

Christian Story I

James Nhan

15th November, 2015

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Part I

First Half

1 25 August, 2015

Overview of and orientation of the Bible. Focus on content, character, role in Christian faith, and the covenant themes of creation, fall, redemption, and new creation.

The following textbooks are required for the course:

- Sumney
- Anderson
- NOAB

Course Requirements:

- Exams: Two unit exams, one comprehensive final
- Quizzes: 6 (on readings)
- Biblical Message Assignment (oral presentation)
- Biblical Story Paper

Homework:

- Read Sumney Ch. 1

2 27 August, 2015

History and Geography of the Bible

Israel and Mesopotamia are very important land bridges that connects 3 different continents between the deserts of the Middle East as well as the land-masses separated by the Mediterranean Sea.

Under David and Solomon during the United Kingdom age from **1020** to **922**, the borders of Israel extended the furthest they ever had and ever have since. This is Israel's Golden Age where it was the most powerful and wealthy time of its history.

In **722**, the country separated into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah ruled by different groups. They did not always get along despite being related ethnically.

Around **722**, Assyria wiped out Israel. The kingdom of Judah pays money to Assyria to avoid being destroyed.

In succession, several large powers would take over each other. During the time of the Babylonian rule around **586** causing the exile and destruction of the Temple of Solomon. Those exiled were serving as slaves in Babylon. Around **536**, the Persian empire ruled. The difference of the Persian rule was that the exiles were allowed to return home. They were released to return to their life in Israel, but they were taxed heavily by the Persian empire. Around **333**, the Hellenistic period took over the Persian period until around **63** through the intertestamental stretch of time when Alexander the Great marched across the giant Persian empire until his death at age **33** due to sickness. The Maccabean family does resist the Hellenistic rule, but did not fight back.

The Herodian family worked with the Roman family that would rule on behalf of the Romans in that region.

The Second Temple Period refers to the period after the exile until **70 C.E.** when the temple was destroyed and replaced with the Dome of the Rock, a mosque.

The Diaspora took place beginning at the start of the exile. Diaspora literally means something like “**scattering**.”

3 1 September, 2015

Hebrew Bible: Contents & Organization

Aka Tanak = Torah (The Law), Neviim (Prophets), Kethuvim (Writings)

The Law: 5 Books

Prophets: 8 Books

- Former prophets (4 books)
- Latter prophets (4 books)

Writings: 11 books

24 Total (OT is 39 total)

(Old Testament) Apocrypha

New Testament: Contents & Organization

Gospels (4 books)

Acts (1 book) – Actually several books titled the Acts of the Apostles like Peter.

Pauline Epistles (13 books)

Catholic Epistles (8 books)

Apocalypse (1 book)

27 total

The Other “Biblical History”

1. Oral Tradition
2. Written Documents
3. Collection

4. Canonization
5. Translation
6. Publication
7. Textual Criticism

Canonization

Hebrew Bible
 3 groupings = 3 stages
 Solidified by ca. 100 CE

4 3 September, 2015

Quiz

Tuesday, 8 September

Multiple Choice and Matching

Sumney's Key Terms: Ch 1, 2, 4

Biblical Books: Genesis to Deuteronomy

In order and spelled correctly

Canonization of the New Testament

The first Christians existed with no New Testament at all. They had proclamation, preaching, and a message. It takes time to have an authoritative canon.

Eusebius of Caesarea – One of the original early church fathers in the early 4th century. Wrote “Church History” the history of the church in the first three centuries. First one.

Athanasius of Alexandria – Bishop of Alexandria in Egypt. Lots of churches exist in Alexandria. In 367 C.E., he writes a letter to the churches with a list of books he considers authoritative, which is identical to what is in the modern New Testament Bible.

Not until the Reformation, during the time of Martin Luther, do we have a major agreement on what books should be included in the New Testament.

Translation and Publication

- Targum: Hebrew to Aramaic (5th c. B.C.E.)
- Septuagint (LXX): Hebrew to Greek (3rd c. B.C.E.)
- Vulgate: Hebrew and Greek to Latin (5th c. C.E.)

Aramaic was the language used in exile by the Judahites. When they returned home, they brought Aramaic back with them. The new generation did not speak Hebrew, so they needed to translate everything in Hebrew to Aramaic.

Septuagint means 70 (Latin). This was after the time of Alexander of Macedonia, so he brought the Greek language with him when he was conquering the world. This caused the Greek language to spread under the Hellenistic rulers. Seventy Hebrew scholars were called in in order to translate from Hebrew to Greek the Torah (probably still just the Torah at this time).

Jerome was the translator. Vulgate means “base” or “common”. It was the translation into the common language, which in Rome was Latin. It became the authoritative text for the Roman Catholic church.

English Translation

In 1382, John Wycliffe makes the first English translation of the Bible based on the Vulgate.

In 1525, William Tyndale made the first English translation of the New Testament from the Greek version, which became the basis for the King James Version.

Formal Correspondence is a Word For Word translation from the source language to the destination language. It is nearly impossible to do this in translation, so most focus on this but also include Dynamic Equivalent translations.

Dynamic Equivalent is a Thought For Thought translation from the source language to the destination language. This is trying to get the same idea, but without needing to match sentence structure and vocabulary.

Textual Criticism

Textual Criticism is the study of ancient manuscripts.

Notable manuscripts are the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in the 1940's that date back to around the 1st c. B.C.E., which were extremely identical to the 10th c. C.E. manuscripts.

Intentional Changes: The ending or endings of Mark.

The original ending ended at “. . . they were afraid.”

The shorter ending ended at “. . . they were afraid. And all that they have been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.”

The longer ending ended even longer with several paragraphs more.

The Torah

The Documentary Hypothesis says the Torah has four distinct sources: JEDP.

1. J = Yahwist
2. E = Elohist
3. D = Deuteronomist
4. P = Priestly Source

How do we distinguish between the sources?

1. Duplication or replication of material

2. Variation in the ways of referring to God
3. Contrasting perspectives of authors
4. Variation in vocabulary and literary style
5. Evidence of editorial activity

Cosmic Origins

Genesis 1:

- Day 0: Water and Darkness
- Day 1: Light
- Day 2: Sky Dome
- Day 3: Earth, Sea, Plants
- Day 4: Sun, Moon
- Day 5: Fish, Birds
- Day 6a: Animals
- Day 6b: Man, Woman
- Day 7: (Sabbath)

Genesis 2:

- Earth, Heaven, Barren
- Man from Dust
- Garden, Plants, Trees
- Rivers
- Man in Garden
- Animals, Birds, Names
- Woman
- (Marriage)

Enuma Elish:

- Apsu, Tiamat (fresh water and salt water dieties, respectively)
- More Gods (children of Apsu and Tiamat)
- Marduk (also child)

- Creation of Monsters (Apsu and Tiamat's army to kill the other gods)
- Marduk becomes chief god if he can save other gods from monsters and parents
- Marduk defeats Apsu, Tiamat (last fight), and monsters
- Marduk creates Sky, Earth, and Sea
- Marduk creates Moon
- Marduk creates Humans as Slaves

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The Fall: Genesis 3

What's the big idea of Genesis 3?

1. Sin: The cursing is different between the serpent and man.
2. Power: God is threatened by an immortal, knowing man?
3. Sex: Forbidden Fruit is sex.

The Flood: Genesis 6-9

Ancient Flood Narratives

Noah

- God sends a flood
- Noah and household survive
- Build a boat shaped ark
- Animals on board
- God shuts the door
- 40 days and 40 nights it rains
- Rests on Mount Ararat
- Raven, dove (3x) sent out
- Sacrifice to God
- Rainbow

Gilgamesh (Ancient Mesopotamian polytheistic culture)

- Gods send flood (plural)

- Utnapishtim and household survive
- Cube shaped ark
- Animals on board
- Utnapishtim shuts the door
- 6 days and 6 nights it rains
- Rests on Mount Nisir
- Dove, swallow, raven sent out
- Sacrifice to gods
- Necklace

Ancient Recreation Narratives

Noah

- The Deep
- The Wind
- Waters reunite
- Classification of animals
- Humanity destroyed
- “Be fruitful and multiply”
- Provision of food

Genesis 1

- The Deep
- The Wind
- Waters recede
- Classification of animals
- Humanity created
- “Be fruitful and multiply”
- Provision of food

Genesis 1–11

- Catalyst

- Rebellion
- Confrontation
- Rationalization
- Alienation
- Restoration

What is a “covenant”?

Put simply: An agreement between two parties; a contract.

Put biblically: The relationship between God and God’s people, characterized by mutual love and responsibility.

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Covenantal Relationship

- Creation (J & P)
- Image of God (P)
- First Sacrifice (J)
- Cain’s Mark (J)
- Seth (J)
- Genealogies (J & P)
- Noah’s Ark (J & P)
- Promise of Life (J)
- Rainbow (P)
- Blessing on Shem (P)

Tower of Babel

Ziggurat at Ur

Genesis 12-50: The Highlights

Elements of the Covenant

- A great nation from Abraham’s descendants
- A blessing to all nations through Abraham
- A land to call their own

The signs of the covenant

- The meeting with Melchizedek
- The covenant ceremony
- Circumcision

The Covenant and Jacob

Birth of Jacob

Jacob gets Esau's birthright

Conflict: Isaac's household and Abimelech

Jacob and Esau split

Jacob and Bethel (house of God)

Jacob stays with Laban

Jacob at Peniel (face of God)

Jacob and Esau reconciled

Conflict: Jacob's household and Shechem

Jacob returns to his birthright

Death of Isaac

- Prophet = Proclaims God's word & will
- Priest = Intercedes for God's people
- King = Leads people in God's path

Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find anyone else like this, one in whom is the spirit of God?" So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command."

7 17 September, 2015

Quiz on Tuesday over Sumney Key Terms chapter 5 and 6, books Joshua through Esther on Sumney Page 11.

Moses' life parallels with Sargon of Agade. Both were placed in a basket of reeds sealed with bitumen, floated down a river, found and raised by another, and became a great leader.

Moses starts in Egypt and kills a slavemaster. Is exiled from Egypt and he goes to Midian. Moses meets a woman named Zipporah, who he defends from some men at a well. He marries and starts a family with her. Her father is a priest in Midian. Sees the burning bush (a theophany) on a mountain while herding sheep one day. During this vision, God reveals his divine name: ehyeh asher ehyeh, or yahweh. He returns to Egypt and asks the Pharaoh to release his people. He is asked who sent him with this message. He replies "the God who exists." This is one of the first instances of monotheism. Most everyone was a polytheist.

We do not know which Pharaoh it was. It depends on when the Exodus is dated, but it is heavily debated.

1. Nile to Blood targets Khnum, the creator of water and life, Hapi, the Nile god, and Osiris, the Nile as his bloodstream.
2. Frogs target Heket, the goddess of childbirth whose symbol was the frog.
3. Gnats
4. Flies
5. Cattle disease targets Hathor, the mother and sky goddess whose symbol was the cow, and Apis, the bull god.
6. Boils
7. Hail targets Seth, the god of wind and storm.
8. Locusts targets Isis, the goddess of life, and Min, the goddess of fertility and vegetation, protector of crops.
9. Darkness Amon–Ra, Atum, Horus, the sun dieties.
10. Death of the firstborn targets Osiris, the judge of the dead and patron diety of the Pharaoh.

Finally, we have the passover where the blood of a lamb is smeared over the doorpost of the Israelites.

The first major stop after the exodus is at Mt. Sinai. Moses receives the Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments, the Covenant Code, the Holiness Code, the Deuteronomic Code, and the Shema.

The Golden Calf

Spying out the Land

The Waters of Meribah

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The Former Prophets: Part I

From the occupation to monarchy.

Deuteronomistic History:

- Deuteronomy and Former Prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings)
- Complete history from Exodus to Exile
- Deuteronomistic Themes
 - Disobedience and Judgement (Martin Noth)
 - Covenant and Grace (Gerhard von Rad)
 - Repentance and Restoration (H. W. Wolff)

– Prophet, Priest, King

Joshua

- Military Campaigns
- Distribution of the Land
- Joshua's Farewells

Gilgal: A new beginning
Build a monument with 12 riverbed stones.
Gibeath-haaraloth
Passover resumes.
Manna stops.
Mt. Ebal (Shechem): The covenant
Build another monument.
Faithful to the covenant.

Judges

- The Problem
- The Solution
- The Migration of Dan
- The Attack on Benjamin

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Quiz Tuesday on Ch. 7 and Isaiah through Malachi. Not Poetry or Wisdom books. Check Sumney page 11 Old Testament.

The Former Prophets: Part II

The Monarchy.

Books of Samuel: Outline

- Named for the character, not the author.
- Samuel's oversight (1 Sam 1 to 12).
- Saul's reign (1 Sam 13 to 31).
- David's reign (2 Sam).

Books of Samuel

- Motif 1: Reversal of Fortunes (1 Sam 2:2 through 2:8).
Reversal 1: Hannah
Reversal 2: Eli (and sons) & Samuel
Reversal 3: Saul & David

- Motif 2: Mixed view of Kingship

Books of Samuel: Highlights

The role of spirits. It enters David and leaves Saul.

The Davidic Covenant.

The "Succession Narrative" (2 Sam 9 through 20 and 1 Kings 1 through 2).

The rise of the prophets.

Books of Kings

- Solomon's Reign (1 Kings 1 through 11).
- Israel: Jeroboam to Omri (1 Kings 12 through 16).
- Elijah & Elisha (1 Kings 17 through 22; 2 Kings 1 through 8).
- Up to the fall of Israel (2 Kings 9 through 17).
- Up to the fall of Judah ().

Book of Kings: Highlights

- Elijah, Ahab & Jezebel, and Baal.
- 722 B.C.E.: Fall of Northern Kingdom to Assyrians.

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Prophetic Themes

Covenant History

Hesed = God's covenantal loving kindness.

Faith and Worship

Shaping worship and living accordingly.

The Future

Direction more than prediction.

Prophetic Forms

Narrative Forms

- Biographical
 - Divine Call
 - Encounters with kings
 - Symbolic actions

- Visions

Poetic Forms

- Oracles of Judgement
- Announcement of Deliverance

- Admonitions to Repent
- Laments
- Covenant Lawsuits

The Prophets by Era

Assyrian Period

- Amos
- Micah
- Hosea
- First Isaiah

Babylonian Period/Exile

- Zephaniah
- Jeremiah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Ezekiel
- Obadiah
- Second Isaiah

Persian Period

- Third Isaiah
- Haggai
- Joel
- Malachi
- Zachariah
- Jonah?

Isaiah

Bind up the testimony, seal the teaching among my disciples (8:16).

First Isaiah: 1 to 39 during Assyrian Second Isaiah: 40 to 55 during Babylonian Exile Third Isaiah 56 to 66 during Restoration

Isaiah: Highlights

Call narrative (Ch. 6)

Immanuel & Davidic Covenant (Chs. 7 through 9)

Servant Songs (Chs. 42, 49, 50, 52, 53)

Wisdom Literature

Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes

Proverbs: Highlights

Prologue (Chs. 1 through 9)

Proverbial Wisdom (Chs. 10 through 31)

Collections with headings

(1:1); 10:1; 22:17; 24:23; 25:1; 30:1; 31:1

Proverbs is like a collection of collections (7 including the prologue).

Binary Oppositions

- Wisdom versus Folly
- Righteous versus Wicked
- Rich versus Poor
- Industriousness versus Laziness
- Humility versus Pride

Retribution Theology

Wise men store up knowledge, but the nonsense of a fool draws ruin near.

(10:14)

The righteousness will never be removed, but the wickedness will disappear from the land. (10:30)

Judgement for your actions. You get what you deserve based on the life that you live. It's a fundamental bedrock concept for the book of Proverbs, but not Job or Ecclesiastes.

Job & Ecclesiastes

Job is the story of a man who makes a bet and is righteous. He still loses everything. Not because he is sinful like in Retribution Theology. Ecclesiastes is written by a guy who is looking for the meaning of life. He finds that both righteous and wicked get bad luck. It doesn't matter.

Wisdom

- Proverbs: The beginning of wisdom
- Job: The limits of wisdom
- Ecclesiastes: The futility of wisdom

Israel's Sacred Songs

Psalms, Song of Songs, Lamentations

Biblical Poetry

Structure is in terms of lines and sentences.

- Line
Main Features:
 - Alliteration: Similar sounds in several syllables (Psalms 122:7 through 9)
 - Paronomasia: Words that sound alike (Amos 5:5)
- Couplet
Main Features:
 - Parallelism: First line begins a structure and following lines follow the structure (Synonymous in Psalm 19:7 and Antithetical in Psalm 1:5 and Synthetic in Psalm 22:4)
- Stanza
 - A combination of couplets as a unit like Psalm 119 using 22 stanzas of 8 lines each and in alphabetical organization (each stanza begins with the next letter in the Hebrew alphabet)

Psalms: Forms

Laments

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Quiz on Tuesday over page 164–167 and Chapter 10. Books of the NT Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts.

H4

The Historical Background of the New Testament Period
Historical Overview: The 4 H's

1. Hellenistic Rulers

- Key Date: 333 B.C.E. (beginning of the Hellenistic Period)
- Key Figures
 - Alexander the Great
 - Ptolemies
 - Seleucids
 - Antiochus IV Epiphanes
- Hellenization

- Language & Culture
- polis = “city”
 - * Education
 - * Religion
 - * Architecture
 - * Entertainment
 - * Language

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1. Herodian Rulers

- Key Date: 4 B.C.E. (death of Herod the Great)
- Key Figures
 - Herod the Great
 - Herod Antipas
 - Herod Agrippa I
 - Herod Agrippa II

Ancient Judaism

Sociohistorical

- Sadducees
- Pharisees
- Essenes
- Zealots
- Gnostics
- Rabbis
- Christians

Literary

- Tanak
- Apocrypha
- Pseudepigrapha
- Dead Sea Scrolls

- Nag Hammadi Lit.
- Talmudim and Midrashim
- New Testament

The Gospels, Part 1

The Synoptic “Problem”

Despite significant differences between the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke), the similarities in wording are at times so close that some interdependence must be assumed.

What solution best explains the nature of this interdependence?

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Quiz Thursday: Chapter 11 through 12. Books Romans through Colossians.

The Two or Four Source Theory says that Mark and an Oral Tradition Q are the sources of Matthew and Luke. There is also the extra stuff in Matthew and Luke not found in Mark that is thought to come from Oral Tradition M and L.

The Sources for Jesus

How many independent sources do we have for Jesus?

- Mark
- Q
- “M”
- “L”
- John
- Paul

Independent Extra-Biblical Source

- Greco-Roman Sources
 - Tacitus
 - Suetonius
- Jewish Sources
 - Flavius Josephus
- Gnostic Sources

- Gospel of Thomas?

The “Historical Jesus”

If the Gospels are theological documents rather than historical documents (a la Sumney), who was Jesus really?

Multiple attestation: reported in more than one independent source.

Marcus Borg: Jesus, the Jewish rabbi.

J.D. Crossan: Jesus, the Cynic sage.

Richard Horsley: Jesus, the peasant revolutionary.

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Gospel of Luke

Date: 80 to 90 C.E.

Author: Educated Greek speaker (Traditional: Luke the physician and companion of Paul).

Distinctives:

- Birth Narrative (but not Matthew's)
- Greco-Roman Historical/Biblical Style
 - Intro: The need for a new account despite other sources
 - Life Story: Birth to Adolescence to Adulthood
- Role of Women
- Geographical Emphasis
- Audience: Diaspora Jewish and Gentile Christians

Gospel of John

Date: 80 to 110 C.E.

Author: A Johannine school (Tradition: John)

Authorship Issues in John

Who was the “disciple whom Jesus loved?”

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Distinctives in Gospel of John

- The Prologue: an “incarnation” narrative.
- Jesus as the Man from Heaven

Quiz Tuesday on Ch 13 through 15
Books 1 Thess through Hebrews
The Acts of the Apostles

Highlights:

- A History of Christianity, vol. 2
- The Speeches (Peter, Stephen, Paul)
- The Major Events (Commission, Pentecost, Stoning of Stephen, Conversion of Saul/Paul, Jerusalem Council, Paul's Arrest in Jerusalem)
- The Purpose: The spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome, from Jew to Greek

Paul
How did he change the world?

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Overview of the Life of Paul

Date: Event

10 C.E.: Birth in Tarsus
Up to 34 C.E.: Training in Jerusalem
35 C.E.: Paul's Conversion
44 to 47 C.E.: First Journey
49 C.E.: Jerusalem Council
50 to 52 C.E.: Second Journey
53 to 57 C.E.: Third Journey
58 to 60 C.E.: Arrest in Jerusalem and Imprisonment in Ceasarea
61 to 63 C.E.: Imprisonment in Rome

In his early life, hated the church. Some event occurs in his life that completely reverses this. He then loves the church.

Romans

Dated 56 to 57 C.E. and directed to predominantly Gentile believers in Rome. Main theme is righteousness through faith.

Romans: The Argument (Chs. 1 through 8)

All possess the law

No one follows the law

Righteousness comes from faith, not law

Faith precedes law

Grace leads to life in the Spirit

Thessalonians Correspondence

The issue is the parousia ("coming" of Christ)

The 1 Thessalonians Question: Did we all miss it?

The Modern Debate: Did Paul have an eschatological timeline?

Corinthian Correspondence

The issue: Factions within the church
Paul, Apollos, Chephas (Peter), or Christ?
Immorality, yea or nay?
Should Christians sue Christians?
Meat sacrificed to idols?
Disunity during the Lord's Supper?

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Single Letters

Galatians: Freedom from the law and fruits of the Spirit.

Philippians: Joy through suffering.

Philemon: Partnership in Christ.

"Deutero-Paulines"

Colossians: Baptism in the "cosmic" Christ.

Ephesians: Unity in the "cosmic" Christ.

(Maybe 2 Thessalonians?)

The Pastorals.

Authorship Questions:

Does it sound like Paul?

Does it reflect Paul's theology?

Does it reflect Paul's time period?

Pastoral Epistles

Issue 1: Church Order

Issue 2: Women in Leadership

Modern Debate: Who wrote them?

Paul? Paul's Disciple? Paul's opponent? Paul's secretary?

The Catholic (General) Epistles

Hebrews: Written around 70 C.E. ish by an anonymous Hellenistic Jew.

Genre was Treatise, not Letter. Best Greek in the NT, best rhetoric skill in NT, longest sustained argument in NT

Hebrews is about the superiority of Christ.

1-3 John: Written around 100 C.E. by a Johannine school. Genre was Treatise then Letters in 2 and 3. Theme is splitting the church.

Other "Catholic" Letters:

James: "Doers of the word"

1 Peter: Church versus World

2 Peter: Living in light of Christ's return

Jude: Keeping the law

Apocalypticism

The 3 M's:

Motive: Crisis, Persecution, Suffering

Method: Symbolism

Message: Critique of present situation

Revelations

Written around 95 C.E. by "John" (otherwise unknown).

Three M's:

Crisis was probably domitian around 95 C.E. or a local outbreak around 70 C.E.

Symbolism was 666, gematria, number symbolism in general, and OT symbolism.

Present situation is Satan (the dragon) and Rome (Babylon) on the verge of defeat by Christ (the Lamb).