



PodClass: What's the Word?

Syllabus – Your Guide for Self-Learning

Instructor and Host

Melisa Ortiz Berry, PhD is an author, speaker, and scholar exploring spirituality, identity, evangelical history, and the language that shapes modern faith. Through thoughtful conversation and accessible teaching, she helps listeners engage theology, culture, and spiritual formation in ways that are intellectually grounded and deeply human.

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PodClass Description

PodClass is a space for people all over the globe to learn about God, the Bible, and Christianity through podcasting. This series addresses common questions people have about the Bible as a book such as: “Who wrote the Bible?” “How do we interpret it?” “When did it become an actual book?” “Why do we have so many translations?” and “What can we do with all of those translations in our personal study of the Bible?”

Purpose of / Reason for this PodClass

Create an accessible space for people to investigate their questions about the Bible as a book and about the many different views that people have about it.

Goals

- 1.) People around the globe will have access to a Bible class.
- 2.) PodClass will be a form of Christian continuing education for the listener.
- 3.) Listeners will have their faith built up (not torn down) through an academic conversation.
- 4.) Provide a variety of voices to best illuminate the subject.
- 5.) Model positive learning experiences and friendly encounters with people who have a different view than your own (it's okay to agree to disagree).
- 6.) Appreciate what a wide variety of Jesus' followers that there are in the world.
- 7.) To begin to identify what different groups of people believe and in solidarity with them or in contrast with them, what you yourself believe.

How to Grow

- 1.) Listen once a week.
- 2.) Read through and explore the books and topics explored
- 2.) Share each podcast with a friend with whom you can continue the conversation with.

Podcast Order

Who Wrote the Bible?

Conservative	Sam Lamerson, Knox Theological Seminary
Progressive	Eric Barreto, Princeton Theological Seminary
Pentecostal	A.J. Swoboda, Bushnell University
Roman Catholic	Edward Sri, Fellowship of Catholic University Students
Coptic Orthodox	Mary Ghattas, Holy Transfiguration College at Agora University

Why do people interpret it so differently?

Messianic Jewish	Jen Rosner, Fuller Theological Seminary
Archaeological	Bob Mullins, Azusa Pacific University
Disability	Elizabeth Staszak, Disability Theologian
African American	Jacqueline Winston, Azusa Pacific University
Indigenous American	Randy Woodley, Portland Seminary
Nigerian	Agam Iheanyi-Igwe, Bushnell University
Palestinian Christian	Alex Awad, Bethlehem Bible College
Japanese	Ryuta Kimura, Double O Cross Church

How did the Bible become a book?

Church Historian	Jacqueline Winston, Azusa Pacific University
NIV Committee	Mark Strauss, Bethel Seminary
Missionary Translation	Joe Hoover, Missionary Bible Translator

What are some of the ways that we can use the Bible in everyday life?

Pastoral Advice	Aaron Dilla, Northwood Christian Church
Scholar's Advice	Bradley Jersak, St. Stephen's University

RECOMMENDED READING

Awad, Alex. *Palestinian Memories*. Bethlehem: Bethlehem Bible College, 2015.

Awad, Alex. *Through the Eyes of the Victims*. Bethlehem: Bethlehem Bible College, 2013.

Barreto, Eric D. *Exploring the Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016.

Jersak, Bradley. *A More Christlike Word: Reading Scripture the Emmaus Way*. Pasadena, CA: CWR Press, 2021.

Jersak, Bradley. *Out of the Embers: Faith After the Great Deconstruction*. Nashville: Whitaker House, 2022.

Lamerson, Sam. *The Bible Matters*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019.

Mazar, Amihai. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*. New York: Doubleday, 1990.

Rosner, Jennifer M. *Finding Messiah*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022.

Rosner, Jennifer M. *Healing the Schism*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021.

Rosner, Jennifer M. *The Jewish Gospel of John*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021.

Sri, Edward. *No Greater Love*. West Chester, PA: Ascension Press, 2019.

Sri, Edward. *Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible*. West Chester, PA: Ascension Press, 2017.

Sri, Edward. *Walking with Mary*. New York: Image Books, 2013.

Strauss, Mark L. *40 Questions About Bible Translation*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2020.

Swoboda, A.J. *After Doubt*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2021.

Swoboda, A.J. *The Gift of Thorns*. Nashville: Zondervan Reflective, 2021.

Woodley, Randy. *Becoming Rooted*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2022.

Woodley, Randy. *Living in Color*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2025.

Woodley, Randy. *Shalom and the Community of Creation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.