

**TUTORIAL**  
**8.22**

# Ata Bible resources 2

This tutorial is taught by Kaikou Maisu and Mike Griffis and outlines the Bible resources available to the Ata church, Papua New Guinea.

## Introduction

In this second tutorial from Kaikou and Mike, they discuss the important Narrative and Foundational Bible resources available to the Ata church, as well as the place for topical Bible teaching, and Mike describes the importance of building an underlying framework to provide a Biblical theology for the church.

*The following is a transcript from the video for Tutorial 8.22.*

**KAIKOU -**

Now we are going to talk about the teaching from Corinthians. Because we know that within the church, there are still things like tensions between families, and that other similar issues still exist. So as we teach from 1 Corinthians, it helps the believers to understand that the reality is that they are all one in the Body of Christ. It also helps those who are teachers and leaders in the church, to be able to build on the foundation of the believers' faith in Christ, and their understanding of God's grace, so that when they stand up to teach God's Word, or work with people, then it will all be based on the grace of God. And they will also know that there is no other foundation for growth in peoples' lives - it is just the grace of God.

People believe in God; in the power of God and in the wisdom of God, and that He is the One who helps them each day in their lives. They know that whatever it is that they are doing to help the Body of Christ, that it isn't because any person, or any law, is forcing them to do it, but it is the work of the Holy Spirit within that motivates them. They know that God is already pleased with them, and it is the love of Christ that motivates them in their work. Also as we look into this particular book, it helps us to know that even though we exist here on earth, that we can truly know God and understand Him. Because we can look at the life of Christ and see a picture of who God is. We look at the work of Christ;

how he was nailed to the cross, and His blood sealed the new agreement, and we also know the work of the Holy Spirit within us. So this book helps us because when sin does happen, then the people of God will not just overlook it, because they know that if sin is left to develop within a church, it can seriously hamper growth and damage the testimony of the church. But there is a way to deal with it. There are steps to take to correct the situation, which include removing that person from the fellowship so that they learn to understand what God's desire is for His people as they live together.

Next we begin to teach from 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians, where we learn more about God's overall plan. Because many people don't understand God's plan for the people of the earth. So we go to these books where God clearly articulates His plan. He lays out His plan for His people who have died and for those still living, and for those who have died who don't belong to Him. God's plan for them is also clear. That is why we then begin to teach from Thessalonians.

I'll give you an example... When this material was first taught to us, we also heard some rumours and talk about the 'end times'. And those rumours produced fear in the hearts of God's children. They were afraid when they heard about the end times and Antichrist. Because if people don't clearly understand God's plan, then that kind of talk makes them very fearful. So we teach from this part of God's Word so His plan becomes clear to them. His children then understand that everything is part of God's plan, and that God sees them and knows each one of them. Then they are no longer fearful when they hear talk about these things, when people talk about 666, or Amageddon, or Antichrist, they are no longer afraid, but they have peace and joy. They are secure in their lives in Christ and in God's plan. They know that God has not forgotten them and He hasn't overlooked them.

They can also remember all of the foundational truth that they have heard. It strengthens their faith as they see God working out His plan to save Man. The story of Noah, for example, gives them peace because God protected His people from what would happen later. And in the story of Lot, God destroyed the two towns of Sodom and Gomorrah, but he protected Lot and his children from the destruction. So in this teaching here, God's children find encouragement and assurance that God has them in a place of safety.

MIKE -

OK, so as Kaikou is describing the progression of teaching, and we are describing how we have moved from the book of Acts into this group of Epistles, we are describing a process which isn't random. I trust that is being clearly understood. And moving into Romans, Ephesians, 1

Corinthians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, there are various themes that we are trying to establish that are dependent on the way that this new group of believers who have come about through hearing the Gospel presented clearly, who are understanding their individual identities in Christ, who are understanding the corporate identity that connects back to the Church. They are then beginning to see the way in which those Apostles that we communicated about, that we described in the book of Acts, are the ones responsible for sharing their perspective of faith that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has been revealing to them. They are sharing their perspective on the faith and the needs that these churches have - at the time and in specific settings. And yet, as believers today, we know that those principles of the growth of the church are universally applied. And so selecting the book of Romans for example, to describe the basis of that grace of God that we have established as being revealed in the person of the Holy Spirit as He teaches our hearts. And He is continuing to teach us today as believers. He is continuing to teach about His grace, continuing to teach about the way in which we are dependent on His grace. Then in the book of Ephesians and the book of 1 Corinthians, we are given a snapshot of a church that was undergoing difficulties in these areas of not living up to the identities that they had in the Lord Jesus Christ and in which Paul engages with them and describes their shortcomings. And he describes the opportunities that they have to grow to represent that identity in grace that is based on all the things that we have been teaching to this point.

So we are trying to reiterate the opportunity that the believers have to see the way in which God's grace is worked out in day-to-day situations in their lives as they grow to understand more and more clearly that identity as applied to their real life situations today. And as we see, there is a time element that is really significant here. We're not, in an instant, dumping a load of works-related life on them. We are not trying to create an identity of them in their own efforts, in their own strengths, trying to work their way to the identity that God has for them - either as individuals or as a body of believers. But through the progression of carefully teaching line upon line, and precept upon precept, we are giving them the opportunity to gradually see the Holy Spirit to be at work in their hearts to bring them towards that clear identity that He has for them - that they have seen a picture of, that progresses along through the teaching.

Then we come to a point where we want to, for example, in the area that was mentioned in 1 and 2 Thessalonians and that really ties back to the way in which we as human beings who are sinners die. We died spiritually before we became believers, and then as we become believers we take on the life of Christ, and we put to death the deeds of the flesh. Then in Thessalonians there is the mention again of death in

the natural sense that our bodies are dying, and the question comes up, 'What does that mean for us as believers?' Then we have an opportunity to come back to a topic like death, for example, and to carefully describe or sum up what we know about that topic, based on a real need in that community. A need, because people are dying as a natural process, in the community where we may be working, and we are wanting them to understand clearly how to apply the flow of the narrative that they have heard to that point. Beginning all the way back to the character of God, but continuing on through the Epistles, we are wanting them to understand, and in a summary way, to apply all the points that they have been taught to a topic that is really significant to their life. Many of these types of topical lessons develop based on a need that arises at the time, but being carefully to base that material on what has been clearly taught to that stage. Not going ahead and trying to find areas ahead of where we are actually teaching at this stage, to continue to teach clearly about those kinds of topics that are significant to the church.

Another example of that are lessons about the topic of marriage, which obviously is very important to the church. A set of lessons that is, in a sense, topical, but it is not a stand alone set of materials or tools because it ties and connects back into those things that have been clearly established in the foundations that have been taught to that point.

So Kaikou is going to continue on with another area relating to some of the other Epistles that move us forward.

#### KAIKOU -

Like we have been saying, the church of our Lord has already been born, and the Lord is beginning to raise up leaders from within that group. So at this time we begin to look at 1 Timothy and Titus. Because that helps the believers to recognize those God is raising up and to understand the role that the Lord has for them in the church. And this part of God's Word gives specific help to those who are beginning to work in the church to understand their roles. They are encouraged to know that God Himself has raised them up for this work. Also believers begin to understand a new basis of authority for their leaders, and they see it is the Holy Spirit who is guiding these leaders to look after them. They trust and respect them before God because they are able to see that God Himself has raised them up to take care of His people, so in their hearts they are able to respect and appreciate their leaders. And the leaders fulfill their roles humbly and with reverence, when they think about the fact that it is God's work they are doing.

Then we move into the book of Revelation, which, as we know, talks of things that will happen in the future. But even today a lot of talk comes from unbelievers, and they spread rumours about things that they say will happen later on. So this book encourages God's children by helping them to understand His plan. They also heard some of these same things in Thessalonians, that are now covered again in Revelation, so they are reminded of those things. The two books complement and support one another, and God's children get a clear picture of God's plan, and they find peace and encouragement in that and it strengthens their faith.

As we have already said, we have all of these resources that explain God's Word. We give praise to God because we see the life and growth of the church, based on the new birth that they also received from Him. And it is God who guided those who produced all of these helpful resources. They help to strengthen the faith of God's people, and help them to continue to grow in the new life they have received. It's true that we are part of the Church and of groups of believers, but the things of the world still exist too. So when we think about what teaching the people of God might need, we think about what would help them most to grow in their understanding of the grace of God. We trust that God is going to lead and guide us as we decide which portion of God's Word we should teach at which time. For example, we had been taught all the books that we have already mentioned, but then what portion should we hear next?

Well, next we went into lessons from Galatians, which was a huge help to us at that time. Because this particular part of God's Word, helps God's children to evaluate the foundations of their previous worldview. It also helps them to correctly assess teaching they had heard in the past and the motivation of those people who had taught it. Now a complete change has taken place and they are living a new life. Galatians helps them to understand the grace of God more clearly, and it also helps them to be able to correctly judge or evaluate their legalism from the past, and to clearly separate that from God's grace. So they are able to stand firm on the foundation of grace, and to defend the heart of the Gospel itself. And they have the assurance that comes from trusting in God alone.

This Epistle also helps the believers to be able to correctly assess anyone who comes in to teach God's Word. Because as we know there are many teachers of God's Word, and they say things like, "We are all one", or "We all have one God". But there is help from Galatians because they can clearly see that there are those who are truly part of their fellowship, and they have heard their teaching and trust that God

has raised them up to teach, and their teaching is based on the grace of God.

There are a lot of other Epistles represented here, and in each of those parts of God's Word we can see beneficial teaching to help the church and believers to grow. I'll use the example of Philippians here. We know that this portion of God's Word is very helpful for believers, because it talks about their personal responsibility for sharing God's Word. God specifically guides certain people to stand up and teach His Word, and it is also His plan that they will plant churches in other communities. But the believers in the sending church must also know their role in God's work. It's enlightening to read about the time the Apostle Paul was in prison in Rome, and how the Philippian believers gathered their resources to help him. And not just that time, but they helped on his other missionary journeys too. They supported and encouraged him in his work. So that really opens the eyes of God's children, to realize they have an important role to play in the outreach of the church, as they support and encourage the work of reaching out.

MIKE -

OK, you have explained all of these Epistles here, and the specific help each one is to the believers, but could you now tell us about 1 John and how that met a need in the church?

KAIKOU -

At the time 1 John was first taught it greatly helped the believers lives. Because when they heard that portion there, it helped them to really grasp the new life that they had in Christ. And another important thing that they realized, was that they still live in a world of sin, and that the root of sin still exists within them, so they still sin. But this Epistle really helped them to submit to God, and to truly listen to what God says and respect that. Because no matter what sin they fall into, the way to God is open, so there is no excuse for them not being open and honest with God. So whatever happens, whatever they do, they can immediately share it with God, and then real life change can begin. That's the thing the believers understood. That real change happens, only when someone understands that yes, they do sin, but they can openly share that with God and apologize to Him and He will help. Because they know God is there and He wants a relationship with them, and to help them with the things they are struggling with in life.

Another important point here relates to their understanding of Christ. He came to earth as a man, but they must know He wasn't just a man. They need to respect Him for who He truly is. He came to earth as a man, and had a body, but actually He was God. And they need to understand what He came to do; to die on the cross. And that He died in order to

pay their debt for their sin. And that is the reason they love and respect Him, because of what He did. They are awed by that. Even though He was God, He gave up His life to pay for their debt of sin.

MIKE -

Yes, it's amazing, thank you. So I know that you went into the book of Philemon, can you tell us anything about that, and how it helped the believers?

KAIKOU -

Yes, they found a lot of help in there for them as a church. Because there are certain men who lead the work of God, and some who have other roles in it. And they considered how they demonstrate affection for the believers. They were given a great example here in Philemon. Because Paul demonstrated his true affection by sharing God's Word clearly, so that Philemon truly understood and was brought to life. It helps too, because there was sin that had come between them, or something that had come between Philemon and Onesimus. But we can see that even though something had happened there, that Paul reminds Philemon that what he believed, is the same thing that his brother also believed. So that unifies them. So whatever it was that had come between them, he shouldn't think of that any more. Because they are one in belief and are brothers in the faith, and can love one another because of that. So that is a huge help to believers in their lives.

MIKE -

Yes, that's good. So tell us about James, I know you are teaching that right now.

KAIKOU -

Yes, we are very thankful to God, because we didn't just jump into James before some of the other teaching, a lot of other teaching came before, and now we are hearing James, and that is helpful because there is already a strong foundation of grace. And we know the teaching from James is heavy, and it talks about how the fruit of our lives will be obvious. It is very helpful right now for us, because of course we want our lives to produce fruit, but it has to grow out of the foundation of grace. So we find a great deal of help in James. The other teaching we have heard helps many other areas of life, but James specifically helps us as we talk to other people. It helps us to think carefully about the things we say, so whatever we say is helping the people of God in some way.

MIKE -

So you have talked about all these Epistles from the New Testament, and these resources that cover all the books in there, but what about

this one from the Old Testament that covers the story of Ruth? I know that all of the books in God's Word are helpful, but what can you tell us about this particular Old Testament book?

KAIKOU -

Yes, well, the story of Ruth from the Old Testament is a great example for us to help us to really understand the grace of God and also the plan of God. So in the story of Ruth, the believers are able to see God's plan, because they can see that even though Ruth was a Gentile woman, she was able to truly know God. He was the God of the Israelites, the One that they feared and respected, and their obvious reverence for God attracted Ruth. She saw that and was convinced that the God of Israel was the true living God. She saw that and then went and joined with the Israelites. So that example really helps the believers, because they can see this part of God's plan to send the Deliverer, and this part of God's Word describes His actual family line, and how it came about that Ruth came from outside and joined the Israelites, and became a woman of God and a part of God's plan to send the Deliverer.

MIKE -

In this time of discussion, we have tried to establish the rationale for the ways in which we make resources accessible to the church. We have attempted to communicate of course the foundational basis of the Word of God, obviously, as our primary resource. Our desire then is to give access to the Word of God through a process of carefully narrating the Word of God as it is unfolding through the ages. It ties all the way back to the character of God in Genesis. The way that He worked amongst His people, the way that the nation of Israel came about and was a light to the world, and the way that God, in His wisdom, had the mystery of the church hidden in the plan that He had in mind and that was seen in the work of the Apostles and of course through the life of Jesus Christ.

So we are attempting to establish the rationale for that underlying framework of God's overarching narrative plan. And then we have moved forward and described the rationale for different letters that form the basis of our New Testament, and even into our Old Testament; understanding the person of Christ as the key to seeing clearly what God has been about throughout the centuries. And yet, not leaving behind this carefully developed process of narrating our way through the story that God has for us in the Scriptures. We want that framework to be clearly established. In the process of narrating our way through the story of what God has been about over the centuries we are very intentionally creating a Biblical theology upon which any other organizational scheme of theology may be built. Also then, we are giving access to a narrative establishment of an underlying hermeneutic as well by which we can understand clearly, when we come to a new



portion of Scripture, we can clearly understand, as we engage with that, the way in which that part of Scripture connects to God's broad story of redemptive history. And in turn, the way in which we carefully and correctly apply that portion of Scripture to our lives today as members of the growing Body of Christ, which He intended from the beginning as part of the unfolding of His great plan for our lives.



## DISCUSSION POINTS

*Ata Bible resources 2*

1. Sum up what you hear Kaikou and Mike saying about the role of topical teaching (on marriage, death, etc.) within the wider flow of Narrative teaching.
2. Kaikou is a first-generation believer from a previously unreached people group. Do you think this fact affects his view of God and His Word? If so, in what ways?