THETHE
BIBLE
COURSE
GET THE BIG PICTURE
2nd Edition
Across the world, millions of people are not engaging with the Bible. This is often because the Scriptures aren’t available or accessible, or because their significance and value haven’t yet been recognised. Working in over 200 countries, Bible Society is a charity and on a global mission to offer the Bible to every man, woman and child. This is because we believe that when people engage with the Bible, lives can be changed, for good.
Welcome to the Bible Course

The Bible Course will help you understand the Bible for yourself. Over eight sessions you will see the big picture of the Bible storyline – from Genesis to Revelation. Along the way you will pick up tools and skills to help you read it for yourself. Each session is interactive with sections of teaching followed by a study exercise. Between sessions there are daily readings to prepare for the following week and to form the habit of reading the Bible. By the end of the course you will have confidence to pick up the Bible, read it for yourself and apply it to your life. The course has three great aims:

**Learn it** – understand the Bible for yourself
**Live it** – apply the Bible to your life
**Love it** – make the Bible your priority and passion

Enjoy the Course,

Andrew Ollerton
If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. 
If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for life.
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*This symbol indicates a word that is explained in the glossary*
Scripture is like a lion. Who ever heard of defending a lion? Just turn it loose; it will defend itself.

Charles Spurgeon (London preacher: 1834–92)
The Bible is a unique collection of distinct books written over a period of 1600 years by authors under the direction and influence of the Holy Spirit, from every walk of life including kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen and scholars. It was written in 3 languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek) on 3 continents (Asia, Africa and Europe). It covers hundreds of controversial subjects and yet has a harmony and continuity from Genesis to Revelation. The God of the Bible is not a remote, unknowable divine force, but a loving God with whom ordinary people develop personal relationships.
What is the Bible?

The Bible is a library (see diagram on next page)
- The Bible® is not a one-volume history in chronological order.
- The books are grouped together by style of writing.

The Bible is his-story
- Real people in real places, meeting the real God.
- The Bible® is not a manual.
  - 4.1. God is all-knowing and eternal
  - 4.2. All Bibles should be black
  - 4.3. Church leader should have his own parking place
- The Bible is the big story of creation and redemption.

Get the big picture

Skill

To understand the small stories, we need to see the big picture.
Old Testament

The Bible – 66 books, many contributors but one Author*

* these are the 66 books common to all Christians
New Testament
The Bible needs interpretation

“Just believe it and do what it says”

BUT the Bible can be abused
- Crusades, Holocaust, slave-trade
- Sects and heresies
- Even Satan quotes the Bible (Matt 4:6).

To interpret the Bible means going ‘Back to the future’

Eg. Does the Bible support slavery?
Roman Empire (1st century) vs. British Empire (18th century)
The Bible is accessible

- It was written by kings and peasants; professionals and labourers.
- It was written for everyone to read.

Before I became a Christian, I thought the Bible was a book written by men with sexist views and out of date ideas. I was put off by the harsh customs and confused by the cultural language used. I had lots of opinions about Christianity but I had never actually read the Bible. I believe God has led me on an amazing journey and opened my eyes to how he works and to who Jesus is and what he has done. Now when I read the Bible, God’s word speaks to me and this has impacted on me and has been life changing.

Roberta works as a creative arts educator and lives in Cornwall

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

*Psalm 119:105*
The Bible is God’s book

- The Bible® is not bottom-up religion but top-down revelation.
- Not by dictation but by design. 2 Peter 1:21 ‘Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.’
- The Bible is God’s book as St Paul’s Cathedral is Sir Christopher Wren’s building.