

An Introduction to the Bible – Outline

I. Introduction: A History of God's Revelatory Dealings in the Past

- A. *Creation – God Spoke Light Into Existence*
- B. *Calling of Abraham – God Began a Nation that Would Receive His Revelation*
- C. *Canon of the Old Testament – God Gave the Jews a Body of Revelation*
- D. *Coming of Christ – God Revealed Himself in the Son, the Living Word of God*
- E. *Completion of Scripture – God Unveils His Complete Written Revelation*

II. Basic Facts About the Bible

- A. *A Definition:* Scripture is the written communication of God – definitively “God-breathed” in nature and in quality, produced as “men carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God,” so that man shall live “by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.”
- B. *Its Authorship*
 - 1. Divine Authorship – Displayed in the Coherence and Authority of the Unified Volume
 - 2. Human Authorship – Displayed in Varying Writing Styles and Emphases
 - a. 40+ Authors
 - b. Written over approximately 1,500 years
- C. *Its Basic Features*
 - 1. 66 Books in Total
 - 2. Old Testament
 - a. Jewish Divisions
 - i. Section 1 – The Law – The Torah
 - ii. Section 2 – The Prophets – The Nevi'im
 - iii. Section 3 – The Writings – The Ketuvim
 - b. Modern Divisions
 - i. Section 1 – The Pentateuch (Genesis – Deuteronomy)
 - ii. Section 2 – Historical Books (Joshua – Esther)
 - iii. Section 3 – Poetry/Wisdom (Job – Song of Solomon)
 - iv. Section 4 – Major Prophets (Isaiah – Daniel)
 - v. Section 5 – Minor Prophets (Hosea – Malachi)
 - 3. New Testament
 - a. Gospels and Acts (Matthew – Acts)
 - b. Pauline Epistles (Romans – Philemon)
 - c. General Epistles (Hebrews – Jude)
 - d. Apocalypse (Revelation)
- D. *Its Background*
 - 1. Hebrew Old Testament (with Aramaic portions)
 - 2. Greek New Testament
- E. *Literary Types and Their Purposes*
 - 1. Poetry – Brings out the deep feelings of the heart, whether in grief to call out to God or in praise at the marvel of all His works.
 - 2. Narrative – Records God's practical dealings with His people. Narrative often provides

lessons for Christian living or illustrations of a teaching in another part of Scripture.

3. Didactic – Teaches the truth of God in a straightforward manner. Often it includes practical application in light of the truth.
4. Prophetic and Apocalyptic – Portrays events which were future at the time of writing. Some prophecies are explicit statements that cannot be mistaken. Some prophecies are highly symbolic in language. Prophetic passages of Scripture serve to establish the promises of God as reliable, and enliven our hope in the glorious future which God has prepared.

III. The Claims of the Bible

- A. *A Book of Exclusive Revelation – It Manifests a God to Be Known*
- B. *A Book of Singular Doctrine – It Embodies a Faith to Believe*
- C. *A Book of Authoritative Instruction – It Empowers a Life to Be Lived*

IV. The Contents of the Bible

- A. *The Central Message and Purpose of Scripture* – From beginning to end, the God of Creation is seen as progressively manifesting intrinsically holy Being, especially emphasizing His greatness, His glory, and His grace. Through the initial fall of man and the succeeding ages of failure in which man exposes his complete depravity, God manifests His judgment upon sin and yet His faithful compassion in spite of it. Such reached its climax when God manifested His Person in His Son and his character of both extreme justice and extreme grace in the cross of Christ. Subsequent to this work, God has exalted His Son with a view for all to recognize Him as Messiah to the Jews, Saviour-Lord of Gentiles, and Bridegroom of the Church. Christ is the center of Scripture's entirety.
- B. *Main Themes Developed (With Representative Verses Given)*
 1. Genesis 1-3 as a Summary
 - a. Chapter 1 – God's Power Displayed in Creation
 - b. Chapter 2 – The Necessity of Relationships Emphasized
 - c. Chapter 3 – God's Remedy for Sin Revealed
 2. The Glory and Revelation of God in His Creation
 - a. God's First Act of Revelation: Light – Genesis 1:3
 - b. God's Passion for His Glory – Isaiah 48:11
 - c. God's Deliberate Revelation of Himself – Matthew 11:27
 - d. God's Ultimate Manifestation of His Glory – Revelation 15:4 / 21:23
 - e. God as the Ultimate Purpose in all Things – Romans 11:33-36
 3. The Depravity of Man and The Justice of God
 - a. The Fall of Man – Genesis 3
 - b. The Absolute Ruin of Man Proven – Romans 1-3
 - c. The Ultimate Justice of God Exacted Upon the Ungodly – Revelation 20:11-15
 - d. Note: One will notice through Scripture that God dealt with and will deal with man in a variety of ways; regardless of the way God deals with man, there is always rebellion. Under any and every circumstance, man proves himself to be totally depraved.
 4. The Incarnation and Exaltation of the Son of God
 - a. Christ as the Anticipation of the Old Testament – Isaiah 52:13-53:12

- b. Christ as God Revealed – John 1:1-18
- c. Christ as the Humble Servant and Exalted Sovereign – Philippians 2:5-11
- d. Christ as Exalted in His Very Being – Hebrews 1:1-4
- e. Christ Exalted as Head of the Church – Ephesians 1-3
- f. Christ's Exaltation as the Consummation of All Time – Revelation 1-22
- 5. Redemption through Christ's Sacrifice
 - a. Blood Sacrifice as an Old Testament Theme – Genesis 3, Exodus 12, Leviticus 1
 - b. Christ as the Ultimate Offering – Isaiah 53
 - c. Christ as the Ransom for All and Singular Mediator – 1 Timothy 2:1-6 / John 14:6
 - d. Christ's Cross as His Ultimate Source of Glory – Revelation 5
- 6. Personal Submission to and Enjoyment of God – Relationship with Him
 - a. Man's Ultimate Occupation: Satisfaction in God – Psalm 63
 - b. The Goal of Christ's Death: To Bring Us to God – 1 Peter 3:18
 - c. The Effect of our Reconciliation: Salvation from God's Wrath, Exaltation to a Place of Dignity, and Ability to Render Service to Him – Ephesians 2:1-10
- 7. The Ultimate Direction of Time – God's Purposes Fulfilled
 - a. "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:" – Isaiah 46:9-10
 - b. God's Creativity Brought to Consummation – Genesis 1 / Revelation 21
 - c. God's Purpose to Make a Man Head is Fulfilled – Genesis 2 / Ephesians 1:20-23
 - d. God the Father Glorified When the Son Delivers His Victorious Kingdom to the Father – 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 (See also Phil. 2:10-11)
 - e. God fully Manifested to, Submitted to, and Realized by All (Revelation 20-22)
- C. *Main People Groups Dealt with in the Bible – Each will Recognize Christ as Lord and Saviour*
 - 1. Gentile – Includes everyone outside of the Church and Israel
 - a. Dealt with in the first 2,000 years of human history, then put aside.
 - b. Genesis 1-11 records the epoch of God's dealings with Gentiles. There, He shows that man in his natural tendency drifts toward paganism centered around man with no concern for God. However, in spite of this, God called out a godly line from Adam's son, Seth.
 - c. Submission and blessing promised to them in a future day (Isaiah 2:2-4).
 - 2. Jew – Those born into the chosen nation of Israel
 - a. Dealt with in the second 2,000 years of human history, then put aside.
 - b. The record of Israel begins with Abraham in Genesis 12, called out of pagan idolatry into knowledge of the true God. The progress of its history takes up the entirety of the Old Testament. Its highlights include:
 - i. Period of the Patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Genesis 12-50)
 - ii. Deliverance from bondage in Egypt and the journey to Canaan (Exodus – Deuteronomy)
 - iii. Conquest of Canaan and rule by judges (Joshua – Ruth)
 - iv. Rule by monarchy and division of the kingdom (1 Samuel – 2 Chronicles, and

- some of the prophets)
 - v. Captivity, return to the land, and rebuilding of the temple (Ezra – Esther, and many of the prophets)
 - vi. 400 Silent Years (Between Malachi and Matthew)
 - vii. Rejection of Messiah (Gospels and Acts)
 - c. Israel will be restored to being the head of the nations with all of its covenants with God fulfilled, having been reconciled to Him (Zechariah 11-14)
 - 3. Church of God – Includes both previous Jew and Gentile, united unto identity with Christ.
 - a. Formed in the third 2,000 years of human history; never set aside, but immediately brought to a condition of glory and holiness.
 - b. Acts records the beginning of the Church. The Epistles give description of what the Church is and should look like.
 - c. This body will ever be with the Lord, eternally united with Him and heirs His infinite inheritance.
- D. Key Events Which Stand Out*
1. Creation – Explains the Reason for Existing: God's Own Will and Purpose
 2. The Fall – Explains the State of the World and the Depravity of All Mankind
 3. The Flood – Explains God's Judgment on a Past Generation, as Well as the Current Topography of the Earth
 4. Babel – Explains the Existence of Different Languages, Cultures, People Groups, and Religions
 5. Abraham – Explains the Origin of the Nation of Israel, as well as Illustrates a Life of Faith
 6. Exodus and Giving of Law – Explains the Solidification and Foundation of the Nation of Israel
 7. Babylonian Captivity – Explains the Judgment of God on Israel and the Dispersion Jews that Existed and Exist
 8. First Coming of Christ
 - a. His Incarnation – God was manifested in the flesh.
 - b. His Life – Christ fulfilled the perfect human life
 - c. His Death and Burial – Christ satisfied God's wrath and made way for forgiveness of sins
 - d. His Resurrection – Christ conquered the grave, guaranteeing our resurrection
 - e. His Ascension – Christ glorified and exalted as priest for His people and King waiting till his enemies be “put under his feet.”
 9. Coming of the Holy Spirit and Formation of the Church
 - a. Pentecost – the birth of the Church
 - b. Rapture – the glorification and consummation of the church
 10. Tribulation – Judgment on the Nations and Restoration to Israel
 11. Second Coming of Christ and Events Surrounding It
 - a. Restoration and Salvation of Israel
 - b. Purging of the Earth

- c. Initiation of the Millennial Kingdom
- 12. Final Judgment – The Ultimate Division of Saved and Lost, Unrighteous Man Condemned Eternally and Finally
- 13. New Heaven and New Earth – Initiation of God's Perfect Eternal State, the Consummation of All Time
- E. *Time-Periods, Epochs, and Ages (Called Dispensations)*
 - 1. Innocence
 - a. Adam and Eve innocent, but not without capacity to sin
 - b. Adam and Eve rebel by taking the fruit
 - c. God judges by casting them out of the garden
 - d. Conclusion: Man fails even without prior disposition to sin, God cannot dwell with sin without judging it, and God makes provision for sinners by His grace
 - 2. Conscience
 - a. Man exists with “knowledge of good and evil” and called to “do well.”
 - b. Man with that knowledge rebels and relies on his own means of approaching God, culminating in the murder and suppression of true religion. Man and his natural inclinations and methods are exalted.
 - c. God judges with a worldwide flood
 - d. Conclusion: Man fails even with knowledge of good and evil, God judges false religion and paganism, and God accepts the worshipper that comes by Divine means.
 - 3. Human Government
 - a. Man exists with a form of government and law (Genesis 9).
 - b. Man in his organizational and governmental capacities rebels and builds a civilization surrounding pagan religion in rejection of God's commands (Genesis 11).
 - c. God judges by confounding the communications of the rebels, leading them to confusion and dispersion.
 - d. Conclusion: Man organized around man results in chaos and rebellion, God is the judge of man's systems.
 - 4. Promise
 - a. God calls out the family which would one day grow into the chosen nation of Israel. A life of faith demanded of each patriarch in light of God's promises to Abraham's progeny.
 - b. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob fail, especially in relationship capacities. Egypt fails to recognize God's chosen people and persecute them.
 - c. God brings judgment upon Egypt by means of plague.
 - d. Conclusion: Man even with Divine promises and revelations fails to respond by faith, yet God's righteousness and purposes prevail.
 - 5. Law
 - a. God institutes written revelation and a codified Law for the people of Israel.
 - b. Such only exposed and emphasized man's sinfulness as man repeatedly failed through Israel's history, whether on the way to Canaan, in Canaan, or in foreign

lands. Man's ultimate rebellion was the crucifixion of Christ.

- c. God's main judgments are seen in the Babylonian Captivity and especially in the temporary setting aside of Israel as the nation through which God's blessings would flow. This setting aside was culminated in A.D. 70, when Israel as a recognizable nation ceased to exist until 1948.
 - d. Conclusion: Man, even with rules systematically laid out, could not obey God from the heart; God is supremely righteous and yet longsuffering.
6. Grace / the Church
- a. The explicit gospel is the proclamation of this age. Through it, God establishes a brand new body of people, which is the Bride of Christ. Their rule of life is "Christ formed in you," attained by the power and method of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Nevertheless, the true Church remains a remnant, while false "Churchianity" prevails and the gospel is rejected.
 - c. God will not judge the true Christians, but rather bring them straight to glory. However, He will send the false organized church into the Great Tribulation, as well as all who reject the gospel.
 - d. Conclusion: Man, even when faced with full provision for his sin and spiritual power to live for God, rejects God's means and blasphemes the gospel. God is faithful to His own, though He will not overlook the rejection of His Son, despite the prevalent preaching of His Person and work.
7. Kingdom
- a. Christ visibly reigns in Jerusalem, with Israel restored as the head of the nations. Christ rules as Messiah of the Jews and Lord of the Gentiles and Bridegroom of the Church. Perfect righteousness will be perfectly and strictly administered by the King of Righteousness in ideal conditions.
 - b. Man's heart will be manifested as, even under ideal conditions of righteousness and blessing, he will still ultimately be deceived by the Devil after the 1,000 year Kingdom is ended.
 - c. God immediately judges the Devil and all who were deceived by him, culminating in the Great White Throne and the Consummation of all things with the New Heavens and New Earth in which perfect righteousness dwells, where God is revealed.
 - d. Conclusion: man under no circumstance can be righteous in and of himself. He needs divine grace and life to be life God's own Self. God will always be the ultimate Judge of sin and Rewarder of righteousness.

F. *Covenants*

- 1. Covenant with Noah – God Promises to Preserve the Perpetuity of the Earth
- 2. Covenant with Abraham – God Promises to Preserve the Progeny and Property of Abraham
- 3. Covenant with Moses – God Prescribes the Practices of Israel Until Christ Would Come
- 4. Covenant with David – God Promises the Power of the Throne to David and His Son
- 5. The New Covenant – God Procures a Permanent People who Purposefully Obey

V. Subjects Surrounding the Topic of Scripture

A. Determining Its Nature

1. Revelation: How Has God Disclosed Himself in Scripture?
2. Inspiration: Is This Book God-Breathed?
3. Sufficiency: Does This Really the Whole Counsel of God For Us Today?
4. Infallibility: How Reliable Is It?
5. Authority: What Authority Does It Hold On My Life?

B. Understanding Its Origin

1. The Canon of Scripture: What Books Belong in the Bible?
2. The Language of Scripture: How Do We Translate and Study the Original Languages?
3. The Transmission of Scripture: How Did We Get the Bible?

C. Approaching Its Interpretation and Application

1. Hermeneutics: How to We Interpret a Bible Passage?
2. Exegesis: What Are We Meant to Get Out of a Passage?
3. Illumination: How Does God Enlighten My Mind to Scripture?
4. Application: How Does This Affect My Life Today?