

SCRIPTURE · READING SCRIPTURE THE ANGLICAN WAY

What Kind of Book Is the Bible?

Catechesis Track, Lesson 1 · About 25 min

Before we read a single verse, we have to ask what we are holding. Is the Bible an anthology of ancient religious writings that happen to be bound together? Or is it, as the Church confesses, one book, with one divine Author, telling one story, about one Lord?

One Author, one subject

The Anglican answer is the second. The sixty-six books were written across centuries by many human authors, and each has its own voice and setting. Yet the Church reads them as a single canon because behind the many writers stands one Spirit, and before them all stands one subject: the Lord Jesus Christ, 'the same yesterday and today and forever.'

This does not flatten the differences between Genesis and Galatians. It means that the differences serve a unity. The Bible is not a reference book to be mined for verses; it is a story to be inhabited, moving from creation through Israel to Christ and his Church, and on to the world to come.

Why this changes how you read

If Scripture is one book, then no passage stands alone. The obscure is read in the light of the clear. The Old is read with the New. And the whole is read in the light of its center, the death and resurrection of Jesus. To learn to read Anglican-ly is, first, to learn to read the Bible as the coherent, Christ-centered book the Church has always believed it to be.

READ THE SCRIPTURES

2 Timothy 3:14-17 | Luke 24:44-47 | John 5:39

FROM THE PRAYER BOOK

Collect for the Second Sunday of Advent (the 'Read, mark, learn' collect)

“Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Savior Jesus Christ.”

FOR A PARISH SMALL GROUP: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When you sit down to read the Bible, do you tend to treat it more like a reference book or like a story? What difference does it make?
2. What did you assume about the Bible's unity before this lesson, and what changed?
3. Where have you struggled most to make sense of what you're reading?
4. How might reading in community change the way you approach a hard passage?