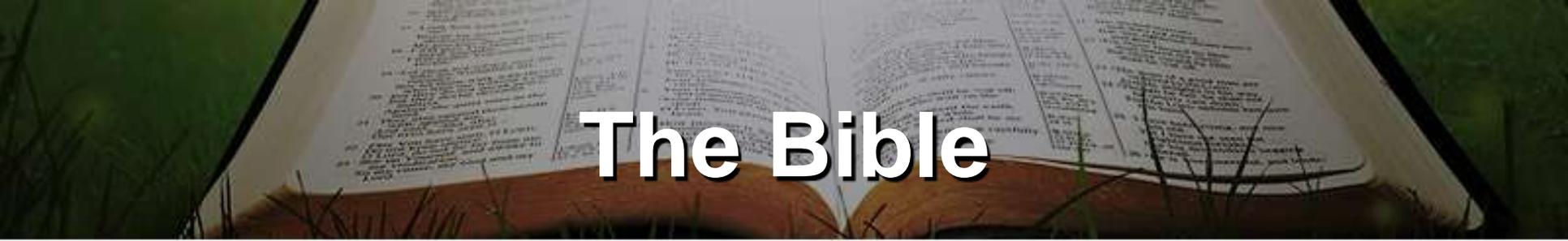


The Bible

Nuneaton – 6th March 2011





The Bible

- 1. Its origin**
- 2. Its reliability through the ages**
- 3. Its purpose**
- 4. How to read and understand it**

The Bible – a Miracle



The Bible



Its Origin

- **Why should we be interested?**
- **What do we mean by ‘the Bible’?**
- **What do we know of its origins?**
- **What does the Bible say about its origins?**
- **What next?**

Why should we be interested?

- **The Bible is the oldest set of writings in the world dating back about 3,500 years**
- **It is the most widely available book in the world having been translated into over 3,000 languages**
- **It has survived despite many attempts to suppress and destroy it**
- **It has been more influential than any other set of writings**



What is the Bible? (1)

- **The Bible is a collection of 66 books, 1,189 chapters (can be read aloud in about 70 hours)**
- **It was written over a period of >1500 years in three different continents**
- **It was written by 40 people including kings, prophets, fishermen, a doctor, a prime minister and a tent maker**



What is the Bible? (2)

- **It was mainly written in Hebrew and Greek**
- **It covers hundreds of subjects**
- **Many of the things written were and still are highly controversial**
- **Despite all this it has common themes and is entirely consistent in what it is saying**



The 'canon' of scripture

- **What is included in the Bible?**
- **The inspired writings were preserved** (eg Deuteronomy 31:26; Joshua 24:26 & 1 Samuel 10:25)
- **Josephus listed the books** (1st century AD)
- **NT canon of writings established in the 2nd century AD**
- **Preservation of the scriptures led by the Jews and Apostles but ultimately guided by God** (Romans 3:2; 1 Peter 1:25 & Revelation 22:18-19)

What do we know of its origins?

- **Oldest manuscripts date back to 200BC (Old Testament) and 1st century AD (New Testament) *cf 900AD Herodotus***
- **There are 1,000s of OT manuscripts and over 25,000 NT manuscripts available *cf none of Shakespeare & 8 of Herodotus***
- **Even the oldest MSS agree with the most recent, 95% word for word *NB 1,000 years apart***



The Dead Sea Scrolls

- **About 15,000 fragments of 500+ MSS were found dating from 3rd – 1st century BC**
- **Included 19 copies of Isaiah, 25 of Deuteronomy and 30 of Psalms**



- **Astonishing quality of preservation and consistency**
- **Discovered 1947-1956**

What does the Bible say? (1)

“...from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” *2 Timothy 3:15-17*

What does the Bible say? (2)

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

2 Peter 1:19-21



What does the Bible say? (3)

- **It is the Word of God**
- **It is a unique and authentic explanation of:**
 - **The origin and history of our creation**
 - **The nature and purpose of God, our creator**
 - **The role, work and teaching of God's son the Lord Jesus Christ**
 - **The nature and situation of mankind**
 - **How man can, through Jesus, receive God's gift of salvation and eternal life**



What next?

1. Its origin ✓
2. Its reliability through the ages
3. Its purpose
4. How to read and understand it



**Thank you
for listening**