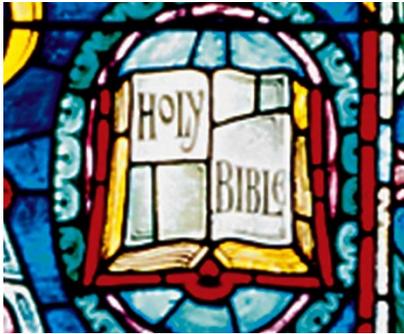




## THE HOLY BIBLE - FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION WITH OPEN MINDS - QUICKLY & JOYFULLY IN FAITH!

Led by the Reverend Dr. Wesley S. Williams, Jr.  
For Academic Years 2018-2019 & 2019-2020

Following on the popular Bible Study led by Father Williams this past spring, we embark on a two-year program, **From Genesis to Revelation**. Open to all.



"Our hope is that this course offering, entitled *The Holy Bible - from Genesis to Revelation ... With Open Minds, Quickly and Joyfully in Faith*, will afford all who attend a sound overview of our Sacred Scripture central to the faith and culture, and even to the literary traditions, of more than two billion people around the world. Moreover, it bears recalling that Christian ministers of various denominations at their ordination "solemnly declare that [they] do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New

Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation." (See, for example, *Book of Common Prayer*, page 526.) We hope that you share or are at least open to that belief; and that you will join our study of the Holy Bible, indeed with open minds, quickly and joyfully in faith!"

This Sunday series will first focus on the *Old Testament* for approximately 42 weekly sessions of 45 minutes each, **starting on the Sunday, September 9, 2018**. In fall 2019, we will focus on the *New Testament* for approximately 42 weekly sessions.

**Morning Sunday sessions:** 10:15 am—11 am, Bethlehem Chapel

**Afternoon Sunday sessions:** 3-3:45 pm, Bethlehem Chapel

**RSVP encouraged: [Registrations@cathedral.org](mailto:Registrations@cathedral.org)**

The Rev. Dr. Wesley S. Williams, Jr., is a lifelong student of scripture. He draws upon years of broad-ranging Bible study with Old and New Testament scholars of many denominations. As a layman, Wes Williams taught courses at St. John's Lafayette Square and also led Bible study at his law firm. Following his doctoral studies at Virginia Theological Seminary, Father Wes served the Episcopal Diocese of the Virgin Islands (U.S. and U.K.). In addition to parish ministry, he chaired the chaplaincy of the regional hospital and cancer institute on St. Thomas. In that role, he also taught Bible study for a decade and additionally, conducted weekly Bible study sessions at All Saints Cathedral and at two other churches on St. Thomas.



## Syllabus

**1, 2 & 3** - BIBLE BASICS: Holy Scripture roles and functions; the authoring of the Holy Bible; translations and publication thereof; diverse notions of the structure of the Bible; related conventions; some good (sound or at least historic) and accessible commentaries; summary biblical geography, and an abbreviated biblical time-line

**4, 5 & 6** - GENESIS: Creation; foundational sacred legends; the Patriarchs; their great migrations; and the tales of Joseph

**7 & 8** - EXODUS: Moses, the Deliverance, wilderness wandering, laws, and nation-building

**9** - LEVITICUS: more laws and the Holiness Code

**10** - NUMBERS: more wandering, Divine provision, and more laws

**11** - DEUTERONOMY: old and new laws, and Moses' farewell (adieu)

**12** - JOSHUA: final wandering, entering Canaan, conquest, and Joshua's farewell (adieu)

**13** - JUDGES: evolving definition; some familiar judges and some unfamiliar; some female and some male; also RUTH: David's and Jesus' ancestor

**14, 15, 16 & 17** - 1&2 SAMUEL, and 1&2 KINGS: *prophetic* history, especially of the ministry of Samuel, of Nathan, of the great, miracle-working Elijah and Elisha; and likewise *prophetic* history of the reigns of Saul, David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Josiah, and others, re-discovery of the Mosaic Law, the fall of Jerusalem, and the onset of the great Babylonian Exile

**18 & 19** - 1&2 CHRONICLES: repeated (embellished) *prophetic* history, especially of the reigns of David and Solomon, of the division of the Israelite Kingdom, and later, the reigns of Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Manasseh, and Josiah, among others, again re-discovery of the Mosaic Law, the fall of Jerusalem, and the Great Exile, but also the end thereof

**20** - EZRA and NEHEMIAH: return from the Great Exile, with rebuilding of the Temple and of the faith; and rebuilding of the walls, with re-discovery of the Law, followed by covenant renewal

**21** - ESTHER: Esther and Mordecai, and victory in Persia

**22** - JOB: the drama, and why bad things happen to good people - common answers (all wrong)

**23** - JOB: the concluding drama, with God's answers (all correct), and essential epilogue

**24, 25 & 26** - PSALMS: function, authorship, structure, literary techniques, Salvation History allusion, and theological insights mixed with some all too human misunderstanding - for example, Psalms 22, 51, 95, 100, 103, 116, 119, 121, 126, 127, 130, 136, 137, and 150 - with close study of Psalms 1, 8, and 23

**27** - PROVERBS: wisdom commentary, and your favorites, especially 3:5-7, and the ode to a capable wife (at 31:10-31)

**28** - ECCLESIASTES and SONG OF SONGS: more wisdom commentary, and a love song perhaps of Solomon - a sustained allegory paralleling the love of God for God's people, or love of Christ for the Church

**29 & 30** - 1<sup>st</sup> ISAIAH: warning disobedient Israel (immoral and unethical), headed for exile as is, or if repentant, then with hope for redemption and return, also 1<sup>st</sup> Isaiah's famous call to prophecy; 2<sup>nd</sup> ISAIAH: consoling the imprisoned leaders of Israel with the promise of divine deliverance (just as God has afforded God's people heretofore); 3<sup>rd</sup> Isaiah: again, promising deliverance with the ascendancy of the Persian Empire ... also, sketching the appearance and other characteristics of a future Messiah (a suffering servant) or messianic age

**31 & 32** - JEREMIAH: his own call to prophecy, his and his secretary Baruch's prophetic warnings to Israel against departure from the laws of God, and warning of the need for renewed covenant with God ... also, description of the fall of Jerusalem, and of the on-coming Babylonian Exile. Also, LAMENTATIONS: the five poems (not explicitly attributed to Jeremiah) that bewail the fall of Jerusalem, but nevertheless look forward to God's rescue

**33** - EZEKIEL: his call to priesthood and prophecy; his warnings to Israel before the Babylonian Exile; also, more warnings mixed with consolation during the Exile; and vivid visions of Divine rescue and restoration

**34** - DANIEL: allegorical prophecies (not prophetic *history*) of Divine rescue of Daniel and others from oppression in exile, including familiar tales of the triumphs of the faithful Hebrew boys in captivity; tales of the fall of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar and his oppressive reign; and tales of the ascendance of the Persian era, together with other, end-time visions

**35** - The importance of the 12 minor prophets, starting with one of the greatest - HOSEA: a tale of the "wages" of faithlessness in marriage, and the wonder of love, set out as an allegorical prophecy concerning the fate of the Northern Kingdom ... Also, for us, a touching exploration of what the Christian era will later call "agapé" love

**36** - JOEL: A call to repentance in Israel during the Persian era, set in a vision of an oncoming plague of locusts, cataclysmic punishment, which will be followed by Divine rescue in an out-pouring of God's Holy Spirit. Also - abandoning (slightly) the order of the minor prophets - OBEDIAH: a sound condemnation of the territory and people of Edom, which/who hindered the Hebrew people in their pursuit of their promised home in Canaan, and a half-millennium later sided with the destroyers and looters of Jerusalem, in the onset of the Babylonian exile. The prophet Obediah predicts the overthrow and subjugation of Edom in punishment

**37** - AMOS: The quintessential social justice prophet, who saw, in the prosperity of the Northern Kingdom, seeds of Israel's collapse (ultimately realized) - traceable to the unfairness of the chasm between the "haves" and the "have nots," the unethical behavior that produced that chasm, and the reflection of that misbehavior in the insincere faith and religious practices of the rich and powerful. Nevertheless, the prophet assures us, God will set all this aright

**38** - JONAH: The familiar tale of the ultimate futility of any attempt to escape God's call ... and the futility of attempts to defeat God's great mercy, which cannot be overcome or even matched by human notions of justice

**39** - MICAH: Another social justice prophet (like the somewhat earlier Prophet Amos), who condemned unethical and immoral behavior, but had a clearer vision of redemption through a Savior, a Messiah (or messianic age) anchored in "little" Bethlehem Ephrathah, and a celebrated formula for individual "good behavior"

**40** - NAHUM: Condemnation of ungodly behavior like that of Nineveh towards Israel; and celebration of Nineveh's fall at the hands of Almighty God. Also HABAKKUK: The prophet decries the ascent of the ungodly, and asks when God will take charge. God's reply, and Habakkuk's final understanding place this book in a category with that of Job who finally "gets it." Also, HAGGAI: Again abandoning (slightly) the order of the minor prophets ... After the exile, much is still in ruins in Jerusalem - spiritually and materially. The prophet urges the Jewish community to get on with their revival, promising that God will help make it happen, but also ending on a note reminiscent of the "solution" proclaimed in Job and Habakkuk

**41** - ZEPHANIAH: Prophet of eschatological harsh judgment, and of death and destruction (and as such, a source of the opening theme of the liturgical poem "Dies irae, dies illa"), warning Judah to heed the lessons of the destruction of the Northern Kingdom (Israel) ... but also hoping for repentance and redemption. ZECHARIAH: In two parts - first, a series of visions intended to hasten the return of all the exiles (now free to return), and the swift rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem and restoration of godly life and worship in the messianic age to come, and second, discourses on the Messiah who will rule over that age

**42** - MALACHI: After the Exile has ended, and in Jerusalem, the walls and Temple have been rebuilt, the prophet on behalf of the Almighty, points an accusing finger at the community of faith which has lapsed in its day-to-day behavior, in the regularity and sincerity of its worship, and in its support of the Temple and Temple ministries. God, however, promises to address the situation with both judgment and mercy, and with the aid of a messianic return of the Prophet Elijah.

*[The 42 session numbers for academic year 2019-2020 (New Testament) and content synopsis for each session will be ready for distribution in January, 2019.]*