

# How to Read and Study Your Bible

## Lesson 1

### I. Presuppositions for Interpretation

#### A. The Bible Is God's Word

##### 1. The Bible is Inspired by God

2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness."

2 Peter 1:21, "No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but people moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

This does not mean dictation. The different writers of the Old Testament and the New Testament have different styles, their personalities come out, their style of writing comes out and so we see that there is a human dimension in inspiration.

##### 2. The Authority of Scripture

Scripture has claim to our life and that we submit ourselves to Scripture's authority.

1) Over personal experience.

2) Over reason – rationalism or naturalism.

Assume the supernatural, the existence of God, God engages in human history and God intervenes in human history.

Apparent contradictions.

3) Over all church tradition or dogma – *Sola Scriptura*

#### B. The Interpreter Must Be Born Again

2 Corinthians 4:4 says, "The God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ who is the image of God."

1 Corinthians 2:14 says, "The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, but considers them foolishness and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit."

Someone can interpret Scripture but if they do not apply it to their lives they are mishandling God's Word. Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

#### C. The Interpreter Must Be Filled with the Spirit

John 16:13 says, "But when he, the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth, he will not speak on his own, he will speak only what he hears and he will tell you what is yet to come."

The Holy Spirit was the one who inspired the original authors to write, to record God's Word, but the Holy Spirit also illuminates us as we read and interpret God's Word, he guides us into all truth.

## II. The Nature of the Bible: Unity and Diversity

### A. Diversity of the Bible

#### 1. Kinds of Diversity

- a. **Time** – we mean that the Bible is written over a long period of time, something like 1500 years.
- b. **Authors** – we have authors from all walks of life in the Bible.
- c. **Languages**
- d. **Genres** – literary form – prose and poetry, with many, many subgenres.

#### 2. Implications of Diversity

- a. **We must adapt methodology for various kinds of literature.**

Daniel 7:6, “After that I looked and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard, and on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads and it was given authority to rule.” – apocalyptic literature.

Psalm 137:9, “Happy is the one who takes your babies and smashes them against the rocks.” –imprecatory psalm.

Isaiah 55:12, “You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace. The mountains and the hills will burst into song before you and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.” – eschatological poetry

- b. **We must recognize the progress of revelation.**

- c. **We must allow the biblical writers to speak for themselves.**

### B. Unity of the Bible

#### 1. Unity of Theme

The actions of God in bringing salvation to humanity through Jesus Christ, it is the story of God’s redemption.

#### 2. Implications of Unity

- a. **The Bible is one story.**
- b. **A systematic theology becomes a possibility.**