

## Lesson 2

### The Bible—The Why and How

- We are in the Bible's story whether we realize it or not.
- We are living between the time of Jesus' ascension to heaven, following his saving death and resurrection, and the time when he will return.
- The Bible **shows us how God acted in the past**, so we can know **how to act according to his purposes in the present**.

### Transform your life

- The Bible can transform your life, if you let it.
- It tells the story of a loving God running hard after his people to save them.
- It's the story of a God who wants to change your life for the better.
- But the Bible is also a **book from another culture and time**, and sometimes it can be hard to see just how incredible it is.
- **Bible Study** will help the **biblical story come alive for you**,

### Experience God's Word for yourself

- You have a viewpoint to offer—and God **wants you to experience his Word, instead of just experiencing it through someone else**.
- Each of us who know Jesus and have received the Holy Spirit have the opportunity for the **Spirit to work through us to interpret the Bible and discern God's will**.
- In doing so, **we will be drawn into God's presence** and into his mission to redeem the world.
- By learning to **love and obey God more**, we **discover how to love and serve other people**.

### Matthew 22:34-40

#### The Greatest Commandment

<sup>34</sup>Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. <sup>35</sup>One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: <sup>36</sup>"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’<sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ [*that is, unselfishly seek the best or higher good for others*]<sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

- **And it is this transformative work among us**—the work of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—**that can change our world.**

### **Act upon its calling**

- As we interpret the Bible and act upon its calling, we will see our world renewed.
- My dear friends, **the Bible** shows us the power of God’s story at work among us—the story that we are meant to live!

### **Bible Study will help you:**

- Learn the **basics of historical biblical interpretation** (formally known as exegesis).
- Know the **key terminology** of biblical studies.
- Identify **genre (type, kind, category)** when approaching the Bible and use **resources** accordingly.
- Understand **how to approach any passage in the Bible**, even if you know little to nothing about it before you begin.
- **Develop your own ideas about passages** while learning to consult others’ opinions.
- **Appreciate what Bible scholars** think about when approaching a passage of the Bible and **know how to find** most the **information professional scholars** use during their interpretation process.
- Understand the “**who, what, where, when, why, how, and apply**” of biblical interpretation.

## How to Interpret Biblical Narrative

The Bible's story is told through narratives – stories, accounts, plots, chronicles, storylines

Generally, the parts of the Bible categorized as **narrative** include the **Pentateuch, the Historical Books, the four Gospels, and the book of Acts.**

The Pentateuch includes:

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy

These five books are also full of laws (and are broadly known as “the Law”).

These laws are really part of Israel's story, too, as they tell how Israel should interact with God and the world.

The Pentateuch gets us from the **beginning of the story of humanity all the way up to God's people living just outside the promised land, about to enter it.**

### Historical books

The Bible's story continues in the Historical Books, **which tell the history of God's people after they enter the promised land up until—and after—their fall to foreign rule, including the destruction of the Jerusalem temple.**

The Historical Books of the Old Testament include:

- Joshua
- Judges
- Ruth
- 1 and 2 Samuel
- 1 and 2 Kings
- 1 and 2 Chronicles

- Ezra and Nehemiah
- Esther

**Fact.** Narratives also occur sometimes in prophetic and poetic books; *Jonah and Job* are two examples among many.

- The Historical Books leave us with God's people having a second, rebuilt temple, but still living under foreign rule.
- While Worship has been restored, **full and complete life** in the promised land has not.

God's people needed a Messiah who will restore them to wholeness, peace, and a full life with God—a **Messiah, an anointed one, who will save them.**

## **New Testament**

### **The Gospels**

The story continues in the New Testament with the Gospels and the formation of the early Church:

- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke
- John
- Acts of the Apostles

### **Synoptic Gospels**

**Matthew, Mark and Luke** are called the "**Synoptic Gospels**" because in many ways they are parallel accounts.

John's Gospel takes a different approach, retelling Jesus' life from a theological perspective.

Acts is really a companion book to Luke's Gospel, showing how the Christian faith spread quickly in the three decades after Jesus' resurrection.

Roughly half of Acts focuses on the ministry of Paul, tracking his missionary journeys to the northern Mediterranean region and recounting his arrest and trials.

The book of Acts leaves us with the idea that we, as God's people today, are meant to tell the next chapter

- That is why it is not closed – with - Amen

The Bible's story, through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, continues.

**As part of living in God's story, we must accurately interpret the Bible's narrative.**

We often think that narrative texts are straightforward—after all, they're stories, right?

- But since the biblical narratives are so old, interpreting them requires skills and tools that help us connect with the ancient world.

### **Asking the right Questions about Biblical Narrative**

To learn how to interpret biblical narrative, we'll use a passage from Mark as an example [Mark 8:22–9:13](#).

After a quick read, ask ourselves the following:

- Who is involved?
- What is happening?
- Where and when is this happening in the narrative (place and time)?
- Why are these actions occurring?
- How does this section, and in particular [Mark 8:27–30](#), change the narrative?
- What does the passage mean today?

These can be answered by getting the right context and the right tools

## **The “Who” and “What” of Interpreting Biblical Narrative**

### **First two major questions we want to ask:**

- Who is involved
- What is happening

### **To get these – need to read biblical text closely – to see**

- What’s going on
- Who are the key people?
- What are the key places and things

These are our clues – trying to understand what the bible is saying

### **Here is where we will need tools like – Bible dictionary, commentary**

Look up stuff – for instance in **Vs 22 – Bethsaida** –

- Will show that it was a fishing village located on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee
- It was the hometown of disciples – Philip, Andrew, and Peter

### **Lesson – that biblical story has key elements in it – giving us clues**

#### **People**

- we see that the blind man,
- Jesus, the disciples and
- the crowd of the fishing community – are key characters
- having this key moment around this man’s healing in Bethsaida
- hometown of these disciples

You can imagine what impact this would have had on the friends and neighbours of these disciples after seeing such a miracle – follow Jesus too.

All this gives biblical context –people, location and time

### **How to look up the location of a biblical narrative**

Let’s look at where this is happening in the overall narrative – time and in place.

- **Bible dictionary** – answers these kinds of questions
  - Outline of book
  - You will get your portion of scripture
  - See what happens in the scripture
  - Shows key moments – from vs 26 – Jesus asks a question

**When Jesus asks questions – some key things that we should pay attention to:**

- Ask it to yourself
- In this case – major narrative – who do people say that I am
- Look at the place where it occurs – Caesarea Philippi
  - Dictionary or study bible – that Caesarea Philippi
    - the capital of Herod's brother Philip's domain,
    - which included the northeaster coast of the Sea of Galilee.
    - The city itself stood at the foot of Mount Hermon, which was also the primary source of the Jorden river.
- Shows us the because of the surrounding area – Jesus is in a political place – a key political place within the Roman Empire with in the Jewish nation

**Question – where are we in time over all?**

- Jesus is dealing with a key issue here in his life and ministry
- Turning point in his life
- Also, a turning point in the Gospel of Mark
- A key moment in the lives of his disciples
- It shows us who he is, where he is going,
- The key question – the core of his ministry – who do people say that I am?

**Why?**

Jesus predicts his death for the first time

Why use **Son of Man**?

- The son of man who had divine origins – sent to restore humanity to God
- A phrase often used by Jesus – **his life and ministry**

- Phrase 'son of man' – **found 93 times in Ezekiel** – referring to the prophet's humanity

**Ez 2:1**

*And He said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak to you."*

**Ez 3:1**

*Moreover, He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel."*

- A divine prophetic figure
- We want to know why Jesus is using it
- Talks about his suffering and death

**Peter takes him aside. WHY?**

- Coz he is using the term – **son of man**
- The son of man is not only this **mysterious figure who is to come**, the son of man is also present now, **he is Jesus** – this is his message – he is already here and must suffer and die
- Imagine – Jesus's disciples having to deal with this
- How would you react

Using these stools – we see why Jesus says these things

- He is connecting himself to Scripture's story
- He is showing them who he is and why he has to die

**Conclusion**

In this key time, key political moment in history – Jesus is asking not only them but also us too – who do people say that I am – what about you?