

BIBLE 101 — Week 8

Reading the Bible as One Epic Narrative from Start to Finish

Scripture Focus: Genesis 3:15 · Isaiah 53 · Luke 24:27 · 2 Timothy 3:16–17

KEY VOCABULARY — scan this before you watch

Term	What It Means
Canonical Context	Asking where a passage fits in the big _____ of the Bible's 66-book collection
Analogy of Faith	The principle that the Bible is its own best _____ — it won't ultimately contradict itself
Progressive Revelation	God revealed His plan piece by piece over _____, with later parts building on earlier ones
Harmony vs. Unison	The goal isn't making every part say the same thing (unison) but hearing many _____ voices blend together beautifully

I. THE PROBLEM: 66 BOOKS OR ONE STORY?

The roadblock: if the Bible isn't _____, how can we really trust it at all?

The classic example:

- Paul says: "We're justified by _____ apart from works" (Romans 3:28)
- James says: "A person is justified by _____ and not by faith alone" (James 2:24)

Are they fighting? This is the kind of thing that makes people throw their hands up — unless there's a better way to _____ at it.

II. THE BIG SHIFT: ONE DIVINE AUTHOR, ONE EPIC STORY

Over _____ different human authors writing over roughly 1,500 years — yet one single divine Author orchestrating the whole thing.

Every part — from the laws in Leviticus to the poems in Psalms — is woven into one _____ story.

The Four Acts of the Story:

ACT	WHAT HAPPENS	KEY IDEA
1. Creation	God makes a _____ world	Everything begins in goodness and order
2. Fall	Humanity messes it up — _____ and brokenness enter	The problem that needs solving

3. Redemption	God's rescue mission — runs through the OT, _____ in Jesus	The long story of God making things right
4. Restoration	God will make everything _____ again	The promise that the story ends in total renewal

Every passage you read fits somewhere in this _____.

III. THREE ESSENTIAL TOOLS

Tool 1 — Canonical Context

- "Canon" = the _____ of 66 books recognized as the Bible
- The habit of asking: Where does this passage fit in the big _____-part story?
- How does it connect to what came _____ and what's coming after?

Tool 2 — Analogy of Faith

- Because the Bible has one divine Author, it won't ultimately _____ itself
- Any tension we see is a problem on _____ end, not the Bible's
- **Rule of thumb:** Always let _____ passages shine light on difficult ones — move from what's clear to what's unclear

Tool 3 — Progressive Revelation

- God didn't drop the whole Bible at once — He revealed His plan _____ over centuries
- Later parts build on and bring _____ to earlier parts without contradicting them

Picture it: Like a photograph developing in a dark room

- First: a faint, _____ outline
- Then: key _____ start to appear
- Finally: a crystal-clear, _____ picture

The full image was always there — it just became _____ over time.

Augustine's summary: "The new is in the old _____. The old is in the new revealed."

IV. SEEING IT UNFOLD: THE PROGRESSIVE PORTRAIT

When you use all three tools together, you see the entire story pointing to one central _____.

STAGE	WHAT HAPPENS	THE FOCUS SHARPENS
Genesis 3	The first faint _____ of a deliverer	Someone will crush the serpent's head
Genesis 12	The promise narrows to _____'s family	All nations will be blessed through him

2 Samuel 7	Zooms in to King _____'s royal line	An eternal kingdom is promised
Isaiah 53	A detailed portrait of a suffering _____	He will bear the sins of many
The Gospels	Jesus arrives and _____ every promise	The full picture is finally revealed

Jesus himself modeled this on the road to _____ — starting with Moses and walking through all the prophets, showing how the entire Old Testament was about Him (Luke 24:27).

|| PAUSE & REFLECT

Look at the progressive portrait above. How does seeing the Bible as one unfolding story — rather than 66 separate books — change how you think about a passage you've always found confusing?

V. HARMONY, NOT UNISON

Unison: Everybody sings the exact same _____ — flat and boring

Harmony: Many different voices sing their own unique notes that _____ together beautifully

We want to hear Paul's distinct voice, James's distinct voice, David's voice in the Psalms.

The only way to honor the _____ of the Bible is to first listen carefully to its diversity.

Why it matters: Paul tells Timothy that **all** Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable — not just the parts we like (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

Engaging the _____ story makes us whole people, fully equipped for every good work.

VI. YOUR CHALLENGE THIS WEEK

Step 1: When you hit a tough passage, check the _____ references in your Bible first — let Scripture interpret Scripture.

Step 2: Before reading any passage, ask: Where am I in the big story of creation, fall, _____, and restoration?

Step 3: Listen for each author's unique _____ and what they're trying to emphasize.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How does the Paul vs. James tension (faith vs. works) look different when you apply the analogy of faith? What might each author be emphasizing differently?

2. Think of a passage in the Old Testament that has always puzzled you. How might progressive revelation help you understand it in light of the full story?

3. What does it mean to read the Bible as harmony rather than unison? Why is it important to hear each author's distinct voice?

