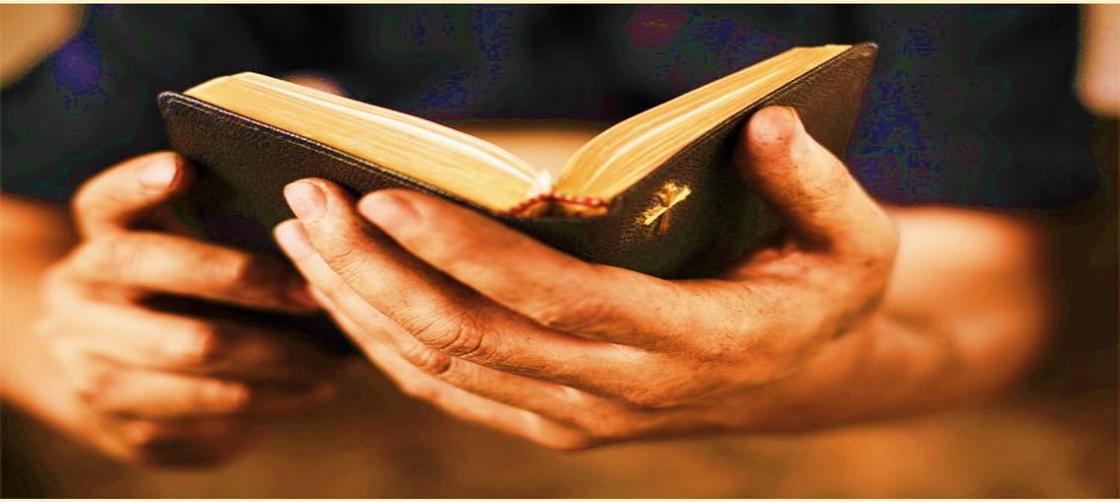


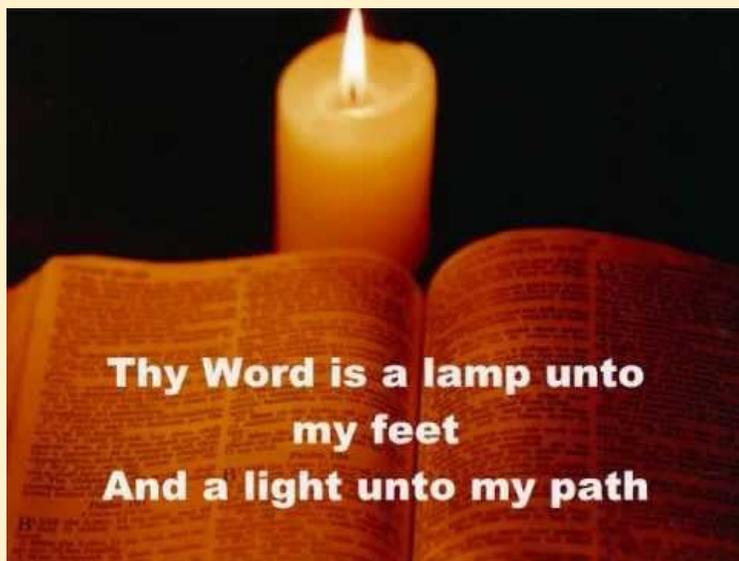


The Anglican Parishes of Whittington, Weeford and Hints

*What the Lord requires of you is to do justice and to love mercy and to
walk humbly with your God*

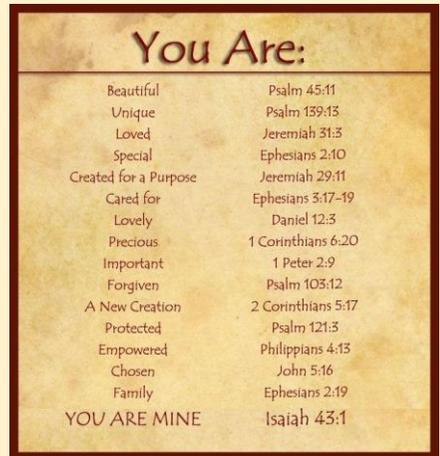
The Bible An Introduction to this sacred text





INSPIRED BY GOD”, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

We speak to God in prayer and God speaks to us through His word. God reveals Himself in the Scripture and teaches us about His ways.



St. Paul clearly states: “All Scripture is inspired by God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3: 16).

The word “inspired” in Greek is *Theopneustos*, means “God-breathed”. This means that any truth contained in Holy Scripture is given directly by God.

Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 2: 13: “For this reason we thank God without ceasing, that when you received of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it as the Word of God, not as a word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which also effectually works in you who believe”. St. Peter says the same: “For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1: 21).

The inspiration of the Bible does not mean that the Biblical writers were merely secretaries who wrote word by word of what God inspired them. The Holy Spirit conveyed to the Biblical writers the truths to be expressed in Scripture, but the details of the writing itself reflects the emphases and personal style of the individual writers.

The Bible is written at different times and places and includes Hebrew, Greek and elements of Aramaic in its original form.



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Many Christians especially from a Benedictine background believe the Bible to be the word of God to them today. In church we give thanks' for the word of the Lord' believing God to prompt us afresh in the words of scripture. The practice of slow reading called' Lectio Divina' encourages the reader to read until a phrase or word prompts them to stop. The reader then meditates and thinks about the words believing God to be shaping their thoughts and speaking to them now...often the prompt may not be related to the biblical phrase but arises from that initial slow reading. Followers of Ignation Christianity practice meditation on a given scripture in a similar way – waiting to see how God prompts their hearts and minds to action-again the word of the Lord in present time.

SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

In 2 Thessalonians, the Holy Apostle Paul exhorts, “*Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle*” (2: 15). St. Paul’s statement clearly implies two inseparable elements of orthodoxy: the oral word, and the written word. We should remember that the Bible originally was an oral tradition passed down by memory and word for word.

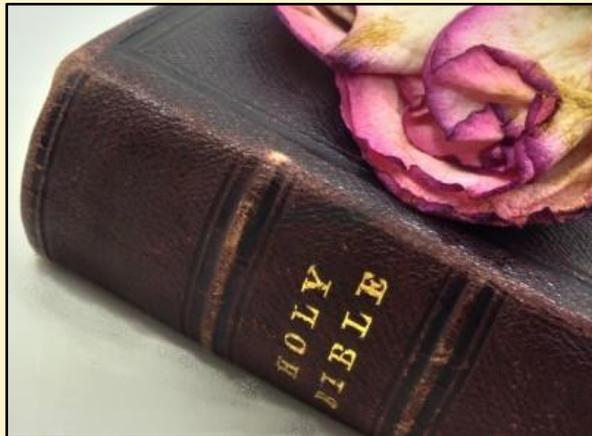
How we interpret scripture is vital to our understanding. In our Anglican church there are many approaches including a literal way to a highly mystical way.

Many, including our parish priest, would see the Bible as indicating the love story between God and humanity throughout history and into present times. This approach takes into account cultural and contextual nuances and whilst values

individual texts takes great care to interpret in light of the grand narrative of loving relationship.

The Anglican way to decision make but also as interpretation is to reflect scripture, tradition and reason/experience together and to listen for the present day promptings of God within that matrix.

It is often difficult to fully understand the meaning of Scripture without also understanding the teaching of the Church in the context of experience Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you.

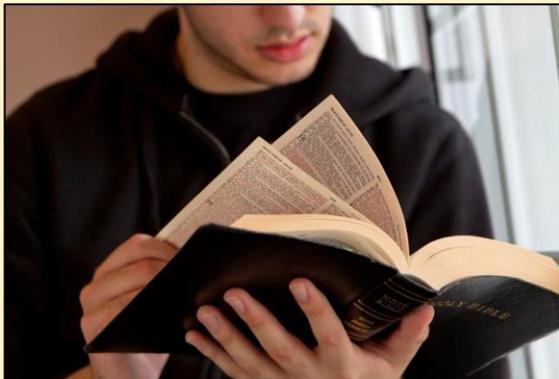


METHODS FOR BIBLE STUDY

1. Devotional Study: if you engage in no other form of bible study, you should at least engage in devotional reading. Read the bible, allow the Holy Spirit to convince you, and apply it to yourself. (lectio Divina, praying the offices such as compline)

2. Topical Study: This is what many of our church Bible Study meetings do. We reflect on a topic related to our Christian life, discover what the Bible has to say about it, and find ways to apply to our life. The groups are valuable because they broaden the dynamics of reason/experience and tradition from just ourselves.

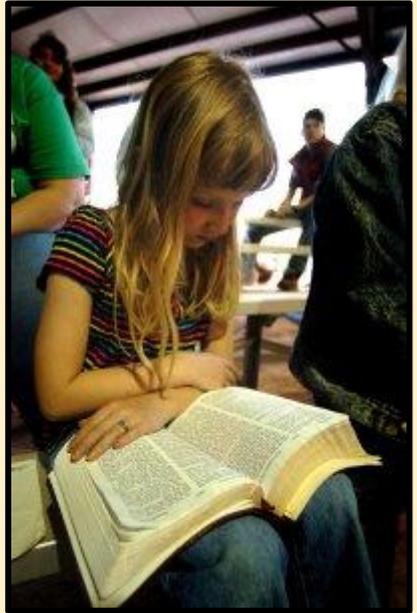
3. Book Study:. This method takes the historical, cultural, social contexts of the book into account. In this method, you aim to understand what the book is asking; such questions as: who is the author? Who was the intended audience of the book? Under what circumstances was the book written?



THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD

The Word of God has a Power to Change your Life:

“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from the heavens, and does not return there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring out and bud, and give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall My Word be, which goes out of My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall certainly do what I sent it to do” (Isa 55:10)



1. It Changes Us Into the Image of Christ: St. James in his Letter says: “But become doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man studying his natural face in a mirror. For he studied himself and went his way, and immediately he forgot what he was like. But whoever looks into the perfect Law of liberty and continues in it, he is not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work. This one shall be blessed in his doing” (James 1: 22-25). And Paul says: “But we all, with our face having been unveiled, having beheld the glory of the Lord as in a mirror, are being changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3: 18).

2. The Bible Instructs us in Righteousness: St. Paul exhorts us to “exercise yourself toward godliness” (1 Timothy 4: 7), and that we can do so by being “nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed”. No one can live a godly life without the Holy Scripture.

3. The Word of God Reveals our Inmost Thoughts and Tendencies: “For the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing apart of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4: 12)

4. The Word of God Protects the Believer from Sin:
“With what shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your Word. With all my heart I have sought You; do not let me wander from Your Commandments. I have hidden Your Word in my heart, so that I might not sin against You.” (Psalms 111: 9-11)

Other books you may want to read:

Bishop Helen Ann Hartley (2011) Making Sense of the Bible

Jonathan MAgonet (2000) A Rabbi Reads the Bible

Henry Wansborough (2013) SPCK Bible Guide

(2015) Introducing the New Testament

(2010) the use and Abuse of the Bible

Mark Strom (2012) Symphony of Scripture

Bible Translations

Brian Close The Word New Testament

Nicholas King__ The Bible, The New Testament, The Old Testament

Eugene Peterson The Message

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