

What is the Bible?

Statement of faith: We believe that the Scriptures consisting of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, fully inspired without error in the original manuscripts, and are the infallible rule of faith and practice.

It's Organization

The Bible is a series of 66 books written by approximately 40 authors, over a period of about 1,500 years. The Bible is broken up into 2 sections,

- The Old Testament, consisting of 39 books, is an account of the Lord working in and through a nation, Israel. In the Old Testament we see God's character and how he relates to the nation of Israel. The Old Testament starts with Genesis and ends with Malachi. Originally written in Hebrew and some Aramaic, the Old Testament can be divided into 4 main sections.
 - **The Law:** The first five books of the Old Testament, Genesis through Deuteronomy has been called the law or Pentateuch. Here we see the beginnings of God's work, creation, establishment of the nation, and establishment of his covenant law.
 - **History:** The next 12 books of the Old Testament, Joshua through Esther have been known as the history books, because they mainly give us a historical account of the nation of Israel.
 - **Poetry/Wisdom:** The next five books are known as the Wisdom and Poetic section of the Bible, Job through Song of Solomon(songs).
 - **Prophecy:** The final 17 books of the bible are known as the prophetic books, Isaiah through Malachi. These books record God's word to the nation of Israel about their future and consequences of their actions. Many have been fulfilled and some are waiting for fulfillment.
 - **Major Prophets:** Isaiah-Daniel (5 Books).
 - **Minor Prophets:** Hosea-Malachi (12 Books)
- An easy way to remember this order is (5-12-5-5-12)
- The New Testament consisting of 27 books is an account of the Lord working in and through a Man (Jesus) to bring about his purposes and plans in mankind. The main theme of the New Testament is "Grace". Starting with Matthew and ending with Revelation we see God's continued work through the coming of Jesus, through his establishment of the church, to his second coming. Originally written in Greek the New Testament can also be divided into 4 sections.
 - **The Gospels:** The first four books of the New Testament are called the Gospels, or Good news. They are Historical biographical accounts of the life and work of Jesus. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John given us four accounts of Jesus. Why four? Each book was written with a specific purpose in mind. Each writer and a group of people in mind when he wrote his book and he wanted to prove a specific point about Jesus. They see the same Jesus from different angles. They give us a complete picture of who Jesus is.

- **History:** The next book is seen as an historical account of the beginning and growth of the church, Jesus' continued work through a body of believers. This book is Acts of the Apostles, or commonly called the Acts of the Holy Spirit.
 - **Epistles:** the next 21 books are known as the Epistles, Romans through Jude. These are letters written by men moved by God to communicate truths to the body of Christ. Paul wrote the first 13, from Romans through Philemon and perhaps Hebrews as well. Then there is James, Peter, John, and Jude.
 - **Prophecy:** The last book of the bible, Revelation, is prophecy about the second coming of Christ and the events that take place surrounding his return.
- Although we have broken the bible into two sections and then broke each section into four parts, the Bible is to be seen as a united whole. The major theme of the Bible is God's work of Salvation through Jesus Christ. The Old Testament foretells of Jesus Christ and salvation in him. The New Testament is the fulfillment of that salvation.
 - Here is a little something cool to help you remember the number of books within the bible.
 - Old Testament – Old (3 letters) and Testament (9 letters) = 39
 - New Testament – New (3 letters) times Testament (9 letters) = 27
 - Total = 66

What about the Apocrypha?

These 15 books written between 300 B.C. and 30 B.C. that appear in Catholic Bibles, we believe to not be part of Scripture. No church council recognized them as Scripture until 1546 at the Council of Trent when the RCC officially declared them to be so.

Church father, such as Athanasius, Jerome, and Origen did not accept them as Scripture. Jerome when translating the Vulgate distinguished the canonical books from the apocrypha, giving them secondary status. Other reasons why we reject them are as follows:

Jewish community never accepted these books as Scripture

Jesus never quoted from the Apocrypha but accepted all 39 OT books (**Luke 24:44**).

They have doctrinal errors: 2 Mac. 13:45 against **Heb 9:26** and Tobit 12:9 against

Ephesians 2:8-9

How did we get the Bible?

The Word of God: Revelation

Revelation is an act of uncovering or communicating divine truth to man, which would otherwise be unknown. In the case of Christianity and the bible, revelation is the act of God disclosing or uncovering and communicating the truth of who He is and what is plan for humanity is, which would otherwise be unknown to us.

- God spoke the things of the Old Testament to men and told them to write them down. **Numbers 1:1** and **Exodus 17:14**.
- The New Testament is also God speaking to us through his Son. **Hebrews 1:1, 10:7**
- **1 John 1:1-3** speaks about the things that were written in the Bible. Christianity is based on the revelation of God. IT is faith based on the claim that God has come to us and made Himself known to us. Christianity believes that there is a God and he has revealed himself to mankind through His son and through His word.

Practical Lesson: If we are to know God, then we must search the Bible.

Fully Inspired

Inspiration is defined as God's superintendence of the human authors so that, using their own individual personalities and styles, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs.

- **2 Peter 1:20-21:** The word moved is a nautical term and was used to describe how the wind would fill the sail of a boat and move it along.
- **2 Timothy 3:16:** God breathed.

Inerrancy: Without error and infallible

The bible is inerrant in that it tells the truth and it does so without error in all its parts and with all its words. The bible is infallible in that it is trustworthy and effective in all that it claims.

- **Numbers 23:19** – If the bible is God's word and breathed out by him, and he cannot lie, then the bible has to be without error and truth.
- **Isaiah 55:11** – His word goes and does what He sent it to do.

In the original manuscripts

When we say the original manuscripts, we mean that which the biblical authors wrote down from God as the time they wrote them was without error.

Why should we believe the Bible?

There are three reasons that we can trust the bible.

1. Jesus taught that the Scriptures were the Word of God. **Mark 7:6-13**
2. Undeniable and accurate prophecy. **John 17:4.** Nearly 500 specific prophesies concerning the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Some made well over two thousand years prior to his birth.
 - a. It was prophesied in the Old Testament that Christ would be a descended of Abraham (**Genesis 12:1-3**) and be from the tribe of Judah (**Genesis 49:10**) and from the house of David (**Psalms 110:1**).
 - b. He would be born in Bethlehem (**Micah 5:2**), born of a virgin (**Isaiah 7:14**), betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (**Zechariah 11:12**) and that his hands and feet would be pierced (**Psalms 22:16**).
 - c. He would be crucified with transgressors (**Isaiah 53:9, 12**), none of his bones would be broken (**Exodus 12:46**), and that he would cry from the cross, MY God My God why has thou forsaken me?"(**Psalms 22:1**).
3. Its ability to change lives. **2 Timothy 3:16-17**
 - a. The Bible is Profitable:
 - i. For Doctrine – showing what is right.
 1. It tells us about God's Character.
 2. It reveals God's will
 3. It teaches us how to live moral lives.
 - ii. For Reproof – Show what is not right.
 - iii. For Correction – Show how to get right and make you right
 - iv. For Instruction – Show how to stay right and grow.
 - b. Bible brings us to maturity

How we should read and study the Bible

Here are some principles for reading and studying the bible.

- Step #1 – Prayer: Pray that God would give you insight into his word.
- Step #2 – Read and re-read the Bible thoughtfully.
- Step #3 – Ask Questions for the bible. This is called observation. Ask the questions: Who? What? Where? When? How?
- Step #4 – Prayer: Pray that God would help you put these things together.
- Step #5 – Identify what these observations mean within their context. Here you are asking the question Why? And What does it mean?
- Step #6 – Prayer: Pray and ask God to apply his word to your life as you meditate of the on the passage and its meaning.
- Step #7 – Application: How must I change my life to fit what the bible says? Memorize a verse that will help you remember this application.