
SESSION # 1

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME!

We know that your time is valuable, so we promise to make your time with us productive and enjoyable.

Our goal is to help you to read the Bible more effectively. You may be here tonight because at times you have found Bible reading to be:

- frustrating because of archaic language
- confusing because of apparent contradictions
- boring because of seemingly irrelevant material
- overwhelming because of the mass of information

We hold the Bible to be the inspired Word of God and believe that it is able to enrich your life. To do so, however, will require overcoming the obstacles mentioned above. We think we can provide you with keys and tips in doing so.

Why we are giving this seminar:

- To help you become familiar with the *content* of the Bible
- To assist you in learning the *meaning* of the Bible
- To give you confidence in the Bible as God's *inspired* word

Introduction

AN IMPORTANT BEGINNING TIP:

Look for Bible "echoes."

Ask: Where else (in the Bible) have I seen this?

Consider this example of when the Pharisees and Herodians attempted to catch Jesus in his words, so they could arrest him. They asked, *"Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? Shall we give or shall we not give?"*

Jesus recognized their treachery and asked for a coin. He asked, *'Whose is this image and superscription?'* They replied *'Caesar's,'* to which Christ responded, *'Render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.'*

(Mark 12:13-17)

Fair enough. Pay your taxes, because they belong to man's system of things, is the clear answer. But what are the things we ought to render unto God?

Look for Bible "echoes"

Remember Genesis 1:27 - *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him."*

Whose image and superscription are we? Jesus' full message is not merely to pay your taxes, but also that we belong to God and must render to Him His due by reflecting His image and character correctly.

This is not a mysterious connection. It is merely an association gained by careful reading.

Let's learn more...

Background of the Bible

BACKGROUND

Holy Bible - "Separate Book"

66 Books

Old Testament - 39 books

New Testament - 27 books

40+ writers - kings and peasants, doctors and fishermen, princes and herdsman, poets and laborers, rich and poor, educated and illiterate

Written over a period of 1600 years

2,930 characters in 1,551 places

Many literary forms (poetry, prose, etc.).

Even with so many different writers, subjects, etc., all parts of the Bible agree with one another. Though the writers were separated by time, geography, social standing, and so on, there is wonderful harmony in all they wrote. There is no contradiction, no disagreement. This could only come from God! They all wrote by divine inspiration. They were God's agents, proclaiming His message to humanity.

INSPIRATION

God is the Author.

2 Tim. 3:15-17

All scripture is inspired - "God Breathed"

Scripture is sufficient in itself

Examples:

David - *2 Samuel 23:1-2*

Jeremiah - *Jer. 30:1-2*

How often you read in the Bible:

"Thus saith the LORD . . ."

"The word of the LORD came unto me saying . . ."

Men recorded God's words, not their own.

1 Peter 1:10-12

2 Peter 1:19-21

Background of the Bible

God's Word never fails, nor should it be added to.

Is. 40:6-8

Prov. 30:5-6

The Bible is the Source of Truth.

Ps. 19:7-9 - perfect, sure, right, pure, true, righteous

IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

Makes us wise unto salvation.

2 Tim. 3:15-17

Gives us Hope.

Romans 15:4

Power of God unto Salvation.

Romans 1:16-17

Neglect brings death.

Prov. 13:13

Essential in developing faith.

Rom. 10:17

Provides direction for daily living.

Psalms 119:105

Joshua 1:8

HOW READEST THOU?

It is one thing to read the Bible through,
Another thing to learn and read and do.
Some read it with desire to learn, and read
But to their subject pay but little heed;
Some read it as their duty every week,
But no instruction from the Bible seek;
While others read it with but little care,
With no regard to how they read or where;
Some read it as a History, to know
How people lived two thousand years ago,
Some read it to bring themselves into repute,
By showing others how they can dispute;
While others read because their neighbors do,
To see how long it takes to read it through.
Some read it for the wonders that are there,
How David killed a lion and a bear;
While others read it with uncommon care,
Hoping to find some contradictions there.
Some read as though it did not speak to them
But to the people at Jerusalem.
One reads it as a book of mysteries,
And won't believe the very thing he sees;
One reads with father's specs upon his head,
And sees the thing just as his father said;
Some read to prove a pre-adopted creed,
Hence understanding but little as they read,
For every passage in the book they bend
To make it suit that all-important end.
Some people read, as I have often thought,
To teach the Book, instead of being taught;
And some there are who read it out of spite,
I fear there are but few who read it right.
One thing I find, and you may find it too,
The more you read, the more you find it true;
But this to find, an open eye is needful,
With often prayer, and humble heart all heedful;
The man who reads with pride or inattention,
Will only find full causes of dissension,
The man who reads with modest penetration,
Will find the joy of comfort and salvation.

The Bible Interprets Itself

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS...

How many times have you heard of a person who spent a frustrating evening assembling his child's bike only to find out after the fact that he has assembled the handlebars backwards! Of course, we all know the modern proverb "when all else fails, read the instructions."

This is of course true when reading the Bible. We need to learn from our life's experiences and recognize that the key to easier (not easy) understanding of the Bible is found within its own pages. Our tendency is to not look far enough for answers within the book when we encounter something we do not understand.

A basic principle to reading the Bible more effectively lies in this simple fact:

Your questions about what the Bible teaches are answered in the Bible.

We know that is like asking who is buried in Grant's tomb. However, given human nature, the obvious solution is often our last resort. Read the instructions first - is the obvious solution to preventing frustration with most of life's projects.

ANSWERS ARE FOUND NEAR AND FAR

Look in the same chapter or surrounding chapters:

Christ's explanation of the parable of the Sowers

Matt. 13:3-8 compare Matt. 13:18-23

(note they are not adjacent)

Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the Image

Daniel 2:31-45

Note that Daniel recognized the dream would be revealed by God.

vs 22 "He revealeth the deep and secret things. "

Look in other books of the Bible (especially New vs Old Testament)

It was an angel who spoke to Moses in the burning bush

Exodus 3:4 compare Acts 7:30-31

Why Jesus Said " *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"*

Matt. 27:46 compare Psalm 22

DO

- Look first to the Bible for answers to questions
- Read all of the Bible to find answers to your questions
- Write down your questions (it may be awhile until you get to the answer)

DON'T

- Expect quick answers
- Look at isolated passages and draw conclusions

The "Canon" of Scripture is an authoritative list of books accepted as Holy Scripture. The Bible is broken into two testaments, Old and New. The Bible contains the following Table of Contents:

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis	II Chronicles	Daniel
Exodus	Ezra	Hosea
Leviticus	Nehemiah	Joel
Numbers	Esther	Amos
Deuteronomy	Job	Obadiah
Joshua	Psalms	Jonah
Judges	Proverbs	Micah
Ruth	Ecclesiastes	Nahum
I Samuel	Song of Solomon	Habakkuk
II Samuel	Isaiah	Zephaniah
I Kings	Jeremiah	Haggai
II Kings	Lamentations	Zechariah
I Chronicles	Ezekiel	Malachi

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew	Ephesians	Hebrews
Mark	Philippians	James
Luke	Colossians	I Peter
John	I Thessalonians	II Peter
Acts of the Apostles	II Thessalonians	I John
Romans	I Timothy	II John
I Corinthians	II Timothy	III John
II Corinthians	Titus	Jude
Galatians	Philemon	Revelation

Overview of the Books of the Bible

HEBREW ARRANGEMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT:

The Law (5 books):

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

The Prophets (8 books):

1. The Former Prophets (4 books):

Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings

2. The Latter Prophets (4 books):

Major (3 books):

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel

Minor (1 book) The Twelve:

Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

The Writings (11 books):

1. Poetical (3 books)

Psalms, Proverbs, Job

2. Five Scrolls (5 books)

Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther

3. Historical (3 books)

Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles

Overview of the Books of the Bible

APOCRYPHA:

A Greek word meaning "hidden things."

They were not part of the Hebrew Scriptures. They were included in the Greek version of the Old Testament made for the Greek speaking Jews in Egypt. Later were included by Jerome into the Latin Bible. Protestants do not consider them a part of the inspired Canon which makes up the Bible today. The Catholic church does include them in their Bible. We will not be covering them in this seminar. The books are generally accepted as being written between 200 - 50 B.C. Today, if included, they typically find their placement between the Old and New Testament.

The Apocrypha consists of 14 books or parts of books. They are:

- I Esdras
- II Esdras
- Tobit
- Judith
- The Rest of the Chapters of the Book of Esther
- The Wisdom of Solomon
- Ecclesiasticus or the Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach
- Baruch (with The Epistle of Jeremiah)
- The Song of the Three (Hebrew Children)
- The History of Susanna
- Bel and the Snake
- The Prayer of Manasseh
- I Maccabees
- II Maccabees

Each class will contain a section devoted to an overview of the books of the Bible. We will cover the Old Testament books in chronological order. We will cover the New Testament books in Biblical (canonical) order.

SESSION OUTLINES

Session 1 - Overview of Bible

- (a) Background/Structure/Chronology
- (b) Genesis

Session 2 - Exodus to David

- (a) Exodus to Promised Land
- Job

Overview of the Books of the Bible

- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy
- Joshua

- (b) Period of Judges
 - Judges
 - Ruth

- (c) Saul & David
 - 1st & 2nd Samuel
 - Psalms

Session 3 - Solomon to Exile of Northern Kingdom

- (a) Reign of Solomon
 - Introduction to:
 - 1st & 2nd Kings
 - 1st & 2nd Chronicles
 - Proverbs
 - Ecclesiastes
 - Song of Solomon

- (b) Northern Kingdom
 - Amos
 - Hosea

- (c) Southern Kingdom
 - Isaiah
 - Micah

- (d) Nations
 - Jonah
 - Nahum

Overview of the Books of the Bible

Session 4 - Southern Exile to Christ

- (a) Pre Exile
 - Jeremiah
 - Zephaniah
 - Habakkuk
 - Lamentations

- (b) 70 years captivity
 - Joel
 - Daniel
 - Ezekiel
 - Obadiah

- (c) Exile and Return
 - Ezra
 - Nehemiah
 - Esther
 - Haggai
 - Zechariah
 - Malachi

Session 5 - New Testament - Part 1

- (a) Gospels
 - Matthew
 - Mark
 - Luke
 - John

- (b) Acts of the Apostles

- (c) Paul's Epistles to the Churches
 - Romans
 - 1st & 2nd Corinthians
 - Galatians
 - Ephesians
 - Philippians
 - Colossians
 - 1st & 2nd Thessalonians

Overview of the Books of the Bible

Session 6 - New Testament - Part 2

(a) Paul's Personal Epistles

1st & 2nd Timothy

Titus

Philemon

(b) General Epistles

Hebrews

James

1st & 2nd Peter

1st, 2nd & 3rd John

Jude

(c) Prophecy

Revelation

Workshop – The Bible Interprets Itself

Please complete these two exercises to show yourself how the Bible interprets itself.

Exercise 1

Turn to Matthew 13 and read the first 8 verses. Jesus spoke to the people in parables. In this parable he told a story about a sower who went out to sow and the seed fell on four different types of ground. Complete the chart with just a few words indicating the interpretation that Jesus reveals to his disciples in verses 18-23.

The Parable	The Interpretation
some <i>seeds</i> fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up v3	V19 – people who hear God’s word but do not understand
some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. V5-6	V20-21
some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: V7	V22
but other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.V8	V23
the seed	Take a guess and then look up Luke 8:11 to see if you got it right.

The Bible interprets itself. Following the parable there is an explanation of the parable; in this case the explanation was close by, but sometimes it takes more reading and more patience.

Later you may wish to try and understand what Jesus meant in verses 9-17, but for now move to the next exercise.

Exercise 2

Read Daniel 2. Nebuchadnezzar had a very special dream. This dream troubled him greatly and he determined to know the significance of this dream. He asked his advisors to tell him the dream and also the interpretation. Under normal circumstances these advisors could invent a meaning to a dream, but Nebuchadnezzar wanted to be sure they were telling the truth this time. Of course they could not tell him what he dreamed so he declared that they would all be put to death. In the meantime a report came to the king that Daniel a Jew who had been brought captive into the Babylonian empire to serve the interests of the king was able to foretell the dream. Daniel was able to tell the dream and the interpretation. Complete the chart with the interpretation using verses 36-45.

The Dream	The Interpretation
this image's head <i>was</i> of fine gold	
his breast and his arms of silver	
his belly and his thighs of brass	
his legs of iron	
his feet part of iron and part of clay	
Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet <i>that were</i> of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.	
Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.	

For a real challenge identify the specific kingdoms through your knowledge of history. History books are the one other source of information that really help us understand parts of the Bible.