

A Visit to the Library

SESSION FOUR
Seek Ye First



With thanks to Barbara Kingsolver

The Poisonwood Bible; The Bean Trees;
Pigs in Heaven

Non-fiction: High Tide in Tucson

HOW MR. DEWEY DECIMAL SAVED
MY LIFE


A librarian named Miss Truman Richey
snatched me from the jaws of ruin, and it's
too late now to thank her . . .





MISS RICHEY


Miss Richey had something else in mind. She took me by the arm in study hall one day and said, "Barbara, I'm going to teach you Dewey Decimal." She launched me on the project of cataloguing and shelving every one of the, probably, thousand books in the Nicholas County High School library.





DISCOVERIES

I found *Gone With the Wind*, which I suspected my mother felt was kind of trashy, and I found Edgar Allan Poe, who scared me witless. I found that the call number for books about snakes is 666. I found William Samoan's *Human Comedy* . . . I imagined the life of an immigrant son who believed human kindness was a tangible and glorious thing. I began to think about words like tangible and glorious.






TWO YEARS LATER

It came to pass in two short years that the walls of my high school dropped down, and **I caught the scent of a world**

More worlds than one . . . Modern and ancient






IN AN ANCIENT WORLD

Writing, and scripture not readily available

The world before the printing press and universal education


Ancient and early messages, about Christianity were few and far between





SAINT PAUL (1 Corinthians 15)

I should remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you





PAUL TO CORINTH

Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died





HOLY SCRIPTURE

A way of passing on the story from one generation to the next

A very complicated history

- Foreign time
- Foreign place and culture

A lot of self-interest in its protection, translation and interpretation





SCRIPTURE'S CLAIMS FOR ITSELF


2 timothy 3:16 - All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness





WORD and Word/written


Isaiah 55:10-11 - For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, **so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty**



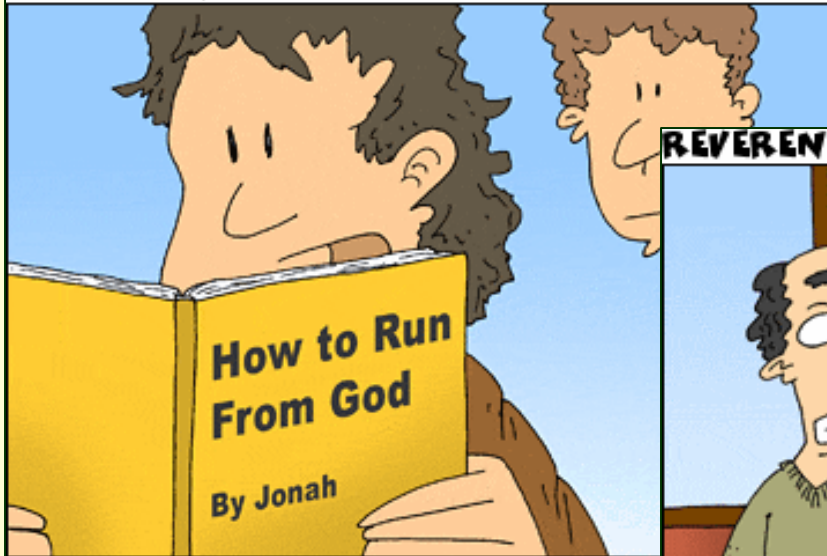


DISCERNING AND DISSENT

1 John 4 - Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God.



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Thanks to Richard Germain (See Jonah 1-4)
IT JUST SAYS "DON'T"

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02-18-2005

GOOD THING I FOUND YOU GIDEON ... IT
SEEMS SOMEONE HAS BEEN HIDING ALL YOUR
BIBLES IN HOTEL ROOMS

BARBARA KINGSOLVER



**The unexpected,
and disturbing**





KINGSOLVER REVISITED


The most important thing about the books I read . . . is that they were not what I expected . . . What snapped me out of my surly adolescence and moved me on were books that let me live other people's lives . . .



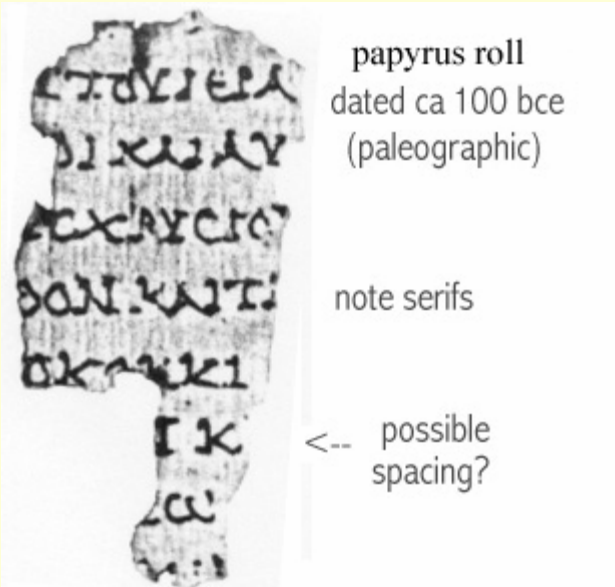


On Banned Books:

If there is danger in a book like *Martha Quest*, and the works of all other authors who've been banned at one time or another, the danger is generally that **they will broaden our experience** and blend us more deeply with our fellow humans.



SOURCES AND MANUSCRIPTS



papyrus roll
dated ca 100 bce
(paleographic)

note serifs

<-- possible
spacing?

Qumran 7QLXXEx Exodus 28
[Goettingen #805]

Discoveries in the Judean Desert 3
(1962) plate 30


Rockefeller Museum, Jerusalem, Israel





NRSV SUMMARY SENTENCE


The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible is an authorized revision of the Revised Standard Version, published in 1952, which was a revision of the American Standard Version, published in 1901, which, in turn, embodied earlier revisions of the King James Version, published in 1611.





AUTHORIZED VERSION


In the course of time, the **King James Version** came to be regarded as “**the Authorized Version.**” With good reason it has been termed “**the noblest monument of English prose,**” and it has entered, as no other book has, into the making of the personal character and the public institutions of the English speaking peoples. We owe to it an incalculable debt. Yet the King James Version has serious defects.





NO TRANSLATION IS PERFECT


Because no translation of the Bible is perfect or is acceptable to all groups of readers, and because discoveries of older manuscripts and further investigation of linguistic features of text continue to become available, renderings of the Bible have proliferated.





SCHOLARLY ADVANCES

Following the publication of the RSV Old Testament in 1952, **significant advances were made in the discovery and interpretation of documents** in Semitic languages related to Hebrew . . . During the same period early Greek manuscript copies of books of the New Testament also became available.





JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY


In traditional Judaism and Christianity, the Bible has been more than a historical document to be preserved or a classic of literature to be cherished and admired; it is recognized as the unique record of God's dealing with people over the ages.



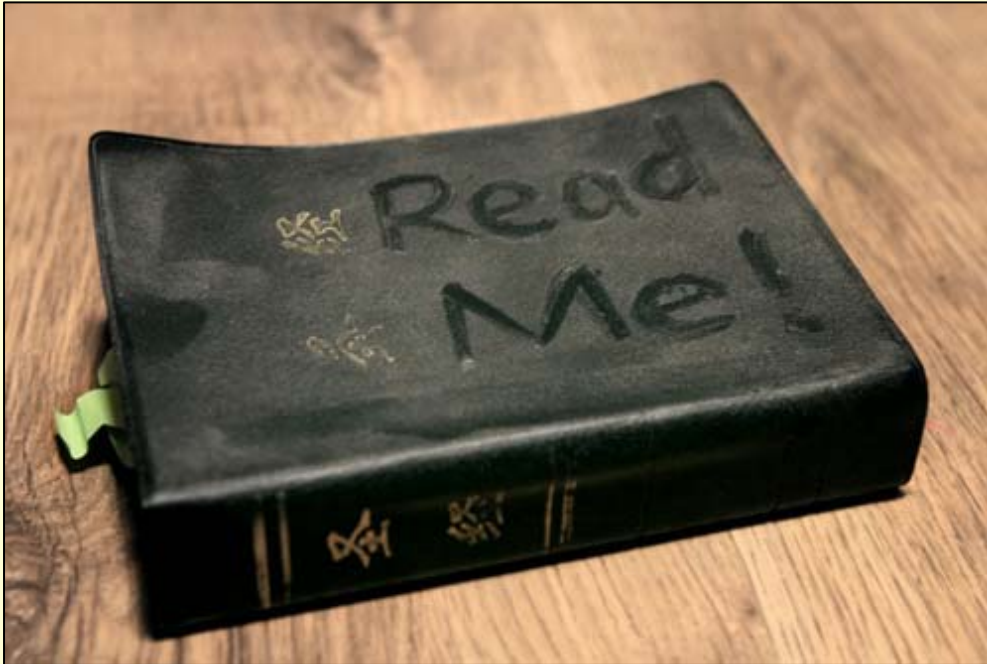


VISION FOR USE

It is the hope and prayer of the translators that this version of the Bible may continue to hold a large place in congregational life and to speak to all readers, young and old alike, helping them to understand and believe and respond to its message.




ON GLASS, DUST AND BIBLES





The collect for the second Sunday in Advent for the first English Prayer Book in 1549:

Blessed Lord, who hast 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 by
patience, and comfort (strengthening) of thy
holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast
the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou
hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ.
AMEN.





PRACTICAL MATTERS

Translation


Conflict of interpretation





TRANSLATION

Read the one you'll read

- New International Version
 - New Revised Standard Version
 - (New) King James
 - The Message (Paraphrase)
 - EXAMPLE – Romans 12:1
- 



KING JAMES (Authorized)

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.





NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION


I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

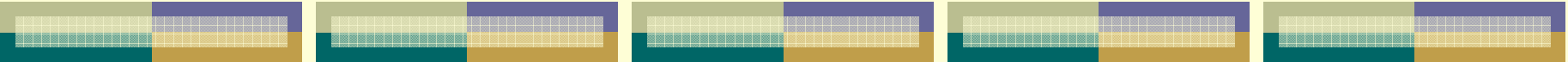




THE MESSAGE

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life--your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life--and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.





CONFLICT OF INTERPRETATION LEADING TO DIFFERENT ACTION

Four readings of Galatians 3:22

The issue is whose faith is it anyway?

On whom lies the burden of faithfulness?





NRSV/main text

But the scripture has imprisoned all things under the power of sin, so that what was promised through faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.





NRSV/margin

But the scripture has imprisoned all things under the power of sin, so that what was promised through the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.





NIV

But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.





NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE

But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.






SOURCES OF REVELATION

Scripture . . . And beyond

A sample – Sallie McFague

With “nature as a sacrament of God”


McFague finds a way to welcome God’s
“speech” through creation





NATURE AS SACRAMENTAL VOICE OF GOD


The interpretation of nature as sacrament of God demands a different stance, one suggested by Henry David Thoreau's comment that "wildness" was in the second-growth forest at Walden Pond in Concord. "Wildness" is in the mind as well as in reality; it is our recognition of otherness.





SALLIE MCFAGUE


In the words of philosopher Iris Murdoch:
"Love is the extremely difficult realization that something other than oneself is real. Love ... is the discovery of reality. In other words, "love" is not a sentimental emotion or an act of charity; rather, it is the "objective" recognition that others exist, have intrinsic worth, and rights to the basics of existence.






ISAIAH revisited

Isaiah 55:10-11 - For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, **so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty**





QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

- How many bibles are in your home/possession; which is your favourite and why?
 - Barbara Kingsolver tells how literature helped her to ‘catch the **scent of a world.**’ If this sort of awakening has happened, either through scripture or literature, talk about this together
- 



THE FINAL QUESTION

- When we hear the words “read, mark, learn and inwardly digest” what do you think is the difference between these four actions? Is one harder than the other and if so, why?

