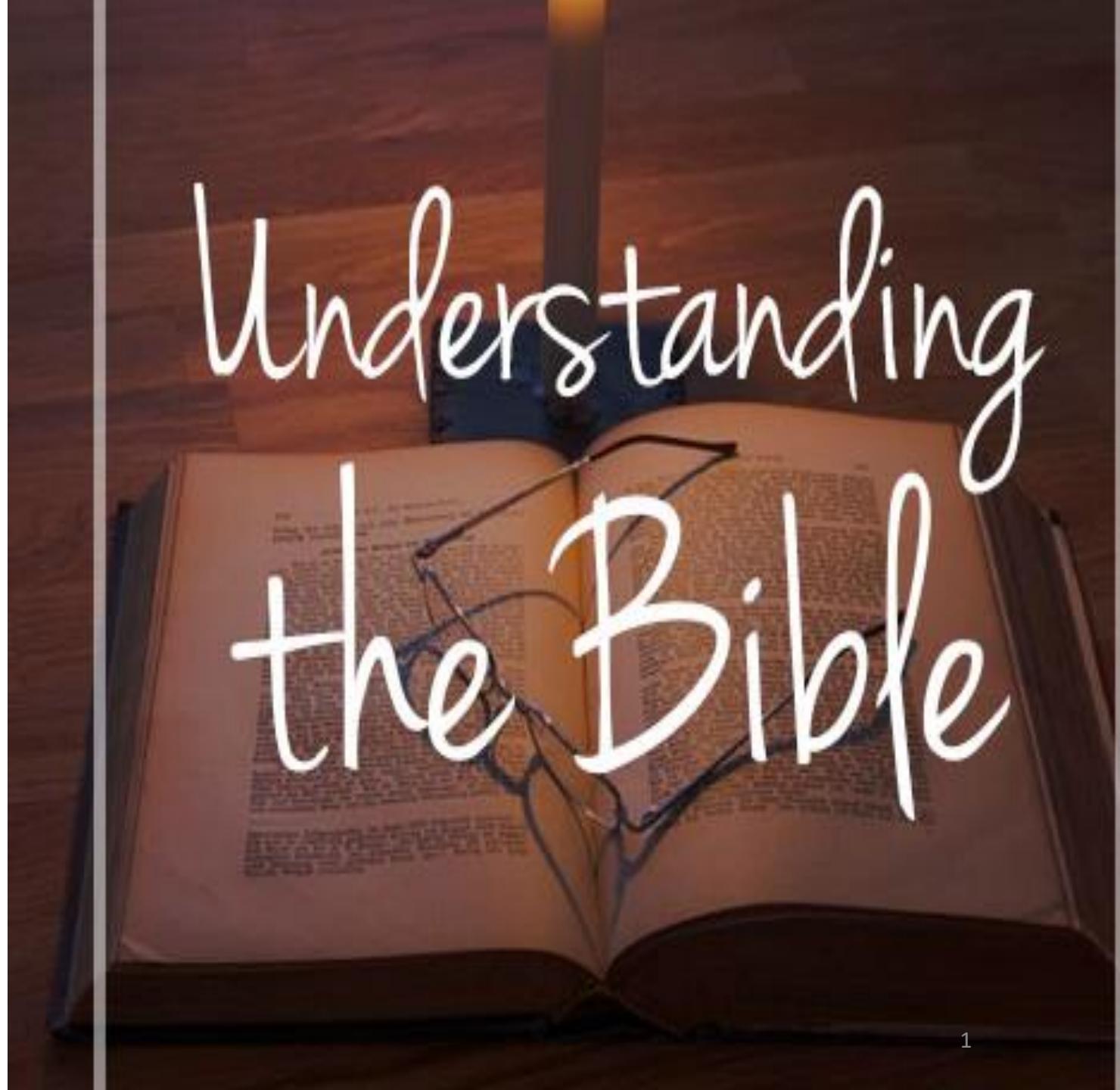


WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN
OUGHT TO KNOW
HOW TO UNDERSTAND
THE BIBLE

*“Open my eyes, that I may
behold Wonderful things from
Your law.”* (Psa. 119:18)



INTRODUCTION

- Here at **MOUNT CARMEL**, we are totally dependent upon the word of the living God, the **“SCRIPTURE,”** the Bible. We are committed to the Word of God as absolutely **TRUE**. We believe every phrase, verse, chapter, and book as having come from God Himself. The only way we can know God and His will is to have it given to us in a way that is unmistakable, and God has chosen to do that in a book, the Bible.
- The Bible is calling people to the single authority of the Word of God as over against all **HUMAN OPINION**, and to the only Savior, **JESUS CHRIST** as over against all **HUMAN RELIGION**. God gave us a book, and in that book, He spoke, and what He said is exactly what He wanted to say, and He desired to say it in a way that we would understand it, because we are accountable for it. And God has sworn in His revelation, the holy Bible, that He has spoken the truth, the whole truth, and **NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH**.

- The Bible is true, it is all true, and it is also all the truth that God desired to reveal to us. The rest is left for us to know in eternity. The Bible alone is the true word of the one true God, who does not contradict Himself, who does not write other books that say other things that are contrary to what He has said in this book. **THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD, AND HE HAS SPOKEN IN ONE BOOK!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**
- All other supposed revelations from God are not at all from God; they are the concoctions of men, and for the most part, demon-inspired men. For example, the **KORAN**, the **BHAGAVAD-GITA**, (Hindu-scripture) the writings of Mary Baker Eddy, (**CHRISTIAN SCIENCE**) Joseph Smith (**Book of Mormon**), to all the false prophets, seers, cultists, all the religious leaders, all the world religions – **IT IS ALL DECEPTION!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**
- Notice (Dt. 4:2) ***You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.***
- Notice (Prov. 30:6) ***Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.***

- In 1903 a man died by the name of ***HERBERT SPENCER***. Herbert Spencer was a scientist and was heralded by the world; he was given all kinds of prizes as a ground-breaking scientist.
- His greatest achievement was **CATEGORICAL**. It was Herbert Spencer who announced to the scientific world that everything that exists in the universe falls into **five categories** – **TIME**, **FORCE**, **ACTION**, **SPACE**, and **MATTER**. Nice going, Herbert, you discovered what the Bible already said in (**Gen. 1:1**) watch this:
- ***"In the beginning," THAT'S TIME!***
- ***"God," THAT'S FORCE!***
- ***"created" THAT'S ACTION!***
- ***"the heavens," THAT'S SPACE!***
- ***"and the earth," THAT'S MATTER!***
- Poor ***HERBERT***, he was trying to find this truth without using the Bible. We could go to science, and we could say that science verifies the Bible but while we would get a general affirmation – a little better than experience, we'd get a general affirmation, that's pretty amazing stuff.

Three Great Terms YOU NEED TO KNOW!

1. **REVELATION:** Is the process by which God unveils Himself and His will to human messengers.
2. **INSPIRATION:** This refers to God's inbreathing into the chosen human messengers through the Holy Spirit, enabling them by divine guidance to deliver or record God's revealed message. In a scriptural sense it means God breathing into His Messenger.
3. **ILLUMINATION:** Is the Holy Spirit's work as He enlightens the human mind with spiritual understanding in order that persons might grasp the revealed truth.

UNDERSTANDING THE *GENRES* OF THE BIBLE!

- **AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE GENRES:** of Scripture is vital to the Bible student. If the wrong genre is assumed for a passage, it can easily be misunderstood or misconstrued, leading to an incomplete and fallacious understanding of what God desires to communicate. God is not the author of confusion
- In (1 Cor. 14:33), God wants us to ***“correctly [handle] the word of truth”***
- In (2 Tim. 2:15). God wants us to know His plan for the world and for us as individuals. How fulfilling it is to come to ***“grasp how wide and long and high and deep,”*** is the love of God for us! (Eph. 3:18)

- **THE BIBLE IS A WORK OF *LITERATURE*.** Literature comes in different genres, or categories based on style, and each is read and appreciated differently from another. For example, to confuse a work of science fiction with a medical textbook would cause many problems—they must be understood differently. And both science fiction and a medical text must be understood differently from poetry. Therefore, accurate ***exegesis*** and interpretation takes into consideration the purpose and style of a given book or passage of Scripture. In addition, some verses are meant figuratively, and proper discernment of these is enhanced by an understanding of genre. An inability to identify genre can lead to serious misunderstanding of Scripture.

The main genres found in the Bible are these:

1. **LAW**
2. **HISTORY**
3. **WISDOM**
4. **POETRY**

5. NARRATIVE,

6. EPISTLES,

7. PROPHECY

8. APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE.

- The summary below shows the differences between each genre and how each should be interpreted:
- **LAW:** This includes the books of **LEVITICUS** and **DEUTERONOMY**. The purpose of law is to express God's sovereign will concerning government, priestly duties, social responsibilities, etc. Knowledge of **Hebrew** manners and customs of the time, as well as a knowledge of the covenants, will complement a reading of this material.

- **HISTORY**: Stories and epics from the Bible are included in this genre. Almost every book in the Bible contains some history, but

Genesis, Exodus, Numbers,

Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel,

1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles,

Ezra, Nehemiah, and Acts are predominately history.

Knowledge of secular history is crucial, as it dovetails perfectly with biblical history and makes interpretation much more robust

- **WISDOM**: This is the genre of **APHORISMS** that teach the meaning of life and how to live. Some of the language used in wisdom literature is metaphorical and poetic, and this should be taken into account during analysis. Included are the books of

PROVERBS, JOB and ECCLESIASTES.

- **POETRY**: These include books of rhythmic prose, parallelism, and metaphor, such as **SONG OF SOLOMON**, **LAMENTATIONS** and **PSALMS**.
- We know that many of the psalms were written by **DAVID**, himself a musician, or David's worship leader, **ASAPH**. Because poetry does not translate easily, we lose some of the musical "**flow**" in English. Nevertheless, we find a similar use of idiom, comparison and refrain in this genre as we find in modern music.

- **NARRATIVE**: This genre includes the Gospels, which are biographical narratives about Jesus, and the books of:

RUTH, ESTHER, and JONAH.

- A reader may find bits of other genres within the Gospels, such as

- **PARABLE**- A usually short fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or religious principle. (**Luke. 8:1-15**)

- **DISCOURSE**- Units of connected texts that are longer than paragraphs. The book of **RUTH** is a perfect example of a well-crafted short story, amazing in its succinctness and structure. (**Matthew 24**).

- ***EPISTLES:*** An epistle is a letter, usually in a formal style. There are **21** letters in the New Testament from the apostles to various churches or individuals. These letters have a style very similar to modern letters, with an opening, a greeting, a body, and a closing.
- The content of the Epistles involves clarification of **prior teaching, rebuke, explanation, correction of false teaching** and a **deeper dive into the teachings of Jesus**. The reader would do well to understand the cultural, historical and social situation of the original recipients in order to get the most out of an analysis of these books.

- **PROPHECY AND APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE:** The *Prophetic* writings are the Old Testament books of **ISAIAH** through **MALACHI**, and the New Testament book of **REVELATION**. They include predictions of future events, warnings of coming judgment, and an overview of God's plan for Israel.

- **Apocalyptic literature** is a specific form of prophecy, largely involving symbols and imagery and predicting disaster and destruction. We find this type of language in
1. **DANIEL (THE BEASTS OF CHAPTER 7),**
 2. **EZEKIEL (THE SCROLL OF CHAPTER 3),**
 3. **ZECHARIAH (THE GOLDEN LAMPSTAND OF CHAPTER 4)**
 4. **REVELATION (THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF CHAPTER 6).**

- **THE PROPHETIC AND APOCALYPTIC:** books are the ones most often subjected to faulty **EISEGESIS** -(the interpretation of a text “as of the Bible” by reading into it one’s own ideas.) and personal interpretation based on *emotion* or *preconceived bias*.
- (Amos. 3:7) tells us, ***“Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.”*** Therefore, we know that the truth has been told, and it can be known via careful **EXEGESIS**- (exposition, explanation; an explanation or critical interpretation of a text), a familiarity with the rest of the Bible, and prayerful consideration. Some things will not be made clear to us except in the fullness of time, so it is best not to assume to know everything when it comes to prophetic literature.