

-- Welcome to talking about the Bible with Reverend Bob Wood I want to talk to you a little bit about how we read the Bible. Most of the time in modern Christianity, we are not reading the Bible properly. What I mean by that is we usually look up a topic or a theme and we read individual verses without reading the book of the Bible as a whole. Now I'm not talking about all the books of the Bible. I'm talking about the individual book that we're studying. I want to talk to you about how to study an individual book. For example, John or Mark or Samuel, Genesis. First of all, you need to understand that the Bible wasn't written in verses that was something that was added many, many, many, many centuries later. Sometimes the way the Bible is divided up in verses and chapters are maybe not the way I would recommend they be divided up. When we look at the Bible, we start off by looking at the book as a whole, see the author of the book. Let's use the book of Genesis, sat down to write an entire book and he didn't think about the individual versus he was writing a whole. And as we understand the whole, we understand better the verses. If the author of Genesis were to sit down. He would have to make preparations to make a scroll in the Old Testament days that scroll would be usually made of a cat skin or some kind of animal skin. It would take time to be treated and writing a book was an expensive proposition, a lot different than what we have today. You know, I can sit down here on Word I can type away. I can go back and copy and paste and change. Run spellcheck, run, grammar, check. but in ancient times, sitting down to write a book was a very arduous and also very scientific kind of task. It was, it was high technology of that day. So an author would plan carefully everything in his book. And that's why, when we look at the book as a whole, we need to understand that every part of it is critical because he wouldn't have put it in. If he hadn't been inspired to put it in. So every part is critical. The writer would have put a lot of planning in it. There would have been a lot of preparations and then only the best books would have copies have been made because you didn't hit press print to print more copies of the book. This whole process would have to be gone over again to make copies and copies. And in the New Testament time, yes, they were using paper and, writing books and codex is as we call them. But in Old Testament times they were writing scrolls, but even in the New Testament time, writing was a very scientific very technical task and the professional scribes that we all see throughout the New Testament that actually wrote the words of Paul, oftentimes address us. Copies were something that were difficult to make. And a copyist also is another profession. So let's look at the book as a whole. For this study that we're going to do we're going to look at a book that maybe we're not so familiar with, to see how we're going to, use the tools that I'm about to talk about. So let's use the book of Ruth, for example. Proper study of Ruth would begin with two things, a Bible and a notebook and pencil. And how you start off by reading Ruth is you sit down and you do not look at the verses. I wish I could get a Bible's without versus some of your Bible programs you can turn off the verses verse numbers and just read it as a whole text. Read the story of Ruth from beginning to end. And then read it again and then read it again, reading it several times quickly. Like you would read a normal novel that you might experience getting to know it after you've finished reading it. There are some things you need to write down and identify. The first is what kind of material is this book? Some of the famous theologians who have put together the form of Bible study that I'm talking about. Inductive Bible Study have divided the different kinds of materials in the Bible into categories. Biographical. Historical, Chronological, Geographical and Ideological. And you need to identify what you're reading, what kind of book it is, because that affects how you're going to read the book later. You're going to read the individual verses and themes to understand them and to interpret. A biographical book is a book that would follow an individual's life, especially getting into personal aspects of their life. the book of Samuel First and Second Samuel was an example of biographical books. There's actually three biographies in the two books, one --

-- of Samuel one a David and one of Saul and then there's other smaller biographical notes on characters in the midst of that work, but it is moved by helping us understand what's going on biographically in these people's lives. Historical books are more invested in the actual event themselves. We don't get a lot of detail about the character, but we get a lot of details about the events. When I think of a historical book, I think of a book like Exodus where we move our moving from, from a little biography in the beginning when we learned about Moses, but then it's going into the various struggles between Pharaoh and Moses and the different plagues. A Chronological book is a book that's telling us about a period of time. It's not, focusing on any particular person as it is telling us about how things were in the days that this book was written. I think of Judges as a chronological book, a book that is telling us about, "and in those days everyone did what was right in their own eyes." and it kind of goes through a chronological, uh, events that tells us that move the story. Geographical books are ones that are driven by locations. Now, the book of acts is, is an example where it starts off, uh, with, uh, in the first chapter talking about you will be my witnesses in Judea and Samaria and to the ultimate parts, to other parts of the world. As the story goes through, we see the gospel start in Jerusalem and eventually goes through as we follow Paul's various, missionary journeys as he carries this all the way to when it ends with Paul in Rome. Ideological books are books that are talking about a certain topic or idea. We see these, especially in the New Testament letters where the authors are writing about problems in the church and are teaching theology. Now when we've identified, which one of those books, which one of those categories, each book is the next thing we're going to put on our piece of paper. So we've got Ruth and we're going to put what one of these things it is. I'm not going to tell you. And then the next thing is we write a book report, very simple, very short, just like you did back in school, a book report, you're going to identify the major characters of the book, the plot, the climax of the book and the resolution. This is how I start off my study and I put it in a notebook. And then we're going to go into other features of the Bible study as we go later on. But I want you to take what I've given you now and come up with, pick your book, or if you want to go with me and do Ruth do Ruth decide what general materials. Is it biographical, historical chronological, geographical ideological, and then write a couple of paragraph book report, which tells the major characters, the plot of the book, the climax of the book and the resolution, how it ends. Well, next week, we'll be going on to the next stage of Bible study. And this process is long and it's not something you do in an hour. This is something that you'll do for a month, maybe, um, slowly understanding the book as a whole, because see, I believe that the book is a whole was written by an author, divinely inspired by God and that every aspect of it needs to be understood in its wholeness and completeness so that we can properly interpret the word of God for our lives. Taking individual verses can create problems. You grab a verse and you say, well, it says this in the Bible and you try to imply it without understanding the rest of the context you can get into some heresies. Ah, yes. In the Bible it says, eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we may die. But that's not a guidance for life. If you read that, the book you realize that those words are being spoken by, characters who are not godly. So I hope you'll come with me on this journey on how to read the Bible. And in the next episode, we will talk about creating divisions and understanding the structure of the book. --