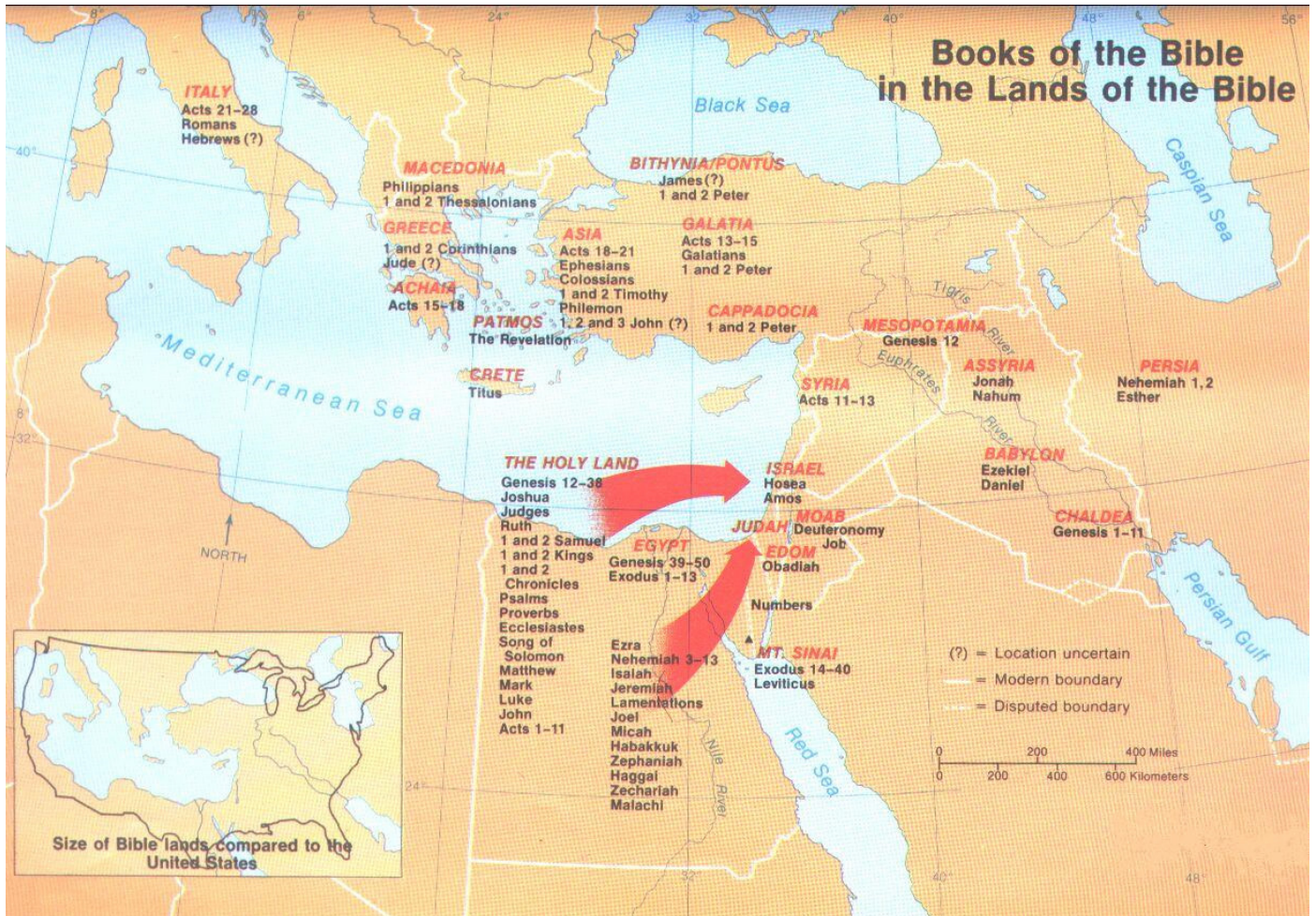


INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE



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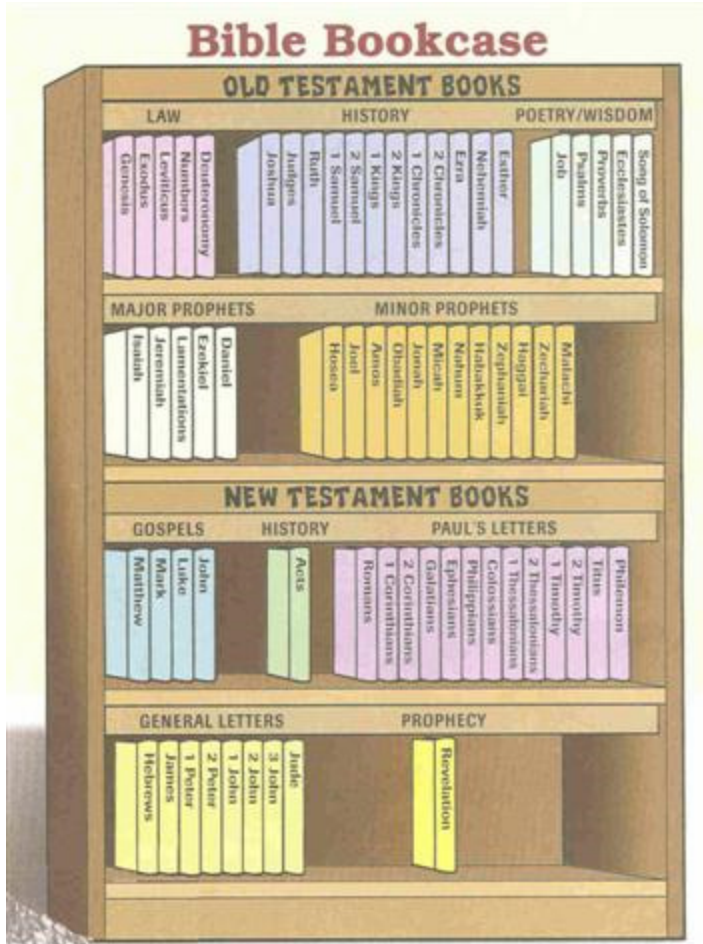
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New Bible Dictionary

New Bible Commentary



THE STRUCTURE OF THE BIBLE

1. **The Bible is a library of 66 books.** Written by about 40 authors, covering a period of approximately 1,400 - 1,600 years. The central theme is salvation through Jesus Christ. There are 2 main sections.

Old Testament (39 books)

New Testament (27 books)

2. **The message of the Bible** is all about God's gracious actions to reverse the effects of human sin and establish a new creation. The plan of salvation which is in Genesis and comes to a climax in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- The Old Testament is the story of a PROMISE of a Saviour and the account of God and his people.
- The New Testament is the FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE of a Saviour in Jesus Christ.

3. THE MAIN DIVISIONS OF THE BIBLE

The Old Testament is made up of books of Law/History, Poetry or Wisdom Writings and Prophetic Books

OLD TESTAMENT

THE BOOKS OF LAW (5) ALSO KNOWN AS THE PENTATEUCH

GENESIS	EXODUS	LEVITICUS	NUMBERS	DEUTERONOMY
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The books of Law are the first 5 books of the Old Testament and are also called "the Pentateuch" which means five scrolls. The framework of the Pentateuch consists of the story of God's people from the call of Abraham to the death of Moses. These books describe the creation of the world, God's call to the Hebrews to be His special people, their captivity, and release from Egypt, the law that guided them on their way to the Promised Land and how God blessed the people when they obeyed and disciplined them when they disobeyed.

THE BOOKS OF HISTORY (12)

Joshua	Judges	Ruth	1 Samuel	2 Samuel	1 Kings	2 Kings	1 Chronicles	2 Chronicles	Ezra	Nehemiah	Esther
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The period covered by these books extends from Joshua's entry into the land of Canaan until the middle of the exile.

God brought His nation to a new homeland. He helped them defeat their enemies and selected Kings to rule them. The historical narrative from Joshua to 2 Kings was in fact given the title "The Former Prophets" This was to distinguish the books from the Latter Prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the 12 Minor Prophets.

THE BOOKS OF POETRY (5) / also known as the Wisdom Writings

Job	Psalms	Proverbs	Ecclesiastes	Songs of Songs
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These books tell us about the greatness of God and the beauty of His creation. They also tell us how to live a life that will please God. There are answers in these books to many questions. Biblical poetry teaches that true worship and wisdom can only come from appropriate fear and affection for God.

THE BOOKS OF THE MAJOR PROPHETS (5)

THE BOOKS OF THE MINOR PROPHETS (12)

Isaiah	Jeremiah	Lamentation	Ezekiel	Daniel		Hosea	Joel	Amos	Obadiah	Jonah	Micah	Nahum	Habakkuk	Zephaniah	Haggai	Zechariah	Malachi
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God sent His messages to the people through the Prophets. The prophetic books belong to the dark ages of God's chosen people.

The Major Prophets wrote from the 8th to the 6th centuries BC, as nations were rising and falling around Israel, and idolatry and injustice were endemic in Israel.

By the time most of the Minor Prophets were writing (7th to the 5th centuries BC), the promise God had made to David of an everlasting kingdom was already at least 300 years old. These prophets foresaw tremendous destruction and sorrow for God's chosen people and for nations that would not humble themselves before God.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament reports how God's PROMISE CAME TRUE. The New Testament is made up of History / Letters (Pauline & General) and Prophetic books.

THE GOSPELS

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
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The Gospel writers record how God's promise of a Saviour and a new King came true. They record the special birth of Jesus, God's son. It is to the Gospels that we must turn for the written record of the life and teaching of Jesus.

HISTORY

Acts

The record of the Christian church and the spread of the Gospel

THE EPISTLES OR LETTERS

PAUL'S LETTERS

13 of the 21 Epistles (letters) were written by Paul – hence the Pauline Epistles. He wrote his letters to the churches at Thessalonica, Galatia, Corinth and Rome during his missionary journeys. While he was a prisoner in Rome he wrote his letters to the church at Ephesus, to the Colossians, one to Philemon and one to the Philippians. After his imprisonment, he wrote two letters to Timothy and one to Titus.

TO CHURCHES

INDIVIDUALS

Romans	1 Corinthians	2 Corinthians	Galatians	Ephesians	Philippians	Colossians	1 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians		1 Timothy	2 Timothy	Titus	Philemon
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GENERAL LETTERS

Hebrews	James	1 Peter	2 Peter	1 John	2 John	3 John	Jude
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The General Letters are letters of encouragement to believers, many of whom suffered persecution for their faith.

PROPHECY

Revelation

Revelation is the only book of prophecy in the New Testament. The book presents a glorious, reigning Christ.



THE 4 CLAIMS OF THE BIBLE:

1. **INSPIRED** – meaning it is the activity of the Holy Spirit who supervised what was written down, as God wanted His truth known. The method was supervision. All Scripture is God-breathed and not the interpretation of the authors. The authors were carried along and driven by the Spirit.
2 Timothy 3:16 / 2 Peter 1:20-21

Conclusion

The 2 related items are ***verbal*** inspiration meaning that every word is profitable and **plenary** meaning all of scripture as a whole is God's Word – not just the New Testament but the Bible as a whole.

2. **INERRANT** – The Bible is wholly true – every word and it is without error. Scripture is free from falsehood in all its teaching.
Titus 1:2 / Hebrews 6:18 / Matthew 5:17-18

Why should we believe it?

- 📖 Jesus teaches it
- 📖 Church teaches it
- 📖 God's character

3. INFALLIBLE

The totality of the Bible is trustworthy. It is without error in the truth it contains.
The Bible is authoritative.

4. SUFFICIENT AND FINAL

The Bible is completely sufficient for all our needs. The canon of Scripture is closed – there is nothing further to be added or removed from it. All the revelation of God has been placed in the Bible.
Deut. 4:2; 12:32

The Canon of Scripture is final and closed. It is our RULE / STANDARD of living for the Christian. It should be unbendable and straight. It is how God has revealed that He requires us to live.

Therefore in conclusion we are:

- To believe the Bible.
- Read it; love it and teach it to others.

CHRIST AND HIS BIBLE

This section shows us what His Bible meant to Him. How Jesus loved his Bible and how He taught from the Bible.

1. Way the Lord Jesus introduced the Old Testament

Today the Old Testament is terribly neglected – people sometimes only carry a New Testament – this should not be because we have a whole Bible, Genesis through Revelation.

Luke 4:16-21

Find how the Lord Jesus at the commencement of his work, based it on the Old Testament. Right at the start Jesus says - *"I am here to fulfill the Old Testament."*

Luke 4:1-12

V3 – "If you are the son of God tell"

Jesus answered – **"it is written"** - He quotes from Old Testament to defeat Satan

V8 – **"it is written"**

V12 – "do not put the Lord your God to the test."

Whether Jesus is introducing his ministry or fighting Satan or during times of temptation, He is using His Bible, the Old Testament.

Matt 15:1-9

Jesus used the Bible to silence His enemies. Jesus replied – **"for God said .."** - again to silence his critics the Lord Jesus is quoting from Word.

John 3:14

To teach the way of salvation.

The Lord Jesus was absolutely steeped and saturated in the teachings of the Old Testament. All the time it is the Bible that Jesus is quoting.

Psalm 73 – one quotation as He is answering the critics and speaking to his people.

Matt 4:4

Temptation – Jesus answered – **"it is written"** - every word

Why was the Bible so precious to the Lord Jesus? Every word – not only some or part, but every Word - it comes from the mouth of God.

The Lord Jesus believed that the Bible was inspired, the very word of God – He believed that. Jesus and his Bible – he introduces, emphasizes the eternal and the abiding authority of the Old Testament and scripture.

2. The way the Lord Jesus used the Old Testament:

Matt 15:4 – For God saidhonour your.....

Matt 19:4-5 – At the beginning the creator said

Mark 12:36 – David himself speaking by the Holy Spirit said.....

Each time Jesus is stressing that the Bible is really a message from God

3. Way the Lord Jesus believes the history of the Old Testament

a) He never doubted the historical accuracy of the Old Testament – Creation/Jonah these were all teachings not merely stories or myths.

b) He always used OT to teach important truths

The Old Testament is wonderfully relevant for today.

When asked questions, immediately Jesus goes to the Word of God:

Luke 24:25-27 – Beginning with Moses and all the prophets He explained to them what all the scriptures says concerning himself.

On every page, every book – they all point to the Lord Jesus.

Conclusion:

If we could say the Lord Jesus Christ loved His Bible – there is no other answer as to how he could know so many scriptures so well. He knew it, he loved it, he believed it and that is what he taught – the Bible, the Old Testament as He had it then.

If this was true for Jesus, what does my Bible mean to me – is it neglected?

The Bible is the book of God – God has given us the Word – it brings us to Jesus. Read it and learn to memorize it and obey it. Know the answers from the Word of God.

**The Word of God must mould and shape
our thinking and dwell in us richly.**

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE – GENRE – STYLES OF WRITING

Every day our eyes touch a wide variety of reading material -

Books
E-mails
Adverts
Tweets
Sms / Whats-App
Face Book

Without thinking about it, we change our reading speed, our attention and our engagement to adjust to these different mediums.

When we read the Bible we need to make similar adjustments.

We need to ask ourselves "How is God speaking"

Although one page of the Bible can look the same as the next page, the pages often contain different categories of writing.

Genre calls for us to adjust (change gears) as to how we read them.

Genre = category or type of writing.

A good visual aid or example is to use the sweets – different tastes but all are sweets

Each genre has its own set of reading rules.

2. HISTORICAL NARRATIVE
3. POETRY/WISDOM WRITINGS
4. LAW
5. PROPHECY
6. GOSPELS (BIOGRAPHICAL STORIES OF LIFE/MINISTRY OF JESUS)
7. LETTERS (EPISTLES)
8. APOCALYPTIC literature is a genre of prophetic writing (Revelation).

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

This is the most common Genre in the OT, Gospels, and Acts

In this style the author takes historical events and facts and turns them into a STORY (Narrative).

One way to understand the verses is to see that often the inspired authors arrange their narrative into PLOTS – which can be divided into:

The crisis - centers on the problem or what is happening.

The complication – often there are circumstances that may complicate the story and which then leads to -

The Climax – at this point God usually speaks or acts directly through His representative to resolve the matter

The Resolution – this carefully organised story pattern leads the reader to a lesson linked to the crises and resolution.

Using Matthew 8 – (which is a simple and short narrative) work through these steps:

The Plot – Jesus got into the boat and his disciples followed. Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake.

The crises comes quickly – violent windstorm unleashes its force against a boat full of men, which is complicated by the fact Jesus is sleeping – the disciples fear drowning. Climax reached – when Jesus rises, rebukes the weather and reduces the treat.

‘What kind of man is this?’

The Resolution or point of the narrative is:

As the son of God, Jesus is capable of addressing treats with a power that is out of this world.

POETRY/WISDOM WRITINGS

The poetry we read in the Bible flows from REAL-LIFE EVENTS. Authors spend time moving our attention to the IDEAS behind the events, than on the details of the event itself using mostly WORD IMAGES.

These passages are usually not long paragraphs, rather short lines filled with patterns, and colourful imagery, and emotion.

Using PSALM 1 – Author reflects on the great fortune enjoyed by a person in God’s care. But instead of telling a narrative story, the poet turns to images.



That person is like a tree planted by streams of water
which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither – whatever they do
prosper – Psalm 1:3

While HISTORY requires us to PRESS ON QUICKLY TO GET ALL FACTS, Poetry calls for us to slow down and focus our thinking on the idea being shared.

BIBLICAL POETRY does not use rhyme, but more REPETITION, CONTRAST AND PARALLEL structures to develop the ideas. Poetry often uses the SECOND LINE TO CONTRAST THE FIRST.

E.G. Psalm 1 – the primary idea of GOD’S CARE is CONTRASTED with the EXPERIENCE OF THE WICKED. PSALM 1:6

OR

The idea can be developed by introducing the idea in FIRST LINE and then EXPANDING it in the following lines:

E.G. PSALM 1.1

VERB – IS A DOING WORD – WALK, SIT, STAND (even the most casual acquaintance with people like this could be harmful)

These are just a few of the many patterns in the poet’s toolbox. Practice and sustained reading of Biblical poetry will help us discover so much.

The KEY **is read slowly, re-read and observe the ideas for our own reflection.**

LAW

In contrast to POETRY, LAWS in the Bible are presented in a straightforward language.

THE LAWS IN THE BIBLE DIRECTLY **CALL THE PEOPLE OF GOD TO HOLINESS.**

In some ways, LAW is easier than reading HISTORY OR POETRY.

The challenge comes is when we need to know which Laws were limited to specific people or are UNIVERSAL (for everyone at all times). Many of the LAWS found in the Old Testament represent God’s will for a special period of history. – I.e. Diet of the Israelites – following the death of Jesus this command was no longer in force. (Acts 10:9-23).

But certain laws are for everyone down through the ages – for example - stealing (Duet. 5:19).

In other cases, some are a bit more complex – like working on the Sabbath (Duet 5:12-14) though we do not have servants and donkeys to help us maintain our homes in today’s culture, **WE CAN FIND A PRINCIPLE in this directive**, which is ***God calls for us to set aside one day a week and free it from tasks that normally fill our days, to worship Him and share fellowship with believers.***

TO UNDERSTAND THE GENRE OF BIBLICAL COMMUNICATION we need to look for the CONTROLLING IDEA in the LAW and determine how it applies to us in our era.

PROPHECY

The prophets were God's selected representatives (**MESSENGERS**) who were directed to speak to OLD TESTAMENT Israel on GOD'S BEHALF.

Some were intended to WRITE DOWN their message and preserve them for future generations to read.

These prophetic books are named after those prophets – for example Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jonah, Haggai etc.

We might expect these books to be filled with predications about the future – and in some cases, they are, BUT in most cases, the prophetic writers were charged with responding to their **IMMEDIATE CIRCUMSTANCES**, often criticizing the attitudes and behaviour of the people of their time. When God's people repented, the prophets were quick TO OFFER HOPE THAT FLOWS FROM A FORGIVING GOD.

Several strategies will allow us to read the prophetic books in a more informed way.

Most were written in poetic form. This means the rules for reading poetry apply here. By using poetry, the prophets show that their emphasis is often more on an IDEA than an EVENT.

Our goal as readers is to FIND THE CONTROLLING IDEA – examine the artful way the Scripture REPEATS AND DEVELOPS it and ITS **APPLICATION IN OUR LIVES**.

Because the prophets often wrote in response to HISTORICAL EVENTS, it is also helpful for us to be aware of the HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES BEHIND THE WRITING so that we can set the IDEA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SITUATION.

It is also helpful **to read LARGER sections** of the prophetic books to get the full historical narrative.

For example: Take the prophet AMOS – Amos was a Shepherd – The examples he uses are based around his lifestyle. Jeremiah brought God's warning of judgement from King Nebuchadnezzar who would destroy Jerusalem and take the people into Exile.

GOSPELS – Historical narratives of the birth, life and ministry of Jesus and His death resurrection of Jesus.

ACTS is a book OF HISTORY about the birth and expansion of the Christian Church.

LETTERS (EPISTLES)

The apostolic letters are the N.T. matching part of the OT prophetic books. These letters were written either by those taught directly by Jesus, or by students of those taught by Jesus. In the months after the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Christian Church expanded in all geographical directions.

The letters were written to address challenges and questions. Unlike the O.T., the letters in the N. are similar to the language we would use in a letter today.

APOCALYPTIC

Apocalyptic writing, the final genre may be the most challenging to read. What makes this style difficult to understand is the writing style, which paints the pages of our Bible with fantastic images and extended visual metaphors, all which move against a brightly coloured and dreamlike backdrop.

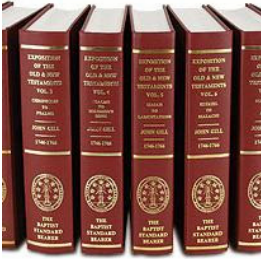
For example : Revelation 13

What do these images represent?

What do they teach us that can be applied to our lives today?

Because these portions of scripture were often written against the backdrop of persecution, it is helpful to learn the historical circumstances that motivated the writing.

Only with that backdrop can we decode the images. Tackle this when you have learned how to read the Bible.



HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE

The Bible is like a box of wonderful treasure. It is full of value, but the Bible requires a key to unlock it and is within the reach of every person to understand it, but it does require hard work.

There are easy passages that we understand, but the problem is, that in the Bible there are also some difficult passages. How do we interpret them?

IT IS PURE ARROGANCE AND IS DISRESPECTFUL TO A HOLY AND ALL POWERFUL GOD TO PUT YOUR OWN INTERPRETATION TO SCRIPTURE.

We need to be **very careful** how to interpret the Word.

ALWAYS HAVE "TOOLS" TO HELP YOU WHEN YOU COME TO THE WORD OF GOD.

God has given us wonderful teachers and scholars of the Bible as well as Libraries full of books and commentaries to help.

1. WHEN YOU COME TO A PASSAGE THAT IS DIFFICULT – ASK YOURSELF A QUESTION:

WHAT KIND OF PASSAGE IS THIS?

Is it historical?

History – is it describing something that actually happened - facts and records? – E.g. Gen 1:1. This is a record of how God made the world – it is without error, believe it.

Jonah – Did a fish really swallow Jonah – Yes, it a lesson teaching us that God has sovereign control over events on the earth and God's determination to get his message to the nations. Jonah was given a commission. It is a true story; it is HISTORY - take it as it is and believe it. Do not waste time concentrating on the wrong idea of what it means.

However not everything is History – then ask yourself another question:

Is it Poetry?

E.g. Ps 104:3 – is describing the poetic description of creation. It is not literal, it is a poetic image.

OR - Is it prophecy?

Is this something God is going to do in or beyond the prophets own day. Is it something God will do later, or is it a prophesy about Jesus and end times.

Look at Revelation – Horse with 4 heads ????? HELP ...
Prophetic writing about the Empires – slit into four Kingdoms.

GET HELP, USE TOOLS – READ AND SEE HOW THEY CAN HELP US – these books summarize, explain, and are so helpful.

Always be clear what kind of passage you are reading

If you are still not sure, ask yourself another question –

WHAT IS THE CONTEXT OF THE VERSE?

A text without a context will always become a pretext – the reason that comes before.

CONTEXT = background / situation / circumstances

If you take a text out of its CONTEXT, it can mean something very different.

THERE ARE three CONTEXTS:

a) Biblical context – e.g. Revelation 3:20 – “Behold I stand at the door and knock” - An Evangelist might say that Jesus is knocking on the door of your heart – let Him in. The context here is that this passage was written to the Church at LAODICEA, THESE WERE CHRISTIANS WHO HAD BACKSLIDDEN – not unbelievers.

b) Historical context – What is the historical background of the book and or section you are reading. It is important to read the historical context. How do I find this out – get a Commentary and read it.

For example: In KINGS – “Nation rising against nation” – The history here is that Israel looked to Egypt for power, BUT the prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah were saying – **NO, LOOK TO GOD.**

c) Local customs of the day – so much of the Bible was written thousands of years ago and the people lived with certain customs. In order to correctly understand the setting, we need to look at the background of the writing, to the group of people and their

lifestyle. For example, they would have been shepherds, farmers, or from a fishing community or farmers. This helps us understand the situation.

Text can include **biblical, historical, and local customs**. We cannot carelessly pick up the Word of God and fully understand it. It takes lots of work.

NEED TO STUDY WHAT THE BIBLE IS SAYING – Get help use a Commentary.

Use these questions as a guide:

- What kind of verse is it?
- What is the context?
- What is the plain meaning?
- What do the **words really mean?** – A Concordance can also help. E.g. John 21:15 Jesus says to Peter "*do you love me?*" – There are a number of different words for love (Gk phileo – like) or (Gk. Agape - love) – what word did Jesus use in the context of his question to Peter.
- What are the **figures of speech**:

Simile – (draws a picture for you of something similar)

E.g. 1 Peter 5:8 – The Devil - Roaring Lion – think of how a lion stalks and hunts

Metaphor / Image - Not literal – e.g. Herod you fox (means Herod was a sly and cunning like a fox)

and at other times it could be an

Anthropomorphism – which is describing something of God in human terms. E.g. surely the **arm of the Lord** is not too short to help

Using a **negative to express a wonderful positive** – e.g. Paul says "I am not ashamed of the Gospel" – this means he is **thrilled** to preach it! Rom 1:16

Five Things to look out for:

With a little bit of work, by the grace of God, we can understand the Bible

Be careful of:

1. The man who has no problems – who knows it all.

2. The man who has new discoveries – if we do not have it over 5000 years, we do not need it now.

3. Be careful of the spiritualizer – know the true, simple lesson.

I.E. Acts 27 - Paul caught in the storm and he threw out 3 anchors:
Are you tossed back and forth in the storms of life? Use these anchors: 1 Quiet time; 2 Prayer, Surrender to God. – This text just says Paul used the anchors – what is an anchor? Just a metal stabilizer ... do not take the verse OUT OF ITS CONTEXT.

4. Be careful of the man who has dishonest conclusions – applies own interpretations.

5. Be careful of the man who over exaggerates.

Conclusion

1. Pray when you come to a difficult text and ask the Holy Spirit to help you
2. Give it diligent study
3. The Bible needs careful thought and
4. Humble submission

PASTORS SHOULD SPEND HOURS IN PREPARATION FOR PREACHING. – a properly prepared sermon should take **10-12 hours of work!!**

Do not play with this precious book that has been inspired by God.

GEOGRAPHY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT



AN OVERVIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

A Walk through Old Testament.

There are 10 main divisions and major time periods; a survey with dates showing where to find them in the Old Testament.

1ST TIME PERIOD

Creation (4200 BC) – the beginning of all things.

Covering Genesis Chapter 1 - 11. These are the most important chapters in the whole Bible and they cover a period of 2000 years.

Creation of the world and the creation of man

Genesis 1:1 ***"In the beginning GOD created....."*** So in 6 days of 24 hours the world was created.

Genesis Chapter 1:26 – Then God said, ***"Let us make man in our image....."*** and God created Adam and Eve. In Chapters 1 and 2 we find the story of creation.

The account of sin and the fall of man - Genesis Chapter 3.

Into that marvelous relationship between God and Adam and Eve, when everything was perfect and they were right with God, into that sin enters and this chapter gives an account of that. Tempted by the devil they ate the forbidden fruit and disobeyed God. The result of that sin meant that Adam and Eve died spiritually. **In every sense of the word, death entered into the world – they died physically, socially and in the ecological sense – it really was death.**

They are cast out of the Garden of Eden and sin becomes rampant.

Noah and the flood 2400 BC (Chapters 6 – 9).

In Chapter 6 things were so bad that God called Noah to build a huge boat. It took 120 years to complete and then the flood came. It was a **worldwide flood** which covered the whole world and every **living thing that was not on the Ark drowned and died**. As the water subsides Noah and his family walked out and in a whole **fresh sense everything in the world began again**.

The tower of Babel 2250 BC

The scattering of the nations Chapter 10 -11. The same cycle continues; sin enters and the people get to a point where they want to build a huge city with no place for God. They wanted to come to God on their own terms. So again for a **2nd time there was a judgment**. So the Lord scattered the nations and spread them all over the world. **This was the beginning of the different languages, nationalities and races**. Everything stems from Genesis Chapter 10 – 11.

This is the brief overview of the first 2000 years (main time period of creation).

2ND TIME PERIOD

Patriarchal Period 2166 BC (Genesis Chapter 12 – 50) covering a period of 400 years.

This is the account of the beginnings of the Hebrew nations.

1. Call and covenant that was made with **Abraham** – (Genesis 12 – 15).
So Abraham is called into a vital relationship with the living God and the **whole missionary thrust begins here.**
2. Birth of promised child **Isaac** – (Chapter 25 – 26) Abraham is 100 years of age, Sarah is 90 and by an incredible miracle Isaac is born. These verses give an account of his life.
3. Choosing and name change (Chapter 27 – 36). **Jacob** did not deserve God's grace but God transformed him, and so much so that his name is **changed to that of Israel.**
4. Deliverance through **Joseph in Egypt** (Chapter 37-50). The providence and overruling hand of God. His brothers sold Joseph as a slave. What was a tragic disaster turns out to be an amazing series of events as Joseph is placed in charge of Egypt. He is reconciled with his family and Joseph is a wonderful picture of Jesus.

3RD TIME PERIOD

Egypt and the Exodus (1800-1400 BC - 400 years)

Read about this in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. There are 5 smaller divisions under this; the main thrust is the deliverance of Egypt and Mosaic Law.

- a) **Situation in Egypt after 400 years** – Things go from bad to worse until in desperation the people cry to God for deliverance and God hears them and He raises up a deliverer, **a man called Moses**
- b) Account of the **Exodus** and **crossing of the Red Sea.**
- c) **Mt. Sinai – The 10 Commandments** are given and the **Tabernacle is built** (Exodus Chapter 19 – 34, Leviticus Chapter 1 - 27, Numbers Chapter 1 – 9). So to these people God's law had now been given and the pattern for worship in Tabernacle was set out.
- d) Failure of the Israelites in the **desert** and the **wanderings** in the wilderness for those 40 years. (Numbers 10 – 21) The people grumbled about so many things and this was a sad period.
- e) Final instructions before **entering the Promised Land** (Numbers Chapter 22-36 and especially Deuteronomy which is **the summary of Moses' last sermons** to the Israelite people before going into promised land. Moses pours his heart out and wonderfully prepares them. Moses will never enter into the Promised Land, but he loves the people and has given his life for them. His closing message to them is Deuteronomy.

4TH TIME PERIOD

Conquest of Canaan 1410 BC

The story of how the Promised Land was conquered. 1400 – 1350 (50 years)

Read about this in the book of Joshua.

a) **Crossing Jordan** – Chapter 1 -5. Joshua has taken over from Moses when they face the Jordan River. Just as God sent them through the Red Sea He now miraculously takes them across the Jordan River.

b) **Conquest of the land** - Chapter 12.

This covers the different campaigns - Jericho and Ai. Under the dynamic leadership of Joshua the land of Canaan was conquered.

c) **Dividing the land** among the 12 Tribes – Each were given their sections - Joshua 13 - 22. Everything was decided for them, and so they have settled now into Promised Land and a whole new way of life begins.

5TH TIME PERIOD

Judges 1350 BC (350 years) Read about this period in Judges, Ruth and 1 Samuel, Chapter 1 – 7.

This was a dark age of Hebrew history. (1350 – 1000 BC)

a) **Cycle of sin, judgment and deliverance.**

Book of Judges - Time and time again that cycle appears. How the Israelites sin, their punishment, they are delivered into the hands of their enemies and then they called to God. God would send a Judge to bring deliverance. **There were 15 Judges.**

The Judge would rule and bring peace and then the judge would die and again the people would sin and be handed over to the enemy. They would call to God again and another judge would be given and so the cycle went.

b) Marriage of **great grandparents of David** – Lovely story of Ruth and Boaz recorded for us in the book of Ruth – the line that Jesus would come through.

c) **Birth of Samuel** – 1 Samuel 1 – 7. In those dark days this lovely man was going to be born and to do such a lovely a work for God.

6TH TIME PERIOD

The United Kingdom 1050 – 930 (120 years)

The story of Israel's great Kings. Read about them in 1 Samuel 8 – 31; 2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1 -11, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles 1 – 9, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Songs of Solomon.

a) **The people requested a King.** The book of 1 Samuel describes the transition of great leadership in Israel from the judges to the kings. 1 Samuel Chapter 8 very sadly shows how the Israelite people looked around at the neighbouring countries and saw that they had Kings and so they demanded a King. Samuel said "no" trust God alone, but the people got their way and Saul was their first King. (1 Samuel 9 – 31) Story of a most tragic man in the Bible.

b) **David – God's chosen King.** 1 Samuel 16 – 17. Samuel goes to Jesse and we see how all his sons are brought and rejected, but David was chosen because of the condition of his heart. He was known as the man who walked with God. David establishes Jerusalem as the capital from Hebron which was a brilliant (political move) and he bound the people together, later bringing the Ark back.

c) **Building of the Temple by Solomon** – originally David wanted to build it but God said "no" David's son was to build it. Accepts that but he did the next most wonderful things and collected the material for his son and Solomon then builds temple. (1 Kings 1 – 11) so under Saul/David and Solomon there is a United Kingdom.

7TH TIME PERIOD

Divided Kingdom 930 – 586

1 Kings 12 – 22 / 2 Kings / 2 Chronicles 10 -36

Also during this period as the Kingdom is divided you have some of the Major Prophets ministering. The main prophets being Isaiah/Jeremiah in Lamentations and the minor prophets Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah and Habakkuk – covers 350 years

Death of Solomon and the split of kingdom

1 Kings 11 – 12 - A sad thing. His young son Rehoboam becomes King and he sought advice on what he should do and he listened to conflicting advice and there was a split.

North – Israel

King - Jeroboam

South – stays with Judah

King - Rehoboam

History of the 10 Tribes in the **Northern Kingdom** of Israel and how they develop under Jeroboam.

Fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Important date 722 BC - Kingdom was defeated and fell to Assyria.

Southern Kingdom

- Two Tribes of Southern Kingdom of Judah
- Fall of Judah to the Babylonians – 586 BC

During this period the Kingdom is divided and the prophets are ministering.

8TH TIME PERIOD

Captivity in Babylon 605 – 535 BC (70 years) recorded Daniel and Ezekiel.

- a) **Destruction of Jerusalem 586** – Jerusalem destroyed, the temple raised to the ground and Nebuchadnezzar took the Israelites all across to Babylon. The Israelites were in exile for 70 years.
- b) **Account of life in captivity for those 70 years**
- c) **How Glory of God had departed** – see book of Ezekiel.

9TH TIME PERIOD

Return from captivity. 538 – 430 BC – 100 years.

The rebuilding of national life of the Jewish people covered 100 years. God now brings the people back from Babylon into their own land and restores them. Read about this in Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther and the Prophets who deal with this period are Zechariah, Haggai and Malachi.

- a) **Decree of Cyrus to rebuild the temple** – Persians are more lenient and the first Jews return to Jerusalem in 538.
- b) **Decree of Xerxes to rebuild Jerusalem**

All in all there were 3 returns.

Zerubbabel lead the first group back and in 515 the Temple is rebuilt. The people became very discouraged and Haggai and Zechariah encouraged them.

In 458 **Ezra led the second expedition back from Babylon.**

In 455 **Nehemiah rebuilds the wall of Jerusalem.** In that period Malachi was an enormous challenge to them.

The books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther tell us what happened in the last 100 years of the Old Testament history. Ezra and Nehemiah tell of the return of some of the Jewish captives to their own land. They tell how the people rebuilt the Temple and then the walls of Jerusalem. The book of Esther tells events that happened to Jews who remained in Persia during this time period. Some of the prophets also tell of events during this time. Malachi was the last of the Old Testament prophets.

So the Old Testament now closes

10th Time period of silence – 430 - ± 5BC (400 years)

400 Silent years between OT and NT – there is no word from God

By the time Old Testament history ended, a remnant of the Jewish exiles, chiefly of the tribe of Judah, had returned from Babylonia to Palestine under Zerubbabel, and about 80 years later another company had returned with Ezra.

From Nehemiah and Malachi to the beginning of New Testament times, 400 hundred years passed. During this time no biblical prophet spoke or wrote. **These are called the silent years, but they were far from silent.** Many changes were taking place in the known world.

The land of Palestine is like a bridge that connects three continents: **Europe, Asia and Africa**. Because of the important location of this small piece of land, every world Empire that came to power wanted to control it. And so Palestine was conquered first by one world power and then another and then another.

Alexandra the Great from Greece conquered Palestine and the lands around it. He introduced the Greek language and customs to Palestine.

- a) Rule of Persians 539 – 331BC
- b) Greeks 331 – 143BC
- c) Revolt of the Maccabees under the leadership of Mattathias. 143 – 63
- d) Romans 62 – 170AD
- f) Development of religious parties – Pharisees and Sadducees developed

Then the Bible says – Galatians 4:4

*When the fullness of time was fully come
God sent His son made of a woman
under the law to redeem those under the law.
At the right time Jesus Christ arrived.*

How we thank God for our Saviour.

After 400 years John the Baptist comes as a prophet to prepare the world for Jesus to bring salvation to the world.

A WALK THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. THE GOSPEL ERA (the Gospels are biographies of the life of Jesus)

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John - The Gospels record the birth, life, miracles, teachings and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- a) Early Life – The record of Christ's birth and how the family settles in Nazareth, his childhood, followed by a long period of silence. Then his baptism.
- b) Early Ministry – Alone in the desert Jesus was tempted by Satan, but he did not waiver. Jesus then goes to Galilee where he begins to preach and heal.
- c) Later Ministry – After 2½ years of ministering Jesus encounters jealousy and rejection. He spends time with his disciples.
- d) Death and resurrection – The death of Jesus is covered in enormous detail and the Gospels keep us focused on Jesus.

2. THE CHURCH ERA (Acts 1-12)

- a) Creation – the birth of the Church (Acts 1-5). Jesus has ascended and his followers are in Jerusalem at Pentecost waiting for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes with power and the witnessing of Peter, Stephen and Philip begins.
- b) Growth – organization of the Church (Acts 6) The early church grew under the hardships of Nero. Deacons are chosen care for the needy.
- c) Persecution – the 1st martyr (Acts 7) – Stephen was one of those early deacons is arrested for preaching and he becomes the first Christian martyr to be killed for his faith. Saul witnessed the stoning of Stephen.
- d) Transition – a missionary to the Gentiles (Acts 8-12) – Saul is converted and after 12 years of seclusion he then goes out to take the Gospel.

3. THE MISSIONS ERA (Acts 13-28) Paul, Barnabas and Silas.

- a) First missionary journey: Galatia for 2 years (Acts 13-14)
- b) Second missionary journey: Greece for 3 years (Acts 15-17)
- c) Third missionary journey: Asia for 4 years (Acts 18-21)
- d) Trial and imprisonment: Rome (Acts 22-28)

4. THE EPISTLES

Pauline

Romans – Teaches that everyone is a sinner and needs God's salvation which comes through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Salvation is by grace alone.

1 & 2 Corinthians – It is practical. The Christians in Corinth had many problems. Paul wrote about dealing with these problems: such as divisions in the Church, married people, food, worship, and believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He also dealt with false teachers.

Galatians – Paul refutes legalism.

Ephesians – Deals with our position in Christ. As believers, we are “in Christ”, chosen by Him, saved by Him, given a great hope, and growing in Him as His children.

Philippians – A book of joy.

Colossians – Deals with the pre-eminence of Christ – He is Lord over all things.

1 & 2 Thessalonians – Deals with Christ as our hope for the future – Paul teaches about the second coming of Jesus.

1 & 2 Timothy – 2 letters to the young pastor in charge of the church at Ephesus.

Titus – a letter to a young pastor at Crete.

Philemon – a dear friend of Paul’s who wrote to Philemon about his runaway slave, Onesimus and how love would bring him back.

General Epistles

Hebrews – A book of heavy doctrine which shows how the New Testament fulfills the Old.

James – Deals with practical faith.

1 & 2 Peter – Encourages suffering Christians.

1,2,3 John – About the love of God. John wrote to help believers KNOW they have eternal life and to beware of false teaching.

Jude – A warning against growing cold and giving up.

Revelation – Tells us this book reveals about Jesus and how He will triumph in the end times.