

Bible Survey Notes

What is the Bible?

The Bible's testimony of itself (NKJV)...

All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. — **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. — **Romans 15:4**

knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit. — **2 Peter 1:20-21**

But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught *it*, but *it came* through the revelation of Jesus Christ. — **Galatians 1:11-12**

The Organization of the Bible

The name "Bible" is equivalent to the Greek word "biblia" originally meaning "books."

The Bible contains 66 books. 39 in Old Testament and 27 in New Testament.

The Bible was written over a period of about 1,500 years by more than forty different human authors from a variety of backgrounds. (Joshua a military general, Daniel a prime minister, Peter a fisherman, Paul a religious leader, and Nehemiah a cupbearer.)

The biblical writings were composed on three different continents (Africa, Asia, and Europe), and in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek).

It is not just a collection of books. Though it speaks on many controversial subjects, there is a unified message and completed purpose throughout that reveals the hand of God in the writing and compilation of these works. From beginning to end, there is one unfolding story of God's plan of salvation for mankind through Jesus Christ.

In comparison, try to take ten people from your local area having similar backgrounds and speaking the same language. Separate them and ask them to write on only one controversial subject such as the meaning of life. When they finish, compare what they have written. Do they agree with each other? Of course not. Yet the Bible is internally consistent even though it speaks on many controversial subjects.

It can be helpful to understand the breakdown and arrangement of the various books of the Bible. This is especially helpful when you are searching for information in it. For example, if you want to find a verse about something that Jesus said, you would start with the four Gospels that record the life and teachings of Jesus.

The Bible is comprised of two major sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. Each of the testaments are typically further divided into sections as described in the following information.

The Old Testament Books

The Law (5 books) Also called: Torah, Pentateuch, Five Books of Moses

—Almost entirely written by Moses. Covers history from the creation through the time of Moses and the establishment of the nation of Israel. Includes the revelation of God to man along with the laws of God. It lays the foundation of God's purposes, plans, and love for all of creation.

Genesis

Exodus

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

History (12 books)

—Documents the rise and fall of the nation of Israel. Covers the time when the Israelites enter the promise land (Canaan), through the divided kingdom (Judah and Israel) and to the return of the Israelites from Babylonian captivity.

Joshua

Judges

Ruth

1 Samuel

2 Samuel

1 Kings

2 Kings

1 Chronicles

2 Chronicles

Ezra

Nehemiah

Esther

Poetry (5 books) Also called: Wisdom

—instructive songs, poetry, and wisdom. Also deals with the problem of suffering. Much of it (except Job) was written by David and Solomon.

Job

Psalms

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Song of Solomon (Also called: Canticles or The Song of Songs)

Major Prophets (5 books) [longer works]

—The prophets called the people back to the Lord while challenging ungodly beliefs and practices. They also announced God's judgment when the people refused to repent. The "major" prophets are so designated because of the large physical size of their writings.

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Lamentations

Ezekiel

Daniel

Minor Prophets (12 books) [shorter works]

—The prophets mainly called the people back to the Lord while challenging ungodly beliefs and practices. They also announced God's judgment when the people refused to repent. The "minor" prophets are so designated because of the smaller physical size of their writings.

Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

Between the Testaments

—There was a period of about 400 years from the time the last Old Testament book was completed until the birth of Jesus Christ. During this time, the Roman Empire conquered the nation of Israel setting the stage for the coming of the promised Messiah.

The New Testament Books

Gospels (4 books)

—Four different accounts of the birth, life, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Each is written from a different perspective to provide a more complete picture when taken together.

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John

Matthew – primarily written to the Hebrews (Jews) to demonstrate that Jesus is the prophesied Messiah. Matthew emphasized Jesus' Jewish roots and what He taught.

Mark – primarily written for Roman (gentile, non-Jewish) readers who appreciated government and power. Mark emphasizes more of what Jesus did than what He said. It is an action-packed Gospel and often the first one translated into a new language.

Luke – primarily written for the Greeks who appreciated culture, philosophy, wisdom, reason, beauty, and education. Luke was especially careful to accurately record the historical events associated with Jesus.

John – John emphasized the deity of Jesus—that He is God in human form. More attention is given to the things Jesus said than what He did.

Acts (1 book) (History of the Early Church)

—Covers the activities of the Apostles and early Christians as the Church begins to take shape. It documents the spread of Christianity in Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and to the end of the earth. It includes the life and work of Paul.

Acts

Epistles (21 books) (Letters to the Church and Christians)

—provide explanation and instruction for Christian living. Most were written by Paul (*Pauline Epistles*: Romans through Philemon). The traditional view is that Hebrews was also written by Paul, possibly in Hebrew, then translated into Greek by one of his aides.

Romans

1 Corinthians

2 Corinthians

Galatians

Ephesians

Philippians

Colossians

1 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians

1 Timothy

2 Timothy

Titus

Philemon

Hebrews

James

1 Peter

2 Peter

1 John

2 John

3 John

Jude

Revelation (1 book) Also called: Apocalypse (“destruction” or “revelation”)

—written by the Apostle John recording a vision in which Jesus revealed to him information about things to come. It includes details about the final days of the earth and universe, the judgment of sin, and eternity.

Revelation

The Apocrypha

—These are extra writings that are included in the Roman Catholic version of the Bible. They are not in the Hebrew version of the Old Testament, nor were they ever quoted by Jesus and the writers of the New Testament. They should not be considered as inspired Scripture.

Bibliography:

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