



# Course Outline

- Uniqueness of the Bible
  - Bible and the people
  - Bible answers the biggest questions
  - Benefits of studying the Bible
  - Adaptability

# Course Outline

- The origin of the Bible
  - Godhead
  - God the Father
  - God the Son
  - God the Holy Spirit
  - Inspiration
  - Evidences (Internal and External),

# Course Outline

- structure of the Bible
  - OT
  - NT
- Canonization
- Bible Versions
- The purpose of the Bible
- How to study the Bible

# INTRODUCTION: THE UNIQUENESS OF THE BIBLE

- **The Bible and the people**

“No book has been so loved, so hated, so revered, so damned as the Bible. People have died for the Bible. Others have killed for it. It has inspired man’s greatest noblest acts ... Wars have raged over the Bible, revolutions have been nurtured in its pages, and kingdoms crumbled through its ideas. **People of all viewpoints** – from liberation theologians to capitalists, from fascists to Marxists, from dictators to liberators, from pacifists to militarists – search its pages for words with which to justify their deeds”.

# INTRODUCTION: THE UNIQUENESS OF THE BIBLE

- **The Bible Answers Life's Biggest Questions**

In addition to discovering the richness of our Creator, studying the Bible also helps us to learn more about ourselves, and the world in which we live. Answers -to all of life's biggest questions are found in God's Word.

Questions such as:

- Who am I?
- Where am I going?
- Why am I here?
- What should I do with my life?
- Where did I come from?
- What's my relationship to God?

# INTRODUCTION: THE UNIQUENESS OF THE BIBLE

- **Eight Benefits of Studying the Word**

1. It assures us of salvation - 1 John 5:13
2. It cleanses us from sin - John 15:3 / John 17:17
3. It gives peace - John 16:33
4. It brings joy - John 15:11
5. It guides our decisions - Psalms 119:105
6. It helps us in prayer - John 15:7
7. It strengthens - 1 John 2:14
8. It leads to success - Joshua 1:8

# INTRODUCTION: THE UNIQUENESS OF THE BIBLE

- **Who Should Study the Bible (Adaptability)?**

Every Christian should study the Bible. We all need God's wisdom no matter what season of life we are in. This little poem, written by a Baptist church in Indiana, answers the question well:

*The young—to learn how to live; the old—to know how to die*

*The ignorant—for wisdom; the learned—for humility*

*The rich—for compassion; the poor—for comfort*

*The dreamer—for enchantment; the practical—for counsel*

*The weak—for strength; the strong—for direction*

*The haughty—for warning; the humble—for exaltation*

*The troubled—for peace; the sinner—for salvation*

*The doubting—for assurance; all Christians—for guidance*



# The origin of the Bible

- The Bible is the word of God. Even though it was written in the human language and by human author, they wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

## WHO IS GOD?

- God is love, power, and splendor—and God is a mystery. His ways are far beyond us, but He still reaches out to us. God is infinite yet intimate, three yet one, all-knowing yet all-forgiving. We will spend eternity cherishing an ever-deepening relationship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Despite the distance sin demands, God has revealed Himself in countless ways. The Bible is the story of God striving to reconnect with His children, and is a major method God uses to reach us.

# WHO IS GOD?

- A mosaic of authors, styles and perspectives, the Bible reveals a God who is ever-creative, ever-patient and ever-seeking to restore our relationship with Him. Though written by ordinary people, through the Spirit it pierces our hearts, opens our eyes and convicts us to live for Him.

# WHO IS GOD?

- God the Father reached out to us most dramatically through His Son Jesus, who chose not just to visit us, but to become one of us. Born human so we can be reborn in the Spirit, Jesus showed us God's love and character—and how far God was willing to go to save us from self-destruction. What we could not do for ourselves, He did for us, paying the price for our sins, dying in our place so we can live forever. He conquered death through resurrection, and promised to return to take us home

## WHO IS GOD?

- Meanwhile, God has not left us alone. The Holy Spirit is here to comfort us, guide us and transform us to live as witnesses for God's love. The same Spirit who inspired prophets and empowered Jesus, who shaped scripture and created the world, enables and empowers each one of us. The Spirit activates the "body of Christ," the church, through spiritual gifts and a humble attitude of service and compassion.

# INSPIRATION

- The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history. (2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12.)

# EVIDENCES OF DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE

- The Bible is given by inspiration of God (2Tim.3:16) to holy men of God who were moved by the Holy Spirit (2Peter1:21)
- If the Bible is truly God's Word, then we should cherish it, study it, obey it, and fully trust it. If the Bible is the Word of God, then to dismiss it is to dismiss God Himself.

## The evidences that prove the divine origin of the Bible:

There are both internal and external evidences that the Bible is truly God's Word:

- **The internal evidences** are those things within the Bible that testify of its divine origin.
- One of the first internal evidences that the Bible is truly God's Word is seen in **its unity**. The theme of salvation from sin, which runs throughout the pages of Scripture, is one of the attributes of the Bible showing its harmony and consistency. It is remarkable that such unity could be maintained by so many writers (more than 40 authors), who lived at different times (over a period of approximately 1500 years)



## The evidences that prove the divine origin of the Bible:

- Another of the internal evidences that indicates the Bible is truly God's Word is **the fulfilled prophecies** contained within its pages.
- The Bible contains hundreds of detailed prophecies relating to the future of individual nations including Israel, certain cities, and mankind. Other prophecies concern the coming of One who would be the Messiah, the Saviour of all who would believe in Him.
- There is no other religious book with the extent or type of predictive prophecy that the Bible contains.

## The evidences that prove the divine origin of the Bible:

- A third internal evidence of the divine origin of the Bible is **its unique authority and power**
- This authority and power are best seen in the way countless lives have been transformed by the supernatural power of God's Word.
- Drug addicts have been cured by it, homosexuals set free by it, and hate turned to love by it...
- The Bible does possess a dynamic and transforming power that is only possible because it is truly God's Word.

The evidences that prove the divine origin of the Bible:

**There are also external evidences** that indicate the Bible is truly the Word of God.

- One is **the historicity of the Bible**. Because the Bible details historical events, its truthfulness and accuracy are subject to verification like any other historical document. Through both archaeological evidences and other writings, the historical accounts of the Bible have been proven time and time again to be accurate and true.

## **The evidences that prove the divine origin of the Bible:**

- The fact that the Bible accurately and truthfully records historically verifiable events is a great indication of its truthfulness when dealing with religious subjects and doctrines and helps substantiate its claim to be the very Word of God.

The evidences that prove the divine origin of the Bible:

- Another external evidence that the Bible is truly God's Word is **the integrity of its human authors**.
- In studying the lives of these men, we find them to be honest and sincere.
- The fact that they were willing to die often excruciating deaths for what they believed testifies that these ordinary yet honest men truly believed God had spoken to them.

## The evidences that prove the divine origin of the Bible:

- A final external evidence that the Bible is truly God's Word is **the indestructibility of the Bible**. Because of its importance and its claim to be the very Word of God, the Bible has suffered more vicious attacks and attempts to destroy it than any other book in history.
- From early Roman Emperors like Diocletian, through communist dictators and on to modern-day atheists and agnostics, the Bible has withstood and outlasted all of its attackers and is still today the most widely published book in the world.

## Conclusion

- No matter how its opponents try to attack, destroy, or discredit it, the Bible remains; its veracity and impact on lives is unmistakable.
- The accuracy which has been preserved despite every attempt to corrupt, attack, or destroy it is clear testimony to the fact that the Bible is truly God's Word and is supernaturally protected by Him.
- It should not surprise us that, no matter how the Bible is attacked, it always comes out unchanged and unscathed.
- After all, Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Mark 13:31). After looking at the evidence, one can say without a doubt that, yes, the Bible is truly God's Word.

# QUIZ

1. List 3 benefits of studying the Word.(3marks)
2. The Bible was inspired by God. Give the biblical text as support.(2 marks)
3. Which are the internal evidences showing that the Bible is God's Word?(3 marks)
4. The Bible is divided into two parts: Cite them. (2 marks)



# BIBLE STRUCTURE

## INTRODUCTION

The term "Bible" is used to name the book which contains the 66 separate written documents or "books" which together compose the "sacred library" of the Christian faith. *(The Catholic Bible contains the same 66 books and an extra 7 books. Those extra 7 books are mostly historical accounts of events that took place before the time of Jesus and were added in the context of counter-reformation).*

The Bible is broken down into two separate collections of books known as the Old Testament, consisting of 39 books, and the New Testament, consisting of 27 books.

# BIBLE STRUCTURE

## INTRODUCTION

- The books of the Bible were written by about 40 different people who were inspired by God.
- The entire Bible was written over a period of time consisting of about 1500 years.
- The first five books of the Bible, known as the Pentateuch, are believed to have been written by Moses around 1400 BC, while the last book of the Bible named "The Revelation" is believed to have been written by the Apostle John shortly before 100 AD.

# **BIBLE STRUCTURE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

- The writing of the OT was complete around 400 BC meaning the entire OT was written over a period of about 1000 years.
- In contrast, the New Testament was started shortly after the death of Jesus, and was finished some time before 100 a.d.(After Christ) spanning a much shorter period of about 50 to 60 years

# THE OLD TESTAMENT

- The Old Testament has 39 books grouped into: Pentateuch, historical, poetical and wisdom, and prophetic books.
- The first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis, the first book of the OT, gives the record of creation and the history of the world up until the time of Abraham who lived about 2000 BC.
- The remainder of the OT gives a written record of the history of the Israelites up until about 400 BC, with the emphasis being on their relationship to God.
- The bulk of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, however a few small portions have been preserved in Aramaic.

# 1. The Pentateuch

- **The Pentateuch (torah or Laws): (Books 1-5)**  
Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
- These books are foundational to all of Scripture and rank as one of the most important portions of the Word of God. This is so because its theological and historical revelations are necessary for an understanding of the rest of the Old Testament and the New Testament as well.

# 1. The Pentateuch

- These five books contain, for example:
  - God's revelation about the origin of the world with its emphasis on the creation of man made in the image of God,
  - how sin entered human history and the judgment that followed,
  - and the origin of the nation of Israel and its covenant-relationship to Yahweh

## 2. The Historical Books

- **The Historical Books: (Books 6-17)** Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
- These books, among other things, explain the history of Israel from the time that the nation was established about 3400 years ago.
- It includes information about the time when the nation was conquered by the Assyrians about 2700 years ago, and when it was conquered by the Babylonians about 2600 years ago.
- The Assyrians and Babylonians forced many of the Israelites out of their homeland. But, some returned during the next few centuries, during Medo-Persian time, shortly before the time of Jesus.

## 2. The Historical Books

- The books of Joshua and Judges cover the earliest period in the history of the Jewish people, when the Jewish tribes that populated the Promised Land had not yet been united into one state, but were separate from each other to a lesser or greater extent.
- The books of Kings and Chronicles cover the monarchical period in the history of the Jewish people that lasted about five hundred years. This period ended with the fall of the Kingdom of Judah and the beginning of the Babylonian captivity in 586 BC.
- The books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther tell us of the events that followed the Babylonian captivity and of the restoration of Jerusalem.



## 2. The Historical Books

- The political and spiritual development of the Jewish nation spanned many centuries and took place in several stages.
- God chose the Jewish people to bring salvation to all nations on earth through the Jews.
- It was in God's plan that the Saviour of the world, Christ, the first citizens of God's Kingdom and preachers of the Christian Faith should come from among the Jewish people.

## 2. The Historical Books

- The Old Testament prophets, being sent by God, spiritually prepared the ground in the Jewish nation for building God's Kingdom among people.
- The path of spiritual development of the Jewish people was not smooth. There were times of spiritual growth and prosperity, as well as times of decreased interest to religion and even apostasy



Answer the following question:  
Give the difference between Major  
and Minor Prophets of the Old  
Testament

- When reading the Old Testament history, one should remember that it covers pre-Christian era.
- The Jews lived surrounded by antagonistic Gentile nations - Canaanites, Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites, Philistines, and later - Syrians, Assyrians, Babylonians and others whose superstitious beliefs and cruel Gentile customs pulled the Jews down a path of spiritual decline.
- There was no one from whom to learn good.

- These Gentiles used each and every opportunity to cruelly enslave and oppress the Jews.
- Throughout its history, the Jewish people constantly struggled to preserve their faith pure and to physically survive.
- To be correctly understood, this history must be read in the context of morals and customs of the time.

- Throughout the historical books of the Bible, of value are truthfulness and objectivity of this Sacred Book.
- The Bible does not idealize people or events, but sternly and impartially evaluates everything, including great national heroes, thus helping the reader to learn from both good and bad examples.
- It tells us what to do, and what to avoid.

- Despite adverse external circumstances, many sons of the Jewish people achieved great spiritual heights and have left examples worthy of imitation by people of all ages.
- Even though the Jews often sinned no less than their Gentile neighbours, yet they were able to sincerely repent.
- One may assume that it was for this quality that they were chosen by God.



- Another value of the historical books of the Bible is their clear message that it is not blind accident, but God that directs and decides destiny of each individual and every nation.
- The Bible provides excellent examples of God's Providence by showing how He exalts and rewards the righteous for their virtue, has mercy on repentant sinners, while at the same time punishing stubborn sinners as their righteous Judge.

- In Biblical description of individual lives and events, the reader is able to see qualities of the Great God Whose mercy is endless, Whose wisdom is incomprehensible, Whose power is infinite, and Whose righteous judgment is inescapable.
- No secular book about history is able to convey such spiritual perspective on events. Only the Bible can do this!

### 3. The Poetic and Wisdom Books

- **The Poetic and Wisdom Books: (Books 18-22)**  
Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon.
- **Hebrew Poetry:** The most noted distinctive of Hebrew poetry has to do with balancing ideas in (usually) pairs of lines. This is called *parallelism*. Parallelism is extremely important in Hebrew poetry, and with its emphasis on content it is a very effective vehicle for communicating truth.

- In a *synonymous parallel* the second line simply repeats the thought of the first, only with different words. → \*Ps. 2:4; 6:1; 19:1; 49:1; \*Prov. 14:17; 16:18 2.
- In an *antithetic parallel* the second line states the obverse side of the same idea; it restates the thought of the first line from a contrasting viewpoint. → \*Prov. 11:1; 15:1; 18:14; 28:13; \*Ps. 37:9 3.
- In a *synthetic parallel* the second line amplifies or expands the meaning of the first line. → \*Ps. 1:3; \*Prov. 10:10
- In an *emblematic or comparative parallel* the second line draws a comparison between some basic ethical or theological truth and some illustration, usually from nature. These parallels are generally marked by the use of “like” or “as . . . so.” → \*Prov. 25:12, 19, 20, 25; 27:17, 21; \*Ps. 42:1 5.
- An *enjambment* has no real parallel at all, but both (or all three) lines simply form one complete sentence. → \*Ps. 121:8; \*Prov. 4:23

- In a *synonymous parallel* the second line simply repeats the thought of the first, only with different words. → Ps. 6:1;
- O Lord, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath.
- In an *antithetic parallel* the second line states the obverse side of the same idea; it restates the thought of the first line from a contrasting viewpoint. →  
\*Prov. 11:1; 15:



- **A false balance is an abomination to the Lord**, but a just weight is his delight.
- In a *synthetic parallel* the second line amplifies or expands the meaning of the first line. →  
\*Ps. 1:3; **He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither.** In all that he does, he prospers.

- In an *emblematic or comparative parallel* the second line draws a comparison between some basic ethical or theological truth and some illustration, usually from nature. These parallels are generally marked by the use of “like” or “as . . . so.” → \*Prov. 25:12, Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise reprover to a listening ear.

- *An enjambment* has no real parallel at all, but both (or all three) lines simply form one complete sentence. → \*Prov. 4:23
- Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.



- **Hebrew Wisdom** : had to do with skill in living before God.
- Wisdom is seen in proper behaviour, doing what is right, wholesome, and pleasing to God.
- Wisdom is morality and sound judgment that results in fulfilling relationships with God and with men.
- Basic to wisdom is the fear of God.
- God is both the judge and the source of understanding, and to be successful life must be rightly oriented to him.
- This — rightly orienting life toward God — is the function of the wisdom literature.

## The book of Job

- The story of **Job** is presented as a drama that explores the question of God's justice in relation to the suffering of his people.
- Why do his people suffer? Is God fair? He is certainly sovereign over all, so then why do his people suffer so? What does Job's suffering — and ours — say about God?
- In a series of acts and speeches the story of Job displays God's sovereignty *and* justice in all things and challenges us to a robust faith that trusts God tenaciously in his ordering of our lives.
- And at the conclusion of the book in Job's restored prosperity we are reminded of the final triumph of justice. Indeed, in the end both God and his people are vindicated(justified)

# The Psalms

- The ***Psalms*** teach us how to live before God (wisdom Psalms), and they reflect our own complaints (“laments”) and praise to God.
- The Psalms inspire our hope in God and remind us of his righteous and sovereign rule (Kingship Psalms). **And they call us to submit to God and rest in his covenant faithfulness.**
- The Psalms provide some of the most beloved passages in all the Bible. Throughout the history of the church Christians have turned to the Psalms to find expression for every emotion in every circumstance of life. The Psalms — the hymns of ancient Israel and of the church — reflect the passion of the believer’s heart for God.

# The Proverbs

- ***Proverbs***, as the name indicates, is primarily a collection of brief, pithy sayings that provide instruction for successful living.
- The proverb is perhaps the most basic form of wisdom instruction.
- Usually by way of comparison, a proverb captures and summarizes some life truth or situation and thereby directs us away from the way of folly and darkness to a life that is blessed.
- Major themes in Proverbs include the fear of the Lord, the value of wisdom, sexual purity, justice, personal relationships, and right and wrong kinds of speech.

# The book of Ecclesiastes

- ***Ecclesiastes*** seeks to unmask the emptiness of life without God. Its repeated refrain — “vanity of vanities! All is vanity!” — insists that there is nothing “under the sun” that can bring us fulfilment.
- Only as life is pursued in a God-ward direction do we find ultimate meaning and satisfaction.
- After exploring all the best that this world has to offer the writer concludes that **our wholeness is found only as we learn to live in the knowledge and fear of God.**
- **Apart from this perspective, life is a meaningless waste of time.**

# The Song of Solomon

- ***Song of Solomon***, a poem about love, explores and extols the beauty of passionate marital intimacy.
- God created humanity male and female, and he himself authorized the “one flesh” relationship within marriage. Sexual love within marriage, therefore, is a good thing.
- The most intimate relations between husband and wife are intended for their pleasure and are to be enjoyed fully and appreciated as God’s good gift.

## **Larger Role and Contribution of these Books**

- In the Pentateuch the law of God is given. In the historical books we are shown Israel's response to that law as a nation. The poetic books express the devotional impact of God's law in the individual lives of his faithful people.
- More reflective in nature the poetic-wisdom literature counsels us to faithfulness to God in all of life and to worship God in all of life's varied circumstances.

- In our suffering, our business, our relationships, our home, our worship, and every aspect of living God is to be honored. We must be always aware that we live before him and that he, our judge, has commanded us *how to live*.
- Moreover, it is only in following this instruction that we find the life that is truly satisfying and blessed — to ignore or turn away from God is folly indeed.



## 4. The Prophetical Books (Books 23-39)

- Prophets of the Old Testament are usually grouped as writing and oral prophets.
- Within these two groupings is another classification based on size, and not on content, or on quality of inspiration.
- Four of the prophetic books were longer in content and therefore called “major prophets” (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel). It does not mean the “major prophets” were more important or significant in subject matter than the “minor prophets.”
- The “minor prophets” (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi) simply signify shorter books and nothing more.

## The significance of Prophets

- Before we discuss historical events described in the Bible, we should briefly comment on the significance of prophets in the life of the Jewish nation.
- Even though the Law of Moses did command priests to teach godliness to the people, yet this commandment was rarely followed in practice.
- Most priests limited their activities to offering sacrifices in the temple and cared little about educating the people.

## The significance of Prophets

- For this reason the people remained in ignorance of spiritual things. Idolatry practiced by the Gentile neighbours and their cruel and immoral customs were easily borrowed by the Jews and led to apostasy from faith in God.
- With rare exceptions, Jewish kings and other leaders were poor role models for the people.
- In order to instruct the people in the true faith, God frequently sent them His prophets. Prophets had an enormous impact on the faith of the nation and quite often saved it from spiritual disaster

- While priesthood among the Jews was inherited, yet it was God who called each prophet to the ministry individually.
- Prophets came from all social groups. Some of them were peasants or shepherds and were almost illiterate, while others came from royal families and were highly educated.
- The main task of the prophets was to point to failures of the people in matters of religion and morality and to restore godliness in the nation

- While teaching people about the faith, the prophets frequently predicted the future events in the life of the nation, as well as the coming of the Saviour of mankind, Messiah, and the end of the world.

# THE NEW TESTAMENT

- The NT gives a written record of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and a history of the early Apostolic church.
- In addition to that, a significant percentage of the NT consists of letters written to give instruction in doctrine and living the Christian life.
- The NT was written in "koine" Greek which was the universal language of the Roman empire during the time of Christ. Archeological findings have uncovered thousands of non-biblical Greek papyri, also written in "koine" Greek, which have produced great insight into the original manuscripts of the New Testament. The New Testament has 27 books organized into 4 groups.

# 1. The Gospels

- **The Gospels** (Books 1-4: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John)
- They were written about 2000 years ago by the followers of Jesus.
- These books contain details about the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

## 2. Historical Book

- **Historical Book** (Book 5: Acts of Apostles)
- The book that many call the Acts of the Apostles is the major historical account of the primitive Christian period from a Christian point of view.
- As the church spread from Jerusalem to Rome, this recorded history leaves no question to the progress and development of the church.
- It was not the product of human achievement, not even the efforts of a Peter or a Paul, but the manifestation of Jesus Christ in the lives of the apostles. With its many references to the Holy Spirit, the Acts of the Apostles reveals the development of early Christianity as being beyond the control of human endeavour. God was manifesting Himself among the people.



### 3. The Epistles or Letters

- **The Epistles or Letters** (Books 6-26:Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude)
- These 21 books are sometimes called Letters or Epistles.
- They were written by followers of Jesus.
- They often were sent to other people to help explain Christianity. Sometimes they were written to counter heresy, or wrongful interpretations of the teachings of Jesus.

## 4. Prophetic Book

- **Prophetic Book** (Book 27: Revelation)
- John was shown visions of the future by Jesus.
- No other book in the Bible is so carefully and fully explains its supernatural origin, its chain of transmission, and the exact way the message was communicated to the writer.
- It also stresses that John was commanded to write about only the things to which he was a personal eyewitness.
- The essential point is this: John constantly testifies throughout the Book that he "saw" and "heard" the things about which he writes.

- John didn't have to imagine the horrors he described. He witnessed them firsthand, with his own eyes and ears. He recorded exactly what he saw and heard.
- Revelation is not an allegory(poem). It is not a collection of mysterious, unintelligible symbolism. It is not fiction. It is a living, breathing, prophetic and historical account of events yet to take place.
- It was written to be understood by the generation that was near the fulfilment of the astonishing things predicted to immediately precede the second Coming of Jesus Christ.

# THE FORMATION OF THE BIBLE CANON

- The term “canon” is used to describe the books that are divinely inspired and therefore belong in the Bible.
- Determining the canon was a process conducted first by Jewish rabbis and scholars and later by early Christians.

# THE FORMATION OF THE BIBLE CANON

- Ultimately, it was God who decided what books belonged in the biblical canon. A book of Scripture belonged in the canon from the moment God inspired its writing.
- It was simply a matter of God's convincing His human followers which books should be included in the Bible.

# THE FORMATION OF THE BIBLE CANON

## The canon of the Old Testament

- **I. Terminology & categories:** The "Church fathers" (writers who came just after the apostolic period in the N.T.) spoke of writings of the O.T. era by using the following categories:
  - **A. Homologoumena** ("one word") -- books accepted by everyone. These include all the books found in the Old Testament except Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Ezekiel, and Proverbs.

- **B. Antilegomena** ("spoken against") -- these are the books just mentioned which were included in the canon of the Jews, but about which a question at some time had been raised.
- The questions seem to stem from interpreting these books in ways that put them at odds with the rest of the O.T.

- 1. **Song of Solomon** was questioned because some thought it too sensual. In other words, it seems to be primarily about SEX. Some have attempted to ignore this and interpret the book as ONLY a reference to Christ and the church, but on the surface at least, it seemed pretty racy!
- 2. **Ecclesiastes** was questioned because some thought it too pessimistic. Some even considered it a work of scepticism(doubt). Superficially, at least, it could be understood as an attempt to claim that life is meaningless. (Although I think that is a device that is used to show just the opposite!)



- 3. **Esther** was questioned because the name of God is not mentioned in it. (Though some think it is found there in acrostic form.)
- 4. **Ezekiel** was questioned because some thought it contradicted the Mosaic law, although specific examples were never supplied (to our knowledge, at least).
- 5. **Proverbs** was questioned because some thought it contradicted itself. The Talmud says, "The book of Proverbs also they sought to hide, because its words contradicted one to another." The specific reference here is to Proverbs 26:4-5 and the question of whether or not one should "answer a fool."

- **C. Pseudepigrapha** ("false writings") -- these are books which no Jewish or Christian tradition has ever included in the canon. Some of the more significant of these are the Assumption of Moses and I & II Enoch, because they are quoted by Jude in the N.T.

(Book of Jubilee, Letter of Aristeas, Book of Adam & Eve, Martyrdom of Isaiah, I & II Enoch, Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, Sibylline Oracle, Assumption of Moses, II & III Baruch, III Maccabees, Pirke Aboth, The Story of Ahikar, Psalms of Solomon, Psalm 151, Zadokite Fragment )

- D. **Apocrypha** ("hidden, hard to understand" or later "esoteric")
- 1. This term was first used to denote any books not included in the canon, including the pseudepigrapha. After the reformation, it has come to be used of certain O.T. era books not included in the canon. (*Their origins are not known, or they appeared after the prophetic time, or one who kept them during the difficulty times is not known*)

These are:

- The Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Tobit, Judith, I Esdras, I & II Maccabees, Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, II Esdras, Additions to Esther, Prayer of Azariah, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Prayer of Manasseh

# The Apocrypha and the Canon Debate

- A. The apocryphal books were not included in the Jewish canon, none of the books are cited as scripture in the N.T., and the early church fathers were (at best) divided in their acceptance of these books.
- B. The modern controversy began in the Reformation era when Luther denied the Roman Catholic appeal to II Maccabees(Antiochus) 12:45-46 (p. 236) to support the doctrine of purgatory and the appeal to Tobit 12:9 (p. 61) to support salvation by works. At the Council of Trent (1546, twenty-nine years later) the Roman church officially declared some of the apocrypha to be canonical.

- It is worth noting that one of Luther's opponents, Cardinal Cajetan, published a Commentary on all the Authentic Historical Books of the Old Testament in 1532 and did NOT include the apocrypha.
- D. The Council of Trent (1546) did not add all of the list of apocryphal book candidates to their official canon. I & II Esdras and Prayer of Manasseh were NOT included. But the Council did anathematized those who did not regard as sacred and canonical all the books contained in the Vulgate (Latin translation), and the Vulgate did contain what we now call "the Apocrypha."

- E. A kind of "compromise" position on the apocrypha was worked out by the Anglican church. Although the Apocrypha are not included with the OT books, they are included as a separate section of something like "**recommended reading**." For example, New English Bible, which has Anglican connected origins, has the Apocrypha included as a separate section. Even Martin Luther took a similar approach, including the apocrypha as a kind of "appendix" to his translation, and stating that while not scripture, these books were "**useful and good to be read**."

# The canon of the New Testament

- **I. The homologoumena** (never questioned) books of the N.T.

There is a list of N.T. books, the canonicity of which (practically) no one has ever disputed. This list includes (as arranged in our Bibles) Matthew through Philemon plus I Peter and I John

- **II. The antilegoumena** (questioned by some)
- These are the remaining books of the N.T. (Hebrews, James II Peter, II and III John, Jude and Revelation.) These books were, for various reasons, questioned by some in regard to their status in the canon



- 1. Hebrews -- questioned by those who did not think the author was Paul
- 2. James -- questioned because of interpretation. Some have misinterpreted it in ways that conflict with the Pauline teaching on justification by faith. Even Luther wondered about James because of this.
- 3. II Peter -- on the basis of style or an alleged late date, some have claimed that it is not from Peter. Both these charges have been adequately answered.
- 4. II & III John -- because of what might be a private addressee, their brevity, and the fact that the author identifies himself as "the elder" rather than an apostle, these books have been questioned

- 5. Jude -- questioned because of its references to the pseudepigraphal(false) writings from intertestamental times, those being the Book of Enoch and Assumption of Moses.
- 6. Revelation -- seems to have been questioned because certain groups based their millennial views on the text of Revelation. It is like James in that it was questioned because of the way it was interpreted.

- N.T. **Pseudepigrapha** ("false writings" - never included in the N.T.)
- These are books that were from the same general time as the N.T., but were never included in the canon. They often reflect some of the heresies that were about in the early church. Sometimes they seem to have been composed to promote a particular false teaching. There are candidates in all the categories of the N.T. books: gospels, acts, epistles, and apocalypses.

- **N.T. "Apocrypha"** -- there are some books which were accepted by some for a time as part of the N.T., but were never universally accepted.
- A. Epistle of (Pseudo-) Barnabas (c. A.D. 70-79) A couple of early church writers quote it as scripture. It has a style somewhat like Hebrews, but more allegorical(symbolic) and mystical.
- B. Epistle (of Clement of Rome) to the Corinthians (c. A.D. 96)

- C. Shepherd of Hermas (c. A.D. 115-40) [Hermas is a person's name, the Shepherd is what this person is supposed to have written.] This was the most popular non-canonical book of the N.T. era. It was quoted as scripture by some and read in some churches. It is a devotional book filled with allegory and images.
- D. The Teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles through the Twelve Apostles It is often called Didache (Greek for "teaching"). It dates from about A.D. 100-20. It was quoted as scripture by one church father. It is a handbook of morals and church order

# BIBLE TRANSLATION

- The absolute purpose of Bible translation is to make the Bible available to the People. The original languages of the Bible are Hebrew and Greek.
- Given that the Bible is absolutely the book of the people, it is understandable that to have it in their own language -the language that they do understand - is a must.
- We can understand the need for a translation of the Bible in the first times, but why do we need new translations of the Bible today?

- Basically the reason why new translations are needed is that things have changed. That is not to say that the Bible or its message has changed. God's Word is the same across the centuries. But there have been changes in languages, and there have been new manuscript discoveries, and there have been numerous advances in biblical scholarship

- No living language is static. Languages in use are always changing. A number of words have grown obsolete; others have changed their meanings.
- Since 1611 a wealth of new manuscripts has come to light. Many of these more recently discovered manuscripts have proved to be among the most valuable of all that we possess.
- A third justification for the translation of the newer versions is the significant advance in many areas of biblical scholarship. This is important because the translation process draws on practically every aspect of biblical study. Translation is not merely a matter of language. The translator must rely upon the archaeologist, the historian, the exegete, and the theologian in order to come to a thorough understanding of the text he is translating.



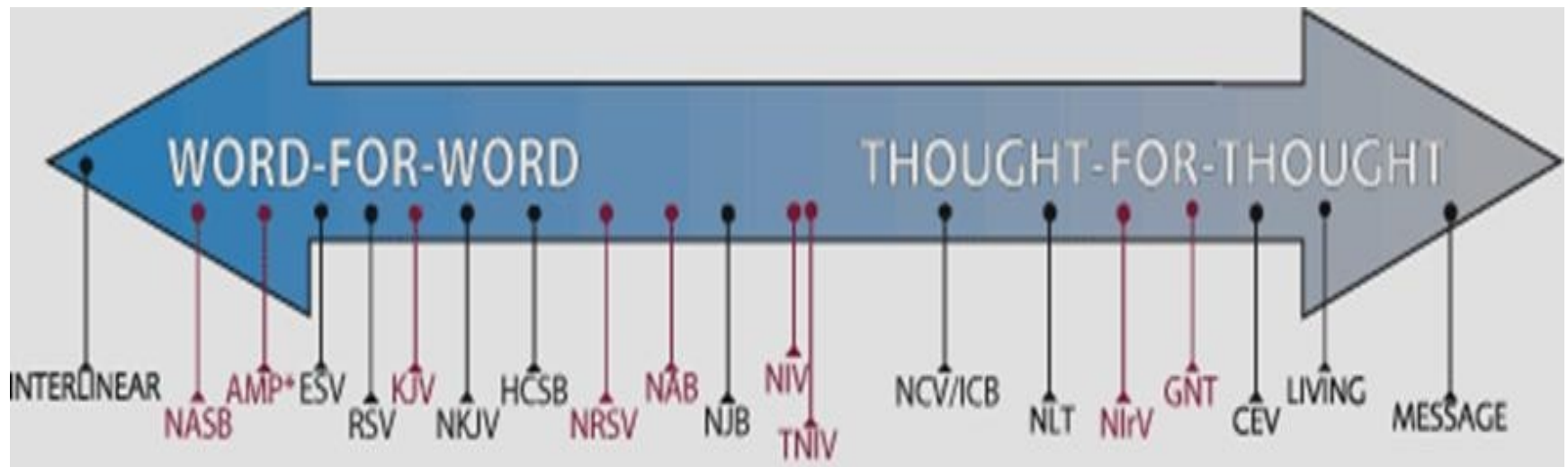
# Types of translation

- Literal ~ Translators using this principle seek to translate each original word into the closest equivalent word in the reader's language. The strength of this method is that it is a **word for word translation** of the Bible giving the reader a close rendering of the literal words of the original writings.
- The weakness of this principle is that the translation can be stiff and difficult to read, and that words cannot always be found to translate the original words of the Biblical writings.

Dynamic Equivalence (**Thought for thought translation**) ~ Translators using this principle seek to translate, not the literal words, but the meaning these words convey. The strength of this principle is that the translation is more readable in the reader's language

- Language. The weakness of this principle is that the Bible student, who cannot understand the original languages, is now further distanced from the original words

# Different translations



# THE PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE

- The Bible reveals God and exposes humanity. It exposes our predicament and reveals His solution. It presents us as lost, estranged from God, and reveals Jesus as the one who finds us and brings us back to God.

# MEDITATION AND BIBLE STUDY

- Meditation and Bible study as two ways to access the biblical message
- Difference between meditation and Bible study:  
Bible study is based on logical analysis, meditation on feelings; BS is systematic (methodology) Meditation is not; BS requires tools but for meditation the Bible is sufficient; BS requires sufficient time but meditation is not; Bible study requires quiet place but meditation can be done anywhere you are.

# BIBLE STUDY

Bible study requires:

- The Right Heart Attitude
- The Right Conviction
- The Right Tools
- The Right Method

# Bible study

- **Having the Right Heart Attitude**

**1. A New Heart :**In order to truly understand the Bible, a book of Spiritual Truths written by the **Spirit of God**, the Bible student must possess the Author (**the Holy Spirit**) in his heart to be his **Guide** and **Teacher!** He must be “**born again**” by God with a **New Heart!** (**1 Corinthians 2:13-14**)

# Bible study

**2. A Hungry Heart:** The main requirement to study God's Word **is not a seminary degree, but an intense desire to know God's Will.** Studying God's Word is hard work! It requires patience and perseverance! Unless you really desire to know God's Will, you will find Bible Study laborious and boring! **When you passionately desire to discover God's Will in His Word, the discipline that it requires will come (super) naturally!**



# Bible study

**3. An Obedient Heart:** Along with a strong desire to know God's Will is the passion to do God's Will. It is fairly easy to gain academic knowledge of Biblical facts and events, but only a desire to do God's Will turns that **Knowledge** into **wisdom (John 7:17)**. How badly do you want to do God's Will? That, more than most other things, will determine how much we will get out of God's Word!

# Bible study

**4. A Humble Heart: Discovering God's Truths requires humility, with a willingness to learn from others and to change our own thinking should it be found in error. Only God is infallible!**

# Bible study

- **Having the Right Conviction**

**1. The Bible is God's Word :***The Bible is inspired by God, both in its message and in its very words. **Inspiration** means more than that the authors themselves were inspired to write, but that **God Himself worked through the various human authors and their unique personalities to record exactly what He wanted to communicate to mankind.*** We can be assured that when we read the Bible, we are reading God's very Word to us! (**2 Timothy 3:16**)

# Bible study

## 2. The Bible Conveys God's Message :

*The Bible consists of 66 books, written by approximately 40 different human authors, over a span of 1500 years and in varying places. And yet, it clearly communicates a **single message** without contradiction: **God's Plan to Rescue Man from Sin and Transform Him into a Child of God!***

# Bible study

- **Having the Right Tools**

**1. A Good Bible Translation: *Few of us have the training and ability to read the Bible in its original languages (Hebrew and Aramaic in the Old Testament and Greek in the New Testament).***  
We must therefore depend on translators to bring the Bible into our own language. The question that is often raised is “***Which translation is the best?***”

# Bible study

**2. A Notebook : *Studies should always be written out* to reinforce what is learned as well as to keep a record for future reference.**

# Bible study

**3. Reference Materials:** There are many reference books that aid in a study of the Bible, including **Bible Dictionaries, Lexicons, Encyclopaedias, Concordances and Commentaries.**

# Bible study

- **Having the Right Method**

You may have attended at one time a Bible Study where a Scripture passage is read and then each person in the group is asked to share what that passage means to them. What often happens is that there are as many interpretations of the passage as there are people in the group. Each person brings their own personal experiences and therefore sees the passage in their own subjective and biased way.



# Bible study

- But the question must be asked. “***Which interpretation is right?***” Why? Because ***each Bible author had only one intended meaning*** when he wrote the Scripture. Our task as Bible students is not to discover what ***we*** think the Scripture means, but to discover what the ***original author*** meant when he wrote that Scripture many centuries ago! We accomplish this by following a logical, methodical, careful and objective system of study.

# Bible study

- Following a Method protects us from interpretations that are affected (or infected?) by our own biases and feelings, and allows us to share and compare our interpretations with others in an objective manner.

# INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY METHOD

- The inductive study method is the most valuable and accurate way of studying the scriptures to arrive at the genuine interpretation of the day it was written to.
- This method focuses on three main areas: Context, historical Background, and Language

# context

- The context is vital to insure the original intent and purpose of the writer of the day it was written.
- Text out of its context is nothing but a pretext

# Historical Background

- The historical background is also very important to insure what is being taught or required is relevant to our day.
- A good example would be the command to the women to wear veils to honour their husbands at Corinth. 1 *Corinthians*. 11:13
- The city had a temple to Aphrodite and the temple prostitutes would be unveiled showing that they had no covering over their lives, in other words no husband and were in fact temple prostitutes.
- The command of Paul to the women is to not use their liberty in Christ lest two things take place; they may be mistaken for temple prostitutes and dishonour their husbands by identifying with the permissive women of the city.

# LANGUAGE

- The original language is key to understand the meaning as well as the sense of the sentence, be it Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek.
- Word studies must be done not in isolation but in conjunction with the passage, context and their relation to the other words that structure the sentence or section, lest a wrong meaning is given to a word because the same word can be used in different ways.

# THE THREE STEPS FOR INDUCTIVE METHOD

## 1. OBSERVATION

- **Begin with Prayer:** Prayer is often the missing element in Bible study. You are about to learn the most effective method of Bible study there is. Yet apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, that's all it will be—a method.
- Questions
- **Ask the “5 W’s and an H”:** As you study any passage of Scripture, train yourself to constantly ask: **Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?**
- These questions are the building blocks of precise **observation**, which is essential for accurate **interpretation**. **Ask many questions as you can. Do not mind about the answers.**

- Answers
- While searching for the answers to your questions give a special attention to the following:
  - **key words and phrases**
  - **contrasts and comparisons**
  - **expressions of time**
  - **Geographic Locations**
  - **terms of conclusion**
  - **chapter themes**



- Summary

After answering to your questions you are to make a summary of the answers.

This summary is to be used in the next step(interpretation)

- 2. INTERPRETATION

- Message to Immediate audience
- The goal of the step of interpretation is that the basic observations begin to be identified in relationship to each other and the entire text, in order to reveal what it meant to the original recipients. What it means to the people to who it was written.
- Remember that context rules.
- Always seek the full counsel of the Word of God.
- Remember that Scripture will never contradict Scripture
- Don't base your convictions on an obscure passage of Scripture
- Look for the single meaning of the passage

- Your message

After having what the text means to the immediate audience you are to such for what it means to you.

### 3. APPLICATION

- The Bible was not given to fulfil our curiosity, but to ***transform*** lives! God is in the business of changing lives, and He does it primarily through the ministry of His Spirit and His Word, transforming hearts, minds and wills, and conforming lives to the Living Word, Jesus Christ! ***We will learn how to apply the Scripture in practical ways to our lives.***

- Once you understand what the Word of God teaches, you are then obligated before God to accept that truth and to live by it.
- Scripture will always teach what is right, show us where we are wrong, how to correct, and train us in right living; so that we are complete, fully equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

# BIBLE REFERENCES

- Verse 5 of chapter 2 in the book of Exodus: Exodus 2:5
- First part of verse 8 of chapter 12 in the book of Genesis: Genesis 12: 8a
- Second part of verse 8 of chapter 12 in the book of Exodus: Exodus 12:8b
- Verse 9 through 12 of chapter 33 in the book of Psalms: Psalms 33:9-12
- Verse 6 and 9 of chapter 7 in the book of Numbers: Numbers 7:6,9

## ASSIGNMENT

1. Find 5 different versions of the Bible and list them.
2. Read Mathew 28:1 in each version.
3. Is the content the same in those versions?
4. Which is the first day of the week according to the text?

End