

HOME STUDY COURSE

THE BIBLE

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

The Bible is a Book. The very word *Bible* means "a book." Yet the Bible might also be considered a *Book of Books* because It is actually a collection of 66 Books which have come from God. These 66 Books are His communication to us so that we might fully understand what He wants us to do.

The Bible was originally written in 3 different languages. Most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew (portions of a few of the later Books are in Aramaic). The New Testament was written in the common Greek language of the day.

1. Why is the Bible considered a Book of Books?

2. Why was the Bible given to man?

3. In what original language(s) was the Bible written?



The Bible is God's communication to man.

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HOW IS THE BIBLE ARRANGED?

Into a First and Last Will and Testament

The 66 Books of the Bible are separated into the Old and New Testaments. This may be thought of as God's First and Last Will and Testament. For example, suppose a wealthy man recorded his will which contained numerous stipulations. Then sometime later he recorded several changes he wished to make. Now he would have his first will but he would also have his last will and testament. The changes recorded in the last will and testament would be legal and binding. We would go by these.

So it is with God. He recorded His First Testament - It is divided into what we know as the Old Testament (containing 39 Books). Then God made numerous changes and recorded this Last Will and Testament - It is divided into what we know as the New Testament (containing 27 Books). The Bible refers to Itself in just this manner in Hebrews 9:15-17 after pointing out many wonderful changes

BIBLE FACTS:

- There are 66 Books in the Bible.
- There are 2 major divisions in the Bible - the Old and New Testaments.
- There are 39 Books in the Old Testament and 27 Books in the New.
- The Book of Psalms is the longest Book and there are 5 one-chapter Books.
- The Bible was not originally divided into chapters and verses.

that had been made. (All of these have to do with the fact that Jesus has come and has shed His blood for the forgiveness of our sins. This is the main focal point of the changes made by God.)

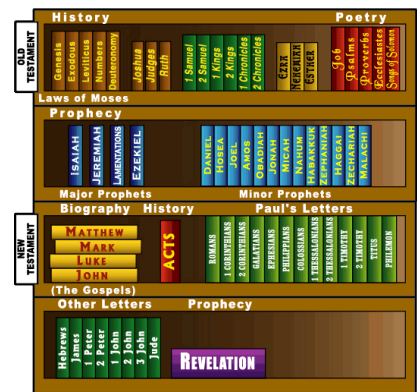
1. What is God's "Last Will and Testament?" _____
2. What is the main focal point of the changes made in It? _____

As Books on a Bookshelf

The Bible may also be viewed as a complete set of Books which are divided into smaller sets as though on a bookshelf. These Books are further arranged by category (see the graphic below).

So then, the first set of Books are what we know as the Old Testament. The first 5 of these are Books of history (primarily of the Jews) and contain numerous statutes of Law (delivered by Moses); then there are 12 additional Books covering the periods of the Judges; the united kingdom; the divided kingdom; and, finally, the period following the exile into Babylon. Written during these same periods are 5 Books of Poetry and 17 Books of Prophecy (which are many times further separated into "Major" and "Minor" Prophets simply because of the size of the Books).

The second major set of Books, what we know as the New Testament, is similarly arranged. However, It opens with 4 Books of Biography (of Jesus). Then there is a Book of History (Acts) which also serves to introduce the remainder of the New Testament — 13 Books written by the Apostle Paul, and 8 Books written by 5 other authors follow. These are called "Epistles" or "Letters" and are written to various churches and individuals. Much of the content of these letters is doctrinal. Finally, the New Testament contains 1 Book of Prophecy, the Book of Revelation.



1. Why might the Bible be viewed as a "Bookshelf of Books?" _____
2. How could a working understanding of this arrangement help in the study of the Bible? _____

The Bible is God's communication to man.

WHAT MAKES THE BIBLE SO DIFFERENT?

There is complete unity in the Bible even though It is a collection of works by some 40 writers over the course of about 1550 years! The earliest works of Moses were written from about 1445 B.C. and the last Book was completed late in the 1st century A.D. There was also a "silent period" of nearly 450 years between the last of the Old Testament Books and first of the New Testament Books. No other book is remotely like this one.

The writers of the 66 Books were men of widely differing backgrounds: kings, soldiers, priests, prophets, shepherds, fishermen, government officials, poets, teachers, a doctor, a tax-collector, and even a tent-maker! Some were very educated; some were uneducated.

The writers of the Bible did their work in widely differing settings: on an exodus to freedom, in captivity, in prison, in exile, on thrones, in shepherds' tents, in palaces, as young victors and elderly outcasts.

These writers were widely separated over time and space. Most were unknown personally to one another. They were not only from different times writing in different languages, but lived in different countries. They covered many different subjects: biography (some autobiographical), history, songs, poetry, romance, oratory (including sermons), civil legislation and governmental edicts, personal and general letters, doctrinal directives, obituaries, character studies, supernatural events and apocalyptic visions.

1. What makes the Bible so unique? _____
2. How did the content of the Bible remain so unified? _____

IS THE BIBLE COMPLETE?

Too Much or Not Enough

Much discussion surrounds the question of whether the Bible is complete. While some see the need to *abridge* the Bible, others claim there are *lost books* that should be added to it. Some ask the questions, "How can we know that we have the complete Word of God?" "Who collected these Books into what we know as the Bible?" "How can one tell what parts came from God or if some of it came from man?"

Reason should tell us that a personal God Who wants to relate His will to man, whom He created, would have the ability to give all that He wants man to know to him, and to keep it from being corrupted. This is exactly what God says of the Bible we have (1 Peter 1:23-25).

1. Explain the main reason we should know that we have the complete Bible today. _____
2. Should the Bible be abridged, added to, or accepted just as It is? _____
3. How do we know the Bible has not been corrupted? _____



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HAS GOD PRESERVED THE BIBLE?

A Product of Inspiration

The Bible says, "All Scripture [every writing] is given by Inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16). The phrase *is given by Inspiration of God* literally means *God-breathed*. Once the Word was given It was settled and cannot pass away (Psalm 119:89; Matthew 24:35). In the simplest of terms the Bible tells us that God oversaw this great work, collected the whole from the various Books He had these writers to compose, and has preserved this complete Book through the ages. He has protected It from corruption, from being obscured by the addition of other works, and from being diminished by some of It being lost. What we have today is the complete and final Inspired Will and Testament of God.

1. What does "All Scripture" mean? _____
2. When the phrase "is given by Inspiration of God" is used, it literally means _____
3. Who has protected the Bible all these years since It was written? _____

1 Peter 1:23-25

²³having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the Word of God which lives and abides forever, ²⁴because "All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, ²⁵But the Word of the LORD endures forever." Now this is the Word which by the Gospel was preached to you.

Matthew 24:35

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words will not pass away.

Psalm 119:89

Forever, O LORD, Your Word is settled in Heaven.

John 10:35

The Word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)

HAS THE BIBLE WITHSTOOD ATTACKS AGAINST IT?

Surviving Under Attack

Not many books survive from antiquity. Any book that does is a rarity. When one realizes that the Bible has endured numerous concerted attempts to remove It, then he realizes how special this Book is indeed. God speaks of those who would "hold down" or "suppress" the Truth (Romans 1:18). Examples of the adverse conditions under which the Bible has survived also point to Divine preservation. It did not take long



**From
Roman
Emperors**

**To
Modern
Critics**

for the enemies of the Bible to discover that Christians base their faith in the Scriptures. Therefore removing the Bible would put an end to Christianity. Emperors like Decius and Diocletian ordered the Bible to be destroyed, completely removed from existence. More modern opponents such as Voltaire, Robert Ingersoll, and Isaac Asimov and others have tried to argue or ridicule It out of existence. The onslaught continues today from those who would stamp out the continued widespread belief in the Bible. In fact, someone has always been trying to corrupt, remove, or totally discredit the Word of God. Still the Bible has withstood all attacks against It to remain **the most popular Book of all time.**

1. Give two reasons why the survival of the Bible should be considered so special.

(1) _____

(2) _____

2. Name some of those who thought they could get rid of the Bible. _____

WHAT IS IN THE BIBLE?



When we pick up a Bible it is important to always remember that we hold in our hands the very Word of God. God has preserved It for us in an uncorrupted condition so that we might read and understand It (Ephesians 3:3-4). If we *handle It correctly* (2 Timothy 2:15). It can accomplish in our lives exactly what God intended for It to accomplish! Yet this can be a daunting task. Many times we are just overwhelmed by the mere size of the Bible, let alone Its serious nature. That is why we need some kind of help so that we may start to understand what is there for us.

The Bible provides us with God's instructions for how we are to conduct ourselves in this world, both in worship to Him and in our interaction with one another. God's Word is authoritative; It is a Book of Law upon which we make a *legal appeal* for justification from God. This can give us wonderful security! In the next lesson we will explore this unique appeal to God.

1. Can the Bible be understood?

2. Have you ever felt overwhelmed about trying to understand what is in the Bible? _____



Do you have a question about anything in this lesson that you wish to discuss with someone? Please feel free to contact us and someone will be glad to assist you.

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