

RESURRECTION OPC - ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL
Hermeneutics: How to Read the Bible

WEEK 5 | MAY 22, 2016

Introduction & Acknowledgement

In our first session, we looked at an overall approach to reading Scripture modeled on the analogy of a compass. The goal of the compass is that we read Scripture *contextually, grammatically, theologically, and doxologically*.

In our last session, we looked at the importance of understanding Scripture in context. We saw that this involves paying attention to both the historical setting and various textual indicators. Having seen these, we now move a step beyond to explore how to interpret Scripture *theologically*.

Though comprised of 66 books written by ~40 authors over a period of ~1500 years, the Bible unfolds a single story of creation, fall, and redemption. This means that every small story of Scripture must be interpreted in light of the big story of the Bible. How we do that is what we will explore this week. In so doing, we are continuing to follow closely the lectures of Dr. Benjamin Shaw.

The Big Story

"The New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New." (Augustine)

The Drama

- The Old Testament story divides into ten major acts:

Stage	Dates (Approx.)	Books
Prologue	Creation - 2200 BC	Genesis 1-11
Patriarchs	2200 - 1805 BC	Genesis 12-50
Exodus	1446 BC	Exodus 1-19
Wilderness	1446 - 1406 BC	Exodus 20 - Deuteronomy 34
Conquest	1485 - 1375 BC	Joshua 1-24
Disintegration	1375 - 1050 BC	Judges 1 - Ruth 4
Unification	1050 - 930 BC	1Sam 1 - 1Ki 11; 1Ch 1 - 2Ch 9; Psalms - Song of Solomon
Division	930 - 586 BC	1Ki 12 - 2 Ki 25; 2Ch 10 - 36; Isaiah - Zephaniah
Exile	586 - 538 BC	Jeremiah-Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel
Post-Exile	538 - 400 BC	Ezra-Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Esther, Malachi

- Prologue - *Creation, Curse, and Promise*
 - Man is made in the image of God (Gen 1.27-28), yet sins by trying to play God (Gen 3.5-7).
 - Sin brings God's curse (Gen 3.8-24), yet within the curse God plants the first gospel promise (Gen 3.15).
 - The flood does not change man's heart (Gen 8.21), but God promises to preserve the world (Gen 8.22).
 - God divides humanity into nations, preventing united apostasy & preparing a chosen people (Gen 9-11).
- Patriarchs - *The Generational Covenant*
 - God gives Abram gospel promises (Gen 12.1-3); Abram believes God & is counted righteous (Gen 15.6).
 - God covenants with families (Gen 17.1-14); the patriarchs build altars and offer sacrifices in worship.
- Exodus & Wilderness - *From Slavery to Nation*
 - "Except for the first two chapters of Exodus, the last four books of the Pentateuch cover a period of forty years. More than one-tenth of the Old Testament is thus devoted to this forty-year period." (Shaw)
 - Israel is rescued from Egypt and constituted a nation w/ law, tabernacle, priests, sacrifices, and festivals.
- Conquest & Disintegration - *From Victory to Anarchy*
 - Under Joshua, Israel conquers and allocates Canaan. God's land promise is fulfilled (Josh 21.43-45).
 - After Joshua, Israel enters a downward spiral of apostasy, judgment, deliverance... ending with anarchy.
 - Though a faithful remnant remains (cf. Ruth), it is clear that Israel needs a king (Jdg 21.25).
- Unification - *God's King, City, and House*
 - The prophet Samuel's birth to a barren woman points back to the patriarchs and promises renewal.
 - Saul represents Israel's craven desire for a king "like all the nations" (1Sam 8.5). His successor, David, is a king "after [God's] own heart," (1Sam 13.14) - a man who sees things from God's perspective.
 - David unites Israel and subdues her enemies (2 Samuel); his son, Solomon, builds the temple (1Ki 6-8).

- **Division & Exile – Heaven Is (Not) a Place on Earth**
 - After Solomon, the kingdom divides into ten northern tribes (Israel) and two in the south (Judah).
 - This period is dominated by the ministries of two prophets: Elijah (1Ki 17 – 2Ki 2) and Elisha (2Ki 2-9).
 - In the end, Israel is annihilated by the Assyrian Empire in 722 BC, never to return (2Ki 17).
 - In 586 BC, Judah is exiled to Babylon (2Ki 25) – with a promise of restoration after 70 years (Jer 25).
- **Post-Exile – God Will Keep His Promises**
 - By decree of Cyrus the Great in 538 BC, Jews are permitted to return to Judah and rebuild the Temple.
 - The Second Temple, completed in 516 BC (70 years after 586 BC), was the Temple features in the NT.
 - Life for the returned exiles was dangerous and difficult, and many fell into old spiritual compromises.
 - Yet the ministries of Ezra and Nehemiah brought true renewal that preserved Israel for the Messiah.

The Dogma (in the Drama)

- “The theology of the Bible is not laid out in a logical fashion the way that a systematic theology is... the theology of the Bible does not come to us fully developed in the beginning. Instead, the theology develops little by little as God tells the story. At each stage a little more is revealed, a little more is made clear... So as we seek to faithfully interpret the Scriptures, we must not only have a good sense of where the passage is found in the larger historical and cultural context... We must also have a good sense of where the passage is found in the theological context of redemptive history.” (Shaw)
- How does the Bible unfold the basic structures of the Christian faith?
 - **Creator** – God is. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-glorious.
 - **Creation**
 - *ex Nihilo* – Unlike in pagan cosmogonies, the God of the Bible made all things from nothing.
 - of Man – Man is made in God’s image as God’s steward over the creation, yet rebels against God.
 - **Covenants** – God establishes and guarantees relationships with humanity:
 - of Works – Adam could earn life or death, by obedience or disobedience, for him and his posterity.
 - of Grace – (see below)
- This basic structure represents four stages in gospel history:

Stage	Scriptures	Covenant
Creation	Genesis 1.1-2.25	Covenant of Works
Rebellion	Genesis 3.1-13	
Rescue	Genesis 3.14 – Revelation 20.15	Covenant of Grace
Consummation	Revelation 21-22	

- The covenant of grace, occupying the vast majority of Scripture, is developed and clarified through stages:
 - **Stage 1: Adam – Commencement**
 - God will provide a Redeemer who will crush the serpent and break sin’s dark alliance (Gen 3.15).
 - This rescue will require – and is thus to be depicted by – blood sacrifices (Gen 3.21, 4.4).
 - **Stage 2: Noah – Preservation**
 - Rescue through the flood in the ark depicts resurrection through judgment in Christ (1Pet 3.18-22).
 - God promises to preserve a stable earth for subsequent covenant history (Gen 8.21-22, 9.1-17).
 - **Stage 3: Abraham – Promise**
 - God’s rescue plan will involve a nation, a blessing, a land, and a seed (Gen 12.1-3).
 - A right relationship to God comes only through faith (Gen 15.6), yet the sign and seal of this righteousness through faith is given to both the believer and his offspring (Gen 17, cf. Rom 4.11).
 - The ruler of Abraham’s offspring will come from the tribe of Judah (Gen 49.10).
 - **Stage 4: Moses – Nation**
 - Israel becomes a kingdom of priests and holy nation – fulfilled in the church (Ex 19.1-6, 1Pet 2.9-10).
 - The promised land pictures a new creation – lost by Israel, won by Christ (Dt 27-28; cf. Mt 28.18).
 - **Stage 5: David – Kingship**
 - Mediator kingship rests with David’s family (2Sam 7.9-17, Ps 2, 72).
 - The Lord’s chosen will be more than a man (Ps 110, Is 9.1-7) and will suffer (Ps 22, Is 53).
 - **Stage 6: Christ – Consummation**
 - Jesus is the new Adam (Ro 5, 1Cor 15), new Israel (Mt 2.15), and new David (Jer 23.5-6, Ezk 37).
 - God’s Spirit is poured out (Joel 2.28-32; Acts 2), regenerating believers (Ezk 36.25-28, Jer 31.31-34).

Remember: all of the Bible unfolds a single story – *one God, one people, and one plan of redemption.*