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# **Learn to Read the Bible Effectively Seminar**

## **Workbook Week 1**

**Introduction**

**Background of the Bible**

**The Bible Interprets Itself**

**Overview of the Books of the Bible (Part 1)**

**Why the Bible is Difficult to Read**

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## SECTION 1

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### Introduction

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WELCOME!

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

Our goal is to teach you to read the Bible more effectively. You are certainly capable of reading and understanding this great book, but if you are like most people, you are occasionally:

*Frustrated,  
Confused,  
Bored,  
or Overwhelmed by the task at hand.*

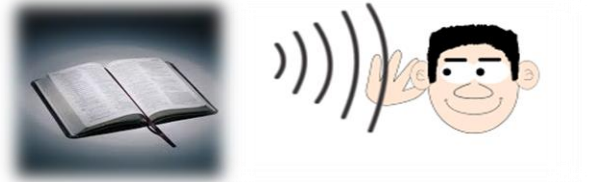
We assume that you believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and that you believe you can benefit in some way from understanding its message. We share that belief with you. But we also assume that since you are attending, that you desire help in furthering your understanding of the Bible while avoiding the many roadblocks which hinder progress. We think we can provide you with keys and tips in doing so.

Why are we giving this seminar?

We are hoping God is pleased that we are attempting to build respect and familiarity with His Word. We are hoping that we are fulfilling our responsibility to share what we have learned with others. We are concerned for your salvation as well, but rest assured, we do not believe it is our place or role to attempt to convert you to our way of thinking in this seminar. We are committed to helping you discover the Bible message for yourself. If we come to agreement on matters then that is great. If not, your conscience and ours must be satisfied independently. For this reason, we will avoid a debate of doctrine during class time, and stick to our promise of helping you read the Bible more effectively!

### A BEGINNING (BUT CRITICAL) TIP:

- ✓ Look for Bible "echoes".
- ✓ Ask: What does this remind me of?



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 not give?"* (Mark 12:13-17)

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

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 to God?

**Look and Listen for  
Bible "echoes"**

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

Whose image are we in? 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 known as "God manifestation").

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

Let's learn more...

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## SECTION 2

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### Background of the Bible

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#### BACKGROUND

Holy Bible - "Separate Book"

66 Books (The Bible is really a LIBRARY of Books!)

Old Testament - 39 books  
New Testament - 27 books

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

Written over a period of over 1500 years

2,930 characters in 1,551 places

Every imaginable literary form (poetry, prose, etc.).

Even with so many different writers, subjects, etc., all parts of the Bible agree with one another. Though the writers were divided by class, period, country, and disposition, there is wonderful harmony in all they wrote. There is no contradiction, no disagreement. Whence came this wonderful unity? From God! They all wrote by divine inspiration. They were God's agents, proclaiming His message unto humanity.



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## 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*

2Peter 1:20-21 "...no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

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*

Prepares us to give an answer and contend for the faith.

*1 Pet. 3:15*

*Jude 3-4*

Provides direction for daily living.

*Psalms 119:105*

*Joshua 1:8*

Read the Bible to believe  
what you find...not find  
what you believe!

## Background of the Bible

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### 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.



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## SECTION 3

### The Bible Interprets Itself

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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 also true when reading the Bible. We need to learn from our life's experiences and recognize that the key to understanding the Bible more easily is to look within its own pages – to read the instructions more carefully!

Our tendency is to not look far enough for answers within the book when we encounter something we do not understand.

Sometimes we find it easier to just 'google it' and accept someone else's opinion or answer!

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, with 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.

## The Bible Interprets Itself

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ANSWERS ARE FOUND NEAR AND FAR

Look in the same chapter or surrounding chapters:

Christ's explanation of the parable of the Sower  
*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 the entire Bible to find answers to your questions
- ✓ Write down your questions (it may be a while until you get to the answer)
- ✓ Pray for Guidance

### DON'T:

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



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## SECTION 4

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### Overview of the Books of the Bible (Part 1)

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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 (Part 1)

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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 Rolls or Scrolls (5 books)

Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther

3. Historical (3 books)

Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles

The overview of the Bible sessions will be conducted by presenting the books of the Old Testament in chronological order, based on the historical events outlined in the Bible. The New Testament books will be presented in the (non-chronological) order as in the Bible.

## Overview of the Books of the Bible (Part 1)

### SESSION OUTLINES

<p>Session 1 - Overview of Bible</p> <p>(a) Background/Structure/Chronology (b) Genesis</p>	<p>Session 4 - Southern Exile to Christ</p> <p>(a) Pre-Exile Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Lamentations (b) 70 years captivity Joel, Daniel, Ezekiel, Obadiah (c) Post Exile Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi</p>
<p>Session 2 - Exodus to David</p> <p>(a) Exodus to Promised Land Job Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy Joshua (b) Period of Judges Judges Ruth (c) Saul &amp; David 1st &amp; 2nd Samuel Psalms</p>	<p>Session 5 - New Testament - Part 1</p> <p>(a) Gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke, John (b) Acts of the Apostles (c) Paul's Epistles to the Churches Romans 1st &amp; 2nd Corinthians Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians 1st &amp; 2nd Thessalonians</p>
<p>Session 3 - Solomon to Northern Exile</p> <p>(a) Reign of Solomon Introduction to: 1st &amp; 2nd Kings 1st &amp; 2nd Chronicles Proverbs Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon (b) Northern Kingdom Amos, Hosea (c) Southern Kingdom Isaiah, Micah (d) Nations Jonah, Nahum</p>	<p>Session 6 - New Testament - Part 2</p> <p>(a) Paul's Personal Epistles 1st &amp; 2nd Timothy Titus, Philemon (b) General Epistles Hebrews James 1st &amp; 2nd Peter 1st, 2nd &amp; 3rd John Jude (c) The Apocalypse Revelation</p>

## Overview of the Books of the Bible (Part 1)

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### GENESIS

The single most important book of the Bible.

Genesis is the beginning or foundation of the Bible, from which everything is built. Everything revealed in the other books of the Bible has its beginning in the book of Genesis (a word that means "Beginning").

It is the first book of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible.

The name itself means "origin, source, or begetting."

The book of Genesis, along with the book of Revelation, stand as two end posts bridging the revelation of God to man; the first telling how it all began, the last revealing in symbol how it all will finish.

In Genesis there is seen the beginnings of all that which Revelation predicts as the consummation of the Divine purpose in the earth.

For example:

Genesis speaks of a natural creation (*Genesis 1*)

Revelation of a spiritual creation (*Revelation 3:14*);

In Genesis the serpent speaks (*Genesis 3:1-5*)

In Revelation it is restrained (*Revelation 20:2*).

In Genesis, the curse is imposed (*Gen. 3:17*)

In Revelation it is removed (*Revelation 22:3*).

In Genesis, sorrow and death make their appearance (*Genesis 3:16-19*)

In Revelation they are taken away (*Revelation 21:4*).

In Genesis, access to the tree of life is denied (*Genesis 3:24*)

In Revelation, access to it is opened (*Revelation 2:7*).

In Genesis, the first paradise is closed to man (*Genesis 3:23*)

In Revelation it is opened to him (*Revelation 21:25*).

Genesis basically can be divided into two parts:

PRIMEVAL HISTORY	Chapters 1 to 11
PATRIARCHAL HISTORY	Chapters 12 to 50

The first division records four outstanding events:

1. The Creation
2. The Fall of Man
3. The Flood
4. The Confusing of Tongues (Tower of Babel)

## Overview of the Books of the Bible (Part 1)

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Patriarchal history is concerned with four outstanding individuals:

1. Abraham
2. Isaac
3. Jacob
4. Joseph

In addition to the natural separation into two periods of time, the book of Genesis is also divided naturally into 12 sections. These natural breaks are as follows:

1. Creation--Introduction (*Gen. 1:1 - 2:3*).
2. The Generations of the heavens and the earth (*Gen.2:4 - 4:26*).
3. The Book of the Generation of Adam (*Gen. 5:1 - 6:8*)
4. The Generations of Noah, a just man (*Gen. 6:9 - 9:29*).
5. The Generations of the sons of Noah (*Gen. 10:1 -11:9*).
6. The Generations of Shem (*Gen. 11:10-26*).
7. The Generations of Terah (Abraham) (*Gen. 11:27 - 25:11*).
8. The Generations of Ishmael (*Gen. 25:12-18*).
9. The Generations of Isaac (*Gen. 25:19 - 35:29*).
10. The Generations of Esau (*Gen. 36:1-8*).
11. The Generations of the Sons of Esau (*Gen. 36:9-43*).
12. The Generations of Jacob (*Gen. 37:1 - 50:26*).

Some Points to Consider from Genesis:

1. Reconciling Creation with the age of the Earth. *Gen. 1:1*
2. God's First Promise to Man. *Gen. 3:15*
3. God called Abram. *Gen. 12:1*
4. God's Covenant with Abram/Abraham. *Gen. 12, 13, 15, 22*
5. How Israel came to be in Egypt. *Gen. Chapters 15, 37-50*

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## SECTION 5

### Why the Bible is Difficult to Read

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If you find the Bible difficult to read, it's probably because ***it is*** difficult to read!

Once we accept this fact and realize that God has a purpose for it, frustration can turn to challenge. Millions of people love doing Crossword Puzzles or the daily "Wordle"! How many spend a few minutes of time to unlock small puzzles of scripture?

Always remember:

*"It is the Glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honor of kings is to search out a matter."*  
*Proverbs 25:2*

WHY DID JESUS SPEAK IN PARABLES?

The disciples posed this question to him in *Matthew 13:10*.

His answer reveals that it is a separation process. *"It is given unto you. . . unto them it is not given "* (If it is a question of whether or not this is fair, consider Paul's comment in *Romans 9:18-21*).

WHO IS TRUTH REVEALED TO?

1. To "babes" *Matthew 11:25-26*
2. Certainly not to those who consider themselves wise or "learned"! See *1 Corinthians 1:17-31*



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## HOW DOES ONE GAIN UNDERSTANDING?

### 1. By application of time and energy.

Social status or financial position will not give anyone an advantage over another. Understanding requires a purchase "without money."

*Isaiah 55:1, 3*

*Prov. 23:23*



### 2. Slowly!

God never revealed anything all at once and has always taught a sure slow effective method of achieving a task.

*Hebrews 1:1*

*Exodus 23:29*



## UNDERSTANDING IS PROMISED TO THOSE WHO SEEK DILIGENTLY

We must ask in faith (and this involves prayer), but understanding is assured if we are patient to receive it.

*Matt. 7:7-8*

*James 1:5-6*

**YOU CANNOT SPEED READ THE BIBLE...if you want to read it effectively!**

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting... James 1:5-6