

Where to start when embarking on a mission to teach the whole Bible? In this writer's experience, the answer took quite a while in coming. The bible is a highly complex document. It has plenty enough moving parts to leave any researcher reeling. To gain a competent enough grasp of the Scriptures requires dedication, deliberate commitment, that is, and discipline or, in short, a love for the Scriptures, for the Truth, for God and His side of the story. To become competent enough to teach it requires humble commitment to a qualified pastor-teaching ministry to learn, a pastor-teaching gift, and a disciplined dedication to research, or, in short, an ability and a hunger to figure out and search out the Scriptures. It is not easy to tease the deeper and deeper truths of the Bible out of the text, and after you have, there is that need to figure out the best way to go about helping others appreciate the same thing that you have learned without subjecting them to the same rigors that you yourself went through.

For this writer, some considerations that have been made in the business of deciding how to commence teaching are:

1. verse-by-verse studies of the Bible
2. topical studies of the Bible, as all systematic theologies are
3. a historical discussion of the Bible story

All of these options have their merits, and this writer may use them all to some degree. The answer though that appears to be unfolding is a deliberate tracing of the Bible beginning from the very first introduction of the unbeliever to the Gospel and onward. That is to say, to start off, this writer's approach is going to be to start at the Gospel and then try to follow a natural spiritual progression through the Bible. That is not at all to suggest that there is no better way. It just appears to be what is working for this ministry.

To begin then, the very first thing to say is that *Jesus Christ, a Man from Nazareth somewhere in Israel about two thousand years ago, was actually God Who put on human nature to come and die for human sins so that no human being would suffer God's just eternal punishment for sin, if only they would believe in Him, and who was raised from the dead too for human justification.* Although the book of Genesis does not start with this statement, and although a reader would come close to the end of the first chapter of Matthew before happening on something of this idea, the whole Bible is actually built upon and around it. It is, in fact, the point of everything else that the Bible says.

This statement about the Lord Jesus in itself is what we call the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). It is a simple enough idea, so that anyone can be saved if they believe it. But it is also a summary of the Bible, so that it should provoke a great deal of godly questions that any believer can use to learn the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). For example, although we can see the uniqueness of this Person Jesus Christ from the statement (He is unmistakable among human beings, since He is the only human being who is also God), we should also be led to ask about how God can become Man and why that should be necessary at all. For another example, we can see and believe that God is just and punishes sin eternally, but we might wonder about what justice looks like from God's perspective compared to ours which

might leave us with a confusion about eternal punishment. These ponderings should make us that much more receptive to how the Bible explains the Nature and Character of this God that it talks about and what it says about the Nature of the Person of Christ too. The former is called “theology” and the latter “christology” in systematic theology.

We will begin at this point then, at the Gospel of Jesus Christ, describing the simple idea of salvation as it is necessary for unbelievers to believe in order to become children of God, and then proceed in whatever direction as the Spirit deems profitable for us to learn all that the Bible has to teach us so that we may walk worthy of the Lord and qualify for the great rewards that He has prepared for those who love Him.