

Part 1 – What is the Bible?

1. Library 66 books

OT

Genesis - Deuteronomy (Pentateuch)

- Covers the law...

Joshua - Esther (The Writings)

- Covers the history, although not chronologically and also some overlap (e.g. Kings and Chronicles one with ah concern about the monarchy, the other with a concern about the temple)

Job - Song of Songs - Wisdom books... including a Hymn book of 150 Psalms;

Isaiah - Ezekiel - The "Greater" prophets; Historically overlap with some of the earlier books (e.g. Isaiah at time of Hezekiah - 2 Kings 19-20);

Daniel - Malachi - "Minor" prophets x 12 - i.e. they're shorter!

NT

Matthews - John - Gospels; 3 synoptics

Acts - Second volume of Luke

Romans - Titus - the letters of Paul, again not in chronology;

Hebrews - Jude - Letters not by Paul!

Revelation - By John, "Apocalyptic" writing.

2. History

History is HIS story

The central message:-

A book about salvation, therefore about Jesus

The key to the Bible is Christ (**Luke 24:29**)

Epochs

1) Creation

2) Fall.

3) Redemption

4) Return

3. Authority

2 Tim 3:16

4. Humility

"under" standing

Psalm 119

- God's word is sweet v103-104 (so we savour it)
- God's word is wise v97-98 (so we should meditate on it; squirrel/cow)
- God's word is light v105 (so we should obey it and follow it! 2 Peter 1:19)

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of they holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Part 2 - How do I read the Bible? Pictures, Windows and Mirrors as a metaphor for reading the Bible

- **Picture** – (look at) examine the text ... texture, mood, tone etc. Literary analysis (sometimes called “surface” reading)
- **Window** – (look through) what lies behind the text? The formation of the canon, historical and traditional issues associated with the interpretation of the text : historical analysis. Windows are there, not so we would concentrate on the panes of glass, but rather in order to look through them to a world beyond our current horizon.
- **Mirror** - (Look at what’s reflected back) What is reflected back to me as a reader from the text? thematic analysis. The purpose of a mirror is not to look at, or through, what is in the frame; rather the purpose is to see oneself reflected back. The themes reflected back from the text might be shaped by personal questions or by the needs of the believing community

1. Everyone begins with a FRAMEWORK

What are the reader’s prior understanding, pre-knowledge and theological convictions that lead him or her to read the text in the way that they do.

2. PICTURE - We need to stock our exegetical toolbox

The list of tools is long: it includes use of biblical languages to understand the meanings of words and the shape of sentences and paragraphs; it involves grammatical skills, noting the richness of vocabulary, giving consideration to the genre, looking at the dominant characters in the text etc. The purpose is to enable the reader to slow down and ponder the text, taking in all the details and allowing them to settle in their heart and mind.

- E.g. Col 3:16 (“you” is plural); Acts 5:11 (ecclesia – gathering – in OT too)

3. WINDOW - We need to build our theology from the text; we need the text to challenge our theology

Looking through the window to see the background of the text is a theological as well as an historical task.

e.g. John 1:1-4 – what does the WORD mean?

Reading the text canonically

4. MIRROR - Becoming reader-aware

- “reader response”
- John Stott - “double listening” this would greatly facilitate the preacher’s role as a “bridge builder”:

First, let the text speak.

Secondly, become aware of their own “pre-understandings”

- Beware of eisegesis rather than exegesis
- BB Warfield, of “reading the bible on your knees”