

SCRIPTURE READING/STUDY | WEEK 3

Read | Worship

One purpose of Bible study is *worship*—that what we find in the Bible leads us to see and celebrate the glorious God at the center of it. Worship itself is an “application” of Scripture; if we spend time thinking about how great God is, we’re getting one of the main points of the Bible!

Thought 2: Reading the Bible in light of the gospel

One of the most rewarding discoveries for me was the principle Jesus establishes in Luke 24:26-7: “*Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?*” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” All of Scripture—not just the New Testament, but the Old as well—finds its ultimate fulfillment in the redemptive work of Jesus. Christians don’t fully understand a passage until we see how it relates to Jesus’ ministry. A good biblical theology book (Jim Hamilton’s *What is Biblical Theology?* is a great primer) will give you a deeper understanding of how to read the Bible this way, but for the time being, we’ll look at how each Old Testament genre can be interpreted through Jesus’ life and ministry.

Old Testament genres

1. **Old Testament narrative.** Old Testament narrative is similar to gospel narrative but we have to read it through a New Testament lens before we can understand it. These stories are still the stories of God building His kingdom or of people responding to that kingdom, but they’re *shadows*—they point, with differing amounts of distinctness, to the story we know through Jesus. So in addition to the questions of “What is God doing to show or build His kingdom?” and “*How are people responding?*” we need to ask, “How does this anticipate or prepare for the full redemptive story in Jesus?”
2. **Old Testament law.** Old Testament Law isn’t exactly like gospel teaching, because some of it is still authoritative for us now, while some of it had to do more with Israel’s worship or Israel’s specific

cultural context. Laws that are *moral* in nature (e.g., “Do not kill”) are upheld or even intensified in the New Testament; laws that are *ceremonial* (i.e., having to do with ritual worship) show something about God but have been fulfilled in Jesus; and laws that are *civil* (i.e., having to do with national justice) show how God feels about things, but don’t bind us since Christianity isn’t an earthly government.

With Law, we should try to ask, “What would this have meant to Israel in that time? Was this a law about morality, orderly society, worship, or was it about being set apart from pagan nations?” Then, we should ask, “What was the heart behind this law? Why would God command this?” In that principle, we may find something we can think about applying in our context now.

3. **Poetry.** With the Psalms, much of Old Testament prophecy is considered poetry—imaginative reflections on a theme or truth. Poetry usually emphasizes one central truth with different images, repetition, or reflection. One genre that is sometimes considered a sub-genre of poetry is *apocalyptic literature* (Revelation in the New Testament is here, too). Apocalyptic poetry uses highly symbolic language—some of which we understand, and some we don’t—and it focuses on God’s future judgment and restoration of the world more than on the present. Parts of Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Isaiah use apocalyptic language. With all poetry, the focus should be on what is being celebrated, warned against, or commanded. What does the author want us to think about, to feel, or to do? And if there is a future prediction: do we see that fulfilled now in Christ? Or is that something to look forward to in the new creation?
4. **Wisdom.** Wisdom literature explores the complexities of living in the real world as God’s covenant people. The Proverbs offer truths that are generally reliable principles; Job explores the fact of suffering through a long conversation; Ecclesiastes looks at the apparent futility in so many things on earth.

THIS WEEK’S READING PLAN

Day 1: Introduction to Micah, Micah 1

Day 2: Micah 2

Day 3: Micah 3

Day 4: Micah 4:1-5

Day 5: Micah 4:6-13