

# Why Bible?

## Week 3 | Bible in 27

### BOTTOM LINE

God's story of redemption The New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. Everything in the Old Testament points to the revelation of Jesus in the New Testament. mankind is captured in the journals of the Old Testament.

### GOAL OF THE GROUP

We will walk through the entire New Testament. It is comprised of 27 books written by 9 authors over 100 years. The first 4 books introduce Jesus and announce the good news. The book of Acts shows us that through the Holy Spirit, God empowers Jesus followers to spread the life and love of Jesus out into the world. The next 21 books are letters written to new churches. The final book is a letter of challenge and comfort written to seven churches about the end times.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there a book you loved so much you read it more than once? Share the book and why you read it multiple times.
2. The New Testament begins with the people waiting with expectations of what God will do. They know His prophecies concerning a suffering servant who will one day save the world from their sins. The New Testament can be broken down into 7 images. Read through these and reflect on last week when we discussed the Bible as a love letter from God. What is God saying to you through this next part of His story? Where do you see yourself in His story?
  - a. **Jesus** – The gospels (the first four books) are personal accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus. They are filled with insight into Jesus as God's solution to the sin problem of man.
  - b. **Cross** – Jesus confronts the dark evil that lures us into selfishness, violence and death. He overcomes evil by dying on the cross. Here He lives out what He taught: non-violence, forgiveness and self-giving love are the most powerful things in the universe.
  - c. **Empty Tomb** – Jesus predicted His own death and resurrection. He conquers death and claims the ultimate victory over sin and death. His resurrection reveals that we will be resurrected too.
  - d. **Holy Spirit** – After Jesus ascends to the Father, He sends the Holy Spirit which now allows humans to be filled with the supernatural power of God.
  - e. **Church** – God's plan to reach the world with the good news of Jesus is a community of Christ followers who love one another and love their neighbors.
  - f. **You've Got Mail** – Paul sends letters to the churches he started. These letters teach that we can leave our slavery and be liberated to a new life. We can leave our old person behind and live as a new creation in Christ.
  - g. **Heaven** – What God started in Eden will be completed in a new heaven and new earth. It won't be like back in Eden, but better than Eden.
3. In what ways can reading the Bible benefit you? What would motivate you to read it regularly?
4. Has reading the Bible ever helped you realize something about your life? Describe the experience. What could have happened if you had stayed on a different course?

"The Bible, God's inerrant Word, is forever true whether or not anyone reads or believes it; but it becomes of value to you when you get hold of it for yourself. Never leave a passage of Scripture until it has said something to you."

-Robert A. Cook



## TRY THIS

The gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) reveal the *person* of Jesus, the *power* of Jesus, and the *preaching* of Jesus. The entire Old Testament story is connected to its conclusion in the person of Jesus. How well do you know Jesus? Have you read the gospels to discover who He truly is? Is this the year that get to know Him rather than just know about Him?

*To know God, you've got to understand the Bible.*

*To understand the Bible, you've got to learn about Jesus.*

*To learn about Jesus, you've got to read the Gospels.*



# Why Bible?

## Week 1 | Change Is Coming

### BOTTOM LINE

God desires to change us and He often does that through His Word.

### GOAL OF THE GROUP

The true purpose of reading and studying the Bible is for life change. The question is not how many times you have gone through the Bible, but how many times the Bible has gone through you. God desires to transform our lives and He does that through the Living Word (Jesus) and the Written Word (Scripture).

### SCRIPTURE

2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21, and Hebrews 4:12

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Share:** Who do you know that is a complete skeptic? Share who comes to mind and their impact on you.
- David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group, outlines the most significant trends from a six year study done from 2011-2016. First and foremost, "increased skepticism." People have questions about the origins, relevance and authority of Scripture, and the steady rise of skepticism is creating an unfriendly cultural atmosphere. In a society that respects science and rationalism, it is increasingly difficult to accept that an eclectic assortment of ancient stories, poems, sermons, prophecies, and letters written over the course of 3,000 years is the sacred "Word of God".
  - In 2011 10% of Americans qualified as skeptics of the Bible. In 2016, that number had more than doubled. Does this surprise you? Why or why not?
  - Many Americans think the Bible is actually harmful and that people who live by its principles are religious extremists. What barriers does this posture create for those that believe the Bible is truth?
- Kensington was founded on the strong belief that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. We believe "The Bible (both Old and New Testaments) is the Word of God, written by men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write down exactly what God wanted to communicate to us." **Read 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20-21 and Discuss:**
  - Paul uses the words "God breathed" to state that the words of our Bible originated with God Himself. They were written down by authors, but in a supernatural action, these words are from the very mouth of God. Does hearing that the words of Scripture are the words of God give you confidence or fuel skepticism? Why?
  - Compare 2 Timothy 3:16 to 2 Peter 1:21. What role does the Holy Spirit play in both the original writing of Scripture and our study of it today?
- Skeptics say that the Bible isn't reliable compared to the original documents. However, there are several methods used to test the reliability of the ancient literature. The amazing thing about the Bible is that it is one unfolding story line, even though it was written by several authors. **Read Hebrews 4:12 and Discuss:**
  - The Bible is God's pursuit of mankind. God wants us to use His Word to change us. The purpose of God's Word is the transformation of our hearts and ultimately our lives. How is God currently pursuing you?
  - If God uses His Word to preserve our faith and equip us for action, then it is essential for each one of us. Why, then, would we ever neglect reading Scripture?

The Bible is not a dead, archaic book that does not relate to modern life.

The Bible is alive with truths to transform your life.

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## TRY THIS

*The Bible contains the overall story of God and His pursuit of mankind. There is a flow from beginning to end. The Bible reveals the plan of God to restore and redeem us back to His original creation intent for us. From God's creation intent for us, to our rebellion, to His redemption and forgiveness through Jesus, to our future glorious eternity, the Bible unveils the mystery of our purpose. What did God reveal to you through this group discussion? Pray about the confusion and doubts you may feel. Write down in your journal what you hear God respond.*



# Why Bible?

## Week 2 | Bible in 39

### BOTTOM LINE

God's story of redemption for mankind is captured in the journals of the Old Testament.

### GOAL OF THE GROUP

We will walk through all 39 books of the Old Testament with an overview of God's story of redemption of mankind. This journey starts with the creation and fall of man in the book of Genesis and concludes with 400 years of silence after the book of Malachi and the wait for the promised Messiah in the New Testament.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If you are a reader, describe the last book you really enjoyed. What was it about the book that pulled you in and kept you engaged?
2. The Old Testament is not written chronologically, but rather it flows like a story. It is comprised of 39 books written by 28 authors over 2,000 years. Are you surprised that the Old Testament could be a flowing story given these details? Why or why not?
3. The story of the Old Testament can be broken down into 10 images. Read through each one and share what comes to mind. Whether or not you've studied the Old Testament in the past consider that the New Testament has its foundation in the Old Testament, yet most evangelical churches teach from the New Testament. It is very important to understand the Old Testament.
  - a. **Apple** – The beginning starts with the creation and fall of man. God made us, gave us a choice, we failed, and His journey to redeem all of us begins.
  - b. **Father Abraham Had Many Sons** – God uses these men to father an amazing group even though they are sinners. God uses us as well when we say yes to Him.
  - c. **Broken Chains** – God uses Moses to lead Israel to freedom. He gives Moses the 10 Commandments. Today we might think God's laws are restrictive, yet if we live by these laws we find life.
  - d. **Real Estate Contract** – God brings Israel to the Promised Land, but they wander for 40 years because they do not obey God's instruction. Partial obedience is still disobedience.
  - e. **Kings** – God gives his people a king to fulfill their repeated request, but earthly kings can be tempted and make bad decisions. God never leads us into temptation. How we handle and negotiate temptation will determine the course of our life and legacy.
  - f. **Crown Split** – Mass disobedience to God's commandments leads to division within the country of Israel. When we seek a king other than God, we live divided lives.
  - g. **Eviction** – The prophets were the mouthpiece of God. Persia captures God's people but allows some back to Jerusalem to rebuild the city walls. God is our master builder and healer no matter the circumstances.
  - h. **U Turn** – The people return to Jerusalem for a time of rebuilding and renovating. When we are not living for God, we are living under a curse.
  - i. **God's Phone Is On Silent** – God is silent for 400 years. This silence is the time between the Old Testament prophets and the arrival of Jesus in the New Testament. However, God is never "silent", He is always active, involved and working to accomplish His will in our world.
4. The Bible is like a love letter from God. Read through the words on the following page. God reveals His character in every book of the Old Testament. What is God saying to you through this His story?

"Reading the Bible generates life. It produces change. It heals hurts. It builds character. It transforms circumstances. It imparts joy. It overcomes adversity. It defeats temptation. It infuses hope. It releases power. It cleanses the mind."  
-Rick Warren



## TRY THIS

*The Bible Project (thebibleproject.com) is where visual storytelling meets the Bible. Watch two videos that explore the origins, context, and purpose of the Bible: Episode 1 "What Is the Bible?"*

*(thebibleproject.com/explore/how-to-read-the-bible/) introduces you to a condensed history of how the Bible came into existence, and the different forms of the Bible in the Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Christian traditions. Episode 2 "How To Read the Bible"*

*(thebibleproject.com/explore/how-to-read-the-bible/) summarizes the overall story of the Bible as a series of crossroad decisions.*



## God in the Old Testament

Wherever you look in the Old Testament you see God.

<b>GENESIS</b>	He is our <b>CREATOR</b>
<b>EXODUS</b>	He is our <b>DELIVERER</b>
<b>LEVITICUS</b>	He is our <b>HIGH PRIEST</b>
<b>NUMBERS</b>	He is our <b>PRESENCE</b>
<b>DEUTERONOMY</b>	He is our <b>PROMISE KEEPER</b>
<b>JOSHUA</b>	He is our <b>CONQUERER</b>
<b>JUDGES</b>	He is our <b>WAY</b>
<b>RUTH</b>	He is our <b>REDEEMER</b>
<b>1 and 2 SAMUEL</b>	He is our <b>PROPHET</b>
<b>1 and 2 KINGS</b>	He is our <b>KING</b>
<b>1 and 2 CHRONICLES</b>	He is still our <b>REIGNING KING</b>
<b>EZRA</b>	He is our <b>LAW GIVER</b>
<b>NEHEMIAH</b>	He is our <b>BUILDER</b>
<b>ESTHER</b>	He is our <b>SAVIOR</b>
<b>JOB</b>	He is our <b>HEALER</b>
<b>PSALMS</b>	He is our <b>WORSHIP</b>
<b>PROVERBS</b>	He is our <b>WISDOM</b>
<b>ECCLESIASTES</b>	He is our <b>LIFE</b>
<b>SONG OF SONGS</b>	He is our <b>LOVER OF OUR SOUL</b>
<b>ISAIAH</b>	He is our <b>PRINCE OF PEACE</b>
<b>JEREMIAH</b>	He is our <b>LIVING WATER</b>
<b>LAMENTATIONS</b>	He is our <b>COMFORTER</b>
<b>EZEKIEL</b>	He is our <b>ONLY HOPE</b>
<b>DANIEL</b>	He is the <b>MAN IN THE FIRE WITH US</b>
<b>HOSEA</b>	He is our <b>FAITHFUL SPOUSE</b>
<b>JOEL</b>	He is our <b>DREAM GIVER</b>
<b>AMOS</b>	He is our <b>DEFENDER</b>
<b>OBADIAH</b>	He is our <b>PROTECTOR</b>
<b>JONAH</b>	He is our <b>UNIFIER</b>
<b>MICAH</b>	He is our <b>MESSIAH</b>
<b>NAHUM</b>	He is our <b>WAY THROUGH</b>
<b>HABAKKUK</b>	He is our <b>EVANGELIST</b>
<b>ZEPHANIAH</b>	He is our <b>TRUE GOD</b>
<b>HAGGAI</b>	He is our <b>RENEWER</b>
<b>ZECHARIAH</b>	He is our <b>RESTORER</b>
<b>MALACHI</b>	He is our <b>FATHER</b>