

Did you know...

In the 14th Century, Oxford was the most outstanding university in the world, and **John Wycliffe** (1320-1384) was its leading theologian and philosopher. The Black Death (Bubonic Plague), which killed a third of the population of Europe, caused Wycliffe to search the Scriptures for answers. In doing so he found Christ!

Wycliffe being so transformed by his own reading of Scriptures had a burden to make the Bible available in the native tongue of his fellow English people. He was responsible for the very first translation of the entire Bible into the English language.

In 1378, Wycliffe completed the book *The Truth of Holy Scripture*. In it he wrote:

“Holy Scripture is the pre-eminent authority for every Christian and the rule of faith and of all human perfection...it is necessary for all men, not for priests alone...Christ and His Apostles taught the people in the language best known to them...therefore the doctrine should not only be in Latin, but in the vulgar tongue...believers should have the Scriptures in a language which they fully understand.”

Wycliffe is reverently remembered as **“The Morningstar of the Reformation,”** because of the profound influence his life and work had on the Protestant Reformers who would later follow him. For example, the writings of **John Hus**, the Bohemian reformer, who was burned at the stake, largely depended on translations and adaptations of tracts and sermons by John Wycliffe.

Wycliffe taught that Scripture contains everything that is necessary for our salvation (ie sola scriptura!). Although his English followers were persecuted and practically disappeared from England, John Wycliffe’s influence on the Bohemians influenced the great Protestant Reformation of the early 16th Century. At the Diet (council) of Worms in 1521, Martin Luther was accused of renewing the errors of Wycliffe and Hus by making the Scriptures his final authority.



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Sola Scriptura

Back to the Bible in 2017



Sola Scriptura in 2017

500 years ago (in 1517) God used a man named Martin Luther to begin a reformation that has literally changed the world. **In 2017 we are celebrating the 500 year anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.** Most Americans, Christians included, are mostly unfamiliar with this history and its profound implications to the church and the world. Perhaps the greatest value and lasting impact of the Protestant Reformation is reflected in the phrase: **Sola Scriptura**—which means, *the Scripture alone*. In the middle ages, the average Christian did not have the Bible available in their native tongue and the church services they attended were conducted in a language foreign to them. They were almost entirely *biblically illiterate*.

“Americans revere the Bible --but, by and large, they don't read it. And because they don't read it, they have become a nation of biblical illiterates.” (George Barna)

When people do not know the Word of God they are susceptible to all kinds of errors, abuses, idols, and sins. **In 2017 the people of Blue Ridge will begin a two year commitment of reading the Bible through in chronological order together.** More details inside!



Reading God’s story...in the order it has happened.

Have you ever wondered when an event in the Bible occurred? Or perhaps struggled to see the big picture of the Bible, and how the various parts actually fit?

Everyone has.

Beginning on January 1, 2017 BRCC is embarking on a two year journey of reading the Bible completely through in the order that it actually occurred.

This unique viewpoint will allow you to better grasp the whole Bible *as a single story* and thus see God’s historical plan beautifully unfolding in history.

Doing this will help us gain a unique perspective on Scripture that is difficult to gain when reading the Bible from cover to cover in the traditional ordering of the books.

The books of the Bible, by and large, are not assembled in chronological order. While the actual content of each book of the Bible is divinely inspired, the order of the books, as with the numbering of chapters and verses, were determined not by the original authors but by later church leaders and scholars.

SOME OF THE BENEFITS

God’s Word is the only fully trustworthy and divinely inspired source for what we can know about God, His character, will and ways. Furthermore, in the Bible we learn the truth about man and the story of how God has provided a way for humankind to know and be reconciled to Him in a relationship of love and trust.



The most essential factor involved in growing in faith...is growing in one’s knowledge and trust of the Word of God.

God’s Word is God’s will.

Faith comes from hearing and reading God’s Word. And God uses the faith that His word imparts to change us and the world around us.

Reading the Bible everyday will help you develop a devotional lifestyle that will aid your walk with God and your ability to both navigate the trials of this life and bear fruit as one of His children.



WHAT VERSION SHOULD I READ?

The version you choose to read is not as important as actually reading the text! Most of the available translations are reasonably good. You should settle on a version that you find readable and easily understood.

Many experts recommend the NIV or the NLT because they are good translations that are also very readable.

HELP! I’M NOT MUCH OF A READER!

If you only read one book well in your lifetime—it should be the Bible! Ask God to help you get into His word. Ask Him to give you understanding as you read. Expect God’s supernatural help.

If you have a smart phone, pc, or tablet, there are numerous apps and online sources for listening to the Bible. And the good news is that they are free. You can listen on your way to work or as you workout.

