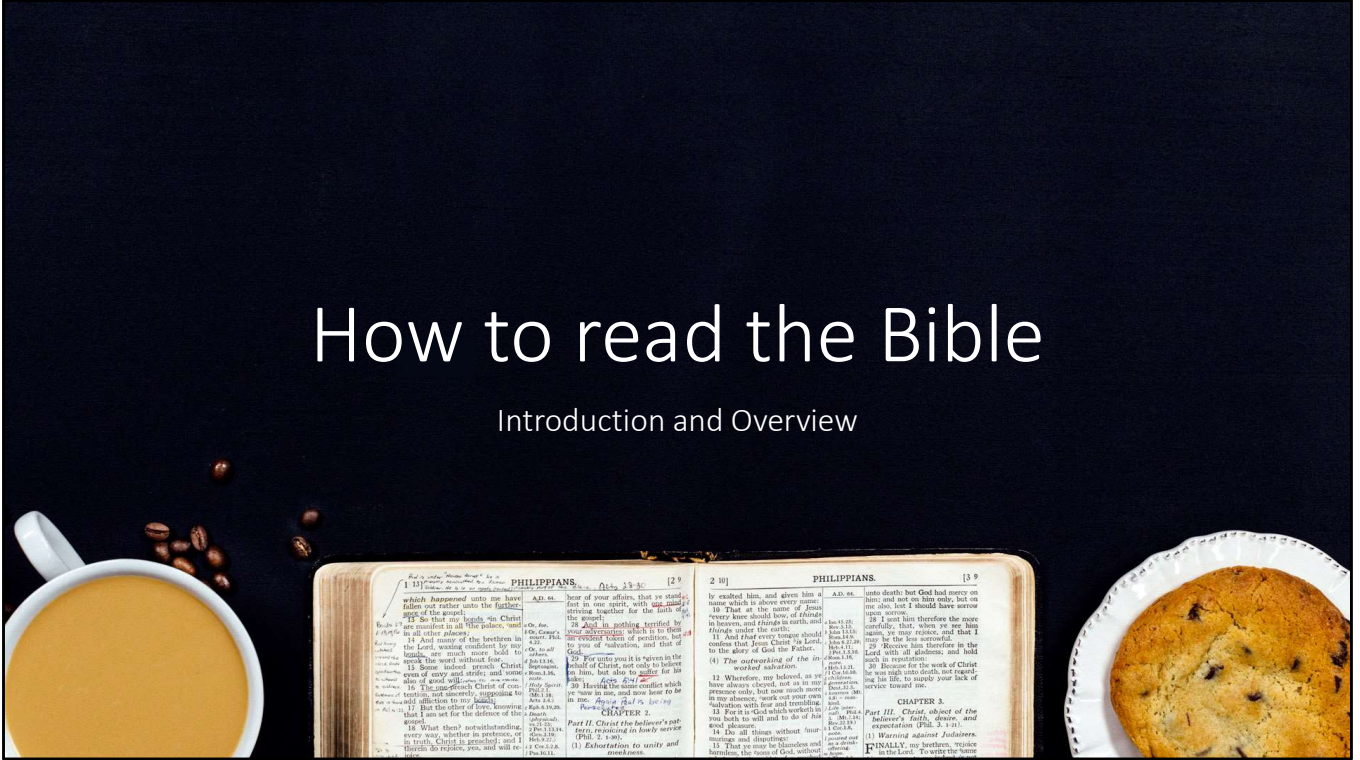
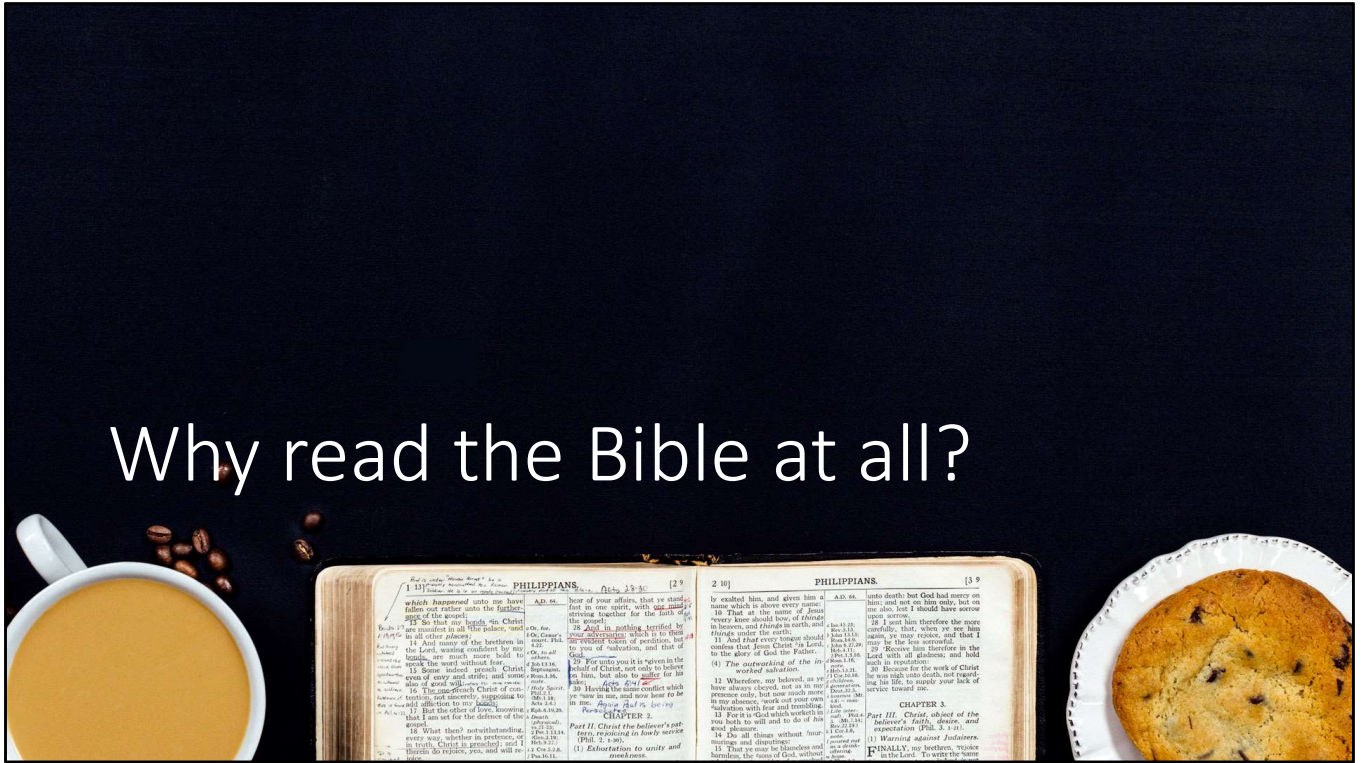


How to read the Bible

Introduction and Overview





Why read the Bible at all?

The first question we should probably address in any course on the Bible is: why read it at all? Why should some 2000 year old collection of writings (which go back three and a half thousand years) from the Middle East be worth any of our time in 21st century Australia?

The answer is simple: we have had an encounter with the risen Christ—we are Christians. And the founding Christians, who saw Christ face-to-face told us, in no uncertain terms, that Scripture—the Bible—was incredibly useful for us.



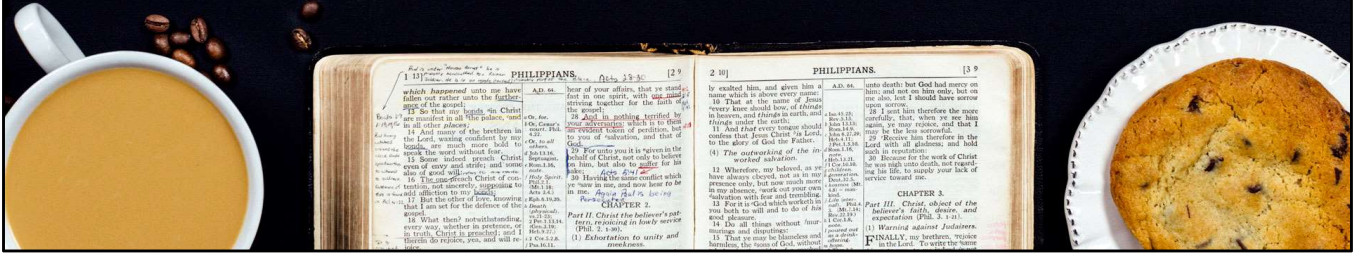
The Bible is reliable, and it equips us to live this life of discipleship.

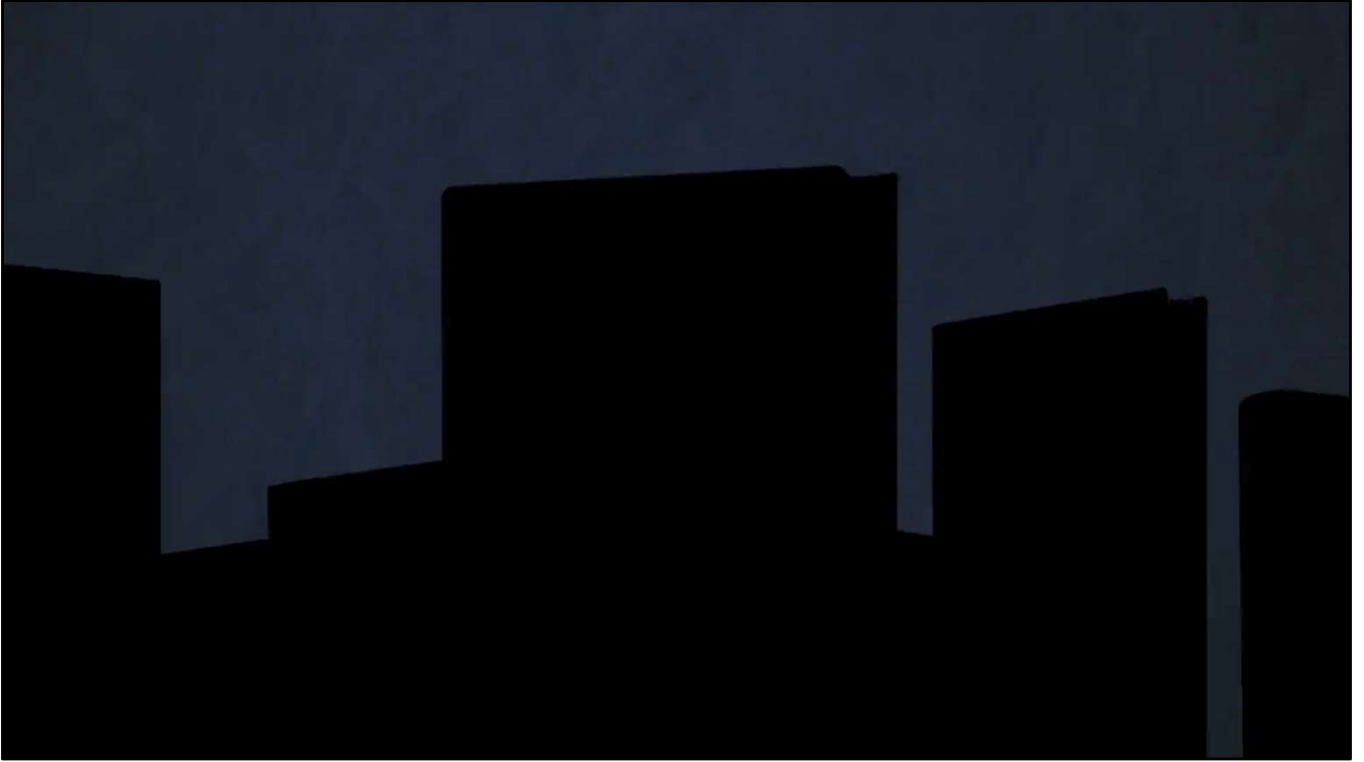
Biblical Discipleship



- Following someone (discipleship) requires knowing them
- God's Word is the (one and only) objective revelation of who he is

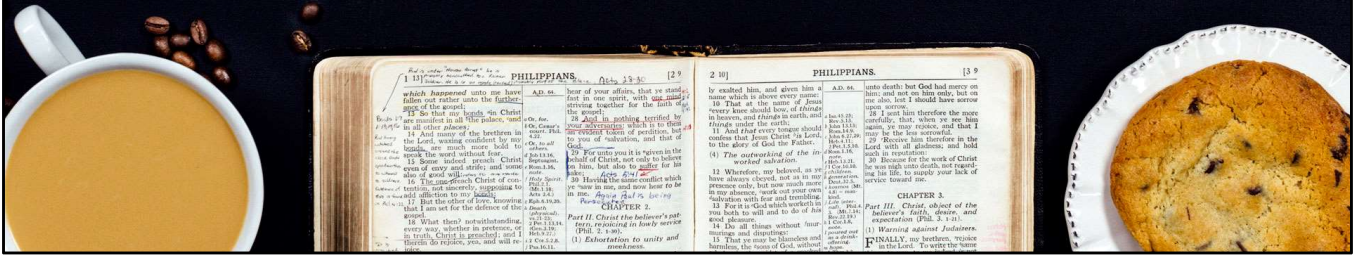
What is the Bible?

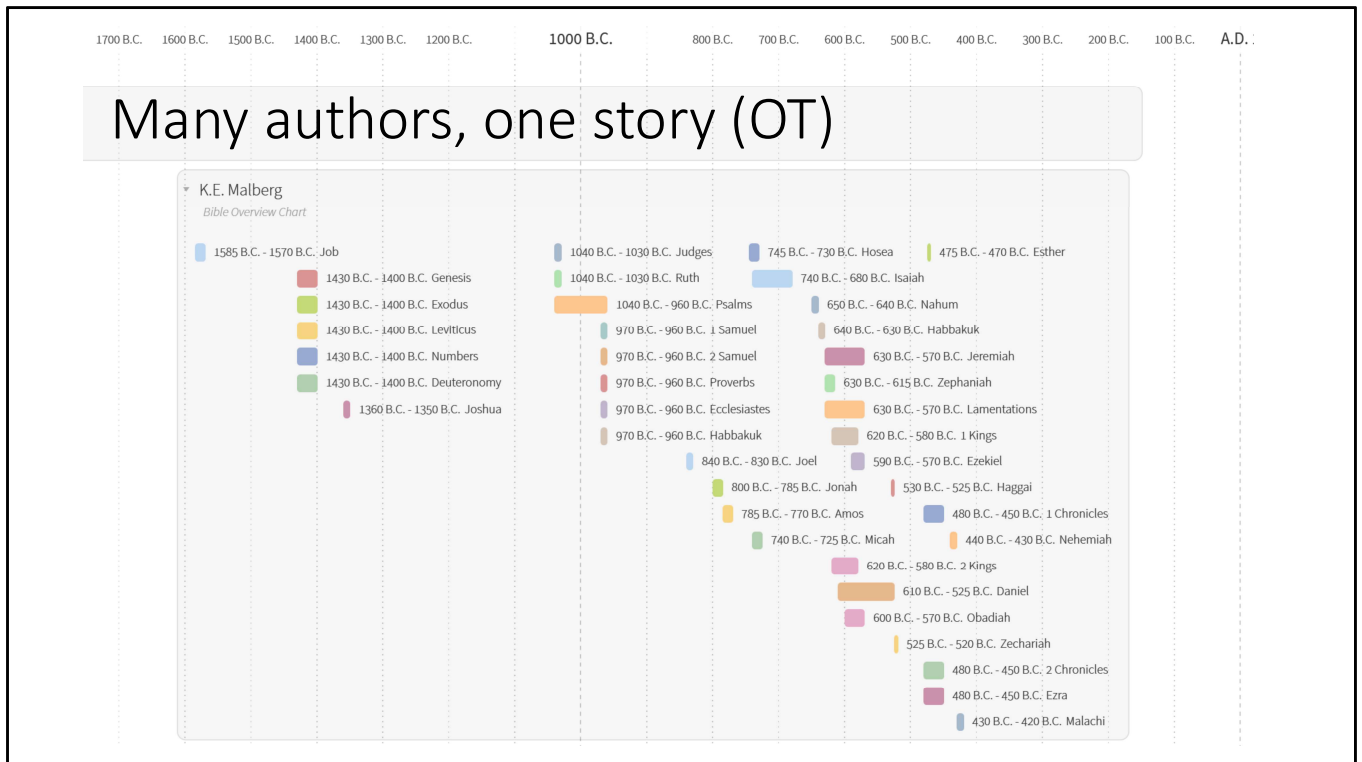




Questions?

The story of the Bible

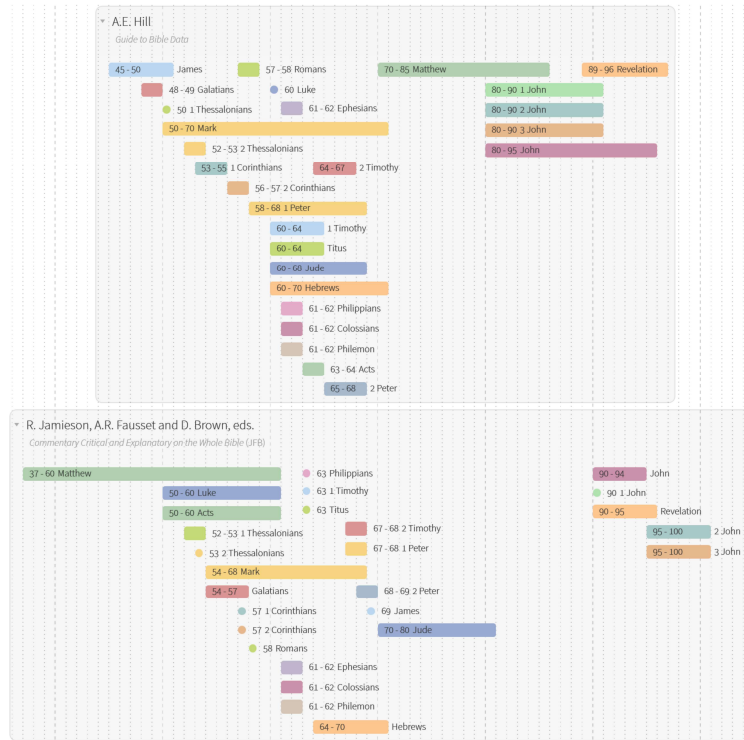




OT

- Written across a thousand years.
- Written in Israel, Africa (Egypt), and Babylon by Egyptian trained Jews, kings, prophets, shepherds, and priests
- Covers internal time span of 3600 years, with story of Israel occupying 1600 years from Abraham to Malachi.

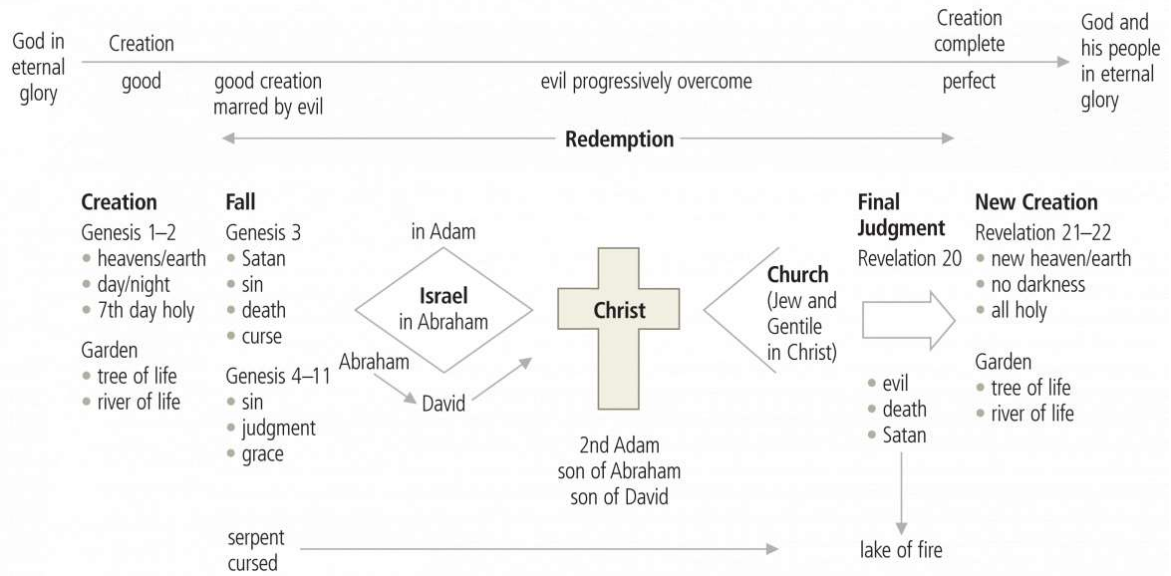
NT



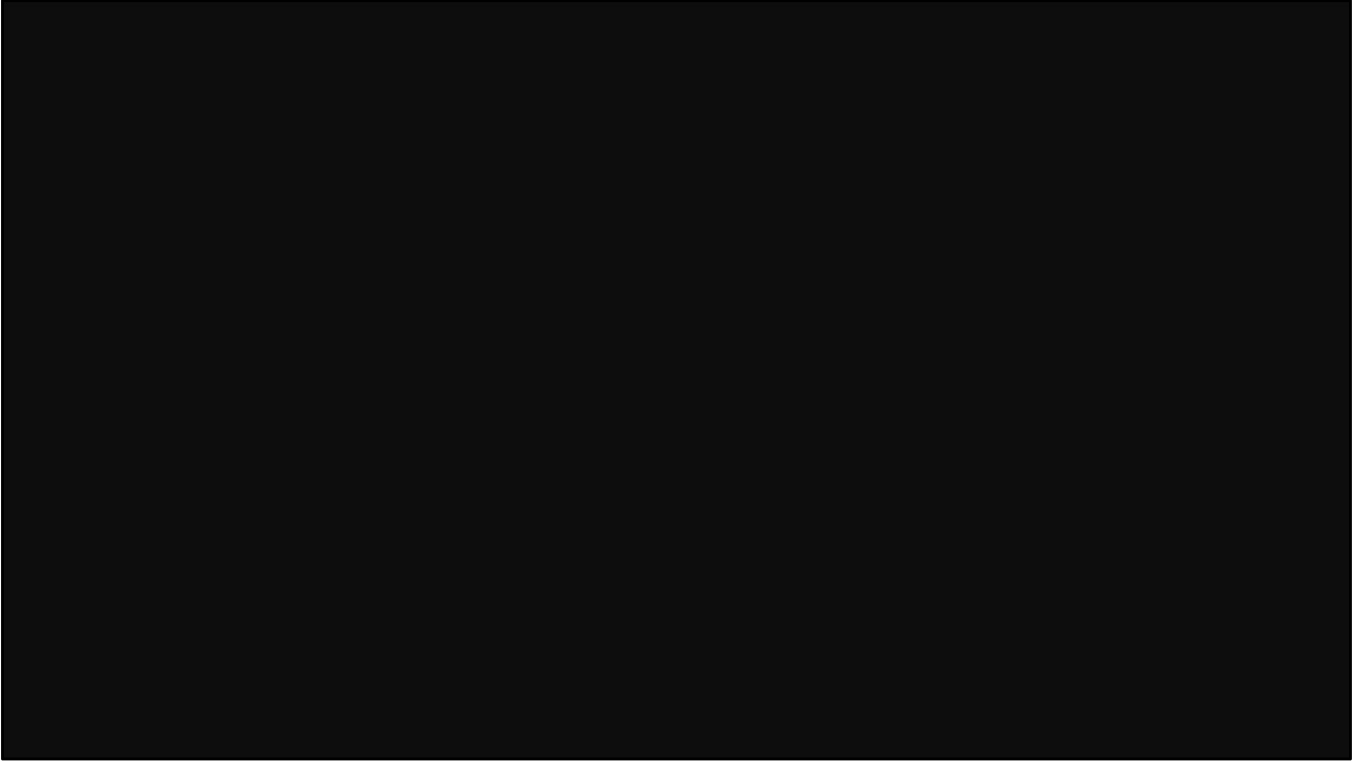
NT

- Written across 45-60 years
- Written in Judah, Asia, and Europe by Galilean fishermen, diaspora Jews, a Greek doctor, and a Jewish tax collector
- Covers internal time span of ~100 years (plus end times prophecies)

The Story

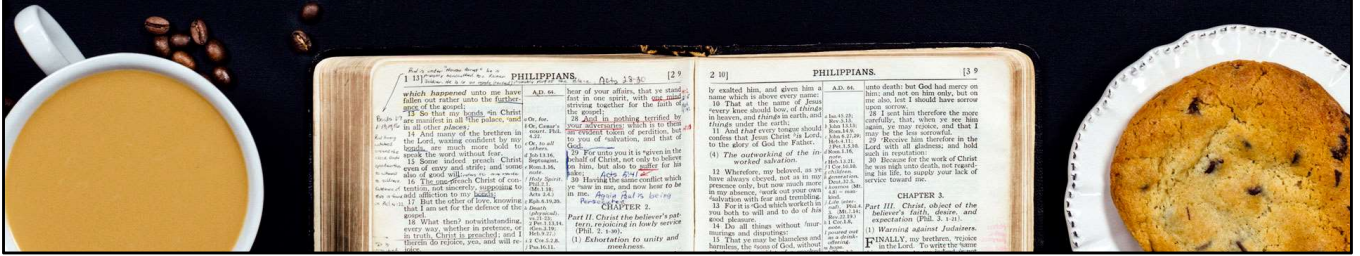


From ESV Study Bible

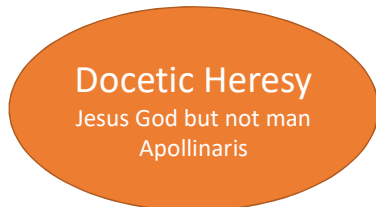


Questions?

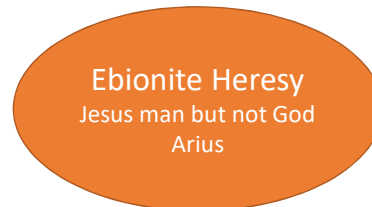
Understanding the Bible



Often misunderstood (e.g. the incarnation)



Chalcedonian Creed
“our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body, consubstantial [coessential] with us according to the manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, *inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably*; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ”



Nicene Creed
“one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father”

“Fatal” misunderstanding called “heresy”

Heresy -> rethinking what’s “right” -> orthodoxy

E.g. Early in the second century, Christians were faced with the challenge of the docetic heresy, which claimed that Jesus was fully God while only appearing to be human. On the other end of the spectrum, the Ebionites claimed that Jesus was a mere human being and therefore not God.

The First Council of Nicaea (325) affirmed, against Arius, that Jesus was fully God, and the First Council of Constantinople (381) affirmed against the heresy of Apollinaris that Jesus was fully human.

Jack Kilcrease, in *Lexham Survey of Theology*, ed. Mark Ward et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018).

Jack Kilcrease, [*“Jesus’ Incarnation,” in Lexham Survey of Theology*](#), ed. Mark Ward et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018).

Nicene Creed

The Nicene Creed was originally the result of the Council of Nicea in 325 a.d.

While there are similarities between the text of the Nicene Creed and the text of the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, according to Schaff, is “more definite and

explicit than the Apostles' Creed in the statement of the divinity of Christ and the Holy Ghost." The Nicene Creed provided the needed clarification to combat the heresies of the Nicene age, and is useful to combat those same heresies today which invariably reoccur in differing forms.

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Lexham Press, 1997).

[Historic Creeds and Confessions, electronic ed. \(Oak Harbor: Lexham Press, 1997\).](#)

The Symbol of Chalcedon

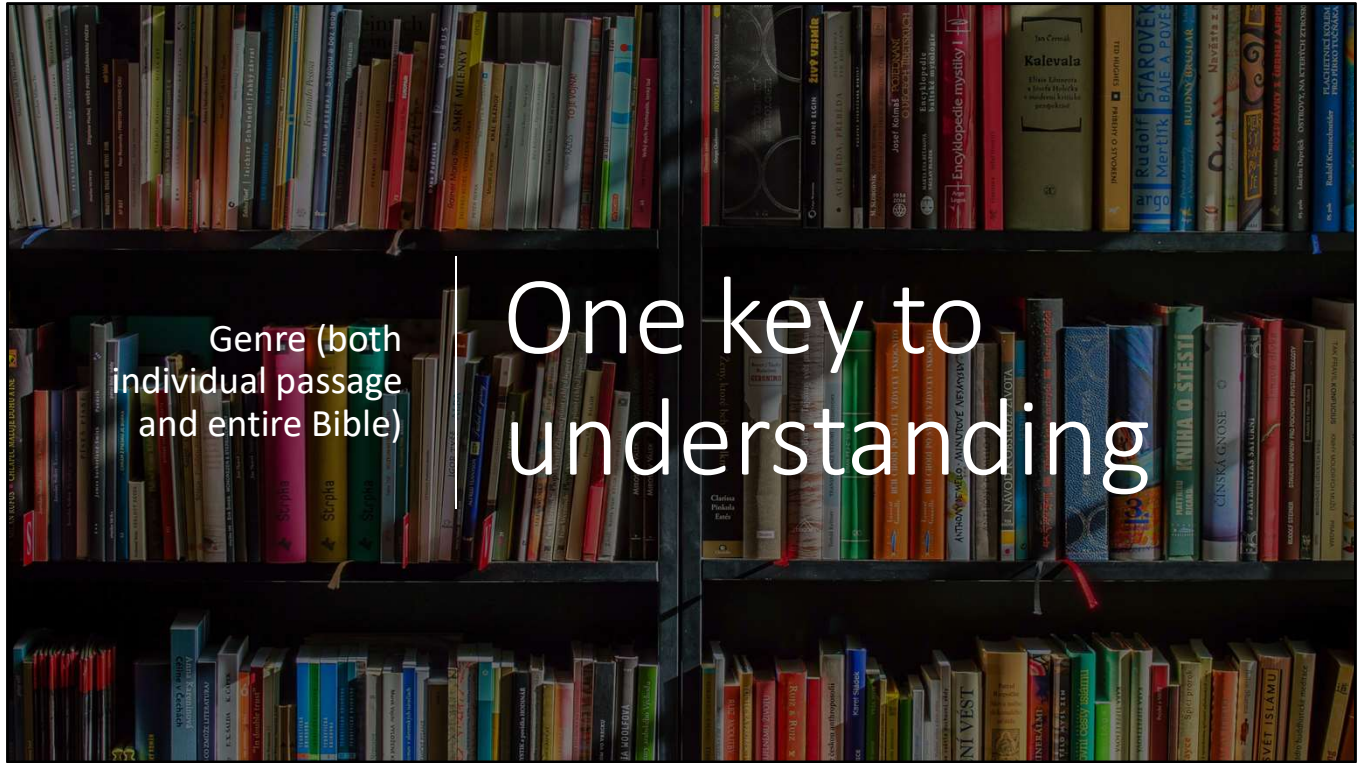
The Symbol of Chalcedon, adopted at the fourth and fifth sessions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, dates back to 451 a.d.. Philip Schaff, in his *Creeds of Christendom*, writes of the Symbol (or Creed) of Chalcedon, "While the first Council of Nicaea had established the eternal, pre-existent Godhead of Christ, the Symbol of the Fourth Ecumenical Council relates to the incarnate Logos, as he walked upon earth and sits on the right hand of the Father. It is directed against the errors of Nestorius and Eutyches, who agreed with the Nicene Creed as opposed to Arianism, but put the Godhead of Christ in a false relation to his humanity."

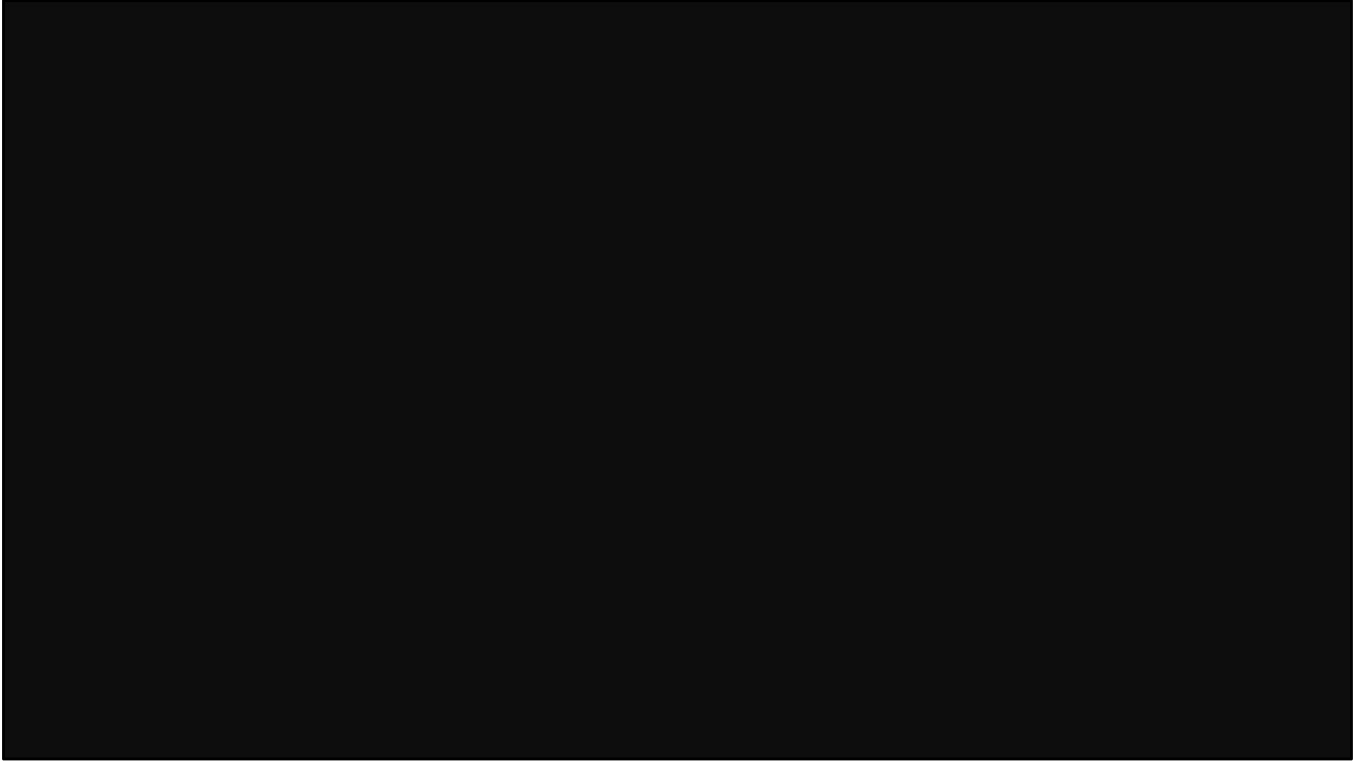
We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [coessential] with us according to the manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the

Virgin Mary, the mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, *inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.*

, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Lexham Press, 1997).

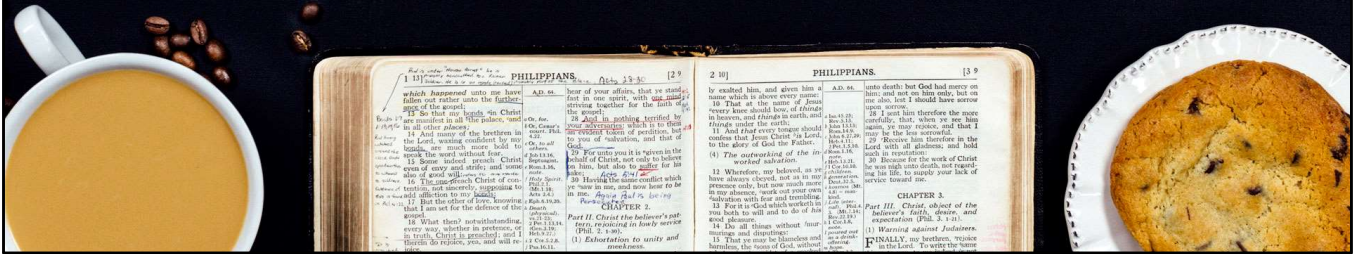
[Historic Creeds and Confessions, electronic ed. \(Oak Harbor: Lexham Press, 1997\).](#)





Questions?

Reading the Bible



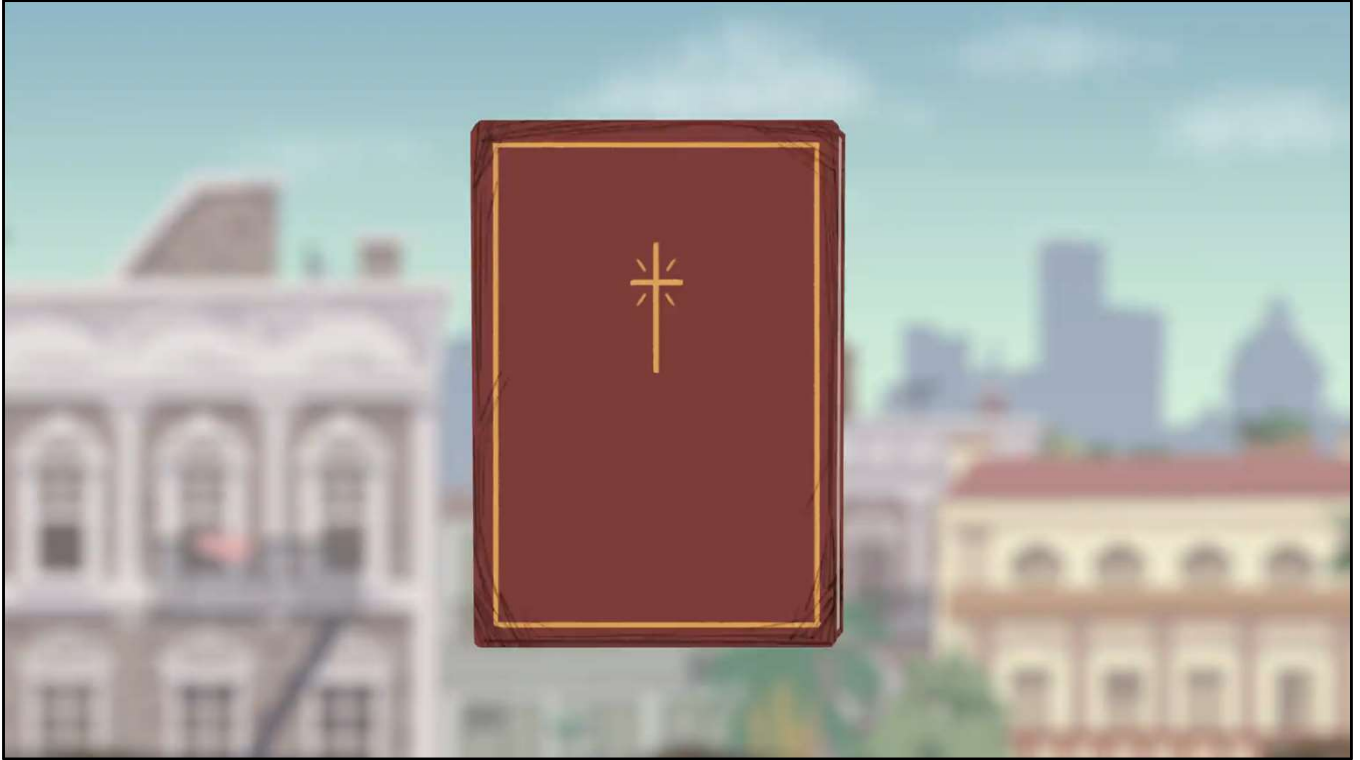
Ancient texts, modern readers

- Can we read the Bible like a textbook?
- If not, then how?



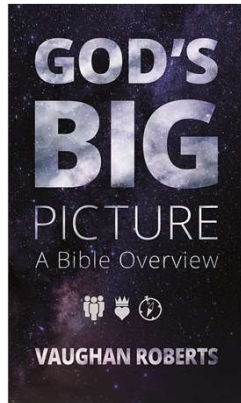
The Bible does not present a systematic, structured approach to knowledge, so:

- Cannot be used as a reference work (e.g. what does the Bible say about food? OT is radically different to NT)
- Cannot be used as a textbook (how do stories like the rape of Dinah work in a textbook—what is it teaching?)
- How then?



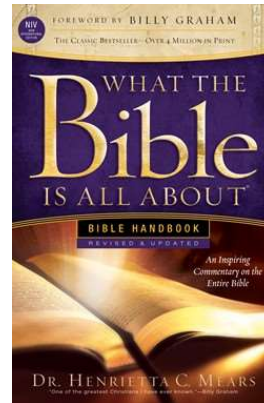
Questions?

Further resources



God's Big Picture
by Vaughan Roberts

See also <https://www.godsbigpicture.co.uk/>



What the Bible is all About
by Dr. Henrietta C. Mears

Summary

- Bible's literature is diverse in every way (authorship, origins, genre, topic)
- Bible's story is unified
- Therefore:
 - Must understand genre
 - Must read and reflect on constantly (meditate)

Workshop



Find passages in OT that point to Jesus

- Goals:
 - Understand how genres work
 - Understand how to piece together parts of the story (literary context)
- Process:
 - Break into groups of three or four
 - Think of passages from the OT that you think point to Jesus
 - Find and read the passage
 - Determine how the passage refers to Jesus
 - Present the passage

Examples:

Gen. 3:5

Is. 7:14; 9:1-2; 42:1-9; 52:13-53:12; 61:1-2

Ps. 16:10; 22

Mic. 5:2

2 Sam 7:13-16

Etc.

Evaluate how these passages fit the Bible's story

Process:

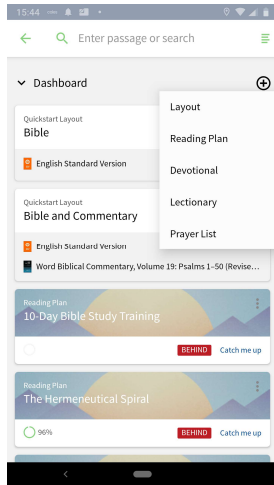
- Read passage, check context, evaluate genre, summarise content
- Consider character "arcs," important events, what changes, what are the objects and people types of?

- Genesis 34 (the rape of Dinah)
- Daniel 1:8-21 (Daniel's faithfulness)
- 1 Kings 18:20-40 (Elijah vs. prophets of Baal)
- Leviticus 17:10-16 (Laws against eating blood)
- Numbers 33:50-56 (drive out the Canaanites)
- Hosea 3 (Hosea redeems his wife)

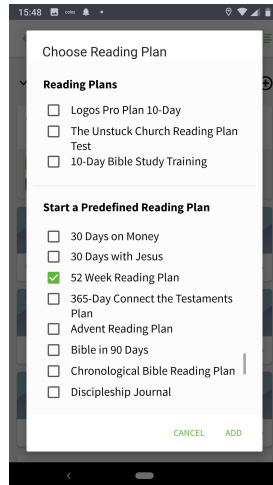
Make a Bible reading plan



1



2



3

