

## **A Basic Introduction to the Bible**

### Quick Facts:

- The word "Bible" comes from the Greek word for book. "Holy Bible" means "Holy Book."
- The Bible has different genres (categories of composition).
  - Law
  - History
  - Wisdom Literature/Poetry
  - Prophecy/Sermons
  - Gospels
  - Epistles/Letters
- It was NOT written in chronological order.
- It has 66 books (39 OT/27 NT).
- The current canon is closed.
- Written over 1500 years.
- 3 languages: Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic.
- Written in 13 different countries on 3 continents; Asia, Africa, and Europe.
- Both the highest sold and shoplifted book in the history of the world.
- It could take the average person about 70 hours to read aloud.
- It was authored by politicians, farmers, musicians, shepherds, and tax collectors.
- Written in many places: Moses/Wilderness, Jeremiah/Dungeon, Luke/Traveling, Paul/Prison, and John/Island of Patmos.
- Topics – marriage, friendship, family, heaven/hell, career, and money.
- The Bible is divided up by four basic divisions: Testament, book, chapter and verse.

## **THE COLLECTING OF THE CANON**

### **How the 66 Books Were Chosen:**

The word canon is used to describe the standard for the 66 books chosen for the Bible. The word canon means "a measuring rod." Each testament of the Bible was chosen with certain standards.

The following is the standard for how each testament was chosen:

#### **I. Old Testament Standard:**

- Written by a prophet of God. (Deuteronomy 18:18–22; 1 Peter 1:16–21)
- The prophet was confirmed by an act of God. (Hebrews 2:3–4)
- It told the truth about God. (Galatians 1:8; Deuteronomy 13:1–5; Deuteronomy 18:22)
- It had the power of God. (Hebrews 4:12)

- It was accepted by God's people. (1 Thessalonians 2:13; Deuteronomy 31:24–26; Joshua 24:26; 1 Samuel 10:25; Daniel 9:2; 2 Peter 3:16; 1 Timothy 5:18; Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27)
- Jesus referenced or quoted it. (Matthew 4:4; 12:40; John 6:45)

## II. New Testament Standard:

- The books of the New Testament were accepted because they contained the words of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 7:28–29; Luke 2:19; John 6:63)
- The books were accepted because of eyewitness accounts, either written by the eyewitness or from first-hand information. (2 Peter 1:16; 1 John 1:1–3; Luke 1:1–3; Acts 1:1–3; 1 Corinthians 15:6–8; John 20:30–31; 2 Timothy 4:11)
- The early church treated the teachings as authoritative. (Ephesians 2:20; Acts 2:42; Acts 15; 1 John 4:6)
- The current Bible canon is closed.
- The Book of Revelation tells us to expect no more scripture than what we already have.

*I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.*

**Revelation 22:18–19 ESV**

## 2 Ways to help ensure you are reading the Bible in its original context:

### I. Ask These Questions While Reading Your Bible:

1. What did this verse mean to them?
2. What does this mean for me today?
3. What are other scriptures that address this same truth?

### II. Study Bibles:

A great way to study the Bible in its original context would be to purchase a Study Bible. This is a Bible that has comments and observations about the verses on the pages either below or to the sides of the Bible passages. To date, some good options are:

- Life Application Study Bible by Zondervan Press
- Zondervan NIV Study Bible by Zondervan Press
- The Quest Study Bible by Zondervan Press
- Nelson Study Bible by Thomas Nelson Press
- The Everyday Study Bible by Thomas Nelson Press
- The New Spirit-Filled Life Bible by Thomas Nelson Press

- . Thompson Chain- Reference Bible by Kirkbride Bible Co.
- . The ESV Study Bible by Crossway Bibles

## IS THE BIBLE RELIABLE?

In his book, "Introduction in Research in English Literary History", C. Sanders (professor of military history) sets forth three tests of reliability employed in general historiography and literary criticism.

1. **The Internal Test:** Do the writers of the Bible claim their writings are true?

### The Writers Proclaimed it to Be True

*For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

**2 Peter 1:16 NIV**

The New Testament was written between 47-95 AD. There would have been plenty of First Generation believers and those who were around during the time of Jesus refute what the Bible would have written.

### The Bible Itself Claimed it to Be True

#### 10 Claims the Bible says about Itself

God Breathed	2 Timothy 3:16
True	John 17:17
Flawless and Perfect	Proverbs 30:5/Psalm 19:7
Trustworthy	Psalm 19:7
Righteous	Psalm 119:172
Eternal	Psalm 119: 160
Unbreakable	John 10:34-36
Alive and Active	Hebrews 4:12
A Guide to Salvation	James 1:21/1 Peter 2:2

NOTE: 2,000 of the 2,500 prophecies in the bible have been fulfilled. 500 are in the future.

2. **The External Test:** What does outside evidence say about the Bible? (Non-Biblical sources)

When considering the trustworthiness of the New Testament (NT) documents, the first question we need to ask is, "Have these documents been accurately transmitted to us since they were originally written?"

**The Historian Way**

Here is how historians determine the accuracy of historical documents:

1. Look at the number of existing manuscript copies (MSS) of the original text.
2. Look at the time gap between the earliest existing MSS and the date when the original document was written.

Bottom Line: The more (MSS) and the shorter the time gap, the better we are able to reconstruct the original.

<b>Author</b>	<b>Work</b>	<b>Date Written</b>	<b>Earliest MSS</b>	<b>Time Gap</b>	<b>Number of MSS</b>
Homer	Iliad	800BC	c.400 BC	400	1757
Plato	Tetralogies	400BC	AD 895	1300	210
Caesar	Gallic Wars	100-44BC	9 <sup>th</sup> C	950	251
Sophocles	Plays	496-406BC	3 <sup>rd</sup> C BC	100-200	193
Herodotus	History	480-425 BC	10 <sup>th</sup> C	1350	109
Demosthenes	Speeches	300 BC	Some fragments from 1 C BC	1100+	340
The New Testament		AD 50-100	AD 130	40	5795*

\*Over 24,000 if you consider other languages.

The New Testament is 95% accurate. The 5% of inaccuracies are grammatical and from punctuation.

The only conclusion one can reasonably reach is that we have more confidence in the textual transmission of the NT than in any other document of ancient history.

"It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference." Nelson Glueck, former president of the Jewish Theological Seminary Archeologists

3. **The Bibliographic Test:** The textual tradition of copying from the original.

### **The Scribe**

- The scribe was considered a professional person in antiquity.
- The task was usually undertaken by a devout Jew.
- The Scribes believed they were dealing with the very Word of God and were therefore extremely careful in copying.
- They could only use clean animal skins, both to write on, and to bind manuscripts.
- Each column of writing could have no less than forty-eight, and no more than sixty lines.
- The ink must be black, and of a special recipe.
- They must verbalize each word aloud while they were writing.
- They must wipe the pen and wash their entire bodies before writing the word "Jehovah," every time they wrote it.
- There must be a review within thirty days, and if as many as three pages required corrections, the entire manuscript had to be redone.
- The letters, words, and paragraphs had to be counted, and the document became invalid if two letters touched each other. The middle paragraph, word, and letter must correspond to those of the original document.
- The documents could be stored only in sacred places (synagogues, etc.)
- As no document containing God's Word could be destroyed, they were stored, or buried, in a genizah - a Hebrew term meaning "hiding place." These were usually kept in a synagogue or sometimes in a Jewish cemetery.

The Bible is the primary and only real reference point for the beliefs of Christianity.

Dr. Simeon Greenleaf, Dane Professor of Law at Harvard (succeeded by Justice Joseph Story) and one of the greatest legal minds we have had in this country; Concluded while at Harvard that the resurrection of Christ was one of the best-supported events in history, according to the laws of legal evidence administered in the courts of Justice.

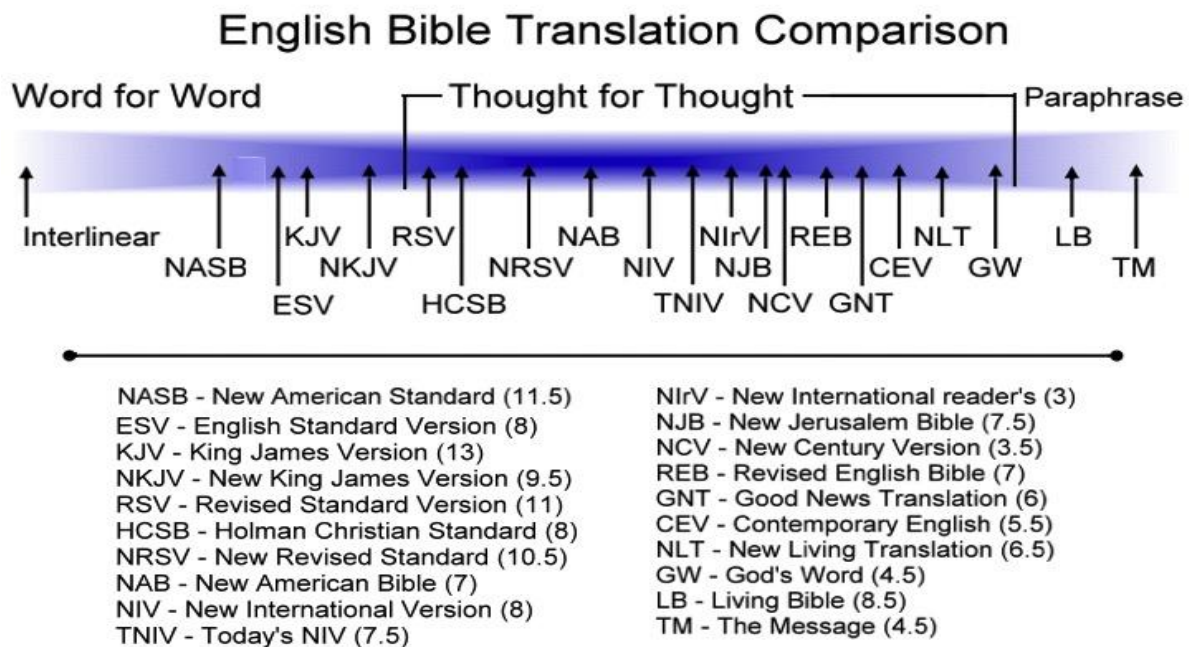
## DEAD SEA SCROLLS

- Dated to the time of Jesus.
- 70 AD Romans attacked Jews. Took their scrolls and hid them in caves so they weren't destroyed.
- 1947 a Bedouin shepherd found Dead Sea scrolls in a cave.
  - almost burned them
  - found more caves with more scrolls
- Our current Bible is a 95% accuracy match to the Dead Sea Scrolls. The 5% error is made up of grammar and punctuation errors - so our current Bible is an accurate match to the original scrolls.

## OUR CURRENT BIBLE

Modern translations can be separated generally by:

- Word to word (ESV/NKJV)
- Thought to thought, (NIV/NAB)
- Paraphrase (NLT/Message Bible)



***\*Each translation has value in helping us understand God's word. Therefore, it's best to have multiple translations of the Bible for personal reading and study\****

<b>HISTORY OF THE BIBLE</b>	
1400 - 1500 BC	God wrote the 10 Commandments in ancient Hebrew on stone.
500 BC	39 books that make up the Old Testament were completed and preserved in Hebrew on scrolls. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 150 feet for 1 scroll</li> <li>• Sheep, ox, no pigs</li> </ul>
500 AD	Bible had been translated into over 500 languages
600 AD	Bible was restricted to only Latin. All other versions were considered illegal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catholic church was the only recognized church in the land.</li> <li>• Priests only able to read the bible.</li> <li>• Church was corrupt</li> </ul>
400-1400 AD	Known as the "Dark Ages." Priests deceived the masses by keeping scripture to themselves and distorting it.
1380	John Wycliffe (often called the Morningstar of the English Reformation) translated the Bible into English. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> guy to do this</li> <li>• 10 months to translate into English</li> <li>• The one God used to start the reformation of the church</li> </ul>
1517	All Hollows eve - Martin Luther nailed his famous 95 Thesis on the church door at the church in Wittenberg. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 95 claims of Heresy</li> </ul> Started the reformation of the Protestant church
1526	William Tyndale (friend of Martin Luther) printed the first English Bible. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life on the run</li> <li>• Kings men would buy them all the time to burn them.</li> </ul> Tyndale would use the profits to print more
1536	Tyndale was incarcerated before he was strangled and burned at the stake. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before dying, Tyndale prayed, "Oh Lord, open the King of England's eyes".</li> </ul>
1539	King Henry VIII finally allowed (and even funded) the printing of an English Bible.

## PROPHECIES FULFILLED CONCERNING JESUS

Born of a Virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:25
Born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1-2
Anointed by the Spirit	Isaiah 11:2	Matthew 3:16
Rides Triumphantly on Donkey	Zechariah 9:9	John 12:14-15
Betrayed By Friend	Psalms 41:9	Matthew 26:48-49
Silent Before Accusers	Isaiah 53:7	Matthew 27:12
Beaten and Spat Upon	Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 26:67
Cast Lots for Clothing	Psalms 22:18	John 19:23-24
Crucified With Criminals	Isaiah 53:12	Mark 15:27
Given Vinegar to Drink	Psalms 69:21	John 19:28-30
Forsaken By God	Psalms 22:1	Matthew 27:46
Pierced For Our Sins	Isaiah 53:5	John 19:34-35
His Bones Will Not Be Broken	Psalms 34:20	John 19:33
The Day Turns Dark	Amos 8:9	Matthew 27:45
He Will Rise Again	Psalms 118:17-18	Mark 16:6-8

## OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES FOR BIBLE STUDY

<b>Standard Resources</b>
<i>What The Bible Is All About</i> by Henrietta Mears
<i>How To Read The Bible For All Its Worth</i> by Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart
<i>How To Read The Bible Book By Book</i> by Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart
<i>The Holman Bible Atlas</i> by Thomas V. Brisco
<b>Online</b>
BibleGateway.com
BlueLetterBible.org
YouVersion.com
TheBibleProject.com (or on Youtube/Podcast)



# GENRES OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

LAW	HISTORY	WISDOM & POETRY	PROPHECY	GOSPEL	LETTERS
<p><b>OLD TESTAMENT</b></p> <p>Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy</p>	<p><b>OLD TESTAMENT</b></p> <p>Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther</p> <p><b>NEW TESTAMENT</b></p> <p>Acts</p>	<p><b>OLD TESTAMENT</b></p> <p>Job Psalm Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs</p>	<p><b>OLD TESTAMENT</b></p> <p>Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel Hosea Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi</p> <p><b>NEW TESTAMENT</b></p> <p>Revelation</p>	<p><b>NEW TESTAMENT</b></p> <p>Matthew Mark Luke John</p>	<p><b>PAULINE</b></p> <p>Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians 1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Philemon</p> <p><b>GENERAL</b></p> <p>Hebrews James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude</p>

