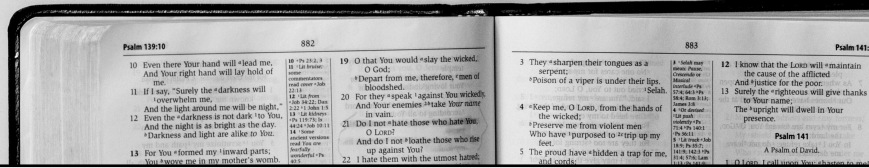


# DISCIPLESHIP CLASS

## HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

### WEEK 6



### VIDEO NOTES

- The word testament refers to a a Covenant partnership
- Written within 30-40 years of each other by the first generation followers of Jesus
- Types of Literature in The New Testament
  - 4 Gospels (narrative)
    - Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
  - Acts of the Apostles (narrative)
  - Epistles - letters from the Apostles
    - Pauls 13 books: Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon
    - Letter to the Hebrews
    - James & Jude
    - 1 & 2 Peter and 1, 2 & 3 John (Jesus first followers)
  - Revelation - apocalyptic literature

**The Gospels** tell the story of Jesus fulfilling the prophecy as the promised son of Abraham who will restore Gods blessing to the nations and also as the new human who will defeat evil and restore humanity to partnership with God.

### **Acts** - acts of the apostles

- Here the risen Jesus commissions the apostles also know as “sent ones”
- The apostles were appointed as Jesus’ representatives to spread the goodness about him throughout the Ancient world.
- The Acts of the apostles shares how the good news about the risen king Jesus changes history and should reshape every part of our lives.

**Letters from the Apostles** - written to provide teaching and guidance for local communities of Jesus’ followers called “churches”

**Revelation** - a letter to seven churches that reveals a prophetic word of challenging comfort to all of Jesus’ followers

- Revelation portrays the idea that when we follow the risen King not even death can prevent the dawn of “New Creation”
- The idea of “New Creation” in the Revelations is depicted as a new Jerusalem Garden temple, the true home of humanity after its long exile
- In the closing remarks of Revelations heaven and earth are reunited.

## Summary

- Each book of the new testament shows how God, through Jesus and the Spirit, is leading our world to its ultimate goal in a renewed creation.

## Parallels between the Old Testament and New Testament

1. All humanity is trapped in a Babylonian exile, but Jesus came to create a new home.
2. Were all living in different kinds of Egyptian slavery to selfishness and sin, but Jesus died as the passover lamb to liberate us into the promised land.
3. Our old humanity is bound in the dust of death, but Jesus' resurrection opened up a new future for a new humanity.
4. We live here in the current evil age, but through Jesus and the Spirit a new creation has burst open here and now.

## TEACHING NOTES

## HOW TO READ THE GOSPELS

- The gospels are the sayings and narratives of Jesus Christ.
  - Sayings – the teachings of Jesus Christ (red letters).

- Narratives – the stories about the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (black letters)
- In many ways, it is a gift from God that we not only read His teachings, but also His acts.
- Jesus is the revelation of God, not only by presenting new truth, but by living a perfect life before man (John 1:18).
- The gospels retain both His teachings and His actions so that this full revelation can be passed on to us.

*John 13:34 – “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”*

**How could we understand this passage from John if we only had the red letters of the gospel, without the black ones as well? The narratives and sayings are both essential and inspired.**

- Why have four gospels?
1. The fullness of Jesus cannot be contained in a singular book.
  2. No gospel supersedes the other. They simultaneously stand alone and harmonize, providing a more complete perspective of Christ.
  3. We can have greater confidence in a multitude of witnesses (2 Corinthians 13:1).

## **Tips for Reading**

1. Get caught up in the stories.

Each story is told for a reason. Enjoy it. Step into it. Be a part of the original audience. Strap on their sandals and experience the event, listen to the sermon. Putting yourself in the stories will make them more vivid and help you better understand what is going on.

## 2. Find the big picture\_\_\_\_\_.

- What's the overall point\_\_\_\_\_ of each of these books?
- What kinds of things are emphasized\_\_\_\_\_?

## 3. Look for relationships\_\_\_\_\_ between stories, events, and discourses.

Very often, the events and teachings are recorded in their unique order because the author wants you to consider them in light of one another.

- Look for repeated\_\_\_\_\_ phrases and concepts.
- Look for how one event relates\_\_\_\_\_ to another

For example, Matthew 18 tells us how to address a “brother” caught in sin. Then Jesus goes on to teach about the importance of forgiving over and over again. These two concepts are both related: they both help us understand what we do with a Christian who sins.

## 5. Ask what the overall\_\_\_\_\_ message demands of you\_\_\_\_\_.

- Ask what you are meant to be persuaded of and choose how you will respond\_\_\_\_\_.
- Ask how your life ought to be changed\_\_\_\_\_ in response to what Jesus taught\_\_\_\_\_.

## HOW TO READ ACTS

- Acts shows us how the church is to respond\_\_\_\_\_ when living in a predominately pagan culture\_\_\_\_\_.
- First, with a bold witness\_\_\_\_\_ for the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Second, with visible love\_\_\_\_\_ for each other
- When you work through the book of Acts, ask how the activity of the Spirit\_\_\_\_\_ of God through the early church should shape\_\_\_\_\_ your life today\_\_\_\_\_.

## HOW TO READ THE PARABLES

- The word “parable” literally means to throw alongside.
  - Jesus would throw parables alongside His teaching to bring a point home to the audience, or use them in response to questions.
- A parable is a saying that is sometimes meant to illustrate an elaborate process and sometimes meant to teach a specific point, but always meant to provoke a response.
- **What Jesus taught about parables:**
  - The saved gained insight, while the lost became even more hardened.
    - The parables are dealing with complex material and by their nature require spiritual insight to understand.
  - Even though they used very common themes (at least they were common in Bible times) to illustrate truth, the lost would hear and see but yet not truly understand the depth of Jesus’ teaching.

It is the response of the heart to the truth that produces the result. Just Because we are meant to understand, doesn’t mean the we wont have to dig for a deeper meaning. Jesus did not discourage the disciples from inquiring about parables. He wanted them to understand and explained their meaning to the disciples. In fact, you will find that in the parable of the sower, the good soil is the individual who heard and understood. The disciples were seekers, not only of knowledge but understanding. They went to Jesus to find out what He meant. In doing so, the truth infiltrated their heart and bore fruit.

## Types of parables

- A True Parable – a story with a distinct beginning and ending.

Examples include: the Good Samaritan, the Lost Sheep (both instances), the Prodigal Son, the Great Supper, the Laborers in the Vineyard, the Rich Man and Lazarus, and the Ten Virgins

- A Similitude – illustrations taken from everyday life.

Examples include: the leaven, the sower, and the mustard seed.

- Metaphors and Similes – a comparison of two things

Examples of metaphors include: You are the salt of the earth (Matt 5:13)

Examples of similes include: Every teacher of the law is like the owner of a house (Matt 13:52)

- An Epigram – a concise, clever, or paradoxical statement

Examples include: Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? (Matt. 7:16)

## Tips for reading parables

- What does this parable reveal about what God is doing to establish his kingdom?
- What specific need or issue is being addressed by Jesus?
- What does it say about who will be in the kingdom?
- What one truth does the parable reveal to a believer?
- What one truth does the parable hide from an unbeliever?
- What is the one central meaning of the parable?

## HOW TO READ REVELATIONS

- Revelations is considered apocalyptic literature.

- This is a type of biblical literature that emphasizes the lifting of the veil between heaven and earth and the revelation of God and his plan for the world.
- Apocalyptic writings are marked by distinctive literary features, particularly prediction of future events and accounts of visionary experiences or journeys to heaven, often involving vivid symbolism.

The book of Revelation was written to seven churches as both encouragement and challenge. An apocalyptic letter, it relies on visions, symbols, and Old Testament references to reveal the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise given to Abraham in Genesis.

### Tips for Reading

1. Pay attention to the symbolism
  - One thing to remember about apocalyptic literature is that it's highly symbolic, and part of the reason for that symbolism is to evoke emotion about the message. When you read apocalyptic literature, pay special attention to the symbolism and the emotions it's intended to evoke.
2. Don't forget the original audience
  - The original audience would have read those symbols and understood what they referenced.
  - We can't just transplant apocalyptic literature into our own cultural and historical setting. When we read it, we need to take into consideration what was happening at the time it was written.
  - Since apocalyptic literature is so closely tied to prophecy, it's easy to read it as though the original author was speaking about our future, and insert our own ideas into the text. Avoid that temptation. If you're going to read apocalyptic literature, it's important to do some research about the setting it was written in and the people it was written to. Otherwise you risk missing the intended meaning entirely.
3. Don't overanalyze the symbols



- Since we know the writing is symbolic, it's also easy to get lost in the details of each symbol. What creature did the author envision? How many parts does it have? Which parts are identified? Many of these details certainly have meaning, some of which we can still make reasonable inferences about (based on what we know of the original context).

5. Bring a guide\_\_\_\_\_

- Symbolism is one of the main things that makes apocalyptic literature so unique. It also makes apocalyptic literature notoriously challenging to read and understand. Instead of wading into it alone, you can stand on the backs of Bible scholars and draw from centuries of analysis done by some of the church's best theologians.



#### **BIRTH AND LIFE OF JESUS**

Jesus enters the world as a human to save humanity

**Matthew 1:1 - 26:16, Mark 1:1 - 14:42, Luke 1:1 - 22:23, John 1:1 - 18:11**



#### **DEATH OF JESUS**

Jesus is crucified to pay for humanity's rejection of God

**Matthew 26:17 - 27:50, Mark 15:6 - 47, Luke 23, John 18:12- 19:42**



#### **RESURRECTION OF JESUS**

Jesus conquers death to bring life to humanity

**Matthew 28, Mark 16:1-18, Luke 24:1-49, John 20-21**



#### **ASCENSION OF JESUS**

Jesus returns to heaven to rule over creation

**Mark 16:19-20, Luke 24:50-53**



#### **PENTACOST**

The Holy Spirit empowers the apostles to be Jesus' witnesses

**Acts 2**



#### **GOSPEL MISSION**

The Gospel begins to spread from Jerusalem to "the ends of the earth"

**Acts**



#### **APOSTLE PAUL**

Paul is commissioned to take The Gospel to the Gentiles

**Acts 9 - 28, Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus.**



#### **PRESENT DAY**

You are here!



#### **RETURN OF JESUS**

Jesus returns to bring an end to evil



#### **FINAL JUDGEMENT**

All humanity is judged before the throne of God



#### **NEW CREATION**

God creates a new heaven and a new earth

## **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

What are your favorite books in the New Testament?

What types of literature do you enjoy reading the most in the New Testament and why?

Pick a passage from one of the New Testament books. Identify the type of literature it is and then use the “tips” provided above to analyze the section of scripture.

## **SMALL GROUP NOTES**