



Church Newsletter

First Baptist Church of
Niles

Volume 1 / Issue 9

WHAT WE ARE DOING? AND WHAT WE SHOULD DO?

IN THIS ISSUE

WELCOME

This week's reading is Psalm 72 (ESV).
Titled, Give the King Your Justice
OF SOLOMON.

72 Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the royal
son!² May he judge your people with
righteousness, and your poor with
justice!³ Let the mountains bear
prosperity for the people, and the hills,
in righteousness!⁴ May he defend the
cause of the poor of the people, give
deliverance to the children of the
needy,
and crush the oppressor!⁵ May they fear
you while the sun endures, and as long
as the moon, throughout all
generations!

⁶ May he be like rain that falls on the
mown grass, like showers that water
the earth!⁷ In his days may the righteous
flourish, and peace abound, till the
moon be no more!⁸ May he have
dominion from sea to sea, and from the
River^[b] to the ends of the earth!⁹ May
desert tribes bow down before him, and
his enemies lick the dust!¹⁰ May the
kings of Tarshish and of the
coastlands render him tribute;
may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring
gifts!¹¹ May all kings fall down before
him, all nations serve him!¹² For he

delivers the needy when he calls, the
poor and him who has no helper.¹³ He
has pity on the weak and the needy,
and saves the lives of the needy.¹⁴ From
oppression and violence he redeems
their life, and precious is their blood in
his sight.¹⁵ Long may he live; may gold
of Sheba be given to him! May prayer
be made for him continually, and
blessings invoked for him all the
day!¹⁶ May there be abundance of grain
in the land; on the tops of the
mountains may it wave; may its fruit be
like Lebanon; and may people blossom
in the cities like the grass of the
field!¹⁷ May his name endure
forever, his fame continue as long as
the sun! May people be blessed in
him, all nations call him
blessed!¹⁸ Blessed be the LORD, the God
of Israel, who alone does wondrous
things.¹⁹ Blessed be his glorious name
forever; may the whole earth be filled
with his glory! Amen and Amen!²⁰ The
prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are
ended.

This is a royal psalm, praying that the
heirs of David's line (beginning with
Solomon) might have success in the task
that God has assigned the king (namely,
ruling God's people well, protecting the
poor and needy and bringing blessing to
all nations of the earth.)

This also explains why Christian witness,
when it is true to the messianic picture
of the Bible, is so much more than the
basic gospel proclamation and also
fosters social justice and the moral
transformation of whole societies.
Solomon is setting out not only the goal
of his reign but for the reigns of his
heirs.

**These have not been the easiest times
and some of us might be struggling on
account of the imposed isolation.
Maybe it's the lack of fellowship or
maybe the loss of a steady income is
bearing down. As a church family we
are there for you. If you have need(s)
please reach out and let us know how
we can be of assistance.**

**We have begun a virtual Bible Study on
Wednesday evenings from 6:30pm –
7:30pm over Zoom. Please feel free to
join us. Information follows.**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/7570102283?pwd=YTI1ZUs3M2JiZWdOTEpyaVlobkFIOTog>

Or via audio connection
312-626-6799, US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 757 010 2283#
Password: 498061#,



The Watchman's Notes
Offering biblical messages, perspectives
and views on

Biblical & moral issues and current
events.

A Ministry of Chuck Vitel, Pastor – Bible
Teacher

*"For thus the Lord said to me: Go, set a
watchman; let him announce what he
sees." Isaiah 21:6 [ESV]*

May 7, 2020

"KNOW YOUR BIBLE"

The next two Issues of The Watchman's Notes for this week and next week will focus on The Word of God [The Bible]. Issue #8 is "Know Your Bible" [The Storyline of Redemption] and Issue #9 is "How God gave man the Bible."

Christian leaders around the world declared 2020 as the *"Year of the Bible."* No one knew at the time of this declaration that a global pandemic was just around the corner. But God did. Today, we are in the midst of the *Coronavirus [COVID-19] pandemic* busy doing our best to deal with it. Just a few months ago, people had other things on their mind.

Only God knew how important this year was going to be. One Christian Missionary leader said, *"This could be the greatest opportunity of our lifetime to see people reengage with the Word of God (The Bible) and come to Jesus."* The timing is nothing less than providential.

The biggest obstacles to people getting into the Bible are either they don't have the time or they don't understand it, so why bother. Now people have the time, because of the social distancing and stay-at-home orders [Quarantine], people are reading the Bible again and some for the first time.

Perhaps, it's time to *"Be still and listen to His voice."* *Read and study the Word of God.*

(The Storyline is Redemption)

*"When your words came, I ate them;
they were my joy and my heart's
delight,*

*For I bear your name, O LORD God
Almighty." (Jeremiah 15:16)*

Let me begin by telling you something about myself that you may not know. I became a *Born-Again believer* in Jesus Christ in March of 1975 – I became a child of the One True King – I've been saved, I've been changed, and I've been set free. And ever since I became a child of the One True King, I've been studying, teaching and preaching the Bible. This is all by God's "Amazing Grace." Over the decades I have cultivated a great love and respect for the Bible, the Word of God, God's Truth. Not only have I have read the Bible, studied it, taught it, but I also have worked hard to apply the teachings to my life. So, in this issue of *The Watchman's Notes*, I want to talk to you about the Bible.

The word "Bible" comes from the Latin and Greek words meaning "Book," a fitting name, since the Bible is "the Book" for all people, for all time. It's a Book like no other, in a class by itself. The Bible is actually a "*Library of 66 Books*" and 1,189 Chapters. The English Bible is comprised of two Testaments [or Covenants, the OT & NT], with a total of 66 different books, 39 in the OT and 27 in the NT.

40 different human authors contributed to the Bible, *inspired of God*, to write over a period of about 1500 years. The Bible was written from three different continents, Asia, Africa, and Europe and written in different places and at different times - in the wilderness, in a dungeon, tents, hillsides, palaces, prison and an island. The Bible was written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. The authors were kings, fishermen, priests, government

officials, farmers, shepherds, and even a doctor.

The subject matter includes hundreds of controversial topics – and yet the biblical authors spoke with harmony and continuity with one theme from Genesis to Revelation.

The Bible has been read by more people and published in more languages than any other book. There have been more copies produced of its entirety and more portions and selections than any other book in history. The Bible has withstood the attacks of its enemies and the criticism of many people for many generations. No other book has been so analyzed, dissected, scrutinized or vilified. No other document of antiquity, or book, or writings has the *manuscript reliability* of the Bible – or can even begin to approach its reliability and trustworthiness.

From all of this diversity - comes an incredible, supernatural unity, with a common theme woven throughout. "There is one unfolding story throughout the Bible: "God's Redemption of mankind through Jesus Christ." Jesus is the central character in the Bible – the whole Book is really about Him. Redemption is hinted at in the beginning – (Genesis 3:15) -and developed as the main theme, coming to a climax with the Advent (coming) of Christ. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of both religion and spirituality.

Jesus is the One to whom we are accountable – which all religions point to. Jesus is the One to whom we need to connect – which true spirituality points to. Jesus is more than a historical figure – in fact, He is more than a man, or some Prophet. He is God in the flesh, and His coming to earth as a human baby (the Incarnation) was the most important event in the history of the world. God Himself became a man (took upon Himself the flesh of man) in order to give us a clear, understandable picture of who He is. He is the Redeemer of the world – the One true Messiah.

People often ask: *What is God like?* He is like Jesus; Jesus is God in human form (John 1:14; 14:9).

Since I have given you the "Storyline of the Bible" – *the Redemption of Mankind through Jesus Christ*" – let me define, "What is Christian Redemption?" What does it mean to be redeemed by the blood of our Lord Jesus? The word "Redeem" means to *purchase back* or to *buy back* – or to regain possession again by payment of a stipulated price. It means to *ransom* or to *liberate* or *rescue* from captivity or bondage – or from any liability or obligation.

(Psalm 25:22) says, "Redeem Israel, O God, from all their troubles." Theologically speaking: *Redeem* mean to *rescue and deliver from the bondage of sin and the penalties of God's violated law or standards*. The Apostle Paul says in (Gal. 3:13) – "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

In other words, Christian Redemption means: that Jesus Christ paid the penalty of our sins. He made *amends* for us – He serves as an equivalent or offset for our sins – He *atoned* for our sins - or compensated for the forgiveness of mankind's sins. In Christian Theology: *atonement* is the reconciliation of God and humankind through Jesus Christ, who *covered our sins* through His blood or death on the Cross. The Bible tells us that everyone in the world is in need of "Redemption." Because our natural condition or nature is characterized by sin, guilt and disobedience. (Romans 3:23) says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory [the standards] of God." However, Christ's redemption has freed us from that sin and guilt.

(Romans 3:24) adds these words – "We are justified [declared righteous] freely by His grace – through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." His death on the Cross was in exchange for our life. The Bible is very clear on this matter – "that redemption is only possible through His blood – that is by His death." (Col. 1:14).

(Ephesians 2:8-9) tells us: "For it is by *grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*"

That my friends is "The Storyline of what the Bible is all about!" The Bible, *the Word and Truth of God*, can be trusted; it is reliable, accurate, and sufficient – the total answer to man's total need. It is in the Holy Scriptures that we find the answers to life's ultimate questions: Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? What is the purpose of my existence?

(2 Tim. 3:16-17 and 2 Peter 1:20-21 (NIV) tell us - "All Scripture is *inspired of God (breathe out by God) and is useful for many things*" and "no scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. The thought and the revelation are divine in origin and the expression of the communication is human – Holy men of God spoke as they were *carried along [superintended] by the Holy Spirit of God.*"

I. Old Testament (1445—400 B. C.) – Starts with the Creation of the universe and closes about 400 years before the First Coming (Advent) of Jesus Christ. There are 39 separate Books in the Old Testament:

- Law > 5 Books – (Genesis – Deuteronomy)
- History > 12 Books – (Joshua – Esther)
- Wisdom > 5 Books – (JOB – Solomon)
- Major Prophets > 5 Books – (Isaiah – Daniel)
- Minor Prophets > 12 Books – (Hosea – Malachi)

The 39 Books of the O.T. focused on the history of Israel and the promise of the coming Savior We can divide the whole Old Testament this way: Genesis 1-11 > God creates the human race. Genesis 12 to Malachi 4 > God creates the Hebrew race.

In the Old Testament, we learn that God prepared His chosen people, the Hebrew

race, the nation of Israel to be the instrument to bring salvation to the world. And God gave Israel two important promises:

- [1] God would send His Messiah, the Anointed One as the Redeemer – he would be a King from the line of David.
- [2] God would establish a new covenant or agreement to restore His relationship with His people.

The time between the last writings of the Old Testament and the appearance of Christ is known as the "Intertestamental" (or "between the testaments") period. It lasted *from the prophet Malachi's time (around 400 BC) to the preaching of John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus (about AD 25).*

Because there was no prophetic word from God [spoken or written] during the period from *Malachi to John*, this period of time is known as the "400 silent years." *Though God was silent during these years – God was still at work in the world and history continued on.* The events of the *Intertestamental Period* set the stage for Jesus Christ and had a profound impact on the Jewish people.

The "400 years of silence" of the *Intertestamental Period* were broken by the greatest story ever told—the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Between the two Testaments - From the moment that Adam and Eve sinned, God has been working out His Plan of Redemption. *Even through Israel's failures, God's plan remained intact. The New Testament Era begins*, and it tells the story of how hope came, not only for the Jews but for the entire world. Christ's fulfillment of prophecy was anticipated and recognized by many who sought Him out. The stories in the N.T. of the Roman centurion, the wise men, and the Pharisee Nicodemus – all show how Jesus was recognized as the Messiah by those from many different cultures.

II. New Testament (AD 45 – AD 95)
A total of 27 Books are found in The New Testament - written from approximately A.D. 45

[Book of James] to approximately A.D. 95 [Book of Revelation]. The New Testament was written in “Koine Greek” (common Greek, the everyday form of the Greek language in the first century A.D.)

- Gospels > 4 Books - (Matthew through John)
- History > 1 Book - (the Book of Acts),
- Pauline Epistles > 13 Books (Romans through Philemon)
- General Epistles > 8 Books (Hebrews through Jude)
- Prophecy > 1 Book - (Revelation)

That is the Bible in a nutshell. Let me summarize it for you.

- God creates man. (Genesis 1 & 2)
- Man rebels. (Genesis 3)
- God initiates redemption. (Genesis 12 – Malachi)
- God accomplishes redemption. (New Testament)
- God gives birth to the church. (Acts)
- God completes redemption. (Revelation)

If we imagine the Bible as a great sanctuary and every book in the Bible as a seat in the sanctuary, then we can say wherever you go in the Bible, you’ve got a great view because you can see Jesus everywhere – in every book – all 66 of them.

And in the Book of Revelation (the last Book in the Bible) it is summed up with these words – “*He’s the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.*” Jesus is the Theme of the Bible. The whole book is about Him. If you know the Bible, but you don’t know Jesus, you’ve missed the whole point.

*Of His kingdom there will be no end. He shall reign forever and ever and ever.
King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
Hallelujah! Amen.*

“Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this Book.” (Revelation 22:7)

(Revelation 22:19-21(NIV) adds. “*And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*”

May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.

Pastor Vitel’s message this week not only describes and defines the Bible but it should serve as a challenge to us. He quotes an evangelist and author who is leading the “Year of the Bible” initiative. Regarding what we are currently facing today, in 2020, that “*Only God knew how important this year was going to be,*” and, “*This could be the greatest opportunity of our lifetime to see people reengage with the Word of God (The Bible) and come to Jesus.*”

These are certainly unique times we’re living in. As we’re all sheltering at home, let’s take this opportunity to spend extra time with our Bibles. We should take inventory of our relationship with God and his Word. It should be our desire to glean encouragement and gain the tools necessary to share the gospel with those we come in contact.

Reading the Bible is our most immediate exposure to God. We all know the transformative power of sitting under preaching, but it’s God’s Word where the power lies. As we have had to change our routines these past weeks, let us develop a new routine where we pick up our bibles, or our devices, and study God’s Word.

Borrowing from *The Finish Line*, Al Nuzikowski wrote, “If you are going to witness to others, you need to know the truth. How will you know the truth unless you spend time in His book? Read, ponder and apply it to your life.”

“And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, ‘Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.’” Acts 15:7

We need study in order to understand God’s Word. I think sometimes we, as I heard it described, try to “overstand” God’s Word. What that means is that we go into the Bible to find solutions to our problems with God, our friends, family, and ourselves. We go through the Bible collecting data, attacking it and in doing so, we miss the true intent of the scriptures and we fail to understand its purpose and goal.

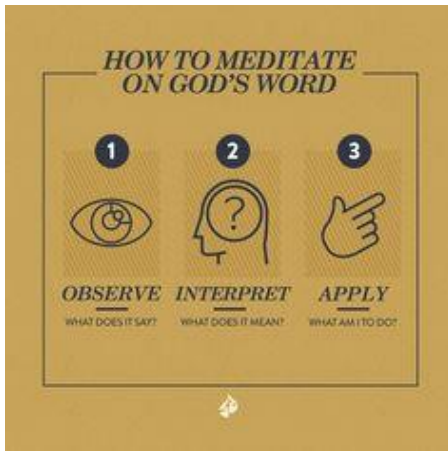
The key to understanding is the Holy Spirit. Borrowing from Al again, “The Holy Spirit was called the ‘helper’”. We need a “helper”. How do we get this help? If we are willing to yield ourselves to Him, we may freely draw on the resources of God’s Spirit. He is always there to attend to our needs. Since trusting Jesus as our Savior we have never been alone or helpless, even if that was how we felt. He is always present and actively working in our lives.

Here are two ways which the Holy Spirit can help us understand the Bible.

1. He Teaches Us. *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.* (John 14:26). Because He is God, the Spirit is a teacher who surpasses all others. He guides us as we read God’s Word and helps us interpret it accurately. As we faithfully read it, asking the Spirit to teach us, He will help us understand it.

2. He Reveals Truth to Us. *Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.* (1 Cor. 2:12). What is promised is divine knowledge, which reaches far beyond ourselves and this universe, and it is found in God's Word. We may not understand immediately what a passage means or how to apply it, but if we'll keep seeking and searching God's Word, the Spirit will give us understanding. However, if we give up reading the Word, we'll lack the wisdom that comes only from God.

I'll leave you with the following acronym, **B**asic **I**nstructions **B**efore **L**eaving **E**arth.





PRAYER LIST

✓ Continuing Prayers for loss:

All the families that have lost loved ones this past year. Remember those who have recently lost loved ones due to COVID 19. The family of Mary Grace Reyes.

✓ Continuing Prayers for physical needs:

Maria Hatfield, Erwin and Elizabeth Lickman, Gloria-Lynn Fernandez, Betty Matson, Ronaldo Claveria, Anne Benliro's co-worker's husband—Oscar with Covid-19.

✓ Continuing Prayers for our Ministry Needs:

The Pastoral Search Committee, Pulpit Supply, Our Deacons, Financial support of the church during the Virus

✓ Continuing Prayers for our Sister Ministries:

BIEM Ministries, Orchard Church, Pastors Davis, Billow, Eddy Bartolome, Pastor and Sue Vitel

✓ Continuing Prayers for Spiritual Needs:

Leonard Hatfield, Carol Pelfrey's family, Daniel Ruehlman

✓ Continuing Prayers for:

The spread of the Gospel, Our Government, Our Nation, Our Community, Our Neighbors, Our Families, Erwin & Elizabeth Lickman living together at Bella Terra Nursing Home

Mylin Lardizabal - My husband, Errol, and I are both nurses and Errol did get assigned to work in ICU to take care of Covid patients, he will have to work on the unit for at least a month. We were told that we will be pulled to other areas as needed. Please pray for us that we will stay healthy to take care of others. Our biggest concern is not getting our girls and our friends sick and that includes our church family.

Liza Mitchell in her role as a health care worker at Vi Independent and Assisted Living Facility she has responsibility over those with Covid 19 .

Pray for our members that have lost employment and for those who still have jobs and need to interact with others on a daily basis. Pray for those still working that God will protect.

Lift up all our health professionals and their families who are on the front line of this pandemic.

Praise to answered prayer - Dewain Karnes has been able to secure full time employment. Brian Mitchell has been cleared for unrestricted work following his surgery several months ago.

If you have prayer requests or updates on your family we encourage to submit them to the Newsletter email address at the end of this newsletter.

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