



A CHRIST-CENTERED BIBLE MINISTRY

New Heart Community Church

of Colorado Springs, Colorado

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. Ezekiel 36:26 NIV

Bible Basics

New Heart Community Church (NHCC) is affiliated with the Berean Fellowship of churches. The Berean Fellowship took its name from the Bible, specifically from the book of Acts, whose author commended the Bereans (people who lived in a town called Berea) for being so committed to the Bible (see Acts 17:11). The Bereans of old believed God had spoken to mankind in *clear, understandable* words based on unchanging principles—all found in the Bible. We still believe that.

Bereans believe the Bible is God's Holy Word, *inspired, infallible and inerrant*, and that it is the written revelation of God's unchanging principles—and of His holy character.

Because we believe the Bible plainly and accurately portrays God's character, as well as His principles for human life and behavior, we also believe that *all* Christians need to be devoted to reading and understanding the Bible.

Ephesians 4:11-13 says,

It was he [God] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

For these reasons, we have developed the following summary of "Bible Basics," to help NHCC members and friends build a solid Biblical foundation for their lives as Christians.



"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."

- Jesus, praying to the Father, recorded in John 17:17

66

The number of books in the Bible (Old and New Testaments combined)

39

The number of books in the Old Testament

- Law
- History
- Poetry
- “Major” prophets
- “Minor” prophets

27

The number of books in the New Testament

- Biography
- History
- Epistles (letters)
- Revelation

Who wrote the Bible?

2 Peter 1:21 says, “For prophecy [Peter was referring to the Torah; what we call the Old Testament] never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Spirit.” So the answer is that *men wrote the Bible as the Holy Spirit “moved” them to do so.*

Actually about 40 human authors wrote the books that became the Bible—and they wrote it over a span of some 1,500 years! Imagine 40 different authors over some 40 generations all contributing to the same book—and that book having a *coherent theme*. These 40 very different authors achieved their remarkable unity and coherence because they had one general editor: *the Holy Spirit*.

Why do I need to know the Bible?

2 Timothy 3:16 says, “*All Scripture* is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” In other words, the Bible teaches Jesus’ followers how to live.

Note: It is not our intention that the summaries of each Bible book below replace your reading of the Bible itself; instead, we hope the summaries will stimulate believers to read the Bible.

The Books of the Bible

(Note: The books are not arranged in exact chronological order)

- **Genesis** is the book of “beginnings.” It explains God’s creation of “the heavens and the earth”—and of all that is within them. Genesis goes on to explain that early humans lived very long lives, and implies that, because of the long lifespans, the human population increased rapidly—matched by humans’ capacity for and indulgence in sinning. God used a worldwide flood to wipe out all humans except Noah and his family. The next theme—the one that carries through the remainder of Genesis—is about God choosing Abraham and developing the family line through whom Messiah (Savior) would come.
- **Exodus** centers on Abraham’s descendents through his chosen son Isaac and Isaac’s son Jacob (*Israel*). Exodus reveals God’s **covenant** with His chosen nation (including Israel’s escape from Egypt).
- **Leviticus** provides the intricate details of God’s special *covenant* with the nation of Israel.
- **Numbers**, which got its name from a census taken of the Israelite nation, reveals God’s justice in dealing through the covenant with His often rebellious people. And it reveals His mercy and honor in upholding the covenant *despite* the Israelites’ rebellion and complaining.
- **Deuteronomy** expands still further on the covenant (some refer to it as a “**suzerain treaty**”) between God and the nation of Israel. First it recalls Israel’s wilderness wanderings and land divisions; then it confirms (ratifies) the covenant/treaty; and finally it records the death of Moses, the Lawgiver.
- **Joshua** was God’s choice to take over Moses’ place in leading Israel. Despite the Israelites’ promise to obey God as their sovereign Lord, the generation that escaped Egypt failed to obey, so they wandered in the desert for 40 years. After that generation, including Moses, had passed on, God used Joshua to lead a new generation into the Promised Land.
- **Judges**: Under Joshua the people claimed their Promised Land, but they failed to drive out *all* the idol-worshipping peoples who preceded them there. This book records the Israelites deeds and misdeeds under a series of Judge-leaders, from the death of Joshua until shortly before Saul was crowned Israel’s first king. The book ends on this somber note: “In those days Israel had no king [*and followed no law*]; everyone did as he saw fit.”
- **Ruth** is an interlude, a break from the ongoing historical account. This book tells of the Israelite widow Naomi and her two widowed Moabite daughters-in-law. With no men to provide for them, Naomi chose to return to Israel. One of Naomi’s daughters-in-law, Ruth, chose to accompany Naomi back to Israel. While Ruth was gleaning (gathering leftovers) from a wealthy farmer’s fields, the farmer noticed her. The farmer,

Covenant:

A formal and binding agreement entered into by two or more persons or parties.

Suzerain treaty

A treaty in which the vassal (subject) agrees to display his love and loyalty to the sovereign through obedience.

Boaz, married Ruth. In the New Testament we learn that Jesus' (Messiah's) lineage traces back to Adam through Ruth.

- **1 Samuel:** Samuel is the last of the judges. During his time the Israelites were regularly at war with the Philistines, and during one of these battles the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant. Samuel crowned Saul as Israel's first king, and then David as Saul's replacement.
- **2 Samuel:** Most of this book is dedicated to recording King David's reign—his triumphs and failures.
- **1 Kings** covers David's final days and Solomon's rise to king. As with the story of his father in 2 Samuel, 1 Kings follows Solomon's many great accomplishments—and his tragic failures, which led to the division of the kingdom (Israel in the north and Judah in the south). The remainder of the book covers the reigns of many kings in both kingdoms, finishing with the reign of Ahaziah in Israel.
- **2 Kings** covers the reigns of many more kings in both kingdoms (a few good kings in Judah, and all bad kings in Israel). The book also records Assyria's defeat of Israel. The prophet Elisha is a major figure in 2 Kings.
- **1 Chronicles** covers much of the same material found in 1 Kings—particularly focusing on King David and his genealogy and the genealogies of Israel's 12 tribes.
- **2 Chronicles** covers much of the same history found in the latter part of 1 Kings and much of 2 Kings, but from a different perspective. Near the end of the book King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians sack Jerusalem and take the survivors as captives to Babylon.
- **Ezra:** Jeremiah had prophesied that the Jews would be taken captive to Babylon, but he also had prophesied they would return to Jerusalem. As one of the Jewish leaders, Ezra recorded the events of the return to Jerusalem.
- **Nehemiah:** Although many Jews returned to Jerusalem, they were surrounded by enemies. Nehemiah, another leader, recorded, among other things, the Jews' work at rebuilding a defensive wall around the city.
- **Esther:** Not all the Jews returned to Jerusalem; some were still in Babylon when Artaxerxes and the Persians defeated the Babylonians, and many of them ended up in Persia. Esther, a beautiful and faithful Jewish woman, became the Persian king's wife, and, because of her influential position, she was able to save her people from annihilation at the hands of the evil Haman.
- **Job:** Many scholars think Job was one of the first books of the Bible written. Job was a wealthy man who throughout his life had lived as honestly and honorably as he knew how. But in a very brief period his whole life crashed down around him: He lost all his children and nearly all of his servants and possessions. His wife was no comfort, and his friends who came to console him did little more than repeatedly advise him to repent of his sins. At the end of the book God enters and sets the record straight.
- **Psalms:** A collection of Hebrew poetry from many authors, but mostly from King David.
- **Proverbs:** A collection of Hebrew wisdom writings; mostly from King Solomon.
- **Ecclesiastes:** More "wisdom" writings from Solomon.
- **Song of Songs:** Solomon's sensuous writings about and to the one woman he truly loved.

- **Isaiah:** The Assyrians already had captured the 10 northern tribes of Israel; now Isaiah warns the two remaining tribes of Judah to turn back to God, lest they fall to the Babylonians. Isaiah’s writings are loaded with prophecies about the coming Messiah.
- **Jeremiah:** Known as “The Weeping Prophet,” Jeremiah, like Isaiah before him, warned the people of Judah to repent to avert God’s judgment through Babylon. But also, as a realist, Jeremiah advised the people that, when the Babylonians would haul them into captivity, they should submit and learn to live in Babylon.
- **Lamentations:** Jeremiah’s five poems lamenting (mourning) the destruction of Jerusalem in general and the temple specifically.
- **Ezekiel,** like Isaiah and Jeremiah, warned the Jews to repent—God was about to send the Babylonians as his instrument of judgment. Then, when the Jews were hauled off to Babylon, Ezekiel went along and continued to call for them to turn back to God. Much of the latter part of his book refers to Israel in the [Millennial Kingdom](#).
- **Daniel:** God always has a “remnant” of those who faithfully follow Him. Daniel was one of the brightest and bravest examples of this truth. He served God wholeheartedly during the Babylonian captivity.
- **Hosea:** About a decade before Isaiah prophesied to the southern tribes (Judah), Hosea was warning the northern tribes (Israel) to repent. God had Hosea marry Gomer, an unfaithful woman, as an illustration of Israel’s unfaithfulness to her God.
- **Joel:** About a century before Isaiah’s time, Joel had warned of “The Day of the Lord,” a dual prophecy about desolate times coming for Israel/Judah in the near future, and woeful days coming for the whole world in the distant future.
- **Amos,** a shepherd and a contemporary of Hosea, warned the Israelites and all the surrounding nations about God’s coming judgments.
- **Obadiah** was a contemporary of Joel, but Obadiah directed his prophecies toward the Edomites (descendants of Esau, Jacob’s brother).
- **Jonah** is a unique book—about a unique prophet. God sent most of His prophets to warn Israel and/or Judah to repent. He sent Jonah to warn the Assyrians (*Israel’s enemy*) to repent. Jonah resisted, but God prevailed in getting him to Nineveh (Assyria’s capital). And, for a time, the Assyrians genuinely repented.
- **Micah,** like most of the other prophets, warned of coming judgment for sin. Also, like most of the prophets he prophesied of a Savior (Messiah) who (those who read carefully can see) will come twice—once in humility, and once in power.
- **Nahum** brought to Nineveh (and Assyria) the message Jonah had wanted to bring a century before: “Because of your wickedness and brutality, God is going to destroy you—and it’s too late to repent!” Although the Assyrians had repented in response to Jonah’s preaching, it only took a couple generations for them to exceed their former wickedness.
- **Habakkuk,** like Jeremiah, who began preaching about 20 years before him, warned Judah that God would soon use the Babylonians to punish them. But Habakkuk struggled with this question: *Why would God use the Babylonians (who were even more wicked and sinful than Judah had become) as His instrument of judgment?*

Millennial Kingdom

A 1,000-year period of peace on earth, referred to by many of Israel and Judah’s prophets. Also see Revelation 20.

- **Zephaniah:** Like Jeremiah, who would follow him in a dozen years, Zephaniah prophesied of Judah’s fall to the Babylonians, but much of his book also focuses on the coming Millennial Kingdom.
- **Haggai** came along after the Babylonian captivity and encouraged the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.
- **Zechariah:** Like his contemporary, Haggai, Zechariah called for the Jews to return to Jerusalem. Many of his prophecies point to Messiah’s second coming.
- **Malachi** warned the people of God’s coming judgment and of a special messenger who would prepare the way for Messiah.

Old Testament (“Messiah is coming”) **400 “silent years”** **New Testament** (“Messiah pays for sins and sends Holy Spirit”)



- ✚ **Matthew:** The “Old Testament” is full of promises of *Messiah* (the Savior), and because so much of the Old Testament (the Torah) was written specifically to the Jews, they expected *Messiah* to come specifically to rescue them. Matthew, one of Jesus’ disciples, wrote his gospel to convince the Jews that Jesus—the one most of them had rejected—was indeed the long-awaited *Messiah*.
- ✚ **Mark** focused on contrasting Jesus’ many miracles with His many servant acts. Mark reveals that, in His ministry on earth, Jesus was fully God and yet also a humble human servant.
- ✚ **Luke**, a physician and scholar,

used much of his gospel to connect Jesus to specific people and events of the time. Luke’s gospel refutes those who would try to dismiss Jesus as a mythical figure.

- ✚ **John** focused on the miracle of the Creator of the universe becoming a mortal in order to atone for human sin—and on Jesus’ promise of the coming Holy Spirit.
- ✚ **Acts:** Jesus had spent much of His ministry explaining about His death and His departure to Heaven—and about the arrival of the Holy Spirit to convict unbelievers of sin, and to guide, teach and comfort believers. The book of Acts, written by Luke, heralds the Holy Spirit’s arrival and His leading in developing the Church. The key human figure

to emerge in the book of Acts is Paul. Formerly known as Sh’aul, Paul was a Jewish leader who had fought vigorously against the new sect who followed “The Way” of Yeshua, the Messiah. But Acts also records Sha’ul’s dramatic conversion and ascension as chief spokesman for the Church.

† **Romans** is Paul’s “masterpiece”; it summarizes the entire Bible. The first few chapters of this letter to the church in Rome emphasize all humanity’s absolute sinfulness—and consequent condemnation. Then the book reveals the only escape from sin’s imprisonment: *faith in Jesus Christ’s payment for everyone’s sins—including mine*. In Romans, Paul also reminds Gentile believers that the Jewish nation is still at the center of God’s eternal plan.

† **1 Corinthians:** Paul’s first recorded letter to the church in Corinth was a reprimand for misbehavior, and an encouragement to rally together in their faith in the one true Messiah.

† **2 Corinthians:** Paul explains his many sufferings for Christ, and encourages the Corinthian believers that, although they, too, will suffer for their faith, they can take comfort in knowing that today’s tribulations bring tomorrow’s growth—and eternal rewards.

† **Galatians:** Paul asks the Galatian believers, “Oh, foolish Galatians! What magician has cast an evil spell on you?” Paul was flabbergasted by the Galatians’ fall back into legalism. He goes on to ask them, “After starting your Christian lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort?” For Christians, true life comes through the Holy Spirit—never by our own efforts.

† **Ephesians:** Perhaps more than any other of Paul’s letters, this one looks deep into God’s heart, and His eternal plan for humanity—Jew and Gentile.

† **Philippians** shows that true joy and unity comes not through self-promotion, but through humility—and Jesus is the ultimate example of humility.

† **Colossians:** Paul wrote to the Colossian church that “He [Jesus] existed before everything else began, and he holds all creation together.” This letter is loaded with practical advice—and with profound theology.

† **1 Thessalonians:** Jesus Christ, the Messiah, WILL return. But before He does, life on earth will become more and more evil. Then, suddenly, all His true followers will be taken away (the “rapture”), and then “disaster will fall upon [those who remain]. ... And there will be no escape.”

† **2 Thessalonians:** Jesus had told His disciples that in this world they will have tribulation (trials), but to be of good cheer because He has overcome the world. Paul echoes those sentiments to the believers in Thessalonica. Paul also tells them that during



the “Last Days,” a “Man of Lawlessness” (the Antichrist) will proclaim himself God and lead many astray.

✠ **1 Timothy:** Paul never married or had children, but Timothy was his “son in the faith.” As Paul writes his letters to Timothy, he knows he may not have a lot of time left, so he is preparing the next generation—Timothy specifically—to lead the Church. He warns Timothy about false teachings, and emphasizes the need for sound, solid church leaders.

✠ **2 Timothy** is recognized as Paul’s last letter. Paul “fought the good fight,” and now he encourages Timothy and others to carry on: *Teach the truth, and don’t be deceived.*

✠ **Titus:** As with Timothy, Paul had disciplined Titus to carry on as a next-generation Church leader. And, as a leader, Titus needed to select other qualified men to join him as leaders (elders).

✠ **Philemon:** Onesimus was a slave who had run away and stolen from his master, Philemon. In Rome, Onesimus met Paul, who introduced him to the Savior. This letter from Paul pleads with Philemon to accept Onesimus back into his household—as a brother in the faith. Paul even offers to pay for anything Onesimus stole.

✠ **Hebrews:** The author, perhaps Paul, argues for the “superiority” of the new covenant over the old covenant. Jesus (the Messiah) fulfilled the old covenant, and is superior in all ways to the old covenant elements.

✠ **1 Peter:** Peter teaches the Church about godly living—even in the midst of suffering.

✠ **2 Peter:** Peter warns the Church about false teachings.

✠ **1 John:** John writes to the Church about the elements of true fellowship—with God and one another.

✠ **2 John:** Follow the truth, love one another, and beware of false teachers.

✠ **3 John:** A short and personal letter about a few church leaders.

✠ **Jude:** More warnings about false teachings.

✠ **Revelation:** As punishment for refusing to renounce his faith in Jesus, John—the same one who wrote the gospel and the three letters listed directly above—was exiled to an island called Patmos. On that island John had a tremendous vision. Some Christians believe John’s vision is entirely allegorical, and many of them believe it refers largely to past events, such as the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The Berean fellowship believes that the most natural way to read Revelation is also the correct way to interpret it. This “face-value” interpretation leads us to believe that the book of the Revelation refers to future events; to a time of great worldwide upheaval; and to a time when Jesus will return as the conquering King and establish a literal 1,000-year Kingdom on earth.



Jesus told His disciples, “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26). If you want to understand the Bible, accept Jesus’ offer of salvation. Admit to being a sinner—one who is opposed to God—and ask for God’s gift of a new life. Included with that new life will be the gift of the Holy Spirit, who, if you ask Him, will help you understand the Bible.