

Sunday, September 30, 2012—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—Lesson 73 The Theology and Impact of the *Scotfield Reference Bible*, Lesson 2

## **Introduction**

- In lesson 72 we considered the theological roots of the *SRB*, by looking at the influence upon Scofield’s theological thinking. In this lesson we want to survey the doctrine that Scofield taught and propagated through the publication of the *SRB*. We will do this by considering the following points.
  - General Characteristics and Approach
  - Hermeneutical Approach and Assumptions
  - Dispensational Scheme

## **General Characteristics and Approach**

- “Every aspect of *The Scofield Reference Bible* is geared toward the reader doing personal, inductive Bible study. . .That *The Scofield Reference Bible* was such a helpful tool for self-investigation of scriptural teaching is largely what gave it its appeal—and its power.” (Mangum and Sweetnam, 95)
- “Of primary concern was the placing of the books of the Bible into their proper context, that is, into their individual historical contexts and into their place in the story of the Bible as a whole. Scofield’s introduction leads with “A Panoramic View of the Bible,” in which the books of the Bible are laid out in canonical order and distinguished according to their purpose and contribution to the overall message of the Bible. Scofield clearly stated that the primary message of the Bible is “*one great theme*—the person and work of Christ.” He identified the Old Testament as “preparation”, the Gospels as “manifestation”, the book of Acts as “propagation”, the Epistles as “explanation”, and the Apocalypse as “consummation” of the message of redemption in Christ.” (Mangum and Sweetnam, 95 and Scofield, V)
- Each individual book of the Bible contains its own introduction with a brief overview of author, date, occasion for writing, and a general outline of the book. In the middle column, Scofield provided a well-researched system of chain reference that highlights significant other usages of terms, alerts the reader to possible alternative translations, or sheds light on the meaning of a phrase. Measurements, weights, coinage, equivalencies, geographical clarifications, and correlations are also provided in the middle column. Where a major theological term is encountered that is too substantial to cover in a couple of words in the middle column, Scofield added a note at the bottom of the page supplying a fuller summary of its meaning and significance and even more extensive cross-references to trace the usage of the term throughout the Bible. In the back of the *SRB*, the reader will find indices of subjects, proper names, a mini-concordance, and topographically colored maps (275 pages). In the 1917 edition, Bishop Ussher’s dating system was added. Taken together, all of these features represent an impressive amount of meticulous work. Considering the absence of computer technology, the indexing,

concordance, and cross-references represent years of tedious and painstaking labor. For these reasons alone it is easy to see why the average Christian found the *SRB* such a valuable resource. (Mangum and Sweetnam, 95-98)

- Transcending partisanship was clearly one of Scofield's goals in his defining traditionally controversial terminology. For example consider Scofield's comments on the will of God in Genesis 46, "It is important to distinguish between the *decretive* and *permissive* will of God." (Scofield, 65) At first blush it seems as if Scofield is using standard theological terminology, however, further investigation reveals that Scofield is coining new terminology. Traditional Reformed Theology speaks of God's decretive, permissive, and moral will. In this framing, God's decretive will—the will he has decreed from eternity past—entails all that comes to pass. God's permissive will is the portion of God's decretive will that God allows to happen (what he does not stop), but what also does not reflect his actual desire. What God actually desires is designated as God's moral will; but, in this framing, God's moral will is not necessarily what he has decreed to come to pass. The end result of Scofield's modifications is that the most practical aspects of standard Reformed distinction are retained, while the more abstract or controversial aspects are modified for great accessibility. (Mangum and Sweetnam, 98-100)
  - Scofield's notes on "the sons of God" in Genesis 6 is one of the few places where Scofield clearly advocated one interpretative option over a competing one.

### **Hermeneutical Approach and Assumptions**

- "One of the first things a reader may notice about Scofield's notes and study helps is the weighty attention given to explaining terms and definitions. . . In this emphasis, Scofield is displaying the influence of the scientific method that had come to be highly respected by the late nineteenth century. Indeed, he is deliberately striving to secure the carefulness of this methodology as well as the alleged certainty of its results. More specifically, the hermeneutical method in play here was introduced by Francis Bacon, often called the father of the inductive method. . . In this method, data is observed, collected, scrutinized, and analyzed with patterns emerging self-evidently from the data. . . In this, Scofield's hermeneutical methods are no different from what American evangelicals in general commonly assumed at the time." (Mangum and Sweetnam, 103-104)
- Princeton theologian Charles Hodge reflects the same approach in the introduction to his *Systematic Theology*:
  - "If natural science be concerned with the facts and laws of nature, theology is concerned with the facts and principles of the Bible. If the object of the one be to arrange and systematize the facts of the external world, and to ascertain the laws by which they are determined; the object of the other is to systematize the facts of the Bible, and ascertain the principles of general truths which those facts involve. (Hodge, 18)

- For Scofield, the most basic unit of data is the word; and so, he devotes much attention to defining words, tracing word usages throughout the Bible, and researching the linguistic background of key terms and phrases. Even though Scofield never attended university, college, or seminary, his high school education was college preparatory and exposed him to classical Greek and Latin. Using this background and the help of other written sources, Scofield used Greek and Hebrew as background reference points to provide further scientific clarification for English word meanings. Not only does this approach reflect the standard evangelical practice of his day, it is also in line with an overall Baconian methodology that seeks to establish the meaning of words with carefulness, thoroughness, and objectivity. The belief was that this established a concrete level of foundational data on which to build exegetical and theological conclusions. (Mangum and Sweetnam, 105)
- “Of course, there is a downside to this methodology, which in fairness to Scofield, did not become obvious to students of hermeneutics for another fifty years. Because word meanings derive their greatest influence from the specific context in which they are used (rather than from such factors as etymology, morphology, or lexical definition), words may be inherently incapable of the kind of static, fixed meaning that Scofield’s scientific approach seeks to assume. Scofield’s methodology tends to mask rather than alert the readers to different ways various authors use the same word(s). Likewise, Scofield’s methodology tends to minimize, rather than explain, the way that the meaning of certain key terms develops over time, or how the meaning of key terms evolves into technical terminology only through historical and communal usage.” (Mangum and Sweetnam, 106)
- “As became common knowledge by the end of the twentieth century, the Baconian method overlooks the role of the collector, collator, and interpreter of data. This is a fault of the methodology, not a fault in the character or intention of the one applying the methodology. In other words, if Scofield was guilty of subtly imposing his own theological assumptions onto the explanations of scriptural teaching, or if he made theological error, there is no reason to assume anything other than that these were mistakes made honestly, not deceitfully.” (Mangum and Sweetnam, 107)
- Another aspect of Scofield’s hermeneutical approach worth commenting on is his typology. The significance of typology for Scofield is rooted in the division between Israel and the Church. “Traditional assessments of biblical typology regard Old Testament events, persons, objects, and icons as spiritual, even mystical, foreshadowing of New Testament persons and realities, especially concerning Christ. Scofield’s typology has much in common with this traditional understanding. Scofield’s typology is distinctive, however, in that it not only advocates a deeper meaning, it suggests an actual dual meaning—one for Israel (its earthly meaning) and one for the church (its heavenly meaning).” (Mangum and Sweetnam, 108)
- The introduction to Song of Solomon in the *SRB* stands out as a prime example of Scofield’s use of typology.

- “The interpretation is twofold: Primarily, the book is the expression of pure marital love as ordained of God in creation, and the vindication of that love as against both asceticism and lust—the two profanations of the holiness of marriage. The secondary and larger interpretation is of Christ the Son and His heavenly bride, the Church (2 Cor. 11:1-4).” (Scofield, 705)
- We are given quite a window of insight into Scofield’s hermeneutical approach to the Old Testament in this brief comment. In his system, the *primary* sense is its literal sense, the *secondary* but nonetheless *larger* sense is the typological sense. It is the typological interpretation that Scofield explored in Song of Solomon. Scofield insisted that the typological interpretation he advocated is not unrestrained (and not prone to fanciful, arbitrary allegorizing). He asserted, “Two warnings are necessary: 1) Nothing may be dogmatically asserted to be a type without explicit New Testament authority; and 2) all types not so authenticated must be recognized as having the authority of *analogy*, or spiritual *congruity*, merely.” (Scofield, 100)
- There can be no doubt that Scofield’s dispensationalism impacted and guided his use of typology. Consider his note on Hosea 2:2 as an example.
  - “That Israel is the wife of Jehovah (see vs. 16-23), now disowned but yet to be restored, is the clear teaching of the passages. This relationship is not to be confounded with that of the Church to Christ (John 3:29, *refs*). In the mystery of the Divine tri-unity, both are true. The N.T. speaks of the Church as a virgin espoused to one husband (2 Cor. 11:1-2); which could never be said of an adulterous wife, restored in grace. Israel is, then, to be the restored and forgiven wife of Jehovah, the Church the virgin wife of the Lamb (John 3:29, Rev. 19:6-8); Israel Jehovah’s earthly wife (Hos. 2:23); the Church the Lamb’s heavenly bride (Rev. 19:7). (Scofield, 922)
- For a complete list of the typology found in the *SRB*, please consult the appendix at the end of this lesson.

### **Dispensational Scheme**

- In the preface to the original 1909 edition of the *SRB*, Scofield outlines eleven distinct points of the study Bible, along with rationale for the content of the notes. Point II highlights the great advances in Bible study that had occurred in the “last fifty years”, i.e., within the prophetic Bible conference movement. Point VIII, suggests that one of the advances in Bible study that occurred in the previous fifty years was, “the modern study of the Prophets, in recovering to the church not only a clear and coherent harmony of the predictive portions, but also the great treasures of ethical truth.” The point goes on to claim that the prophetic “portion of the Bible, nearly one-fourth of the whole has been closed to the average reader by fanciful and allegorical schemes of interpretation.” Point X is the clearest dispensational statement found in the preface. Point X reads:

- “The Dispensations are distinguished, exhibiting the majestic, progressive order of the divine dealings of God with humanity, ‘the increasing purpose’ which runs through and links together the ages, from the beginning of the life of man to the end in eternity.” (Scofield, iii)
- Putting all these points together from the preface of the *SRB*, it is clear that the work assumes an approach to the Bible made popular in the preaching of the Bible conference movement of the previous fifty years—a dispensational approach. In his comments on Genesis 1:28, Scofield offers the following definition of a dispensation.
  - “A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect to some *specific* revelation of the will of God. Seven such dispensations are distinguished in Scripture.” (Scofield, 5)
- In a second note on Genesis 1:28, Scofield articulates a traditional test, failure, and judgment dispensational model.
  - “The First Dispensation: Innocency. Man was created in innocency, placed in a perfect environment, subject to an absolutely **simple test**, and warned of the **consequence of disobedience**. The woman **fell** through pride; the man, deliberately (1 Tim. 2:14). God restored His sinning creature, but the dispensation of innocency ended in the judgment of **Expulsion** (Gen 3:24). See the other dispensations: Conscience (Gen. 3:23); Human Government (Gen. 8:20); Promise (Gen. 12:1); Law (Ex. 19:8); Grace (John 1:17); Kingdom (Eph. 1:10).” (Scofield, 5)
- For Scofield, each dispensation presents its own test; humankind invariably fails this test, presenting overall a striking contrast between God who is merciful and good and human beings who are sinful and undeserving.
  - Please see the chart in the appendix for a complete breakdown of Scofield’s dispensational scheme.
- “For Scofield, this dispensationalist tool was especially useful: 1) for resolving apparent discrepancies between two or more sets of biblical teachings; and 2) for sorting through which prophecies pertain to Christ’s first coming, which pertain to his second coming, and which pertain to a secret coming for the church, unheard of before Israel rejected Christ’s offer of the messianic kingdom.” (Mangum and Sweetnam, 114)
- Fifteen years before the publication of the *SRB*, Scofield published a pamphlet titled, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth: Ten Outline Studies of the More Important Divisions of Scripture*. The ten outline studies of the pamphlet provide a template in which passages of Scripture are put into columns beneath one category or the other and set in contrast to one another. (Mangum and Sweetnam, 120) According to Scofield these divisions were:

- 1) The Jew, the Gentile, and the church of God; 2) The seven dispensations; 3) The two advents; 4) The two resurrections; 5) The five judgments; 6) Law and grace; 7) The believer's two natures; 8) The believer's standing and state; 9) Salvation and rewards, 10) Believers and professors (Scofield, *Rightly Dividing*)
- “Logically speaking, the central contrast in Scofield’s theology is between law and grace. Two people of God—Israel and the church—form around these two mutually exclusive premises of relationship to God. (Gentiles are those outside of Israel and is the term retained for unbelievers in the age of grace according to Scofield.) Christ’s two advents are also explained by these two premises of law and grace being at work in contrast to one another. Christ, in his first coming, fulfilled all expectations of the law and, that done, inaugurated a new age in which expectation and obligation of the law are set aside and grace abounds; his second advent will be a coming for the people of grace and an establishing of the earthly kingdom where God’s law is actually obeyed. The seven dispensations and the five judgments are all derived from there being different expectations for different people . . . depending on whether they are living in an age of law or an age of grace.” (Mangum and Sweetnam, 120)
- “The other four contrasts (believer’s two natures, believer’s standing and state, salvation and rewards, and believers and professors) are all Scofield’s analysis of dynamics at work in the dispensation of grace.” (Mangum and Sweetnam, 120-121)
- For the purposes of the *Grace History Project* it is important to note that Scofield is either ignorant of much of the resurgence in Pauline truth that occurred before the year 1900, or he willfully rejected it. As we have already seen, men such as Holden (Lesson 61), Mackintosh (Lessons 65-66), and Bullinger (Lessons 67-69) had already written extensively on the mystery, Pauline authority, and the fact that Acts 2 was not the beginning of the body of Christ. Despite having this wealth of information available and in print during the years that he was composing the notes for the *SRB*, Scofield taught that the Dispensation of Grace began with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Technically this cannot even be viewed as the standard Acts 2 dispensational view. In his note on John 1:17, Scofield states the following:
  - “As a dispensation, grace begins with the death and resurrection of Christ (Romans 3:24-26; 4:24,25). The point of testing is no longer legal obedience as the condition of salvation, but acceptance or rejection of Christ, with good works as a fruit of salvation (John 1:12,13; 3:36; Matthew 21:37; 22:24; John 15:22,25; Hebrews 1:2; 1 John 5:10-12). The immediate result of this testing was the rejection of Christ by the Jews, and His crucifixion by Jew and Gentile (Acts 4:27). The predicted end of the testing of man under grace is the apostasy of the professing church: See "Apostasy" (See Scofield (2 Timothy 3:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-8) and the resultant apocalyptic judgments.” (Scofield, 1115)
- Despite clearly teaching that the dispensation of grace began with the resurrection of Christ, in his notes on Ephesians 3, Scofield teaches that in the epistles of Paul alone are found the doctrine, position, walk, and destiny of the church.

- “That the Gentiles were to be saved was no mystery (Romans 9:24-33; Romans 10:19-21). The mystery "hid in God" was the divine purpose to make of Jew and Gentile a wholly new thing—"the church, which is Christ's body," formed by the baptism with the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:12,13) and in which the earthly distinction of Jew and Gentile disappears (Ephesians 2:14,15; Colossians 3:10,11). The revelation of this mystery, which was foretold, but not explained by Christ (Matthew 16:18) was committed to Paul. In his writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk, and destiny of the church.” (Scofield, 1252)
- Careful readers of Scofield’s notes will observe in the above quotation that the revelation of the mystery was foretold in Matthew 16. This is only one of the many inconstancies of the dispensational scheme found in the *SRB*. In this sense it is hard to view the *SRB* as a total step forward in the resurgence of Pauline truth. While the *SRB* did much to popularize the general dispensational approach to Scripture and some features of Pauline truth, mid-Acts dispensationalists cannot recommend it without reservation and caution.

### Works Cited

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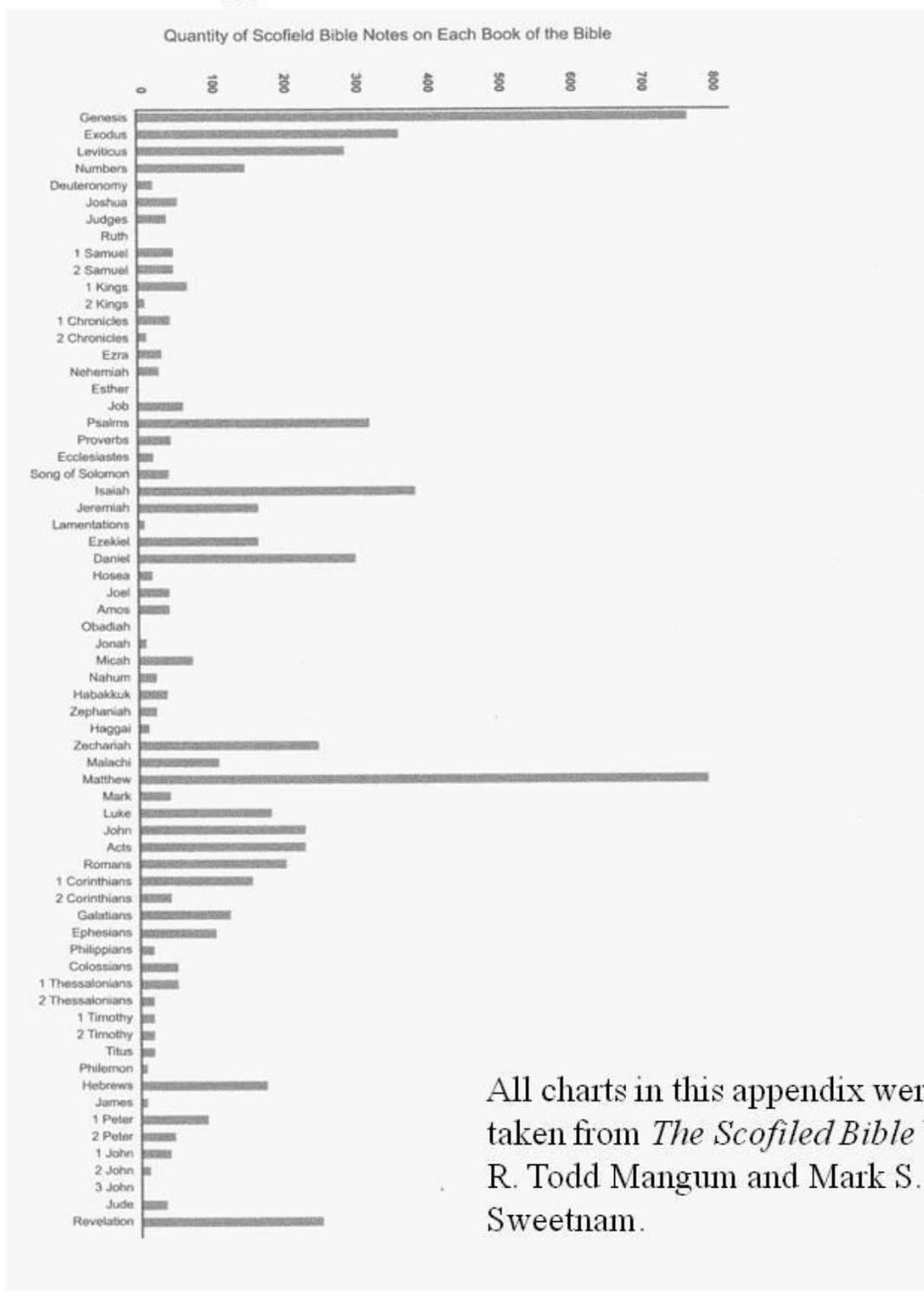
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## Appendix For Lesson 73



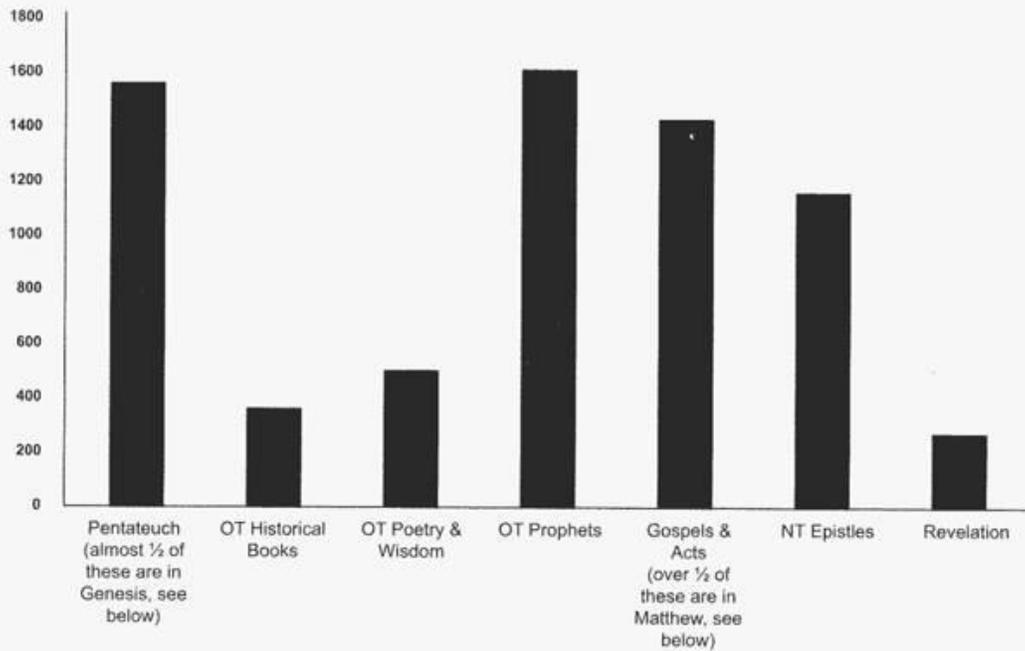
The following chart is a comprehensive listing of the types Scofield recognized throughout the Bible.

Type	Scripture	Represents
"Greater light"; "Lesser light"	Gen. 1:16	Christ The Church
Eve	Gen. 2:23	The Church, as bride of Christ
Coats of skin given to Adam & Eve	Gen. 3:21	" 'Christ, made unto us righteousness'—a divinely provided garment that the first sinners might be made fit for God's presence"
Cain Abel	Gen. 4	Natural man Spiritual man
Abel's lamb sacrifice	Gen. 4:4	Sacrifice of Christ, Lamb of God
Adam, head of old creation	Gen. 5	"Contrasting type of Christ, the head of the new creation"
Enoch	Gen. 5:22–24	Saints who are to be "translated before the apocalyptic judgments," i.e., taken up by rapture before the great tribulation
Noah	Gen. 5–6	Jewish people, left on the earth, but kept through the apocalyptic judgments, preserved through the great tribulation
Noah's Ark	Gen. 6	Christ, refuge of his people from judgment; specifically a refuge for the Jews preserved through the tribulation; also more generally a refuge for the believer, who is safe in the atonement of Christ
Melchizedek	Gen. 14:18	Christ, the King-Priest
Hagar	Gen. 16	"The law, 'which gendereth to bondage' "
Sarah	Gen. 21	Grace, "the free woman" and of "the Jerusalem which is above"
Isaac	Gen. 21–22	"Isaac is typical in a fourfold way": Of the church, as composed of the spiritual children of Abraham Of Christ, son obedient unto death Of Christ, bridegroom of a called-out bride Of the new nature of the believer
Ram, sacrificed in place of Isaac	Gen. 22	Christ, our substitute
Abraham	Gen. 22	God the Father
Rebekah, Isaac	Gen. 24	The church, bride of Christ, The bridegroom, Christ
Esau	Gen. 25	Natural man
Jacob	Gen. 32:28	Christ [not noted in the text, but listed as a type of Christ in Scofield's subject index]

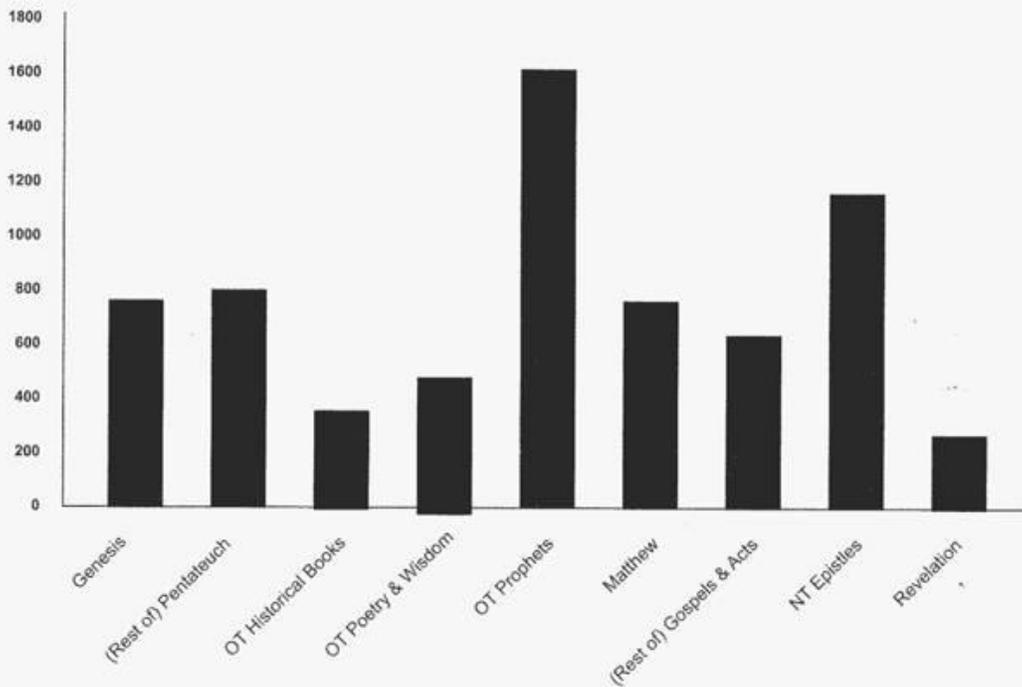
Type	Scripture	Represents
Jacob's ladder	Gen. 28:12-22	Christ, access to God; means of fulfilling Abrahamic covenant through Jacob
Drink offering	Gen. 35:14	Christ, in that He/His life was "poured out" (cf. Psa. 22:14; Isa. 53:12)
Benjamin	Gen. 35	Christ, son of right hand to his father, son of sorrow to his mother
Joseph	Gen. 37	"most complete" type of Christ
Asenath, Gentile bride of Joseph	Gen. 41:45	The Church
Moses	Ex. 2	Christ, the deliverer, taking on a Gentile bride; advocate & leader/king of God's people
Passover	Ex. 12	Christ, our Redeemer
Manna	Ex. 16:23-36	Christ, "the bread of life, come down from heaven"
Rock, from which water came	Ex. 17:1-7	The Rock = Christ; the water = the Spirit
Tabernacle and everything in it (e.g., ark of the covenant, mercy seat); Inner veil Brazen altar  Showbread Candlesticks Oil Incense Laver	Ex. 26-30	Christ, Christ's atoning sacrifice; also, the church and individual believers as habitation(s) of the Spirit; also, figure of the heavenly throne room of God;  = Christ's human body, rent when Christ died = Cross, upon which Christ, our whole burnt-offering, offered Himself without spot to God = Christ, bread of life = Christ, our Light = the Holy Spirit = Christ, our intercessor = Christ, cleansing us from defilement
High Priest, Priests	Ex. 28	High priest = Christ; Priests = believers of the Church age
Aaron	Ex. 29	In contrast to Christ, a priest in need of washing, cleansing, and rituals of sanctification
Burnt offering (similarly, other offerings)	Lev. 1	Christ, an offering without spot to God in delight to His Father's will even in death; an atoning, substitutionary sacrifice
Leprosy	Lev. 13	Sin; healing of leprosy = type of salvation
Feast of Unleavened Bread	Lev. 23:6-8	Communion with Christ, in the full blessing of his redemption
Feast of Firstfruits	Lev. 23:10-14	Resurrection
Pentecost	Lev. 23:15-22	Descent of Holy Spirit, uniting one "homogenous body" (which still has sinful aspects), to make "one organism" (from what were separated "loaves")
Feast of Trumpets	Lev. 23:23-25	Future regathering of long-dispersed Israel

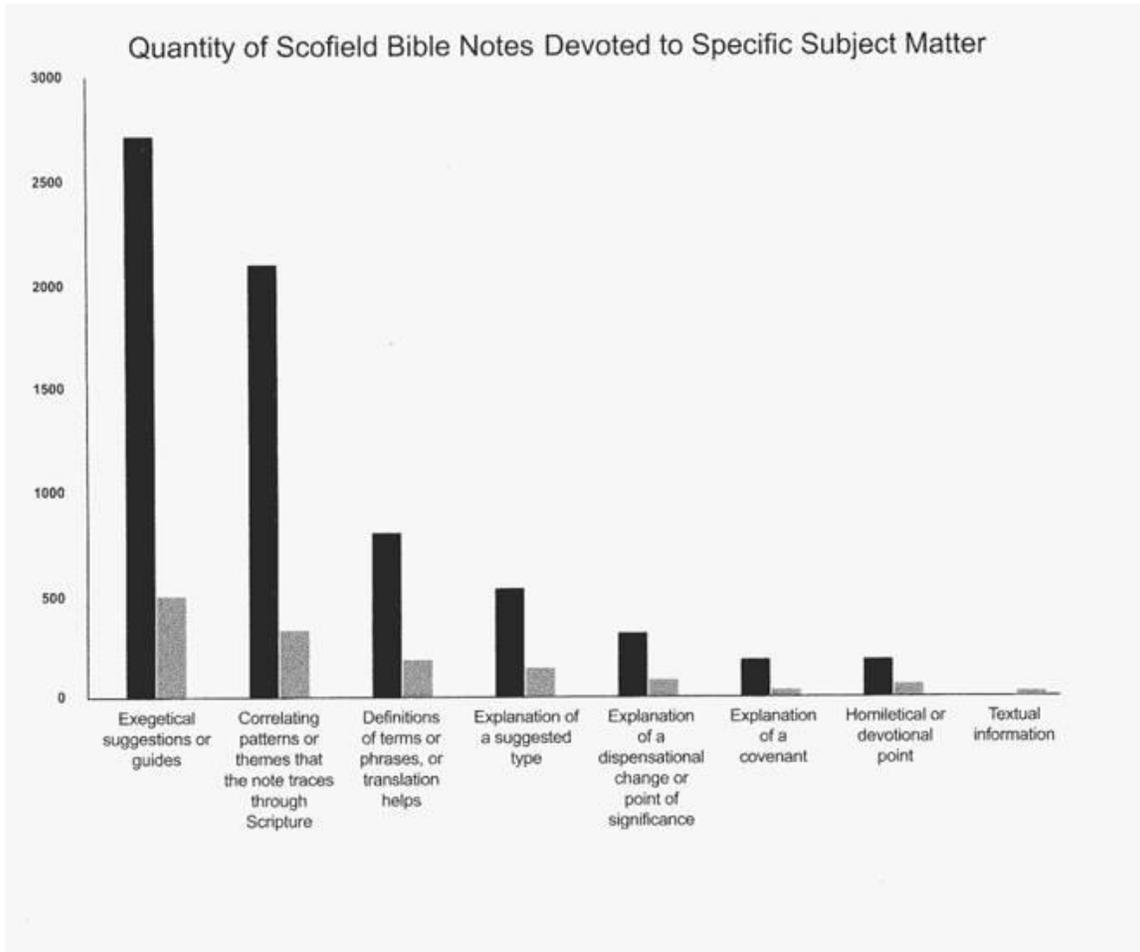
Type	Scripture	Represents
Kinsman-Redeemer	Lev. 25:47–55; and Ruth	Christ
Nazarite	Num. 6	Christ, "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners (Heb. 7. 26)"
Sabbath and Canaan	Num. 15	Heavenly Rest, Promised Land for the believer
Aaron's rod that budded	Num. 17:8	Christ, in resurrection
Red heifer	Num. 19:1–10	Sacrifice of Christ
Serpent; Bronze serpent	Gen. 3:14; Num. 21:5–20	Serpent = sin; Bronze serpent = Christ, bearing sin; sin judged and cleansed
Balaam	Num. 22	Hireling prophet; false teachers
Reubenites, Gadites and half tribe of Manasseh	Num. 32	Carnal Christians
Cities of Refuge	Num. 35	Christ, sheltering the sinner from judgment
Joshua	Joshua	Christ, "Captain of our salvation"
Crossing Jordan	Josh. 3	Our death with Christ
Two memorials of Jordan river crossing	Josh. 4	Christ's death, in the believer's place; the crucifixion of Christ
Samson	Judges 16:30	Christ [not noted in the text, but listed as a type of Christ in Scofield's subject index]
David	1 Sam. 16–17; 1 Kings 2; Psalms	Christ, Shepherd-King
Solomon; Shulamite bride	Song of Solomon	Christ; The Church, Bride of Christ
Eliakim	Isa. 22:20	Christ [not noted in the text, but listed as a type of Christ in Scofield's subject index]
Three Hebrews: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego	Dan. 3	Israel in the last days, faithful in the furnace of the great tribulation
Jonah	Jonah	Christ [not noted in the text, but listed as a type of Christ in Scofield's subject index]
Zerubbabel	Zech. 4	Christ, Prince Messiah

Quantity of Scofield Bible Notes on Each Genre of the Bible



Quantity of Scofield Bible Notes on Each Genre of the Bible (highlighting Genesis and Matthew)





## Scofield's Dispensational Scheme

DISPENSATION	RECORDED IN SCRIPTURE	TEST	RESULT
Innocence	Gen. 1:28 - 3:13	Do not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil	FAILURE Expulsion from the garden of Eden
Conscience	Gen. 3:22 - 7:23	Live according to the vague awareness of God's will awakened by the eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil	FAILURE The flood (as judgment)
Human Government	Gen. 8:20-11:9	The dictates of conscience are enforced by the divine institution of human government, including capital punishment for capital offenses	FAILURE Tower of Babel, confusion of languages  Blessing focused on only one race of people: the Jews
Promise	Gen. 12:1 – Ex. 19:8	Obey God out of love for Him, because of His gracious and unconditional promise to bless Israel, prosper her in the Land, and send her the Redeemer	SUSPENDED "when Israel rashly accepted the law" (Scofield Reference Bible, note on Gen. 12:1)
Law	Ex. 19:8 – Matt. 27:35	Live according to the rigorous dictates of the Mosaic law	FAILURE Cursing and captivity of the nation of Israel
Grace	End of the Gospels – Rev. 3 (Begins with the death and resurrection of Christ; ends at the rapture and beginning of the great tribulation)	"The point of testing is no longer legal obedience as the condition of salvation, but acceptance or rejection of Christ, with good works as a fruit of salvation" (Scofield Reference Bible, note on John 1:17)	(Eventual) FAILURE As world affairs grow more wicked, few will accept Christ, thus provoking God to judge the earth in the great tribulation
Kingdom	Prophets; Rev. 20 (This is the millennium, the revival of the kingdom promises to Israel and fulfillment of the Davidic covenant)	Once again legal obedience, but this time glorified and unglorified saints are enabled to obey by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit	FINAL WAR When Satan is released he again deceives a large portion of humanity, leading to a final devastating battle that ends history, followed by the final judgment