

# HOW TO: STUDY THE BIBLE PART 2

28<sup>th</sup> February 2021  
#tbsundayteaching

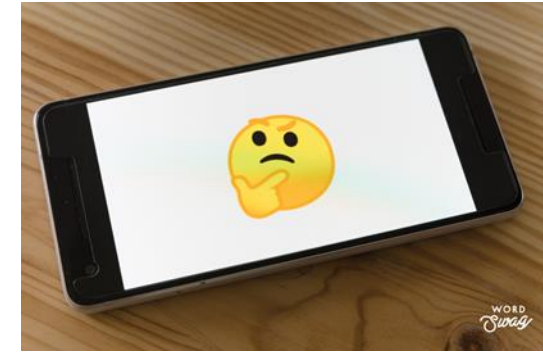
# HOW TO: STUDY THE BIBLE — PART 2

In this session we will be looking at:

1. What the Bible is.
2. Why we read the Bible.
3. Why Bible context is important



# 1. WHAT IS THE BIBLE?



[Wikipedia](#) “The **Bible** is a collection of religious texts or scriptures sacred to Christians, Jews, Samaritans, Rastafari and others.”

[BBC](#) “The **Bible** is not just one book, but an entire library, with stories, songs, poetry, letters and history, as well as literature that might more obviously qualify as 'religious'.”

[History.com](#) “**The Bible** is the holy scripture of the Christian religion, purporting to tell the history of the Earth from its earliest creation to the spread of Christianity in the first century A.D.”

# 1. WHAT IS THE BIBLE

What is the Bible to you?

Take a look at this short video “What is the Bible” from the Bible Society

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/>

“Through [the Bible] God reveals himself and communicates with us”



## 2. WHY DO WE READ THE BIBLE?

Look at these scriptures:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Psalms 119:103-105

John 17:17

Joshua 1:7-9



What do they tell you about why it is important to read the Bible?

## 2. WHY DO WE READ THE BIBLE?

### Reading the Bible...

- Shows us **who God is**
- Tells us how much **God loves us**
- Helps us to know **who we are** and why we were created
- Connects us to **God's family**
  - learning from the lives of others
- Teaches us the best **way to live**
- Reminds us of the **truth**





## 2. WHY DO WE READ THE BIBLE?

Spend some time looking for verses/passages in the Bible that illustrate each of the points on the previous slide.

E.g. “Who God is” – Psalm 145:8-9

“The Lord is gracious and compassionate,  
slow to anger and rich in love.

The Lord is good to all;  
he has compassion on all he has made.”

Use [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com) to help you.



### 3. BIBLE CONTEXT

So now we know **why** we should read the Bible, we will looking at ways to help us with **how** to read and understand it better.

Firstly we will look at the importance of Biblical context.  
For each passage think about...

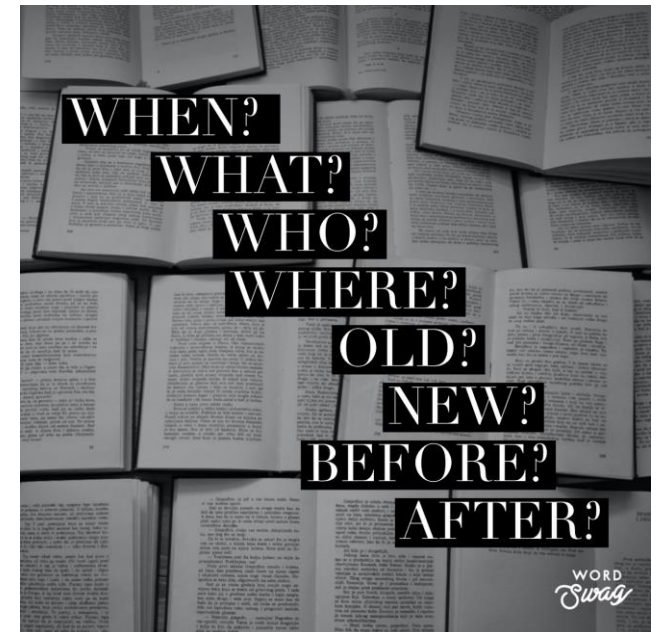
When was it written? What was the culture like?

What happened before or after?

Who is the character/writer/audience?

What language was it originally written in?

The difference between the old and new testament.





### 3. BIBLE CONTEXT

It is important when reading passages from the Bible that we understand the context.

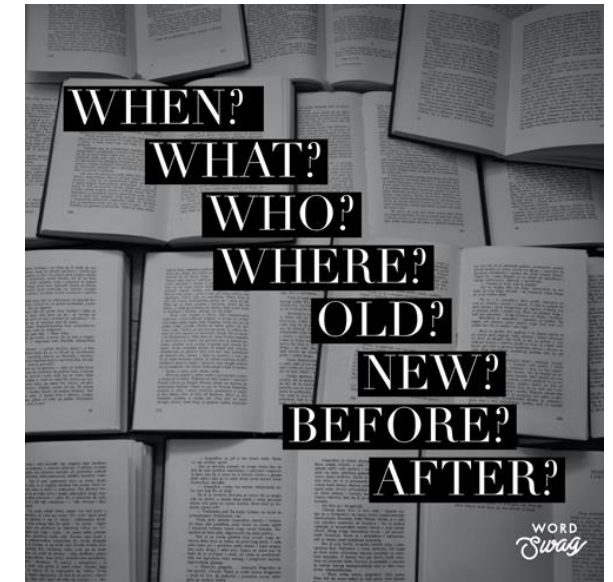
For example,

Many of the Psalms are written by King David –

Who was he? How did he become king?

What had he experienced that has influenced his writing?

Lets look at Psalm 23 – “The Lord is My Shepherd”



### 3. BIBLE CONTEXT — PSALM 23

Read the passage, and use what you already know about David to pick out key parts of the psalm that reflect him as the writer.

<sup>1</sup> The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures,

he leads me beside quiet waters,

<sup>3</sup> he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths  
for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk  
through the darkest valley,

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup> Surely your goodness and love will follow  
me

all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD  
forever.

### 3. BIBLE CONTEXT — PSALM 23



Don't move on unless you have thought about the passage first.

The next pages will set out what I have done, but try and do it for yourself first!

### 3. BIBLE CONTEXT — PSALM 23

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I have highlighted parts of the Psalm that take on additional meaning when you understand the biblical context. I explain why on the next page.



### 3. BIBLE CONTEXT — PSALM 23

Shepherd/green pastures/guide/rod and staff (v1-4)

David was a shepherd in his youth (1 Sam 16), he would have known what it meant to care for the sheep and he uses illustrations/words that hold a specific meaning. Shepherds guide their sheep on the right path, they use the staff to fight off wolves/lions.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley/enemies (v4)

David was also a soldier, he fought many battles for Saul and faced many enemies. He was even hunted by Saul and had to run away in fear of his life (1 Sam 17-30).

Anoint my head with oil/prepare a table before me (v5)

David was anointed by Samuel as the next King of Israel (1 Sam 16), he knew the special significance and honour of anointing. He was also a King who often sat at a full banqueting table, a table prepared for a special and honoured guest (2 Sam 9).



### 3. BIBLE CONTEXT — PSALM 23

Knowing the Bible context is important — it helps to unlock the passages and give them further meaning. There is always more to learn.

I learnt recently more about what “green pastures” meant in a middle eastern context. This really helped my understanding of the Psalm and therefore who God is and how I should be living my life.

Watch this video to learn for yourself

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMQ2xkVSQxc>





### 3. BIBLE CONTEXT

There are many ways to help us understand the Biblical context:

1. Read the rest of the Bible!
2. Listen to talks – other people know more stuff than you!
3. Read books about it
4. YouTube and other videos/websites e.g. [bibleproject.com](https://bibleproject.com);
5. Historical context e.g. Bible tour at the British Museum

We will be exploring this further, as well as looking at tools that can help us read and understand the Bible, in later sessions.

