

# C4 - Inductive Bible Study, Part 3

## Introduction

Today we are going to jump into the Bible itself, in which you are going to have some guidelines for your interpretation. That's why the lesson for today is entitled interpreting the Old and New Testament. So you're going to be given some things to note when you actually go into the Scripture so that you won't go out of the boundaries and leave the road towards an accurate understanding of the Bible. Now, when we come to the Scripture look at what Second Peter chapter one, verse 19, says, "And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you do well to pay attention". So it is indicating that we should be spending time observing, listening, thinking, meditating as to what the Bible actually is saying, "as to a lamp shining in a dark place". So it is suggesting that this light is lit, but you need to be paying attention to it, you need to be observing until when, "until the day dawns, and the morning star rises in your hearts". In other words, if you put in the effort, the time and the energy to observe, you will soon understand what the Bible actually means. And for us to do so accurately and correctly. I'm going to share with you today, first five interpretive lenses for the Old Testament. Okay, so this is supposed to get you from getting to a wrong idea so that the morning star that rises in your heart is the right one, not the wrong one and then you go off the mark. Okay, so these are the five things to guide you along as you meditate, observe and interpret the Scripture.

## Carving a Turkey Analogy

It has been said that studying the Old Testament is a bit like carving a turkey. Has anyone carve a Turkey before? Okay, if you have not carved Turkey before, this is how it goes. At first, you slice all the meat seem to come out very smoothly, right. But before long, you hit some parts you can't really cut through. And so you don't quite know what to do with it that as you start digging further, further, further, you start to hit some of those skeletal structure of a turkey in which you really don't know what to do with it. And so at the end of the day, everybody just leave it alone on the table, and they stop eating the turkey. Okay, why? Because they don't quite know how to go about the anatomy of the bird, of the turkey. So the Old Testament seems to be something like this, in our experience, if you do not know what to do with those parts that you have not considered before. So today, what we're going to do is we are going to show you some of the layout in the anatomy of the Old Testament so that you can know what to do, what to think and you can start digging it in a little deeper. So these are the purposes of this five interpretive lenses.

## 5 interpretive lenses for the Old Testament

### 1. Context

Number one, they happen to be all five C's in the rich tradition of alliteration in this church. So the first C is context. Now, when you go into the Old Testament, the first thing you need to ask yourself is what is the context of this book or this passage? A lot of time you go the wrong direction, because you didn't stop to ask. So what are the questions you need to ask? You need to ask yourself who is the author?

Okay, who are the audience? Who are the people listening to this book to this message for the first time? Some of it was written to Judah, some of it was written to Israel, is there any difference? Okay, some of the prophecies were even written to the Gentile nations and damning them for their pride, for their sins, for their cruelty. So you need to pause otherwise you may be coming to the wrong conclusion. You need to ask yourself the date, when was it written, author's intent, which genre you are in: is it historical? Is it narrative? Is it prophetic? Is it poetic? because all these affects the way it is written. So context. Okay, the first thing is context, ask yourself, Where am I in the Bible? What do I know about this book before I draw my conclusions? Now we're going to go into this quite a little bit more in one of our lessons, so I won't spend too much time on context.

## 2. Covenant

But here's another interpretative lens to help you which I will spend a bit more time it's called covenant. What is a covenant? You see in God's unfolding revelation, in systematic theology, we call it progressive revelation. What does it mean? It means that God didn't tell the whole world exactly what he's going to do at one point in time. Remember in the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve sinned, God didn't tell Eve, one day there will be a son, his name is Jesus and He will be born of one of your descendants, David, and he will be born of one of your descendants, Judah, and one of your descendants, Abraham, and he is going to be the Savior. He didn't say all that right. You will read in Genesis chapter three verse 15, that God told Eve that your seed, Okay, is going to defeat the seed of the devil, okay, it's going to defeat things. So that is called the early messianic prophecy. And then later, you will read in Scripture that God appeared to Abraham and told him that I will make you a great nation. And through you, I will bless the rest of the nation. You see God revealed Himself bit by bit, what he is going to do, that is called progressive revelation. Okay, the unfolding nature of the scriptures in the Old Testament. One of the ways God revealed Himself one point at a time is through covenants. So are you following so far? Okay, because now we are going to take a dive into the deep end already. So if you were drifting, thinking of your lunch or your coffee, you got to come back a bit now, so that you must realize now we're talking about the second C, and this is how covenant fit in. Okay? Progressive revelation, unfolding nature, how? Covenant.

Okay, so you look, the first covenant we're going to consider is the Adamic covenant. That means the covenant made with Adam. And this was given to us in Genesis chapter one and two. What is the covenant with Adam? God told Adam to work the garden, till the ground, be fruitful and multiply, and told him that he is not to touch the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. That was the first thing he said to Adam. Right. So there was a covenant what happened was that Adam broke that covenant, he ate of the fruit. Now, we're not going to go into whether it was a durian, an apple, banana, pineapple. Okay, so everybody has a different thing. But we're going to say that he disobeyed, right? So when the covenant was broken, then what happened was it moves on, God begin to give hope to the seed of the woman but sin continue to spread and so God has to judge the world.

And when God judged the world, He sent a flood Genesis chapter six, and after the flood was over, He preserved a family that believed His word and obeyed and that's the family of Noah. And so with Noah, He made another covenant. Okay in the scriptures the world before the flood is the Old World, the world after the flood is called the New World, so the New World is not the modern age, the New World

is the world after the flood because before the flood if you read Genesis five, the people live up to almost 1000 years old. So 长生不老, live long long never grow old, is not a myth, is in the Bible. All right. So you see this a very different world. So you cannot pretend like the whole Bible is one world, are you with me? If you had that mistaken idea that in the Bible everybody wear robes, long beard and then white hair, you know, Bible? Wrong idea, okay, because there are many different worlds in the Bible. And it spans across the centuries and the covenant mark some of these differences. So with Noah, Noahic covenant was made in Genesis chapter nine, verse eight to seventeen. In this covenant, God promise that he will no longer destroy the entire world with a flood. So that is the Noahic covenant. So we live in the after result of the Noahic covenant, in which we have no longer seen a worldwide flood destroying the entire world. And the symbol of the covenant is the rainbow in the sky.

Okay, now, that was not the end because we continue to read after Genesis chapter eight, nine that again, men sin and they begin to rebel. And so God decided that the next thing is going to do is he's going to call a man, his name is Abram at that time, and he's going to make a covenant with him and his family, that He will bless him and through him, bless the rest of the nation. So this is called the Abrahamic covenant. This covenant is made in Genesis chapter 12, Genesis 15, and Genesis 17, the different aspects of the Covenant was given. So this was made with the descendants of Abraham. Now, what does it mean? It means my friend said, today we are the descendants of Abraham spiritually by faith. Right. So we emulate the principles of faith of Abraham. But you and I, we are not the descendants of Abraham, physically. In other words, there are aspects of the Abrahamic covenant, in principle spiritually is applicable to your life. But you can go down the wrong path, if you think that that those promises are totally meant for you as well, because they are meant for the descendants of Abraham. Take, for example, God promised Abraham that his descendants will be as great in multitude as the stars in the sky, and the sand of the sea. If you think that you are the inheritors of the Abrahamic covenant, then after you get married, you have to buy a very, very big house, to house all the stars in the sky, the sand in the sea, because you're gonna have a lot, a lot, a lot, a lot, lot of children, even if you can fill 12 football teams is still not enough. Right? So you need to realize that there are aspects of the covenant that applies only to Abraham. That's what we mean by covenant, you need to read through the Bible understanding the different aspects of progressive revelation.

Now, then, it didn't end there. We realize that in the Old Testament in Genesis, soon the people travel off to Egypt and Exodus began with the people enslaved, these are the descendants of Abraham. Okay, so God by a strong and mighty hand, deliver the nation of Israel, out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, brought them to Mount Sinai. And there he made another covenant with them, called the Mosaic Covenant. Okay, that is in Exodus chapter 19, verse 25, I want you to notice that God rescued the people first before he made the law with them. In other words, they first experienced God's grace and love, before he established the rules by which they as a nation should govern themselves, and live out their faith in God. That's the purpose of the Mosaic Covenant. And so you will find that the Mosaic covenant is the most detailed, because this is not a covenant made with a man and his family. This is a covenant made with 12 tribes forming the nation of Israel, which is to come. So within the Mosaic Covenant, there is going to be all kinds of laws, ceremonial laws, civil laws, moral laws, all kinds of aspects will be covered in the Mosaic Covenant. In fact, it is so detailed. It is so detailed that Christian nations in the past like England, etc, have actually drawn the principles governing their civil law from the Bible. No insights as to how far the penalty should go for murder with intent, without intent by

accident, manslaughter, etc, all spelled out in the Mosaic Covenant. Okay, so there are aspects that are relevant to our lives. But there are a lot of details, including what clothes you can wear, what clothes you can't wear, what food you can eat, what food you can't eat. Anybody have pork yesterday or today? If you did, you just broke the Mosaic Covenant. But does that mean you're a sinner? Do you have to take the next flight to Jerusalem, find a temple, but it's no longer existent, and there sacrifice a lamb for your sins. You see, that is why you need to understand the covenants, because they are markers of the progressive nature of God's revelation.

Now, then that is the Davidic Covenant. The Davidic Covenant is found in Second Samuel, chapter seven, in which God promised to David a kingdom that will last forever, he intend to establish the throne of David, and through the seed of David bring in the King of kings. So that is the covenant that is exclusive to that dynasty. In other words, no one can claim to be the Messiah, no one can claim to be the Christ, no one can claim to be the Savior, unless he is a descendant of David, a descendant of Abraham. And that's why you read in the Gospel of Matthew, recognizing the nature of this covenant, that Jesus is first introduced as the son of Abraham, the son of David. Why? Because of the covenants that were made.

Now, the last covenant is the one that relates to us, it's the new covenant. The New Covenant is what Jesus announced on the night he was betrayed, there the last supper when he took up the cup, and he said, "This cup is the New covenant in my blood", "do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19, 20). Now, that is the covenant we fall under today. Okay, so everything under the New Covenant fully applies to you. And what is the new covenant. The New Covenant is like what Jesus said that we are redeemed by his blood, all of our hopes, all of our faith rests in the fact that Jesus blood cleanses us from all sins, giving us a reconciled relationship with God. That is the covenant we stand under. That is a spiritual blessing that we are entitled to the moment we trust in Him. So when you read the New Testament, it is in a sense easier, simply because that's the new covenant is the New Testament, it applies fully to you. Right? Because you are washed by the blood of the Lamb, you are a believer today, we are all under the new covenant. But when you go into the Old Testament, you can't have the same kind of thinking, because there will be promises, there will be assurances that spiritually is very in sync similar to what has been taught to you in the New Testament. But the specific out workings, promises of land, of descendants, etc, does not fully apply.

Okay? So we got to take note of covenants when we study the Scripture. So you got to stare at your passage through the lens of covenant in the Old Testament, maybe two other patterns given to you here can help you to understand the nature of unfolding or progressive revelation. The first pattern we see in covenants is this: First, there is the creation. Then there's the fall, there is redemption, and then a new creation. What do I mean? The events of Scripture seems to follow this pattern, Adam was created, then he fell, a promise was given and children were born. Then you see, again, the nation of Israel is established, then they sin and a judge, a new leader comes out and reset their affection. So it seems to go on and on like this, that God is constantly rescuing, constantly redeeming, but that's the whole purpose of the covenant is to establish a new set of relationship and condition by which he could redeem people out of the fall in order to set them on the path towards his new creation. Now, here's another way you can look at covenants in the Old Testament.

The second pattern we look at is this God's people. So you need to ask yourself here, who are the God's people in this passage? Are they Abraham's descendants? Are they Noah's children? Are they the people of Israel? Are they the Jewish people? Who are God's people in this passage? And what rule? Do they fall under in God's place? So you got to ask, where are they now? What are they doing? What are the terms and condition? Take, for example, turn within your Bibles to Leviticus chapter 19, verse 19, Leviticus chapter 19, verse 19. So turn that now with me and look, so that we can apply this rule. What does Leviticus 19:19 says? It says, "You shall not wear a garment of cloth made of two kinds of material". Now, how many of you fall under the category today? Two kinds of material. Do you have wool mix with cotton? More than two? Gone case. Total lawbreaker, yeah. Right? I mean, you may have synthetic fiber mixing with some 30% cotton, polyester, etc. Now, so what's going on here? That's why you need to ask what God's people that is being addressed here, obviously, is not Christians. This is the nation of Israel, the Israelites. Now, what is the place they are under? They are in this Old Testament economy, whereby they're supposed to witness to the presence and the rule of God in the Middle East, that's where they are. They're supposed to establish a pattern of life and living that makes people wonder and question, how come we are different? Who is your God? Why do you worship Him like this? So it's intended to invite question where God has placed them. And what is the rule? The rule here is the Mosaic Covenant. So in other words, this command here, no two kinds of material is a command that called Israel to conform to God's holiness, announced that even in the way they dress, in order to call attention to the God they worship, so that is the unique way they are supposed to witness for God. And that may be a clue to why they cannot eat pork. You know what pork is right? 猪肉 (pig's meat) and a lot of other creepy crawly things that Peter saw in the vision. Because you think about it, the Chinese say, 民以食为天, you know what that means? That means to the people, the ordinary, the food is the most important thing, right? And so imagine when you go down to level one for food, and suddenly somebody says, I can't eat that. I can't eat that. I can't eat this. I can't eat this, then your neighbor will have to ask you why. It's so nice. You mean never tried bacon cheeseburger. You mean you never tried pork trotters? You know, it's lovely. Sio bak, you never try sio bak (Crispy Roast Pork Belly)? You know, the roasted skin. It's crunchy, is lovely. You said no. Why? I cannot eat it. Why? What's wrong? Is there any health reason? No health reason. Now, why can't you eat it? Because my God says, No. You have a very strange god. Why did your God says no? What did he say? What else does he say? You see, this is supposed to lead the nation of Israel in the Middle East to show the distinctiveness or the holiness of God, the separateness of God in the midst of the surrounding pagan nation. That is God's people in God's place. under God's rule, that was His intent.

But you see, when you come to the New Covenant, what happens is God separates out His people by the indwelling, Holy Spirit. Okay, no longer just physical food, clothings and all that, He separate out His people by the indwelling Holy Spirit promise in the new covenant that I will send forth my Spirit to dwell in their hearts, and they will have hearts of flesh and they will obey my law. And so what is going to make you distinct is no longer what you eat and what you wear, is going to be your values, your perspective, your desires, your pursuits, that's going to make you stand out and why. Why do you go to church on Sunday? Why you spend all the time singing? Why do you want to read the Bible? How come you never chiong for this opportunity? How come you didn't commit yourself and lie to get yourself out of this situation? Well, because my God says no. How do you know? Because, you know, the Bible tells me no and I want to obey it, I want to believe it, I want to follow Jesus, that is the indwelling Spirit separating you from the rest of the world because you have different values, you have

different perspective, you have different pursuits. So you see the covenant have their distinctive difference for God's people in God's place, under God's rule. So that is what we mean. So if you bring all this into the Old Testament, you will get a little messed up. Okay, so that's why we need to know the progressive nature of God's revelation through the covenants.

### 3. Canon

Now next, we're going to look at Canon. Now, the Canon is another C word, to highlight a principle of interpretation, comparing Scripture with Scripture. Okay, comparing Scripture with Scripture. So if you look at your notes right at the bottom, you're going to find all these tables in which there are references. They're called cross references. What cross references does is that for every verse that is spoken, there might be a reference to another verse that speaks of the same thing. And when you do this cross reference, it becomes a network that links these thoughts together and give you a clearer picture. So the canon here refers to don't just look at one passage, see what the rest of the Bible says about this truth. Okay, is like a network, it links everything together under the same thought, the same teaching so that the chances of you making a mistake is lower. Okay. So, when we're talking about canon, we are referring to cross references. So, I will show you now at the bottom. You see all this cross references. Some of you when woah, so Bible studies hard work, because there's a lot of information you need to compare and contrast.

Matthew 1:23 is a reference to Isaiah 7:14, Anyone knows what Matthew 1:23 is? Okay, put bigger in case you give the excuse that you can't see. Urgh, this is as big as it gets. Okay. Anybody else what's Matthew 1:23? What? Nasi Lemak? Lunch is over. Let's move on. Okay, anybody knows Matthew 1:23. Immanuel. Okay, good, good. We have moved beyond Nasi Lemak. Okay, God with us, right, it comes from Isaiah 7:14. Some of you may be already familiar with that. That's good. You see, so you're already familiar with the idea of cross-referencing. Matthew 2:6. What does he talk about? Anyone knows? It's a cross reference from Micah 5:2, anyone knows? Give you a clue, it is sung in one of the Christmas carols. Exactly, Bethlehem, even the place where Jesus will be born, mentioned in the New Testament is a cross reference back to Micah 5:2, right? So you'll notice that if you go down the list, every verse in the New Testament has a cross reference to a verse in the Old Testament because the Bible you can say is full of itself, not in a prideful, bad sense, but full of itself in the sense that they are constantly alluding, referencing to each other. And it forms a network that links that truth that keeps you from going down the wrong path. Okay, so remember that Canon, remember the importance of cross referencing.

### 4. Character

Okay, now, the next thing that will help you in interpreting the Old Testament and I think that this is actually a very important one, although it's left blank for you, okay, is the character of God. Okay, is the character of God. Now, if you don't have an understanding of the character of God, you are going to come to very scary conclusions in the Old Testament. You must remember this, when you read the Old Testament that you and I did not live in those times and place. We do not know the moral conditions. We do not know what are the issues involve, we only read or sometimes what is called the judgment of God. For example, in Genesis we read of fire and brimstone raining from heaven on two cities called

Sodom and Gomorrah. Right? And you know what's happening here? You know, God seems to be very, very angry. Right? And then you read later about, you know, the Israelites sent in to the land of Canaan and having to kill everyone there. And so we think like, this is terrible, because our modern movies and values is that we should not kill should forgive. So when we come to the New Testament, and we read of Jesus talking about forgiveness, and kindness, and you compare, you think that that is a conflict. What's the conflict? The conflict is that the God of the Old Testament is angry and fierce, His holy and He's ready to pounce on you, rain down fire and brimstone, send people in and kill everybody. But when you come to the New Testament, the God of the Bible is a sweet, kind, forgiving, gentle God. So, what you have at the end of the day when you study the Bible like this, you have a schizophrenic God. You know, what's a schizophrenic god, he's just weird. Right? Because why I had this picture here, why got the picture there and you are just confused. If you don't think that way, maybe you will become schizophrenic, right? What am I going to do?

Well, the Bible reveals to us from the very beginning, okay, turn with me when your bibles Deuteronomy, chapter six, verse four. Okay, Deuteronomy, chapter six, verse four, okay. This is called the Shema, in the Old Testament, this is the confession of faith of the Jewish nation. This is one of the key things that the Jews took away with, and they learn to fear God on its basis. What does Deuteronomy chapter six, verse four says, it says, "Hear, O Israel, the LORD your God is one." Okay? Now there are different ways you can take this, that is, there is only one God, nothing wrong with that. We know that there's one God, later we know that there's one God in three persons, but deeper, you need to realize that when God declares and told them to confess Him as one, it also means that he is an indivisible unity. What does it mean? That means God is united in all his moral attributes, there is no conflict within his person. He is not contradicted, he is not conflicted, he is not schizophrenic, that when He seems to be in anger, hating sin, judging sin, He is at the same time fully loving. There is no contradiction. When you come to the New Testament, and you will read about Jesus forgiving, telling people to be kind and to be loving, He is equally righteous and holy, and He will judge sin. The Lord your God is one, not just one God, He said, indivisible unity, there is no conflict within the character of God. There is no conflict. There's no schizophrenia here.

And when you approach it with the understanding, when you read a story and account in the Old Testament, then you will try to understand it from this perspective, that God is revealing something of his nature clearly. At the same time, it does not contradict anything else I know about God, that is gentle, merciful and kind because you must realize this, that it is not only in the New Testament that we know that God is merciful, compassionate, even to Moses, when God reveal His glory. Moses heard that the Lord God is merciful, compassionate and kind, forgiving the iniquities of those who will turn to Him.

Remember in the Old Testament, the prophet Jonah, do you know why he ran and refused to preach to the Ninevites, this wicked evil people, who conquered and cruelly tortured the people of Israel? The reason why Jonah ran away got swallowed by a fish so that we have lots of nice Bible stories to tell to our children is not because he thinks that God is a cruel God, he ran because he told God, I know you're going to forgive them. And that's why I don't want to preach because I want them to be punished. That's what Jonah actually told God in His face. In other words, the Old Testament prophets themselves know that that is no contradiction between God's judgment and God's compassion. All right,

so approach the Old Testament with an understanding of the character of God. Otherwise, you're going to be very confused when you read certain stories and how God acted and reacted.

Okay, take for another example. I think I mentioned this story before. Let's try another one. Instead of Abraham and lying about his wife, let's talk about Jacob and Esau and how they lied to each other. Right? If you do not understand the character of God, that is unchanging, that is holy, and that He is pure and righteous, you're going to see like why they all fight like that. And they are children of God. This is a terrible family. That is the first conclusion you're going to come away with in Genesis chapter 27 to 28. You are going to have a very bad opinion on this so called people of God, because Isaac played favoritism. The wife Rebecca also chose Jacob. And then the two brothers fight. Esau want to kill Jacob, Jacob ran away. Now, after Jacob ran away, God appeared to Jacob and say, Come, I'm your God. You said, Wow, what kind of god is this? You lie, you cheat, then after that, I'm your God, then you will be like, huh? You see, because you got all confused, you are looking at it through your own lenses, right, of what you think should be right or wrong. But if you see it from the light of God's character, then what's going to happen? Then you're going to read on and see that although God appeared to Jacob and said, I'm your God, if you follow me, I'm going to honor the promises I gave to your father, which is Abraham, then you're going to read on and see that Jacob went on, and then by the things he suffered, he was humbled, and he repented. And eventually he learned to trust God. And even towards the end of his life, you're going to read about Jacob coming before Pharaoh. And he didn't say, You know what? I did it my way and God blessed me in spite of it. He didn't say that. In fact, he said that your servants speaking to Pharaoh have live short and difficult years, he recognized that he didn't live right but God was merciful and gracious.

So you see, the people of God are not perfect. The things they do are not perfect. But that doesn't change the character of God. When you read the Old Testament in that light, okay, there will be more comfort and reassurance that you do not have some strange God in the Old Testament that seems to be different in the New Testament. Okay, so that's so much for the character of God. Now, if you want to read more about the reflection of God's unchanging character, you can take a look at Psalms 90 because Psalms 90 will tell you about His eternal everlasting nature, how He is sovereign over life and death, etc.

## 5. Christ

Now, the third interpretive lens for the Old Testament is Christ. Christ. Question, how does this text point forward to Christ. You need to realize that all of the Old Testament points towards Jesus, everything in the Old Testament points towards Jesus. Then some of you may be thinking like, wow, that's a very huge claim. How could you say something like that? Now let's look at what Jesus Himself said after his resurrection. In Luke chapter 24, verses 25 to 27 and verse 44, he confronted two of His disciples and said, "How foolish you are and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets has spoken. Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter His glory?", talking about the cross and His resurrection? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets referring to the Old Testament, he explained to them what was in the Scriptures concerning Him. In other words, Jesus taught His disciples to read the Old Testament this way, you understand? This is how you're supposed to read the Old Testament, not just look for signs or archaeology and this and that, not to look for some truth about



this culture and so on and so forth. You're supposed to read the Old Testament and see how it points to Jesus. That's what he told his disciples to do. And so verse 44, says, "He said to them, This is what I told you, while I was still with you, everything must be fulfilled, that is written about me and the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

Okay, so that's why, one of the keyways to make sure you don't go off the mark, when you study the Old Testament, is the last C here, Christ. Ask yourself when you read the Old Testament, how does this point forward to Jesus? Every New Testament sacrifice every law, every principle will somehow point you towards Jesus, because this is how we are supposed to read the Old Testament, according to our Lord Jesus. You see, if Jesus did not come and give Himself as a ransom for God's people, then the Old Testament become nothing but a bunch of moral teachings, unkept promises, and it no longer have that unity that we see in our Bibles for all these centuries. In other words, if you don't have the fifth C, Christ, everything point towards and uniting the message together, then your understanding of the Old Testament will tend to be just moralistic teachings, and there'll be a lot of questions you will not be able to answer.

### Conclusion for Old Testament

Okay, so that is how you can interpret the Old Testament. The five C's that we have covered are number one, what is it? Very good, context. Number two? Covenant, very good, progressive revelation. Okay, number three, what's number three? Canon. Okay, this is not so clear. So what's canon again? You got to compare Scripture with Scripture, look at the entire Bible, network of verses coming together to keep you from falling through the cracks into the wrong place. Okay, number four, what is the fourth C? Character of God, remember that God is not conflicted, he is not divided. He is One. Okay. And that is the fourth C and the last C will be Christ. So when you study the Old Testament, always look for how it points to Jesus. Every law, every prophecy, every Psalm, even the Proverb, Job, how it points to the Redeemer, to the Savior who is to come. Good.

### 4 interpretive lenses for the New Testament

Now we shall move on. I only have 15 minutes. So I shall speed up. Now interpreting the New Testament, four things to remember.

#### 1. Genre

In the New Testament remember the basic genres, you need to realize that the New Testament has three basic genres. Number one, the Gospel, which is like a historical narrative. Okay, gospel, historical narrative. But remember, keep this in mind. It's not like a biography is not like a standard history, I tell you a very simple reason why a standard biography or history record will trace birth and will give a fair amount of time to every important decades of a person's life. So you want to know all about the childhood, the teenage years, then the adulthood. This is how biographies are written. And then the achievements. But the Gospels does not tell you a lot about that first 30 years of Jesus life, you'll notice very, very little about the first 30 years of Jesus's life. So it's not a standard biography. A lot in the three years of his public ministry. Okay, and then half of it is on the final week leading to the cross. So the

gospel has very clearly one intent and is to point you to His redemption at the cross. Everything else gloss over bring you straight to His death on the cross and all that it means. So that is why it is not one standard biography or historical record. We call it a historical narrative. That's the nature of the gospel. They structured that way every one of them.

Okay, now the next genre is the epistles. Epistles are letters, so you need to read it like a letter. That means somebody receive it, somebody first heard it, this means something to someone. And there are other letters written too. So in First Corinthians Paul alluded that he has come before Second Corinthians, he alluded to a third or fourth epistle that he has written before, but it's not inspired. So you need to realize that, although they don't have emails and SMS in those days, they do write letters too. Okay, so these are not the only letters, there are other letters flying around, but this ones okay, fall into that category called the epistles or the letters in those days. So they're written in this format, okay, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, you know, together with so and so greet you in this church, peace and grace, you know, to you, etc. So it flows in that direction. Okay. The third final category or genre is the apocalyptic literature, which is one book, The revelation. So when you enter the revelation is like, totally whole new ballgame. Okay, it's like, you enter a room in which all the former rules in the Gospel and the Epistles don't fully apply. And that is where people make the most mistakes reading Revelation, because they don't understand the nature of apocalyptic literature. But you need to realize that this kind of literature is also very common in the days of the Apostles. And so it's in the same format. So there are certain rules that guides it as well in which when we understand, which we're going to share with you, then you will realize, oh, actually, this is how I'm supposed to understand the book of Revelation. Okay, so understand the basic genre in the New Testament.

## 2. In the gospels, Fix your eyes on Jesus

Number two, in the Gospel, remember to fix your eyes on Jesus, when you read any passage in the gospels, you need to remember this. It is written to tell you about Jesus, not to teach you primarily what to do. What do I mean? Okay, I got time I shall give you an example. Turn with me to Matthew chapter four, Matthew chapter four, Matthew chapter four, give us the famous passage in the first I believe, 11 verses on the temptation of Jesus. Right? So I won't go through with you the passage, I want you to read through it and ask yourself, what have I learned? By now, you should have reached the first temptation. And finish Man shall not live by bread alone. You should be moving on to the second temptation. I hope you have finished the second temptation. In which he says what? What did he say? You shall not what? Yes, you should not put the Lord your God to the test, right? And then the last one. Only him will you worship. Great. Now, what have you learned? To answer me, but let me guess. If you are reading this passage for yourself, in order to teach someone, then what you're going to do is you're going to find in it principles for overcoming temptation in your own life. Think of examples in which you apply the same principle and then preach it to others right. Now, you need to realize that in the gospel, that is called secondary application. You know what I mean by secondary application? It is written primarily not to teach you how to overcome temptation. Do you realize that? Why is the gospel about what Jesus did? What Jesus taught who Jesus is. So this temptation is recorded for us to show us that Jesus, even though He was hungry in the wilderness and have no resources the way the first Adam had in the Garden of Eden, when He was tempted by the same enemy, the devil, He stood on the Word of God surrendered to the will of God and triumph over temptation. That is the purpose of this record.

Do you understand? It's about what Jesus did, who Jesus is. It is meant to tell you about Jesus. And that's why later in the Epistles, Paul said that he is our second Adam, because he stood His ground against temptation and won the victory because of His obedience to the Father, unlike the disobedience of the first Adam. So this is what I mean by focus on Jesus. Now, it doesn't mean that you cannot learn lessons for your own self in overcoming temptation. But in your desire to find lessons for yourself, don't forget is first about Jesus. Are you with me? Do you understand what I'm talking about? Find out what the Gospel says about Jesus, before finding out things you can learn for yourself, because that is why the gospels were written to teach you about Jesus and what it means to follow Him.

### 3. In the epistles, remember the indicative and imperative pattern

Now when you come to the epistles, okay, this is what you need to learn. Remember the indicative and imperative pattern, indicative and imperative pattern wah this is getting chim (difficult). One hour later, throw out to you indicative imperative. What does it mean? Well, indicative simply means what God has done. Okay. It indicates, it tells you, it states the truth or the fact, that's what indicative means. What's imperative. Imperative means a command. So what happened is when the epistles were written, it always have this pattern sooner or later, this is what God has done. Therefore, you should do this. This is what God has done, therefore, you should do this. Okay, so it can be inverted, for example, in Ephesians, be kind to one another, tender hearted too, forgiving one another. Why? As Christ has forgiven you. So where is the Indicative here? Very good, as Christ has forgiven you is the statement of fact. It's the truth, is the reality, is what God has done based on what God has done. You need to be kind to one another, tender hearted too, forgiving, and that's the imperative. And you will find this pattern throughout the epistles, that our life is to be based on Christ. Christ-centered life, gospel-centered living, not I suka, suka decide this is a good idea. Is not that today, I think I want to be spiritual, so I do this instead. No. What has God done for me? What should I now do? That is the way we're supposed to live the Christian life. And so you see that the indicative and imperative pattern is going to flow through a lot of the epistles and when you pick that out, you begin to understand the thought, the argument, the teaching of the epistles. Here's another example, First Peter, chapter one, verse 14 to 16, "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written be you shall be holy, for I am holy". So where is the Indicative here? You shall be holy. I am holy? Good, good, I am holy is the Indicative. How about in verse 15, very good, "as he who called you is holy", that is the Indicative right? And so, you see, our holiness is based on the holiness of God, that is a statement of fact, that is the teaching, that is the truth. And because of that truth, what is the imperative here? "You also be holy." So, you see, our holiness is supposed to be reflective of the holiness of God. It's not to gain spiritual points in the church is not supposed to show that you're one up against your fellow brothers or sisters. We have all the wrong ideas of holiness because we think of holiness as something you achieve on your own to bring you spiritual merit. But the Indicative-imperative pattern here reminds us that our holiness must be a result of the holiness of God.

### 4. In application, Remember what Scripture is for

Okay, number four, in interpreting the New Testament, in application, remember what Scripture is for. The Bible tells us in Second Timothy, chapter three, verse 16 to 17, that "all scriptures is given by the inspiration of God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete or mature, not perfect, equipped for every good work". In other words, if you are truly studying the Bible as you should, what's going to happen is this, you are going to be more and more mature in the faith, in other words, you can think, biblically and scripturally in different situations. That's what the Bible is for. Okay? It's not going to puff you up with knowledge so that you think you're better than others. When you hit down that path, you need to be very careful, because your study of Scripture is not doing you spiritual good. But if the Bible is going to help you be mature and equipped to serve God, then you need to ask yourself questions like this, what is this text teaching me? How is this text reproving or correcting me? What is this text training me to do? In other words, we need to read the Bible with a humble and teachable heart, allow it to reprove us, allowing it to correct us, allowing it to tell us what we should do, what we should think how we should feel. We should read the Bible that way and study it for that purpose. So that you can be mature so that you can be complete so that you can be equipped spiritually for every good work. So this is how we should be reading the New Testament.

#### Conclusion for New Testament

Okay, so let's review quickly number one, they don't give you the answer here. Like this was the first one in the New Testament remember the? Yes, remember the basic genres and what are they? The gospels, the epistles and apocalyptic literature. Very good. Now very quickly, oops. How about I do this. Okay, number two, what is the principle to guide you, in the gospels, what should you do? Yes, focus on Jesus. Okay. In the Gospels, focus on Jesus. In the Epistles, what should you remember? Indicative and imperative. So next time when you go for Bible study, you can ask your teacher so what is the Indicative here? Your teacher will look at you, the imperative is, you start asking questions. All right. So begin to think about how the Bible is written, indicative imperative pattern. Okay, number four, what should you do? In application, remember what Scripture is for.

#### Conclusion

Okay, so these are some interpretation guidelines to keep you from making errors as you observe, interpret and apply. Okay, so if you keep these things in mind, there is a good chance and likelihood that you will come to wrong conclusions as you study into the Bible. Okay, so that's all I have for you today on interpreting the Old and New Testament. And next week, okay, we are going to go into the first genre called the narratives and history. All right narrative and history, there might be more we will cover but at least we're gonna start going into that direction. Yes, we're going to narrative and history so come ready prepared to fill your minds with more skills and tools to help you in the study of Scripture. If you have any questions, once again, I'll be staying behind here to answer your questions if you have any. If not, that's all we have today. I invite you to rise with me and close our study in prayer.

#### Prayer

Our Father in heaven we thank you so much for this time we can learn how to study the Bible. Father, we realize that although the Bible seems to be one book, yet in the amazing way you have revealed yourself, there are 66 different books that spans across centuries, and they are different world that you have moved through, redeeming your people, forming covenants, just to call people out of their sins, to see the hope that will come in Jesus Christ. And that is something we cannot fully fathom. How you could have imagined and brought all this about, but yet it is revealed for us in the Bible. So give us a heart of wisdom to study your Word, with the right lenses, both for the Old and the New Testament, so that we can come to conclusions that are faithful and true to your revelation. Be with your people as they go back to study the scriptures for themselves and may you richly reward them for their labours and help them to become that man who is perfect, mature and equipped for every good work. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen. All right. Thank you, everyone. I'll see you again next week.