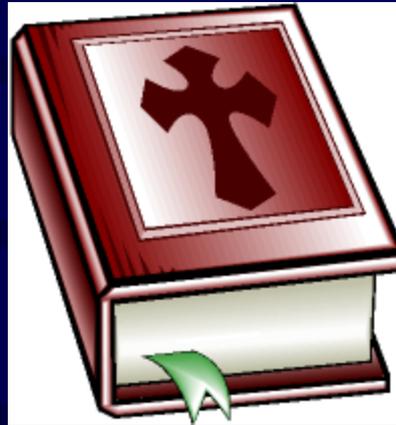


The Bible and Your Life



The Bible and Your Life

- How Do you feel about the Bible?
- Is it still relevant in today's modern society?

The Challenge

- Have an open Bible in your house
- Read it daily
- Let it nourish your life
- Live by it through your actions

David the psalmist says:

“I have kept your words in my
heart that I may not sin
against you.”

The Spirit of the Word

- Don't build theories or practices using one verse alone.
- E.g. *“No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.”* (1 Timothy 5:23)

St. Paul says:

- *“for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life.”* (2 Corinthians 3:6)
- This book is divinely inspired and expresses the word of God in our human language.



St. Paul also says:

“all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16)



The Bible and the Church

- All the doctrines of the Coptic Orthodox Church are in accordance with Bible teachings.
- It is our measuring instrument to whether we are walking in the light or not.
- The word of God is very effective and has a deep influence on us and is very powerful.

St. Paul also says:

“the word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)



The Bible and You

- The Bible reveals our feelings and our attitudes and compares our life to Christ's life.
- Christ also challenges us by saying, “*you search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life.*” (John 5:39)
- St. Paul also urges us saying, “*let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom...*” (Colossians 3:16)

Let us now briefly look at the following points

1. It is God's book
2. The blessings of the Bible
3. Why do we study the holy Bible?
4. How to study the word of God?
5. The Coptic Church and the Bible.
6. The Bible and the rites of the Church
7. Orthodox doctrine is Biblical

1. It is God's book

- The Bible is the greatest book ever written.
- In it God himself speaks to man.
- It is a book of divine instruction.

1. It is God's book

It offers:

- Comfort in sorrow,
- Guidance in perplexity,
- Advice for our problems,
- Rebuke for our sins, and
- Daily inspiration for our every need.

The Bible is not simply one book.

- It is an entire library of books covering the whole range of literature, history, poetry, drama, biography, prophecy, philosophy, science and inspirational reading.
- The Bible is translated into over 1200 languages.
- Every year more copies are sold than any other book.

The Bible is not simply one book.

- The many books of the Bible are ascribed to certain writers such as Moses, David, Solomon, Matthew, Luke, Paul.
- These were not their own writings. The writer of God's book from beginning to end is the **Holy Spirit**, who wrote through these men.



Saint Peter says:

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:20-21)

The Bible

- The Bible is in two testaments
 - Old Testament
 - New Testament
- Testament means a covenant between God and man.
- The bible contains 73 books: 46 OT, 27 NT.
- Written during a period of 1500 years by 40 writers of different backgrounds.

Who Wrote The Bible

- It was written by:
 - Kings such as David, Solomon;
 - Shepherd such as Amos;
 - Priests such as Zachariah;
 - Prophets such as Samuel & Isaiah;
 - Fisherman such as Peter and John;
 - Scholar such as Paul; and
 - Physician such as Luke.

Where was the Bible Written

- Written in different places:
 - Sinai,
 - Judean wilderness,
 - prison in Rome,
 - Patmos, and
 - Jerusalem.
- With all of this diversity in writers, places and times, its seventy- three books form one unified book in spirit, subject, and objective.



The Centre of the Bible

- The centre around which the Bible rotates from beginning to end is Jesus Christ the Son of God.
- From the beginning the Bible says He shall bruise the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15) and at the end we read He is coming quickly, and His reward is with Him (Revelation 22:12).

2. Blessings of the Bible

- Good tidings of hope and comfort (Romans 10: 15)
- Moses speaks and people not afraid (Exodus 14:13-14)
- Lo, I am with you always. (Matthew 28:20, Romans 8:31, Philippians 4:13)
- Light and guidance (Psalms 119:105, Proverbs 6:23, 2 Peter 1:19)

2. Blessings of the Bible

- A weapon and a helper (Hebrews 4:12)
- Put on whole armour of God (Ephesians 6:10-11, Psalm 19:7, 1 Peter 1:13, Psalm 1)
- Measure of perfection and growth (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

3. Why we study the Bible?

- Book of salvation (Hebrews 9:22, John 3:36, 1 John 5:5)
- No other name under heaven by which we can be saved. (Acts 4:12)
- Nourishment for spirit (Psalm 119:92, Matthew 4:4)
- Law of last judgement (John 12:48, Romans 2:16- will be judged by Bible)

4. How to study the Bible?

- By the spirit of the word (Psalm 119:18)
- Do not analyze it scientifically but accept it by the spirit- it is a spiritual book (John 4:24)
- With reverence (Psalm 119:161, 1 Thessalonians 2:13- in reverence of the Lord)
- With humility (Isaiah 66:2, Samuel 1:21)

4. How to study the Bible?

- For personal benefit- What does God want me to learn? “Speak (Lord) for you servant listens.” (Samuel 3:10)
- Think if you get a letter from the president...
- Think of it as a personal message.

4. How to study the Bible?

- Methods of Bible study-
 - By verse,
 - By chapter,
 - By personalities,
 - By topics,
 - By word meanings,
 - By using commentaries, etc... and
 - By practical exercises.

5. The Coptic Orthodox Church and the Bible

- The Coptic Orthodox Church honours the Bible in the following way:
 - The Gospel is placed on the altar all the time.
 - The Bible is placed in the foundations of every new church that is built.
 - The priest raises the Gospel and kisses it with great reverence before the reading of the Gospel.

5. The Coptic Orthodox Church and the Bible

- A special litany that the priest prays before the reading of the Gospel.
- The lighting of candles and lights during the Gospel reading, in order for us to understand that it is a light to our life and to our path.
- The standing up at the reading of the Gospel in particular, for it is the word of God.

6. The Bible in the Rites of the Church

- Agpeya
- Chants of Praise (Tasbeha) – Doxologies
- Prayers of Eucharist – many parts of liturgy are from the text of the Bible

6. The Bible in the Rites of the Church

- Readings in every liturgy –
 - Vespers - Psalm and Gospel
 - Midnight prayer of Agbia
 - Matins prayer of Agbia
 - Matins – Psalm and Gospel
 - Divine Liturgy – 3rd & 6th hour of Agbia, Pauline, Catholic, Acts, Synexarium, Psalm, Gospel

6. The Bible in the Rites of the Church

- On special occasions Kiahk, Pascha, Sacraments
- The rank of Oghnostos – Reader is dedicated to read, study and teach the Bible. His motto is Matthew 24:15, “let the reader take note.”

7. Orthodox doctrine is Biblical

- All Orthodox teaching is founded on the texts and spirit of the Bible.
- It does not contain any doctrine that is based on human reasoning, as there are no infallible humans.
- Only the Holy Bible is infallible, *“for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”* (2 Peter 1:21)

7. Orthodox doctrine is Biblical

- The Church not only relies on the Bible for doctrine, but it does not agree on the method of relying on one verse to formulate doctrine, or
- Combining several verses together to convince people of personal views or teachings.

7. Orthodox doctrine is Biblical

- We must look at the whole Bible and what it teaches.
- The Church has never banned people from reading the Bible personally.
- It has always encouraged people to read, study and memorise the Scriptures.
- Yet at the same time the Church has not allowed individuals to have their own personal doctrines and beliefs, but to submit to the church tradition and teaching and the sayings of the fathers of the Church.

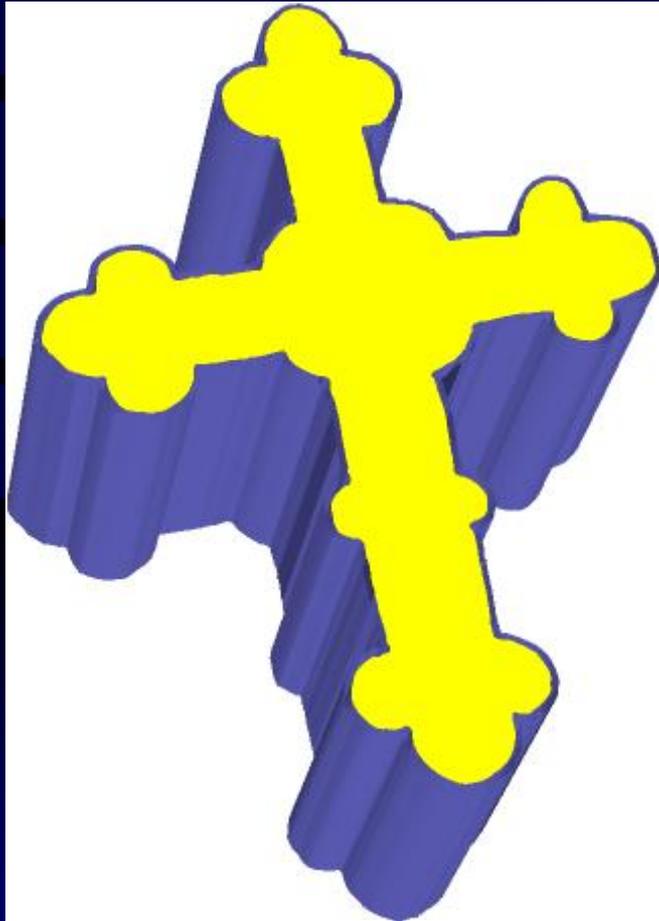
7. Orthodox doctrine is Biblical

One of the wise men asked St. Anthony, *“How are you able to sustain yourself in the desert when you don’t have any books to nourish you?”* He replied, *“My books are the lives of those who preceded me, and if I wish to read, then there is the Word of God.”*

7. Orthodox doctrine is Biblical

- A brother asked Abba Sisoës, “Say a word to me,” he replied, “What can I say to you? I read in the Old Testament and then I return to the New testament.”
- St. Clement said, “When you return to your cell, be concerned with reading divine books and prayer.”

Conclusion



I encourage you to begin this journey of personal Bible Study and what you don't understand you may ask your confessor