
a *Grace Notes* course

Foundations I

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Foundations 101

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Acknowledgments

Equip has been developed under the direction of Village Ministries International, Inc. Since its inception, the mission of VMI has been to reach villages and remote areas of the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Often, the window of opportunity for missionary activity is open for only a brief period of time. Our organization's goal has been to identify gifted men native to these areas and equip them to carry on the delivery of sound Bible teaching after foreign involvement is discontinued, thus "making disciples" in fulfillment of the Great Commission given to us by our Lord and Savior.

Equip was conceived as a way to extend the reach of VMI in providing Bible training materials to these parts of the world where this training was so desperately desired but not available. Through this ministry, VMI is able to efficiently and effectively support a rapidly growing number of indigenous pastors and teachers with sound Bible training and teaching materials.

There are many people we need to thank for their dedication and efforts in preparing this material. First and foremost, we acknowledge our Lord Jesus Christ who in His grace has provided our so great salvation and everything pertaining to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3).

Secondly, as with any effort of this nature, there are also many who selflessly offered of their time, talents and gifts in bringing this vision to reality. They are the invisible heroes.

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.

Lesson 1 - 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. First and foremost the student must believe in Jesus Christ as his Savior, because the "natural man" (that is the man without Christ), cannot accept or understand the things of God (1 Cor 2:14). The Spirit of God allows the student of the Word to discern spiritual things. Your salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone (Eph 2:8-9).

2. ACCEPT THAT THE BIBLE IS DIVINELY INSPIRED.

God's Word proclaims itself to be divinely inspired (2 Tim 3:16-17). Any study of the Word ought to begin by acknowledging that fact. No "leap" of faith is necessary; just a mere "step" that this study will more fully explore as it progresses.

3. PRAY

Prayer is necessary for wisdom in understanding 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.] Matt 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 Tim 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 Cor 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 Cor 5:7). We all enter into salvation by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9); and according to Paul, just as we have entered, so are we to walk (Col 2:6-7). Learning God's Word increases faith.

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 Pet 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 (Rom 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 (Ps 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 Cor 2:14-16), there will be power in our ministry (Eph 2:10). We are in a war with Satan and his forces, therefore we need power beyond our own strength and ability (Eph 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" (Phil. 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 (Col 3:16-17), and proclaim it to a lost and dying world (John 17:17-19; Heb 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" (Eph 4:11-13). To "equip" others requires that we must first be equipped ourselves. Accordingly, this introduction is to guide the student while he must

study God's Word directly to make maximum progress.

Lesson 2 – The Bible

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

1 THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD

The Bible was written by more than forty authors whose lives spanned over 1,500 years, which means the Bible is not simply a common book. Jesus Christ called it "The Book" (Heb. 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).

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.

2 THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD

Every single part of the Bible is inspired by God (2 Tim 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.

"Revelation" means to give new information.

"Illumination" occurs when the Holy Spirit makes "Revelation" understandable for the student of the Word.

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. The written Word is not the living Word; it is the divine description of the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb 4:12 cf. John 5:39-47).

This is an important distinction 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 (Heb 12:2), misses the point.

THE DIVISIONS OF THE BIBLE:

1 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, something of value that has been offered by one party, then accepted by the recipient party. 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.

Another good example is that of the marriage bond. Exchanged wedding vows are a covenant between the bride and the groom acting as the foundation of the relationship.

2 THE FIVE DIVISIONS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The Old Testament contains the original covenants that God made with man concerning the coming Messiah. Later in our study we will examine the covenants that God has made with man. The Old Testament is grouped into five divisions, as follows:

1. The Law, called the "Torah" or "Pentateuch", is comprised of five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

2. Historical books (twelve): Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1

Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther.

3. Poetical books (five): Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon.

4. Major Prophets (five): Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel.

5. Minor Prophets (twelve): Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

3 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 (Matt 24, Mark 13, Luke 21), just as the book of prophecy contains some epistles (Rev 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:

1. The New Testament begins with five Historical books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the book of Acts.
2. 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.
3. There is one book of Prophecy: Revelation.

Lesson 3 – A Historical Overview

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 which happened in the past.

Paying attention to the sequence of the events outlined below, we see 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 to such a marvelous story. Also, we 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 points that God has placed in front of us. Later in this lesson, we'll see an excellent overview of God's wonderfully consistent plan.

1 CREATION

In the beginning of the Bible, Genesis documents the original creation of the heavens and earth (Gen 1:1; 2 Pet 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" (Rev 21-22).

2 SATAN'S REBELLION

Sometime before the creation of man, Satan rebelled against God, seeking to challenge Him (Isa 14:12-14; Ezek 28). The topic of this first rebellion is intricately woven throughout the Scriptures; and the ramifications of this conflict are not easily understood. What is easily understood is that a war goes on between God and Satan that has been going on since before man's creation (Rev 12).

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 (Rev 20:7-10).

3 EARTH AND MAN

God prepared the earth to be inhabited by man (Gen 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 Millennial Kingdom (1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ, see Rev 20:1-3), He will then perfect earth for man (Isa 60-66).

4 THE FIRST AND LAST ADAM

The first man, Adam, was designed to be the head over all creation (Gen 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 Cor 15:45), will establish a literal physical Headship for 1,000 years (Rev 20:4). He is “last” in the sense that there are no more men 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” (Gen 3; John 12:31; 16:11). God will later subject Satan to Christ just before the Millennial Kingdom begins (Rev 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 (Gen 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. He will then separate the remainder of mankind into the “sheep (Believers),” and the “goats (unbelievers)” (Matt 25:31-46).

7 BABYLON.

After the Flood 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 (Gen 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 and putting themselves on a level with God.

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 stand in opposition to the Living God. These attitudes were found in the Babylon of the past (Isa 47) and Tyre (Ezek 26-

27), just to name two such examples that remain with us today. This is 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 (Rev 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 (Gen 12). Through the miraculous conception of his son, Isaac, and then his grandson, Jacob, the promise made to Abraham about the Messiah was continued (Gen 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 (Matt 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 Tim 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 (Zech 14:1-8; Rev 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 (Matt 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 Thess 2:1-12; Rev 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” (Matt 28:18-20), until she is “called” up for the marriage to her Lord the Bridegroom (1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:50-58; Rev 19:7-10).

SUMMARY

When we pay attention to the sequence of the events just described, we see a marvelous pattern emerge. It is the unfolding and then the folding up of human history. It is illustrated by the following chart, “Overview of the Bible.” Match the numbers together and you will see the overview of God’s plan.

1. Creation of the original heavens and earth. Gen 1:1; 2 Pet 3:6	1. Creation of a new heaven and earth. Rev 21-22
2. Satan’s first rebellion. Isa 14:12-14; Eze 28	2. Satan’s final rebellion. Rev 20: 7-10
3. Earth prepared for man. Gen 1:2-2:3	3. Earth perfected for man. Isa 60-66

4. The Headship of the First Adam. Gen 2:4-25	4. The Headship of the Last Adam. Rev 20:4
5. Man subjected to Satan. Gen 3	5. Satan subjected to Christ. Rev 20:1-3
6. All of mankind judged. Gen 4-10	6. All of mankind judged. Matt 25:31-46
7. Construction of the Tower of Babel. Gen 11	7. Destruction of Babylonian organizations. Rev 17-18
8. Israel called as a nation. Gen 12	8. Israel regathered as a nation. Matt 24:29-31
9. First Advent of Jesus Christ. Matt, Mark, Luke, John	9. Second Advent of Jesus Christ. Rev 19:11-19
10. Ministry of Jesus Christ. Matt, Mark, Luke, John	10 Ministry of the Antichrist. 2 Thess 2:1-12; Rev 6-16
11. Church called out. Acts	11 Church called up. 1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:50-58

(Adapted from J. Edwin Hartill, *Principles of Biblical Hermeneutics*, pg. 9)