

Sermon:
"The Bible:
Weird &
Wonderful,
Part 1"



Why a Bible Survey?

- Statistically, members of Presbyterian churches are not as familiar with the Bible as those from other traditions.
- In 2011, the median PC(USA) test taker scored 29 correct out of 40 questions about the Bible.

Why a Bible Survey?

Because the Bible is really interesting and wonderful.

Because it's the best-selling, most widely-distributed book, but not as well-read.

Because it's really important in the Christian faith!

**Okay fine.
Because it's gonna be fun.**

The Plan

Today: Prologue / (re)-Introduction to the Bible

Next Week: Overview – Basic layout of the Bible

The Pentateuch / The Torah

Sept. 27 – Pentateuch 1 – the stories

Oct. 4 – [Surgery week; out of pulpit]

Oct. 11 – Pentateuch 2 – “the boring stuff”

History

Oct. 18 – Pre-Kings History

Oct. 25 – Kings of Israel and Judah

Nov. 1 – Exile and Return

Nov. 8 – Poetry & Wisdom Literature

Nov. 15 – Minor Prophets (Book of the Twelve)

Nov. 22 – Major Prophets

Advent Interlude: Jesus in the Old Testament

Nov. 29 – (Advent 1) – Jesus in the Pentateuch

Dec. 6 – Jesus in the Books of History

Dec. 13 – Jesus in Wisdom and Poetry

Dec. 20 – Jesus in the Prophets

The Plan

Jan. 3 – (Christmas 2) – Gospels

Jan. 10 – Paul's Letters

Jan. 17 – Other Letters

Jan. 24 – Revelation, Ezekiel, Daniel, and
End Times Conspiracy Theories

**Also a fun mid-week
“Bonus Content”
video on the church’s
Facebook page.**

What is the Bible?

What ISN'T the Bible?

What ISN'T the Bible?

- **Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth** (BIBLE, get it?) / an instruction manual for life.
- Univocal
- A modern history or science textbook
- A love letter from God.

What is the Bible?

What is the Bible?

- **An anthology – a group of smaller books brought together.**
- **Divine self-revelation – God’s way of showing us what God is like**
- **Used by the Holy Spirit to reveal God’s heart to us today.**

Test Your Bible Knowledge

How many books are in the Bible?

A. 24

B. 66

C. 73

D. 81

The Canon of Scripture



The Canon of Scripture

ΚΑΝΩΝ



What's authoritative

Test Your Bible Knowledge

How many books are in the Bible?

 A. 24

 B. 66

 C. 73

 D. 81

Test Your Bible Knowledge

How many books are in the Bible?

- ✓ A. 24 – Hebrew canon
- ✓ B. 66 – Protestant canon
- ✓ C. 73 – Catholic canon
- ✓ D. 81 - Ethiopian Orthodox
Tewahedo Church

Test Your Bible Knowledge

How many chapters are in the
Protestant canon?



A. 260

B. 402

C. 666

D. 1000

Test Your Bible Knowledge

How did the Bible get chapter numbers?

- A. They were in the original Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic.
- B. They were added by St. Jerome in 382
-  C. They were added by Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1227
- D. King James I asked his translators to include them for ease of use.

Test Your Bible Knowledge

How did the Bible get verse numbers?

- A. They were in the original manuscripts
- B. They were added by St. Jerome in 382
-  C. A rabbi, Nathan divided the Old Testament (1448), and Stephanus divided the New Testament in 1555
- D. Added by King James I

How did we end up with our current canon?

- A. It is based on what books the early church fathers treated as scripture
- B. The Council of Rome (382 AD) published an authoritative list.
- C. Martin Luther removed books including Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation.
-  D. All of the above, but we kept four that Martin Luther removed.

So how did we get here?

How did we get the *content* of the books, chapters, and verses that make up our canon? Where did it come from?

So how did we get here?

II Peter 1:21

...no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

So how did we get here?

1. **Something happened.** Somebody got a divine revelation; someone believed they had encountered God.
2. They told other people,
3. Others **recognized it**, too.
3. Somebody wrote it down.
4. More people recognized this and copied it.

Wait, where's God in all that?

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What, you were
expecting
golden plates?

Confession of 1967 (C) (2)

The one sufficient revelation of God is Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate, to whom the Holy Spirit bears **unique and authoritative witness through the Holy Scriptures**, which are received and obeyed as the word of God written.

Confession of 1967

The Scriptures are not a witness among others, but the witness without parallel.

The church has received the books of the Old and New Testaments as prophetic and apostolic testimony in which it hears the word of God and by which its faith and obedience are nourished and regulated.

Confession of 1967

The Scriptures, given under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are nevertheless the words of men [and women], conditioned by the language, thought forms, and literary fashions of the places and times at which they were written.

Confession of 1967

They reflect views of life, history, and the cosmos which were then current. The church, therefore, has an obligation to approach the Scriptures with literary and historical understanding.

Confession of 1967

As God has spoken [God's] word in diverse cultural situations, **the church is confident that [God] will continue to speak through the Scriptures** in a changing world and in every form of human culture.

**...the church is confident that [God] will
continue to speak through the Scriptures...**

This week's

Bonus Content

(facebook.com/fairplainpc):

Things That Are Not in the Bible

And finally...

One: What is this book?

All: A Bible.

One: What is a Bible?

All: A library of much smaller books.

One: Was it written in English?

**All: No, it was written in ancient Greek,
Hebrew, and Aramaic, and translated into
many other languages.**

One: When was it finished?

**All: The last book was written at least 1800
years ago.**

One: Who wrote the books?

**All: Lots of different people
over a very long time.**

One: What are the books about?

**All: Some of the ways people have
encountered God.**

One: How is the Bible different from other books?

**All: It tells us about Jesus
in a way no other book does.**

One: Why is it called the Word of God?

**All: Because God still speaks to us
through it.**