

# Lesson 2 - Completing a Book Survey

## Part 2 - Creating an Outline

Last week we introduced a method of studying the Bible that focuses on two key aspects of the text. The first aspect is the historical context of the passage we are studying. The second is the way in which the ideas of the text are pieced together and how individual passages fit into the larger book from which they came. Our work this week will major on that second aspect as we create an outline as part of a book survey of Paul's letter to the Philippians.

### Step 2 - Outline the Book

Hopefully you were able to read Philippians several times this past week. The repeated readings of this short letter possibly resulted in several important outcomes. First, you became VERY familiar with the text. Second, you probably noticed, at a minimum, three to five key words or ideas that occur throughout the book. Third, even though this was not part of the assignment, you may have recognized a certain flow and organization to the letter. That flow and organization is the focus of this step.

Your Bible already has some organization in place for you. Chapter and verse headings were added to the Latin Vulgate in the twelfth century. By the middle of the sixteenth century, they had become commonplace and the Geneva Bible was the first English Bible to include them. While the chapter headings sometimes break the flow of events or a train of thought by the writer, they are helpful in being able to quickly locate a passage.

The possibility of providing helpful guides motivated the first publisher to include section headings to our contemporary printed Bibles. Section headings give us a sense of what we are about to read. If you flip through the pages, the section headings provide a general outline of the book itself.

Last week, you were given a complete copy of the book of *Philippians* without any section headings or even paragraph breaks. Those features were omitted on purpose. Most of the New Testament is written in epistolary form, i.e. a letter. It seems no one writes letters anymore, but when they do, section headings are never part of that process. This week your goal is to begin developing the skill of creating your own outline of the text by creating your own section headings and even paragraph breaks.

Where can we find a Bible without headings? Depending on the size of the book, you can use websites that provide Bible translations and word processing software to remove them.

[esv.literalword.com](http://esv.literalword.com) is a website that allows you to print without section or paragraph breaks. Publishers are realizing a market exists for Bibles without headings, chapter and verse divisions, and even columns. You can now purchase what is called a “Reader’s Bible” in just about any translation you’d like.

Back to the outline. When we create a book outline, we want to identify the arrangement of ideas in the whole book. If you are a detailed oriented person, this part may be more difficult for you. Think big picture. After reading the text a few times, you can identify some common themes or groups of ideas. Let’s look at a few examples of how this would work.

Let’s start with a larger book like *Genesis*. As you are reading through *Genesis*, you notice that the majority of the book provides details about the lives of three important men - Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In fact, those three names are already familiar to you and that helps them stand out. If we take a closer look at the details *Genesis* gives us about these men, we can see that the book makes very clear shifts in moving from one man to the next. Continued reading reveals to you that considerable space is given to the details about Jacob’s son Joseph as well. Noting where these shifts take place gives you a pretty good start on how to develop your outline.

Let’s look at another larger book, though not as large as *Genesis*. In the book of *Matthew*, you notice that the book seems to be a continual report on Jesus either teaching or performing a miracle. You also notice that after a significant block of either of those, that either the religious leaders respond negatively or the people respond positively. As you continue to try and group these events into coherent blocks, you are reminded from prior studies that *Matthew* was written to show the Jewish community that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah. You realize that Peter’s confession that Jesus is the Christ falls in the center of these blocks.

One final example - Paul’s letter to the Galatian church. *Galatians* is similar in its size and format to the book we are using in this class. It is a letter, relatively short compared to many other books in the Bible. As you read it, you realize Paul spends quite a bit of time talking about his background and everything he has done. You notice that he writes quite a bit about Jewish law, around one-third to one-half of the letter. In contrast, you see how he ends the letter by talking about how we would live if we were being led by the Holy Spirit.

Transitional words and phrases that create natural breaks in the organization can help you create your outline as well. These keywords might help you at least identify where to begin looking for section breaks. Examples are words and phrases like: therefore, for this reason, for this purpose, furthermore, however, although, for example, likewise, in the same manner, finally, in conclusion.

## Sample Outlines

Here are three outlines that match the examples from the previous section. Notice that these outlines are big picture oriented. For those of you who like to get very detailed in your descriptions and outlines, your chance will come. For now, focus on the high level, bird's eye view of the organization. Be sure to organize into sections that have meaning. It might be technically correct to outline every book as Introduction, Body, Conclusion, but does that tell you anything about the book?

### Outline of Galatians

- I. Greetings 1:1-5
- II. Paul's Authority 1:6 - 2:21
- III. Faith vs. Law 3:1 - 5:12
- IV. Spirit Guided Freedom 5:13 - 6:16
- V. Closing 6:17-18

### Outline of Matthew

- I. Preparation for the Messiah 1:1 - 4:17
- II. Ministry of Jesus 4:18 - 16:20
  - A. Teaching/Healing 4:18 - 9:34
  - B. Response to his teaching 9:35 - 16:20
- III. Ministry of the Messiah 16:21 - 27:31
  - A. Teaching/Miracles 16:21 - 20:33
  - B. Response to his teaching 20:33 - 27:31
- IV. Messiah Fulfilled 27:32 - 28:20

### Outline of Genesis

- I. Creation & Population of the World Ch.1 thru 11
  - A. Creation Marred by Sin Ch.1 thru 3
  - B. The Effects of Sin Ch.4 thru 11
- II. Creation of a Nation/People Ch.12 thru 50
  - A. The Call of & Promise to Abraham Ch.12 thru 20

- B. Generation 1 of the Promise: Isaac Ch.21 thru 24
- C. Generation 2 of the Promise: Jacob Ch.25 thru 36
- D. Generation 3 of the Promise: Joseph Ch.37 thru 50

In the examples above, the three books are widely different in length, yet their corresponding outlines are similar in size. Note how the general length of each book helps determine the detail of the outline. *Genesis* uses chapter divisions in its outline, even though those events cross chapter lines. *Matthew* has twenty-eight total chapters, but individual verses are used to mark off each section because of the clear-cut nature of the events. *Galatians* is similar in length to *Philippians* and uses verses for its section breaks. All three outlines can definitely be broken down into subtopics, which we will note on our graphic representation later.

One final note about creating your book outline. You might be thinking, “What if I get it wrong? You want me to avoid using helpful guides like section headings, but I want to get it right!” There is nothing wrong with checking your work after you finish. Consult the headings in your Bible. Check a commentary. If your outline isn’t exactly like the one in your study Bible or commentary, it is not necessarily wrong. You may have detected a particular emphasis in the book that drives your outline.

The book of *Matthew* is a great example of one book having multiple possible outlines. Some scholars and teachers organize the book around five major discourses of Jesus. Another common outline is organized around four aspects of Jesus’s kingship. If the differences in your outline and the one you consult are major, do not fear. Go back and try again. Ask a trusted teacher or elder about it. In this assignment, we are trying to develop the skill, so expect mistakes and misunderstandings along the way. It’s all part of the process, and more importantly, God’s plan.

## Graphic Outlines

One option you may want to add to your survey is a size-proportioned graphic outline. At the end of this lesson, you can find three different styles of graphic outlines that match the above text outlines. Graphic outlines can provide a visual understanding of how the ideas of the book are organized, including what overall percentage of the book is allotted to each one. In the case of the *Genesis* example, you can also see how the recurrences are distributed throughout the book.

# Background Info and Other Considerations

Completing a survey of any book of the Bible includes identifying elements about the origin of the text. You began looking for those last week in your initial readings. When you are providing answers to the following questions in your survey, only include answers you can get from the text itself, including chapter and verse to help keep you to this rule. There will be time later to investigate other sources if the answers to these questions are not in the text.

- Who wrote the book?
- To whom was the book written?
- When was the book written? Focus on establishing a time relative to known events versus an exact year. Remember, our current numbering system of the years did not begin until about 500 years after Jesus walked the earth.
- Why was the book written?
- What is the key verse or strategic area of the text?
- What is your thirty second summary (or one minute for a longer book) of the book?

## Homework

This week, create an outline of the book of *Philippians*. If you feel ready, try creating a visual outline. It might come in handy.

- Start with the same prayer from last week. “God, as I come to your Word, I pray you will open my mind to understand the truths it contains. Show me things I missed before and strengthen those which I already know. As I learn more about you, shape me to become more like you. Amen.”
- Re-read the entire book at least once to refamiliarize yourself with the text.
- Highlight transition words like those mentioned above.
- While reading a second time, mark the beginning of new paragraphs by drawing lines between the verses or writing the paragraph symbol ¶ in the margin.
- Use a different color to bracket together multiple paragraphs that deal with the same idea. Change colors every time the idea changes.
- When you feel like you have grouped all the paragraphs as well as you can, create your outline from your largest groups of paragraphs.

Next week, bring the following back to class:

- A text outline of the book. If you are feeling ready and want to develop the skill, try creating a visual outline. It might come in handy later.

- If you haven't already done so, make a list of the recurrences you discovered in your reading last week, including the chapter and verse references for each one.
- Answer the background questions in the *Other Considerations* section above. You can come back to this step next week if you need more time.

## Outline - Galatians

1:1-5 Greetings	
1:6-9 Paul preaches the true Gospel	
1:10-17 Paul's Divine Commission	
1:18-2:10 Paul's ministry unopposed by Church leaders	Paul's Authority
2:11-16 Paul confronts Peter's hypocrisy	
2:17-21 Christ Living in us	
3:1-5 Spirit by faith or works?	
3:6-9 Abraham's faith	
3:10-14 Curse of the law	
3:15-18 Law inferior to faith because. . .	
3:19-28 Purpose of the law	
3:29-4:7 Spiritual adoption	Faith vs. the Law
4:8-11 Galatian return to former principles	
4:12-20 Paul relationship w/the Galatians	
4:21-5:1 Hagar vs. Sarah	
5:2-6 Circumcision vs. Uncircumcision	
5:7-12 Who is the real negative influence?	
5:13-15 Proper use of freedom	
5:16-24 Walking by Flesh vs. Walking by the Spirit	
5:25-6:5 Comparing self to others	Spirit Guided Freedom
6:6-10 Reap what you sow	
6:11-16 New creation is the measuring stick	
6:17-18 Closing	

## Outline - Matthew

1 - Genealogy of Jesus		1:1	
2 - Birth of Jesus			Preparation for the Messiah
3 - John the Baptist			
4 - Temptation of Jesus		4:17	
5 - Beatitudes	4:18		
6 - Hypocrites			Teaching & Healing
7 - Sermon on Mount finale			
8 - Healings			
9 - More Healings	9:34		
10 - Mission of the 12	9:35		
11 - Eval of John the Baptist			Ministry of Jesus
12 - Pharisees			
13 - Parables			
14 - Feeding 5000			
15 - Canaanite Woman			
16 - Peter's Confession	16:20		16:20
17 - Transfiguration		16:21	Teaching & Miracles
18 - Who's the greatest?			
19 - Rich young man			
20 - First vs. Last	20:33		
21 - Triumphal Entry	21:1		
22 - The Greatest Commandment			Ministry of the Messiah
23 - Woes to Scribes & Pharisees			
24 - End of the Age			
25 - The 10 Virgins			
26 - Last Supper			
27 - Crucifixion	27:31		27:31
28 - Resurrection		27:32	Messiah
		28:20	Fulfilled



### Key for Recurrences:

A: Younger sibling receiving the blessing and/or rights of the older

B: Naming of locations by events

C: Giving of blessings by people

D: Conflict between brothers

E: Genealogies

F: Appearances by God to men

G: Making altars

H: Promise of many offspring