

THE
BIBLE
for
GROWN-UPS

EHills.Church

This Book Belongs To

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joining us on this journey.
Scan the QR code.



INTRODUCTION

When we were kids, we probably all had a big book full of words that were tough to pronounce and names we couldn't quite get right. And we were told it was all true and that we should try our best to follow it. But then we grew up, and things didn't feel as simple anymore. Life hit us with a few bumps, and our understanding of the Bible has changed too. We learned the Bible stories, but we never really learned the story of the Bible.

So what happens when “because the Bible says so” just doesn't cut it anymore?

That's where our **Bible for Grown-Ups** series comes in. It's a way to approach the Bible that starts somewhere different, not just “in the beginning...”

Over the next few weeks, we'd love to invite you to:

- *Join us on Sundays*
- *Pick up a Bible for Grown-Ups Guide*
- *Join a Discussion Group (or talk about it with someone in your world—just start a conversation!)*

Take that next step and give it a try. Together, we'll explore how the Bible came to be and how it shines light on and deepens our understanding of its stories.

Looking forward to having you join us on this journey!

Tom

LEAD PASTOR
EHills Church

WEEK ONE

LAST THINGS FIRST

MESSAGE NOTES | 3.23.25

PART 1: LAST THINGS FIRST

INTRODUCTION

PART 1: LAST THINGS FIRST

Most of us know some Bible stories, but very few of us know the story of the Bible. And you may be surprised to discover it's a story that doesn't actually begin in the beginning. It begins with the accounts of a few men who sat down to record the death and resurrection of Jesus. It begins with the words of his followers who were compelled to document the events that had changed everything for them—because they knew it could change everything for us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If you had the chance to read the personal journal of someone whose life has influenced yours, who would you choose? Why would their stories and ideas be meaningful to you?
2. How were you first introduced to the Bible? What people and ideas do you associate with that time?
3. Luke was a first-century Greek doctor who documented the life of Jesus. **Read Luke 1:1–4.** Why do you think it was unusual in ancient times for many people to write about an event? How does Luke describe his purpose in documenting Jesus' life?
4. It's possible you or someone you know left your faith because of something in the Bible. What is the "it" that you or they don't believe? **Read John 20:30–31** to find out the only "it" that really matters. How does John describe his purpose in writing? What do you think John meant by "have life in his name"?

PART 1: LAST THINGS FIRST CONTINUED

5. If John's account of Jesus' life was all you had, what would change about how you approach Jesus and encourage others to move toward him?

MOVING FORWARD

Many of us carried our childhood understanding of the Bible into adulthood. Faced with questions we couldn't answer and doubts we couldn't ignore, we walked away. If that's your story, there's another approach—one that John offers in his personal account of the life of Jesus. And if this account was all we had, it would be enough. This week, approach your faith in a new way by reading John's account of Jesus' life as though it was the only Scripture you had.

READING PLAN

DAY 1

- John 1
- John 2
- John 3

DAY 2

- John 4
- John 5
- John 6

DAY 3

- John 7
- John 8
- John 9

DAY 4

- John 10
- John 11
- John 12

DAY 5

- John 13
- John 14
- John 15

DAY 6

- John 16
- John 17
- John 18

DAY 7

- John 19
- John 20
- John 21

WEEK TWO

IN THE BEGINNING

MESSAGE NOTES | 3.30.25

PART 2: IN THE BEGINNING

INTRODUCTION

PART 2: IN THE BEGINNING

“In the beginning...” can be a loaded phrase—one that forces us into debate and doubt. But maybe we’re missing the point of Genesis 1:1—a point Moses made to a world where the violence and injustice of the gods justified and legitimized the violence and injustice of human rulers. Moses introduced a radically different, unparalleled, and untested worldview.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Read Genesis 1:1.** What do you think about when you read this sentence? Have you or someone you know tried to explore faith by using “In the beginning” as a starting point? What obstacles come with that approach?
2. In Genesis, Moses is not trying to explain how God created the heavens and the earth. Moses is making the case that God (not the gods) created the universe. How does this distinction change the way someone can approach reading Genesis?
3. Do you see anything in nature or life that supports the idea God created the universe with purpose and intent? What would change if you embraced the idea that everyone is here on purpose for a purpose?
4. Many civilizations had creation stories that supported the idea that the human race was an afterthought of the gods. Consequently, individuals had no rights, hope, or intrinsic value. How did those beliefs shape the cultures of that time? Do you see evidence of that kind of view now?

PART 2: IN THE BEGINNING CONTINUED

5. How would you define the word “dignity”?

6. In the beginning God decided every man, woman, and child would be born with dignity because they were made in his image. If you took this perspective on the purpose of Genesis, what would change about:

- *How you view the Bible?*
- *Your faith or your willingness to explore faith?*
- *How you view yourself?*
- *How you see and treat others?*

MOVING FORWARD

You’re here on purpose for a purpose. You are not the result of a cosmic conflict between the gods. You were not created by the universe. God wanted image-bearers who could know him and one another. And in the beginning we are introduced to the God who saves, redeems, delivers, and never gives up on us. He gave us freedom to choose, and he honors our choices. This week, read Genesis 1. This time, though, ask God to help you see this Scripture not as an introduction to how the world was created, but as an introduction to the one who created it.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE

Seven Days That Divide the World by *John C. Lennox*

WEEK THREE

THE OLD TESTAMENT

MESSAGE NOTES | 4.6.25

PART 3: THE OLD TESTAMENT

INTRODUCTION

PART 3: THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament chronicles God's redemptive, sequential activity in history. It's a fabulous, gritty, epic history of the Hebrew people in which, over and over, Israel is reminded that they are a divine means to an end. So, maybe instead of seeing the Old Testament as a spiritual guidebook or a storyline that needs to be tidied up, we should see it as something even better: the history of God preparing the world for a Savior.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Grab some pens and notecards for this group discussion!

1. Discuss a story or idea from the Old Testament that someone tried to tidy up and soften the edges of to serve their practical purpose in teaching you. What's the difference in seeing the Old Testament as a spiritual guidebook versus a history of the Hebrew nation?

2. Write each of the following words on separate notecards and put them in order where everyone can see them.

Abraham, Moses, Sinai Covenant, Kings, Temple, Prophets

As a group, discuss a few words and phrases that you associate with the subject of each card. Write your answers on the cards.

3. Occasionally, a prophet would speak beyond their historical context to a future day when God would do something through a nation for all nations. **Read Isaiah 53:5–11.** What is the most meaningful image to you in this passage?

PART 3: THE OLD TESTAMENT CONTINUED

4. Many people criticize the seemingly unsophisticated nature of the Sinai covenant and use it as a reason to abandon faith. In actuality, the Hebrew nation, because of the guidelines in Leviticus, was way ahead of its time. Which of the following ideas is most surprising or meaningful to you? What do these ideas change about the way you see God? What do they change about your view of the purpose of the Old Testament?

- *The covenant represented a moral and civil code that ascribed inherent dignity to every person.*
- *The covenant included a sexual ethic that protected the weak and vulnerable.*
- *The covenant viewed humanity as the pinnacle of creation because every person is made in God's image.*
- *Women, servants, foreigners, and children all fared better under Hebrew law than did their counterparts in the surrounding nations.*

5. On a notecard, write “Jesus,” and put the notecard after Prophets, in line with the others you’ve already made so that everyone can see them in sequential order. As a group, write words or phrases you associate with Jesus on the notecard. Now take the other cards, put them in a pile and place them to the side with only the Jesus card showing.

6. **Read Galatians 4:4–5.** What does it mean that Jesus would redeem those under the law? What is different about the relationship we can have with God versus the relationship an ancient Jew could have with him?

PART 3: THE OLD TESTAMENT CONTINUED

MOVING FORWARD

The storyline of the Old Testament should cause us to drop to our knees in gratitude. There's no need to tidy it up and sand off the rough edges. It's not a spiritual guidebook. It's the story of our God, who waded into the mess in order to write a story of redemption. This week, write **Galatians 4:4–5** on a notecard and think about what these verses mean for you.

WEEK FOUR

FOR THE WORLD

MESSAGE NOTES | 4.13.25

PART 4: FOR THE WORLD

INTRODUCTION

PART 4: FOR THE WORLD

The Bible did not create Christianity. Christianity is the result of an event (the resurrection) that created a movement (the church) that produced sacred and reliable texts that were collected and bound into a book (the Bible). But how do we approach not being at peace with everything we read in the Bible? Paul—the apostle, Pharisee, author, preacher, and church planter—offers us clarity and confidence to move forward.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the following descriptions of Paul. What about him do you identify with? What's hard to relate to?

Scholar: *Paul studied under the most esteemed Jewish teachers. He was an expert in the law.*

Skeptic: *Paul initially spent all of his energy attempting to discredit, undermine, and hurt the followers of Jesus.*

Convert: *Paul went from being a law-abiding Pharisee to a Jesus-follower in a single day.*

Leader: *Paul taught, wrote to, prayed for, chastised, and financially and emotionally invested in the people he led.*

Writer: *The letters to the churches Paul planted help explain in practical terms what it looks like to follow Jesus. His writing has shaped the thought of Western civilization.*

Thinker: *Paul thought deeply about life and its most difficult questions. He cared deeply about leading people to think the new way Jesus came to introduce.*

Sufferer: *Paul experienced extraordinary loss and pain. At times he struggled financially, physically, and emotionally.*

PART 4: FOR THE WORLD CONTINUED

2. Paul wrote much of what we call the New Testament in his 13 letters. What about Paul's life gives him the credibility to discuss faith in Jesus?

3. In his writing, Paul explains the relationship we should see between the parts of the Bible. And if he could have been there the day we got our first Bibles (as children or adults), he would have given us two pieces of advice:

- *Read the Old Testament for inspiration and motivation but not application.*
- *Take your application cues from Jesus' new covenant command.*

What Old Testament applications are you stuck on? What old expectations and standards can you let go of because of Jesus' new covenant? **Read Ephesians 5:21 and 4:32.** Because of Jesus' new covenant command, what should be your primary focus as you live your life? How are you doing on this currently?

4. Paul authenticates the most important event recorded in the Bible—the resurrection. **Read 1 Corinthians 15:1, 3-7.**

- *What important details are recorded here about the events immediately following the resurrection?*
- *What is the most comforting or encouraging image in this passage for you?*

5. The story of the Bible reminds us that the question of utmost importance is not, Are you at peace with everything in the Bible? The most important question is, Have you found peace with God whose Son died for your sin and was seen?

PART 4: FOR THE WORLD CONTINUED

6. What would change for you if you began your faith with the event of the resurrection like the early followers did?

They didn't have a Bible. They had:

- *Christ died for our sin and was buried; He rose from the dead and was seen.*

Can you revisit or begin your faith here too?

MOVING FORWARD

The story of the Bible is extraordinary. It's a story with personal implications for all of us because of what Jesus did for all of us. We can have clarity regarding our relationship with the Hebrew Bible and we can have confidence regarding the event of the resurrection. This week, think about what old ways of thinking you can let go of in order to make room for a better way—the way that was established before the Bible existed; the way that relies on Jesus rising from the dead and being seen by men and women who believed and followed.

RESOURCES

THE BIBLE'S METANARRATIVE

The *metanarrative* is the over-arching story of the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. Although the Bible is made up of 66 different books, they collectively tell one story of creation, the fall, redemption, and the final restoration of all things.

CREATION

Genesis tells that in the beginning, God created all things ex nihilo, or out of nothing, by his spoken Word. He created the world and all that is in it. His crowning work was the creation of humans made in His own image (Imago Dei).

FALL

Man and woman were created for fellowship with God, but Adam and Eve broke that fellowship by choosing to disobeying His command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The punishment was death, bringing a curse to all of creation, and now we each have that same sin nature that deserves death.

REDEMPTION

Jesus, the Son of God, came into the world to restore us to fellowship with the Father. He lived a sinless life, then offered Himself as a sacrifice by dying on the cross to pay for our sins. Those who turn from their sin (repent) and put their faith in His death and resurrection are made right with the Father and receive eternal life.

RESTORATION

While relationship with the Father is restored for those who put their faith in Jesus, the world is still lost in sin and suffers the effects of evil. Jesus will one day return to destroy the Devil and restore all things. Evil will be judged, creation will be restored, and believers will live forever and reign with Him.

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

OLD TESTAMENT

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy
- Joshua
- Judges
- Ruth
- 1 Samuel
- 2 Samuel
- 1 Kings
- 2 Kings
- 1 Chronicles
- 2 Chronicles
- Ezra
- Nehemiah
- Esther
- Job
- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Solomon
- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Lamentations
- Ezekiel
- Daniel
- Hosea
- Joel
- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi

NEW TESTAMENT

- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke
- John
- Acts
- Romans
- 1 Corinthians
- 2 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians
- 1 Thessalonians
- 2 Thessalonians
- 1 Timothy
- 2 Timothy
- Titus
- Philemon
- Hebrews
- James
- 1 Peter
- 2 Peter
- 1 John
- 2 John
- 3 John
- Jude
- Revelation

GENRES IN THE BIBLE

LAW

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy

HISTORY

- Joshua
- Judges
- Ruth
- 1 & 2 Samuel
- 1 & 2 Kings
- 1 & 2 Chronicles
- Ezra
- Nehemiah
- Esther
- Acts (NT)

POETRY

- Psalms
- Song of Solomon
- Lamentations

WISDOM

- Job
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes

MAJOR PROPHETS

- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Lamentations
- Ezekiel
- Daniel

MINOR PROPHETS

- Hosea
- Joel
- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi

EPISTLES

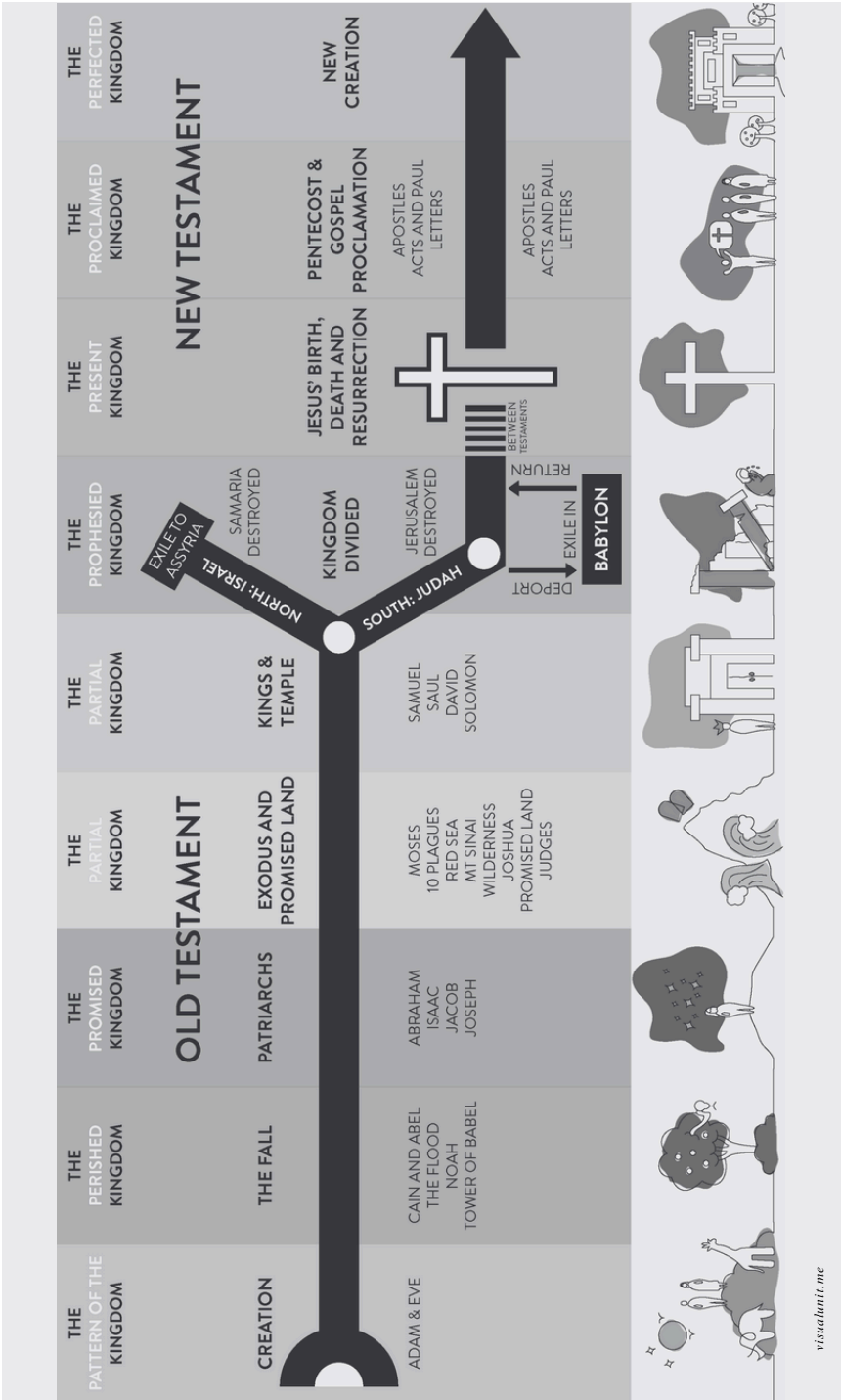
- Romans
- 1 & 2 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians
- 1 & 2 Thessalonians
- 1 & 2 Timothy
- Titus
- Philemon
- Hebrews
- James
- 1 & 2 Peter
- 1, 2 & 3 John
- Jude

GOSPELS

- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke
- John

PROPHECY

- Revelation



Word for Word

Formal Equivalent

Literal

Form Based

Thought for Thought

Dynamic Equivalent

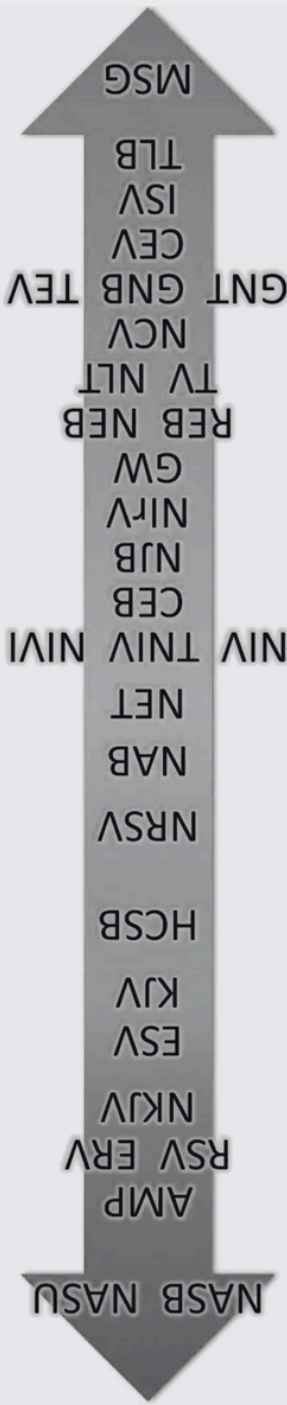
Paraphrase

Paraphrase

Functional Equivalent

Paraphrase

Meaning Based



AMP - Amplified Bible (12)
 CEB^{AA} - Common English Bible (7)
 CEV^{AA} - Contemporary English Version (5)
 ERV^A - Easy to Read Version (3.5)
 ESV^A - English Standard Version (9.5)
 GNB* - Good News Bible (6)
 GNT - Good News Translation (6)
 GW - Gods Word (4.5)
 HCSB - Holman Christian Standard (8)
 ISV^{AA} - International Standard Version (8.5)
 KJV^A - King James Version (1.3)
 MSG - The Message (4.5)
 NAB* - New American Bible (7)

NASB - New American Standard Bible (11)
 NASU - New American Standard Update 1995 (11)
 NCV^{AA} - New Century Version (5)
 NEB^{AA} - New English Bible (7)
 NET^{AA} - New English Translation (7)
 NIRV - New International Readers Version (3.5)
 NIV - New International Version (8)
 NIV2011^{AA} - New International Version 2011 (8)
 NIVI^{AA} - New International Version Inclusive (8)
 NJB* - New Jerusalem Bible (7.5)
 NKJV - New King James Version (9)
 NLT^{AA} - New Living Translation (6.5)
 NRSV^{AA} - New Revised Standard Version (10.5)

REB - Revised English Bible (7)
 RSV^{*} - Revised Standard Version (11)
 TEV^{*} - Today's English Version (6)
 TLB - The Living Bible (8.5)
 TNIV^A - Today's New International Version (7.5)
 TV - The Voice (7)

^{AA} No gender neutral language for God, moderate inclusive language for man.
^A Gender neutral language
^{*} Apocrypha available or included
^(#) Grade reading level

TIPS

FOR FACILITATING A GROUP



SAMPLE READING PLAN ON YOUVERSION



THE
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