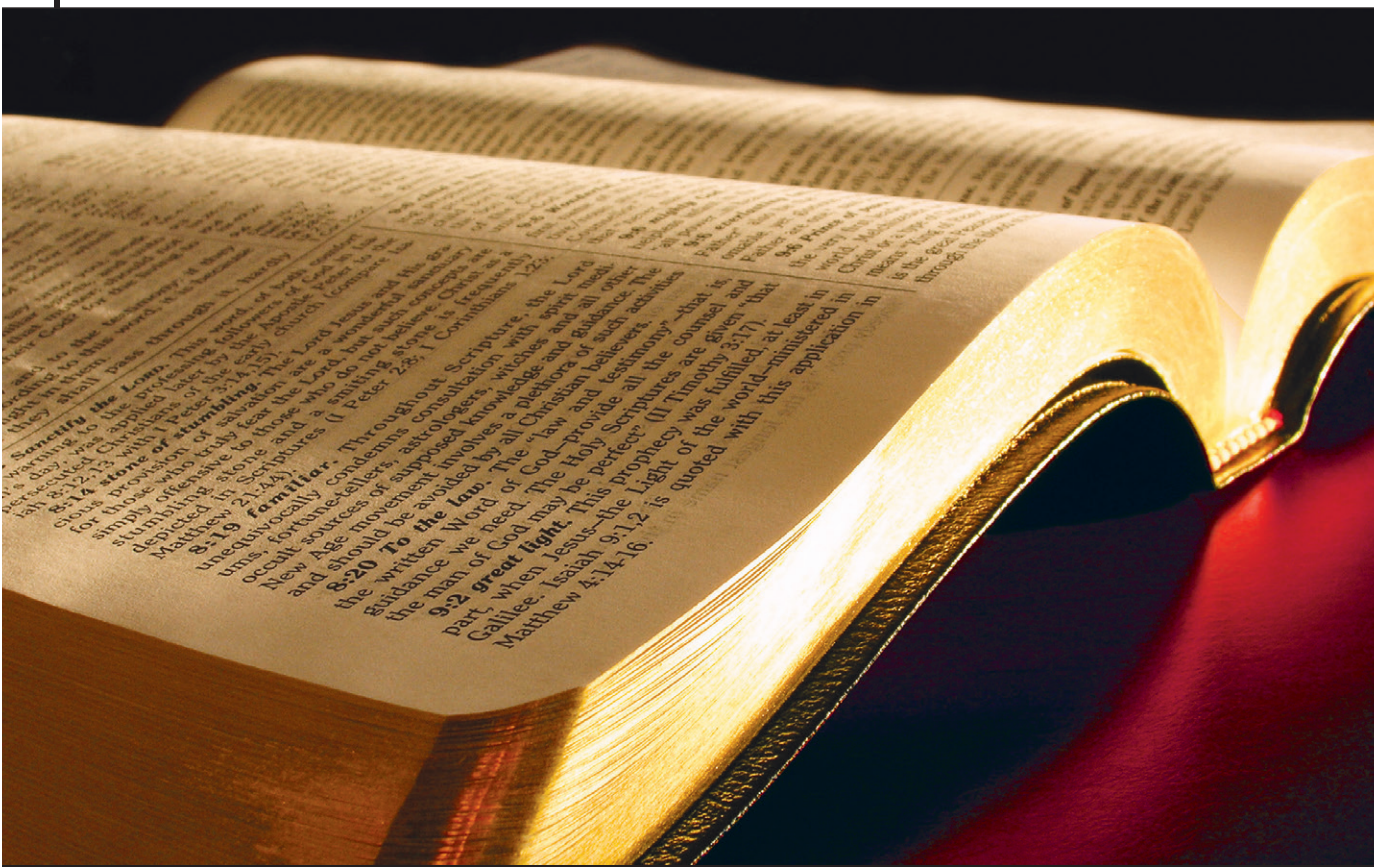


BIBLE OVERVIEW



Reproducible



This free e-Chart is taken from the book *Bible Overview* ISBN 9781596365998. Packed with short summaries, quick-reference charts and diagrams, full-color maps, and illustrations, Rose's *Bible Overview* is the perfect solution to cover over 2,000 years of Bible history, people, and events at a glance!

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INTRODUCTION

Reading the Bible is an exciting spiritual, emotional, and intellectual adventure. It is an invitation to walk alongside God's people in Scripture and meet an awe-inspiring God. God invites us to have an intimate relationship with him. Through the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures, we get to know a loving, compassionate, graceful, stern, holy, and just God. Knowing God is a life-long journey. It is not an easy journey—as Israel's journey through the wilderness, for example, shows, or Paul's ministry in the book of Acts. However, God has promised to be with us through the journey: "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest" (Ex. 33:14), and "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

Whether you travel on your own or with other fellow travelers, *Bible Overview* is a tool to help you in your journey through the Bible. If you are teaching the Bible, *Bible Overview* is a fully **reproducible** book that you can share with those traveling alongside you.

Traveling through the Bible is similar to visiting a foreign, exotic country. Many things are familiar, while many others seem too strange for us to understand them. However, the experience leaves us transformed. Reading the Bible is a transformative experience. Gradually, the Holy Spirit renews our inner beings so we mature and grow in grace before God and other people. Sometimes on this journey we will face opposition and setbacks. Don't be discouraged; remember and be "confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6).

How Bible Overview Will Help You

- *Bible Overview* provides you with the **background** of each biblical book, so you can become acquainted with the lands and the cultures in the Bible. It's the who, what, where, and when of each book.
- We also explore the **purpose** of the biblical book. This section is similar to a compass that helps you navigate a trek through the mountains. It does not show the final destination, but it helps you get there.
- The **outline** of each book gives you a way to travel through the book, so you can enjoy the richness and beauty of the Scriptures.
- Knowing the major **themes** in each biblical book will also help you grasp the main message of each book. Keeping in mind the main message of the book will help you stay on the path as you travel.
- Recognizing the **key people** in the books of the Bible—particularly in the narrative books—helps us follow the story line. When we can follow the plot of the story, we begin to discern the way God interacts with people and nations. As you read the Bible, focus on the main characters. Humbly learn from their shortcomings, and gratefully recognize the wonderful things that God did in and through them.
- **Key verses** are nuggets of truth in each book that sum up the message of the book, contain important prophecies and words of Jesus, and help us focus our attention squarely on who God is and what he has promised.
- The section **Being God's People** is a reminder that one of the main functions of the Bible is to provide an identity to God's people. It helps us know who we are in Christ: a new creation, God's holy nation, and a royal priesthood (2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Peter 2:9). It helps us know about God's intense love for his creation, his compassion, and his merciful plan of salvation.
- Finally, recognizing that **Jesus is the center** and star of God's revelation, Bible Overview shows the way Jesus is present in each book of the Bible. Like the northern star that has guided sailors for hundreds of years, the light of Jesus guides us so we can understand God's plan of salvation.

How We Got the Bible

To begin this journey, knowing a few important facts about the Bible will give us the proper starting point.

1. God inspired the whole Bible (2 Tim. 3:16–17; 2 Peter 1:20–21).
2. The Bible is made up of 66 different books that were written over 1,000 years, by more than 40 individuals. The Old Testament has 39 books, and the New Testament has 27 books. The Hebrew Bible has the same text as the English Bible's Old Testament. However, the Hebrew Bible has different divisions and arrangements of the books.
3. The Old Testament was written mainly in Hebrew, with some Aramaic. The New Testament was written in a dialect of ancient Greek that merchants and travelers used.
4. The books of the Bible were collected and arranged and recognized as inspired sacred authority by councils of rabbis and councils of church leaders based on careful guidelines.
5. Before the printing press was invented, the Bible was copied by hand. The Bible was copied very accurately, in many cases by special scribes who developed intricate methods of counting words and letters to ensure that no errors had been made.
6. The Bible was the first book ever printed on the printing press with moveable type (Gutenberg Press, 1455, Latin Bible).
7. There is much evidence that the Bible we have today is remarkably true to the original writings. Of the thousands of copies made by hand before the year 1500, more than 5,900 Greek manuscripts from the New Testament alone still exist today. The text of the Bible is better preserved than the writings of Plato or Aristotle.
8. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls confirmed the astonishing reliability of some of the copies of the Old Testament made over the years. Although some spelling variations exist, no variation affects basic Bible doctrines.
9. As the Bible was carried to other countries, it was translated into the common language of the people by scholars who wanted others to know God's Word. By AD 200, the Bible was translated into seven languages; by 500, 13 languages; by 900, 17 languages; by 1400, 28 languages; by 1800, 57 languages; by 1900, 537 languages; by 1980, 1,100 languages; by 2006, 2,426 languages have some portions of the Scripture. Today there are still 2,000 people groups with no Bible in their own language. (Source: *The World Christian Encyclopedia*; Wycliffe, International.)

Reasons to Study the Bible

To know God. God created the heaven and the earth and everyone in it (Gen. 1–3). To know God is to have eternal life (John 17:3).

To enjoy and love God. Meditate on God’s character, principles, and promises. Rejoice in his love, care, and forgiveness (Ps. 119:12–18, 160–162; 1 Tim. 6:17).

To know God’s Word. The Scriptures were inspired by God. They teach us the truth and show us what is wrong in our lives. They straighten us out (2 Tim. 3:16).

To understand the Word. Jesus is called the Word because he is the ultimate communication from God. He existed from the beginning with God, he is God, and he created everything. He said that those who have seen him have seen the Father (John 1:1–3; 10:30; 12:44, 45; 14:7–9).

To learn direction in life. The Bible shows us what to do (Ps. 119:11).

To find comfort and hope. The Scriptures give us encouragement (Rom. 15:4).

To let God expose our innermost thoughts and desires. God’s Word helps us see ourselves as we really are and convicts us of sin so that we repent and change (Heb. 4:12–16).

To become pure and holy. Jesus prayed this for all believers that they would be set apart for God and his holy purposes (John 17:17–23).

To obey the Great Commandment. The more we know God, the more we can love him. The Great Commandment is to love God with all of our being and our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:29–31). And Jesus gave us a new commandment to love one another (John 13:34–35).

How to Study the Bible

Plan a study time. Decide on a quiet time and place to study God's Word and make it a daily habit, like eating. Some people get up early to spend time with God. Others study during the day or evening.

Pray. Ask God to help you understand his Word. Pray using your own words or something like this: "Lord, thank you for the Bible so that we will know who you are and what you want for our lives. Please help me understand it and do what you want me to do."

Read and re-read it. The Bible is the most important letter you can ever receive—a message from the God of the universe who made you, loves you, and wants to communicate with you. Open your "love letter" every day. Re-read each chapter and verse several times.

Know the author. Read Genesis to learn about God who created the world. All Scripture is inspired by God. God actually visited earth in the form of man—the man Christ Jesus. Jesus said, "I and my Father are one." Read the Gospel of John to learn about God's plan for you.

Take notes. Write notes about what you read. Use a specific notebook or "spiritual journal" especially for Bible study. You might want to underline key verses or write notes in the margin of your Bible.

Make the Bible your authority. Accept and believe that what the Bible says is true. You may not understand everything in the Bible, but obey and apply what you do understand.

Find a group. "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Prov. 27:17). God gave his Word to his people. When you share what you are learning with other fellow believers, God will do amazing things. It will also help you to be accountable to someone.

Basic Principles of Bible Study

Look for God's over-all plan. The Old Testament reveals God's loving plan of salvation, from creation to prophecies of the future Messiah (the Savior). The New Testament reveals God's salvation of sinful humanity by the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and reveals the everlasting kingdom of God.

Find the background of the books. Find out who wrote the books, the reason for writing, and the themes of the books. Ask "Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How?" Usually this information is in the first chapter or in the introduction of the book.

Read verses in context. Read the surrounding chapters and the verses before and after the verse you are studying. Get the whole picture. Don't study verses out of context. Look at the outline of the book.

Get the whole message of God's Word. Take the whole Bible as God's Word. Don't just concentrate on one verse or one idea. See if the teaching is explained more fully in other parts of the Bible. If you are using a study Bible, look at the small cross references in your Bible to help you find other verses on the same subject.

Discover the intended meaning. As you read the Bible, look for the author's intended meaning. What did the author want to say? What did it mean in that culture? What does it mean now? What are the main ideas? If you have questions, write them down, pray for insight, and discuss your ideas with others.

Learn the history and geography. Use a time line to learn about the history of the Bible. Use maps to learn about the geography of where the events took place.

Pay attention to figurative language. Figures of speech are word pictures that help us understand a truth. "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path" (Ps. 119:105) is a metaphor that helps us picture the Bible enlightening our minds and actions and giving us direction. "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God" (Ps. 42:1) is a simile that compares ideas with the words "like" or "as." Similes occur over 175 times in the Psalms. Jesus used personification when he said if the people did not declare the mighty works they had seen God do, the stones would cry out in praise (Luke 19:40). Hyperbole (exaggeration) is found in Matthew 5:29–30 when Jesus speaks of eyes and hands causing one to stumble.

Know the forms of literature. The Bible contains various forms of literature: history, narrative, poetry and wisdom, prophecy, parables and letters. Recognizing each form will help you interpret the meaning. For example, parables explain a spiritual truth by means of a story or analogy. The parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15 does not refer to a specific historical person, but teaches that God is a loving father who joyfully welcomes back prodigal or rebellious children who later repent and return to him.

DEUTERONOMY

ALREADY, BUT NOT YET



Fragment of the oldest mosaic floor map of the Jordan River and Dead Sea

Purpose

Deuteronomy is a fascinating book that describes God's people in a time in between. After forty years of wandering in the wilderness, they arrived at the Promised Land but hadn't entered yet. Deuteronomy mostly consists of the speeches Moses gave to the second generation on the plains of Moab before they entered the Promised Land. The first generation, those who had left Egypt and witnessed God's mighty acts of salvation, had died—all except Joshua, Caleb, and Moses. The second generation had not witnessed first hand God's powerful acts against Egypt, nor his awesome glory revealed on Mount Sinai. Moses took a long pause to instruct this new generation about what makes them God's people and to challenge them to find their identity and purpose in the covenant with God. As the people waited at the edge of the Promised Land, God's promises were already there to the reaching hand, but they had not yet been fulfilled.

Deuteronomy

The name derives from the Greek name of the book, *deuteronomion*, meaning "second law." However, the book is not really a second law, but rather a repetition of the Torah. Moses repeated God's instructions for the second generation of God's people. The Hebrew name of the book is *'eleh haddebarim*, "these are the words (or discourses)," which are the first two words of the book.

Outline

1. A Look Backward (1–3)
 - a. Summary of the wilderness wanderings
2. The Great Discourse (4–11)
 - a. Fear, Love, and Obey God
 - b. The Ten Commandments
3. Covenant Stipulations (12–26)
 - a. Worship one true God in one place
 - b. Various laws for Israel
4. Covenant Ceremony (27–30)
 - a. Blessings and curses of the covenant
5. A Look Forward (31–34)
 - a. Joshua confirmed as Moses' successor
 - b. The song and blessings of Moses
 - c. Moses' death on Mount Nebo

Background

Author: Although the book of Deuteronomy does not name its author, Jewish and Christian tradition has accepted the author of Deuteronomy (and the other four books of the Pentateuch) to be Moses.

Shema

The famous quote from Deuteronomy known as *shema*—from the Hebrew word that means “hear!”—is the basis for Israel’s monotheistic (“one God”) faith. “Hear, O Israel: The LORD, our God, the LORD is one” (Deut. 6:4). Deuteronomy instructs the Israelites to bind God’s commandment to their hands and foreheads, as well as write them on the doorposts of their homes. Many Jews today tie small boxes with Scripture quotations (usually the *shema*) to their foreheads and hands, and also attach them to their doorpost.

Ancient Covenants

Many scholars consider that Deuteronomy was written according to the structure of ancient covenant documents. Thus Deuteronomy’s outline would be as follows:

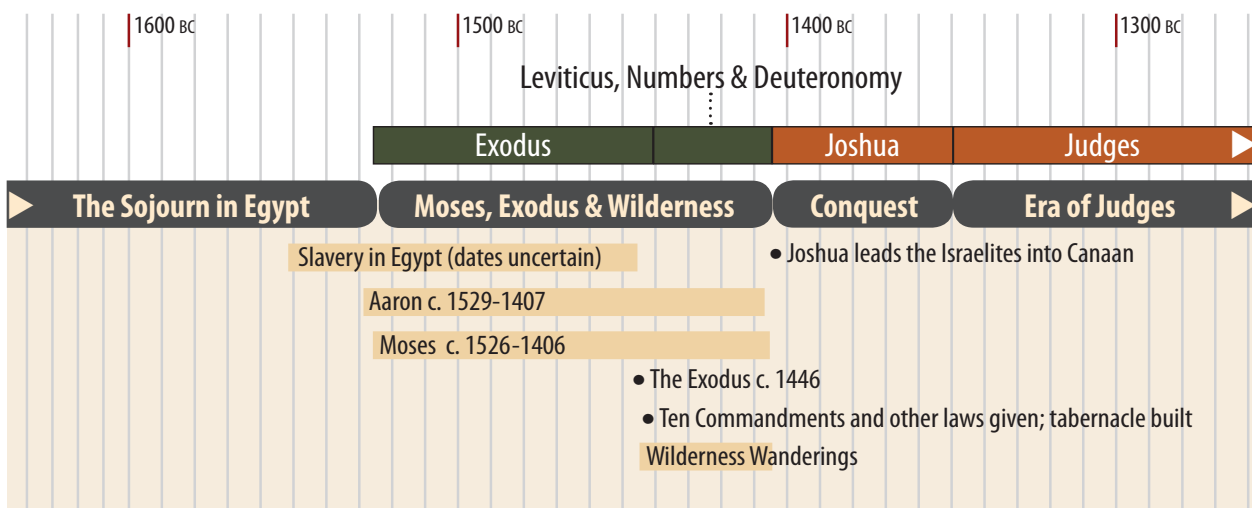
1. Preamble (1:1–5)
2. Historical Prologue (1:6–4:43)
3. Stipulations of the Covenant (4:44–26:19)
4. Ratification: Curses and Blessings (27–30)
5. Leadership Succession under the Covenant (31–34)

Date: Moses would have written Deuteronomy (and the rest of the Pentateuch) between 1446 BC (a possible date of the exodus) and 1406 BC (the date of Moses’ death).

Setting: The entire book of Deuteronomy takes place while Israel is encamped at the border of the Promised Land, east of the Jordan River, in the plains of Moab. Moab became one of Israel’s most adamant enemies. As Israel approached the land, Moab formed an alliance with several Medianite kingdoms to stop the advance of the wandering tribes—the Moabite King Barak sent the prophet Balaam to curse Israel, with surprising results (see Num. 22:2–24:25). To the east of the Jordan River, the majestic Mount Nebo was a silent witness of Israel’s preparations to enter the land. On Mount Nebo, Moses saw the land for the last time.

Old Testament Covenants

Covenant	Reference	Type	Description
Noah	Gen. 9:8–17	Unconditional	God promised not to destroy again his creation.
Abraham	Gen. 15:9–21	Unconditional	God promised to give Abraham’s descendants the land. The covenant was sealed with an animal sacrifice.
Abraham	Gen. 17	Conditional	God confirmed his covenant with Abraham and made a commitment to Abraham. He specified Abraham’s commitment and reaffirmed his promise of land and Abraham agreed to keep the sign of the covenant: circumcision.
Covenant at Sinai	Ex. 19–24	Conditional	God promised to make Israel his people and also expressed what he expected of Israel.
Phinehas	Num. 25:10–31	Unconditional	God granted Phinehas, a priest, a descendant of Aaron and his descendants a “covenant of lasting priesthood” (25:13).
David	2 Sam. 7:5–16	Unconditional	God promised to preserve David’s descendants on the throne of Israel.
The New Covenant	Jer. 31:31–34	Unconditional	God declared that he “will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah” (31:31). It establishes a new relationship with his people by writing his law on their hearts.



Key Verses

But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul.—Deut. 4:29

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.—Deut.18:15

The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.—Deut. 30:6

Themes

Torah. In the retelling of God’s instructions, Deuteronomy offers anew his law—*Torah* more properly means “instruction” —for each generation of believers.

Covenant. The entire book can be read as a covenant renewal between the second generation and God. The blessings and curses of the covenant play a prominent role in Israel’s history.

The Land. God’s promises to Abraham were concretely represented by the land. The land was a visual reminder of God’s faithfulness to his promises.

Being God’s People

Then: The book of Deuteronomy is a reminder to God’s people that God is faithful to his covenant. He’s the holy God, full of mercy and grace, who led his people to the Promised Land. The next generation is challenged to remember and learn from the mistakes of the previous generation (1 Cor. 10:1–13). In Deuteronomy, the second generation must not forget the source of their blessings, take the land for granted, become indistinguishable from the people living in the land, make idols for themselves, rely on their economic or political power to survive, or abandon the covenant.

Now: God’s people in Deuteronomy are in the already-but-not-yet state that still describes Christians today. In a symbolic sense, all believers are the second generation. We all stand at the borders of the Promised Land—the New Jerusalem—already enjoying some of God’s wonderful promises, but knowing that the fullness of his promise is yet to come. As the Israelites required instruction to live in the land God had promised them, we are learning also to live in God’s presence. In many ways, life today is the training ground for life in a new heavens and new earth in the presence of God.

Jesus in Deuteronomy

The glory to which we look forward will be revealed when Jesus returns. In the meantime, we continue to train and “press toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14).

Quotable Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy is the third most quoted Old Testament book in the New Testament—only after Psalms and Isaiah. Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy during his confrontation with Satan in the desert (Matt. 4:1–11). Some scholars suggest that Jesus is doing what Israel was incapable of: fulfilling all obedience. In this view, Jesus embodies the new Israel.

empire as never before to the north, east, and south (possibly as far as Kenya today), then Amenhotep II consolidated the empire through massive building projects in Egypt. Some Bible scholars date the exodus much later, around 1290 BC (the “low” date), putting it during the reign of Pharaoh Ramesses II, one of the most powerful pharaohs of Egypt’s New Kingdom period.

Miriam – She was Moses’ and Aaron’s sister and also a prophetess. She interceded on behalf of her infant brother Moses when Pharaoh’s daughter found him in the Nile River. She also led the Israelite women in a song of praise after crossing the Red Sea.

Key Verses

God said to Moses, *“I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”*—Ex. 3:14

“You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”
—Ex. 19:4–6

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.”—Ex. 20:2–3

Being God’s People

Then: In Exodus, God called his people to be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:6). But he did not leave them to do this on their own. Instead he was with them, equipping and instructing them how to achieve this. God’s presence dwelled in the tabernacle in the midst of the camp. The tabernacle was a visual reminder that God was among them. For Israel, being God’s people was more than just following rules. It was about learning to live as a holy nation with a holy God in their midst.

Now: Jesus promises his followers, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). Being followers of Jesus today means learning how to live with the presence of God within us.

Jesus in Exodus

Moses’ ministry as judge, priest, and prophet anticipated Jesus’ own ministry (Heb. 3:1–6). The Passover celebration and sacrifice (Ex. 12) help us understand Christ’s own sacrifice on the cross on our behalf. In the exodus, God liberated Israel from the bondage of Pharaoh with great acts of power. Through it, God gave birth to a new people (Deut. 32:18). Now, God has freed us from the bondage of sin and death with the greatest act of grace and power: Jesus’ death and resurrection. In Christ, God has recreated us as a new people (2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Pet. 2:10).



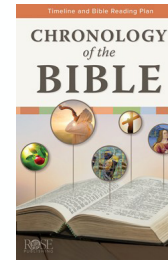
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Bible Overview Book

You know it's important to read God's Word. We read the Bible to get to know the Author himself. But with 66 books and around 800,000 words, the Bible is massive and complicated with history, names, and events. Read Rose's *Bible Overview* book to answer questions like, *Where do you start? What are the most important takeaways from each book? How does each book fit into God's overall plan?*

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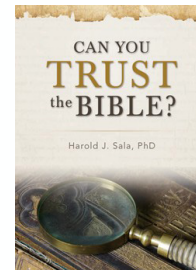


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