

Conversation Guide

Bible, ep. 1

Episode 1 summary

- The Bible is a complex and varied collection of ancient writings, masterfully constructed over thousands of years.
- It was written primarily to the nation of Ancient Israel, with parts directed to first-century Jews and non-Jews.
- The Bible has eternal relevance, which means it's valuable to all people at all times, but it was also written to specific people. It was written for us, not to us.

1. What is the Bible?

2. The Here and Now

3. The Bible is Weird

4. Themes

Discussion questions

01 What's your favorite story? From a book or a movie or anywhere. Why is it that you connect with that story? Is it the characters? Is it the plot? Little of both?

02 Does it surprise you that there aren't any perfect heroes in the Bible (aside from Jesus)? Why do you think the authors would have portrayed the heroes of the Bible in such an honest light?

03 If the Bible has eternal relevance, then there should be verses that could possibly apply more to right now than ever before. What's a verse that 21st century Christians could learn a lot from?

Diving deeper

Read 2 Peter 1. At the end of this chapter Peter is exploring how God inspires prophecy and revelation, which is how we got the Bible. What sticks out to you in the way Peter talks about inspiration? What do you think Peter means by not following cleverly devised myths? It's a big theme of 2 Peter!

Conversation Guide

Bible, ep. 2

Episode 2 summary

- The Bible is a divine work of literature, inspired by God. It is reliable and true, but that doesn't necessarily mean what we take away from it is also reliable and true.
- It's important to understand what the words meant *then and there* (exegesis) and use that to learn what it can mean *here and now* (hermeneutics).
- This is why it is vital to place verses in context, so we don't manipulate the text to mean something it doesn't.

1. What is the Bible?
2. The Here and Now
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4. Themes

Discussion questions

01 Have you or someone you know ever used a verse out of context? Does the meaning of the verse shift when it's placed in context? How so?

02 Does being told to never read a single Bible verse surprise you? Does it make you uncomfortable? What are some verses that you tend to always see by themselves or out of context?

03 Can you think of a verse that is only read in the context of modern day, the *here and now*? Why do you think people forget to consider the *then and there*?

Diving deeper

Read Philippians 4. We gave Philippians 4:13 a hard time in Episode 2, but it's not a bad verse. It's just a victim of consistent "out-of-context-ing." Spend some time processing what Philippians 4:13 means in the context of its chapter. If you need to, read all of Philippians. It's not very long, and it's a wonderful letter!

Conversation Guide

Bible, ep. 3

Episode 3 summary

- There are a lot of uncomfortable parts of the Bible, and these have led many to be skeptical of it.
- Even the heroes of the Bible are messy, and they constantly make mistakes.
- But again, reading in context can help. Reading the Bible in the proper historical and literary context can be difficult, but it's the first step to understanding these hard parts of the Bible.

1. What is the Bible?
2. The Here and Now
- 3. The Bible is Weird**
4. Themes

Discussion questions

01 Is there a story in the Bible that surprised you with its content? What did you do with that feeling of surprise and/or shock?

02 How does knowing most, if not all, of the humans in Bible are flawed make you feel? How could it be encouraging to know the heroes of the Bible are messy?

03 In modern times, the Law of the Old Testament can feel outdated and strange. What are some things we can learn from this old, intricate system of laws and rules?

Diving deeper

There are more violent, uncomfortable stories in the Bible than can be listed. Remember the words of John Piper about the end of Judges, "This is what happens when human beings run rampant without any restraints." Is John Piper right? Do the violent stories show the depth of human sin? Do you think this statement covers all the violence in the Bible? Why or why not?

Conversation Guide

Bible, ep. 4

Episode 4 summary

- The theme of the Bible is unique; it's not a concept or idea. Instead, it's a person: Jesus.
- The Bible in its entirety, from the stories of Genesis, to the law, to the Prophets, to the New Testament, points to Jesus.
- As Jonah says, "Salvation belongs to the Lord." Jesus is the only one who saves. The Bible is not the point of Christianity. Jesus is!

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Discussion questions

01 Why do you think humans respond so much to the idea of a sacrificial savior? Why is this type of character so common?

02 What do you think the Bible would be like without Jesus? Remember, the Old Testament concludes before his arrival, so it's not *too* hard to think about.

03 So the Bible is big and complex and has influenced culture and morals in significant ways for thousands of years, but has a single person as its primary focus. Do you think Jesus deserves to be the focus? Why or why not?

Diving deeper

Read Luke 9:1-36. This section of Luke's Gospel is an example of the rapid fire storytelling about Jesus. Yet, it very clearly sets Jesus up as the center of the story. Verses 28-36 very clearly declare Jesus to be the Son of God, a human and divine savior. Many people really like Jesus, but don't want to believe he's truly divine. Jesus could have spent his time using his power to tear down corrupt governments and free his people from oppression. Instead he healed people and washed feet. What does that say about him?

BIBLE

1 What is the Bible?

What is the Bible?

The Bible has two major parts, the _____ and _____, and contains _____ books.

“The Bible was written for us, not necessarily to us.” What do you think this means?

Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart sum it up well, “Because the Bible is God’s message, it has eternal relevance; it speaks to all humankind, in every age and in every culture. Because it is the word of God, we must listen -- and obey. But because God chose to speak his word through human words in history, every book in the Bible also has historical particularity; each document is conditioned by the language, time, and culture in which it was originally written.

2 The Here and Now

_____ =
Then and There
_____ =
Here and Now

Although everyone employs _____ at times, and although quite often such _____ is well done, it nonetheless tends to be employed only when there is an obvious problem between the _____ and _____. Whereas it must indeed be employed for such texts, we insist that it is the first step in reading _____ text.

- How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth

There is no purely _____ biblical interpretation. This is not postmodern _____. We believe truth is truth. But there’s no way around the fact that our _____ and _____ context supply us with the habits of mind that lead us to read the Bible differently than _____ in other cultural and historical contexts.

- Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes

3 The Bible is Weird

What are some uncomfortable things you’ve read or heard about the Bible?

Where in the Bible is a good place to start reading it?

Cherry-picking the uncomfortable parts of the Bible is just as flawed as cherry-picking the comforting parts.

4 Themes

Try to sum up the Bible in one sentence.

Who are your favorite “Chosen One” characters?

“This is why Christianity has always had, as it’s sole focus, the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

Why does this matter to us today?

BIBLE

1 What is the Bible?

What is the Bible?

The Bible has two major parts, the **Old Testament** and **New Testament**, and contains **66** books.

“The Bible was written for us, not necessarily to us.” What do you think this means?

Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart sum it up well, “Because the Bible is God’s message, it has eternal relevance; it speaks to all humankind, in every age and in every culture. Because it is the word of God, we must listen -- and obey. But because God chose to speak his word through human words in history, every book in the Bible also has historical particularity; each document is conditioned by the language, time, and culture in which it was originally written.

2 The Here and Now

Exegesis
=
Then and There
Hermeneutics
=
Here and Now

Although everyone employs **exegesis** at times, and although quite often such **exegesis** is well done, it nonetheless tends to be employed only when there is an obvious problem between the **biblical texts** and **modern culture**. Whereas it must indeed be employed for such texts, we insist that it is the first step in reading **EVERY** text.

- How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth

There is no purely **objective** biblical interpretation. This is not postmodern **relativism**. We believe truth is truth. But **there's no way around the fact that our cultural and historical context** supply us with the habits of mind that lead us to read the Bible differently than **Christians** in other cultural and historical contexts.

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