

# Understanding the Bible with Five C's

**The Story of God's Self-Revelation:** The Creator of the universe and covenantal God of Israel self-revealed through law, prophets, wisdom, and a variety of inspired witnesses. This same God then became incarnate in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth who lived as a perfect model of God and a perfect blueprint for humankind. He was rejected and crucified, the most transparent sin of humankind possible. However, he was resurrected by God, the most glorious act of grace conceivable. The Church, formed at Pentecost, responds by growing in Christlikeness (both individually and as a Body) and calling others to the same until the end wherein God in holy love will envelope, restore, and abide with creation. The Bible is the written witness to this living God's intervention. Written by human authors, inspired by God, enfleshed fully in Jesus Christ.

## The Structure of the Bible in Five C's:

**Creation** and "Mythic" History: Genesis 1 - 11. The order of creation, imago dei, fallenness, Noah and the flood, Babel and confused languages, etc.

**Covenant:** Genesis 12 - End of Old Testament / Hebrew Bible

- The Pentateuch first follows Abraham, then a few other ancient patriarchs. Then Moses who makes an Exodus, introduces the law, leads them through the wilderness, and prays for softer hearts.
- The History of the Hebrew People follows the Pentateuch and tells the story of the people getting into, establishing, re-establishing, being exiled from, and returning to the Promised Land. Joshua is about Joshua. Judges is about the judges. Etc.
- The Wisdom books: Psalms (prayers), Proverbs (wise sayings), Ecclesiastes (when wisdom doesn't work), Song of Solomon (love), and Job (the problem of evil).
- The Prophets: Critics of Israel and warners of exile, they longed for a messiah to restore God's Kingdom. The "major prophets" are the longer books.
- Apocrypha: Not part of the Protestant canon, set aside as historical but not inspired. Of note, 1 Maccabees records Alexander the Great's reception in Israel.

**Christ:** Matthew - John. Jesus Christ is presented in four basic ways. He is the better Moses and ultimate rabbi (Matthew). He is the Messiah, the Suffering Servant, and the Son of God all at once (Mark). He is Lord of a spiritual Kingdom rivaling even Rome (Luke). He is the Word of God incarnate (John). In each, He is perfect, crucified, and resurrected.

**Church:** Acts - Jude

- The ancient church is recorded in Acts. It could be called the acts of Peter and then the acts of Paul. Against all odds, the message of Jesus' resurrection goes out from Israel through Rome and to the ends of the Earth.
- Paul's letters, Pauline letters, and pastoral letters. Pay attention to how you read Paul; glorifying God more than condemning humans. Also, note that reformed theology is a subset of Paul's letters, as is the New Paul perspective.
- General letters. 1 John is a great first book to study in depth.

**Commencement:** Revelation - vision filled instructions for perseverance until the end.