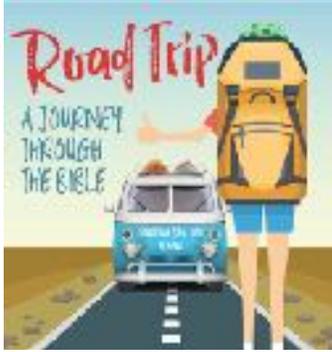


SESSION ONE: “The B - I - B - L - E”



- The Source of the Bible: Where did it come from?
- The Structure of the Bible: What is its arrangement?
- The Story of the Bible: Why do we have these books?
- The Study of the Bible: How should we read it?

THE SOURCE OF THE BIBLE: Where did the Bible come from?

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true...” 2 Timothy 3:16

- 1) Dictation: God gave human writers the exact words to put on paper.
- 2) Verbal, plenary: God gave human writers the thought and words, and all are equal in the original manuscripts.
- 3) Conceptual/Intuitional: God inspired the writers and ideas of the Bible, not every word.
- 4) Dynamic/Partial: God inspired parts of the Bible, but related only to matters of faith.
- 5) Barthian: Similar to Dynamic and popularized by Karl Barth, the Bible points the reader to the Truth, not requiring that every single word be true.

Other words related to Inspiration are the concepts of Infallibility, Sufficiency, Inerrancy, and Literalism.

The Bible covers 4,000 years of human history, written in different times, different cultures, from three continents, in multiple languages, and by scores of writers. Even as a work of literature - inspiration aside - it is the most extraordinary book ever written.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BIBLE: What is the Bible’s arrangement?

The Old Testament contains 39 individual books, divided into five categories. The New Testament contains 27 individual books, divided into five categories.

Old Testament

<u>Torah</u>	<u>History</u>	<u>Wisdom</u>	<u>Major Prophets</u>	<u>Minor Prophets</u>
Genesis	Joshua	Job	Isaiah	Hosea
Exodus	Judges	Psalms	Jeremiah	Joel
Leviticus	Ruth	Proverbs	Lamentations	Amos
Numbers	1 Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel	Obadiah
Deuteronomy	2 Samuel	Song of Songs	Daniel	Jonah
	1 Kings			Micah

<u>Torah</u>	<u>History</u>	<u>Wisdom</u>	<u>Major Prophets</u>	<u>Minor Prophets</u>
	2 Kings			Nahum
	1 Chronicles			Habakkuk
	2 Chronicles			Zephaniah
	Ezra			Haggai
	Nehemiah			Zechariah
	Esther			Malachi

New Testament

<u>Gospels</u>	<u>History</u>	<u>Pauline Letters</u>	<u>General Letters</u>	<u>Apocalypse</u>
Matthew	Acts	Romans	Hebrews	Revelation
Mark		1 Corinthians	James	
Luke		2 Corinthians	1 Peter	
John		Galatians	2 Peter	
		Ephesians	1 John	
		Philippians	2 John	
		Colossians	3 John	
		1 Thessalonians	Jude	
		2 Thessalonians		
		1 Timothy		
		2 Timothy		
		Titus		
		Philemon		

THE STORY OF THE BIBLE: Why do we have these particular books?

The word used for thousands of years to describe the accepted books of the Bible is "Canon." It means "measuring reed," a ruler, or standard.

The books we have in the Old Testament - were largely - accepted as Scripture by the Jewish Community at the time of Jesus. The Septuagint - a Greek Old Testament - was completed about 150 years before the New Testament era. Books now included in the Apocrypha were read and respected, but not accepted as Scripture.

The books we have in the New Testament, were generally accepted as Scripture by circa 400 AD. The major criteria employed by the early church to establish the New Testament Canon:

- 1) The text was written by an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus or close associate of an eyewitness.
- 2) The text is consistent with the overall voice of previously accepted Scripture.
- 3) The church, as a whole, found the text recognized and useful.

A number of "Competing Books" were hotly debated for admission into the Canon. Books that were accepted: Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, Jude, and Revelation. Books

excluded: The Revelation according to Peter; the Letter of Barnabas; Shepherd of Hermas; the Gospel of Thomas; the Didache; the Letter of Clement, and others.

THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE: How should we read the Bible; or what should we take away from the Bible?

There is no objective reading of the Bible. It is always interpreted through the time, place, experience, presuppositions, culture, language, and opinion of the READER. Any time a person opens up the text, he or she is involved in a collision. He or she is crashing against the time, place, experience, presuppositions, culture, language, and opinion of the WRITER.

As a result, every reader employs “hermeneutics:” A method of interpreting, understanding, and organizing the text. The goal in reading the Bible, is to understand as much as you can about the text - its background, culture, use, author, etc. - and to simultaneously remove as many of your personal presumptions as possible.

There are several major schools of interpretation:

- 1) Literal: Seeking the “plain meaning” of the text;
- 2) Dogmatic: As a rule, “proof texting.”
- 3) Allegorical: Much of the Bible should be read looking for symbols, bigger pictures.
- 4) Moral: A search for ethical lessons within the Bible.
- 5) Christological: The Bible is not “flat.” It rises to and falls away from Jesus.

The Bible



Old Testament

Gospels

New Testament

“Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son...” Hebrews 1:1-2