

JUNE  
2020

GRACE NOTES  
YOUR ACCESS TO  
GRACE CHURCH  
NEWS & EVENTS



Church  
News



# GRACE NOTES

## NEW ADVENTURE ABOUT THE BIBLE

The center and foundation of Christianity is the Bible. Preachers deliver Sunday messages based on the Bible and honest believers ardently read the Bible and joyfully attend various Bible studies. In times of despair and suffering, faithful Christians seek God's vivid voice and comforting words from the Bible. It is fair to say, therefore, that the Bible is the beginning and the end of Christian life.

But, in fact, most Christians including me know very little about the Bible. Not many are truly interested in who wrote these sacred writings, when and why. Some Christians vaguely believe the entire Bible was written by the finger of God on tablet of stones and fell on earth one day from heaven.

Here is an interesting, surprising and even shocking fact!

A rabbi reads only twenty-four books in the Hebrew Bible – which we call the Old Testament. If you ask a Catholic Priest how many books are in the Old Testament, he will tell you forty-six. If he were an Eastern Orthodox priest, his answer will be forty-nine or possibly fifty. You pastor says the Old Testament consists of thirty-nine books.

The varying “Canons” – typically means “rule” or “Standard”- in different faith traditions point to the question of what books made it into the Old Testament, for whom, and why. It also implies complexity of canonization. And the same complexity can be applied to the New Testament, too.

For the next couple of months, I would like to explore “the origin of the Bible.” Although I took the two required classes <Introduction to the Old Testament> and <Introduction to the New Testament> in seminary, I have never systematically read and learned the history of biblical canon and have very little knowledge about it.

You may be afraid that my articles might undermine your faith and break your trust in God. Do not misunderstand me! My intention is to go back to ancient times and try to read the minds of our ancestors of faith who got involved in writing, collecting, and compiling and canonizing the Sacred texts.

I am very excited about this new adventure and cordially invite you to join in this exciting journey. I am sure that some topics will challenge your preoccupation but many historical evidences and scholarly insights will expand your knowledge and deepen your understanding of the Bible.

In that sense, this adventure will be a fun and joyful intellectual pilgrimage for both you and me.

Let's begin our adventure with this basic idea: ***Oral tradition.***

We are living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century when almost everything is possible: writing things on a cellphone or taking pictures and videos anytime and everywhere, sending them within 5 seconds through free Wi-Fi service to anyone who lives even in the opposite side of the world.

Now, imagine people in around 1000 BCE. 3000 years ago, they had no paper, no pens, and no phones. Stories were painted in the stones or walls, and people's memories were passed down orally, told and retold by person to person over generations.

Why is the understanding of Oral tradition as the major source of biblical stories so important? It proves that the Bible was not written by historians, or eyewitnesses or a special committee. Rather, it was written and collected by a group of people who had particular purposes at specific historical time.

Traditionally, it is widely believed that Moses wrote the first five books of the Old Testament, known as the Torah/the Pentateuch. Since the 1600s, however, this idea has been questioned. Ponder the fact that the books speak of Moses in the ***third*** person, as if they were written by someone else.

There is another clue that Moses did not write these books.

Genesis 12:6 states, "At the time the Canaanites were in the land." During the entire time that Moses was alive, there were Canaanites in the land. This is clear evidence that Genesis and the rest of the Torah was written ***after*** the Canaanites had largely been removed from the land, which did not happen until after Moses's death.

Look at Number 12:3: "Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth." Do you think that the most humble man wrote this self-praise? Also, the last chapter of Deuteronomy describes Moses's death. If Moses wrote that, it would have been a bit hard for him to describe his own death.

Of no doubt, Moses is the central figure in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy and portions of the Torah were written by Moses. But large sections of the story of Moses and Exodus were passed down through generations through oral tradition.

So, who wrote the story down when, why, and how?

Unfortunately we have no way of knowing. Everything is speculative, as no actual manuscript traces of the story survived. The closest we can come to an historical starting point is the fifth century BCE, when the fog of mystery slowly began to lift.

Your pastor *Kyu*

I would like to Thank the GUMC Family for the last three months in the coronavirus pandemic for the salary that was given to me while we were in lockdown. I give you all a virtual hug. Peace and Love, Carol

## JUNE PRAYER

*Dear Jesus of the Womb, Most fragile child of Mary's protection, We look to you as the youngest image of perfect innocence, We lift up our prayers to you who will save each of our souls. Just as you entered humanity Through this most gentle and helpless state, Now help us to find your presence in the faces of all the gentle and helpless persons of the earth. Bless us with eyes that see you and ears that hear you: In the presence of the poor and the outcast, The hungry and the homeless, The condemned and the war-torn, The elderly and the unborn. May we discover you every day as at Christmas And offer you our gifts every day as at Epiphany. This we ask of You and the Father, with your Holy Spirit, And in union with Mary your tender home. Amen*

# Church News

I was asked if I had any thoughts for Grace Notes this week. I was thinking of how wonderful it was that we seemed to be coming out of the dark days of isolation and anticipating our worship time together. In the last few weeks we have been able to connect with more friends, to safely chat and catch up. It has been great and I was looking forward to more “normal” summer time fun. There is so much to praise God for, so many reasons to be thankful!

Just as those positive thoughts were occupying my mind we've all been plunged over the past few days into the darkness of violence and hatred. The ugliness and horror of the death of George Floyd by a police officer devastates all of us. Personally I feel the sharp sadness also of how decent police officers are feeling, as our son in law puts on that uniform every day and with integrity serves others. No one deserves to die as George Floyd did, no decent public servants deserve to be tarnished by one man's horrible act. We might be tempted to ask, again, where is God in all of this? He is here. He never leaves us. He walks with us on the mountain tops of victory and through the valleys of the shadow of death. One man brought brokenness and sin into the creation, one God/Man brought redemption. Jesus breaks the chains of darkness, He brings light, He is light. He has told us that while He is not physically here with us, His Spirit lives within us. One perfect man, Jesus, makes it possible for us to be the light, to overcome any darkness this broken world tries to spread.

Evil has some power in our world, but Jesus has overcome the world. We are His family, we can overcome any evil with His power, with His love. During dark days may we all be His light, may we never forget to shine with His love!

Blessings, Laurie

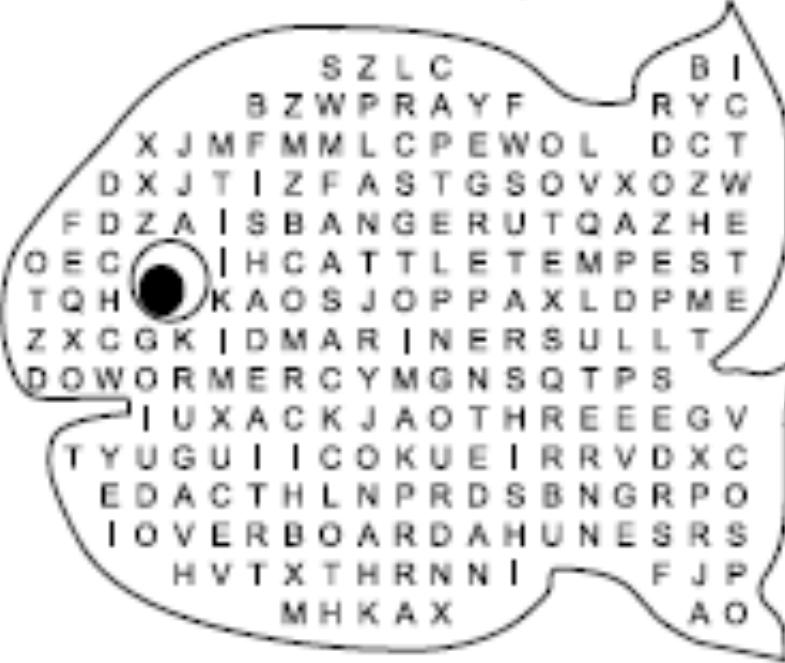
## Lord's Prayer Maze

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done...



### Jonah and the Big Fish

*Find the words hidden in the puzzle.*



ANGER	JONAH	PLANT	TARSHISH
CATTLE	JOPPA	PRAY	TEMPEST
FAST	MARINERS	REPENTED	THREE
FISH	MERCY	SACKCLOTH	WORM
GOULD	OVERBOARD	SHADE	

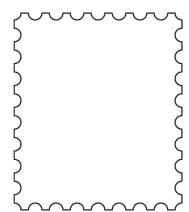
W Q B O R R O W W R R P C E	S Z L C B I
G M I L E E P N M E C E H X	B Z W P R A Y F R Y C
L R H O V E E S C O R E M	X J M F M M L C P E W O L D C T
C S E V I R I T O L F E O	D X J T I Z F A S T G S O V X O Z W
H E A E L S G R M L E K D	F D Z A I S B A N G E R U T Q A Z H E
I R V F T E H I P E C C E	O E C I H C A T T L E T E M P E S T
L V E A R C B K E C T L G	T Q H K A O S J O P P A X L D P M E
D I N T A U O E N T U O S	Z X C G K I D M A R I N E R S U L L T
R C L H I T R S S O N A R	D O W O R M E R C Y M G N S Q T P S
E E Y E N E M Y E R I K O	I U X A C K J A O T H R E E E G V
N J B R O T H E R S C E L	T Y U G U I I C O K U E I R R V D X C
U N J U S T P A G A N S M	E D A C T H L N P R D S B N G R P O
L L M G I V E J R A Y H	I O V E R B O A R D A H U N E S R S

resistance	evil	strikes
cheek	tunic	cloak
service	mile	give
borrow	love	neighbor
enemy	pray	persecute
children	Father	rain
unjust	recompense	collectors
greet	brothers	pagans
perfect	heavenly	





United Methodist Church  
36 Central Street  
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819  
[www.stjgracechurch.org](http://www.stjgracechurch.org)



Join us for Worship — Sunday at 10:30 am

**Jesus Christ** expressed faith boast seated order raised incomparable prepared  
**God** good heavenly advance kind  
**Grace** God's coming show saved  
**Works** even love realms dead workmanship created  
mercy gift made realms ages created  
transgressions