

# YEAR OF BIBLICAL LITERACY

## SO WHAT IS THE BIBLE ABOUT?

The Bible is a library written by God through people that tells a unified story that leads to Jesus and teaches us how to follow Him.

- “a library” - The Bible consists of sixty-six books (39 Old Testament, 27 New Testament) in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek) across different genres\* (history, poetry, prophecy, etc.) roughly spanning over 1,500 years.

- “written by God through people that tells a unified story” - human authors wrote in their own time and place in their own unique voices, and God oversaw the message and preservation of their writings to weave one larger story.\*

2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21, Acts 4:25, Hebrews 3:7, 4:7

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable... (to) be complete, equipped for every good work. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17

- “that leads to Jesus” - all the biblical documents point to God’s people living under God’s rule, all of which culminate in the person of Jesus.

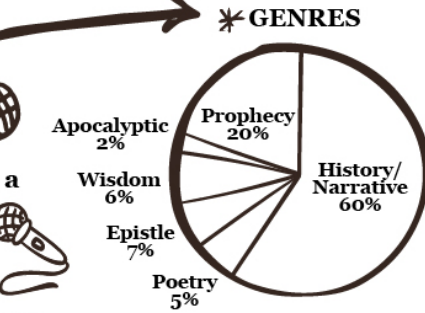
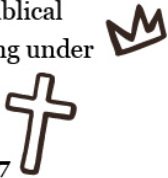
Luke 24:27, John 5:39, Matthew 5:17

“You search the Scriptures... And the Scriptures point to me!” - John 5:39

- “and teaches us how to follow Him”

- The Bible is more than imparting information but calling us to transformation by God’s Spirit to look more like Jesus.

Psalm 1:1-2, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Titus 2:11-14, James 1:22



## NARRATIVE OF GOD'S STORY



## A VERY BRIEF HISTORY ON HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE

1445 BC ≈ the first books of the Old Testament, Genesis-Deuteronomy are written.

400 BC ≈ Nehemiah is the last book of the Old Testament to be written.

132 BC ≈ the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, is completed. This is the main text read/referred to by the New Testament authors.

52 AD ≈ First Thessalonians is the first book of the New Testament to be written.

95 AD ≈ the last book of the New Testament, Revelation, is penned.

382 AD - the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible, is commissioned.

1382 AD - John Wycliffe translates the Bible into English.

1454 AD - the Gutenberg Bible (all in Latin) becomes the first mass-produced Bible.

1611 AD - Commissioned by the Church of England, the King James Version of the Bible is completed in English and mass-produced for the public.

1946 AD - the Dead Sea Scrolls are discovered, containing almost every book of the OT text in Hebrew, with some manuscripts dating as far back as the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

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## WHERE DO I START?

There are different practices you can use when meditating on the Bible. One practice is called inductive Bible study, and it's a helpful way to familiarize yourself with what the author wants to communicate. It can be broken down into three steps:



### 1. Observation - What does the text say?

Read the text a few times over. What do you notice? What questions do you have? Do you notice any repeated words or phrases? Circle those, and this may help you understand the main ideas.



Inductive Bible study, or historical-grammatical method, seeks to uncover the text's original meaning based on what's in the text.



### 2. Interpretation - What does the text mean?

The author had a reason why they wrote what they did. In this step, the job is to uncover the original intent of the author by asking a series of questions such as:

...**who** wrote this, and **who** was it written for?

...**when** and **where** was the text written?

...**what** is the genre? **What** is the author saying? **What** is the author communicating about God and/or people?

...**why** is what the author is saying relevant to the immediate audience?

...**how** does this connect with what came before and after the text? **How** does this fit within the scope of the book? **How** does this point to Jesus?

...do my conclusions line up with what other faithful Jesus followers say? (Studying in a group and consulting commentaries are helpful at this point.)



### 3. Application - What does the text mean for us?

Two things to remember: **(1)** the Bible wants to transform us, not simply impart information. Therefore, we need to know what the text means before applying it to our lives rather than let our lives determine the meaning of the text. **(2)** The Bible was designed to form God's people, so we want to learn and apply this in the context of community. Some questions to ask include:

...what does this passage tell us about God?

...what does this passage tell us about ourselves and others?

...how should we act?

...how should we pray?

How is this calling us to praise God, confess sin, request His help, and/or thank Him?



For reading plans, book recommendations, and more resources on how to study the Bible, go to our Year of Biblical Literacy site



During this year, we will cover the following books and genres:

**January** - The Torah

**March** - The Book of Ruth

**April** - Wisdom Literature

**May** - The Prophets

**June** - The Psalms

**August** - The Gospels

**September** - The Book of Hebrews

**December** - Revelation

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