



The Big Picture: A Walk Through The Bible

Take Home Work

Welcome to the Winter 2024 Community Group season!

During this season, we will be exploring the Bible - what it is, how to read it, some of the big stories, and more. The goal for this series, on Sundays and in our groups, is that we would be more equipped to *know* what the Bible says and then also to *go and do* what the Bible is teaching us.

Our sermon series for these next 8 weeks is called "The Big Picture: A Walk Through the Bible". In our groups, we will be following along, but also practicing what we learn. Every week, we'll have a passage that we will take and look at in our groups and on our own.

Along with that, there will be a page to take home with a passage and either questions to answer or some way to practice reading a certain part of the Bible.

Reading the Bible is a life-long learning experience! And we can't do it on our own. If you get stuck or have questions, reach out to someone in your group for help! The Bible is meant to be read in community, not just on our own. If you're new to studying the Bible, don't worry if you don't understand everything right away. If you've been studying the Bible for a while, try to look at the passages with fresh eyes and consider walking alongside someone who might be newer to the Bible.

Series Overview

1. Week 1 - Preliminary Reflection
2. Week 2 - The Big Picture Introduction
3. Week 3 - The Gospels
4. Week 4 - The Epistles (Letters)
5. Week 5 - Old Testament History
6. Week 6 - Old Testament Poetry & Prophecy
7. Week 7 - Revelation
8. Week 8 - The Big Picture Summary

Welcome to Week 1 - Jan 14

The Bible is a collection of books written over the course of two thousand years by multiple different authors, scribes, and editors. The different books are written in different genres and points of view.

The Bible is the story of God's people. It's also written to address the big questions of humanity, questions that we ask today and questions that have been asked for all of human history - Who are we? Why are we here? Who is God? Why are things the way they are? How did things come to be? What are we supposed to do?

Read

Read Psalm 1 a couple times this week. Try to rewrite or paraphrase it in your own words.

Questions

As we prepare for this series, it is important for us all to recognize where we are. This week, the questions are about *you*.

1. What are your questions about the Bible?

2. What has your experience been reading the Bible?

3. What do you hope to learn in this series?

The Gospels - Week 3 / Jan 28

There are four gospels. The four books we have that we call “The Gospels” or “The Synoptic (common-view) Gospels” are four distinct narratives of the life of Jesus. They are where we meet Jesus, where we see what He did, where we learn about His teachings, where we hear about His interactions with the world around Him. They are where we learn about Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.

Read

The Gospel of Mark is only 16 chapters long. If you read 2-3 chapters a day, you can finish it in a week. This might be a challenge, but it’s worth trying to do it. If you’re not a big reader, consider an audiobook version.

Reflect: Mark 4:1-9

1. What is this passage trying to say? (What?)

2. What does this passage mean? (So What?)

3. What is this passage saying to me? (Say What?)

4. What should I do next? (Now What?)

Epistles - Week 4 / Feb 4

Watch

Go to: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/colossians/> and watch the video

Read: Colossians

Watch the video first and then read Colossians all at once or over the course of the week

Reflect

(Note: These questions are taken directly from The Bible Project page linked above)

1. How does Paul talk about Jesus in his letter?
2. How would you describe the difference between existing in the “old humanity” and living in Jesus’ “new humanity”?
3. Compare Colossians 2:1-10 to Genesis 3:1-8 How are the concepts of deception, knowledge, and wisdom described in each passage? Notice the repetition of sight in each passage. How does Eve see? What does Paul say we should see instead?
4. Humans often feel like they are missing something in life. What is one example of how deception can exploit that feeling in order to persuade people to rely on things other than God? With this in mind, how do you think Paul’s message in Colossians 2:8-10 helps us escape the serpent’s deceptions and hollow philosophies?

History and the Old Testament - Week 5 / Feb 11

The Hebrew Scriptures, what we call the Old Testament, is full of so many different types of books. Even within those books, there are many different genres.

History in the Old Testament and ancient times was written differently than what we would think about today with, say, a history textbook. Ancient historians wrote more narratively, not just sharing the facts about events. When we read the Old Testament, we aren't necessarily watching a video feed of events unfolding. It's the story of God's covenant with Israel and the world. It's

The narrative of the Old Testament History is telling us the story of God, God's people, and the relationship between them and other people around them. God is the main character of the Old Testament (and New).

Reading Options:

Pick **one** of the following passages:

- Genesis 12-15
- Exodus 2-3
- Numbers 22-24
- 1 Samuel 16-17
- 2 Chronicles 19-20

Reflect:

1. What questions do I have after reading this passage?
2. Who are the characters and what do I not know about them?
3. What does this passage teach me about God?
4. Are there any takeaways for my life in this passage?

Poetry & Prophecy - Week 6 / Feb 18

Assignment

Pick a short Psalm. Read it a couple times, then do one of the following:

- Rewrite the Psalm in your own words
- Write a reflection or response
- Sketch a picture or use the Bible App's image generator feature

The goal is to help you answer these questions:

- How does this make me feel?
- What do I not understand?
- How do I identify with the author?
- What is going on in my life that this applies to?

Recommended Psalms

There are 150 Psalms, it might be hard to pick one.

Here are some recommendations or ask a friend:

- Psalm 1
- Psalm 2
- Psalm 23
- Psalm 51

Example

Psalm 23:1-3

Am I a sheep that I need a shepherd? Does the sheep know of the shepherd?

Can she comprehend? Ah, but my needs are met

What else do I need? But I lay in green pastures

And drink from still water. This is my life. It is restored.

But do I know how? Or why?

Yet this path I am on is right And I did not get on this path alone

They are with me, But more, He has led me.

Revelation & Apocalypse - Week 7 / Feb 25

The book of Revelation is one of the most misunderstood, misinterpreted, and mysterious books in the canon of the Bible. It is controversial, full of fantastical imagery, confusing references, and, most importantly, it is a deeply theological letter that was as important for the Church in the first century as it is for us today.

Revelation is a complicated story of creation and the eternal. There are so many different points of view on this book, some valid, and some dangerous. We, as human beings, innately have a desire to understand what is next, what happens when we die, is this actually the end of the world??? And we put those conceptions onto the book of Revelation in ways that it wasn't meant to be handled.

Revelation really needs to be read as a whole, each part adds to the interpretation and each part doesn't exist in isolation. Additionally, Revelation contains more references to the rest of the Bible than any other book in the Bible. Which means that reading the rest of the Bible significantly helps to understand what Revelation is saying.

For this week, consider the main, central point - Jesus Christ is the King and He has come into creation to establish new creation.

We often hear the word "apocalypse" used to mean the end of time. But, as a literary genre, apocalypse simply means "a revealing". John's Apocalypse is a book that is revealing a layer of reality that has been brought present through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah.

Resources:

- Reading Revelation Responsibly - Michael J Gorman
- The Bible Project - videos, podcasts, and articles in their app or website

Questions

1. What has your experience with the book of Revelation been like? How have you heard it taught? Where do some of our ideas of Revelation come from?

2. Why do you think that Revelation has inspired so much music and art over the centuries?

Read Revelation 1

3. What references to Old or New Testament passages can you identify?

4. What symbols or imagery do you not understand? How can you go about trying to understand them?

Tying it all together - Week 8 / March 3

We've just spent the past seven weeks going over major parts of the story of the Bible. For some, maybe this was all new, for others maybe it was a good reminder. Either way, this series has given us The Big Picture of the story - in no way is it the whole of the story. One thing we hope you've picked up is that studying the Bible is a life-long experience, and it isn't meant to be done alone.

Our encouragement with the following questions would be to get together with someone in your community group and review your answers together.

Questions

1. What questions do I still have?

2. What areas would I like to learn more about?

3. What was something new I learned?

4. What are my next steps?