can't Answer All Of The Questions?**

Questions and their answers are important. We must remember, however, that our relationship with the Living God is based on faith (Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 2:6), so we won't get all of the answers that we seek in this lifetime. However, God has promised that eventually all of our questions will be answered (1 Corinthians 13:12). Scripture provides enough information to lead us through life.