

# **PASTOR RAY'S BIBLE SCHOOL 101**

## **The Prophetic View of Scripture**

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### **Session One**

#### **"The Big Picture of Scripture"**

#### **I. Welcome to the Course!**

##### **A. How the Course Came About**

1. This course is the result of 40 years of Bible study and teaching.
2. About 20 years ago, a Christian leader challenged me to share some of the things the Lord had taught me about how to better understand the Bible.
3. All our Bible courses came out of that beginning and center around a theme of what I call the "prophetic view" of scripture.

##### **B. What is the "Prophetic View" of Scripture?**

1. When people hear about a Bible study related to the words "prophecy" or "prophetic" their minds immediately assume that we will be teaching about the Antichrist or the "end-times". But that is not what this course is about.
2. In this course, we will use the term "prophetic" to mean that which is able to "see" or receive special revelation from God.

**In those days if people wanted a message from God, they would say, "Let's go and ask the seer," for prophets used to be called seers.**

**1 Samuel 9:9 NLT**

3. Prophets were special because they had special revelation from God; they could hear what God was saying and “see” what God was doing in a situation when others could not.

4. While everyone could see what was going on from a human perspective, the prophet could “see” what was going on from God’s perspective. The prophetic viewpoint was a “higher” viewpoint.

a. **The term “perspective” means “a particular attitude toward or way of regarding something; a point of view”**; this course will show you have to have a “prophetic perspective” or “prophetic point of view” of the Bible.

5. When it comes to understanding the Bible, everyone can see the text; but not everyone can see the context.

6. This course will teach you to have a “prophetic” view of the Bible so that you can “see” from a “higher” perspective.

7. Another term I use for the “prophetic view of the Bible is the “big picture of scripture.”

### **C. Metaphors for the Prophetic/Big Picture of Scripture**

1. **There’s an old saying, “he can’t see the forest for the trees”**; it refers to someone who gives all their attention to details that they fail to understand the general situation.

a. What do you do if you are lost in a forest? You climb a tree! You know you need to get a higher viewpoint so you can understand how your current location relates to where you need to go.

b. Bible study can be like that. You can read a verse, a chapter, or even a whole book of the Bible and feel at a loss for understanding it.

**(In the movie “Castaway” the hero had to climb to the highest place before he discovered he was on an island)**

c. In this course, we will learn how to “climb a tree” so you can see how your current Bible location relates to the scripture as a whole.

2. **Another metaphor for the “big picture of scripture” is working a jigsaw puzzle.** Imagine buying a complicated 500 piece jigsaw puzzle and dumping out all you pick up one piece and study it, pick up another piece and study it, etc.? Of course not! You pick up each piece and then you look at the picture of the completed puzzle on the box cover. You know instinctively that each individual piece is a part of the whole and the only way to understand where it goes it to keep looking at the big picture on the box.

a. This is the way you will learn to study the Bible from a “prophetic” viewpoint.

b. You will examine each “piece” of the Bible with an eye looking to the Bible as a whole so you can better see where it fits.

c. Expert puzzle solvers look for the straight edge pieces first so they can define the borders in the beginning. All the pieces are important. But some set the boundaries. So it is with the Bible and you will learn how to identify the more important pieces.

3. If you’re lost in the forest, climb a tree; if you’re solving a jigsaw puzzle, figure out the placement of each piece by looking at the big picture on the box; use the same principle when you study the Bible...that is what we refer to as the “prophetic view” of scripture.

## **II. A Whole New Way to Approach God’s Word**

### **A. The Bible is a Story**

1. Think of the Bible as a story. It is more than history; it is “His Story”; it is God’s account of reality in story form.

2. Like every story, it has a beginning, a middle and an end.

3. **The story is an “epic”, a long story covering all things:**

- a. It begins before time-it starts in eternity
- b. It records all time-what has happened and what will happen
- c. It ends when time is no more-in eternity

4. To understand the greatness of the story you have to take it as a whole!

a. Most books tell a story. Who would begin reading in the middle or at the end?

b. Most movies tell a story. Who would come in at the middle of the movie or right at the end and expect to understand the movie?

5. But this is what many people do with the Bible; they open it up somewhere and expect it understand it!

- a. You can spend a lifetime studying a tree without knowing the forest
- b. You can admire the shape or color of a jigsaw piece and never see how the whole puzzle fits together!

## **B. Some Difficulties with the Bible as Story**

1. The fact that the Bible story is not absolutely sequential does should not hinder us. Like some movies, there are “flashbacks”; parts of the story that occur out of chronological order. **(Example: the movie “Titanic)**

a. A biblical example is the fall of the archangel Lucifer out of heaven, an event that takes place before Genesis 1:1. But we don’t get details of the fall until the writings of the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel in the Old Testament and Revelation 12 in the New Testament.

2. The fact that large sections of the Bible do not specifically advance the narrative should not bother us.

a. Example: the books **Psalms and Proverbs** do not advance the story; but they contain the wisdom of God revealed to those who read them.

3. You do not have to understand or perfectly comprehend every detail in the story when you read it. Like a well-made movie or well-written book, at the end, everything makes sense.

4. If we approach the Bible as a story, using the “prophetic/big picture” approach, we will learn the skill of “connecting the dots” to help us appreciate the grand scale of scriptural revelation.

5. This is how everyone who learns to use the “prophetic” view of scripture” becomes a “seer”; one who has a higher perspective, understanding that all the pieces are a part of the whole.

### **C. A Fresh Look at Your Bible**

1. The word “Bible” is from the Greek word “biblos”, which simply means “book”.

2. The Bible is one book in 2 distinct parts: the Old and New Testaments (or “Covenants”)

#### **3. The Bible is one book containing 66 “books”:**

- 39 books in the Old Testament
- 27 books in the New Testament

4. The prophetic view of scripture requires us to be familiar with the Old Testament as well as the New!

**And He said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings forth out of his treasure things new and old."**

**Matthew 13:52 NASB**

a. Jesus says that true disciples of His Kingdom are able to bring forth out of their treasure things new and old; notice there is one treasure, (the Bible), that contains two things; “new” treasure and “old” treasure.

b. By this we understand Him to mean that we are to understand the “treasure” to be biblical revelation from God contained in the Old and New Testament!

5. With all this in mind, let’s do a practical example.

## II. Our First Exercise Using the Prophetic View of Scripture

### A. Begin at the Beginning

1. If the Bible is a story, why not begin at the beginning, with the 1<sup>st</sup> verse?

**In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.**

**Genesis 1:1**

2. I have always believed this is the most important verse in the Bible. Why?

- If I can believe (by faith) that this verse is true, I have established a foundation for believing everything else that is in the Bible.
- On the other hand, if I do not believe this verse is true, I have established a foundation for doubting everything else that is in the Bible.

3. Meditate on the power of this 1<sup>st</sup> verse in the Bible. **If it is true, many other things people believe cannot be true!**

**“In the beginning, God”, denies *Atheism*, with its belief that there is no God.**

**“In the beginning, God”, denies *Polytheism*, with its belief in many gods.**

**“In the beginning, God”, denies *Fatalism*, with its belief in chance.**

**“In the beginning, God”, denies *Evolution*, with its belief in infinite  
“becoming”**

**“In the beginning, God”, denies Pantheism, that makes God and the universe  
identical**

**“In the beginning, God”, denies Materialism, which asserts the eternity of  
matter**

**J. Sidlow Baxter, *Explore the Book*, Zondervan Publishing**

4. So let us assume that you know and believe Genesis 1:1. But the prophetic view of scripture teaches us to think of the big picture; so when we read the phrase “in the beginning” in the 1<sup>st</sup> verse in the Gospel of John, we should immediately connect it with Genesis 1:

**In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

**John 1:1**

**is obviously connected with Genesis 1:1**

**In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.**

**Genesis 1:1**

**B. 5 Things We See in these 2 Verses**

**If these 2 verses are true, these 5 things must be true!**

1. God existed in eternity before the “beginning”

**For thus says the High and Lofty One, *Who inhabits eternity*,  
Whose name is Holy...  
Isaiah 57:15 NKJV**

a. From this we learn the theological doctrine of the “aseity” of God, which affirms the absolute self-sufficiency, independence, and autonomy of God

b. God is self-sufficient within Himself and independent of apart from what He creates; He has no need of anything in order to exist or survive

c. This means that God is altogether “other” from His creation; God is always “one” in distinction to all else

2. There is more than one Person in the Godhead

**“...the Word was *with* God, and the Word was God.”**

3. The 1<sup>st</sup> 2 Persons of the Godhead are distinct, yet one

**And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son  
to be the Saviour of the world.**

**1 John 4:14**

**I and my Father are one.**

**John 10:30**

4. Since the Father and His Son were acting together in Creation, it means that Jesus Christ is God, *co-equal* with the Father...

**And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.**

**Colossians 1:15-17 NASB**

a. If you are witnessing to someone who believes Genesis 1:1, it is only logical that they should believe John 1:1 and Colossians 1!

5. Jesus Christ is the co-Creator of all things, the One who “became flesh and dwelt among us”, (John 1:14); the One present “in the beginning” of the story, who appears in the flesh later in the story.



## C. Conclusion

1. We have just used Genesis 1:1/John 1:1 as an example of how we use the prophetic view of scripture to understand the Bible.

2. **The prophetic view of Bible study trains us to see the “big picture of scripture” and teach us to “connect the dots”, which is the subject of our next class.**

### Homework

- Continue to read and meditate in Genesis 1; as you study, be sensitive to thoughts or impressions from the Holy Spirit that remind you of passages or verses in other places in the Bible
- Consider the order or sequence of Creation in Genesis 1:1; what does this tell you about the nature of God?
- Look for terms or phrases in Genesis 1 that are repeated; make a list of them for discussion