

Introduction to the Bible

Overview. The Bible makes the fantastic claim that its writers are co-authors with God. That makes its contents the most valuable object we have on this earth. What could be more important than a document that God Himself had an active role in writing? In these sessions we examine some of the Bible's claims as a document inspired by God. As we examine these passages we will also discuss the process we use to study this amazing book.

Objectives. This document is designed to help you:

1. Name and explain Bible passages that present God as one who wants to be known.
2. Explain the differences between General and Special revelation and explain the role of each.
3. Describe how the Bible is put together and place each of its books into its setting.
4. Discuss what the Bible contributes to everyday life of those who live by it.

Notes.

I. God's acts of making Himself known are called Revelation and fall into two categories:

A. God's General Revelation allows all creatures to see his presence.

1. Romans 1:18-20
2. Psalm 19:1-6

B. God's Special Revelation allows us to see specific facts about his nature and will.

"By special revelation we mean God's manifestation of himself to particular persons at definite times and places, enabling those persons to enter into a redemptive relationship with him" (Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, p. 175).

1. Psalm 19:7-14
2. Hebrews 1:1-3
3. Second Timothy 3:15-16 & 2 Peter 1:20-21

II. The Bible was written over a period of centuries and its books relate to various historical eras. Knowing how the Bible is organized is essential to understanding each of its books.

A. The most general Grouping of the Bible's contents is into Old Testament and New Testament.

B. **The Old Testament** is divided into **Types of Literature** and into **Historical Periods**.

1. The "Types of Literature" division is essential to accurate reading and is the focus of our next session.
2. Knowing the Old Testament's "Historical Periods" is essential to a contextual reading of each book and is the focus of this session.

The Old Testament Books by Era

Era	Dates	Narrative	“Color”	Poets	Prophets
Ancient – Pre-history	-----	Genesis 1-11			
Patriarchal	2100 - 1500	Genesis 12-50	Job		
Exodus & Pre-monarchy	1450-1050	Exodus Exodus Joshua Judges	Leviticus Deuteronomy Ruth		
The United Monarchy	1050-930	1 Samuel 1 – 2 Kings 11	Chronicles	Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Canticles	
The Divided Monarchy	930-586	2 Kings 12-25	Chronicles		8th Century Amos, Hosea, Micah, Jonah, Isaiah 7th Century Zephaniah, Joel, Habakkuk, Nahum, Jeremiah
Exile and Post-Exile	586-400	Daniel Ezra Nehemiah	Esther	Lamentations	Exile Daniel, Ezekiel Reconstruction Haggai, Zechariah Malachi, Obadiah

C. **The New Testament Books** contain different types of literature and are grouped in three divisions.

1. We will study New Testament types of literature (Genres) in our next session.
2. The various groupings of NT Books help us organize our thinking in terms of who is writing and why.

The New Testament Books by Division

Gospels	Acts/Pauline Epistles			General & Johannine Epistles
The Synoptic Gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke	Acts Pauline Epistles			Johannine 1, 2, 3 John & Revelation
John’s Gospel (a theological treatise to prove Jesus’ deity, not a biography). Jn. 20:30-31	Prison Epistles Philippians Ephesians Colossians Philemon	Pastorals 1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus	“Others” Romans Corinthians Thessalonians Galatians	General Epistles Hebrews James 1 Peter 2 Peter

III. The Bible speaks of rewarding results for those who read and act on its teachings. We look at only a few of many passages.

- A. Joshua 1:7-9
- B. Psalm 1:1-3
- C. 2 Timothy 3:15-16