

# Basic Understanding Of The Bible

## What Is The Bible?

- **Word of God** – that is the commonly accepted phrase that expresses belief and inspiration.
- **Inspired** meant that God or the Spirit of God was at work in the early Christian community through a number of human authors.
- **Divine Self Revelation** reached its climax in Jesus Christ (Heb. 1. 1-2).
  - The **New Testament** is the final witness to the **revelation** from God which focused in Christ.

## How Did The Inspiration Work?

- God is **actively present** in a unique manner in the composition of the biblical books. It is a gift of God's presence to the early Christian (2 Tim 3, 15-17 ; 2 Pt 1, 20-21).
- The **freedom** of the human authors in making use of their own talents and resources in cooperation with the Spirit of God, in composing the sacred books. (Lk 1.1-4 Gal 6.11)
- **Pope Benedict XV**, in the Encyclical Spiritus Paraclitus, wrote that "the individual authors of these Books worked in full freedom under the divine inspiration, each of them in accordance with his individual nature and character.

# Revelation And The Bible

**Revelation** means that God is showing himself to His people by word and act.

This self-revelation took place primarily in history:

1. In the lives of the Patriarchs
  - **Patriarchs** usually refer to the tribal leaders of Israel who lived before the time of Moses (in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, (Act 7:8-9) (Heb.7:4)
2. In the **history of Israel**, the people of God.
3. And finally and the fully, in the **life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ** the Son of God.

# Unity Of The Bible

- The most remarkable feature of the bible is its **unity**.
- The Books were written over a period of at least 1,000 years by human authors
- The Books composition differs greatly depending on the cultural events at that time, the author's education, social standing and their religious perspective.
- There most basic source of the unity and the unifying theme of the bible is:
  - **God himself** - it is the very same God who reveals himself in every page of the Scriptures.
  - The **God, who acts, redeems** and **give love hope to all**.
  - Exp. Gen. 1:1-5 or John 1:1-5

# Translations Of The Old Testament Bible

- The Old Testament was written in Hebrew.
- A few sections were written in Aramaic - a sister language of Hebrew.
- The whole of the Old Testament was translated into Greek about 2 hundred years before Christ.
- The Greek translation was known as the **Septuagint**, meaning "**seventy**" the number of the Jewish scholars who made the translation.
- The **Septuagint** is the translation of the **Pentateuch** or the first 5 books of the Hebrew bible into the Greek language: *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy*
- The Septuagint was used by Christian missionaries among Greek speaking pagans.

## Translations Of The New Testament Bible

- The whole of New Testament was written in **Greek**.
- The Greek language was the most common language in the early church
- The greatest impact on the English-speaking world was the Latin **Vulgate**
- **Vulgate** means "**common**" version done by **St. Jerome** in the latter part of the fourth century AD
- The **Vulgate** is recognized as the best and authentic text in the Catholic Church

# The Bible And History

*The Bible is not just “history “as it happened – it is the story of God in action.*

1. **The Fathers** or the **Patriarchs** at the creation of the world and mankind. (Gen 1:1-ff)
2. **Egypt, Exodus, and Sinai** (1550-1250 B.C.)  
Jacob's people entered Egypt at about the same time foreign people called Hyksos ruled Egypt. After this, the Egyptians expelled the Hyksos in 1550B.C.
  - God called **Moses** in the wilderness of Sinai; he returned to Egypt and was the leader in the mass departure of a number of Hebrews.
  - They became the new people called **Israel** or the **Israelites**.

## The Bible And History (Cont.)

- 3. Conquest, Settlement, and Judges** – (1250- 1030)  
After Moses died, the Israelites was led by Joshua.
- 4. The United Kingdom** (1030 -931 B.C.) Saul was the first king of Israel. After King Saul and the son Jonathan, were killed by the Philistines in battle. Saul's son of Ishbaal was the king in the north and David is the king of the south
- 5. Two kingdoms: Israel and Judah** (937-735 B.C.) – the northern tribes called themselves "**Israel**" who was more important economically and militarily. "**Judah**" is the name of the southern kingdom that lived in the shadow of Israel. Jerusalem was under Judah.
- 6. Judah's Last days** (735-587 B.C.) – Judah's story gained in important as Israel's ended in 735 B.C. Israel and Damascus invaded Judah to try to force it to join them in trying to stop Assyria, a growing Mesopotamian power.

## The Bible And History (Cont.)

- 7. Exiles in Babylon (587-538 B.C.)** – Babylonian Jew exiles were allowed to live as communities and were shown a good deal of freedom, but the Jews did not want to be absorbed by surrounding population and lose their national and religious identity. Elements of God's will that served to set his people apart from their neighbours became important—circumcision, dietary rules, opposition to marriage outside the community, and observance of the Sabbath became central concerns for the devout. These changed the religion of Israel so much that it was now described as "**Jewish**" (from "Judean") instead of being described as "**Israelitic**", as it was before 587 BC.

## The Bible And History (cont.)

- 8. Persian and the Greek Rule in Palestine (538-198 B.C.)**- Cyrus agreed to give the sacred vessels of the temple to those who went home. He also agreed to pay for the building of the temple. He allowed the Jewish captives to return to their homeland in Jerusalem after he led the Persians to ancient world. Cyrus's reign ended in 330 B.C. when he was killed in battle.

The Greek conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great was completed by about 330 B.C. Alexander died in 323 B.C.

# The Bible And History (Cont.)

9. **Maccabean revolt and Hasmonean Independence** – (198-63 BC) The Pharisees and the Sadducees came into being. The Pharisees avoided contact with Gentiles, sinners, and any Jew; therefore they wanted to protect the holiness of the Law.
- The **Pharisees** were Jewish religious party during the time of Jesus. They were strict in obeying the law of Moses and the regulations which had been added to it throughout the centuries.
  - **Sadducees** were the priestly and aristocratic party at Jerusalem that opposed the teachings of the Pharisees. They rejected the traditions of the elders and insisted that the only laws were written in the Law of Moses (the Pentateuch – the 1st five books of the Old Testament)

## The Bible And History (cont.)

### **10. The Romans, the Herods, and Early Christianity**

(63 B.C. – A.D 66) in 63 B.C. the Romans intervened in the growing civil confusion in Palestine and made it part of the Roman province of Syria.

### **11. The Great Revolt, the Destruction of the Temple, and the Second Revolt – (66-135 AD)**

The Roman army fought against the Jews; they seized Jerusalem in AD 70 and utterly destroyed the temple. In AD 132, Judea went into rebellion under Rabbi Aqiba, Eleazar the priest, and Simon ben Kosibah the soldier & political leader. In AD 135, the rebel army was completely defeated.

## How The Bible Came About

- Though the Bible may look like any other book on a writing table or shelf, **it is more like a library in itself** than just another book
- It is a collection of many different writings by several authors and was produced over hundreds years.
- The Bible is **arranged** carefully **according to their topic.**
- **Genesis** is placed first because it deals with the **creation of the world and man's early history,** and not because it was the first Bible books to be written.
- **Revelation** is placed last because it deals with the last things at the end of the world, the final judgment, and the heavenly reign at the end of time.

## How The Bible Came About (cont.)

- The authors of the Old Testament and New Testament books did not think of themselves as professional writers.
- They were members of a Christian community that were especially chosen as the bearer of God's promise.
- The Bible comes from the midst of the community of faith in order to serve the community of faith.

## How Many Books does the Bible have?

Catholic Old Testament books = **46**

Catholic New Testament books = **27**

Total Catholic Bible = 73 books

Protestant Old Testament books = **39**

Protestant New Testament books = **27**

Total Protestant Bible = 66 books

There are 7 books are not recognize by the Protestants:

1. Tobit
2. Judith
3. 1 Maccabees
4. 2 Maccabees
5. Sirach
6. Wisdom
7. Baruch

# What Is A Chapter and a Verse?

- **Chapter** means - experience, event, and episode
  - The Gospel of Matthew has 28 chapters
  - The Gospel of Mark has 16 chapters
  - The Gospel of Luke has 24 chapters
  - The Gospel of John has 21 chapters  
(Ex. Matthew Chapter 22: 37 -39)
- **Verse** –is the name for the short units into which chapters of the Bible are broken up.

Example:

Verse 37 "Jesus said "You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart soul and with all your mind

Verse 38 this is the greatest and first commandment.

Verse 39 "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

*The Bible is the source of our  
spiritual strength and the safe guide  
of the soul*

*2 Tim 3:15 - 4:2*