



DISCIPLE DEVELOPMENT MONTH

Biblical studies 1: Bibliology “Why you can trust the Bible as God’s Word”

Teacher: Professor Russ Glessner

A Survey of Basic Teaching Concerning The Holy Scripture

Week 1 || January 7th, 2024

Class Objectives: Our objective during this time together is:

- to encourage a deep awareness of the Triune God’s greatness as Creator and Redeemer and a fresh understanding of the wonder, power, beauty, character, and value of His Word, the Holy Bible—His Revelation to Humanity.
- To direct constant, worshipful attention to our triune God as Creator, Redeemer, and the Author of Holy Scripture.
- To communicate a basic framework of information concerning the Bible.
- To support teaching about the Bible with careful use of Scripture.
- To encourage thinking, questions, and discussion about the Bible
- To stimulate the regular, thoughtful, planned reading of the Bible and making the Bible part of normal conversation.
- To identify with Christ’s Church in making disciples of Jesus Christ and glorifying our great God

“Preparing you to think and act biblically.” [James Boice]

Structure of the Bible

The Old Testament

The Hebrew Scriptures (24 books)

Tanakh = Torah [Law], Nebhiim [Prophets], & Kethubhim [Writings]

The Law (5)

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

The Prophets (8)

Former: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings

Later: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, The Twelve [minor prophets]

The Writings (11)

Truth [poetry]: Psalms, Proverbs, Job

Scrolls: Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther

Historical: Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles

English Bible (39 books)

Law (5)

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

History (12)

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles,
Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

Poetry (5)

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon

Major Prophets (5)

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel

Minor Prophets (12)

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

The New Testament (27 books)

Gospels

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

History

Acts

Pauline Epistles

Romans

1 & 2 Corinthians

Galatians

Ephesians

Philippians

Colossians

1 & 2 Thessalonians

1 & 2 Timothy

Titus

Philemon

General Epistles

Hebrews

James

1 & 2 Peter

1, 2, & 3 John

Jude

Prophecy-Apocalypse

Revelation

Reading and Understanding the Bible

Dear Reader, as you read your Bible, please be mindful of these words of wisdom. The Bible is God's Word in human language, so it should be read plainly and normally. Ask the Lord to give you the will to be diligent in reading. You should give attention to the text (whole) and texts (parts) of Scripture. Think about what you read, ask questions of the text and its writers, imagine what the earliest readers (hearers) might have thought. Store up challenges and difficulties and they will help you develop your faith as you seek understanding. The Bible is His Story and yet comprises many stories. Ask not only what the writer is saying, but what the writer is doing with what he is saying. The Bible is literature of the highest order and should be read as such. In reading you will find genres such as history, narrative, law, prophecy, poetry, wisdom, Gospel, parable, letter, and apocalypse. There are numerous figures of speech (e.g. simile, hyperbole, metonymy, merism, ellipsis, litotes, apostrophe, etc.) and various forms of parallelism. Jesus and the writers of the NT often quote texts from the OT. The Bible was written over the span of 1500 years by about forty writers and so differences in time and culture need attention. You

will find that much in Scripture is clear and easily understood, and also that much is very hard to understand. The Bible is like a pool, shallow enough for a child to wade in and deep enough for an elephant to plunge about! Listen to and follow the words which St. Augustine heard, **“Tolle Lege,”** which means, **“Take up and read!”**

God

Genesis 1:1; Psalm 145:1-21; Isaiah 40:9-31; Acts 17:22-31;
Matt 28:18-20; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:15-16

Definition:

The one true God is spirit, the creator and ruler of the universe, and is infinite, eternal, and unchanging in His personal and triune being, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, justice, goodness, faithfulness, and love.

Revelation

God paints and speaks; people see and listen.

Exodus 19:16-25; Psalm 19:1-14; Ezekiel 1:4-28; Romans 1:20; Hebrews 1:1-2; 2 Peter 1:20-21

Concepts and Definitions:

General Revelation: God’s communication to mankind everywhere that He exists as “Creator, Preserver, and Judge of the world.” (Demarest)

God’s Greatness—He is Creator

Special Revelation: God’s communication to individuals, groups, and peoples information about Himself, His creation, His images (human beings), and His plan and provision of salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ—through appearances, dreams, miracles, prophets, Christ, apostles, and Scripture.

The Holy Bible

“The Bible is God’s written message to humans and comprises two Testaments—The Hebrew Scriptures and The Apostolic Writings (Older and Newer Testaments). This Message in human language provides the only clear expression of God’s Story, the Good News of Jesus Christ, and the way to live life pleasing to God. These Writings are completely truthful and when correctly interpreted are authoritative for all Christian belief and life.” (RHG)

Inspiration

God communicates his Message as Truth; humans speak and write it.

Exodus 4:14-17; Deut 18:18; Jeremiah 36; 1 Cor 2:13-14;
2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21

Definition and Concepts: Process or Product (inspiration)?

"Inspiration is God's superintending of human authors so that using their own individual personalities they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original manuscripts." (Ryrie)

"Inspiration is that inexplicable working of the Holy Spirit, whereby He guided the human authors of the Bible in choosing the very words they used in writing every portion of the original manuscripts; so that the Bible is in all parts infallible as to truth and final as to authority." (Gausson)

"Inspiration is that attribute of Scripture, which describes it as the product of God's creative breath, and thus truthful and authoritative as the very Word of God." (RHG)

Inerrancy

God's Word is totally truthful.

Psalm 119:160; John 17:17; 1 Cor 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 3:16

Definition and Concepts:

"Inerrancy means that when all facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything that they affirm, whether that has to do with doctrine or morality or with the social, physical, or life sciences." (Paul Feinberg)

"All statements of the writers of Scripture, interpreted correctly and in context, are factual and truthful." (RHG)

Note: God's people have historically believed in the complete trustworthiness of Scripture and have gone to great lengths to investigate and demonstrate that. However, there have been some evangelicals who have believed that a low level of inaccuracy or error in Scripture exists, not contradictory to the essentials of Christian faith or practice. This produced great discussion and debate, with an International Council on Biblical Inerrancy being formed and producing a useful and detailed statement in the 1980s. I believe that was a noble endeavor and that the concept that what is "God-breathed" is without error is reasonable and wisest. It is worth noting, however, that some biblically astute, faithful Christians [scholars], who ardently defend the Bible's truthfulness, would disagree on the inerrancy issue.

Small Group Questions

1. What was something you learned about the Bible today?
2. How often do you think of God or Scripture during the day? How does it affect your activity or behavior?
3. What might be a couple of examples of naturally referring to the Bible in conversation with a neighbor or relative?

4. How would you describe the Bible when you were conversing with your Muslim [Hindu, Mormon, Sikh, Buddhist, atheist] neighbor—someone who knows very little about it?
5. What kind of Bible would you recommend to a friend or neighbor? What versions? What particular kind of Bible APP?
6. What plan do you use for reading the Bible? How faithful are you, and what are some ways that we can encourage each other to be faithful in our reading?