

T3 BIBLE PROGRAMME

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COURSE 1:  
**The Doctrine of Revelation:  
God Speaks**





## The Doctrine of Revelation: God Speaks

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# COURSE OVERVIEW

## **Title**

The Doctrine of Revelation - God Speaks

## **Objective**

The objective of this course is first to give you an understanding of how God has chosen to reveal Himself to mankind through various means. Secondly, the course will help you apply that understanding in the way you live as a disciple of Jesus.

## **Synopsis**

In this course, we focus on how God has chosen to reveal Himself, in a general sense, to all mankind through nature, history, and human personality and why He has done this. We also focus on the specific way in which God speaks to His people, with particular reference to His words, His works and ultimately how God speaks through His Son. From this, we will look at God's written Word - the Bible - its inspiration, uniqueness, and translations. We will then focus on how to read the Bible with the aim to know and obey the Author of the Bible.

## **Duration**

The course content, if running this along with the filmed teachings, will be covered over 7-sessions, with each session split into approximately two 45-minute blocks of teaching time. If this course is being covered by a live presenter, the time frame may differ. Please confirm it with them.

## **Requirements**

Try not to miss a single one! No prior study of Scripture is necessarily needed, however, bear in mind that this is not a foundational course. We will be digging deeper into Theological truths. Should you not have some basic foundational truths in place, we encourage you to first attend a foundations or introductory type of course, to give you a better foundation to build on. \*Please note this is not an accredited programme/course.

## **Tools**

You will need your Bible, a pen and should you wish, a notebook for additional note taking.

## **Assessment**

The best way to learn is through application and interaction with the course content. For this reason, we have included a final optional assessment/activity. Depending on how your course is being run, this may be for self-study, a required part of your course or something you can complete at your leisure. Just check with your course coordinator. Don't fear, this is not an exam. It will merely be an opportunity for you to reflect on and apply what you have learnt during the course. \*If you do this as part of self-study, you may want to ask a pastor/elder if you can submit it to them for their input. No marking memo has been provided.

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## T3 Bible Programme

The T3 Bible Programme consists of 8 Courses with each course made up of Modules. The course work can either be covered with live presentations from pastors/teachers, or filmed recordings of teachings are available. The pace at which the course work is covered is based on the organiser's preference. The course work is taught generally in the filmed teachings and does not necessarily unpack the course notes in a systematic manner. It is recommended students read the notes on their own, before or after sessions, and spend time reflecting and interacting with the notes.

Each course is a stand-alone course and it is not necessary to have attended prior courses or to complete the entire T3 Programme in order.

\*A reminder that the T3 Bible Programme is NOT an accredited or registered programme. It is for informal study only. Should you wish to work towards a formal certificate/ diploma/ degree you will need to sign up to a registered and accredited programme with a recognised institution.

## Programme Outline

- Course 1: Doctrine of Revelation: God Speaks ... **YOU ARE HERE**
- Course 2: In the Beginning
- Course 3: The Fall
- Course 4: Understanding the Old Testament
- Course 5: Coming to Know God: The Doctrine of Salvation
- Course 6: Growing in God
- Course 7: Church and the Kingdom
- Course 8: Eschatology: The Doctrine of Last Things

## Interacting with the Notes

Keep an eye out for **REFLECTION** opportunities in the course notes, where you can pause, reflect and have some space to engage with some questions or additional thoughts. There are also **FOCUS POINTS** which provide additional information and summaries or expound on previous information etc. These are always interesting reads and worth going over outside of "class time".

We trust that as you study and pursue God, seeking His face, that you will encounter Him even more and dig foundations that will take you deeper, make you stronger and will impact on the church and the Kingdom of God, for many years to come.

Blessings,

T3 Teaching Team

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# ASSESSMENT TASK (OPTIONAL)

## Doctrine of Revelation

Read and Answer the Questions that Follow.

Question 1:

Explain the difference between General and Specific Revelation.

Question 2:

Describe a moment in your Christian walk where you have experienced the Lord revealing a specific truth or specific aspect of His character to you in a personal way. For example, God speaking to you through a Scripture, a preach, a word of prophecy or wisdom through a friend/leader in the church, a dream etc. (300 words or less)

Question 3:

Ultimately, the most complete way God has revealed Himself is through His Son. Jesus is God in the flesh. He is the clearest and fullest revelation of what God is like.

1. Write down three Scriptures that explain the above most clearly from the New Testament. (Write each Scripture out in full.)
2. Briefly, discuss which of the three Scriptures is your favourite and explain why it is so. (300 words or less)

### NB Assessment Guidelines

- Use Scripture to back up your point of view, where applicable.
  - Don't just repeat course content but use the course content as a "springboard" for your own ideas and to show that you have a working understanding of the concepts covered.
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# MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION

## The Story of God

This teaching programme is about helping you immerse yourself into the story of God and the main characters that make up the story. The moment we came to Christ, we became part of the story of God, and our personal life stories find meaning within His grand meta-narrative. All the content in this programme is the telling of this story.

God's story has four parts to it as revealed in the Bible. Here is a brief overview of each:

1. **Creation.** The creation account in Genesis describes how God created all things as good. He created humans in His image, with the intent that we would live in fellowship with Him and serve as co-regents with God over the earth, being wise stewards over all He has made.
2. **Fall.** The Scriptures explain that man defies God and is cut off from the fellowship and intimacy he once had. The Holy Creator God simply cannot fellowship with sinful man. While Man is still in God's image, that image has been corrupted and twisted through sin and the desire for self-rule. Because of man's sinful choices, even the earth itself comes under a curse.
3. **Redemption.** God in His mercy promises to rescue and redeem man's sinful condition and restore creation back into right relationship with Him. This great rescue plan is promised and foreshadowed in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament through the ministry of Jesus. God's great plan of renewing all things begins in Jesus.
4. **Consummation.** The climax of the story when God finishes His project of redeeming the world through Jesus. He finally puts every enemy under His feet including death, sickness, and Satan.

This is the greatest story ever told. God wins and gets the glory and He graciously allows us to share in His glory. This great overriding story or meta-narrative is what gives our life meaning and purpose. We are a part then of God's great story to renew all things and bring us into true life. We have one truth and one Lord and our individual stories find meaning within the 'big picture.'

## What is Theology?

Theology (from the Greek: *Theos* meaning "God", and *logos* meaning "study or discourse") is essentially the study of God – who is the 'main character' in the story we have looked at.

In our passion to get to know and "study" God, we will take a closer look at doctrine. Doctrine (from Greek: *Didache* meaning, "teaching or instruction") is simply the teaching on a specific subject or topic in the whole Bible. So to use the analogy of a builder - in order to build a house, you need to construct it section by section and brick by brick. Doctrine is like the bricks we use to build. Theology is like the house.

## Limitations of Theology

We realise that trying to study God and His ways is somewhat like an ant trying to understand the elephant. God is infinite and we are finite. But God does encourage us in His Word to apply our hearts to understanding and to find the knowledge of God (Proverbs 2:2-5). His desire is for us to love Him with our minds as well as with our emotions. But in dealing with theology, we need to always keep in mind that our understanding is limited and finite and we can only see at best, in part. Therefore, in our attitude God requires us to come to Him and His Word with humility (Isaiah 66:1-2; Job 42:2-6).

*"There are indeed some areas where human minds cannot go ... a God we can wholly explain is no bigger than our little minds." - Winkey Pratney*

That is, a God that we can fully understand, ceases to be God!

*"Theology having reached its highest peak will always remain nothing more than man's puny attempt to understand and explain God" - Jan Robbertze*

### REFLECTION

Why do you personally wish to study God's Word in greater depth? What do you hope to glean during this personal study time?

### NOTES:

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## Purpose of Studying Doctrine

1. It is a requirement for leadership in the Church (1 Timothy 3:2; 1 Timothy 3:9; Titus 1:9).
2. It helps us understand, preserve and unify all of God's amazing truths.
3. It strengthens our faith:
  - o by providing grounds and reasons for our beliefs and experiences,
  - o because faith comes from hearing ... the Word of God (Romans 10:17).
4. It helps protect us from deception (Ephesians 4: 11-14).
5. It enables us to live in a manner pleasing to God (2 Timothy 3:16).
  - o Doctrine = right belief
  - o Correction = for instance, of a wrong belief
  - o Instruction in righteousness = right behaviour
  - o Reproof = for instance, of a wrong behaviour

### FOCUS POINT

It is interesting to note that Paul's letters nearly always address issues of doctrine before he addresses issues of behaviour.

6. It helps in the Great Commission (Matthew 28). If the church, as the only recipient and guardian of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15), departs from true doctrine and preaches a false gospel, how can men be saved?
7. It helps us reach maturity (Hebrew 5:12-6:3; Ephesians 4:11-14).
8. It is of invaluable practical use in every area of ministry. For example- preaching, teaching, pastoring, counselling, evangelism, apologetics, polemics, etc. Doctrinal studies are not a substitute for these things. However, they cannot be practised effectively without sound doctrine.

*"The often implied dichotomy between knowing God and knowing about God is a false one. One can know about God without knowing Him but the reverse is not true: one cannot know God without knowing about Him, and the more one knows about Him the better one will know Him, the more able one will be to trust Him and the more willing to obey Him." - Nigel Day- Lewis*

### NOTES:

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# MODULE 2: INTRODUCING REVELATION

We can only get to know God if He reveals Himself to us. God is invisible to our natural senses and therefore it is only by His initiative that we can experience and know Him.

## Defining the Word, 'Revelation'

The word "revelation" comes from the Greek word *apokalypsis*, which basically means, "to uncover". It refers to when a veil is lifted, the curtain is drawn back, a mystery is revealed, the truth is made clear and the ignorant made wise. It is the idea of making something known that was unknown. The word revelation then refers to God's acts in "making Himself known" to us.

### The Source of Revelation is God

- "For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you" - Matthew 16:17. (See also Matthew 11:27; Romans 1:19; John 6:63-65).
- Man's wisdom cannot understand God. (See Psalms 145:3; 1 Corinthians 2:10-12)
- God is not found through human wisdom and understanding. (See 1 Corinthians 1:21; Romans 11:33)

### The Aim of Revelation is to Know God

Ultimately, God makes His ways known so that Man may know Him. As we will see later in the course, the pinnacle and centre of God's revelation is the Person of Jesus Christ - not abstract truths or information (Hebrews 1:1). God's intent is always that we enter into a personal relationship with Him, through His Son. The Son, who reveals the Father, makes Him known (John 17:3).

However, we will never get to know every single thing about God. He is incomprehensible. (Psalm 147:5; Psalm 139:6). We will know Him, but even into eternity, freed from the presence of sin and doubt, we will still continue to grow in knowing Him and delighting in Him (Psalm 139:17-18; Job 26:14). We will be like adventurers, always exploring and discovering new vistas and lands.

So does Heaven seem like a boring place to you?

#### FOCUS POINT

Religion teaches that man can find God. Man's role is to DO the work of reconciling himself to God in order to please God and earn His favour.

Christianity teaches that God finds Man. Man's role is to recognise that God has already DONE the work of reconciling us to Himself through Christ. Our role is then to live in response and obedience to the truth.

# The Way God Has Revealed Himself

There are two broad types of revelation through which God reveals Himself:

## General Revelation

This is how God reveals Himself to all people, at all times and in all places so that humanity becomes aware of God and in a broader sense, that He exists.

## Special Revelation

This is how God reveals Himself to particular people, at specific times and places. Specific revelation is information about God found in the Bible, although not limited to the Bible.

### REFLECTION

In what ways has God revealed Himself to you personally?

### NOTES:

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# MODULE 3: GENERAL REVELATION

## Introduction to General Revelation

This is how God reveals Himself to all people, at all times and in all places, so that humanity becomes aware of God and, in a broader sense, that He exists.

God speaks to the whole world through:

- Nature
- History
- Human Personality

### Nature

Read Psalm 19:1; Acts 14:17; Romans 1:20.

There is evidence of God in His creation which points to His creative, powerful and wise character. But does that mean that God is in nature? (i.e. Pantheism).

#### FOCUS POINT

What is Pantheism?

1. A doctrine that identifies God with the universe, or regards the universe as a manifestation of God.
2. Rare worship that admits or tolerates all gods.

God remains separate from His creation, like a painter with His painting. Creation is the work of His hands, therefore it points to a greater truth. We are called to steward and look after nature, not to worship or deify it.

### History

History is "His Story". He controls the destiny of nations and He guides, governs and works all events out for His good purpose. Theologians called this work of God in the world, "providence".

The Bible is clear that it is God who does this. (See Psalm 47:7-8; Isaiah 10:5-13; Daniel 2:21; Acts 17:26)

- **The Providence of God in Our Lives**

God's providence is seen in our circumstances and the details of our lives: which family we were born into, genetics, place of birth, etc. God did this so that we could seek Him (Acts 17:27) and find salvation. God never leaves us to our own devices but orchestrates events to bring people back to Him. Believing in a providential God enables us to know that God is in control. There is then no place for anxiety or constant worry.



## The Human Personality

Man is made in God's image, with a capacity for love as well as to think, feel and create with a sense of justice and truth (Genesis 1:26). It is a fact that every person has a spiritual and moral dimension like God.

### Spiritual

Seen in fact of religion. Every culture has a religious fabric in their society, an internal sense of a "greater power" and a need to appease "god". All people have an innate sense of worship.

### Moral

All people have an innate sense of right and wrong. God has placed His laws in the heart of every person. He has given them a conscience: - an internal moral compass in the mind given by God. It is like an internal referee (Romans 2:11-16, especially v15 with reference to conscience).

God has given all people an objective and real revelation of Himself in these three areas - Nature, History and Human Personality. This means that all people then have some basic knowledge of God and truth (Romans 1:21).

#### **REFLECTION**

How well can you really get to know God through general revelation?

## Getting to Know God Through General Revelation

You cannot get to know God through general revelation. Some hold to Natural Theology, the core of which is that it is possible, without a prior commitment of faith, and without relying on any special authority (the Bible or the church) to come to a genuine knowledge of God on the basis of reason alone.

## The Purpose of General Revelation

- General revelation performs a negative function of leaving humanity without excuse if people ever exclaimed that they didn't know God exists.
- General revelation does not reveal enough for a person to get saved. However, it can cause a person to realise that there is a God and lead them to the opportunity to call out to God and on His mercy to save (Acts 17:26-27).





## Ontological Argument

From the Greek *ontos* meaning "reality" or "to be", *ontology* is the "science of being: existence." This is a philosophical argument that asks, "Where did the idea of God come from if God doesn't exist?" For Man to have an idea of something, that thing must exist. Man commonly has the idea of a supreme, perfect being: such a being must, therefore, exist.

Rene Descartes held to this argument, as did Anselm of Canterbury who said, *"I can think of a perfect being, where has that thought come from? Certainly, it cannot come from myself because I'm not perfect. Neither could it have come from observing others because they are not perfect. Neither could it have come from the world because it is not perfect. It must have come from God."*

## Teleological Argument

From the Greek *teleos* meaning, "sign". Paul in Acts 14 uses this argument – even the rain coming at the proper time is a sign that there is a God. Everything in nature points to an Intelligent Designer. As science has advanced this argument has only been reinforced. Every atom has the look of a manufactured article, the Bombardier Beetle seems to disprove the principle of evolution and the perfect arrangement of the solar system, for instance, all reinforce this. In 1802, William Parley wrote, *"Evidences of Christianity"*. He writes of a man who finds an intricate watch on the moors. The man never saw the watch being made but he instantly assumes the existence of a creator.

## Anthropological Argument

Again, God is a more reasonable accountant than evolution, for example with respect to man's unique properties such as intelligence, emotions, spiritual sensibility of the divine and longing for meaning and purpose. In other words, how can Man be explained apart from God? John Henry Newman said, *"conscience witnesses to the truth that there is that within us which proves conclusively that there is One above us."*

Whilst some philosophers, sociologists and the like try to explain away conscience as a combination of fear of man, superstition, prejudice, vanity and custom, it is impossible to see how this can be justified in the face of many instances of conscience having gone directly against these things (for example, martyrs).

Some separate the Anthropological and Moral Argument, which looks for an explanation of man's universal sense of morality (conscience), for the near agreement of all cultures on what is right and wrong.

## Ethnological Argument

This is also known as the Historical Argument. Throughout all nations, there is a belief in a deity. Religion is endemic throughout the human race. Where does this come from if not from some Supernatural Source?





## How God Has Revealed Himself (Scripturally)

- God's Works: Historical Events
- God's Words: Divine Speech
- God's Son: The Incarnation

### God's Works: Historical Events

God comes to humanity through a series of divine events. Two significant events stand out to us. He acted personally to make Himself known at a very particular time, at a special place, and to particular individuals. Theologians call it, "*the scandal of particularity*".

#### The Call of Abraham

That God would choose one man, Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3) and through Him, birth a nation through whom He would fulfil His plans (Deuteronomy 7:6; Exodus 19:6).

Abraham's call can only be understood in the light of the overarching story and plan of God. In Creation, God makes Adam and Eve His image bearers to rule and govern the earth. However, they rebel against God (The Fall) and introduce sin and death into the world.

Genesis 12 marks the very beginning of the story of redemption - the third "chapter" of God's plan. The event of Abraham's call is the call of one man chosen by God who would birth a nation who was called to bring God's redemptive rule back to earth.

#### *God's Choosing*

Genesis 12 describes how God calls Abram. It makes no mention of Abram's character or goodness. This brings us back again to, "*the scandal of particularity*". God chooses on the basis of grace.

We see that God makes a habit of choosing individuals and revealing Himself to them at particular times, and at special places:

- Mary – Luke 1:26,
- Gideon – Judges 6,
- Moses – Exodus 3,
- The 12 Disciples – Mark 3:13,
- Paul – Acts 9

God chooses on the basis of grace and His sovereignty to show that we can't come to God based on pedigree, self-righteousness or good works.

This is good news for us. Scripture promises that it is those who forsake self-righteousness and trust (have faith) in God's ability to save that will receive salvation and favour from God (Isaiah 66:2; Ephesians 2:8-9; 2 Timothy 1:9). It is this kind of faith that brings about the pleasure of God (Hebrews 11:6).

*"For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples," - Deuteronomy 7:6-7*



## God's Words: Divine Speech

From the beginning: God spoke directly to Adam, Cain, Abraham, Noah, Moses and then initially to the whole congregation of Israel at Sinai. But after that, He spoke His revelation through prophets as a mouthpiece to speak to Israel, His people.

So we see this pattern: God reveals His mysteries to the prophets and then they speak it out – the VERY words of GOD, “Thus says the Lord”.

*“God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” - Exodus 3:14 (NIV)*

*“The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah.” - Jeremiah 33:19*

### REFLECTION

What other means did God use to speak to the people in the Bible?

Specifically, in the Old Covenant God speaks to His people through the prophets. The Prophet was a Seer (had revelation) and a spokesman (spoke out God's words) to the people. This was God's means to speak and guide Israel.

God also spoke through other special means including, angels, dreams, visions and signs, such as the burning bush (Exodus 3) and the writing on the wall (Daniel 5).

## God's Son: The Incarnation

We have seen how God has revealed Himself in special ways, through historical events and through the Old Testament prophets. However, God's plan was always to speak and act through His Son.

NT Wright explains how God had for a long time been sending advance sketches of Himself to His people (through the prophets) but now He's given us His exact portrait!

God the Son took on human form and lived amongst us. In doing so, He gave us the clearest possible revelation of what God is like. We can rightly say that Jesus Christ was the full and final revelation of God. He spoke God's words as a prophet but was much more. He revealed the Father, the Nature of God, in a completely new way. He was superior to any other revelation that came before. His message surpassed those of the prophets of old; going beyond them and fulfilling all others (Matthew 5:17, also Matthew 5:21, 27, 32, 33, 38,43).

For example:

- **He completed the sacrificial system.** Sacrifices had to be made every year for the forgiveness of sins using the blood of unblemished animals. Jesus completed that. He laid down His unblemished life once and for all to pay for all sins (Hebrews 8-10).

- **He obeyed the moral law.** Adam, God's first head of the human race disobeyed God. Israel, God's firstborn son (Exodus 4:22) disobeyed God. Jesus, the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45), God's true firstborn, came and obeyed perfectly. He was tempted as Adam and Israel were, yet He did not sin. He obeyed the Father perfectly and laid down His life as the perfect sacrifice (Luke 2:51; John 17:4; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22).

*"Through Christ all the other moments of divine disclosure become more understandable. All of God's other manifestations; past and future, become better received, remembered, and clarified. In the light of Christ, all previous revelation through the history of Israel and the nations becomes increasingly meaningful. Christ is the One whom the angels have longed to see, "the desire of all nations," the goal toward which all the history of revelation prior to Christ had been tending (Haggai 2:7; John 1; Ephesians 1)." – Thomas Oden<sup>3</sup>*

## REFLECTION

Consider the following Scriptures:

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." - John 1:1,14*

*"Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" - John 14:8-9*

*"For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form." - Colossians 2:9 (NIV)*

*"Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" - Hebrews 1:1-3*

## NOTES:

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<sup>3</sup> Oden, Thomas. The Word of Life: Systematic Theology, vol. II.



# MODULE 5: THE BIBLE

## The Uniqueness of Scripture

- The Bible was written over a period of 1600 years, by at least 40 different people, from farmers and fishermen to priests and kings. It was written in three different languages, in various styles, from various places on the three continents of Europe, Asia and Africa. It covers subjects as diverse as genealogy, ethics, geography, history, warfare, worship and health.
- Given all this, it still provides a single compelling message that never contradicts itself.
- It is the most read, most printed, most widely distributed book in history.
- It has been translated into more languages than any other book. By the 1960's this number was already 1280.
- Possibly no other book in history has been attacked like the Bible. Over the centuries, many rulers have tried to destroy it. It has also been attacked intellectually and philosophically. Critics have tried to prove the Bible wrong for centuries and it still holds true today. No work of man could withstand such scrutiny.
- The Bible's teaching is unique. It contains incredibly accurate prophecy; amazingly accurate historical and geographical information, portrays its heroes in an honest light, complete with weaknesses and sins, and shows knowledge of things not known until scientists have proven them in modern times.

We would, of course, expect a book if it were of divine origin, to be both unique and miraculous in its preservation. We would also expect that it would contain information that could not be explained as being of human origin:

1. Remarkably accurate predictive prophecy.
2. Verifiable miraculous events.

We shall now look at some example of these in turn.

### Predictive Prophecy

Of the hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament, it has been estimated that a remarkable 81% have been fulfilled exactly as prophesied. This is a remarkable statistic, which no claimed oracle (medium, prophet, clairvoyant, astrologer) can come close to. However, does this mean that 19% is inaccurate? Not at all! It simply means that approximately 19% of such prophecies are still to be fulfilled, as they refer to the "time of the end" when Christ will return! In other words, there is not a single error in the predictive prophecy of Scripture. It is worth looking at some of the most remarkable among them.

There are many prophecies that speak of coming kings and empires and the destiny of people and cities that came true. Some of the most remarkable are found in the book of Daniel, which predicts the rise and fall of empires, and predicts the coming of Jesus to the day, even though he wrote the book hundreds of years before the event.







## The Canon of Scripture

The Canon of Scripture can be defined as, “*the list of all the books that belong in the Bible*” - Wayne Grudem<sup>4</sup>. From the people of Israel to the early Christians, there was a preserving of a collection of books deemed to be God’s sacred Word to His people.

### Old Testament Canon

The Ten Commandments form the earliest canon by which tablets of stone were written with the finger of God (Exodus 31:18). This was the absolute authoritative Word of God and the collection grew in size throughout Israel’s history. Moses himself wrote additional words (the books of the Law) that were put into the Ark of the Covenant alongside the tablets (Deuteronomy 31:24-26). Joshua also added to the collection (Joshua 24:26).

#### FOCUS POINT

But what about the warning in Deuteronomy 4:2, in which God commanded that no one was to add to or take away from the Word which God had commanded?

Answer: Joshua knew the commands and must have been convinced that God Himself had authorised him to add it.

We also see later on that it was the Prophets who wrote many of the other additional words from God, which were added and recognised as part of the canon. (1 Samuel 10:25, 2 Chronicles 26:22, Jeremiah 30:2). So these inspired books became quickly recognised by the people as being God’s Words. Books that were mostly written by Moses, Joshua, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and so on were immediately accepted as recording God’s revelation because they were recognised as prophets. History shows that from 400 BC to the coming of Christ, there were no prophets who spoke the Word of God to Israel. Because there were no prophets, no Scripture was written. Although there were other writings written after 400 BC, they were not deemed worthy to be included in the Hebrew Scriptures. Scholars say that the full collection of material that makes up the Old Testament was agreed upon around 150 BC and so it seems that the Old Testament Canon was already established around the time of Jesus.

In the English Bible, the Old Testament contains 39 “books”. The 39 books are divided into four collections.

- First, there is the **Pentateuch**, the five books of Moses.
- Second, we have the **Historical Books**, twelve books from Joshua to Esther that tell the story of Israel’s history after Moses.
- Third, we have five **Wisdom Books** (Job to Song of Songs).
- Fourth, there is a collection of seventeen **Prophetic Books**, the writings of Israel’s prophets from the eighth century to the fifth century BC.

<sup>4</sup> Grudem. Wayne. Systematic Theology.

**FOCUS POINT**

What about the books of the Apocrypha?

In addition to the 39 books of the Old Testament, there were a number of books written between 400 BC and AD 150 by some Jewish leaders. These books are recognised by the Roman Catholic Church as part of the Scriptures but have been excluded from all Protestant Bibles. Interestingly, these books were also never accepted by the Jews as Scripture. Most importantly, Jesus and the New Testament authors never considered these books Scripture.

The Apocrypha, while including helpful teaching and reflecting much of what was said in the Old Testament, does contain some things that are inconsistent with the rest of the Bible. For example, the book of Wisdom teaches that matter existed before the creation of all things, while in Baruch it teaches that God hears the prayers of the dead. 1 Maccabees also contains historical and geographical errors.

**New Testament Canon**

The Old Testament records the story of God's great acts and His dealings with Israel and it ends with the promise and expectation of the Messiah to come (Malachi 3:1-4, 4:1-6). The next portion of Scripture to be written happens only after the most momentous event in history, the coming of Jesus the Messiah. It was primarily then the Apostles who testified and wrote about the words and works of Jesus, that form our New Testament Scriptures.

There are a few places where Jesus promised His Disciples, the Apostles, that the Holy Spirit would empower them to remember and understand His words.

*"All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." - John 14:25-26 (NIV)*

*"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you" - John 16:12-15 (NIV)*

Even though a small number of New Testament books were not written by the Apostles, (e.g. Mark, Luke, Acts, Hebrews and Jude), the authors had a very close association with the Apostles and it seems the books were endorsed and authorised by them, according to Grudem. Although he was not one of the Twelve, Paul was also called to be an Apostle and entrusted with special revelation from God which enabled him to speak and write with full authority.

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**FOCUS POINT**

Evidence of this can be found in Romans 2:16; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16, 14:37; 2 Corinthians 13:3; Galatians 1:8-9; 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 4:8, 5:27; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14.

Before the New Testament was complete, there is evidence that some of it was known and recognised as Scripture. There are two examples in the New Testament itself:

- The first example, *“And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.”* - 2 Peter 3:15-16

The apostle Peter was discussing the Apostle Paul's letters. He mentions that false teachers have a tendency to distort Paul's writings, just *“as they do the other Scriptures”*. The other Scriptures referred to, are the inspired writings of the Old Testament. Here Peter is treating Paul's letters as other Scriptures. In his own lifetime, Paul's letters were recognised as Scriptures.

- The second example, *“The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, ‘do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,’ and ‘the worker deserves his wages.’”* - 1 Timothy 5:17-18 (NIV)

Writing to Timothy, Paul argues that the church should pay its workers appropriately. To make his point, he quotes two Scriptures. First, he quotes Deuteronomy 25:4, *“Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain.”* Second, he quotes Luke 10:7, where Jesus says, *“The worker deserves his wages.”* Thus Paul is quoting the gospel of Luke *as Scripture!*

### **Who Determined Which Books and Letters Make Up the New Testament Canon?**

As discussed above, if the book was written by or known to have a close association with or affirmed by an Apostle of the Lord Jesus, it was generally accepted as part of the canon.

Most important though - the books themselves, if they were truly inspired by God Himself, had to be self-attesting. In other words, they had an inherently incorruptible authority and this was recognised and tested over time by the Christians themselves as they were circulated, read and obeyed. As early as AD 170, a document called the Muratorian Canon listed all the current books of the New Testament except for Hebrews, James, and 3 John.

By the fourth century, there was almost universal agreement on the 27 books that belong in the New Testament. The church councils in Laodicea (363), Hippo (393), and Carthage (397), as well as the eminent theologian Athanasius (367), all reflected the universal consensus. It wasn't so much a case of which books were voted for and which books were left out. Rather that the books had, *‘voted themselves in’* and were widely recognised as being God's Word.

## The Importance of Believing the Bible is Trustworthy

As Christians, we must believe the Bible to be trustworthy. Christians throughout the centuries attested to the fact of the power of the Word. We must trust that God is powerful enough to give us exactly what we need. We need to trust in the faithfulness of God that every one of the 66 books is there because God ordained it. So Christians believe that the Bible is the completed revelation of God. We cannot add or subtract books from the Canon.

*"I love my encyclopedia, but the encyclopedia hasn't spawned thousands of communities based on its words. It hasn't shaped the actions, values, deaths, love lives, warfare, and fashion sense of millions of people over three millennia. No one has been executed for translating the encyclopedia into another language, as was William Tyndale when he published the first widely distributed English-language edition of the Bible. No president has been sworn in with the encyclopedia" – AJ Jacobs<sup>5</sup>*

Spurgeon once said *"Defend the Bible? I would as soon defend a lion! Unchain it and it will defend itself."*

### FOCUS POINT

What about the gnostic gospels?

The gospel of Thomas, which for a time was held by some as belonging to the canon, ends with the following absurd statement, *"Simon Peter said to them: 'Let Mary go away from us, for women are not worthy of life.' Jesus said: 'Lo, I shall lead her, so that I may make her a male, that she too may become a living spirit, resembling you males. For every woman who makes herself a male will enter the kingdom of heaven."*

Answer: The gnostic writings contain serious doctrinal error and conflicts with the spirit and truth of the canonical books and were eventually condemned by early church leaders as being heretical.

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<sup>5</sup> Jacobs, A J. The Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible.

# MODULE 6: TRANSLATIONS OF SCRIPTURE

We have been referring to Scripture in terms of its inspiration in its original form. The Old Testament, which was written in Hebrew, and the New Testament, which was written in Greek, were inspired by God and therefore written without error. For most of us, though, we have never been trained to read the Bible in the original languages. Can we then trust our translations to accurately bring us God's Word?

Yes, we can, but first, we must look at two important points that deal with accurate translation:

- Reliable Copies
- Accurate Translations

## Reliable Copies

### Old Testament

The Scriptures were copied by hand for over a thousand years and the Jews took utmost care in copying God's Word accurately. The scribes who were responsible for writing and copying the text had very strict rules for copying and checking. They would tediously and with great care, copy, not word for word but letter for letter, and if any error, however small was detected, they would destroy the scroll. When the Dead Sea scrolls were found in 1947, scholars were amazed to find that the older copies of the Hebrew Scripture they had, and the copies they found at the Dead Sea that were over 1000 years apart in age, had almost no meaningful differences.

It is profound to think of the great care and respect these Jews has for the Word of God when handling it.

### New Testament

Due to the amazing growth of the early church and the need for apostolic writings to teach to the church, the early Christians found ways of copying New Testament text that was much quicker but less accurate. Today, as a result, we still have thousands of manuscripts containing all or a section of the New Testament. Kevin Smith explains this,

*"Other than the New Testament, the Greek book that is best preserved is Homer's Iliad. We have some 640 manuscripts of the Iliad, with the earliest copy dating 400 years after Homer wrote it. By contrast, we have almost 5400 copies of the Greek New Testament, with the earliest copies dating from just 50 years after the original. Because we have so many manuscripts, including some very early ones—all other factors being equal, early manuscripts are likely to contain fewer copying errors because they would have been copied fewer times—New Testament experts are convinced that every word of the original writings has been preserved."<sup>6</sup>*

Thanks to the detailed and painstaking work of Biblical scholars, both ancient and modern, we have copies of the Old and New Testaments that are accurate copies of the original - accurate enough for us to trust them as the Word of God.

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<sup>6</sup> Smith, Kevin. Unpublished Notes on Christian Doctrine

## Accurate Translations

The earliest translation was the Old Testament translated into Greek around 250 BC, which is called the *Septuagint*. When the New Testament writers quoted from the Old Testament, they often used the Septuagint and when they did, they often called it Scripture (Greek: *graphe*), (2 Timothy 3:16-17). So as far as Jesus, Paul and the other inspired writers were concerned, a faithful, accurate translation of Scripture is also Scripture.

Interestingly, Jesus spoke mainly in Aramaic but the gospel writers had also translated His words for us into Greek, for the sake of the Greek-speaking world. So even from the original, translation has taken place.

### FOCUS POINT

Are the major English translations accurate?

Yes, without a doubt. Teams of Biblical Language Experts work together to add their extensive and up-to-date knowledge of Biblical customs, theology and language according to well-defined principles of translation. Working in teams also ensures that personal and theological leanings do not influence the translation work negatively.

Examples of outstanding and faithful English translations, in alphabetical order:

- Contemporary English Version (CEV)
- English Standard Version (ESV)
- God’s Word Translation (GWT)
- Good News Bible (GNB or TEV)
- Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB)
- Lexham English Bible (LEB)
- New American Standard Bible (NASB)
- New English Translation (NET)
- New International Version (NIV)
- New King James Version (NKJV)
- New Living Translation (NLT)
- New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)
- Revised Standard Version (RSV)
- Today’s New International Version (TNIV)

This is not an exhaustive list but it does give you an idea of the major English translations.

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# MODULE 7: THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE

The key verse on the inspiration of Scripture is 2 Timothy 3:16-17, which says,

*“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”*

Many translations use the phrase “inspired by God” instead of “God-breathed”. The term God-breathed evocatively describes God as the source of what is recorded in Scripture. Just as God breathed out breath into Adam, so He breathed out His Word into the writers of the Bible.

John MacArthur explains,

*“The idea then in the Scripture is that the Bible is the out breath of God. It's not God breathing into man's words. It's not God breathing into man's thoughts. It's God breathing out His words. Now, we believe that the Bible is God's breath”<sup>8</sup>*

## How Inspiration Took Place

### Two Incorrect Views

#### Intuitive

The Bible is man's inspired words, like an artistic ability or gift that contains general truth. The Jewish people had a gift/ aptitude for the religious; essentially no different to Plato, Shakespeare or Buddha.

#### Mechanical

The idea that God dictated His exact words to the writers and the human writer was bypassed or taken over by the Divine Author's power and Spirit. They were just the vessel for the Spirit in which they then mechanically wrote it down. So the Bible then is simply a “heavenly download” and is not really a human book.

(There are instances though where we find God overwhelm and, in a sense, cause men to speak the very words of God automatically, e.g. 1 Samuel 10:5-12.)

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<sup>8</sup> MacArthur, John. Our God-Breathed Study Bible. Audio Sermon.



# MODULE 8: THE TRUTHFULNESS OF SCRIPTURE

We believe that the Bible is free of error and is inerrant, or completely truthful, in all it says.

Inerrancy is the doctrine that simply means, “*the Bible always tells the truth concerning everything it talks about*” - Wayne Grudem<sup>10</sup>

We understand that every letter, every word and every book is just how God wanted it to be. Therefore, to disbelieve or disobey the words of Scripture is to disobey God Himself. Scripture itself testifies God’s Word as being completely true and without error. (Numbers 23:19; Psalm 12:6; Psalm 119:89,96; Proverbs 30:5; Matthew 24:35; John 17:17).

## Some of the Different Concepts of Inerrancy

### Absolute Inerrancy

This teaches that all the detail in the Bible, including scientific and historical data, is fully true as it reads and any apparent discrepancies can be explained (2 Chronicles 4:2).

### Full Inerrancy

This teaches that the Bible is completely true but that the scientific and historical data were reported the way they appeared to the human eye and not necessarily as they exactly are. Often the author’s used popular descriptions and general references of the time (2 Chronicles 4:2).

### Limited Inerrancy

This teaches that the Bible is completely true in its *salvific* (“leading to salvation”) message but contains errors in the limited understanding of scientific and historical matters. These ‘errors’ are of no great consequence since the Bible wasn’t given to teach history and science but truth about salvation and God and in that sense, it is inerrant and truthful.

### Inerrancy of Purpose

“This teaches that the Bible is effective in bringing people closer to God, not to communicate truths. In other words, it brings people to Christ regardless of any errors it may contain. There is a difference between inerrancy and factuality.” - Millard Erickson<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*

<sup>11</sup> Erickson, J Millard. *Christian Theology*

## Flexible Concept of Inerrancy

In light of the aforementioned points, it would be fair to say that a flexible concept of inerrancy is best. This concept is in line with number two (Full Inerrancy) and hence we understand that God's Word is fully true, not only in spiritual matters but also in historical, geographical and biological matters.

However, this does not mean:

- That there are no problems of seeming inaccuracy and discrepancy

*"Many claim the Bible contains errors—it reports historical events inaccurately; it gets scientific information wrong, and it contradicts itself in place. However, if we give the Bible the same courtesy we extend to alleged criminals—treating it as innocent until proven guilty—we shall find credible explanations for the alleged errors. The Word of God has proven credible for thousands of years; it deserves to be given the benefit of the doubt. Scholars, who have given the Scriptures the benefit of the doubt, have learned that over time many good explanations have been found for difficult passages. There are some passages that remain perplexing, but we should reserve judgement and await further information." - Kevin Smith<sup>12</sup>*

- That there are no difficult passages

Some of the very difficult passages that we struggle to believe are "God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16).

### REFLECTION

For instance, read Psalm 137:9. How does this match up to the character of a loving God who cares for the weak and young?

Psalm 137 verse 9 is the Word of God, in the sense that it truly and truthfully reveals the fallen human condition. Not every passage, because it is in the Bible, reflects God's character and will! Often it is, *"simply being a true revelation about some subject that God wanted us to know about, including our fallible selves"* - Ben Witherington<sup>13</sup>.

Also, the Bible will often give untrue statements made by ungodly people, but the statement is truthful in that it was reported correctly.

<sup>12</sup> Smith, Kevin. Unpublished Notes on Christian Doctrine.

<sup>13</sup> Witherington III, Ben. The Living Word of God: Rethinking the Theology of the Bible

# MODULE 9: HOW TO READ SCRIPTURE (Hermeneutics)

## Introducing Hermeneutics

How is it that we can all read the same Bible, yet come to wildly different beliefs and doctrines which shape the way we live? It stems from the different methods of reading and interpreting the Bible that we take. In this section, we will see that our method of reading and interpreting the Bible will always determine our beliefs. If your method of reading the Bible is flawed, your beliefs will be flawed. Right thinking leads to right living.

*"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth" - 2 Timothy 2:15*

The context of this Scripture has to do with false teachers twisting Scripture, teaching what it does not really mean. It can be quite easy to be lazy and mishandle Scripture, to make it say what you want rather than find out what it really says. The aim of this section is to learn to have the heart, the skill and the common sense to rightly handle the truth, just as Timothy had to do.

## Being an Interpreter

When I use the phrase, "you are an interpreter", we could think of a language teacher, a Bible professor or a Greek student who is trying to explain the meaning of certain foreign words. But actually, whether you realise it or not, you are an interpreter whenever you read the Bible. God's intent is for you to read and understand His Word and for you to learn how to apply it in your life.

We see the Lord Jesus practising this with some disciples in Luke 24:27, where He explained how to correctly interpret the Scriptures that spoke of Him. "Explained" is from the Greek word *hermeneuo*, meaning, "to interpret". So hermeneutics is simply the art of interpreting the Bible. Every time we read the Bible, and interpret it in our situation we practice hermeneutics.

If the Bible is itself truth which is worth more than silver or gold, then shouldn't we be like treasure hunters devoting our lives to seeking and finding its treasures? A student of the Word has that attitude and is willing to devote his or her life to applying his heart to understanding (Proverbs 2:2) knowing that rich treasures of revelation await those who put in the hard yards.

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## The Heart of an Interpreter

Rightly handling God's Word is not a task for pastors or learned students only. It is something we are ALL called to do. The most important characteristic of learning to read and obey the Bible is to have the right attitude or heart.

Here are some vital points to consider for us as disciples of Jesus:

### We must believe that the Bible is the Word of God

If we accept the Bible as divinely inspired, we will be able to receive the truths written in it and submit to its authority (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

### We must come with a humble and teachable heart

Our posture must be those who come "under" the authority of the Word rather than those who sit "over" it with a critical attitude (Isaiah 66:2; Psalm 34:18). Part of approaching the Scriptures in humility is to read prayerfully and to acknowledge the need for the Holy Spirit's help (Psalm 119:18; Ephesians 1:17; 1 Corinthians 2:12).

### We must come with a heart to worship and obey

Ultimately, the Bible points us towards a relationship with Jesus Christ Himself. The purpose of reading and studying the Bible is to be able to worship and obey the Author of the Bible! We are not to be like the Pharisees who totally misinterpreted the Scriptures because their hearts were not set on the Lord (John 5:39-40).

#### REFLECTION

Keeping the above points in mind, how do you approach the Word and the reading of the Word? What can you change within yourself and your approach?

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## Two Ways to Read the Bible

### Devotional Bible Reading

Devotional Bible reading is different to Bible study. The aim in devotional Bible reading is to meet the Lord, the Author of the Word. Our attitude here is much more important than a method. Devotional reading is reading to seek God's mind, to listen to His voice, rest in adoration, and worship in His presence.

Kevin Smith in his excellent book, *A Practical Guide for Studying God's Word*, discusses how to use the Bible in personal devotions. He gives a simple four-step system for devotional reading:

- **Passage:** Read an entire passage
- **Part:** Focus on one part
- **Point:** Ask what God is saying to you
- **Practice:** Respond to God

#### *Step 1: Passage*

Read a whole passage, chapter or many chapters, rather than one or two verses. A simple way is to work through a book of the Bible, reading a chapter a day.

#### *Step 2: Part*

When you read a passage, look for one part that stands out to you. Bypass the parts you don't understand. Remember that your goal is to meet the Lord rather than get caught up in the details to understand the mysteries of the text. Read and re-read the text until something stands out or "jumps out" at you.

#### *Step 3: Point*

Once you've identified the part which stands out, prayerfully ponder it, and ask God what the point of the Scripture is. Do your best to interpret it correctly (within context) rather than twisting the meaning. Ask the Holy Spirit, why He is highlighting this text to you.

#### *Step 4: Practice*

It's important to ACT on what you have read since the goal of Bible reading is to know God and obey Him. This might take the form of confession, worship, repentance, or restitution towards someone, and so on.

There are many ways to read the Bible devotionally. This is just one of them. Ultimately, the aim is to spend time with God and His Word, to get to know and obey Him. Be consistent and intentional and you will be amazed at how God will speak!

### Intensive Bible Study

Reading the Bible as part of Bible study is what we will be discussing at length in the section which follows.

## Why the Need to Study and Interpret the Bible?

### Often the Objection is: I just Need to Read and Obey it

Surely God just expects us to read the Word and obey it? Surely it is as simple as that?

In one sense it is, yes. But the problem is often not in the understanding of a Scripture, but in obeying it. For example, *"Do all things without grumbling or disputing"* - *Philippians 2:14*

It is also true that many people miss the plain reading of the text and try to find some obscure meaning, or they ignore the obvious context. But the phrase, *"It's easy, just read the Word and obey it"*, can be naive and even dangerous sometimes! For example, should you really cut out your eye if it causes you to sin? Even blind men struggle with lust. Was that what Jesus wanted us to do? It's clear that we need to learn how to interpret the words of Scripture with understanding.

### We Need to Understand the Nature of Scripture

In the previous section, it was taught that the Bible is both Divine and human. It is God's Word, but written through human words, in a variety of circumstances, to different kinds of people.

#### FOCUS POINT

If it was just God's Word downloaded from heaven as a series of commands, it would be easier to listen and obey. But we must remember that the Bible was not written originally to us. It was written through human words, a long time ago (in history), and conditioned by the culture that they lived in. We need to understand the context, and understand what God's Word was in that day (relevance).

As Gordon Fee says,

*"God's Word to us was first of all his Word to them. If they were going to hear it, it could only have come through events, and in a language they could understand. Our problem is that we are so far removed from them in time, and sometimes in thought. This is the major reason why one needs to learn to interpret the Bible"*<sup>14</sup>

Remember that the Bible was written FOR us, but was not written TO us. In other words, we receive the message indirectly, as it were. Only once we know what the text meant to those it was written to, can we know what it means for us.

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<sup>14</sup> Fee, Gordon, and Stuart, Douglas. *How to Read the Bible for all it's Worth*



## Example of the Eisegetical Reading of Scripture

### Allegorical Method

The allegorical method is essentially when we read the text and “spiritualise” it to find a layer of hidden meaning, as opposed to the literal straightforward meaning.

The style of allegory is used by authors (such as CS Lewis in the Narnia series) to write about a topic or character that symbolises and means something else. The allegorical style is often a powerful way to explain simple or profound truths.

The Bible itself does use allegory. For example, we can see this in Galatians 4:24, much of the book of Revelation, and in the Old Testament symbolism of the Passover lamb. However, Christians often try to read into texts and attempt to find a layer of hidden meaning in the texts that aren’t meant to be read as allegorical. We try to make it mean something that the original writer or speaker did not intend at all and look for a secret double meaning.

It is most often the case that the writers of the Bible wanted us to read the Scriptures as plainly as possible, to receive the full force of its truth!

### The Use of Allegory and Symbolism in Scripture

Now there is much use of allegory, metaphors and symbolism in the Bible, but it is purposefully used by the author (intended) and obvious to see; for example, in Revelation 1:13-16, we see how John uses the word “like” and “as” to explain that it is symbolic.

Much of the Psalms use symbolism, and the Old Testament prophetic books employ a kind of double prophetic meaning that was not clear to the original readers but is clear to us today. In fact, much of the New Testament actually interprets the prophetic books for us in the light of Christ.

#### REFLECTION

Read Isaiah 53 and consider how it points to Christ.

The problem with the allegorical method is that we then decide what the Scripture really means. If we over analyse to find some deep hidden mystery that no one else knows, we are playing into the Devil’s hands. Why? It is very easy to get caught up with, “wanting secret knowledge” rather than simply obeying what God says! God desires His truth to be plain to see. We then can become like the Greeks who wanted to talk about the latest idea, yet never obeyed, and were never doers of the Word.

*“It ain’t those parts of the Bible that I can’t understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand”- Mark Twain*

The Biblical authors did not intend to have multiple hidden meanings that would confuse their readers. Their purpose in delivery was always that the Word they gave would be understood and obeyed.

Bear in mind that even though Scripture has one meaning, it can still have many applications. As disciples of Jesus, we can draw from its principles which can be applied in many different situations.



**REFLECTION**

PRACTICE 1: Read Joshua 6. Follow and apply the, "3 Steps on How to Study Scripture".

Step 1 - Observation:

Step 2 - Interpretation:

Step 3 - Application:

**REFLECTION**

PRACTICE 2: Read Deuteronomy 22:5. Follow and apply the, "3 Steps on How to Study Scripture".

Step 1 - Observation:

Step 2 - Interpretation:

Step 3 - Application:

**REFLECTION**

PRACTICE 3: Read Judges 6: 36-40. Follow and apply the, "3 Steps on How to Study Scripture".

Step 1 - Observation:

Step 2 - Interpretation:

Step 3 - Application:

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- Grudem, Wayne. Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine. Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, England, 1994.
- Jacobs, A J. The Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally As Possible. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007.
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- Witherington, Ben, III. The Living Word of God: Rethinking the Theology of the Bible. Baylor University Press, Waco, Texas, 2007.

## Recommended Reading

### Systematic Theology

- Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine. Wayne Grudem (IVP)
- Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective. J. Rodman Williams (Zondervan)
- Christian Theology. Millard Erickson (Baker Academics)

### Reading the Bible

- How to Read the Bible for All its Worth. Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart (Zondervan)
- Unlocking the Bible. David Pawson (Collins)
- How to Enjoy Your Bible. John Blanchard (Evangelical Press)
- How to Study Your Bible. Kay Arthur (Harvest House)

