

TUTORIAL
1.7

The Bible is God's message to all people

This tutorial introduces the Biblical Narrative, what it actually is, and how we are going to be covering it in the rest of the Module 1 tutorials.

Focused on God

So much of our lives are focused on ourselves. We think about our time, money, energy, emotions and our own thoughts. We are primarily concerned with our needs, desires, appetites, worries, etc. This is our default as human beings, like a compass always pointing back to ourselves.

Because of this compass that points to ourselves, we often come to God's Word to see what we can get out of it. Or perhaps what we are meant to do.

As we go through the Biblical Narrative over the coming months, we need to come to it putting all of that aside and honestly seek to find out what God wants to tell us. Let's let the focus be on Him. We want Him to be the One to tell us about Himself. From there we can more clearly see His view of the world, and also learn His view of us. Let's take the opportunity to work against our self-seeking default and allow this to be about Him. His Story.

Tracing the Biblical narrative

Instead of jumping around and grabbing what we want to from the Bible, we'll trace the flow of history as God tells it. We'll try to discipline ourselves to think in terms of the truth-foundations covered up to that point. Following the main story line - chronologically - or in the order in which those events happened and in the way He told it.

The Biblical Narrative is the Story of Him dealing with people. We will not be covering every detail, but will be touching on key events. This should serve to give us a fresh view of how things tie together - of God acting in time and space. Interacting with His Creation, with human beings

Threads and Themes

We won't try to cover everything in the Bible. To do that would be years worth of material, incredibly, endlessly deep. Instead, we'll be looking at the major

Themes, motifs, big subject lines. We will look at how they run through stories, books, lives and events that are included in the Narrative of God's Word. Our focus will be the themes that begin with who God is, and then play out in history, and finally play out for us. We don't want to get sidetracked into many possible subjects.

Foundations

We won't try to cover everything in the Bible. To do that would be years worth of material, incredibly, endlessly deep. Instead, we'll be looking at the major Themes, motifs, big subject lines. We will look at how they run through stories, books, lives and events that are included in the Narrative of God's Word. Our focus will be the themes that begin with who God is, and then play out in history, and finally play out for us. We don't want to get sidetracked into many possible subjects

God's Word, God's Voice

We want to remember the incredible privilege we have of having God's Word. Of having His Voice speaking to us. We don't want to take that for granted - a possible danger for those of us brought up in Christian families or in a culture where His Word is freely available to us. We have the privilege of having this record of what He gave to His prophets to write.

2 Timothy 3:16 – *All Scripture is inspired by God*

"Inspired" means - of extraordinary quality, as if arising from some external creative impulse, e.g. *Her singing performance was inspired.*

But God's Word is much more than that. In a way that only God could possibly do, He guided the thoughts of the prophets so they wrote down exactly what He intended. They were real people, using real language, that was culturally appropriate, but they wrote God's very carefully intended message.

So we can truly say that the Bible is a book (the only one) authored by God. And now, no less amazingly, He is speaking to us through those same words written down by those different men so long ago. In our language, just as culturally relevant to us.

Historically accurate

The Bible is not intended to be a history textbook as such. It isn't bound to the conventions of "history" as a humanities subject. It doesn't have to prove itself, defend its own viability and authenticity. But the Bible is historically accurate. Any perceived historical and scientific gaps, are in our understanding, not in the Bible. It is historically accurate, because it is God's true account of how things actually were, are and will be.

God is speaking to each of us

Most of all, let's remember how amazing it is to have the eternal, Creator God speaking to us. Let's continue to remind ourselves of what it means that He graciously speaks to us. As humans, and most personally and specially, as His children.



DISCUSSION POINTS

The Bible is God's message to all people

1. In general terms what has been your experience of hearing and engaging with God's Word? What are the similarities and differences in that experience with the way the Firm Foundations overview is described?
2. What are some of the things in society that work against the idea that God's Word has authority...even against the idea that there is Truth?
3. Consider the issue of commitment that is required to study God's Word in this way and talk in practical terms about how you think you can find time to engage at the level that is needed.



ACTIVITIES

The Bible is God's message to all people

1. Watch some clips online about the accuracy with which the text of the Old Testament Scriptures has been preserved over many centuries.
2. Listen to the song "Ancient Words" by Michael W. Smith and think about the lyrics. It can be found on YouTube