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CHURCH HISTORY MONTHLY

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Timeline of Topics.

- Quote:
- Poemen, 300s
- Old Testament
- We might know the name of someone who died in the flood
- Middle Ages
- Chapters and verses added to the New Testament
- American Church History
- How did Pentecostalism get started?

Class starting this week: How we got the New Testament

This 3-week class will cover the exciting journey through heretics, various lists, persecutions, and councils as we discover how the 27 books of the New Testament were formed.

--It is not too late to join! The class just started yesterday (Monday). [Click here to join or find out more](#)

Class starting in 4 weeks (March 28): New Testament Apocrypha

By the year 150, approximately 125 books existed that claimed to be Christian. This class will discuss those books that were not included in the New Testament, known as Apocrypha. We will also discuss both types of Apocrypha.

Already taken these classes? Invite a friend to take them.

When were the chapters and verses added to the New Testament?

The Story

Christians early on realized that the New Testament books needed some type of division. Think about their dilemma: someone quotes a sentence from Romans and you ask, "Where is that?" "Oh, about 1/3 of the way through," is the reply.

In one of the earliest known copies of the New Testament, the Vaticanus from the fourth century, Matthew is divided into 170 sections, Mark into sixty-two, Luke into 152, and John into fifty. Acts has two sets of divisions, both written in the margins and done after the book was copied: one divides Acts into thirty-six sections, the other into sixty-nine sections. Other letters are divided into numerous sections as well.

In Alexandrinus, a copy of the New Testament from the fifth century, Matthew is divided into sixty-eight sections, Mark into forty-eight, Luke into eighty-three, and John into eighteen. In addition, both Vaticanus and Alexandrinus do not begin the division with the first sentence, instead leaving the first number of sentences as the preface and beginning the first division a short way into each letter. For instance, the first section of Mark begins with Mark 1:23 in the Vaticanus. So add another "section" to each book.

Revelation caused special consideration. For example, Archbishop Andrew of Caesarea, writing in the sixth century, divided it into twenty-four sections, because of the twenty-four elders mentioned in Revelation. He further divided each of the twenty-four sections into three subsections, reflecting the three parts of the human: soul, spirit, and body.

The Answer

Other systems developed, and, while some probably gained a following, none were popular enough to set a standard. That changed in 1205. In that year (give or take several years) Stephen Langton divided the New Testament into the chapter system which is used today; he became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1207 and was one of the signers of the Magna Carta.

The verses were not added for 350 years. In the year 1551, a printer from Paris named Robert Stephanus included verses in the copy of the New Testament that he printed. His son said that he divided the chapters into verses while traveling from Paris to Lyons and while riding his horse.

So, while many people have devised different partitioning systems for the New Testament, the current chapter division of the New Testament did not appear until the early 1200s, with the verse division appearing in the mid-1500s.

“A person will always be tripped up by that thing which he will not cut off from himself.”

Poemen, Desert monk, sometime in the 300s.

WE MIGHT KNOW THE NAME OF ONE PERSON WHO DIED IN THE FLOOD

First, we can find out the time span between the Creation to Abraham. This genealogy occurs in Genesis 5. If you add up how old a man was when his first child was born, you can figure this out. For example: 5:3: “When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son,” who was Seth.

Adding these years will determine the time span between the Creation (when Adam was created) and the flood: $130 + 105 + 90 + 70 + 65 + 162 + 65 + 187 + 182 + 600 = 1656$. So the flood occurred 1656 years after creation. But this time line can reveal another interesting statistic: Methuselah died in the year of the Flood. So back to math.

- 5:25,27: “When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech. . . . Altogether, Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died.”
- 5:28, 29a: “When Lamech had lived 182 years, he had a son. He named him Noah.”
- 7:6: “Noah was 600 years old when the floodwaters came on the earth.”

First, figure out how old Methuselah was when his grandson Noah was born: Methuselah was 187 years old when Lamech was born, and Lamech was 182 when Noah was born, so Methuselah was 369 years old when Noah was born. Noah was 600 years old when the Flood came, so add 600 to 369 and you get 969 years. So, according to Genesis, Methuselah was 969 years old when the flood came, and Methuselah died when he was 969 years old. Therefore, Methuselah died in the year of the flood. But did he die in the flood? We don't know.

Questions, comments, or want to join a free class contact Mark at marknickens@gmail.com

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How did Pentecostalism begin?

Pentecostal groups stem from a revival that ran from 1906 - 1909. Here is the story.

Charles Fox Parham (1873-1929) began his work as a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church. He left the denomination in 1895 to become an independent Holiness preacher. In those days, the Holiness belief included divine healing, a second work of God of sanctification, and a third work of God which is baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Let's open up those last two. Parham, and all Christians, believe the first work of grace in a Christian's life is salvation. Parham believed in a second work of grace, called sanctification, when God takes away someone's desire to sin, in other words makes them holy. Plus, Parham believed in a third work of God, when the Holy Spirit comes to live in a person. Many Christians believe the Holy Spirit comes to live in them when they become a Christian or join a church (as in the case of Catholics and Orthodox). But Parham believed this did not occur until after one became a Christian, sometimes much later.

In 1898, he established the Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas, with about 40 students. In December 1900, Parham and students concluded that the first evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit was the ability to speak in tongues. On January 1, 1901, a student of Parham's, Agnes Oxmen, spoke in tongues for the first time in the modern Pentecostal movement. Parham and other students also began to speak in tongues. A revival began centered speaking in tongues as evidence of being “baptized” by the Holy Spirit; it attracting as many as 25,000 followers. In 1905 he founded a Bible school in Houston, Texas. One of the students was William Joseph Seymour (1870-1922).

Seymour was involved early in his life in the Holiness faith (same as Parham). He took classes at Parham's Houston Bible School and embraced the Pentecostal teaching (although he did not speak in tongues at that time). In January 1906, Seymour accepted an invitation to speak at a black Holiness church in Los Angeles. Once there, he preached the importance of speaking in tongues. He was rejected by that black Holiness church, but continued to preach elsewhere.

On April 9, Seymour and others began to speak in tongues. People gathered to hear Seymour preach and receive the “gift of tongues,” and eventually they rented a rundown building on 312 Azusa Street. For the next three years Seymour led revivals from this church. Its fame grew and people traveled from great distances to hear Seymour and receive the gift of speaking in tongues. They returned to their homes and began Pentecostal churches. And thus the Pentecostal movement grew.

Today the number of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians in the world has been estimated as high as 500 million.