

THE BIBLE



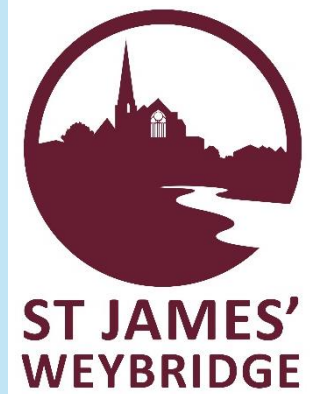
FAITH CONFIRMED



**ST JAMES'
WEYBRIDGE**

THE BIBLE

and why God's Word is important to Christians.



This evening, we will be reflecting upon the importance of Holy Scripture and what the bible means to Christians.



How much do you know about the contents of the bible... ?

Mark alongside a timeline when you think the following famous people from the Bible lived...

for example...

David

Abraham

Isaiah

Jesus

Moses

Samuel

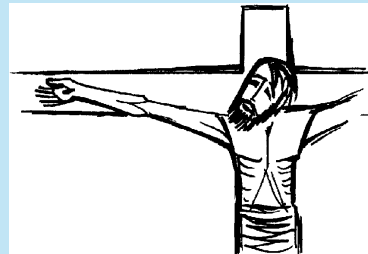
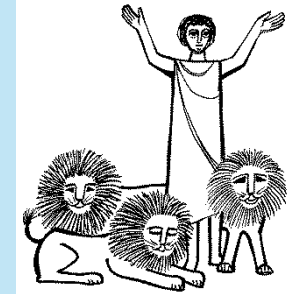
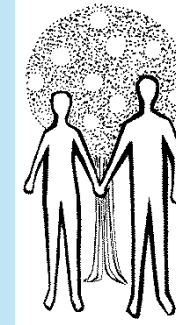
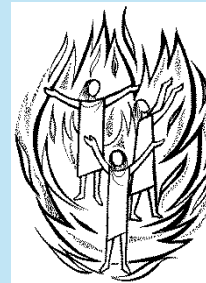
John the Baptist

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego

Jeremiah

Job

Peter



Then, go through the answers and look up the events in the time chart in your own Bible to get a sense of biblical history.

Some Bible facts

The Bible is the world's number one best-seller each year.

This book has been translated into more languages than any other book in history.

Millions of Christians the world over read the Bible each week and each day in church services, in small groups and on their own.

Christians believe that, through this book, God has spoken to us in a unique way, and that through the text of scripture God speaks to us today.

The Bible's teachings about God and humanity lie at the root of our entire civilization.

Moral teachings such as the Ten Commandments, still form the foundation of our laws.

Ironically, although one of the Ten Commandments is "thou shalt not steal," the Bible is the most stolen book in the world! Bibles are regularly taken from hotels, hospitals, bookstores, and other locations.

The very first thing we need to understand about the Bible is that it definitively claims to have its source in God. Meaning, the Bible proclaims itself to be divinely inspired by God.

Just as God “breathed life into Adam” (see Genesis 2:7) to create a living being, the creator breathed life into the Scriptures. While it's true that a myriad of people spoke and wrote down the words of the Bible, over the course of thousands of years, the text itself claims God was the source of those words.

What does the Bible say about itself

Psalm 1.1-3 – scripture as the law of the Lord

Psalm 119.105 – God’s word a lamp, a guide for our path

Matthew 4:4 – live by every word that comes from God

John 17:17 - The word is truth

Ephesians 6.17 – a helmet of salvation & sword of the spirit

1 Thessalonians 2:13 – God is the source of these words

2 Timothy 3:16 – scripture inspired by God

2 Peter 1:20-21 – The origin of the word is God

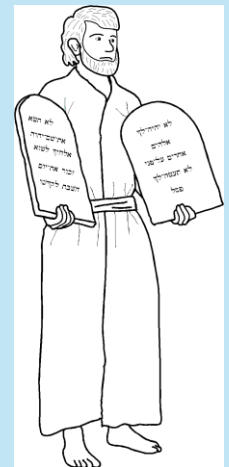


The Bible (from Koine Greek τὰ βιβλία, tà biblía, "the books") is a canonical collection of texts written over many hundreds of years by many different people who lived in the Middle East, Africa and Southern Europe around the Mediterranean Sea.

It tells the story of God, and his relationships with people over several thousand years. Many Christians consider the whole canonical text of the Bible to be divinely inspired. The oldest surviving complete Christian Bibles are Greek manuscripts from the 4th century.

For Christians, the bible is very significant because it tells us the truth about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We believe that God caused the bible to be written for our learning.

For many hundreds of years, stories, like those of creation, would have been passed on orally from one generation to the next, as part of the heritage of that group. Over time those accounts were written down, first engraved upon stone tablets and later scrolls made from skin. It was a very long time before the books of the bible were arranged as we have them today.



The collections of books that make up the bible reflect the lives of different people at different times. They are arranged into two distinct sections. The words Testament and Covenant basically mean the same thing – they are all about relationship.

Old Testament

The first part, comprising thirty-nine books and corresponding approximately to the Hebrew Bible. Most of the books were written in Hebrew, with some in Aramaic, between about 1200 and 100 BC. They comprise law, history, prophecy, wisdom literature and poetry/song from the ancient people of Israel. The first book is Genesis, recounting different understandings of creation and early human existence.

In addition to the Old Testament there is another section of scripture known as the Apocrypha (from the Greek ἀπόκρυφος, apókruphos) meaning "hidden".

New Testament

The new relationship (the New Testament) is for all people. John the Baptist is the ‘herald’ of this new relationship, preparing the way for Jesus who is the new relationship! Then the early days of the Christian church are recorded in various Epistles. This section concludes with Revelation and looking ahead to the future and the end of time.

The New Testament

is also a guide – to Jesus – for the Church.

- ❖ written in Greek and was composed within 60 – 120 years of Jesus' death and resurrection.
- ❖ by Jesus' disciples and by the first generation of Christians.

The New Testament tells the story of Jesus and the early Church. The books in the New Testament library are:

- ❖ Four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke & John)
- ❖ Acts of the Apostles (by Luke)
- ❖ Letters (Epistles)
- ❖ Revelation

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

(John 1:1)

Christians believe through the bible God has made his purposes and his personality known to the entire world. Therefore, we know the bible as ‘God’s Word.’ In New Testament Greek ‘Word’ means, Logos. John writes about this in his introduction (Prologue) to his Gospel.



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How to read the Bible

Some important things to remember:

- ❖ Read the Bible in a form you can understand - use a modern version. We use the **NRSV** at St James.
- ❖ Don't try to read through from Genesis to Revelation.
- ❖ listen (through attending to Scripture) to what God may be saying
- ❖ Don't use it like a lucky dip.
- ❖ If in doubt, use the Lectionary to help you choose which bible readings to follow or subscribe to a daily bible reading series like 'Daylight'.

The bible, as a text inspired by God, is also God's Word, because it is God speaking to people, God in relationship with people and therefore those of us reading the scriptures today. Of course we are all different, and when we read a text we come to it with our own attitudes, understanding, language, hopes, challenges and perspectives. Therefore, we have to be careful when 'interpreting' the scriptures.

St Augustine was concerned with the way some Christians used the scriptures to criticise each other. He wrote:



“Whoever, then, thinks that he understands the Holy Scriptures, or any part of them, but puts such an interpretation upon them as does not tend to build up this twofold love of God and our neighbour, does not yet understand them as he ought.”

(Augustine of Hippo, On Christian Doctrine)

Turn to your neighbour....

Question: **How should we use the bible as Christians?**

