

The United Church “of Christ” (UCC)

Collected and Edited by Scott Shifferd Jr.

History:

- According to the Handbook of Denominations, **the United Church “of Christ” numbered 1,401,682 in 5,961 congregations** (Mead, Frank S and Hill, Samuel S. *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*. 11th ed. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001. P.125). The Handbook of Denominations previously noted the UCC numbering 1,555,382 in 6,264 churches in the U.S. (Mead, 10th ed. 1995. P.291).
- The Handbook of Denominations says, **“Four churches of real importance in American history constitute the United Church of Christ: the Congregational Churches, the Christian Church, the Evangelical Synod, and the Reformed Church.** The first two bodies merged in 1931 to become Congregational Christian Churches; they were joined in 1957 by the merged Evangelical and Reformed churches. The union was complete when the constitution was adopted at Philadelphia in July 1961” (Mead, P.289).
- About **congregational** churches, the Handbook of Denominations notes, **“Congregationalism has been an issue in Christianity from the beginning; it began, as has been suggested, ‘without a name and with no sense of its destiny.’ Even before the Reformation, dissenting groups of church people in England were ‘seeking a better way’ than that of the established church”** (Mead, P.292).
- Concerning **Reform churches**, the Handbook also reports, **“The Reformation-founded churches called Reformed, as distinguished from those called Lutheran, originated in Switzerland under Zwingli, Calvin, and Melancthon. They were called Reformed in Switzerland, Holland, and Germany; Presbyterian, in England and Scotland; Huguenot, in France; and various national names, for others in Bohemia and Hungary”** (Mead, P.244).

God, Christ, and the Spirit:

- The United Church “of Christ” excludes reference to Jesus’ deity and states, **“We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father,** and to his deeds we testify:
He calls the worlds into being, creates man in his own image and sets before him the ways of life and death” (“Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ.” *United Church of Christ*. 3 Apr 2012. <ucc.org/beliefs/statement-of-faith.html>).
- Regarding **Jesus**, the United Church “of Christ” teaches, **“Jesus and the Canaanite Woman, Matthew 15:21-28 - The Son of God gets taught a thing or two by a foreign woman full of humor, strength, and smarts”** (Caldwell, Quinn G. “Twelve Great Reads.” *The Bible and the United Church of Christ*. 3 Apr 2012. <ucc.org/lcm/Bible-and-the-UCC-FINAL-2.pdf>).
- Answering **“Is Jesus God?”**, the United Church “of Christ” states, **“Jesus is not God, but God is like Jesus.** Life is full of mystery and much we cannot explain. But in Jesus we see that, at the heart of it all, God's love pulses and often surprises us, turning many a grim situation upside down.
While the church has debated the doctrine of Jesus' divinity, the New Testament is not doctrine. And the Bible is not theology: it's an anthology of stories about God often culminating in twist endings that bring O'Henry to mind. In these narratives we see God imperfectly, ‘as in a mirror dimly.’ But we still see” (Green, William C. “Is Jesus God?” *United Church of Christ*. 21 July 2010. <ucc.org/feed-your-spirit/daily-devotional/is-jesus-god.html>).
- The United Church “of Christ” (UCC) says, **“One of the defining characteristics of the UCC is that we join in community by testimonials, not tests, of faith. Your beliefs, your understanding of God and Jesus and church are uniquely yours, as you seek and explore alongside others in community”** (“About Stillspeaking.” *The United Church of Christ*. 3 Apr 2012. <ucc.org/god-is-still-speaking/about/>).

- About **evolution**, the UCC presents itself in these words: **“Thankfully, creationism and intelligent design are not the only responses to evolutionary biology available to our Christian faith.** Ever since Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* rolled off the presses in 1859, theologians, philosophers, and scientists have struggled to reconcile his theory and its subsequent elaborations with Christian thought. Like generations of Christian thinkers before Darwin, many have seen scripture and nature as two books of revelation, one special and one general, which are not contradictory but complementary in revealing God’s relation to the world. **Many have recognized that Genesis does not purport to be a scientific treatise, and that to read it as such does not enrich science but rather impoverishes the Bible of its much richer moral, metaphorical, and even metaphysical meanings. Ironically, young-earth creationism arose decades after Darwin as a fundamentalist reaction to the growing acceptance of evolution in liberal theology;** and intelligent design theory has arisen only in the last two decades as a reaction to the failure of creation science to win respect in the academy and the courts” (Schaal, Jim M. Div. “An Evolving Faith.” UCC. 26 Apr 2006. <ucc.org/not-mutually-exclusive/pdfs/sermon2.pdf>).

Scriptures: *God:* Gen. 1:1-2, Psa. 110:1, Isa. 9:6, 48:16, 61:1, Mic. 5:2, Matt. 12:46-47, 13:55-56. 28:19, Luke 3:22, John 1:1, 14, Acts 7:55, 10:38, **Rom. 8:9, 9:5, 15:30, 2 Cor. 3:17, 13:14, Phil. 2:5-8, Col. 1:15-20**, Heb. 9:14, 1 Pet. 1:2, 3:18, 1 John 4:2; *Creation:* Gen. 1:26-27, Exo. 20:11, Matt. 19:4-5, Mark 10:6-8, Luke 11:50-51, Rom. 1:20.

Christ’s Words and the Scriptures:

- The United Church “of Christ” says, **“We take the Bible seriously but not literally.** In our tradition, **we take it so seriously that we take the time to study the social and historical context in which it was written. So you will hear us talk about the history of the Jewish and Christian people, as well as the work of modern scholars. We believe that God intentionally planted the word in the middle of history and culture, and therefore that background is part of the story we need to learn.** We believe in the Bible so much that we think it deserves our best questions. **We believe that the Bible is the opening of a conversation in which God is still speaking.**

We believe that the Bible is God’s own holy word passed down to us through fallible human beings. **We can imagine that some of what is in the Bible was a product of a particular time and place and is not what God desires for this time and place.** We tread carefully in these waters, using the tools of history and the gifts of **the spirit** to ask the still speaking God for a word for today. [...]

We are not afraid to notice and point out places where scripture disagrees with itself. We know that we are not the first generation to notice these things. We know that we are not the first generation to notice these things. **Those who carefully put the Bible together over the early centuries wrestled to decide which books should be included and which left out.** In their wisdom, they left us a collection of holy words that offer a rich variety of descriptions of God.” (Daniel, Lillian. “Do We Believe in the Bible?” *The Bible and the United Church of Christ*. 3 Apr 2012. <ucc.org/lcm/Bible-and-the-UCC-FINAL-2.pdf>).

- The UCC also thinks, “The Bible was not dictated by God. Nevertheless, God’s Spirit was at work in the ways in which the narrative took shape. **At every point, however, God’s Spirit worked through flawed, limited human beings, so in certain respects the biblical accounts are also flawed and limited. There are historical records in the Bible, and some of them may be accurate, but others may be less accurate.** [...]

Our study of the Bible is not merely an intellectual exercise. It is a spiritual endeavor. As the Holy Spirit was at work in those who gave shape to the Bible, we seek the Spirit to be at work in our reading of it. **That is, the Spirit not only helped get the words on the page, we rely on the Spirit to get the words off the page. We rely on the Spirit all the more when we attempt to derive God’s**

truth for our time from passages of scripture that may in some way reflect the limited perspectives of the time in which they were written. [...]

It can take some time for the implications of the truths revealed in the Bible to be fully realized. **For instance, today we understand that slavery is wrong and irreconcilable with a Christian way of life. Yet early Christians, including the Apostle Paul, seemed to accept the practice. When Paul said that in Christ there is ‘no longer slave or free,’ it came like a revelatory flash, but even he did not understand all the implications fully. [...]**

If, because someone misuses the Bible, we stop using it or taking it seriously, then those others will be left to interpret it as they see fit and we won't have much to say.” (Copenhaver, Martin B. “How We Read the Bible in the United Church of Christ.” *The Bible and the United Church of Christ*. 3 Apr 2012. <ucc.org/lcm/Bible-and-the-UCC-FINAL-2.pdf>).

Scriptures: Luke 1:1-3, 1 Cor. 1:1-2, 10, 12:13, 2 Cor. 1:1, Eph. 3:3-5, Col. 4:16, 2 Thess. 2:15, 2 Tim. 3:16-17 (cf. 1 Tim. 5:18), **2 Pet. 1:16-21, 3:15-16, 1 John 1:1-4.**

Way of Salvation:

- The United Church “of Christ” (UCC) states, “Am I saved? These days the question may be put more smoothly. In whatever guise, it lingers. And it does get to the heart of faith. ‘Salvation’ comes from a Hebrew root meaning ‘removal of constriction’ and ‘breathing space.’ **For Christians, we grow into this under the influence of Jesus. The new life he inspires gradually frees us from what has gotten in our way—doubt, arrogance, excessive modesty, guilt or shame, anger including what the church itself can stir up. ‘Frees us’ is not the same as ‘makes go away.’** It means that trouble no longer locks us in. We’re no longer facing dead ends. The problems that remain, however serious, are no longer shackles. Jesus did not constrain people all over again, this time in the name of God. He did not insist that people see things his way. Many didn't. He didn't argue. He simply states what he knows to be true and embodies it in his way of living. He shows that God's love runs deeper than anything that gets in the way” (Green, William C. “Are You Saved?” *UCC*. 4 Apr 2012. <ucc.org/feed-your-spirit/daily-devotional/are-you-saved.html>).
- The UCC says, **“The sacrament of baptism is an outward and visible sign of the grace of God. Through baptism a person is joined with the universal church,** the body of Christ. In baptism, God works in us the power of forgiveness, **the renewal of the spirit,** and the knowledge of the call to be God's people always” (“About Baptism.” *UCC*. 4 Apr 2012. <ucc.org/worship/baptism/>).
- The UCC states, **“In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognizes two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion”** (“The Preamble of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ.” *UCC*. General Synod, 1957. 4 Apr 2012. <ucc.org/beliefs/preamble-to-the-constitution.html>).
- Regarding **baptism**, the UCC reports, **“Almost all congregations (97%) practice infant baptism, almost always as part of regular Sunday worship.** About 14% practice immersion of youth or adults, but usually only if requested, rather than a general practice. Over half will baptize any child, with the remainder requiring church membership, or promise of membership, by a parent. Most use the liturgy from the *Book of Worship*, or an adaptation, and the majority (78%) use traditional trinitarian words of ‘in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (or Ghost),’ **while another 9% use those words, but add more inclusive words such as ‘One God, Mother of us all,’** and 14% use ‘Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,’ or a variation of it. In general, baptismal practices are more in line with the common ecumenical tradition than other liturgical practices” (“Worshiping into God’s Future.” *UCC*. 2005. <ucc.org/assets/pdfs/witgf/ss2005.pdf>).

- The UCC states, **“The recognition of our baptism by the ecumenical church is important to us, and the Book of Worship encourages the use of language recognized in most Christian churches: ‘I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.’ Feminine images for God may surround these words to enrich understandings and offer balance”** (“About Baptism.” UCC. 4 Apr 2012. <ucc.org/worship/baptism/>).

Scriptures: Matt. 28:19-20, Mark 16:16, John 6:53-56, 16:7-13, Acts 2:28, 3:19, 8:38, 22:16, **Rom. 6:3-7**, Col. 2:11-12, 1 Tim. 2:4, 1 Pet. 3:21, 2 Pet. 1:10, 3:9, 1 John 1:5-2:6.

The Church & Government:

- The Handbook of Denominations states, **“The United Church of Christ represents a union of congregationalism and presbyterianism-** ‘It establishes congregationalism as the rule for the local congregation and presbyterianism as the basis for the organization of the connectional life of the churches’ [...]

Beside the local church stand associations, conferences, and the general synod. Local churches in a geographical area are grouped into an association, which is concerned with the welfare of the churches within its area; receives new churches into the United Church of Christ; **licenses, ordains, and installs ministers;** adopts its own constitution, bylaws, and rules of procedure; and is made up of the ordained ministers and elected lay delegates of the area. Associations meet regularly and related to the general synod through their conferences.

Associations are grouped into conferences, again by geographical area, [...] A conference acts on requests and references from the local churches, associations, general synod, and other bodies. It meets annually, and its main function is to coordinate the work and witness of its local churches and associations, to render counsel and advisory service, and to establish conference offices, centers, institutions, and other agencies.

The General Synod is the highest representative body; it meets biennially and is composed of 675 to 725 delegates chosen by the conferences, together with ex-officio delegates – the elected officers of the church members of the Executive Council, the moderator, and assistant moderators” (Mead, P.290-291).

- The Handbook of Denominations notes, **“The national church holds membership in the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. ... Since 1985, the United Church of Christ has enjoyed an ecumenical partnership with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)”** (Mead, P.291).
- The UCC presents, “The UCC's commitment to reconciliation among the separated branches of the Body of Christ includes our relationships of full communion. **Among these relationships are the Ecumenical Partnership between the UCC and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)** and the Formula of Agreement (FOA) among the UCC, **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA)** and the Reformed Church in America” (“Ecumenical Partnerships and Relationships of Full Communion.” UCC. 3 Apr 2012. <ucc.org/ecumenical/ecumenical-partnerships-and.html>).
- The UCC also notes, “The United Church of Christ is **a founding member of the National Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches** and many other ecumenical agencies and projects” (“Ecumenical Councils and Agencies.” UCC. 3 Apr 2012. <ucc.org/ecumenical/ecumenical-councils-and.html>).

Scriptures: Acts 14:26, 20:28, Eph. 1:22, 4:11-12, Phil. 1:1, Col. 1:18, 2:19, 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Pet. 5:1-4.

Worship and Assembly:

- The United Church “of Christ” views worship as, **“Worship is, first and foremost, ‘an encounter with the presence of God so that we might be transformed to do God’s work in the world.’** This

alternative was chosen from a list by 90% of clergy and about 2/3 of laity. Of course, worship is other things, as well (and respondents were asked to choose no more than two options). About 40% of clergy and 25% of lay respondents described worship as ‘**a joyous celebration of our redemption**,’ and 20-25% of both groups said that worship is ‘a gathering of learners on the way,’ ‘an opportunity to be educated and empowered for ministries of justice and reconciliation’ and ‘a reminder that all are welcome in God’s house’ (“Worshiping into God’s Future.” UCC. 3 Apr 2012. <ucc.org/assets/pdfs/witgf/ss2005.pdf>).

- About **the Lord’s Supper**, the United Reform Church states, “In the sacrament of Holy Communion, also called the Lord’s Supper or Eucharist, meaning ‘thanksgiving,’ Christians hear, taste, touch and receive the grace of God revealed through Jesus Christ in a unique way. Communion is:
 - a joyous act** of thanksgiving for all God has done, is doing, and will do for the redeeming of creation;
 - a sacred memorial of the crucified and **risen Christ**, a **living** and effective **sign** of Christ’s sacrifice in which Christ is truly and rightly present to those who eat and drink;
 - an earnest prayer for the presence of the Holy Spirit** to unite those who partake with the Risen Christ and with each other, and to restore creation, making all things new;
 - an intimate experience of fellowship** in which the whole church in every time and place is present and divisions are overcome;
 - a hopeful sign of the promised Realm of God marked by justice, love and peace.
 A variety of practices are found in the United Church of Christ, **including the sharing of a common loaf or the use of individual wafers or cubes of bread and the sharing of a common cup or of individual cups either at the Table or in the pews. Intinction (dipping the bread in the wine) is also an acceptable practice.** Care should be taken to ensure that the full meaning of the sacrament is communicated by the way the elements are used and served. **The pastor presides at the Table**, normally assisted by elders or deacons” (“About Communion. [...]
- **In the early church Communion was served weekly, a practice continued and encouraged by the Protestant Reformers.** Gradually the frequency of communion decreased in many Protestant churches. This trend is now being reversed. **While no one pattern prevails in the United Church of Christ, many congregations are moving toward monthly or weekly communion”** UCC. 3 Apr 2012. <ucc.org/worship/communion/>).
- The UCC reports, “**Holy Communion is generally celebrated either monthly (82%) or quarterly (9%), although a few congregations celebrate it weekly either at the primary or a second service (4%)**” (“Worshiping into God’s Future.” UCC. 2005. <ucc.org/assets/pdfs/witgf/ss2005.pdf>).
- Concerning **praise**, the United Church “of Christ” states, “‘Praise music is a memorable, melody-based composition which is musically accessible without being simplistic; it has a fresh sound incorporating less-traditional rhythms and harmonization. **Praise music makes one ‘feel’ something with a goal of establishing a deeper relationship with God.** It can move one to thought, action, and reflection based on the text or theme. **The language of praise music is inclusive and accessible.** It encompasses traditional religious vocabulary; explores non-traditional, **contemporary images of God**, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit; and draws from the rich imagery found within sacred Scripture. **Praise music seeks to embody the covenantal values of the United Church of Christ: Justice and Peace, Multiracial/Multicultural, Open and Affirming** [acceptance of homosexuality, etc.], Accessible to All – as we seek unity; celebrate diversity; honor inclusion; hope for relational, loving communities; and explore multiple images and understandings of God.’ ~Adopted by the Praise Song Advisory Team, Sunday, July 22, 2007” (“Sing! Prayer and Praise.” UCC. 3 Apr 2012. <ucc.org/music-arts/sing-prayer-and-praise/sing-prayer-and-praise-5.html>).

- “Traditional church music is still the norm in the majority of UCC congregations, with the organ used in all but 3%. **Almost all congregations use music during a prelude (99%), offertory (93%) and postlude (92%) and 89% have an anthem.** Classical music is a distant second (38%) and praise songs are third, with nearly a quarter singing them regularly. **Other musical instruments such as drums or guitars and other types of music are present, but in far fewer churches, or only occasionally**” (“Worshiping into God’s Future.” UCC. 2005. <ucc.org/assets/pdfs/witgf/ss2005.pdf>).
- Concerning **leadership for attracting others**, the UCC announced, “Focusing on the principles of creativity, commitment to excellence, leadership and training that have made The Walt Disney Company a success for decades, **the workshop will provide practical tips and tools necessary to help churches and church staff create a Disney culture in their church.**
‘This workshop is open to all church leaders, because I believe everyone can benefit from the various lessons that Disney has to teach,’ said Perry. **‘It is my hope that those who attend discover new and exciting ways to not only attract and reach out to those who are interested in church, but to also create experiences and convey Christ’s message in creative and transformative ways’**” (“Church Leadership Expert and Disney Enthusiast Coming to UCC Church House.” UCC. 3 Apr 2012. <ucc.org/news/church-leadership-expert-and.html>).

Scriptures: Matt. 6:1-18, 15:1-9, 23, John 4:21-24; **1 Cor.** 4:17, **11:17-34**; 14, 16:1-3; Eph. 5:19; Col. 2:18-23, 3:16; Heb. 2:12, 10:24-25, 13:15-16.

Morality:

- About abortion, the United Church “of Christ” (UCC) says, “After the Supreme Court decision in 1972, *Roe v. Wade*, which legalized abortion in the U.S., **the UCC has joined with other faith groups to protect women’s equal and fair access to abortion and family planning which have been under attack consistently.** The strategies of those seeking to overturn *Roe* have shifted to state legislations. In 2010, 2011 and 2012, we have seen an unprecedented number of state laws introduced and passed which restrict women’s health options” (“Reproductive Justice.” UCC. 3 Apr 2012. <ucc.org/justice/womens-issues/Reproductive-Justice.html>).
- Regarding **homosexuality**, UCC states, “Reflecting the **Open and Affirming action of the General Synod** (1985) and the Transgender action of the General Synod (2003), to say that a setting of the UCC (a local church, campus ministry etc.) is **‘Open and Affirming’ means that it has publicly and specifically declared that those of all ‘sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions’ (or ‘lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender’ people) are welcome in its full life and ministry (e.g. membership, leadership, employment, etc.)** It bespeaks a spirit of hospitality and a willingness to live out that welcome in meaningful ways” (“What Does ‘Open and Affirming’ (ONA) Mean?” *United Church of Christ*. 3 Apr 2012. <ucc.org/lgbt/ona.html>).
- Concerning **homosexuals adopting**, the UCC decided, **“THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-eighth General Synod of the United Church of Christ, call on the United Church of Christ in all of its settings to defend the rights of all children to have loving parents without regard to sexual orientation or gender expression, and to recognize a family to be any loving, nurturing, ethical relationship between a child and one or more parents; and**
 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-eighth General Synod of **the United Church of Christ calls on all states to evaluate prospective adoptive parents solely on the basis of their individual character and ability to parent, not on their sexual orientation or gender identity**, and to grant second-parent or joint adoptions when it is in the child’s best interests;
 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-eighth General Synod of the United Church of Christ requests **Justice and Witness Ministries to communicate this resolution to local, state and national legislators**, urging them to support the rights of all children to have a loving parent or parents

without regard to the parent's sexual orientation or gender identity." ("The Right of LGBT Parents to Adopt and Raise." UCC. 1-5 July 2011.

ucc.org/lgbt/pdfs/2011_THE_RIGHT_OF_LGBT_PARENTS_TO_ADOPT_AND_RAISE_CHILDREN.pdf).

- In a list of **recommended scripture readings** to those who are not familiar with the Bible, the UCC suggest these, "(2) **The Story of Ruth and Naomi**, in the Book of Ruth - Two women form their own same-sex family, for a while at least, in a world dominated by men. Don't get us wrong: they're not lesbians, just really strong women.

(3) **Mary's Annunciation and Song**, Luke 1:26-38, 46-55 - Mary meek and mild? Yeah, right. How about Mary the Revolutionary? **Overthrowing governments, redistributing wealth...**read the Magnificat again and see the Mother of God in a whole new light. [...]

(8) **Balaam's Ass**, Numbers 22 - On the way to do an unholy deed, **Balaam discovers his \$%# is smarter than he is**. Also that God isn't down with cruelty to animals. And yes, we know that most modern translations say 'donkey,' but **we think the old language is a lot more fun**" (Caldwell, Quinn G. "Twelve Great Reads." *The Bible and the United Church of Christ*. 3 Apr 2012. ucc.org/lcm/Bible-and-the-UCC-FINAL-2.pdf).

Scriptures: Matt. 15:19, **Mark 7:20-23**, Rom. 1:24-32, 12:9-15:13, 1 Cor. 6:9-11, Gal. 5:16-6:10, Eph. 4:17-6:18, Col. 3-4:6.

Marriage and Divorce:

- The UCC represent themselves by these words from Martin Copenhaver, "It is harder for me to know what to do with other teachings. For instance, **Jesus taught that married people should not divorce. And we're not talking about some obscure verse from a book of the Bible hardly anyone reads. All four gospels record Jesus' teachings on divorce.**

Nevertheless, when I am working with a couple whose marriage has become so riddled with conflict that it seems like a death-match in which the parties can neither leave nor come out alive, **it can be difficult to accept such a teaching, no matter the source. Sometimes I end up supporting a couple's decision to divorce.** Even in such instances, however, I do not take out Mr. Jefferson's scissors to cut out the passages I find difficult to accept. I keep them close at hand because I recognize that my own perspectives are limited and I still have a lot to learn. I pray for fuller understanding and new insight. After all, we often learn the most from other people when we don't readily agree with them. Often that is true in our relationship with the Bible as well" ("The Really Hard Parts." *The Bible and the United Church of Christ*. 3 Apr 2012. ucc.org/lcm/Bible-and-the-UCC-FINAL-2.pdf).

Scriptures: Matt. 5:31-32, 19:9, Mark 10:5-12, **Luke 16:18**, 1 Cor. 6:16-18, 7:10-15, Heb. 13:4.

The End Times & Afterlife:

- **The UCC presents no official position regarding Jesus' coming, His kingdom, heaven, or hell** (ucc.org).

Scripture: Matt. 24:29-51, 25:31-46, Mark 13:24-37, Luke 21:25-36, John 14:1-4, Acts 1:9-11, 1 Cor. 15:23-28, 50-53, 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11, 2 Thess. 2:1-12, 2 Pet. 3:1-13, Rev. 19-22:5.