**Where do we start when reading scripture?**

1. **God is the main character of the Bible.**

This is his story.

Everything we read needs to be with that understanding at the center.

It is about Him, not us!

1. **We need to read the Bible as a whole.**

The word is tied together by themes from Genesis to Revelations that show who God is, how he relates to creation and humanity and how he is working out his plans in History. Themes of salvation, a covenant community, knowledge of God, and land ( kingdom) tie the Word together.. God’s Design Elmer A. Marten’s

Hendricks writes that

*“ It is not a collection of parts, It is an integrated message in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, that is bad math, but it’s good method. We keep breaking it down and breaking it down until we have nothing but baskets of fragments. What we need today are people who can put the parts back together again into a meaningful and powerful whole.”*

I love this quote by James M. Hamilton Jr. author of What is Biblical Theology

*“Scripture is meant to be read, understood and interpreted as a whole complete unit. When we are drawing a conclusion, we need to ask ourselves if it fits with scripture as a whole. And how other portions of the scripture speak to our understanding.”*

1. **We need solid biblical theology**

Biblical theology is the study of the Bible that seeks to discover what the biblical writers, under divine guidance, believed, described, and taught in the context of their own times. (Bible Dictionary)

This is a fundamental and important approach to the Bible.

We learn what they believed by carefully reading what they wrote, and making accurate observations. Looking at what bold claims they make and what assumptions they have. Because they were inspired and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, we can trust that their conclusions are accurate.

When we carefully read, we can see how they applied what they understood in their context and culture. As we read the scripture, we learn more about their context.

1. **Christ is Central**

From Genesis to Revelations. Redemption and reconciliation to God through Christ is the key theme in all scripture. The Old Testament and the New Testament need to be read though this lens.

*All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast--all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.* - Revelations 13:8

*Instead, you were bought with the priceless blood of Christ. He is a perfect lamb. He doesn’t have any flaws at all. He was chosen before God created the world. But he came into the world for your sake in these last days.* -1 Peter 1 :19-20

Jesus was chosen before creation to come and do the mighty work needed for our salvation. Therefore, throughout scripture we will see imagery, and references to this.It is a question we must ask when reading the Word. Where do we see salvation, how does this reflect redemption?