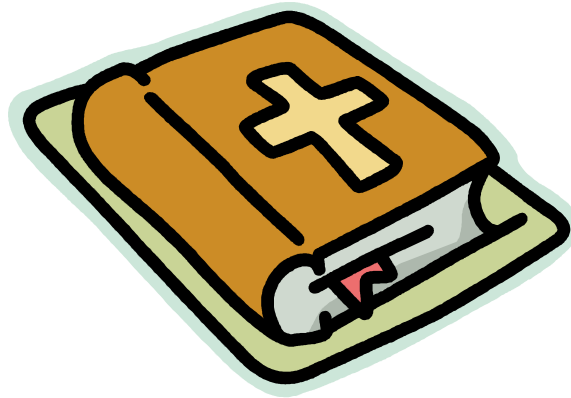


MORE
THAN JUST A GOOD BOOK!

What is the Bible?

- God revealing himself to us, in and through human history as he brings creation to its completion.
- From creation, to the fall, to redemption and final consummation, the Bible records God's search for *us*!

Why should we **study** the
Bible?



Psalm 119

- 1 Blessed are they whose ways are blameless,
who walk according to the law of the LORD.
- 28 My soul is weary with sorrow;
strengthen me according to your word.
- 29 Keep me from deceitful ways;
be gracious to me through your law.
- 31 I hold fast to your statutes, O LORD;
do not let me be put to shame.
- 32 I run in the path of your commands,
for you have set my heart free.

Psalm 119

35 Direct me in the path of your commands,
for there I find delight.

36 Turn my heart toward your statutes
and not toward selfish gain.

45 I will walk about in freedom,
for I have sought out your precepts.

Psalm 119

- 98 Your commands make me wiser than my enemies,
for they are ever with me.
- 99 I have more insight than all my teachers,
for I meditate on your statutes.
- 100 I have more understanding than the elders,
for I obey your precepts.
- 101 I have kept my feet from every evil path
so that I might obey your word.

Why should we study the Bible?

- Know God
- Know God's mission
- Be the people of God

KNOW GOD

- 4 One generation will commend your works to another;
they will tell of your mighty acts.
- 5 They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty,
and I will meditate on your wonderful works. [b]
- 6 They will tell of the power of your awesome works,
and I will proclaim your great deeds.
- 7 They will celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.
- 8 The LORD is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and rich in love.
- 9 The LORD is good to all;
he has compassion on all he has made.

KNOW GOD

"Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.

Exodus 6:6-7 TNIV

KNOW GOD'S MISSION

We have come to see that mission is not merely the activity of the church. Rather, mission is the result of God's initiative, rooted in God's purpose to restore and heal creation. "Mission" means "sending" and it is the central biblical theme describing the purpose of God's actions in human history...We have learned to speak of God as a "missionary God." Thus we have learned to understand the church as a "sent people." "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." (John 20:21)

The Missional Church: a vision for the sending of the church in North America,
Darrell L. Guder

KNOW GOD'S MISSION

“God’s nature or character and his Mission are inseparable. He is what he is doing. He does what he is. God is a missional God.”

Nancy Vamvakas, Aug 29 Message to TOB!

KNOW GOD'S MISSION

Is there a single grand narrative (main story) to the Bible?

- Yes and No – several major themes – none that excludes all others, but some are more dominant than others.
- The Mission of God brings the dominant themes together. The mission of God provides the framework, the clue, the hermeneutical key for biblical interpretation.

BE GOD'S PEOPLE

I will walk among you and be your God, and
you will be my people.

Leviticus 26:12

BE GOD'S PEOPLE

" 'For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God. I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you.

Ezekiel 36:24-29

How should we study the Bible?

- Interpret – understand what is being revealed and taught
- Apply it to our daily lives

Interpreting the Bible

– STEP 1:

- Determine the original message (exegesis)
 - What did the author mean originally?
 - How did the original audience understand it?
 - THIS IS THE OBJECTIVE POINT OF CONTROL

– STEP 2:

- Determine what it means for us today (hermeneutics)

RULE OF THUMB: THE BIBLE CAN NEVER MEAN WHAT IT NEVER MEANT!!

Interpreting the Bible

Why is it so hard?

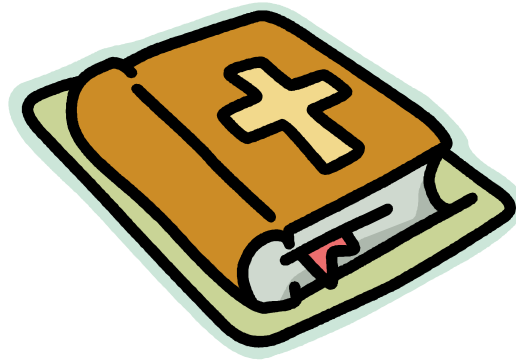
- Translations/Language
 - Unavailability of authors and original audiences!
 - Quality of external evidence – age and quality of manuscripts
 - Weight of internal evidence – copyists and authors
- Literary challenges - almost every known genre is used
 - narrative history, genealogies, chronicles, laws, poetry, prophetic oracles, proverbs, riddles, drama, biographies, parables, letters, sermons and apocalypses
- Cultural differences
 - Oral culture
 - Agrarian culture
 - Community vs. individualism
 - Structured social classes vs. democracy
- Nature of Scripture both fully divine and fully human

Applying the Bible

Why is it so hard?

- Issues with Application
 - SIN, Stubbornness, Pride, Ego, Selfishness...

Overview of the Bible



Overview of the Bible

- 66 Books
- Over 40 Authors
- Written over a 1500 year period
- 3 Languages – Hebrew (almost all OT), Aramaic (1/2 Daniel, 2 passages in Ezra), Greek (NT)

Overview of the Bible

- The Old Testament (39 books)
 - Pentateuch
 - Historical Books
 - Poetry and Wisdom Literature
 - Prophets
- The New Testament (27 books)
 - Gospels and Acts
 - Pauline Letters
 - General Letters
 - Apocalyptic Literature

Overview of Biblical History

<p><u>Creation</u> (Genesis, probably Job)</p>	<p>BEGINNINGS: Genesis records creation of world, humankind and their corruption by sin. The flood, Tower of Babel show humanity starting over, but sin remains. God sets his plan of redemption in motion with Abraham and his descendants – Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. He leads them to worship God and create a new kind of people devoted to Him.</p>
<p><u>c. 1500BC</u> (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) (Joshua, Judges, Ruth)</p>	<p>DELIVERANCE: Exodus tells story of Abraham’s family enslaved by Egypt and God raising up Moses to deliver the Hebrew people from bondage. Israel fled Egypt and was given a law code at Mt. Sinai (10 commandments, rules for civic order, regulations for worship, sacrifices). Goal is to create a holy nation.</p> <p>After wandering in the desert 40 years, Joshua guides the people into the Promised Land. They conquered some of the inhabitants, but not all as instructed. They remained disorganized, and adopted Canaanite practices and foreign gods. Therefore, God raised up leaders, called judges, to restore order and correct the people.</p>

Overview of Biblical History

<p><u>c. 1000BC</u> (1&2 Samuel, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes)</p> <p>(1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, Lamentations, Prophets)</p>	<p>KINGDOM: Israel crowns Saul as their first king. Other kings followed, establishing Israel as a military power in the ancient Near East. David set the precedent as a leader who truly loved God and led his people to be a light to all the surrounding nations. His son Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem.</p> <p>DOWNFALL: After Solomon, things went downhill – fighting among tribes led to divided kingdom (northern kingdom of Israel and southern kingdom of Judah). Kings of both nations often wicked and people turned to idols and other gods. Prophets challenged the kings and the people to return to God, and warned of God’s judgment). Then, in 722BC, Assyria destroyed Israel and carried people into exile. In 586BC, Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, and carried the people of Judah into exile.</p>
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Overview of Biblical History

<p><u>c. 500BC</u> (Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther)</p>	<p>REMNANT: Assyrians were conquered by Babylonians, who were then defeated by the Persians. During all this, Jews lived in exile, but Persians allowed them to return to the rubbles of Israel. A remnant slowly returned and started rebuilding the city of Jerusalem and the temple. As Jews searched for their identity, they wondered if God would raise up a messiah to restore their kingdom and establish God's rule in the world, as the prophets foretold.</p>
<p><u>Inter- testamental Period</u> 400 years</p>	<p>QUIET YEARS: Not described in Bible, but other ancient historians provide details. 322BC, Alexander the Great conquered the ancient Near East and the Greek Empire was established. Jews gained independence for a short time, but eventually Rome triumphed and Jews ended up living under Roman rule. Group of Jewish leaders, called Pharisees, emerged and challenged the people to return to God by obeying the law.</p>

Overview of Biblical History

<p><u>1st Century AD</u> (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)</p>	<p>JESUS: When all hope was lost, Jesus appeared, proclaiming God's imminent kingdom and attracting followers with his teaching and miracles. Jewish leaders were threatened and influenced the Roman officials to crucify Jesus as a rebellious criminal. Days later, Jesus appeared to his followers, risen from the grave with new life and hope. He challenged his followers to spread the good news that his life, death and resurrection was the long-awaited redemption from sin's curse for all of humanity.</p>
<p>(Acts, Pauline letters, General letters, Revelation)</p>	<p>CHURCH: Jesus' followers attracted first other Jews, then Gentiles as they spread the word about the Messiah. These early Christians found new power in God's indwelling Holy Spirit and shared their message around the world. One Christian, Paul, travelled extensively preaching and establishing local churches. The Bible concludes at the end of the first century with a dramatic portrayal of the future consummation of God's redemptive plan for the world.</p>

Who are we?

Name:

City:

Life facts:

2 usual:

1 unusual:

Spiritual

Background:

Favourite

Scripture:

Goals:

Pizza I like:

Who are we?

Name:	Nancy Vamvakas
City:	Thornhill (Richmond Hill after Dec 1)
Life details:	
2 usual	Married with 3 teenagers Originally from Winnipeg
1 unusual	I have a Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do
Spiritual Background:	Raised in United Church, made decision for Jesus 19 years ago. Founding Partner of The Olive Branch.
Favourite Scripture:	Jesus' birth (Luke 2:1-21)
Goals:	To inspire a love of studying God's Word in my fellow students, and to deepen my own love of learning.
Pizza I like:	Hawaiian, Pesto/Chicken, Ham, Vegetarian

Overview of the Bible

- The “Canon” – how the books of the Bible were compiled
- Some themes of the Bible

Canonization

- Canon = rule or standard; refers to the texts which were considered as authoritative.
- Canon as a process –
 - event happens
 - people talk about it and begin to repeat it; authoritative oral form
 - earlier texts are produced
 - Later on, get final form

Canonization

- We think of Canon as a fixed set of books and a fixed order.
 - This understanding is the END of a historical process (modern way of looking at it)
 - The process continues (i.e. Gospel of Thomas; Luther's questioning of James and Esther)
 - Catholic/Orthodox have kept apocryphal books

Canonization – the “final” form

- Old Testament
 - “final form” started during exile (after destruction of temple in 586BC)
 - Loss of promised land, temple and king – no formal structure left
 - How do we be the People of God without structure?
 - Answer – return to Sinai – before they had land, king or temple!
 - Torah (Genesis to 2 Kings) became the centre of the community (exilic and early-post-exilic community); possibly some prophet books
 - By about 2nd Century BCE, Prophetic books counted among Scripture
 - Writings added up to time of Christ.

Canonization – the “final” form

- Old Testament – guidelines (Josephus)
 - No contradictions
 - Written by prophet or one with divine authority
 - Originated through inspiration of God
 - Accepted by Jewish community as authoritative

Canonization – the “final” form

- New Testament
 - During early Church period, there was a need for an accurate record (rapid growth)
 - Need to protect against heresy (Gentiles brought baggage!)
 - Greco-Roman world was literate society – written record required to appeal to them

Canonization – the “final” form

- New Testament
 - Gospels
 - From oral to written forms – the sayings and stories of Jesus
 - Timing uncertain – during his life or after
 - Not overnight; not in one central location
 - Did not supplant the oral tradition – continued in tangent until well into the 2nd century
 - Written sources – 2 main sources: Mark and Q
 - Pauline letters
 - Written
 - 27 books considered authoritative by 3rd century CE

Canonization – the “final” form

- New Testament – guidelines
 - Apostolic authorship
 - Evaluated against core teachings of Christ
 - Accepted by both East and West Church
 - Divine inspiration – evidence that they contribute to the shaping of people in the image of Christ.

Canonization – the “final” form

- New Testament – Is it Closed?
 - What about other books, written later?
 - What about the possibility of more revelation?
 - Mohammed? (Islam) 570-632 CE
 - Joseph Smith (Mormonism) 1805-1844 CE

Canonization – the “final” form

- New Testament – Is it Closed?
 - Galatians 1:8: But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!
 - Revelations 22:19: And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

Themes of the Bible

Salvation

Holiness

Battle of kingdoms

Promises

....these are all part of the Mission of God!

Salvation

- Repeatedly, God is shown as a “Saving God”
- Exodus Event as a defining event
 - I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt.
 - As proof of his power/faithfulness/sovereignty
- Jesus Event (birth, life, death, resurrection) – considered the new exodus

Salvation

- Repeatedly, God is shown as a “Saving God”
 - Adam and Eve (Genesis 3)
 - Noah (Genesis 6-8)
 - Israelites from Egypt (Exodus)
 - Hezekiah (2 Kings 19)
 - Jesus (Luke 4:16-30)

Holiness

- Hard for us to grasp this – modern culture, lack of context of Jewish wilderness tradition
- Parallel realities – seen/unseen; holy/unholy
 - God, angels, seraphim, cherubim – holy/unseen
 - World we live in – unholy/seen
- Usually there is a strict boundary between these realities; only God is entitled to cross
 - Whenever the boundaries are crossed without God's permission, there is danger
- In order to be in the presence of a holy God, you need a mediator!!!

Holiness

- What does it mean to be holy?
 - Original meaning: to be set apart
 - Nuance added: moral/ethical perfection
- Big Problem
 - How can a holy God dwell among an unholy people?
Solution: God needed to make accommodations.
 - Wilderness: Tabernacle, Ark of the Covenant, sacrifices, worship (Leviticus)
 - Israel in Promised Land: Temple, Ark of the Covenant, sacrifices, worship
 - Finally: Jesus as new Temple, new Covenant, once-and-for-all sacrifice, worship as a living sacrifice

Holiness

Watch for designation of “holy”

- Times – appointed, holy days, feasts, Sabbath (treat it differently)
- People – Priests, Levites
- Places – holy places (kadosh), holy of holies; set apart for mediatorial use (i.e. burning bush)
- Actions – sacrifice, worship
- Objects – to profane a holy object is to treat it as if it is ordinary

Holiness

- Isaiah Chapter 6 – His Vision
- We are called to be a holy people:
 - Leviticus 11:44-45: I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy...I am the LORD, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.
 - 1 Peter 1: 15-16: But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

Battle of kingdoms

- Creation and Fall

- Creation – Genesis 1 – bringing order out of chaos
- The Fall - Genesis 3:14-15

So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,
"Cursed are you above all the livestock
and all the wild animals!
You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.

And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring [a] and hers;
he will crush [b] your head,
and you will strike his heel." curse on the serpent

- “gods” in the OT
- Jesus’ mission

Battle of kingdoms

- Jesus' mission
 - Temptation in the wilderness
 - **Luke 4**
 - Ministry of Jesus
 - Exorcisms – Luke 4:33-37
 - Healings – Luke 5:12-26 (leprosy and paralytic)
 - **Mt 16:18 - I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. (NLT)**
 - Cross and Resurrection
 - **Jn 12:31 - Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. (NIV)**

Promises

- OT Covenants - 2 kinds of covenants in the ANE – bilateral suzerainty and unilateral (land grant, charter, last will and testament)
- Basic idea - a unilateral and unconditional promise made by God, believed by his people, that brings blessing for the people who believe it and for those around them.
- There is a strong future element – fulfillment to come; orientation to future hope – holding onto the promise, but don't yet have the thing promised.
- God's people are called to wait and trust and hope – all you have is the promise; hope in God alone.
- Trusting in the promise is manifested by orienting my choices today with the promise to be fulfilled in the future.

Promises

NOAH - Genesis 8:20-22

Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of human beings, even though every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.

"As long as the earth endures,
seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat,
summer and winter,
day and night
will never cease."

Promises

ABRAHAM

Genesis 12:1-3: The promise given to Abraham

- a. land
- b. seed
- c. blessing to nations
- Genesis 15:7-21 Assurance of possession of the land is made to Abram in the form of a unilateral promissory land grant. Abraham's responsibilities as recipient of the promise are elaborated in Genesis 17
 - Covenant made by the fire – passing through the pieces of animals cut in two; had a solemn binding effect – self-imprecation – may I become like these animals if I break the covenant – solemnly swearing in the cultural form.
 - 15:6 – promises offspring

Promises

David – 1 Chronicles 17:10-14

" 'I declare to you that the LORD will build a house for you: When your days are over and you go to be with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. I will never take my love away from him, as I took it away from your predecessor. I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever.'

Isaiah 7:9

“...If you will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.”

Promises

Psalm 3

O LORD, how many are my foes!
How many rise up against me! Many are saying of me,
"God will not deliver him."

But you are a shield around me, O LORD;
you bestow glory on me and lift up my head.

To the LORD I cry aloud,
and he answers me from his holy hill.
I lie down and sleep;
I wake again, because the LORD sustains me.

I will not fear the tens of thousands
drawn up against me on every side.

Arise, O LORD!
Deliver me, O my God!
Strike all my enemies on the jaw;
break the teeth of the wicked.

From the LORD comes deliverance.
May your blessing be on your people.

The Mission of God

- The Kingdom of God has arrived!
 - YHWH is a Salvation God! We have been saved by his grace.
 - A Holy God has found an everlasting way to bridge the gap between the Holy (God) and the common (us)
→ Jesus!
 - Jesus life, death and resurrection demonstrate that the final victory over evil is certain.
 - God has been faithful to his covenants with us!

Homework

- Read
 - Genesis Ch. 1-3,
 - Genesis Ch. 37, 39-50
 - Exodus Ch. 5-6:6
 - Leviticus Ch. 19
 - Numbers Ch. 11
 - Deuteronomy Ch. 5