

## HOMESCHOOL THE FAITH - THE BIBLE - 2006 - Session 1

**A Note to Parents:** This year's Home-schooling the Faith Program will be on the Scriptures. Your attitudes toward the Bible will be those of your young people. Consider placing the Bible on display in some way in your home – coffee table, shelf, open or closed. Speak of it as precious, because it puts us in touch with Our God.

### Bible

Bible comes from a Greek word meaning "Book" It is also called: Holy Scriptures. It is divided into Old Testament (or Jewish Scriptures (God deals with humanity through the Jewish people) and New Testament or Christian Scriptures (God deals with humanity also through the Christian people).

The Bible is not so much a single book but almost a "Library." It is actually made up of 72 different books with 45 in the Jewish Scriptures and 27 in the Christian Scriptures.

The Bible is also an ancient Library. The First 5 Books of the Bible – Called the Pentateuch ( 5 scrolls) were written by Moses probably around the years 1200 before Christ. (3300 years ago) They are part of the Old Testament (O.T.) The last book, the Book of Revelation in the New Testament (NT) it was written 125 AD.

God speaks to all people in the depths of their hearts. God also speaks to all people thru the lives of the Jewish Community and the Christian Community in special ways. Each group, by guiding its life according to God's will, shows to all the world that the God who speaks to everyone should be taken seriously

The Bible was written in many different places: The Holy Land, Asia Minor, Greece, Egypt, Rome.

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, the classical language of the people, and some books were written in Greek. The New Testament was written in Greek, the conversational language of the people.

There are 3 kinds of writing in the Bible: History, Teachings, Prophecy in both Old and New Testaments:

### OLD TESTAMENT

- HISTORY:** History in the Bible is not history with dates and names and places. It's like the History of the Gettysburg Address. In one sentence, the whole history of our country is summarized: "Four score and seven years ago, our ancestors brought forth on this great continent a new nation Conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all persons are created equal." It is history written by one who is a patriot – one who loves the country – and one who writes in broad and sweeping strokes, covering a lot of time in a single sentence. The Historical Books may be found in the Index of the Bible itself
- PROPHECY:** A prophet, in the Bible, is not one who foretells the future. He is one who is a spokesperson of God. There are prophets who wrote books – and those who did not. The most important prophet – Elijah – did not write a book. In the Old Testament there are 4 Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezechiel, Daniel) and 12 Minor Prophets. A list of these may be found in the Index of the Bible.
- TEACHINGS** All the Books that do not fit into the categories of History and Prophecy are called Teachings.

### NEW TESTAMENT

- HISTORY** The historical books of the New Testament are the Four Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, each of which presents the person of Jesus and some of his teachings for different groups. The fifth historical book of the New Testament is the book of "Acts," which tells of the actions of some of the apostles, particularly Peter and Paul.
- PROPHECY** The Book of "Revelation" is the only prophetic book of the New Testament.
- TEACHINGS** These are the Epistles or letters of the Apostles to their congregations. Most were written by Paul, And others by Peter, James, John, and Jude.

## HOMESCHOOLING THE FAITH 0607 SESSION 2

**PARENTS:** Last week we saw the Bible as an ancient collection of books written over many centuries by many authors of varying backgrounds and skills. The earliest book was written in 1250 BC or thereabouts and the most recent – Revelation about the year 125 AD. The languages were Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic and the places of writing were many. We invited you to familiarize your children with the Bible – its parts – its make up and the 3 types of writing – History, Prophecy, and Teachings.

Today we try to share with our young people the concept of oral tradition. Reflect with us step by step and in your own ways get these concepts across to your youngsters:

1. People in ancient times did not have a scientific appreciation of the world and its origin.
2. God had to bear this in mind in telling them what God wanted to tell them.
3. God had certain truths that God wanted shared with people but they had to be told in ways they could understand.
4. In ancient times there were no newspapers, books, libraries, TV stations, Computers, Internet, or even pen and paper. Even if these had been available, few could read – most could not.
5. For God to communicate well with people, God had to accommodate Himself to our ways of knowing, thinking and understanding.
6. The way things were told that were important for people to remember was the story form. Remembering the Story, people would remember the truths contained therein.
7. Therefore many of the Bible sections, had a story form before they were written down. They only had to be written down because only in this way could the stories be set down in a form in which they could be communicated from one generation to another as people gathered around their campfires by night.
8. And this is the way many of the things that God wanted people to know about the world, about people, about life, and about what life is all about came to be shared from one generation to another.
9. At one point, years later, as the story tellers themselves grew older and died, it became helpful to write the stories down to ensure their accuracy and truthfulness.
10. The Bible itself then was first written in the stories of the People of Israel as they came to be listened to, then written down, and then in this way shared with people yet to be born.

Conclusions:

- The Bible is not a scientific textbook which God gave us to show with us HOW the earth came to be created. It tells us that God is the creator of all things – the universe and all that is in it – and that God has loved us and prepared for us a life which will last forever.
- God intended to share with us that we are to live for others, we are to live forever, and we are to respond to God's love for us by being very genuine in our relationship to all and that we are made to live not in this less than perfect world but to soar to the heavens to an eternity of happiness with our God.

**Parents:** It might be useful to point out how you describe to them your own childhood in stories about your parents, your schooldays, In this way they come to appreciate people they have not known as profoundly as almighty wish.

Get them to remember some of the stories that you have told them that they love hearing time after time again. One of the things that I do for my nieces and nephews is to write down and share with them things that my father and mother used to do with and for us when we were kids. Why is this done? To retain knowledge and gratitude for people they were not privileged to know personally at a deeper level.

You might take the Creation Story in Genesis Chapter One, and remembering what is stated above, not the story and share with your family some of the truths you can pick out that God wanted us to know about Himself and about how the world was made.

The Story Teller has played an important role in all civilizations, It plays a crucial role in the wonderful story of God's dealings with all people both through the Jewish Community and through the story of those dealings with us through the Christian Community.

In the process, tell them some of the stories of what things were like when you were yourselves their age.

## HOMESCHOOLING THE FAITH 007 SESSION 3

**Parents:** It is important that you have an appreciation of the three forms of writing in Scripture. But even before that, your reverence for the Bible by displaying it on a mantel, referring to it often, reading from it respectfully will itself be a positive and powerful teacher of how to relate to the Word of God. Keep checking yourselves on this.

The 3 types of writing are very important if we are to appreciate the truth contained in the Word of God. It will also be important to get the kids into knowing their way around the Bible. We will try this year to make many references which will send them into the pages of scripture to see for themselves some of the things we address.

### *Types of Writing in the Bible*

**HISTORY:** Biblical History is a story of a people and some of its significant events. In the Old Testament, the story of Creation is told to a simple people in words easily remembered that could be told from memory from parents to children around the campfires at night. Simple truths – e.g. the Creation of the universe and everything in it including people were made by the creator God. Read your children the creation story in Genesis 1/ 1 – 31. (Or tell it to them depending on their age.)

**History of the Old Testament** - The Old Testament contains the story of the Human Race from the Creation of the World and the testing of man and woman. It spoke of the twin history of the Fall of Adam and Eve and of the Promise of a Redeemer, It moved through the Patriarchs and Prophets, the Judges and Kings, It closed with our Jewish ancestors asking the Romans to bring peace to their world. Rome conquered Assyria in the North and Egypt in the south and the Pax Romana (Roman Peace) prevailed in the world before Jesus was born

**History of the New Testament** – The New Testament historical books are the Gospels, which tell the story of Jesus as related by eye-witnesses in four different areas of the world. They also include the Acts of the Apostles, which tells the story of the early days of the church and especially the story of the ministry of St. Peter and of St. Paul.

**PROPHECY** A prophet is not one who foretells the future. A prophet is a person who speaks for God. There are writing prophets who left a written record of their pronouncements from God. And there are those who simply appear on the scene and speak in God's name to people at critical times in their history.

**The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament** - The most important of the prophets were Elijah and Elisha, neither of whom wrote a book.. The Prophetic books of the Old Testament are divided into those of Major Prophets and those of Minor Prophets. The Major Prophets wrote longer books. These were Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. The Minor Prophets wrote shorter books. There were 12. Their names can be found in front of your Bible.

**The Prophetic Books of the New Testament** – The Prophetic Books in the New Testament are only one – the Book of Revelation. These were written in a special type of style known as apocalyptic, Apocalyptic writing involves the creation of a colossal tragedy which is described in terms so general that they can be found in any age. It is writing that conveys to the reader: "If God can overcome this huge problem, your problems can certainly be handled by God. They are hope to a people very scared and their object is to bring hope.

**TEACHING** The Books of "Teaching" are books that do not fall under the heading of historical or prophetic books. These are books which contain various aspects of God's vision to us of what life is about and what is important. The vision we share is that life is the gift of the Creator God who became one of us, modeled how to live it, and told us it is to last forever.

**The Teaching Books of the Old Testament** – Find these books containing Teaching under the list in the front of your Bible. They are listed as "Wisdom Books." They are: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom, and Sirach. Find each of them in your Bible and with your parents' help pick out one that says something to you about God, life, or others.

**The Teaching Books of the New Testament** – These books are first the Epistles (letters) of Paul, Peter, John, James, and Jude. They were letters, mostly those of Paul, written by the apostles to communities they had already taught about Jesus. Many are responses to letters sent. Some are further instructions, help on dealing with problems, or encouragement or correction. There are many beautiful passages in these letters. Tell your children your favorite passages and ask them someday to pick one which will serve to motivate and remind they of all they owe God.

**PARENTS** Share some of your Bible story memories with the children. What impressed you most? Helped you most. Guided you?

# HOMESCHOOLING THE FAITH SESSION 4

## *Human History and Biblical History*

- Human history is much concerned with accurate recording of events as they happened chronologically.
- Biblical history tends to be painted in broader and more sweeping strokes.
- Again, an historian today would look at the creation account in the Bible and it does not measure up to historical writing today.
- A scientifically accurate account of history to people of Moses' day would have been unintelligible.
- The intent of the Historian of Genesis was simply to say to a simple people that God created the universe and all in it.

However when possible, we can fit things together into sequence at least when people began recording history more accurately.

One perspective on history can be had from the following:

If the 4 billion years since the earth began could be condensed into one year beginning January 1st:

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| • July 1                           | Single celled forms of life would appear |
| • October 1                        | Invertebrate Animals would appear        |
| • October 21                       | Reptiles and Dinosaurs appear            |
| • November 15                      | Dinosaurs disappear and mammals evolve   |
| • December 28                      | Walking ape-men appear                   |
| • December 31, 11:57pm             | First Human Beings appear                |
| • December 31 ½ second to midnight | Recorded History begins                  |

## *Recorded History*

C 1900 B.C.	Call of Abraham to establish God's people
1900 – 1700 B.C.	Age of the Patriarchs – Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah
1700 B.C.	Egyptian Exile – Joseph settles Jacob's family in Egypt
1300 – 1200 B.C.	Moses leads people out of Egypt, Covenant, Desert Stay
1200 – 1020 B.C.	Age of Judges: Gideon, Judith, Samson, Samuel
1020 – 900 B.C.	Period of the Single Kingdom: Saul, David, Solomon – Golden Age
900 – 721 B.C.	Two Kingdoms – Israel (Northern – Larger) and Judah (Southern)
721 B.C.	Fall of Northern Kingdom – Israel – to Assyria. Destruction and Exile
721 – 586 B.C.	Single Kingdom of Judah
586 – 7 B.C.	Fall of Judah to Babylon. Destruction of nation – Exile
587 – 532 B.C.	Babylonian Exile. Babylonia conquered by the Persians
532 B.C.	Persians permit people to return to Holy Land. Rebuilding under Nehemiah, Ezra
537 – 333 B.C.	Rebuilding of the Nation – its spirituality
333 B.C.	Conquest of the World by Alexander the Great, Judah was part of the conquest
325 B.C.	Death of Alexander. Empire split by Seleucus and Ptolemy, His generals
333 – 142 B.C.	Seleucid Kings in Damascus – Ptolemy's in Egypt
142 – 67 B.C.	Maccabean Rebellion – Guerilla Kingdom
67 B.C. – 70 A.D.	Period of Roman Rule (Pax Romana) Roman Peace
4B.C.	Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem (Date miscalculated by experts)
29 – 30 A.D.	Suffering, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus
51 – 105 A.D.	New Testament being written
70 A.D.	Jerusalem destroyed by the Romans

Parents – Hopefully, this will put some of contemporary history as a framework on which can be hung the history of the Bible. Note that the evolutionary theory can be accepted as long as one holds to the special creation in joining body and spirit in human beings.

## HOMESCHOOLING THE FAITH SESSION 5

### LITERARY FORMS OF THE BIBLE

**Parents:** The object of this lesson is to point out how the type of writing one deals with must be kept in mind when reading or the truth will be distorted. The example of the newspaper is a good one. Call attention to the different modes of truth found in each different form. Then achieve the second object of the lesson by having children look up the book and verse themselves, read the selection and explain to you the truth it contains.

**Newspaper** We change gears six times when we read the paper. There are six different forms of writing we deal with:

**Front Page:** Here we look for facts, events, things that happened.

**Editorial page:** Here we find the paper's opinion about events. It is opinion – not fact

**News Analysis:** This form gives one person's way of looking at things. You can differ with it

**Sports Page:** Here is a whole new language. "Bears Crush Giants" refers to a game not animals and big people.

**Comic Page:** Here animals speak, Superman flies and we take it in stride. It's a different form of writing.

**Horoscope:** Sheer fantasy. Read this as fact and you end up not with truth but a nervous breakdown.

Every different form of writing gives a different twist on truth. To know what is being said, one must know the form and take notice of it.

**Bible** In the same way, the Bible's different literary forms influence the way truth is set forth. It is important to appreciate this. Walk through the following list of forms and have your youngsters read, hear read, or hear told the story.

**Religious History** Biblical History records events that happened. As religious history, dates are of less import than seeing events from their meaning as manifestations of God's care and love.  
Examples: Creation: Genesis 1:1 - 2:3      Birth of Christ: Luke 2: 1 - 20.

**Stories:** Stories told to illustrate a point.  
Examples: Nathan's Story: II Samuel 12: 1 - 7      Workers in Vineyard: Matt. 2: 1-16.

**Poetry** Poetry uses symbolic and lyric language to proclaim truth.  
Examples: Song of Mary: Luke: 1: 45 - 56      Song of Zachary: Luke 1: 57 - 75

**Law Codes** Laws governing behavior or worship  
Examples: Ten Commandments: Exodus 20: 1 - 7      Worship: Leviticus 1: 1 - 17

**Parables** Stories to Illustrate a point – often used by Christ  
Examples: Good Samaritan: Luke 10: 29 - 37      Sower: Matthew 13: 3 - 9

**Apocalyptic Texts** Texts showing horrendous catastrophes – yet good won out. God can do all things.  
Examples: The 1<sup>st</sup> 7 Seals: Revelation 6: 1 - 17      7 Last Plagues: Revelation 1 - 21

**Prophecy** God's spokesperson speaks to God's people with a message.  
Examples: Isaiah: 1: 1 - 3;      Jeremiah 1: 1 - 11.

### Parents

- If your children are old enough, let them search through the Bible for themselves to get the texts cited. Otherwise read with them or to them the story and figure out the different kinds of truth they reveal.
- Show them how different it is to read the comic page (where animals talk) and confuse it with real life where animals don't talk.
- Show them how dangerous it is to read the horoscope the way you read the front page of the paper. If one reads the apocalyptic writings of scripture as one reads historical fact, an alarmist concern over the end of the world surfaces which is untruthful.
- Show them the differences between religious history and the preciseness of secular historical writing.
- More of this will become clear when we go further along in this scripture course. For now the objectives listed on top of the page are sufficient

## HOMESCHOOLING THE FAITH - 2006 - SESSION 6

### ABILITY TO IDENTIFY THE TRUTHS CONTAINED IN THE BIBLICAL LITERARY FORMS

HISTORICAL WRITINGS	<p>Ancient religious history differs substantially from the scientific historian of our day. It is helpful to understand the position the sacred writer was placed in the earlier books of the Bible. This included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The truths God wished Moses to pass on to the people were simple. How they were to be passed on was complex. People did not read. There was no radio, TV, or web site on a computer.</li><li>• The ancient way of passing on important elements in the history of peoples was the story form since what was taught had to be readily capable of being memorized. The story was the vehicle of communication.</li><li>• God was revealing to Moses the fact that God created the entire universe and all that was in it. God was communicating this to a people whose knowledge of the universe and its formation was pre-school at best.</li><li>• The author, having understood the facts – e.g. God created all things. God wanted to state the universality of his creative power. God also wanted to have the people work for six days and rest on the seventh – a day committed to family, friends and freedom from work. God wanted them to remember these truths so that they could pass them on to their children in their campfires at night. The Creation Story is in Genesis 1: 1<sup>st</sup> chapter.</li></ul> <p>The sacred author then came up with the first creation story in which he showed God as creating the whole of creation in six days. The universality of Creation and the command to rest on the 7<sup>th</sup> day after working for six days were incorporated in the one story. But notice that the knowledge of the world reflected in the story is preschool. God created light on the first day and the cause of light – the sun – on the fourth day. Yet the story will be remembered. Biblical history then records facts of religious significance for the history of a people. It does so from a primitive worldview. It incorporates obligations into the actions of God thereby giving them further authority as things they should take seriously. We will go further into the Creation story later, but the example is valuable.</p>
STORIES	<p>The means of communication most effective in the ancient world.- e.g. Special Creation of Eve: “Genesis 2: 4 – 22. Eve is stated to be equal to Adam, and this was done by the story of woman being fashioned from the rib of man.</p>
POETRY	<p>Psalm 137: The loneliness and desolation of the exiles is depicted by their hanging their harps on a tree and stating they could not sing one of the songs of Zion in a foreign land.</p>
LAW CODES	<p>These are codified laws governing worship, judicial matters, purification and childbirth, and also the laws of the land. Many may be found in the book of Leviticus.</p>
PARABLES	<p>A fictitious short story that points out a teaching of Jesus. It would not be appropriate then to ask where, for example, the Good Samaritan lived? in what location did the event take place? Many times the parable clarifies one truth. Some questions remain. In the Prodigal Son Parable, one could also indict the father for weakness, the elder son for jealousy. But one lesson is taught – forgive – rejoice. Luke 15:11-32</p>
APOCALYPTIC FORM	<p>Isaiah 29: 9 – 22. The apocalyptic form of writing creates a generic macroscopic tragedy which threatens a people, and speaks of it fearfully. It can be identified with happenings of any age and is often catastrophic and deals with the destruction of the world. In the end, good wins out over evil. If this form is read as historical fact, the end of the world will be feared as coming in each age and many confusing messages about the end time abound. On this subject, it is well to impress on our children that we need not be concerned about the end of the world. We need to be concerned about living our lives out faithfully on a day to day basis, recommitting ourselves each day.</p>
PROPHECY	<p>Isaiah 1: 1 – 4: The prophet speaks as God’s ambassador warning of the impending disaster that will befall the people of his day because of their infidelity. This is prophecy in its truest sense – prophet as God’s spokesperson.</p>
Parents:	<p>The above forms of writing give us the truth wrapped in different packages. It’s important to know the wrapping. Hopefully, you’ll be able to share some of these concepts with your children. The Bible is the Word of God and precious to us. It is in Word and in Sacrament that we receive and experience our God. Share the legacy of our faith with your little ones. You’ll help them process life’s plusses and minuses with the realization that we were made to live forever in a life of peace and joy with our God.</p>

## HOMESCHOOLING THE FAITH - 2006 - SESSION 7

### INSPIRATION AND THE BIBLE

Inspiration is a Technical Term when used concerning the Bible. It is defined in the following manner:

:

*By inspiration of scripture, we mean that God so moved and influenced The sacred writer, in his decision to write, selection of resource materials and actually putting pen to paper, that God is Himself the Author of Sacred Scripture and the human author is an instrument.*

To understand inspiration in this sense, we might look at the following example: In writing my name, I can use any of the following instruments: a felt tip marker, a ballpoint pen, a pencil, a crayon, a piece of charcoal, a piece of chalk,

1. The instrument used contributes of its very nature to the signature written. If the pen has green ink, the writing will be green. If the pen, pencil has red ink, the signature will be red. The instrument contributes to the writing – I am author.
2. The writer must respect the nature of the instrument. Writers must use the instrument in accord with the nature that instrument possesses. e.g. If the signature is in pencil, it can be erased - if in pen - usually it cannot be. Color of ink is color of signature.
3. The instrument is not the author of my signature - it is I, the person who am the author..

Inspiration then involves God's using a human person as an instrument in writing the books of the bible, just as a person uses an instrument in writing a signature.

1. The instrument God used - the human person - contributed to the end product. Hence each author brought a unique style, background, education, and skill in the art of writing. We find evidences of this in the Bible itself: Isaiah has a highly polished literary style, while the prophet Habakkuk, a swine-herd, has a crude, more direct style.
2. The writer has to use the instrument in accord with the nature it possesses which means that the human being - a free agent – must somehow be used by God in a manner which respects that freedom. And herein lies the mystery of inspiration: how God could so utilize a person as instrument that only what God wanted was written, and yet the person remained free. Note that this means that as far as the sacred author was concerned, he was simply writing a book. He was neither in a trance nor was he conscious that God was in fact using him as an instrument.
3. And because this is what happened, it is not the human author who can tell us that the writing is inspired, but God alone, the principal author. This God must do either personally or through the community God called into being.

As a result of seeing the Bible as inspired in this sense, the Church accepts it as:

:

1. The very word of God, who recorded in it only what God wished, and recorded in the way God wished it recorded.
2. The Bible, properly understood, contains no error. If it appears to us to contain error, we have yet to understand its meaning..
3. It is important to note that only the "autograph," that is, the original, as it came from the hand of the sacred writer, is inspired. Other texts and versions of the Bible, are inspired to the degree that they faithfully represent what was in the original.

#### WHICH CAME FIRST: CHURCH OR BIBLE?

1. Jesus wrote no book - he told no one to write a book. Jesus commissioned the apostles to preach, to baptize, to teach.
2. John the Apostle states: "But there are also many other things Jesus did and taught not contained in this book. Were every one to be written, the world itself could not contain the books that would need writing."
3. Nowhere in the New Testament is there a full presentation of the teachings of Jesus:
  - a. The gospels contain the written form of the oral tradition about Jesus. They give the person Jesus, and some teaching.
  - b. Acts of the Apostles tells the story of the infant church and acts of some of the apostles - notably Peter and Paul.
  - c. The Epistles are letters by Paul and others of the apostles to communities already instructed to correct, and to clarify. .
  - d. The book of Revelation is highly symbolic, It is a form of writing which had as its object the encouragement. By presenting a situation much worse than theirs, it said: if God can solve this huge problem God can solve what you are dealing with easily.
4. The Church was in existence, living its witness many years before the New Testament was written. and declared to be inspired. The first book of the Christian Scriptures was written in the decade 40-50 AD - Paul's Epistle to the Thessalonians. As to the Gospels, Mark was written 55 – 60 AD; Matthew: 60 – 65 AD; Luke: 65 – 70 AD; and John: 100 – 125 AD.
5. It was not until the Council of Carthage (393 AD) and the Council of Hippo (397 AD) that the Church declared and defined that these 27 books of the New Testament and these 45 books of the Old Testament alone are inspired by God and to be accepted as constituting the Bible. Consequently, rather than the Bible being the blueprint from which the Church community is to be constructed, it was the Bible that was the product of the faith community itself - the Church.

## HOMESCHOOLING THE FAITH - 2006 SESSION 8

### *The Canon - The Official Listing of the Books of the Bible*

Parents: The declaration that a book is inspired by God is one only God can tell us. It either comes from God directly or through the Community God founded. This is true both of the Jewish Scriptures (Old Testament) and the Christian Scriptures (New Testament). We will look to each to discover how this book came to be. As appreciation of the process is reached, you will be able to share that understanding with your children at their various stages of development.

#### JEWISH SCRIPTURES

- The Sacred Writers receive their message from God. They transmitted it orally to their people, many parts in story form.
- Eventually the oral tradition was set forth in writing for accuracy's sake. Several authors may have been involved.
- During the course of time many copies were made. Since the documents were important, accuracy in copying would have been a priority. Copies of the original are called "Texts." In time these copies came to be translated into other languages – Aramaic or Greek etc. Translations are designated as versions.
- The study of Texts and Versions is a very important one because the copy inspired was the original. Texts and versions are inspired to the degree that they reflect the original. Note that none of the originals of any biblical book are extant.
- In the Jewish Community, it was the religious leadership of the people who determined which books were indeed part of the Jewish Scriptures and which were not.
- The Jewish Community residing in Jerusalem accepted as Scripture only books which had a Hebrew original. They came up with a total of 39 books in the Jewish Scriptures.
- However, the religious leadership of the Jewish Communities outside of Palestine accepted as part of the Jewish Scriptures, in addition, some books that were originally written in Greek. They came up with a total of 45 books in the Jewish Scriptures.

#### CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES

- The gospels went through the following stages of development:
- The person of Jesus and some of Christ's teachings were communicated by the Apostles to people of their day. As the stories were repeated, they took on slightly different forms in the various communities where the reaching took place.
- As eyewitnesses of the person of Jesus and His message grew older, their words were recorded to preserve and ensure accuracy. These texts were used in liturgical services and shared in the community. These were called Gospels.
- Mark's Gospel is the earliest extant Gospel. The author of Luke's Gospel had Mark's work before him. The author of Matthew's Gospel had both Matthew and Luke before him. The author of John's gospel had the others before him when he wrote as well.
- The story of some of the activities of the early church especially of Paul and Peter, were contained in the Acts of the Apostles.
- Many other texts came to be revered as precious in the community. These included letters of Paul to churches he founded. And those of Peter and other of the apostles. These too were read as parts of the liturgical services.
- The lone book of the Christian scriptures which is listed as "Prophetic" is that of Revelation. It is in apocalyptic form and is attributed to the Apostle John.
- All of the above and other writings were circulating in the early Christian community for three centuries following the resurrection of Jesus. Without any of them being designated as being inspired or part of the Christian scriptures.
- In the year 393 at the Council of Hippo, a fathering of the church to which Christ had said: "What you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." The Church father made the following decisions:
  1. The Canon (Official Listing) of the Christian Scriptures consisted in the 27 books that included the four gospels, letters of the Apostles and Acts of the Apostles – 27 books in all. The names of the books may be found in the front of your Catholic Bible.'
  2. The Canon (Official Listing) of the Jewish Scriptures consisted in the books accepted by the Jews of the Exile – 45 Books some of which had no Hebrew original.. These are all part of the Christian Bible. A list of these books may be found in the front of your Catholic Bible as well.
  3. The Council of Carthage in the year 397 repeated the designation of the Canon of the Bible as outlined at the Council of Hippo.

Parents: It is helpful to note that the 45 book listing of the books of the Jewish Scriptures were seen as part of the Christian Bible from the 4<sup>th</sup> century to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. At the time of the Reformation, the other Christian Churches decided to be back to the Canon of the Jewish Community of Jerusalem and eliminated six of the books. From that time on, the Protestant Bible contained 39 books in the Jewish Scriptures and the Catholic Bible had 45 books. At the beginning of the next session we will do a line-up of the different translations of Scripture that are available today.

## HOMESCHOOL THE FAITH - THE BIBLE - 2006 - Session 9

### Which Came First - Church or Bible - And Which Bible

Parents: In approaching the Bible, it is important to keep the following concepts in mind:

- As Catholics, we see Sacred Scripture – the Bible – as one of the twin sources of revelation (God’s revealing self to us)
- The other source is tradition - the living witness of the Community founded by Jesus and commissioned to continue God’s caring presence for all people by their lived witness.
- The Community existed and witnessed to Jesus from the Resurrection up to 393 AD and 397 AD when the Councils of Hippo and Carthage – gatherings of the Bishops of the Church declared the books contained in our Catholic Bible to be WORD OF GOD.
- The original writings of each of the books is INSPIRED and have God as their author, the writer as Instrument.
- Copies from the original – TEXTS – and translations from the original – VERSIONS – are inspired to the degree that they faithfully reflect the original.
- For centuries, the church used as the official text for Liturgy and public service the translation by St. Jerome from original texts into Latin. This translation was known as the “VULGATE” translation – the one for the people and dates back to 405 AD.
- The text used for Public and Liturgical services today is the New American Bible translation, which was made between 1952 and 1970. This was the first time in 1500 years that a translation was made from the original languages themselves and this edition is now the one used for the public and liturgical services of the Church.

#### VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE IN ENGLISH

Wickliffe Bible	1382 – 1384:	The first complete English translation of the Bible. It was pre-Reformation, and pre-printing.
Tyndale Bible	1525 – 1531	A Protestant Christian version of the Bible.
King James Bible	1611	Revised 1981 1985. Very popular. Much beloved
Good News Bible	1966 – 1979	Popular style. American.
Revised Standard Version	1946 1952	National Council of Churches
Living Bible	1962 -1971	A paraphrase of the Bible
Douay-Rheims Bible	1582 – 1609	Catholic Translation of the St. Jerome’s Vulgate (Latin) Official up to 1941.
New American Bible	1952 – 1970	1 <sup>st</sup> American Catholic Official translation from the original language texts. This translation is approved for Liturgical and Public usage.
Jerusalem Bible	1966	Translation of the work of Catholic Biblical scholars in the Holy Land into English. A beautiful translation that has become very popular.
New Jerusalem Bible	1985	A still popular translation cherished by many

Parents: It is hoped that the above will be helpful in sharing with your young ones the who’s and what’s of the Bible. It is also hoped that Your reverence for Scripture, your speaking about your heroes in the Bible, and your attempt to live The words, the stories and the behavior of Jesus will have a powerful impact on the lives of your children. They’re great kids. But the best philosophy for parenting is my philosophy for pastoring: Take credit for nothing – only God changes the hearts and lives of people. But if things don’t go as you think they should, don’t beat yourself up. It’s not yet God’s time. Blessings to all of you.

## HOMESCHOOL THE FAITH - THE BIBLE - 2006 - Session 10

### A LOOK OVER THE ROAD TRAVELED

Parents: A summary is helpful at this point.

- The Bible is an ancient library of 72 Books composed by many authors over a period of 1300 years. It was composed in different parts of the world. The authors were of varying backgrounds and education.
- The Books are divided into Old Testament (Jewish Scriptures) and New Testament (Christian Scriptures). They contain for a primitive people, historical writings, writings that contain teaching, and prophetic writings. A prophet is one who speaks for God. The prophet does not necessarily predict the future.
- We realized that the early books of the Bible had their origin in the oral tradition of a people. The writings were put in story form and thereby more easily committed to memory. In time these stories came to be written.
- We examined the many literary forms in the Bible, and realized that each has its unique way of portraying the truth and must be respected and known.
- We learned that the Bible conveyed to God's people, that God was saving God and also Creator God. God loved people, gave them freedom, and held them accountable.
- We saw inspiration in such a way that God is the principal author and the human being was used as an instrument in the process. We understood inspiration to mean:  
*God so influenced the mind of the writer in deciding to write, selecting materials and even setting pen to paper, that God is the principal author and the human being simply the instrument God uses to write only what God wants the way God wants it.*
- As a result of this understanding: God is the author of Scripture. It contains truth. And it is addressed to an audience that God wanted to reveal Himself as Creator of all things, and the one who holds them in being.
- Interestingly, only God can tell us which Books are inspired. God does so through the Jewish Community's leadership for the Jewish Scriptures. God does so through the Church Christ founded for the Christian Scriptures.
- It was here that we studied the "Canon" (Official List) of the Bible. Since only the original coming through the author's hand as God's instrument was inspired, and the texts (copies of the original) and versions (translations of the original) are inspired to the Degree that they reflect the original, the study of texts and versions is very important.
- The Jewish Community in Jerusalem recognized only 39 books as Scripture. Other were rejected because they were not written originally in Hebrew. The Jewish Community in Exile considered some other books to be part of Scripture also and recognized 45 Books as part of Scripture..
- The Christian Community had a two fold task. They had to choose which listing of the Jewish Scriptures to consider part of the Bible and also from many writings which books consisted in the Christian Scriptures.
- At the Council (Official Gathering of Bishops of the Church with the Pope) of Hippo in 393, and in the Council of Carthage 4 years later, the Church accepted the 45 Books as Jewish Scriptures and 27 Books as the Christian Scriptures.
- Parts of the Bible speak of events preceding recorded history. An attempt was made to relate Biblical history to recorded history where possible.
- We learned that Christian Scriptures were composed between the year 50 AD and the year 125 AD. Interestingly this means that up to the fourth century, there were no official Christian Scriptures (New Testament).
- Finally, we looked at English versions of the Bible. There was a Catholic English translation before the invention of printing.

## HOMESCHOOLING THE FAITH - THE BIBLE - SESSION 11

Parents: To share Scriptures with your children, understanding on your part is of the essence. The following elements will help.

- The story form was the way people recalled God's teaching. It was shared - parents to kids. Do it.
- Genesis 1 has God creating man from nothing in 6 days, resting on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Imitate God's way.
- Chapter Two of Geneses has God creating humans from the earth & creation of woman from man
- God buys people where they are: Non scientifically knowledgeable – Light is created on the 1<sup>st</sup> day and the Sun – its cause is created on the 4<sup>th</sup> day. The Bible then is not a scientific text and what is intended is to state that ALL THINGS HAVE THEIR ORIGIN IN THE LOVE OF THE CREATOR GOD.
- Apart from God, no one else was present at creation. What God wanted known was shared by God.
- Written documents were useless – most were illiterate. Writing was an advantage to ensure accuracy.
- The Sacred Author was told by God the basic facts of creation. Knowing his audience, these truths were incorporated into stories by the authors under the guidance of inspiration so their accuracy and truthfulness was ensured.
- Once the Sacred Author had been given the truths of revelation, he was guided in his use of resources so that he was covered by inspiration in writing only what God wanted shared with others.
- With this as background, we cover the first of the Creation Stories in Genesis Chapter 1.

### The Two Genesis Creation Stories

#### CREATION STORY (GENESIS)

1. God created the world in 6 days – rested on 7<sup>th</sup>  
*Genesis 1:1 – 2:3*

2. God saw creation was all good – repeated often.  
*Genesis 1: 4, 10, 13.*

3. Man and woman were placed in Garden. Were free to do whatever but were forbidden to eat one fruit.  
*Genesis 2:16 - 17*

4. The serpent tempted Eve. She ate the fruit. Eve tempted Adam. They saw they were naked and hid from God  
*Genesis 2:9 – 3:9*

5. Man & woman were had to leave the garden. Man –  
“In sweat will you earn bread.” Woman: “In pain you will bear children.” Serpent: “You will crawl on your belly  
*Genesis 3:19 - 23*

6. A descendant of the woman will crush head of serpent. the serpent will lie in wait of her heel.  
*Genesis 3:14 – 15*

7. God created man in image and likeness of God.  
*Genesis 1:27,27*

8. “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and conquer it  
*Genesis 1:28*

#### MESSAGE COMMUNICATED

1. God is author of all creation. Imitate God – work 6 – rest 1

2. The universe, the human condition are good. People are good

3. Man and woman were given power of choice. But were also to be accountable.

4. Man and woman were tested. They proved unfaithful. In their punishment, they felt the loss of togetherness within and hid.

5. As a result of sin, things have changed in our world. Effort in pain in child bearing, and snake crawling on its belly will serve as a reminder of humanity's brokenness.

6. One day a descendant of the woman will turn things around, and enable humanity to move beyond the evil done.

7. Human beings in a mysterious way are “god-like.” (More later)

8. Humanity is charged to manage the earth. Harnessing the World's power, technological progress is response to the Creator God.

Parents: The Above diagram lists the Story in column #1 and the revelation God intended in Column #2. Read both stories first. Then take time to reflect on the diagram. It will be helpful in sharing with your children the fact that life is the gift of the Creator God, who became one of us in Christ to model how life is to be lived and told us it is to last forever. The Bible is a marvelous book. It puts us in touch with our God in a very real and profound way. Help your children appreciate it more.

## HOMESCHOOLING THE FAITH - THE BIBLE - SESSION 12

### Creator and Creature

Parents: Voltaire – the French rationalist – once said: “God made people to his own image and likeness. “And people returned the favor.” Take time to get across to your young people, as they become familiar with the Bible, to remind them of the vast difference between Creator and Creature. The following hopefully will help

The best way to contrast the difference between Creator and Creature is to distinguish TIME and ETERNITY.

#### Creator:

- Eternity is total and simultaneous possession of unending life.
- What we experience moment by moment, God experiences as one eternal NOW!
- God, then, has had – as long as God was God – from all Eternity – the lives of every human being who ever walked the earth. He has had their total lives before him, knowing from all eternity how they would play out from start to finish.
- Looking at that total picture of the life of each, knowing each in their glory and their weakness, God liked what He saw and decided to publish.
- This means that every single human being who ever drew the breath of life, was known by God, loved by God, and given the gift of life.
- Every human being without exception can truthfully state: “I have been loved with an everlasting love.”

#### Creature:

- Time is the measure of created motion according to a before and an after.
- The earth revolves on its axis once. This takes X duration. We call it a day
- We divide X into 24 parts and call them hours; we divide each into 60 parts called minutes; and each into 60 called seconds.
- We put X seven times together and call it a week; 52 weeks = a year; 10 years a decade, 100 a century 1,000 a millennium.
- Time is the measure of created motion according to a before and an after – it is successive duration.
- Importantly, God – who created the world and its motion – is totally outside of time.
- Lastly, creation is not a date on an ancient calendar. Creation is NOW. If God stopped creating for a single second, each of us and the world in which we live would fall into nothingness.

The difference between Creator and Creature is profound. If it be true that every human being is beloved of God then

- We, the baptized, are charged by God to continue in the world God’s love for all people by the way we live.”
- We are called to love as God loved. We are called to love others whether they deserve love or not.
- And it is precisely in loving as Jesus loved, that we continue God’s caring presence.

The Scriptures speak of the creation of the human race in Genesis:

“Let us make man to our own image, after our likeness...  
God created man in his image; in the divine image He  
created him, male and female He created him.”

This needs to be reflected upon more deeply in light of the following:

- This godlikeness of which the Scriptures speak can be viewed *statically* or *dynamically*.
- Statically, human beings are godlike because – like God – we possess intelligence and free will – power of choice.
- However, this does not do justice to god-likeness which also involves more>
- Dynamically, human beings are god-like because – like God – they utilize the power of intelligence and free will to become – like God – creators.
- God gives us:  
Raw material of self            and calls us to build person  
Raw material of relations        and calls us to create love  
Raw material of my life          and calls upon each of us to create order, harmony, beauty, direction, peace.
- This is our primary response to the Creator God – to create person, love, and direction, harmony beauty in my life.
- All of this takes place near no church. It governs our lives from morning till night..
- When we go to church on Sunday, we give God seven days of faithful response to God. We are nurtured by Mass and Eucharist, the Word of God, Christ present in the community and by our lives preach God’s love for every human being..

Parents: These concepts are foundational to our faith. God willing, they will remind your children of who God is, God’s love for each of them and the importance of taking responsibility for their own lives

## HOME-SCHOOLING THE FAITH - SESSION 13

### The Religious Worldview of the Bible

#### *Facts:*

What God has shared with us in the two creation stories:

1. God created all things in the Universe – the Universe itself and all people and things within.
2. God made them all Good.
3. People were specially created by God who made them like God – having intelligence and choice
4. God gave them charge over the world. God gave them charge over their own lives
5. Human beings are to use the power of choice to become – like God – creators.
6. In harnessing the forces of nature and making them useful to people, human beings share in the creative powers of God.
7. The primary response of human beings to God is to work on their relationship to self, their relationship to others, and their relationship to the world they live in, over which they have charge – for the good of all.
8. This takes place near no church – it governs their days from morning to night.
9. God tested people – tested their faithfulness. People failed the test. God removed them from their idyllic situation and made the work of man, the childbirth of woman, and the crawling of the snake reminders of their failure.
10. God also promised them a Redeemer, one who would make it possible once more for all people to come to God.
11. The rest of the Bible tells the history of the Fall, and the history of the Promise.
12. These are the facts God, who alone was present at the dawn of creation, shared with humanity.

#### *Not Told*

What God did not share with us in the two creation stories

1. When the world was created
2. What was the process followed in creation
3. How the world was created
4. The time when the world was made and each item in it.
5. The time when the world would end
6. A scientific account of what happened accurate to our present-day knowledge of the universe.

#### *A Legacy*

God has given us a legacy to share from one generation to the next whereby we can shape our lives. It states:

1. Life is Gift of the Creator God
2. All of creation is good.
3. We have the power of choice – can make decisions – will be held accountable
4. You are to be a people special to me.
5. Through you the world will come to know that I love all people. Till then keep alive this hope in your hearts.
6. Through all generations, tell your children of God's will to straighten things out, tell all humanity they are to live forever.
7. Show this hope by the life you lead.

#### *Parents*

At this point, the God of the Bible tells us the above about life and what it's all about. Later on, the Redeemer to come will be seen to be God Himself. But in the meantime, the vision shared is one which is a legacy given them whereby they can understand and appreciate God's gifts in this life with gratitude. They can recognize that we live in a less than perfect world, and the negative things about life are God's way of reminding us that it's not all here and that this is a proving ground or training program. As St. Augustine put it so well:

*You have made us for yourself, O Lord,*

*And our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee*

# HOME-SCHOOLING THE FAITH - SESSION 14

## Stories and the Bible

### Parents: TODAY

A reflection on the stories of the Bible – the story as a means of communication would be helpful at this point. The story is one of the earliest methods of communication of important truths to others. In our own day, we have experienced the revolution of the art of communication. Among the many ways at present consider the following:

Word of Mouth	Printed Material	Written Material	Newscast	Electronic Billboard	TV Presentation
Movie	Telegram	US Mail	Phone	Audio Cassette	Video Cassette
DVD	E-mail	Chat Room	Cell Phone	Word of Mouth	Messaging
Power Point	Songs	Conference Call	Tele-Conference	Fax	Hand Signals
Smoke Signals	Pictures		Signing	Press Conference	Braille Script

Communication skills have come a long way and taken many shapes and forms. Together with incredible advances in transportation, they have served to create a world in which diverse peoples and cultures touch one another frequently.

### BIBLICAL TIMES

- Few people could read and write
- Knowledge of history, science and cosmology were on the pre-school level.
- When the world was made, none was present but God.
- God had a message to be communicated to every single individual:  
I created you and the world you live in from nothing  
I placed you in a world which I made for you.  
It is I who keep you in existence each moment  
I made you like myself – having intelligence and the power of choice.  
Make the right choices, and I will be your God and you will be my people.  
You freely chose not to make the right choices.  
You suffered the consequences, but I will send One to free you  
You are to be my people once more and you will live forever.

### CHALLENGE

- What to tell them?
- How to tell them in terms that they can understand?
- How tell it in such a way that it will be easily remembered and communicated to others?
- How do so in a way that easily ensures accuracy:
- How so package it that it will be as easily taken in as it is presented?

### SOLUTION – THE STORY

- Strengths:  
All the world loves a story – it speaks not only to the head but to the heart  
It can quite simply and attractively in generic terms describe facts in ways that can be remembered  
Accuracy is easily preserved in the process by the story form itself.  
Jesus used stories continuously to get His message across. As a parent can I afford not to use it?  
In both Old and New Testament – Jewish and Christian Scriptures – stories are God's way of communicating.  
Parents can ensure from earliest years of a child's life stories of the Patriarchs, Prophets, Heroes of both Jewish and Christian scriptures.

From your own background, or with help from books, (internet) tell a youngster or share with another your story of:

Adam & Eve	Garden of Paradise	Noah	Abraham	Isaac	Jacob	Joseph
Moses	Samson	David	Solomon	Isaiah	Jeremiah	Ezechel
Daniel	Elijah	Samson	Goliath	Esther		
Jesus	Magi	Peter	John	Andrew	Prodigal Son	Good Samaritan
Unjust Steward	Good Shepherd	Herod	Sheep & Goats			

Story Telling is a ancient art which should be utilized to the fullest between Parents and Children. Tell them stories of your own life, places you've been - lived. They'll love them all!

## HOMESCHOOLING THE FAITH - SESSION 15

### GOD SPEAKING TO HUMANITY THROUGH ISRAEL

- The God of Adam and Eve was a God who made the world, everything in it and people who were made in God's image.
- His love extended to all people but to Israel in a special way – actually on behalf of all people.
- God led humanity to see himself as one who created people with free choice, invited them freely to follow Him, and knew He was risking being turned down and in fact would be turned down.
- God held them accountable, tested them, and in humanity's failing to be faithful, sin became a reality in the world.
- Sin was described in terms of :
  1. Broken Relationship within themselves (Both realized they were naked)
  2. Broken man-woman relationships (Adam blamed Eve, who blamed the serpent)
  3. Broken family relationships – Abel's sacrifice was accepted. Cain's refused. Cain killed Abel
  4. Broken relationships between peoples. After the sin of pride at Babel, God changed languages of people. (People no longer communicated)
- People were punished (driven out of paradise) but a promise was made that one day, one would come who would restore things to where they were before.
- There followed a history of sinfulness with people drifting more and more from God. However, through the ancestors of the people of Israel – the Patriarchs, and prophets, there were always individuals, families who carried on the hope for one to come. The story of hope continued with the further history of the Jewish people whose understanding of themselves in the plan of God went through four stages:
  1. Israel understood herself to be the only authentic religion, superior to that of all their pagan neighbors.
  2. As time went on, they began to understand that God used others outside the believing community to punish them. This at least was growth in adverting to the existence of other ways of living life.
  3. Later still, they began to realize that God also spoke to some other people than themselves. Abraham, father of the Jewish nation, met Melchisedeck – a mysterious figure in scripture, who is described as a priest of the Most High God. Yet although he was not a member of the Community of God's people, Abraham asked him to offer sacrifice to God for him.
  4. Finally, the people would come to see that they were called to be light to all people. By the lives they led, they were to show forth God's love for all by making God central to their whole approach to life.

The God of the Universe is portrayed in the Jewish Scriptures in the following fashion.

1. God is the creator of the universe and all that is in it.
2. God specially created people – making them like Himself.
3. In making people like to Himself, God gave them the power of choice.
4. When people failed to measure up to God's directives, God became involved in human history and promised that though they were to suffer the consequences of their decisions, God would provide a way for them to be given another chance to be reconciled with their God.
5. God then is portrayed as a loving God – a forgiving God – and one who understands humanity profoundly.
6. God was also seen as being aware of the growing history of sinfulness and holding God's people to faithfulness by rewarding their fidelity and chastising their wandering off from Himself.
7. God's love was also shown in His forgiving His people whether they turned back to God or not – such was God's goodness. .
8. In point of fact, God often, in the Book of Psalms, told people quite openly and frankly, that the one gift that is never refused is the gift of a contrite heart.
9. Another way of putting this is to realize that God does not necessarily demand perfection, but God absolutely insists on honesty.
10. God also is one to whom Israel may turn in any need and gain a hearing. God is one who involves Himself in our history and looks to be supportive of, nurturing of, and "delighted" with God's people.

Parents: This picture of God is one which you model for your children in the love you show them so well. How often do you put self in your back pocket and go to the assistance of your children in need with every ounce of strength that is in you. Point out the connection between your love for them and simply tell them that if you love them so, God loves them profoundly and they will never be alone – without God – their lives long

## HOMESCHOOLING THE FAITH - SESSION 16

### The Plan of God for All God's People

The foundation of our worldview from the legacy we have received from the God become one of us is: Life is gift of God. In becoming one of us, God showed us how to live. It is a life that will last forever. We accept life's good things with gratitude. We accept life's negatives as part of our formation program Energized by the fact we will live forever, we are empowered to build the city of God where people can live together in peace - accepting differences not as threats but as Gift. And the bottom line is:

#### GOD WILLS THE SALVATION OF ALL PEOPLE!

Hence any authentic response to life itself – secular, religious, sacred or profane  
is an authentic response to its creator.

God speaks to all people in the depths of their human experience.

In the midst of a world where the history of sin flourished  
Israel, on the behalf of all humanity retained the beacon of hope by her witness  
The patriarchs – individuals in the history of humanity were the predecessors of Israel  
Then God called Abraham, father of the Jewish people, and  
promised he would be father of many nations.  
Of Abraham's two sons, Isaac was the bearer of the promise.  
Of the twelve sons of Jacob, Judah was the one through whom the History of Hope would continue  
But, through Joseph, the nation was preserved in a special way,  
Joseph was sold by his brothers to slavery in Egypt. Placed in the Pharaoh's household,  
Joseph correctly interpreted the Pharaoh's Dream, In the dream, seven healthy cattle were followed by seven lean animals.  
Joseph was rewarded by being put in charge of storing grain in time of plenty  
And distributing it in time of famine  
During famine time, the family of Jacob went to seek food and Joseph disclosed himself to them.  
The entire family took up residence in Egypt and enjoyed a privileged position at first,  
Later, fearing their growth, the Egyptians enslaved them and made life burdensome.  
They called to God and Moses was sent to lead them out of Egypt.

Under Moses they wandered through the desert.  
God made a covenant with them, gave them the Commandments. They became God's people – God became their God.

Through subsequent times they were faithful – then, unfaithful  
God sent them judges, prophets and to bring them back.  
The history of faithfulness and the history of sinfulness continued side by side.  
and Israel kept alive hope in the one to come,  
who would restore humanity to its God

In Jesus, not only did the holy one come, but the one was God Himself, one of us in the person of Jesus.  
With Jesus a profoundly new covenant blossomed forth  
And the world did become one with its God

However, several of God's people of Israelite descent  
were not to see Jesus as the Awaited One, let alone God Himself.  
And these faithful ones continue to live their witness to God's love for all people in their traditional ways

And the people of God who accepted Jesus have been placed as sign to the nations  
Along with the witness of a faithful Israel.

Both would be signs forever to all, that in addition to God speaking to all deeply within of God's love,  
the witness of these two communities is another reminder  
of God's loving care for everyone who ever drew the breath of life.

And this is the role of Israel in the Saving Plan of All the Nations

## HOMESCHOOLING THE FAITH - SESSION 17

### THE JEWISH AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH COMMUNITIES

In the eternal plan of God, the Jewish and Christian Communities share a major role.

Common to each is:

- A belief in Monotheism
- Recognition that all creation and especially people are good.
- The Christian Faith Community sees itself as having grown out of the Jewish Faith Community
- When God became one of us in Jesus, God chose to come as the One awaited by the Jewish Faith Community
- Jesus family of origin was rooted, generation upon generation, in the Jewish Faith Community
- All 12 of the Apostles were of the Jewish Faith Community
- The first Pope – Peter – was a member of the Jewish Faith Community
- Our parts in the salvation history of ALL people are shared.
- The Jewish Scriptures form a part of the Holy Book of the Christian Faith Community
- The People of God – prior to Christ's coming were entirely of Jewish Faith Community.
- Today, with the Jewish Faith Community, we stand as called to witness by our lives to the universality of God's love for all.
- The Mass, the central worship experience of the Christian Community grew out of the Passover Supper
- Each Sunday Mass begins with a reading from the Jewish Scriptures
- Many of the daily Masses include readings from the Old Testament.
- The response to the first reading at Mass is a responsorial psalm – a selection from the Jewish scriptures
- The Official Prayer of the Church – the Divine Office – prays the Book of Psalms in its entirety in a four week cycle
- The Holy Ones of the Jewish Faith Community are revered as the Holy Ones in the Christian Community as well

### SUMMARY

God – "I am Who Am" – Creator of the Universe - Who sustains all in Being

Planted knowledge of Himself deep within every human being.

Every human being's response to Life

In gratitude, respect, genuineness and integrity -

Be it individual of group Be it sacred or secular Be it religious or profane -

Is authentic response to the Creator God.

To enhance and to retain awareness of this love

God called forth a people special to Himself.

Their lives were additional sign of God's love for all.

God chose further to come Himself as one of God's people

To show definitively God's love for all – how life is to be lived – that it is to last forever.

To continue this caring presence of Himself God chose to flower forth from the People of God

Another Community to continue God's presence for all people

The faithfulness of the people of the two communities then – serves to remind all of God's eternal love for each.

Response to that invitation, sincere and genuine, is the privilege and responsibility of every person who ever drew the breath of life..

**AMEN**

## HOMESCHOOLING THE FAITH - SESSION 18

### The Mystery of God become One of Us

Parents: It is well for you to have a profound "appreciation" of God. Anthony de Mello, the Jesuit Poet from India once said: "No one ever became intoxicated by the word "Wine." As wine must be experienced, so must God. Your life must be such that God may be experienced in the lives of your children. Reflect on some of the following images, which may help.

- Creation is not a date on an ancient calendar. It is an on-going process each moment. As a pencil will remain aloft as long as you hold it in your hand, and if you let go of it for an instant it falls to the floor; God needs to be "creating" us each moment or we fall back into the nothingness from which we came. God is the one in whom we LIVE, MOVE, AND HAVE OUR BEING.
- God is eternal. Time is the measure of created motion. The earth spins on its axis once and we call the duration it takes a day. 365 of these make a year, ten of those a decade, 100 a century, a thousand a millennium. And our hold on time is so tenuous that when we say "NOW," it is already history. Time is the measure of created motion according to a before and an after. But God is the creator of what moves to create time. Everything that we experience successively, God has present to Him in one eternal NOW. So from before the world was made, each one of us has been known by God in our entirety – our glory and our shabbiness. And if we draw the breath of life, we certainly have to know that as long as God was God, God knew me – God loved me- and God decided to publish. Indeed, I have been loved with an everlasting love.
- One image of the scope of eternity may be cited:  
If the entire world could be transformed into a huge mass of sand, and each one thousand years, a bird would come and take one grain of sand from off that huge ball of sand...  
By the time the entire earth would be carried off in this way, eternity would be beginning.
- Another image may be cited:  
If the earth were transformed into a huge ball of brass as large as the earth itself, and every thousand years, a bird would come and brush its wing against the ball, by the time the entire ball would be wiped away, eternity would be beginning.
- These are profound examples of how vast and incredibly above us God is. We, as creatures have received the gift of existence. God IS existence.
- In becoming one of us in the person of Jesus, God made the most profound statement the world has ever experienced. God speaks with deeds. It is we that speak with words. And the Word God spoke in becoming one of us in Christ was: "In your world of space and time, I am best expressed by people. People are the most eloquent expression of God in your world. Because of this statement, the following things are true:
  1. From before the world was made, God knew me as an individual. God knew my life – start to finish. God knew the masterpiece I would be.
  2. From countless other persons God might have created instead of me – God chose to give life to me.
  3. God chose to put me into this particular family, at this particular time in history, with these particular talents and gifts, and with these particular challenges and trials.
  4. God also has told me that I am to live forever with God and this life is only the beginning of my life.
  5. And this is my whole philosophy of life. I am to live forever with my God and the life I now enjoy is only the preparation for the life for which I was made.
  6. I have the privilege and task of showing in a way unique to myself WHO GOD IS and HOW GOD LOVES. Only I can show this and I do it by the way I live – for others.
  7. God became one of us in Jesus, and when Jesus left, he called 12 people and told them to love God out of all the people they meet. Each one of us has God living within.
  8. My life must say to others: Thank God for the Good we have. Know that we're made to live forever. Take the tough things in life and see them as part of the making of the Masterpiece that is each one of us.

## HOMESCHOOLING THE FAITH - SESSION 19

### The Mystery of God Become One of Us Continued

Parents: Last week's session and this week's go together. The God Whom we saw last week to be totally Other, is the God who becomes one of us. We move now in two stages: First, The problems to be faced in the Creator God becoming one with us. Secondly, resolution of those problems.

#### The Problems

- A Story. St. Augustine, one of the most learned of the Fathers of the Church, was one day walking on the shore, taking a break from his writing on the Trinity – God three in one. He came upon a child. As he watched, the child dug a hole in the sand. He then took a large shell, went to the ocean, filled it with water and poured it into the hole he had dug. Augustine asked "What are you doing?" The boy answered. "I'm pouring the ocean into the hole I've dug." The learned man said to the child "It's impossible to put the ocean into that little hole that you've dug. "It can't be done." The boy looked at him and said: "It is more possible for me to do what I am doing than for you to do what you are doing. "The God of heaven can never be understood by the human mind."
1. How can the God who made people and the space and time in which they dwell, and keeps them in existence, become a part of what He has made?
  2. To become a person in any fashion entails taking on a short life span. How long should God live?
  3. How can God become one with all human beings, when, because of their living only a short period, he would have a problem relating to all of them?
  4. Another problem would be: Into what period of time would God best come?
  5. Into what nation?
  6. Into what family?
  7. For how long should the stay be?
  8. How can omnipotence be transformed into dependence?
  9. How can the omnipresence of God of eternity be translated into the restricted life time of individual human beings?
  10. How be present to all people of every age, place, and time?

#### The Resolution

When God became one of us in Jesus, God made the most profound statement the world has ever heard. We speak with words, as indicated previously – God with deeds. The saving plan of God for all people was forged when God became one with us and for us. In so doing, God proclaimed that people best express God in our world.

It is through people then that God has been present and will be present for all time. The Plan of Salvation for all people then runs as follows:

1. God speaks to all people in the depths of their human experience. Every person's authentic response to life is accepted by God as genuine.
2. God spoke to Abraham and from him formed a people to be witnesses to all the world of God's love for all people. In a world of sinfulness, they were to be an additional sign God's love. God also promised through them that one would come who would redeem the human race from its sinfulness.
3. That person came and instead of being "Messenger" of God, it was God Himself in the person of Jesus. He was most precious sign to all of God's presence and care. In so doing, God also affirmed the fact that people best express God in our world.
4. Consequently, on leaving, Jesus called together the 12 chosen ones and mandated them to continue the presence of God in the world for all people.
5. This people – described as LEAVEN, LIGHT, and SALT are God's plan to be present to and love for all people in the name of Jesus. And there is no Plan B.
6. A summation of the saving plan of God in Jesus then is that Jesus is present to individuals in the Community who take His place at each of the significant moments of their lives: Birth (Baptism), Growth (Confirmation) Nourishment (Eucharist) Illness (Anointing), Mistakes, Sin, Brokenness (Reconciliation), Love (Marriage) – through another, (Holy Orders) – through community. So energized together with the Faith Community of Israel, with every authentic religious and secular response to life itself, we give the presence of Jesus to our world, and remind it that we are all to live forever.

Parents: To continue the presence of Jesus is to give Christ the highest form of reverence – Imitation. Help your children discover who Jesus is. Read the gospel stories to point out how Jesus acted. Read the sermon on the mount (Matt 5 – 8) and discover what tough love is required to be part of God's saving plan. Help your children see that they are important to God. They have a mission from the God who made them to show love for others and thereby fulfill God's saving plan. God's counting on them, on you. God bless.

## HOMESCHOOLING THE FAITH - SESSION 20

### The New Testament – History, Prophecy, Writings

Historical Books: Matthew Mark Luke John Acts

The Gospels went thru the following stages:

1. The person of Jesus, Christ's teachings were shared by the Evangelist with the people. They spoke of the things they witnessed themselves.
2. As the stories and teachings were repeated, they took slightly different form in the communities in which they were spoken
3. As the eye-witnesses grew older, some of these stories and teachings were written down for future ages to preserve accuracy.
4. In the recording of the accounts the differences in oral presentation continued to find expression in written form.
  - Mark's Gospel was the first of the extant gospels.
  - The author of Luke's Gospel had that of Mark on hand
  - The author of Matthew had both previous gospels in hand.
  - When John's gospel was written each of the other gospels was available.

The Gospels then are four written versions of the stories and teachings of Jesus as presented in four different communities. Matthew wrote for a Jewish audience – Luke for a pagan.

Each gospel had its own outline: Matthew – 5 Great Sermons of Christ beginning with the sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5 – 8) And Luke "The Journey to Jerusalem." Mark has been described as the Passion of Jesus with a few additions in front.

Acts of the Apostles is more accurately titled "Some acts of Peter and Paul." It gives the story of the Infant Church and some of the challenges faced.

### Prophetic Books Revelation

Revelation is the single Prophetic Book of the New Testament or the Christian Scriptures. Important to note is the fact that it is in the literary form of an apocalyptic writing. This a writing to a people besieged with struggles. It describes in generic terms identifiable with events in many ages which are catastrophic. The intent of the writing is to say to the hurting audience "Your troubles are insignificant in comparison with these portrayed. If God can handle these – God will handle yours with no problem. To read the Book of Revelation as One would read the front page of the paper would lead to panic.

Writings	Romans	I, II Corinthians	Galatians	Ephesians	Philippians
	Colossians	I, II Thessalonians	I, II Timothy	Titus	Philemon
	James	I, II, Peter	I, II, III, John	Jude	Hebrews

- The Epistles of the New Testament were letters of Paul (chiefly) and other apostles addressed to communities already instructed in the faith.
- Their purpose was to clarify, communicate, elaborate upon teachings, or to praise or chastise. Many such letters were written. Only those we have as Epistles were accepted as part of the Christian Scriptures.
- Each of these letters were used as part of the Liturgy of the early church as part of the services surrounding the "Breaking of the Bread." All are part of the heritage of the church together with the writings of the Fathers of the Church – i.e. early leaders whose wisdom was cherished by the Community as part of their heritage.
- As indicated, from among the many writings, epistles, stories and materials about Jesus and His teachings, it was the Councils of Hippo in 393AD and later in the Council of Carthage in 2297 that the decision was formulated as to which of these writings were inspired and part of the Christian Scriptures.

Among the favorite texts of many Christians are the following:

1. The Infancy Narratives in the Gospel of Luke Chapters 1 & 2
2. The story of the Magi in the Gospel of Matthew
3. The Sermon on the Mount of Matthew, Chapters 5 -8.
4. The Prologue (Introduction) to John's Gospel ( "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God..." )
5. The story of the Eucharist in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel.
6. The many stories, parables, sayings of Jesus found throughout the Gospels.

**PARENTS:** Our suggestion to parents is that you pick some of your favorite scriptures and share them with your children, asking them to be on the lookout for their own favorite passages. Also, from these stories and actions Jesus does, what kind of person do they see Him to be?

## HOMESCHOOLING THE FAITH - SESSION 21

### New Testament – Sourcebook for Teaching and Person of Christ

#### The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5, 6, and 7)– A Solid Beginning

Parents: A useful way of working with your children on Who Christ is and what Christ taught is the Sermon on the Mount. It covers chapters five, six, and seven of Matthew's Gospel. Spend some time in reflecting on the Beatitudes and the other teachings. The Sermon on the Mount has been called the "Platform" of Jesus – the Statement for all to read of what He was about. In sharing His thoughts with us, Jesus also revealed who He is as a person – God become one of us. One could spend a year on it.

#### Beatitudes:

- Poor in Spirit. You do not need a lot of things to be happy. You are on a journey to eternity. Travel light.
- Mourning: Blessed are those who can deal with life's hurts, and live in hope, knowing we are to live forever
- Gentle. Anyone can show anger. To move beyond it is maturity. To hear the pain in others and minister to it is wisdom.
- Hungering for Right: Blessed are all who work for justice, share with others, help those who are in need.
- Merciful. Those who are always ready to forgive. Try to forgive whether people deserve forgiveness or not. Jesus did this.
- Pure of heart: those who consistently look for lasting values and strive to see things as Jesus does.
- Peace-makers: Those who bring people together – see things that are common and don't focus on differences.
- Persecuted for righteousness. Criticized for doing what is right. Looked down upon. Ridiculed. Rejected.

#### Other Values:

- Salt of the Earth. The courage to live as Jesus suggests above. Your presence - so living – makes God's love real for others.
- Light of the world. Your values come from Jesus who says we're to live forever. Our citizenship is there – not on earth.
- Leaven. It is your presence that makes people be aware that there is a God. Your very different behavior challenges world's ideas
- Your attitudes must be: WWJD (What Would Jesus Do?) WWJT (What would Jesus Think?)
- See things as they never were and ask the question "Why Not?"
- Be at peace with others. Pray to your God.
- Treat others rightly – Don't do as others do. Know that following Jesus involves tough love.
- Pray in secret. Pray simply. Don't be verbose. Pray as Jesus taught you (Our Father)
- Keep your heart in heaven where your citizenship is located. Where your treasure is there your heart will be
- You are more important than lilies of the field, and clothing.
- Prioritize God first and everything else will be given you in anticipation.
- Don't worry. Don't judge. Get good at knowing your own weaknesses and you'll be less concerned over those of others.
- Ask, seek, knock. Trust God and God will protect you.
- Pray simply – use the Our Father.
- Don't follow the crowd – it leads to destruction.
- If a person's fruits are good, that person is good. Good fruit from good trees.
- Don't just be good at praying. You have to not only pray well but love God as well by the life you lead.
- Hear God and act on the Word – Build on solid foundation.
- Hear God and do nothing is building on sand. It will all wash away in time of stress.

Parents These are some of the teachings of Jesus. They give us the ideal of how we are to live life. You are to give your children A vision of life – that of Jesus – which will enable them to process the negatives in life with the realization that we are to live forever. It also enables us to enjoy life's good things with gratitude. A person who lives as described by Jesus above, will be noticed. His or her very presence will say something to those among whom they walk and live.

It also shows us something of the person of Jesus – one who models everything that He teaches and thereby commands respect for what He has to say by the Person He is.

A very simple way to summarize this for the youngest is: "What would Jesus do?" "What would Jesus think?" You owe it to your children to model the person of Christ as He described it himself the home.

One of the Scripture readings for Mass earlier this week gives Jesus' response to the question: "Which is the greatest commandment of them all? His response was:

Love the Lord Your God with your whole mind, soul, heart, and strength (This has to do with our PRIORITIES.)

The second one is: "Love your neighbor as yourself." (And this has to do with our RELATIONSHIPS)

## HOMESCHOOLING THE FAITH - SESSION 22

### Jesus: the Person    The New Testament – Product Of Not Blueprint for Building Church

Parents:        Last week, we looked into the Sermon on the Mount as a sourcebook for the Teachings of Jesus and the Person of Jesus. The Teachings were found in the Sermon on the Mount. The Person of Jesus, we can discover in the Parables Which shed light on His character. Then we will remember that the Church was in existence some 3 centuries plus before the books of the New Testament was definitively designated as inspired Word of God. Read or tell the parable to your kids – What does it tell us of Jesus?

#### Parables:

- The Good Samaritan. (Luke 10: 29 – 37) Jesus often made heroes out of people who were not part of the Community of Faith:
- Pharisee and the Publican: (Luke 16: 9 – 14: Jesus loved sinners wanting their change of heart not condemnation.
- The Lost Sheep (Luke 15: 1-10) Jesus loves those who stray as a Shepherd leaves 99 sheep to search for the lost one.
- Leaven - Hidden Treasure: (Matt 13: 44 – 46) Sell all you have to get the treasure. Unconditional total love is demand of Jesus.
- Wicked Tenants: (Matt. 21: 33 – 44) Connection between belief & Behavior. Jesus is merciful but holds us accountable.
- Widow's Mite (Matt. 13:47-50) Sometimes a small gift far exceeds in the love that brings it than the large. Jesus as sensitive.
- Laborers in Vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16) Jesus as sensitive to the needs of all – the least to the first
- Marriage Feast (Mark 22:1 – 14) We are like the guests invited to follow Jesus. What busyness in my life keeps me away?
- Sheep and the Goats: (Matt. 25: 31 – 46) When it's all said and done – how we treat one another gets us into Paradise.

The Parables may be read, recounted, dramatized, role played with the youngsters. They show us a Jesus who is caring, selfless, Loves the lost and will go to any lengths to bring them back. It is a Jesus who values goodness in everyone, even those society Dismisses as of little value. Jesus is sensitive to the needs of people and addresses those needs. He is most merciful but also holds us accountable.

Have your youngsters go through the gospels to discover other parables, pick a favorite, and describe why it is a favorite.

#### The New Testament - Product of Community – not Blueprint from which to Build a Church

- The first book of the New Testament was written 40 – 50AD. This was Paul's letter to the Thessalonians.
- The Gospels have the rough dates of: Mark: 55 – 60AD; Matthew: 60 – 65AD; Luke: 65 – 70AD; John: 100 – 125AD
- These books, the other books that became the New Testament, and other letters of the early Fathers were read in the ceremony of the "Breaking of the Bread"
- It was not till the Council of Carthage in 393AD, and the Council of Hippo in 397 AD that the 27 books that form the New Testament were formally designated as the inspired Word of God and hence with the Hebrew Scriptures part of the Bible.
- Again, the Gospels present us with the Person and some of the teaching of Jesus as reflected in four different communities in the early church. They give us Christ and some of His teachings.
- Acts of the Apostles gives some of the events in the lives of some apostles – chiefly Peter and Paul.
- The Epistles of Paul, James, Peter, John, Jude and Hebrews were communications to churches already founded and instructed in the vision of Jesus and were to clarify, further instruct, chastise or problem solve.
- The Book of Revelation – the only prophetic book of the New Testament – is written in apocalyptic form and would not contain in its entirety the teachings of Jesus.
  1. Consequently, the Catholic posture on the Scriptures is that it is the inspired word of God, understood properly it contains no error since it is written by God as the primary author and the human being as simply the free instrument of the creator God.
  2. It is our belief that the sources of revelation are not simply the Bible, but the Bible and Tradition – the living teaching of the church.
  3. Indeed, then, the New Testament is the product of the Community – not the blueprint from which a Church is to be built.

## HOMESCHOOLING THE FAITH - SESSION 23

### The Gospels – Written Accounts of Preaching About Jesus

Parents: In viewing the Gospels, the following are items important to remember:

1. Jesus commissioned the Apostles to preach the Gospel to all people, baptizing them in the name of Father, Son, Spirit.
2. The apostles and their followers were eye-witnesses. They spoke of the Jesus they knew, loved, and had been with.
3. Each went to different sections of the world of their day during their lifetimes and told the Story of Jesus, presenting both the person and some of Jesus' teachings.
4. As they went from place to place, their message was adjusted to their audiences – Gentile in origin or Jewish.
5. In time, the messages began taking on a certain form with each of the presentations with minor variations.
6. At one point, the Community realized that eye-witnesses were getting older, and it would be helpful to have a record their story.
7. At this point the story of Jesus as told by the authors of the 4 gospels came to be written down as it was presented orally.
8. Copies were made and circulated. They were read in the ceremony of the "Breaking of the Bread." And this period of circulation was the one which was done very carefully, recognizing the preciousness of the works themselves.
9. Many other writings were also used at the "Breaking of the Bread" as well.
10. In the year 393 at the Council of Hippo, and the year 397 at the Council of Carthage, these books were declared to be Scripture. Among these were the four Gospels, attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The following is the breakdown of the respective background of the Four Gospels we have today.

- Mark** The Gospel of Mark is the one which is the earliest account of the Life and the Person of Jesus. His would be an eye-witness account. An early tradition describes Mark as having recorded the record of the preaching of Peter, Prince of the Apostles. The focus of Peter's preaching as recorded is on the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. In the process, there is also included some of the things that Jesus taught.
- Matthew** The Gospel of Matthew focuses on the words of Jesus. These the Sacred Author gathers into five great sermons beginning with the Sermon on the Mount. Because of the nature of the book, more of Jesus teachings are contained here than in Mark.
- Luke** Luke's Gospel shares with us the preaching about Jesus to a Gentile or non-Jewish audience. The focus of the Gospel of Luke is the Journey to Jerusalem which presents Christ gradually making His way to the Holy City where the suffering climaxes in the Suffering, Death, and Resurrection.
- John** John's Gospel presents Jesus as He was understood by the Christian Community at the end of the First Century. John's is the most theological of the Gospels and reflects the preaching of an old man recalling the significant experiences he had in his youth when he walked with God through the streets of the Holy Land. An interesting story is told about John the Evangelist. At the end of his life, he had but one sermon and that a short one. It was "Little Children, love one another." When questioned by a close friend on why his sermons were the same, John's reply was: "It is because if one does this, one fulfills the whole of the Law and the Prophets as well."

**Summary** In the Gospels, we Jesus as one:

1. Who speaks of Himself and the Father as one
2. Who forgave sin
3. Who said "Before Abraham Came to be, I AM."
4. Who received divine approbation on the occasion of His baptism by John. Spirit descending like a dove.
5. Who experienced a meeting with Moses and Elijah – the personifications of the Law and the Prophets.
6. Who at the Transfiguration was spoken of as "This is my Beloved Son, "Listen to Him." Which bespeaks a superiority to Moses and Elijah.
7. Who announces that "God's Kingdom is in our midst."

The Gospels also give the MO (Modus Operandi – way of proceeding – of Jesus:

1. Jesus calls a few people together
2. He forms a community with them – bonds with them
3. Jesus accepts them and forgives their shortcomings and inadequacies.
4. Jesus then empowers them, commissioning them to continue His presence and mission in te world

# HOMESCHOOLING THE FAITH - SESSION 24

## Apocalypse – Book of Revelation

### Parents

- The Literary form of this last book of the New Testament is “apocalyptic writing.”
- This literary form pretends to be a revelation of the future.
- It portrays itself as a writing of an ancient hero which has been kept secret.
- The revelations come thru “Visions”, or “Openings of the Heavens,” which reveal the future in complicated symbolism.
- It deals also with the final period of history, where Evil makes a final assault on God till Evil is routed in a huge conflict
- It becomes a .book of hope in that when God routs such cataclysmic evils, God certainly can solve problems of our own day
- The important thing to get across is that most of the end of the world panic scenes are based on mistakenly reading the Apocalypse as one would read a news story. This is like reading the horoscope as one reads a recipe i.e. with ultimate seriousness.

### Outline

Introduction

1<sup>st</sup> Part: Letters to the Seven Churches

2<sup>nd</sup> Part: End of the present age and coming of new age

Conclusion

### Letters to the Seven Churches

<b>Ephesus</b>	I know your works and endurance. You have suffered for my name. Yet I hold this against you: You have lost the love you had at first. Realize how far you have fallen and repent.
<b>Smyrna</b>	I know your tribulation and poverty yet you are rich. Do not be afraid of what you are going to suffer. Remain faithful. I will give you crown of life.\
<b>Pergamum</b>	You hold fast to my name and have not denied your faith in me. Yet I have a few things against you. Therefore repent.
<b>Thyatira</b>	I know your works, your love, faith, service, endurance and your latter works are greater than the first. But you tolerate the woman Jezebel with her harlotry. To the rest of you, I place no further burden
<b>Sardis</b>	I know your works – your reputation of being alive but you are dead I have not found your works complete in the sight of God. Remember how you accepted and heard and repent. Otherwise I come like a thief in the night.
<b>Philadelphia</b>	You have limited strength yet you have not denied me and kept my word. Your enemies will realize that I love you. Because you have kept my message I will keep you safe in time of trial.
<b>Laodicea</b>	I know your works. I know you are neither cold nor hot...Because you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of my mouth. Those whom I love, I reprove and chastise. Be earnest therefore and repent.

Reflection: Were the Lord to come to the church that is my heart, which of the words addressed to the churches, would be most applicable to me at the present time?





This concludes our course on the Bible. Note that the Old Testament is the product of the Jewish Community of God's people, and the New Testament is the product of the Christian Community. IN the Christian Community there are two sources of revelation – Scripture and Tradition.

As Word of God, the Scriptures put us in touch with God and are one of the ways for us to be connected to God. And as Christ so beautifully put it in the image of the vine and the branches – without connection to the Vine, no growth is possible.