

* An overview of the Bible

A Drama in Five Acts

* Anglicans speak of **Scripture, Tradition and Reason** - (*Richard Hooker 1594*)

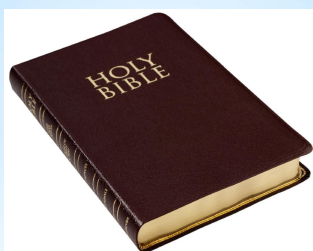
* **Tradition** is how previous generations interpreted matters

* **Reason** is using our God-given ability to understand Scripture

* **Reason** will be shaped by our experience

* **Reason** will be conditioned by our context - (*Article 34 of 39 Articles*)

* Scripture, Tradition and Reason



* What is the bible?

* In Islam, God's revelation is considered to be the Holy Koran. In Christianity, God's revelation is Jesus Christ both fully human and fully divine

* Bible is inspired by God,

* **39 Articles (1562) - VI. Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for salvation**
Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be. believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.

* What is the bible?

* Canon decided by God

* The Church needed to discover and agree what God had decided

* Canon of the Bible

* Irenaeus (late 2nd century) - 21 books in New Testament

* Origen (early 3rd century) - 27 books as used now

* Discussed by Ecumenical Councils and finally agreed by all parts of the Church (Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch) by the 5th century

* New Testament

- * Jewish Scriptures
- * Hebrew and Greek (Diaspora) versions were different
- * Originally, the Church accepted Greek version
- * Post-Reformation: Protestants only accept Hebrew version
- * Anglicans - Article 6 of 39 Articles - Hebrew version
- * Post-Reformation: the Council of Trent 1546 re-affirmed the Greek version for Roman Catholics
- * Greek also used by most Eastern Churches

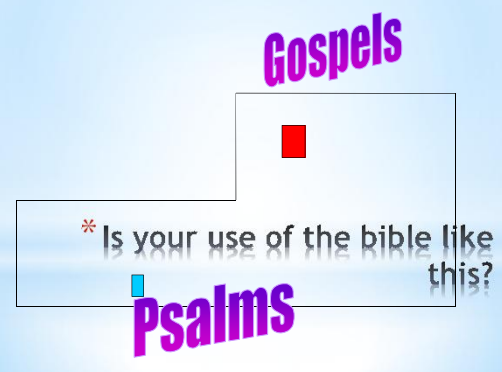
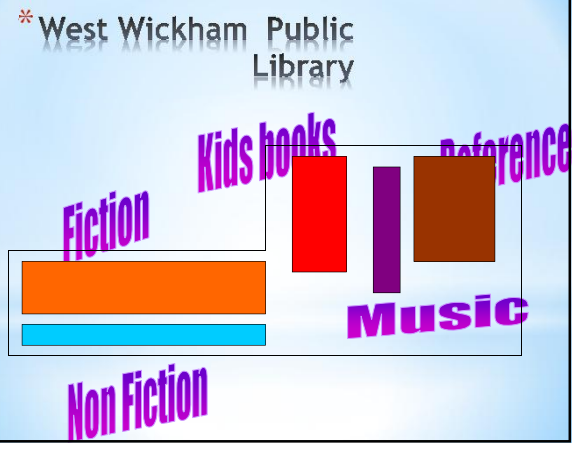
* Old Testament

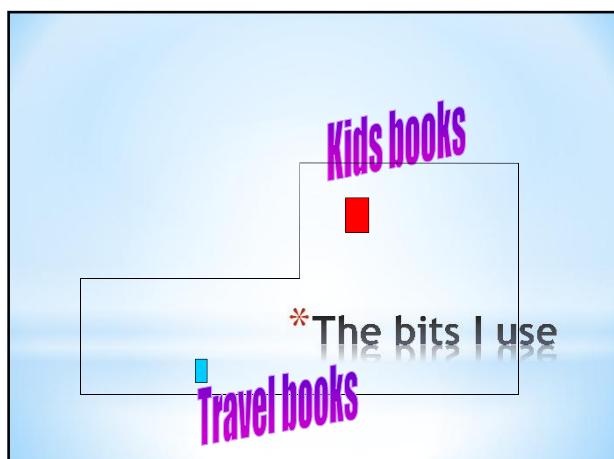
- * Books in the Greek, but not Hebrew OT
- * *For examples of life and instruction of manners, but not for establishing doctrine*
- * Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, the letter of Jeremiah, the prayer of Azariah, Susanna, Bel and the dragon, Ezdras, 1, 2, 3 & 4 Maccabees, Psalm 151
- * Additions to Esther and Daniel

* Apocrypha

- * Imagine yourself in your local public library
- * How much of this do you use?

* The Bible as a library?





- * "Is it literally true?" Is a post - enlightenment question
- * The appropriate question is "What is the deeper truth that the writer/narrator is trying to convey?"
- * Parables
- * Two dangers
- * Internet has strong American influence

*** Literal truth and relational truth**

- * History
- * Parable
- * Narrative (history and parable)
- * Law
- * Poetry
- * Prophecy (commentary on current events)
- * Theology and doctrine
- * Worship and Spirituality
- * Missiology

*** Important to know which bit of the library we are in?**

- * It is one story
- * Themes that run right the way through, connecting one part with another;

*** The Bible as Unity**

- * But to understand it we need to know who/what it is about
- * And which bit of the story we are in

*** The Bible as Unity**

*** Who is the Bible about?**

* God	* ... Jesus
* and His whole creation	* ... Jesus' disciples
* The heavens and the earth	* ... The Church
* Adam and Eve	*
* All of the nations	* Cheat! Read the last 2 chapters (Rev 21 & 22)
* ... Abraham	* The new creation
* ... Israel	* All of the nations

God, all of the nations and the whole creation

- * Genesis 1 - 11
- * Genesis 12 - end of OT
- * Matthew 1 - John 21
- * Acts 1 - Revelation 20
- * Revelation 21 & 22

***Where are the discontinuities?**

- * Genesis 12 - end of OT
- * Matthew 1 - John 21
- * Acts 1 - Revelation 20

***Any references to the nations at the beginning of:**

- * Genesis 12
- * Matthew 2
- * Acts 1

***Look at:**

- * Genesis 12. 3 *'and in you all the nations of the earth shall be blessed'*
- * Matthew 2. 1 - 15 - the magi, representing the Gentiles, the non-Jewish nations, coming to worship Jesus
- * Acts 1. 8 - *'you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth'*

***Any references to the nations at the beginning of:**

- * Creation
- * Then something goes wrong - "The Fall"

***What happens in Genesis 1 - 11?**

- * Look at:
 - * Genesis 3 - Adam and Eve;
 - * Genesis 4. 1 - 16 - Cain and Abel;
 - * Genesis 11. 1 - 9 - Tower of Babel;

- * What relationships break down?
- * Which relationship breaks down first?

***What happens in Genesis 1 - 11?**

- *The relationships between:
- *God and people - the personal relationship
- *Different people - the social and political relationship
- *Ourselves - dis-ease - physical and psychological healing
- *God, people and creation - the environmental relationship

*** But what actually went wrong in Genesis 1 - 11?**

- *God takes the initiative to restore these 4 relationships
- *The personal relationship is the first to break
- *If the personal relationship, the relationship between God and people, isn't restored it is unlikely that the other relationships will remain restored
- *Missio Dei - The mission of God
- *Mission and Mass both derived from the Latin verb to send

*** Which relationship breaks first?**

* Anglican Five Mark of Mission

- *To proclaim the good news of the kingdom
- *To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
- *To respond to human need by loving service
- *To seek to transform unjust structures of society, **to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation**
- *To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the earth
- *ACC 6 (1984), ACC 8 (1990) & ACC 16 (2016)

- *Genesis 1 - 11
- *Creation
- *Creation as Temple for worship of God
- *Temple is where heaven and earth meet and where God is found
- *Humans as the *Image bearers*
- *Humans as *Stewards of creation*
- *The Fall

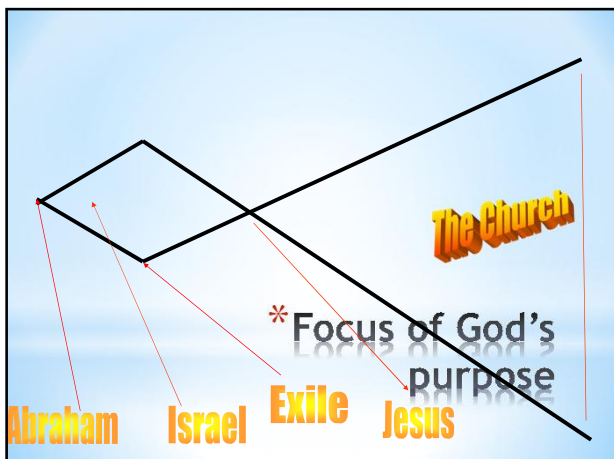
*** The Big Story**

- *Don't want eternal separation from God - so exile from the garden to avoid *Tree of Life*
- *Mark of Cain - so he will not be killed
- *Rainbow after the flood
- * After tower of babel ...
- * ... call of Abram
- *The rest of the bible is the story of God taking the initiative to restore these four broken relationships

*** Signs of Grace**

- *Genesis 1 - 11
 - * - Creation and the Fall
- *Genesis 12 - end of OT
 - * - God sends Israel
- *Matthew 1 - John 21
 - * - God sends Jesus - the True Israel
- *Acts 1 - Revelation 20
 - * - God sends The Church - the New Israel
- *Revelation 21 & 22
 - * - The New Creation

*** A drama in five acts**



- * Israel chosen for task and responsibility, not for privilege
- * God wants to save everybody, but some are chosen for the responsibility of helping to achieve this
- * People are not chosen because they are 'better' than others, but are chosen for tasks
- * Same with the Church now!

*** Elect / Chosen People**

- * Abraham/Israel sent to be a blessing to the nations to restore the broken relationships
- * First need to be shaped in understanding and faith, obeying God, to become a model nation attracting the other nations
- * Also need to be prepared to share their faith with the nations

*** God Sends Israel**

- * Abraham - Isaac - Jacob - Joseph and 11 brothers (2000 - 1500 BC) (Genesis)
- * Egypt - 12 brothers become 12 tribes
- * Egypt becomes captivity and slavery
- * Moses and Exodus (1300 - 1200 BC)
- * 40 years being shaped in the wilderness
- * Ten Commandments (Exodus) and The Law (Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)

*** God Sends Israel**

- * The Law addresses:
 - * Relationship with God
 - * Relationships between people - issues of justice
 - * Relationships with creation
 - * Sabbath, land lying fallow, Jubilee (Leviticus 25.11)

*** God Sends Israel**

- * Return to Promised Land - Joshua and Judges
- * Twelve tribes - theocracy with Judges; King Saul then King David
- * Reaches pinnacle under David and Solomon (1000 - 932 BC)
- * Attracts the nations - Queen of Sheba
- * Tension between sharing the blessing with the nations and being corrupted by the nations
- * History described in 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings

* God Sends Israel

- * 930 BC - Split between Northern Kingdom of Israel and Southern Kingdom of Judah
- * Prophets condemning Israel and Judah for disobedience, idolatry and injustice
- * 722 BC Israel falls to Assyria. Many taken into exile in Assyria; and Samaria repopulated. Inter-marriage corrupts Judaism

* Israel and Judah

- * 598 - 587 BC - Judah begins Exile in Babylon
- * Back to where it all began for Abram
- * Time of self-discovery and awareness
- * Isaiah Servant Songs: 42. 1 - 9; 49. 1 - 6; 50. 4 - 9; 52. 13 - 53
- * Called to suffer on behalf of the nations
- * Re-interpretation and writing of earlier history
- * Influenced by the dualism of Zoroastrianism and concept of resurrection

* Babylonian Exile

- * Prophets - God's warnings about idolatry, injustice, corruption and bad kings. Some speaking primarily to Israel, some to Judah
- * Isaiah -
 - * Isaiah 2. 1 - 5 *All the nations streaming to the Mountain of the Lord*
 - * Chs 1 - 39 - pre Exile, 741 BC until 697 BC
 - * Chs 40 - 55 - during Exile 571 BC until 539 BC
 - * Chs 56 - 66 - post Exile 538 BC until 515 BC

* The Prophets

- * Pre- Exile/ Exile
 - * Jeremiah; Ezekiel;
 - * Hosea; Amos; Micah; Zephaniah; Nahum; Habakkuk
- * Post Exile
 - * Joel; Obadiah; Haggai (520 BC); Zechariah (520 BC); Malachi (440 BC)

* The Prophets

- * Persia overcomes Babylon. Cyrus encourages return to Jerusalem and Judah (537 BC)
- * Rebuilding of the Temple under Ezra (445 BC)
- * 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra & Nehemiah written and edited with strong theological emphasis (400 - 300 BC)
- * Jonah as a parable of Israel the reluctant missionary. Ruth as ancestor of David
- * Later history not obvious from the OT

* Post Exile

- * Alexander The Great (333 BC) - Greek invasion of Jerusalem causing Jewish Diaspora
- * Maccabean revolt (168 - 165 BC)
- * Temple rededicated (164 BC);
- * Book of Daniel
- * Probably response to Greek invasion, but set during Exile - use of symbolism and imagery
- * Roman occupation and rule (63 BC)

* Post Exile

- * Psalms - many, but not all, written by David
- * Wisdom writing, some influenced by Babylonian worldview. Some used in liturgical worship:
 - * Job;
 - * Proverbs;
 - * Ecclesiastes;
 - * Song of Solomon
 - * Esther

* The Writings

- * No prophetic utterances since Malachi (420 BC). Still expectation that God would send a Messiah to cast out occupiers
- * Primarily four Jewish responses:
 - * Sadducees - only source is Moses, don't accept idea of resurrection - wealthy, collaborate with Rome
 - * Pharisees - need for observing stricter laws
 - * Zealots - take initiative and overthrow Rome
 - * Essenes - opt out and start desert monasteries

* Before Jesus' birth

* God Sends Jesus

- * The four creatures; like:
 - * A Lion - Mark
 - * An Ox - Matthew
 - * A face, like a human face - Luke
 - * A flying Eagle - John

* Gospels & Revelation 4. 7

- * Written first, used as a source by Matthew and Luke
- * Punchy, readable, tabloid - *'Reporter flees naked from scene of arrest' (14.51)*
- * Starts with John the Baptist's ministry, no birth narratives or genealogy

* Mark

- * Written for Jewish readership
- * Genealogy starts with Abraham
- * Sojourn in Egypt
- * 40 days, not years, in wilderness
- * Fulfilment of OT prophecies

* Matthew

- * Jesus the new Moses - five distinct sections (c/f Torah)
- * .. *'When Jesus had finished these words'*
 - * Sermon on the mount (Ch 5 - 7)
 - * Teaching his disciples (Ch 10)
 - * Parables (Ch 13)
 - * Teaching about community (Ch 18)
 - * Warnings and judgement (Ch 23 - 25)

* Matthew

- * Written for Gentile readership - Luke also wrote Acts
- * Genealogy works backwards to Adam (and God)
- * Birth in context of Caesar Augustus
- * Emphasis upon the marginalised and the poor; healing and restoring

* Luke

- * No genealogy, but prologue based on Wisdom in Proverbs 8. 22 - 31
- * Theological, not chronological, approach
- * Jesus the fulfilment of Jewish festivals
- * Jesus the fulfilment of Old Testament imagery:
 - * The Good Shepherd
 - * The True Vine
 - * The Bread of Life
 - * The water of life

* John

- * Forgiving sin
- * Suffering Servant foretold by Isaiah
- * Atonement (At-one-ment) restoration with God
- * Sacrifice for our sin - Jesus representing not just Israel, but all humanity
- * Passover lamb - Exodus from slavery of sin
- * Ransom - to free us from slavery

* Jesus forgiver of sins

- * Teaching - Sermon on the Mount
- * Teaching - Discourses in John
- * Parables
- * As example

* Jesus as Teacher

- * Healing miracles
- * Casting out demons
- * Raising the dead
- * Challenging unjust authority
- * Challenging unjust relationships

* Jesus as Healer

- * Judging what he encounters to challenge and enable forgiveness and restoration
- * Forcing those who he meets to judge who Jesus is for them
- * The one who will come at the end as judge

* Jesus as Judge

- * Worshipped by the Magi - Matthew 2
- * A light for revelation to the Gentiles - Luke 2
- * Sent to the House of Israel first
- * Visit of the Greeks (John 12. 20 - 26) signal for Passion to begin
- * *The Land* replaced by *The Kingdom* (Acts 1.6)
- * Resurrected Jesus sending disciples to all the nations

* Jesus as Blessing to the Nations

- * The census - Luke 2.1 - Caesar Augustus *son of god* bringing peace through violence
- * Jesus Christ *Son of God* bringing peace through self-giving, justice and love
- * Psalm Sunday procession on donkey compared with Pilate's military procession to Jerusalem for Passover

* Jesus as Son of God and King

- * The New Adam - Tree of Death becomes Tree of Life
- * Restoring the broken relationships through;
 - * Healing
 - * Casting out demons
 - * Challenging authority
 - * Challenging injustice
- * Resurrected Jesus the first fruit of the New Creation

* Jesus first fruit of New Creation

- * Disciples, and the Church, sent with:
 - * The **authority** of the Father (Matt 27.18)
 - * The **power** of the Spirit (Acts 1.8)
 - * The **vulnerability** of the Son (John 20.21)
- * Ascension - resurrected Jesus, first fruit of the New Creation, can exist in both heaven and on earth
- * Mattias replaces Judas.

* God Sends The Church

- *Disciples first need to become 12 again before the Holy Spirit is given
- *Holy Spirit overcomes language barriers of Babel (Acts 2.4)
- *Holy Spirit is a down payment, a promise of what is to follow, on the New Creation
- *A frightened group of disciples, inspired by the resurrection and enabled by the Holy Spirit, gain courage and faith and are empowered

* God Sends The Church

- *Begins with *'You shall be my witnesses to Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth'*
- *Mission strategy initiated by Holy Spirit
- *Persecution and Dispersion after Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 8)
- *Philip in Samaria (Acts 8)
- *Philip and Ethiopian official (Acts 8)
- *Various healing and exorcism miracles

* Acts

- *Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10)
- *Do Gentiles need to become Jews first? (Acts 11)
- *And again in Acts 15
- *'Christian Aid' Antioch send to Judea (Acts 11)
- *Paul's missionary journeys - Gospel spread through Asia Minor and into Europe
- *Acts ends with Paul in Rome about to meet with the Emperor

* Acts

- *Interpreting Christianity into Greek cultural worldview
- *Christian behaviour and discipleship
- *Do Gentiles need to become Jews first? (Galatians)
- *Where do the Jews fit into God's plans? (Romans). Also, saved by faith, not works
- *Mutuality and interdependence of Jews and Gentiles to fully understand Jesus (Ephesians)

* Pauline Epistles

- *Hebrews - explaining Jesus specifically to Jewish Christians
- *James - Jewish insights reiterated within Christianity. Faith is only real if it leads to action
- *Peter and John - pastoral issues

* Non-Pauline Epistles

- *Vision of the end times
- *Uses symbolism and imagery from Daniel, which was in itself, imagery from a different age
- *Read with care ... and a good commentary

* Revelation 1 - 20

*Pointers in:

- * "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; (Isaiah 65 also similar in 66)
- * Nation against nation ... famines and earthquakes ... beginning of the birth pangs (Matthew 24.8)
- * Whole creation has been groaning in labour pains (Romans 8. 22)
- * Birth pangs not death pangs

*The New Creation

*What actually happens?

- * ' .. The holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven ... see the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples and God himself will be with them; ...'
- * Heaven comes to earth, not we go to heaven! (Revelation 21)

*The New Creation

- * 'Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven' (Lords Prayer)
- * Rest in peace and rise in glory

*The New Creation

- * We are still waiting for the New Creation
- * That's why we are still meant to be working with God in restoring those broken relationships

*So where are we in this story?

*The relationships between:

- * God and people - the personal relationship
- * Different people - the social and political relationship
- * Ourselves - physical and psychological healing
- * God people and creation - the environmental relationship

*So where are we in this story?