

# **Learn to Read the Bible Effectively**

Distance Learning Programme

Session 2





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# **SESSION 2**

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## **Section 1**

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# Section 1

## Overview of the books of the Bible (Part 1)

### Background

The “Overview of the books of the Bible” sections will look at the books of the Bible in chronological order, based on the historical events outlined in the Bible, rather than using the order they appear in the Bible. This “Overview of the Bible” will be split up as follows:

Part 1 Background and Genesis

Part 2 Abraham to David – 2000 to 1000 BC

Part 3 Solomon to the exile of the northern kingdom – 1000 to 700 BC

Part 4 Hezekiah to Christ – 700 BC to Christ

Part 5 New Testament

### GENESIS

This is a very important book to understand!

A solid grasp of it is important for understanding what comes after. It is the beginning or foundation of the Bible, on which everything is built. Everything revealed in the other books of the Bible has its beginning in the book of Genesis.

The book of Genesis can be summarised as follows:

1. World history up to the start of the Jewish nation, including:

The creation –  
chapters 1 and 2

The preparation of the earth for life, followed by the creation of life, including the human race. Our first parents were given the choice whether to obey God or not.

The rebellion of  
Adam and Eve –  
chapter 3

Our first parents decided not to obey God. God’s plan started to remedy the results of the rebellion.

The flood –  
 chapters 6 to 9

The wickedness of the human race reached the point where God decided to destroy most of the human race with a flood. Noah's family were the sole survivors.

The introduction of  
 different languages –  
 chapter 11

Following the flood, the family of Noah repopulated the earth. A plan was devised to build an enormous tower as a central focus to keep all the population concentrated in one area. The Tower of Babel, as it was later called, was a rebellion against God's command to populate the whole earth. God intervened and stopped the plan by introducing different languages, preventing further co-operation on building the tower.

*This partially reconstructed ziggurat or temple-tower at Ur shows what the Tower of Babel may have looked like, with stairways leading from one level to the next.*



## 2. The early history of the Jewish nation, which concerns four outstanding individuals:

Abraham –  
 chapters 12 to 24

Abraham was a man who had outstanding faith in God. So God chose him to be the father of the nation at the centre of His plan – the nation of Israel. God made promises to Abraham that can have far-reaching consequences for us all. We shall start to look at these promises at the end of this section.

Isaac –  
 chapters 25 to 27

Isaac was Abraham's son, who also showed great faith.

Jacob –  
 chapters 27 to 35

Isaac's son. Jacob's twelve sons formed the basis for the nation of Israel. God repeated to Jacob the promises He had made to Abraham, and changed his name to Israel. These promises started to be fulfilled in Jacob's twelve sons.

Joseph –  
 chapters 37 to 50

One of Jacob's twelve sons. Joseph was disliked by his brothers, so they sold him as a slave.



Joseph ended up in Egypt where he eventually became the king's right-hand man. As a result of Joseph's influence, Egypt escaped the worst effects of a seven-year famine. Jacob and his other eleven sons went to Egypt to escape the famine.

*A statuette of an  
Egyptian high official,  
from the time of Joseph.*

## Some points to consider from Genesis

1.

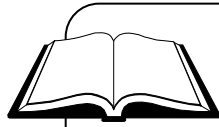


Look at Genesis 1 v 1

This verse makes the statement that God created our world. The rest of the chapter tells us what He did.

The Bible does not try to tell us in detail *how* God created the earth. It tells us *why*. This is what the rest of the Bible is all about.

## 2. Genesis is relevant to everyone.



Look at Genesis 12 v 1 to 3  
 22 v 17 and 18  
 26 v 4  
 28 v 13 and 14

These verses are promises from God to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They are promising that their descendants (in the Authorised Version “seed”) will become a nation and have a land. Notice at the end of all these promises a blessing is included for “all the families of the earth”. So these promises are not restricted to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but all of us can be included. The rest of the Bible is all about the outworking of these promises. This makes understanding *all of the Bible* exciting and relevant to us all.



As a start to understanding what these promises are all about, make a list of all the things that God promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in these verses :  
 Genesis 12 v 1 to 3; 13 v 14 to 17; 15 v 18;  
 17 v 2 to 8; 22 v 17 and 18; 26 v 2 to 4;  
 28 v 13 to 15.

**OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENT 1**New Testament references to the promises

- Luke 1 v 46 to 55  
 Mary speaks of the future work of the Lord Jesus and says that this is connected with what God “spoke to our fathers” (v 55).
- Luke 1 v 67 to 79  
 Zacharias, speaking after the birth of John the Baptist, recognises that God is working out this plan as promised to Abraham.
- Galatians 3 v 13, 14, 16 and 26 to 29  
 This chapter tells how we can be involved in the “promises”.

Look at these passages and write in your own words what you think they are telling us about the promises to Abraham.

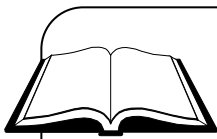


## Section 2

### The Old Testament is the foundation of the New Testament

The New Testament is full of references and allusions to the Old Testament. We cannot hope to understand the New Testament without knowing about its Old Testament foundation. In this section, we shall look at this concept.

#### The Old Testament background to the life of Christ



Look at the following sections and see how they are telling us that the life of Jesus must be understood with the Old Testament in mind:

Matthew 5 v 17 and 18

John 1 v 45

There are many places where the Old Testament is referred to in the Gospels.



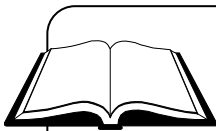
Have a look at these verses:

Matthew 2 v 3 to 6; 3 v 1 to 3

Mark 12 v 1 to 11; 15 v 27 to 28

John 12 v 37 to 41; 19 v 23 to 24, 32 to 37

After his death and resurrection, Jesus made it very clear that we must read the Old Testament to understand what his own life's work was all about.



Read Luke 24 v 13 to 47

Notice the following :

Verse 25 "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in *all that the prophets have spoken!*"

Verse 27 "And beginning at *Moses and all the prophets*, he expounded to them *in all the Scriptures* the things concerning himself".

Verse 32 “Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us on the road, and while he *opened the Scriptures* to us?”.

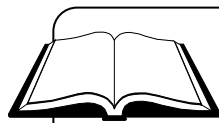
Verse 44 “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled *which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms* concerning me”.

Verse 44 very clearly tells us to look for allusions to Christ in the Law of Moses (Genesis to Deuteronomy), the prophets (Isaiah to Malachi) and the Psalms. So when reading all of these books we should look for “echoes” of the life and work of Jesus. We saw in Session 1, Section 2 how Isaiah 53 looks forward to Christ.

Verse 45 “He opened their understanding, that they might *comprehend the Scriptures*”.

## The Old Testament as used by the first-century believers

The record of the Acts of the Apostles tells us that the first-century believers used the Old Testament extensively when giving people their message. Let’s look at just one of the speeches made in Acts:



Read Acts 2

Verses 17 to 21 are a quotation from Joel 2 v 28 to 32

Verses 25 to 28 are a quotation from Psalm 16 v 8 to 11

Verse 30 is a reference to Psalm 132 v 11

Verse 31 refers to Psalm 16 v 10

Verses 34 and 35 are a quotation from Psalm 110 v 1.

The same happens in the speeches recorded in chapters 3, 4, 7 and 13

## Summary

- The Old Testament is the foundation for the New Testament.
- Look for “echoes” of the Old Testament in the New Testament.
- Look for allusions to the Old Testament in the New Testament.

## OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENT 2

### The Old Testament is the foundation of the speeches in Acts

Look at the speeches we have already mentioned in Acts chapters 3, 4, 7 and 13. As you read the verses we have noted in the list below, have a look at the corresponding Old Testament references and see how they are being quoted.

<b>Reference in Acts</b>	<b>Old Testament reference</b>
3 v 22 and 23	Deuteronomy 18 v 15, 18 and 19
3 v 25	Genesis 22 v 18
4 v 11	Psalms 118 v 22
4 v 25 and 26	Psalms 2 v 1 and 2
7 v 3	Genesis 12 v 1
7 v 5	Genesis 12 v 7; 13 v 15
7 v 6	Genesis 15 v 13 and 14
7 v 27 and 28	Exodus 2 v 13 and 14
7 v 32	Exodus 3 v 6
7 v 33 and 34	Exodus 3 v 1 to 10
7 v 37	Deuteronomy 18 v 15
7 v 40	Exodus 32 v 1 and 23
7 v 42 and 43	Amos 5 v 25 to 27
7 v 44	Exodus 25 v 40
7 v 49 and 50	Isaiah 66 v 1 and 2
13 v 22	1 Samuel 13 v 14
13 v 33	Psalms 2 v 7
13 v 34	Isaiah 55 v 3
13 v 35	Psalms 16 v 10
13 v 41	Habakkuk 1 v 5
13 v 47	Isaiah 49 v 6

# Notes