



THE BIBLE TIMELINE
24-WEEK BIBLE STUDY

LEADER'S GUIDE

Jeff Cavins, Sarah Christmyer and Tim Gray

Table of Contents

About the Bible Timeline 24-Week Course 1

Materials 2

Course Outline 4

Organizing a Group Bible Study. 5

Facilitating Group Discussion. 8

Frequently Asked Questions 11

About the Bible Timeline 24-Week Course

The Great Adventure: A Journey Through the Bible is a learning system that teaches the narrative story of the Bible so you can understand the plan of salvation history. The cornerstone of the program is the *Bible Timeline Seminar*, a day-long introduction to the Bible that lays the foundation for a lifetime of Bible reading and study.

The 24-Week Course takes the material taught in the Seminar and expands it into a 24-session Bible study that enables individuals to read through the Bible historically while learning the plan of salvation history, and make it their own.

Central to the program is the *Bible Timeline Chart*. This chart arranges the key people and events of salvation history in chronological order and shows how the books of the Bible fit together to tell the story. People who go through the course learn the “big picture” of salvation history and are taught to:

- Divide **salvation history** into **12 identifiable periods** to help remember the progression of the story. Significant details from secular history are included to place Bible events in time
- Identify the “**narrative books**” of the Bible – **fourteen books** that, read in order, tell the story from start to finish – and see how the remaining 59 books fit into the story
- Recognize how God’s plan unfolded through a **series of covenants** so as to understand not just

Copyright © 2004 Ascension Press
All rights reserved.

Ascension Press
Post Office Box 1990
West Chester, PA 19380
Orders: (800) 376-0520
www.ascensionpress.com

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN: 1-932645-48-9

the story, but where it is headed and how they fit into the “big picture”

- Use **color-coded multi-sensory memory aids** to remember the story (the Timeline **Chart**; a **Memory Bead Wristband** of colored beads representing the 12 periods; and a full-color **Bible Memory Bookmark** showing where the books of the Bible fit into the periods), giving the reason for each color

General principles for reading the Bible are also taught, and participants are encouraged to continue on the life-long “Great Adventure” of learning to know God through Scripture.

Materials

1. **Audio/video lecture series:** 24, 50-minute talks by renowned Bible teacher and theologian Jeff Cavins available in DVD and CD formats. These talks form the core teaching of the study.
2. **Study Materials** (available in the Bible Study Kit):
 - **Study Set Questions:** 24 Bible study lessons help you learn the “big picture” of Bible history from Creation to the Church.
 - **Full-color Bible Timeline Chart:** The master plan of Bible history in one handy 33”-wide fold-out chart.
 - **Seminar Workbook:** Includes fill-in Timeline charts, assigned Scripture readings, and pages for taking notes during the taped lectures plus a dozen important maps and graphs, a Bible reading plan, and more.

- **Bible Memory Bookmark:** Holds your place in the Bible and locates the 73 books of the Bible in 12 periods of Bible history, giving the reasons for each period color.
- **Memory Bead Wristband:** Handy mnemonic device for memorizing the periods of Bible history.
- **Study Set Responses:** Recommended answers to the Study Set Questions.
- **Three-ring binder:** Helps you keep your Great Adventure materials organized.

3. Additional Bible Study Resources:

- **Then and Now Bible Maps book:** With colorful plastic-overlay maps, shows where key events took place in Old and New Testaments and how the geography of the Holy Land has changed over the millenia; customized for use with *The Great Adventure Bible Timeline*.
- **Great Adventure Bible Indexing Tabs:** Helps you locate all 73 books of the Bible quickly and easily; color-coded to match the periods of *The Great Adventure Bible Timeline* system.
- **Full-Color Wall Charts:**
 - Jesus Family Tree**—traces Jesus’ royal and legal lineage all the way back to Adam and Eve through King David. Double-sized: 39” x 26”
 - Books of the Bible**—lists all 73 books, divided by literary type. Size: 19” x 26”
 - 100 Prophecies**—shows all the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah are fulfilled in Jesus. Size: 19” x 26”

Study questions require each participant to have his or her own Bible and a copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

- The Bible should be a Catholic Bible such as the *New American Bible* (NAB) or the *Revised Standard*

Version – Catholic Edition (RSV-CE). The RSV-CE is the version used in the course materials. If a Protestant Bible is used, it must be one that includes the deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament (which Protestant Bibles call the Apocrypha)

- An on-line, searchable version of the *Catechism* is available on a number of websites, including <http://www.usccb.org/catechism/text/> and www.scborromeo.org/ccm.htm

12 Effective Ways to Increase Attendance at your Great Adventure Bible Study

Although many Catholics feel intimidated by the thought of studying the Bible, most truly want to understand Scripture. They just need a bit of encouragement to get started. Here are some practical and effective ways to see the attendance at your Great Adventure seminar grow beyond your expectations.

1. Place an announcement in your parish bulletin several weeks prior to the start of the study (Note: We have samples for you to customize).
2. Post 11" x 17" full-color promotional posters around your parish (Note: We can send these with your order).
3. Ask your pastor to announce your *Great Adventure Bible Study* from the pulpit.
4. Show the Overview DVD after all Masses to generate enthusiasm (announce this two weeks prior), and allow people to register at that time.
5. Invite neighboring parishes. Ask them to place an announcement in their bulletins and post flyers around their parishes.
6. Use your parish website to announce the study.
7. Place an ad in your diocesan newspaper.

8. Run free community calendar announcements on Catholic, Christian, or secular radio stations.
9. Commission a group of five to ten “inviters” to personally invite people they know and encourage attendance. A personal invitation is extremely effective.
10. When you begin your study, ask participants to bring at least one friend with them.
11. Allow late registrations, even after the study has begun.
12. Encourage students to continue attending, even if they can't complete the assigned readings. They will still benefit greatly and may resume the reading later.

Course Outline

Ses. #	Title	Scripture references
1	Introduction	(none)
2	Early World Part 1	Genesis 1-3
3	Early World Part 2	Genesis 4-11
4	Patriarchs Part 1	Genesis 12-26
5	Patriarchs Part 2	Genesis 27-50
6	Egypt & Exodus Part 1	Exodus 1 - 18
7	Egypt & Exodus Part 2	Exodus 19 - 40
8	Desert Wanderings	Numbers
9	Conquest & Judges Part 1	Joshua
10	Conquest & Judges Part 2	Judges
11	Royal Kingdom Part 1	1 Samuel 8 - 31
12	Royal Kingdom Part 2	2 Samuel 1 - 1 Kings 1

13	Divided Kingdom Part 1 Israel	<i>1 Kings 12 – 2 Kings 16</i>
14	Divided Kingdom Part 2 Judah	<i>1 Kings 17 – 2 Kings 23</i>
15	Exile	<i>2 Kings 17-25</i>
16	Return	<i>Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther</i>
17	Maccabean Revolt	<i>1 Maccabees</i>
18	Messianic Fulfillment Part 1	<i>Luke</i>
19	Messianic Fulfillment Part 2	<i>Luke</i>
20	Messianic Fulfillment Part 3	<i>Luke</i>
21	The Church Part 1	<i>Acts</i>
22	The Church Part 2	<i>Acts</i>
23	The Church Part 3	<i>Acts</i>
24	Conclusion	<i>(none)</i>

Organizing a Group Bible Study

1. Form your group

Make sure there is at least one group facilitator for every eight to twelve people. Facilitators need not be knowledgeable on the topic, as guidelines are provided for answering the questions. With large groups, though, there should be a leader (such as a priest or catechist) to guide the group as a whole and to answer questions that are not covered in the materials.

2. Order the following materials:

- One copy of the 24-part audio/video lecture series (DVD format is most effective)

- A Bible Study Kit for each participant (or, if participants have already attended the Bible Timeline Seminar and have the Seminar Pack materials, only the Study Set is needed)
- One copy of this Leader's Guide (included free with group orders also and available as a downloadable PDF file at www.thebibletimeline.com)
- Optional (but very helpful): Great Adventure Bible Indexing Tabs

**Some groups choose to distribute the Study Set Responses to all participants following the group discussion for each session. They are produced in a loose-leaf format for this reason.*

3. Plan your schedule

Plan for a two-hour weekly time slot. A 24-week study can be done comfortably between mid-September and mid-March, allowing a week off at Thanksgiving and longer break during the Advent/Christmas seasons; or three 8-week sessions can be planned; or a 17-week Old Testament followed by the 7-week New Testament.

4. Prepare to lead the study

Leaders and facilitators should be familiar with the program before it starts. Have everyone listen to the first two audio or video sessions: *Introduction* and *Early World Part 1*. If there are several facilitators in the group, it would be helpful to go through a lesson together ahead of time to become familiar with the format of the homework questions and determine how the class will be run. (Guidelines for facilitating a discussion begin on page 8 of this Leader's Guide. Guidelines for discussing the questions themselves can be found in *Session 1 Responses: Introduction*.) When time and interest allows, leaders and facilitators might gather monthly or each week prior to the class to prepare and to pray.

5. Suggested session agendas

Session 1 (Introduction)

*NOTE: This is the only meeting in which the video session is shown first. All other weeks, the reading and questions are done and discussed **before** viewing the video.*

Times given are approximate.

20 minutes: Hospitality, registration, distribute materials

10 minutes: Welcome and opening prayer

50 minutes: Watch or listen to the first taped session, "Introduction." There are pages in the *Bible Timeline Seminar Workbook* for taking notes on the introductory talk (point this out to participants before starting the tape).

30 minutes: Break into discussion groups to review guidelines for doing the homework as covered in "Session 1 Questions: Introduction" from the Study Set.

10 minutes: Reconvene large group. Take final questions, then close with a prayer.

Sessions 2 - 23

10 minutes: Gather, welcome, and opening prayer and song, if desired.

General reminder of the lesson topic.

40-50 minutes: Break into groups to discuss the lessons done the previous week at home

(guidelines for answering the questions are in the Study Set Responses)

5 minutes: Return to main group

50 minutes: Watch video corresponding to lesson just completed (for week #2: Session 2: Early World Part 1). The *Bible Timeline Seminar Workbook* contains pages for note-taking and blank chart pages to fill in during this time.

5 minutes: Wrap-up and give assignment for following week, then close with a prayer.

Session 24 (Conclusion)

The agenda for this class is similar to the preceding ones, but the audio/videotape is only 30 minutes long and leaves 20 minutes for a group wrap-up. This may be a good time to share spiritual benefits gained from the course. If desired, the time may be used to review the sequence of events on the chart, or to trace Christ's bloodline while walking through a brief outline of the story, and to encourage continued personal Bible reading. (To follow Christ's bloodline, a red pencil can be used to connect the asterisks on the period pages in the workbook if this hasn't been done already.)

Facilitating Group Discussion

Suggested responses to the *Bible Timeline 24-Week Course* study questions are provided to facilitate group discussion and to reinforce the lesson.

Understanding the Questions and Responses

Some of the questions have actual, expected answers. Others may have a number of potential answers and are designed to draw you in and make you interact with what you are reading. Often a great richness of response comes out in the group discussion, where each person brings a different perspective to the reading. Everyone benefits from this. The “answers” you will find in the *Study Set Responses* are not exhaustive but are offered as a guide. Reading them as you go may limit your thinking about a particular passage and can stifle group discussion. For this reason, we strongly recommend that individuals doing the study look at the *Responses* only after completing a set of questions, and that groups distribute the *Responses* only after the discussion if at all. Group leaders should review them only after they have completed the answers on their own and before facilitating discussion.

The Goal of Group Discussion

The primary goal of group discussion in this study is to reinforce the main teaching points of each session: to help everyone fix in their minds an overview of the biblical period in question. Another goal is to share with and glean from others the things learned during the preparation time.

The Role of the Facilitator

It is not necessary for group facilitators to be trained catechists. It would be helpful, though not necessary, for them to have some experience or training in group facilitation. If they have previously attended a *Bible Timeline Seminar*, so much the better. The role of the facilitator is not to teach, and it is not even so much to get people to answer questions correctly as it is to draw out of them what they have learned from their reading, make sure they have

a broad idea of what the particular period is about, and encourage them in their journeys through the Bible.

Keeping Time

The amount of time available for group discussion will vary from group to group. We recommend a 40- to 50-minute time period, but to a large extent the time needed will depend on how many people are in each discussion group. It is useful for facilitators to determine ahead of time how much time to spend on each section of the study. Suggestions for limiting the discussion time can be found in “Session 1 Responses: Introduction.”

Some groups may find it helpful to assign one person to assist the facilitator by alerting the group when time is half over or five or ten minutes before closing.

Keeping Focused

Often questions will lead people into related areas that however interesting, are off the subject and steal time from the intended topic. One way to handle that is to keep a log of these questions. When one comes up, simply write it down and delay discussion until the lesson is completed.

The Role of the Video/Audio Lesson

In each 50-minute tape, Jeff Cavins walks the viewer or listener through the main events of the period, explaining difficult areas, drawing out major themes, telling how they fit in with the big picture, showing how events in the Old Testament come to fulfillment in Christ, and applying the reading to our lives today. This audio/video portion of the *Bible Timeline 24-Week Course* is intended to follow and supplement individual preparation, not precede it. Because it does not directly address the questions asked

in the Study Set, it is not a substitute for the Study Set Responses or for group discussion of the questions.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Can the videos be watched on their own, without using the other materials?*

Yes, the DVDs or CDs can stand alone, although they will make more sense if you have access to the full-color *Great Adventure Bible Timeline Chart*. Because the talks were taped during an actual class in which people were using the Bible Timeline Seminar workbook and other materials, these are mentioned from time to time. Jeff Cavins also refers to the questions included in the *Study Set*. If you want to make full use of the program, you will use these, too. But without them, the videos will still give you a complete picture of the timeline of Bible history.

2. *Can the Study Set be done as a stand-alone Bible study, without the videos?*

Yes again. The *Study Set* was developed as a Bible study program to help people read through and get a basic understanding of the 14 books of the Bible that tell the story of salvation history. The video lectures significantly enhance and supplement that study, whether it is done individually or in a group setting. Ideally, they are both used together. Materials in the *Bible Study Kit* (the *Bible Timeline Chart*, Seminar Workbook, Bookmark, and Memory Bead Wristband) are all referenced in the *Study Set* and used to complete it.

3. *Does the video answer all the questions in the homework?*

Not directly, although they cover similar ground. The homework is aimed at helping people learn the periods of Bible history, get a basic working knowledge of the Biblical narrative, get familiar with how the “supplemental” books fit in with the “narrative” books of the Bible, begin using the *Catechism*, etc. The video lectures tell the story, put it into historic and biblical perspective and then focus on applying what is learned to our lives.

4. *What if we still have questions after doing the reading and questions and watching the video, and no one in the group knows the answers?*

Hang onto those questions—you have begun a journey that you will be on for the rest of your life! It can be difficult to let go of the need to know, but try not to think that all your questions must be answered now. One of the things we hope this course will do is encourage people to ask questions and to seek for truth. Write your questions down. Pray about them. Try to track down the answer in the Bible, or your *Catechism*, or with some other outside reading. Some questions can be answered with a little research. Others may bother you for days or weeks or even years. Pray over those, and keep reading, discussing, and expanding your knowledge of God’s Word.

5. *Is this course appropriate for high school use? Middle school?*

In its present form, the 24-week course is meant for adults (however, there are high school students who have been successfully using it). With a knowledgeable instructor, it can be used at the high school level. To serve the needs of teens, a teen version of *The Great Adventure Bible Timeline*, **T3: The Teen Timeline**, is being developed and will be available in late 2006.

To order additional copies:

**ASCENSION
PRESS**

W5180 Jefferson Street

Necedah, WI 54646

800-376-0520

TheBibleTimeline.com

AscensionPress.com

Email: Info@AscensionPress.com

ISBN 1-932645-48-9

