# Understanding the Bible

##### Culture, Context, Content

*When reading the Bible, remember these three elements:*

**Culture The social environment and traditions**

(e.g. women’s roles, Roman rule, oral communication)

**Context The surrounding circumstance or text describing a situation**

(read text before a particular verse to put it in context)

**Content The message itself; languages that produced the specific message or the actual meaning**

(what was the original language – use lectionary and dictionary)

**Organization**

#### Old Testament (Hebrew Bible); first five books of Moses called Pentateuch

#### New Testament (Greek Bible)

### Gospels (ministry of Jesus of Nazareth)

### Acts (the Holy Spirit comes)

### Epistles (letters from disciples and apostles)

### The Apocrypha – not found in Protestant Bible (“hidden books”)

1. Canon vs. non-canon
2. Books (Partial list)

* The First Book of Esdras (also known as Third Esdras)
* Tobit
* Judith
* The Additions to the Book of Esther
* The Wisdom of Solomon
* The First Book of Maccabees
* The Second Book of Maccabees

### Symbols, places, numbers and other elements are found in the Bible that communicate God’s messages to us and help us to understand the people during this age (3 – Trinity; water – purity, etc.).

**Bible Etiquette / Protocol**

* Always give the version or translation of your Bible; if you use abbreviations, then do not repeat the word (“NIV *Version*”), since it has already been stated
* Determine whether the congregation is to stand and give directions beforehand
* Speak with clarity and appropriate volume
* Do not add an “s” where it is not written (Psalm 23, not *Psalms* 23; The Revelation of Jesus or the Book of Revelation, *not Revelations*)
* Close with an affirmation (“This is God’s Word…”)
* In Bible study, have more than one version or use parallel versions for clarity
* If you have been assigned to read Scripture for a formal occasion or worship, do as requested; avoid using the moment to express your point of view or for some other purpose

Notes

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