

Introduction

- 1 A few years back, the Bible Society survey showed, 85% of Christians read Bible once a week
- 2 15% of these people said the one time they read the Bible was in church each week
- 3 What does this tell us about these peoples Chn faith – like fasting for a week – weak spiritually
- 4 These days we have so many English translations of the Bible, but has not always been the case
- 5 In 1401 the Roman Catholic church in England passed a law punishable by burning alive any one who tried to translate the Bible into English or to anyone who owned/read such a Bible
 - a 1519 Seven men burned alive for teaching their children the Lord’s prayer in English
 - b 1524 William Tyndale had to flee England for wanting to translate the Bible into English
 - c In exile in Belgium/Germany he was the first to translate the NT into English from Greek NT + 45% of OT from the Hebrew before imprisoned–smuggled into UK by boat in material bales
 - d 1526 Bishop Tunstall burned all English Bibles he could find-not Muslims/Hindus but church
 - e 1535 Tyndale arrested by trickery, found guilty of heresy translating Bible killed/burned 1536
- 6 Why did Thomas More and the King not want Bible in English? Only priest gifted to interpret it
- 7 **Real reason** – church introduced many things not in Bible – did not want to be found out
- 8 Tyndale translated 4 words differently in NT, which challenged whole teaching of the RC church
 - a Elder instead of Priest
 - b Congregation instead of church
 - c Repent instead of “Doing penance”
 - d Love instead of charity–opened Bible understanding, showed false teachings of 1500s church
- 9 Like Luther, taught “Justification by faith alone based on Lord’s death/resurrection not works”
- 10 90% of Tyndale’s translation included in King James version, 70% of all modern translations
- 11 Tyndale has had greater impact on English language than William Shakespeare
- 12 **The English Bible came at great cost in early days, BUT how often do you and I read it?**

I The Scriptures – The Bible

- 1 Parts or the whole of it translated into over 2300 different languages out of estimated 6912

A The Old Testament written in the Hebrew language + few chapters in Aramaic

- 1 This consists of 39 separate books of varying lengths divided into 5 broad sections
 - a 5 books of law Genesis- Deuteronomy
 - b 12 Historical books of descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob/Israel Joshua - Esther
 - c 5 Books of Poetry – Psalms to Song of songs
 - d 17 books of Prophecy - 5 major Isaiah to Daniel, e 12 minor in length Hosea- Malachi
- 2 The last book of Malachi was written about 400 years before the coming of the Lord Jesus
- 3 When He was born the 39 official OT Scriptures **were accepted as God’s Word by Jews**

B The New Testament written in common Greek

- 1 27 books of the NT were originally written on separate papyrus scrolls of varying lengths
 - eg Matthew would have been written on a papyrus scroll about 10 metres long
- 2 There were 9 different authors, 8 of whom were Jewish and one Gentile, Luke
- 3 They each wrote independently of one another, their scrolls circulated separately for 60 yr
 - a Four gospels Matthew- John
 - b History of the early church - Acts
 - c 21 letters to people/churches –Romans-Jude
 - d Revelation-Prophetic book re future
- 4 Were many letters being circulated - in 397 Council of Carthage **confirmed** 27 books of the NT which the Chn church had generally accepted as being the inspired Word of God

C 2 Peter 1:20-21 You/I must understand this: says Peter, based on personal experience of the Lord Jesus, particularly His glory revealed on the Mt of Transfiguration 1:16-8

- 1 Peter tells us 4 things about how the various authors wrote God’s Word in the Bible
 - a Nothing in the Bible comes about by the prophet’s own interpretation
 - eg “I think I will write God’s Word today, now what shall I say!!!”

- b** For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man – Man doesn't know God's mind!!!
- c** But men spoke from God – “When God guided them to write something down and later the Council of Carthage agreed with them that their writings had been inspired by God”
- d** They were carried along by the Holy Spirit, Just like a ship is carried along by the wind
It is a controlling and carrying power which is quite beyond anything that the human will can claim for itself – Holy Spirit gave the writers the right thoughts to write down
That is why Peter repeats himself in 1:20 and 1:21 from 2 angles in **1a, b** above
- e 1:16-18** Peter had seen the Lord Jesus' glory and heard God's voice on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark 9:2-10) – He had experienced what God was like

D 2 Peter 3:15-16 Peter under guidance of Holy Spirit acknowledged Paul's Letters were equal to the OT Scriptures – Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:7-13; John in Revelation 1:2

Peter describes how God gave Paul wisdom to write Scriptures just as He had done for the OT writers. Paul claimed this for himself in 1 Cor 2:7-13; 14:37; 1 Thess 2:13; Rev 1:2 John eg 1 Corinthians **2:10 “But God has revealed it to us by His Spirit”**

E Authority of the God-inspired Scriptures including their inerrancy and infallibility

1 As evangelical Christians we are **100% convinced of the authority of the Bible** as being the inspired Word of God. We accept the Scriptures by faith, as a God-given revelation to be our guide in **matters of faith and morals. This act of faith** as with all acts of faith should be supported by reason and shown to be true by our personal experience.

2 **Inerrancy** means that the Bible **in its original form** and currently translated is entirely true, consistent, never false and without error in matters of faith, doctrine, morals & ethics

3 God who is sovereign has continued to guide those who have copied and translated the Bible into many languages down through the centuries, to teach His eternal truths

4 **Infallibility** means that God who is holy, perfect and 100% truth

a is not capable of teaching falsehood or error of any kind

b Always tells us exactly what He wants us to know about the truths He intends to teach

c The Bible never contradicts itself and is consistent in its teachings. - eg re God, man, sin

d It tells us what God Himself understands as true and the real nature of things –

eg Doesn't hide man's mistakes - Peter's denial in Luke 22,

- Abraham twice told ½ truths re Sarah in Genesis 12,20

e The Scriptures are like God speaking directly to us from heaven

eg “This is my Son whom I love. Listen to Him” (Mark 9:7); John 14:6 – Jesus' words

5 If it is accepted that God inspired the writing of the books of the Bible, then to claim otherwise would imply that **a** Either God made or permitted mistakes in the Bible, or

b He is not sovereign or in control of all things

(((6 The earliest manuscripts available go back to 900 AD, but when the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947, it was found these dated back to 200BC- 86AD -1000 yrs older

7 Were found to be almost identical, showing those copies of 900 AD could be trusted.)))))

F Amazing thing about the Bible - “An Unique Book”

1 Bible is written over 1500+years period 2 Written by more than 40 different authors

Moses, a political leader, trained in Egyptian universities **Peter**, a fisherman

Paul, a teacher **Amos**, looked after animals **Joshua**, a military general

Nehemiah, a cupbearer **Daniel**, a Prime Minister **Matthew** a tax collector

Luke, a doctor **Solomon**, a king **Ezra**, a priest

3 Written in different places

Moses in the wilderness **Jeremiah** in a dungeon **Daniel** on a hillside and in a palace

Paul inside a prison **Luke** while travelling **John** on the island of Patmos

Others involved in warfare

- 4 Written at different times
David in times of war **Solomon** in times of peace
- 5 Written during different moods
Some writing from the heights of joy **Others** from the depths of sorrow and despair
- 6 Written on 3 continents
Asia, Africa and **Europe**
- 7 Written in 3 languages
Hebrew **Aramaic** (Daniel 2:4-7:28; Ezra 4:8-6:18 etc.) **Greek**
- 8 Its subject matter includes 100s of controversial topics. Yet the Biblical authors spoke with harmony and continuity from Genesis to Revelation**
- Question 1** How is it possible for one book to have one consistent message throughout?

G Fulfillment of OT Prophecies about the Lord Jesus

- Question 1 :-** How many people do you know or read about who have been able to prophesy about the future once and it came true???
- Question 2** How about being able to prophesy 3 times about the future and it came true???
- 1 However with the Bible it is amazing how many times prophecies about the future have come true, because God always tells the truth.
- 2 Thomson's Chain reference Bible lists 38 prophecies in the OT which have been fulfilled (**ie** Have come true) about the birth, life, death and resurrection of Lord Jesus.
- 3 **On this card I have listed 18 separate prophecies which have all been fulfilled**
- 4 If people do not believe God must be responsible for the writing of the Bible after this evidence, then they really have a problem and are not being honest with themselves
- 5 Jesus came 1st time to save us from God's judgement, the 2nd time He will come to judge

II Teaching of the Scriptures

A General

- 1 From Genesis to Revelation the Bible describes how God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit created the world, with man being the last of God's creation, made in His image
- 2 God gave man the responsibility of ruling, looking after this world and everything in it, including the animals, bird and fish as God's representatives.
- 3 God gave the first man and woman one rule to obey and if they disobeyed they would suffer spiritual & later physical death and separation from God, who always tells the truth
 - a They chose to rebel against God, reject His control over their lives
 - b Sin, self-centredness entered this world and everyone is born with this human weakness of naturally rebelling against God, without being taught to do so by anyone
 - c The result was that everyone born into this world was under God's judgement of death
- 4 **The rest of the Bible describes** how God had a plan in place to give everyone the opportunity to be reconciled to God – He chose a nation, the descendants of Abraham and one descendant in particular to bring that about – Jesus Christ, the Son of God

B Consistency of the whole Bible in describing God and man's nature and character

- 1 Do not have time to go into the detail of this, but despite the wide variety of different authors in different time zones, both the OT and NT show God's nature and character to be 100% consistent- just, love, truth, all-knowing, all-power, be everywhere, grace, holy etc. These apply equally to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- 2 Mankind of all nations show very clearly their self-centred, sinful natures with some worse than others, but with not one being right in God's eyes and all under His judgement
- 3 **Let us be honest** – all of us knows we rebel against God, want to live our own lives!!!
- 4 God is sovereign and in control of this world although He has given mankind the responsibility of looking after it for God – **man has failed very badly!!!**

4 Yet God is fulfilling His purposes and sometime in the future He will send the Lord Jesus to judge the world and everyone who has ever lived in it – **Big question – What have you/I done about Jesus? Have you/I repented and placed our trust in Him?**

C Jesus Christ, the Son of God is central to the Scriptures – like the making of a movie

- 1 From Genesis 3:15 when the first reference is made to His saving work on the cross to the last verses Revelation 22:20-21 “Come, Lord Jesus – may His grace be with God’s people
- 2 Genesis 12:3 promises Abraham all peoples on earth will be blessed thru’ him and one of his descendants-message about this coming Messiah/Anointed One mentioned thru-out OT
- 3 All the Jewish people were waiting for the coming Messiah/Christ during Jesus’ life here
- 4 OT points forward to His coming, the NT looks back – He is central to the Scriptures –
- 5 Like the making of a movie 1000s metres film taken, edited, goes thru’ small lense -world
- 6 One descendant of Abraham, Israel. dies on cross-gives all chance to be reconciled to God
- 7 **You/I have believed that message, millions have not. Our responsibility to tell them**

D Why did John write his gospel according to John 20:31? – These are written that

- 1 **You/I believe Jesus is the Promised Christ/Messiah**, the Son of God, sent by God to save each from God’s judgement, and
- 2 That **by believing** in Him **you may have (eternal) life in His name** – live and be with God in heaven forever after death

E How does the Bible help us to change according to 2 Peter 1:3-4

- 1 When a person repents, believes and puts his/her trust in Jesus, they are born again and God the Holy Spirit comes and lives within each Christian
- 2 Holy Spirit gives that new believer **everything needed** to live a godly life as obeys Bible
- 3 God has given **every believer many great promises** in the Bible to believe in and claim by faith so that 2 things will happen eg Phil 4:6-7; I Pet 5:7; Math 28:28
 - a Become more like God as we read, understand, put into practice what the Bible teaches eg love other people even if nasty, tell truth always, don’t speak about others badly
 - b Learn how to escape the corruption in the world which comes from man’s evil desires eg Cheat, eat or drink in excess, tell dirty stories, pornography, dishonest work practices

F How can we serve God effectively in church, work and home? – 2 Timothy 3:16-17

- 1 Similar to 2 Peter 1:3-4, in that it teaches again that God was actively involved in the writing of Scripture so powerfully, that what is written is inerrant and authoritative.
- 2 Each Bible writer is guided by God to write in accordance with God’s will. So Scripture does the following to help Christians to serve God. **Scripture**
 - a **Teaches** us the truths of God’s word – Put off evil ways, put on godly practices
 - b **Rebukes** – tells us when we have done wrong things, like telling lies, hating someone
 - c **Corrects** – May have thought something was true, but Bible shows this is not so
 - d **Trains** in how to be right with God – Love our neighbours, fellow believers, enemies**so the person of God can be trained in how to serve God thoroughly everywhere.**
Bible teaches we must bring God’s light to people by living according to God’s stds

G How can we achieve these goals as a born again Christian – Joshua 1:7-9

- 1 Word of God encouraged Joshua as he face a big responsibility to be strong, courageous
How could he do this?
 - a To be successful Joshua must carefully obey all God’s laws which God had given to Mose
 - b To obey them he needed **to read them every day**, by meditating on God’s word and do whatever he is told to do, knowing God was trustworthy
 - c No need to be discouraged, scared what might happen, God promised to be with him daily

III What can I do about the Scriptures (Bible) as I face 2009?

- 1 If you have not accepted the Lord Jesus into your life as your personal Saviour by repenting and believing, God invites you to be reconciled to Him today - have your sins forgiven.
- 2 If you are a born-again Christian, then decide this is the year I am going to read the Bible every day and allow God to change my thinking, behavior and relationship with Him
- 3 My friend Bill became a Christian at the end of 2006 and during 2007/8 he read through the whole Bible, by setting time aside each day and making notes.
- 4 He is amazed how this has helped him to understand the Bible better, so that he is finding it much easier to understand what the Bible is teaching him, as he starts to read it again in '09
- 5 This is the year of Connect09 where we as a church will be visiting every home in Waitara, to connect with each household, give everyone a gospel, CD about the church.
- 6 To prepare ourselves for new members, we must continue to **Pray** for our neighbours **Connect** with them, **Expect** God to work in their lives – but should also become more familiar with God's word by reading and acting upon it every day as our spiritual food.