

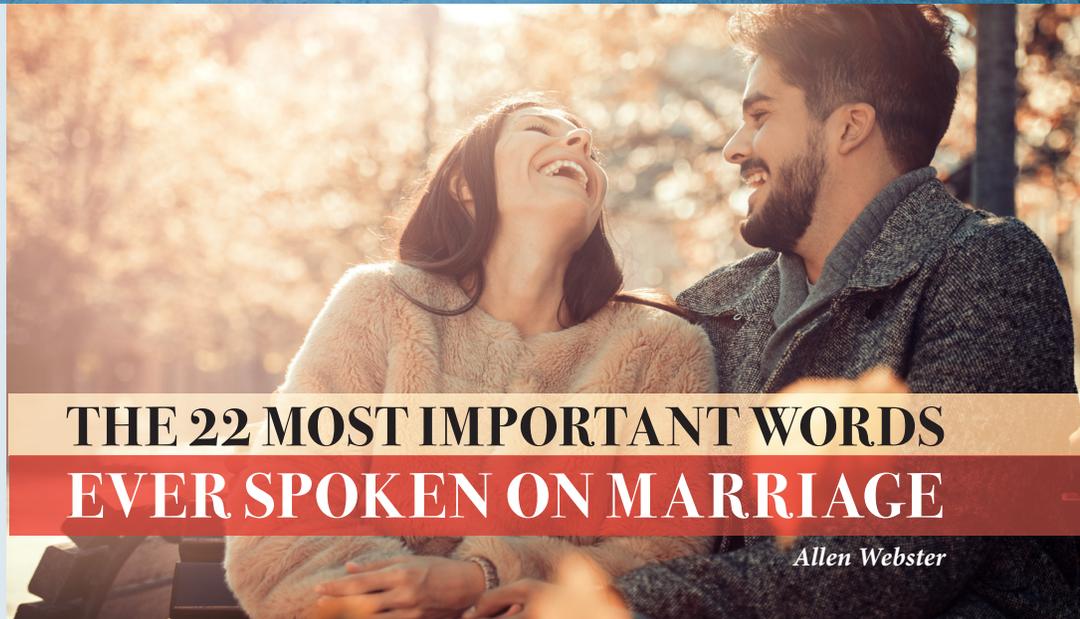


HOUSE to HOUSE
HEART to HEART

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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 22 NUMBER 3



THE 22 MOST IMPORTANT WORDS EVER SPOKEN ON MARRIAGE

Allen Webster

There are 171,476 words in the English language, including *romance*, *wedding*, *bliss*, and *nuptials*. The Bible has 773,746 words in it (κτν), including *love*, *husbands*, *wives*, and *joy*.

The average person speaks 15,942 words on an average day, many to a partner. A book on marriage averages 90,000 words. A sermon on marriage contains 5,000 words. A gospel tract on marriage has 2,000 words. A traditional wedding ceremony runs about 1,150 words.

Words are important (Proverbs 18:21; Matthew 12:36-37). Marriage is important (Hebrews 13:4; 1 Timothy 5:14). So words about marriage must be especially important. Which are the most important? The twenty-two spoken at the first wedding: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

This is the beginning of an institution that endures to this day—perhaps one you have participated in, or one day will. The one thing God pronounced “not

good” during creation was a single man (2:18). After naming thousands of pairs of animals—from Mr./Mrs. Aardvark to Mr./Mrs. Zebra—it dawned on Adam that he was the only lonely creature. “But for Adam there was not found an help meet for him” (2:20).

Then God performed the first surgery on an anesthetized Adam. Removing a rib, God sculpted Eve into a beautiful bride. Adam did not wake up and find Eve lying in a hospital bed beside him. Picture Adam instead waking and wondering about the new scar in his side. Counting his ribs, he hears God say, “Adam, you forgot to name one creature.” He looked up to see the Father bringing his bride down the aisle (2:22).

The sight of his wife prompted the first recorded words of the first man: “She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man” (2:23).

The twenty-two words spoken at the first wedding give three principles necessary for a satisfying and successful marriage relationship in every age.



“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh”

Genesis 2:24

LEAVE FATHER AND MOTHER: AN EXCLUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

When children become adults, they cease a dependent relationship with parents with the intention never to resume it. *Leave* is a strong verb meaning “to forsake and neglect; leave destitute, refuse.”

When couples marry, they must leave parents in three ways:

Physically. A common complaint of young couples is intrusive mothers-in-law and too much family interference (cf. Genesis 29). To avoid it, they should not move into either parents’ house. It is difficult—and dangerous to the marriage—to live in another’s home while trying to start one’s own. No house is large enough for two families and no kitchen is big enough for two cooks. The honeymoon couple does not need to feel inhibited because the walls are thin. When they have their first—inevitable—fight, Dad does not need to be in the hall outside their bedroom with his baseball bat, saying, “Wait till that boy comes out. I’ll teach him a thing or two.” Even living nearby is not advisable, because it is hard to establish a separate family identity. One old preacher said, “Newlyweds should move a mountain and three rivers from their parents.” Marriage is exclusive. It needs its own space.

Emotionally. Emotional maturity is required for marriage. One cannot be both a dependent child and an independent husband or wife at the same time. Parents must rear children intending to release them. The cord must

be cut by the wedding. Otherwise, sorrow results.

The young couple must make their own decisions—where to live, where to attend church, what career to pursue, when to have children, and how many—and be prepared to live with those decisions. This does not mean they do not ask parents for advice. But ultimately, they will pay the mortgage, attend the church, and work the job, so they should make their own decisions.

Economically. A man is not ready to ask for a woman’s hand unless he has a job and intends to keep it (1 Timothy 5:8; 2 Thessalonians 3:10). Parents are no longer responsible for support. Each must earn his own bread (Genesis 3:19) and carry his own weight (Galatians 6:5).

To support a family, one must hold down a job. To keep a job, one must keep the boss happy by considering these suggestions: Don’t be lazy (Proverbs 6:6–8). Don’t be late. Do a little more than required. Don’t hang around the critical crowd. Be dependable. Since everyone cannot be promoted, aim to be the one who is. To some degree, the happiness of the breadwinner’s family depends upon his successful career.

Since debt is a leading cause of divorce, avoid it (Proverbs 21:20). No matter how much money one makes, he can always spend more. Spending less than one makes requires self-discipline. Once children come, it is a blessing to be able to live on one income and have more personal time with children in-

stead of having to work two jobs to pay the bills (Titus 2:5).

CLEAVE TO EACH OTHER: MARRIAGE IS A PRIMARY RELATIONSHIP

God created a wife for Adam—not a father, mother, or child—establishing marriage as the primary relationship, not the parent-child relationship.

One’s spouse also takes precedence over friends. Married people need friends, but these should be second-tier relationships receiving less time, energy, and devotion than spouses.

Marriage is more important than career. Douglas MacArthur II (the famous general’s nephew) worked for the U.S. government. The Secretary of State once called his home and asked to speak with him. His wife did not recognize the Secretary’s voice and replied tersely, “He’s not here. He’s where he always is—weekends, nights, Saturdays, Sundays—at the office. You can reach him there.” He politely hung up and immediately called MacArthur, saying, “Go home. Your home front is crumbling.”

Many home fronts crumble for the simple reason that couples do not spend enough time together to keep the fire burning. Husbands and wives who live separate lives miss the point of marriage (Proverbs 5:15–19). Some men spend more time with golf or hunting buddies than with their wives; some wives will not leave work friends long enough to build a relationship with their husbands.

It can happen unintentionally. A couple becomes so involved in outside activities that they are more roommates than mates. They give so much attention to children that nothing is left for each other. If a marriage is built around children, or careers, disappointment awaits when the nest empties or retirement comes. Children are home a few years, but partners are there for life. It is unhealthy for children, too. Modeling spousal love is the best way to prepare them for their future marriages.

Moses showed how to get marriage off on the right foot: “When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife” (Deu-

teronomy 24:5). The new husband was not to be charged with any overnight business or be drafted into military service because that would require him to be away from home. His assignment was to cheer his wife. She was in a new environment with new responsibilities, perhaps feeling overwhelmed.

WEAVE TWO LIVES TOGETHER: AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP

The last five of the twenty-two words contemplate weaving: “They shall be one flesh.” Marriage is a beautiful union of two lives. The more things a couple does together—live, play, work, plan, talk, worship—the greater likelihood the marriage will be satisfying.

Weaving involves a healthy one-flesh relationship. Don’t overlook the obvious: “One flesh” points to God’s wedding gift of sex for the married couple. It is the fun element of marriage (Proverbs 5:15–19), an important ingredient in a lifelong relationship (Hebrews 13:4). God’s restrictions regarding sex before marriage are not to keep us from sexual joy but to save it for the right time and right person.

God designed sex to have deep meaning. In this act, a husband and wife become one being for a moment in time. More than physically uniting bodies, it creates an emotional, chemical bond between them. To become one flesh with multiple partners (1 Corinthians 6:15–20) damages one’s ability to bond with a life partner.

Two pieces of duct tape stuck together have a strong bond. They will probably tear if separated. However, if first stuck to other things—the couch, the floor, clothing—the two pieces will hardly bond at all. They will be easy to separate. When people are immoral before marriage, they hinder their ability to bond strongly and stay together long term.

Sex is not only a marriage privilege, it is a marriage requirement (1 Corinthians 7:1–9). A husband owes his wife romantic affection. A wife owes him this pleasure. When spouses argue or go through a rough stretch, they must not refrain from sex—unless both agree for a limited time. If spouses do not satisfy each other, they leave one another open to temptation to commit adultery.

Weaving involves rearing children together. Children are the natural product of marriage (Genesis 1:28). If everyone adhered to God’s original plan, all babies would be born into families with a father and a mother and mature in a stable, financially secure environment.

Weaving involves exalting God’s name together (Psalm 34:3; 122:1; Hebrews 10:25). A key component missing in many marriages is spirituality. When spouses share the common ground of worship, they have a strong foundation (Psalm 127:1; John 4:24).

Weaving involves sharing “sweet counsel together” (Psalm 55:14; Ecclesiastes 9:9; 1 Peter 3:7).

Aquila and Priscilla exemplify a “together” relationship. They traveled, worked, and were hospitable together (Acts 18:2). They took a missionary trip together (Acts 18:18). They worshipped and taught the Bible to others together (Acts 18:26). They assisted Paul and risked their lives together (Romans 16:3–4). They encouraged other Christians together (1 Corinthians 16:19). They remained faithful throughout a lifetime together (2 Timothy 4:19).

As an exclusive, primary, and intimate relationship, marriage is a picture of the spiritual relationship between Christ and His bride. In marriage, God achieves with two people what He wants all to experience in the church.

A husband and wife are one flesh; we are one with the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:17). Christ loves the church; a husband loves his wife (Ephesians 5:25). The church is subject to Christ; a wife is to her husband (Ephesians 5:24). The marital union results in children; the union of the Lord and His church results in converts (Romans 7:4).

As the Bible begins with a marriage, and ends with a wedding supper (Revelation 19:6–9), perhaps your life will go from an enjoyable marriage here to a seat at that great wedding supper at the end. And if marriage has not worked for you here, then everything can be perfect at your next one.

The Spirit and the bride say, “Come” (Revelation 22:17).



God's Plan for Saving Man

- God's Grace:** Ephesians 2:8
- Christ's Blood:** Romans 5:9
- The Holy Spirit's Gospel:** Romans 1:16
- Sinner's Faith:** Acts 16:31
- Sinner's Repentance:** Luke 13:3
- Sinner's Confession:** Romans 10:10
- Sinner's Baptism:** 1 Peter 3:21
- Christian's Work:** James 2:24
- Christian's Hope:** Romans 8:24
- Christian's Endurance:** Revelation 2:10

Living It Day by Day

She sat alone in an old people's home,
Lonely and old and gray;
She wished that someone, just anyone,
Would call on her that day.
Did you?

He lay for days on his hospital bed;
The hours were long and hard.
He wished someone, just anyone,
Would send him a cheery card.
Did you?

He was far from home on foreign soil,
Feeling homesick, lonely, and blue.
He wished that someone, just anyone,
Would write him a letter.
Did you?

She felt a stranger, that little bride;
No husband with her to church came.
She wished that someone, just anyone,
Would stop and call her name.
Did you?

Her loved one died a few weeks ago;
All sad and brokenhearted she sat.
She wished that someone, just anyone,
Would come to her house and chat.
Did you?

That matter of Christian service—
We are living it day by day,
When we help someone, just anyone,
As we walk along life's way.

—Author Unknown



For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

What Jesus Said about

DIVORCE

When Jesus was questioned about divorce for any reason (Matthew 19), He directed the Pharisees back to Genesis 2:24. While He made an exception for the injured person to remarry when a spouse cheats (19:9), Jesus gave four reasons divorce was never God's plan.

Divorce violates the precedent God set for marriage in the beginning. Originally, remarriage was not only inadvisable; it was also impossible. God made only one man and one woman. When it later became possible, problems followed those who disregarded the “one man for one woman” precedent. The result with Abraham, Jacob, David, and Solomon was the same as it often is today—chaos, conflict, and heartache. Since two become one in marriage, divorce causes indescribable pain, like a tear in one's body.

Divorce violates God's command to cleave to one's spouse. Cleave is the opposite of divorce. Marriages must be built primarily on commitment, not romantic feelings. Romance is important, but the foundation of marriage is a decision, not a feeling. Commitment—in the form of a covenant before God (Malachi 2:14–16;

Proverbs 2:17)—is what holds marriage together through difficulties. “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:6).

Divorce violates the design of marriage. Marriage math is easy: One man, one woman, for one life. When a man and woman marry, they dedicate themselves to each other for the rest of their lives—that includes their being one another's sole sexual partner. Monogamy is God's design. Remarriage is a form of adultery because it brings together partners to whom God does not give the right to be together. If a couple divorces for a reason other than fornication, they both commit adultery if they marry another (Matthew 19:9; Luke 16:18).

Divorce violates God's will in marriage. Marriage counselors hear, “I want out. I'm not happy. He's mistreating me. She's not making me happy anymore.” The question should always be, “What is God's will in this situation?”

God's design for every marriage is permanence—so long as they both shall live (Romans 7:1–3; cf. Matthew 19:9).

—Allen Webster

Harry Truman's Mother

Someone once said to Harry Truman's mother, “Mrs. Truman, you must be very proud that a son of yours is in the White House.” She responded, “Well, yes, but I have another son who lives down the road—and I'm just as proud of him.”

Ah, the wisdom of that mother! Thank God for mothers who love their children and who are impartial to them in spite of talents or lack of talents . . . their failures or attainments . . . their personality differences or behavioral characteristics.

A mother is the only woman who can divide her love among all her children, and yet each child still has all of it.

There is no depth to which a child can fall that diminishes a mother's love.

There is no height of success a child may achieve that will increase her love. Her love is protective, tender, consistent, impartial, understanding, forgiving, unchanging, unselfish, giving, contagious, everlasting. Solomon said of such wisdom: “Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; love her, and she will keep you” (Proverbs 4:6). —Author Unknown



With His Last Breath



Darren Holt was the preacher for the Figueroa church of Christ in Los Angeles, California. On Sunday, October 25, 2015, he drew his last breath.

It seemed to be just like any other Sunday and any other sermon. As he came to the end of his lesson, he stepped down from the podium and told the congregation he needed to sit down.

While resting on the front pew, and in his final breaths, he uttered the words, “If you’re not a Christian, say yes to Him. You’ve heard the Word. Believe it. Repent of your sins, confess Christ, be baptized.”

After these incredible words, Darren Holt became unresponsive. Several members with medical training administered CPR until the paramedics arrived and rushed him to the hospital. Sadly, all efforts were unsuccessful. He passed

away a short time later at the hospital. He had drawn his last breath, uttered his last words, and taken his last action.

Every breath we take brings us closer to our last. We do not know when our final life-sustaining draw will be. While we should not live in a panic, we need to live with a sense of urgency.

We do not know what our lives will be like tomorrow, or even if we will have a tomorrow (James 4:14). Like the rich farmer, tonight could be when we leave this world (Luke 12:16–21).

Darren Holt used his final words to tell people what they needed to do to be saved. As we near our end, let’s leave no unfinished business. If life ended today, what would we regret? Who would we wish we had tried to reach with the gospel? What sins would we wish were for-

given? What relationships would we wish we had tried to mend? What apologies would we wish we had made? What words of love would we wish we had expressed?

Possibly thinking about such things, David wrote these humbling words: “Lord, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am. Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, and my age is as nothing before You; certainly every man at his best state is but vapor” (Psalm 39:4–5).

Let’s seize the moment. Let’s fix what needs fixing. Let’s use every breath we take today for good and for God.

—Brent Petrillo, Denver, Colorado

“Life is even a vapor”

JAMES 4:14

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.

Bible Quiz

VOLUME 22:3

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark! We’ll grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark “The 10 Plagues” as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).



Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City/State: _____
 Phone: _____

Questions taken from the King James Version

Answers to Last Issue

Heaven and Hell, Do Tell: True/False: 1. F (Matthew 22:30); 2. F (Matthew 7:13); 3. T (Matthew 7:14); 4. T (Matthew 25:46); 5. T (Revelation 20:10); 6. T (John 14:2); 7. T (Matthew 5:22, 29); 8. T (Revelation 21:2); 9. T (Matthew 18:3); 10. T (Acts 1:9); 11. T (Philippians 2:9–11); 12. T (Revelation 20:15); Short Answer: 1. eyes (Matthew 5:29); 2. hell, nations (Psalm 9:17); 3. lake, fire (Revelation 20:15); 4. angels, sinned (2 Peter 2:4); 5. fire, quenched (Mark 9:46); 6. torments (Luke 16:23); 7. affection, above (Colossians 3:2); 8. All, nations (Revelation 7:9); 9. Throne (Acts 7:49).

The Miracles of Jesus

Directions: Find your answers in Matthew 8:14–17; 14:13–33; 17:1–2; 21:19; Mark 4:37–39; 5:21–43; 10:46–52; Luke 4:38; 8:2; 22:51; John 2:1–11; 5:5–8; 6:1, 19; 9:1–41; 11:1–44; 18:10.

1. What was Jesus’ first miracle? _____
2. Whose mother-in-law did Jesus heal when she had a fever? _____
3. What was Jesus doing when the storm arose? _____
4. Whose daughter died while Jesus was on the way to his house to heal her? _____
5. What was the last miracle Jesus performed before He died? _____
6. When Jesus fed 5,000 men, plus women and children, with how many loaves and fishes did He start? _____
7. How many baskets full were left when Jesus fed the 5,000? _____
8. When Jesus healed the man who was blind from birth, He made mud with His spit and put it on the man’s eyes. What did He tell the man to do then? _____
9. What man had been dead for four days when Jesus raised him? _____
10. What was Bartimaeus’ affliction that Jesus healed? _____
11. Jesus walked on what body of water? _____
12. Out of what woman did Jesus cast seven demons? _____
13. What was the occasion—wedding, funeral, Passover, bar mitzvah—for Jesus turning water into wine? _____
14. What tree did Jesus cause to wither? _____
15. Which disciples were at Jesus’ transfiguration when “His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light”? _____
16. Near what city did Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead? _____
17. The man who was told to “take up [his] bed and walk” had been ill how long? _____
18. Who climbed out of the boat to meet Jesus walking on the water? _____



The Maid of the Mist

One of my favorite cartoons shows a boy standing in the very front of the boat called *The Maid of the Mist*.

This boat carries sightseers so close to Niagara Falls that they must wear rain gear to keep from being drenched by the spray. Wearing his raincoat and hat, the boy stood at the front of the boat, squirting a water pistol at the falls.

People can be like that; they aim criticisms at the Bible. Nevertheless, in the light of the Bible's continuing witness to the righteousness and love of God, any attempt to discredit its message is like squirting a water pistol at Niagara Falls. —Author Unknown

"Let us not fight against God."

ACTS 23:9

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.

Recommended Resource



The Gospel Broadcasting Network is unique in the world of religious TV—commercial-free, and they never ask for money! Sponsored by the churches of Christ, GBN is available on many cable systems, as well as through their smartphone apps, the Roku device, and at gbntv.org.

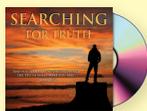
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Things My Dad Taught Me

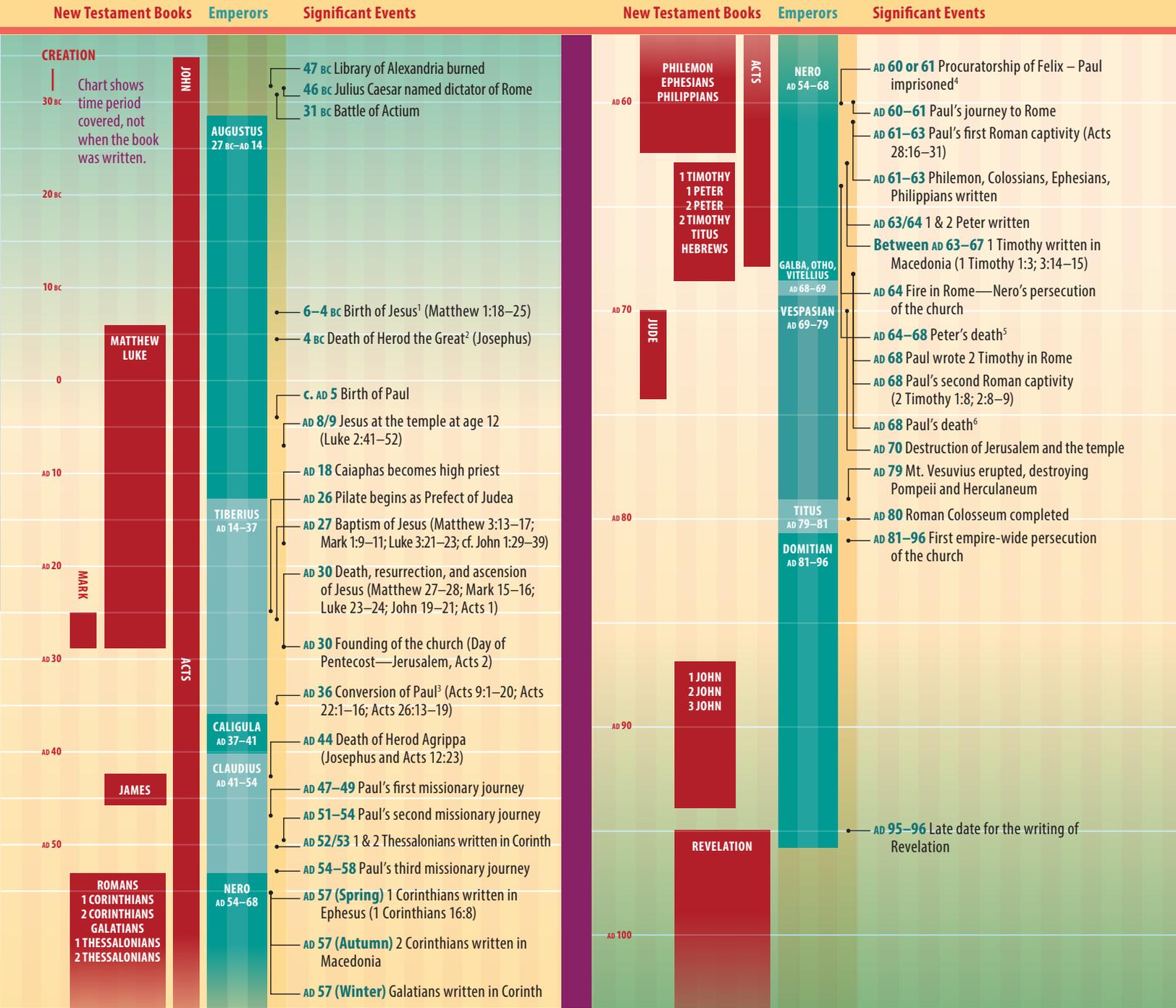


The Rooster That Woke up Peter

Don't see the topic you need? Visit www.housetohouse.com for more subjects.



NEW TESTAMENT TIMELINE



¹ Many are surprised to learn that Jesus was born between 6-4 BC. Our system of dating was established by Dionysius Exiguus, and he incorrectly guessed as to the year of Jesus' birth. Careful historical study shows that Herod died in 4 BC, and Jesus was certainly born one or two years before that.

² From Josephus (War 2.6.3).

³ This date is calculated from a reference in Josephus to Aretas and the allusion in 2 Corinthians 11:32 where Paul mentions Aretas, who was king of Arabia when Paul escaped in AD 39.

⁴ Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius list this event in either AD 60 or 61.

⁵ Tradition says Peter was killed under Nero.

⁶ Paul was killed sometime after he wrote 2 Timothy but before Nero died on June 9, 68 (2 Timothy 4:6).

Some dates are speculative but based on good logic. Many events are dated by rulers listed or mentioned in the secular histories of Josephus, Tacitus, Philo, Suetonius, and others.

Other sources consulted were *Tyndale Handbook of Bible Charts and Maps*, *Rose Book of Bible & Christian History*, *Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts*, *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, and *Eerdmans Handbook to the Bible*.



Sincerity is not enough

In a New York hospital several years ago, carbon dioxide instead of oxygen was mistakenly administered to a patient.

According to the police report, the patient died almost instantly. The unfortunate patient died in spite of his own sincerity and that of the hospital authorities, the anesthesiologist, and the surgeon.

In the same way, in religious things certainty must be coupled with sincerity. A person can be religiously honest and yet be in an extremely unsafe spiritual condition.

Saul of Tarsus was sincere during the time when the blood of Christians was dripping from his hands. After his conversion to Christ he said, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1). "Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9).

The plain teaching of the Book of God is "a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

Make absolutely sure you are right, and then sincerely practice it.

—George F. Gaines



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We offer a variety of Bible study methods and numerous topics that fit various ages and interests.

Note: You can fill out the form at www.housetohouse.com/freestudies.

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- God's Plan of Salvation
- Finding the Church of the Bible

Step 3: Choose your appointment. What works best for you?

- Weekend
- Weekday
- Weekday, after work
- Contact me and I'll look at my calendar

Step 4: Call the number on the front or fill out the form online.

Thank you for your interest in learning the Bible!

