

BASIC BIBLE FACTS

66 BOOKS

The Bible which is the written Word of the one true God. The word "Bible" means "the books." The Bible is one volume which consists of 66 separate books.

The word "Scripture" is also used to refer to God's Word. This word comes from a Latin word which means "writing." When the word "Scripture" is used with a capital "S" it means the sacred writings of the one true God. The word "Bible" is not used in the Bible. It is a word selected by men as a title for all of God's Words.

The Bible is the written Word of God. He inspired the words in the Bible and used approximately 40 different men to write down His words. These men wrote over a period of 1500 years. The perfect agreement of these writers is one proof that they were all guided by a single author. That author was God.

The Scriptures are to be used to teach doctrine, to reprove and correct from evil, and to teach righteousness. They will help you live right and equip you to work for God.

The Bible is divided into two major sections called the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word "testament" means covenant. A covenant is an agreement. The Old Testament records God's original covenant or agreement with man. The New Testament records the new covenant made by God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

What was the subject of these two agreements? They both concerned restoring sinful man to right relationship with God. God made a law that sin can only be forgiven through the shedding of blood.

Under God's agreement in the Old Testament, blood sacrifices of animals were made by man to obtain forgiveness for sin. This was a symbol of the blood sacrifice Jesus Christ would provide under the new agreement with God. Through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, a final sacrifice for sin was made.

Both testaments are the Word of God and we must read both in order to understand God's message. The terms "old" and "new" testaments are used to distinguish between God's agreement with man before and after the death of Jesus Christ. We do not disregard the Old Testament simply because it is called "old."

The Bible is further divided into 66 books. The Old Testament has 39 books. The New Testament contains 27 books. Each book is divided into chapters and verses. Although the content of each book is the Word of God, the division into chapters and verses was made by man to make it easy to locate specific passages. It would be very difficult to find a passage if the books were all one long paragraph.

Even though the Bible was written by many writers over many years, there are no contradictions. One author does not contradict any of the others.

The Bible includes discussion of hundreds of controversial subjects. Yet the writers of the Bible spoke on such subjects with harmony from the first book of Genesis through the last book of Revelation. This was possible because there was really only one author: God. The writers only recorded the message under His direction and inspiration. For this reason, the content of the Bible is united.

Some people think the Bible is a collection of 66 separate books on different subjects. They do not realize that the Bible is united by a major theme. From beginning to end, the Bible reveals God's special purpose which is summarized in the book of Ephesians.

The Bible reveals the mystery of God's plan which is the unifying theme of the Bible. It is the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Savior of sinful mankind. Jesus explained how the Old Testament centered on Him.

The Old and New Testaments both tell the story of Jesus. The Old Testament prepares us for its happening and the New Testament tells how it happened. This unites the Bible in one major theme. The people who looked forward to Jesus under the Old Testament were saved from their sins through faith in God's promise. Everyone who looks back to it as having been fulfilled in Jesus Christ is saved in the same way: Through faith that it happened just as God promised.

When we speak of the "diversity" of the Bible we mean that the Bible has variety. It records different ways in which God dealt with people and the different ways in which they responded to Him.

The Bible is written in different moods. Some portions express joy while others reflect sorrow. The Bible includes different types of writing. It contains history, poetry, prophecy, letters, adventure, parables, miracles, and love stories. Because of its variety, the Bible has been further divided into major groups of books.

The books of the Old Testament are divided into four major groups: Law, history, poetry and prophecy.

There are five books of law.

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

These books record the creation of man and the world by God and the early history of man. They tell how God raised up the nation of Israel as a people through which He could reveal Himself to the nations of the world.

These books record the laws of God. The best known parts are the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3-17), the greatest of all commandments (Deuteronomy 6:5), and the second greatest commandment (Leviticus 19:18).

There are 12 books of history.

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
I and II Samuel
I and II Kings
I and II Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

There are five books of poetry.

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon

There are 17 books of prophecy.

The books of prophecy in the Old Testament are divided into two groups which are called Major and Minor prophetic books. This does not mean the Major Prophets are more important than the Minor Prophets. The title is simply used because the Major Prophets are longer books than the Minor Prophets. There are 17 books of prophecy in the Old Testament.

Major Prophets:

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel

Minor Prophets:

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

These books are prophetic messages from God to His people about future events. Many of the prophecies have already been fulfilled, but some remain to be fulfilled in the future.

The New Testament has also been divided into four groups: Gospels, History, Letters, and Prophecy.

There are four books in the Gospels.

Matthew Mark Luke John

These books tell about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Their purpose is to lead you to believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God.

There is one book of history in the New Testament, the book of **Acts**. This book tells how the church began and fulfilled Christ's commission to spread the Gospel throughout the world.

There are 21 letters in the New Testament.

Romans	Titus
I and II Corinthians	Philemon
Galatians	Hebrews
Ephesians	James
Philippians	I and II Peter
Colossians	I, II, and III John
I and II Thessalonians	Jude

I and II Timothy

The letters are addressed to all believers. Their purpose is to guide them in living and help them do what Jesus commanded.

Revelation is the only book of prophecy in the New Testament. It tells of the final victory of Jesus and His people. Its purpose is to encourage you to keep living as a Christian should live until the end of time.

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

39 BOOKS

Law

Genesis: Records the beginning of the universe, man, the Sabbath, marriage, sin, sacrifice, nations, and government and key men of God like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

Exodus: Details how Israel became a nation with Moses as leader. Israel is delivered from bondage in Egypt and travels to Mt. Sinai where the law of God is given.

Leviticus: This book was a manual of worship for Israel. It provides instruction to the religious leaders and explains how a sinful people can approach a righteous God. It relates to the coming of Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Numbers: Records Israel's 40 years of wandering in the wilderness which was a result of disobedience to God. The title of the book is from two numberings (population censuses) taken during the long journey.

Deuteronomy: Records the final days of Moses' life and reviews the laws given in Exodus and Leviticus.

History

Joshua: Details how Joshua, the successor of Moses, led the people of Israel into the Promised Land of Canaan. It records the military campaigns and the division of the land among the people.

Judges: Israel turned away from God after Joshua's death. This book records the sad story of their repeated sins and the judges God raised up to deliver them from enemy forces.

Ruth: The story of Ruth, a woman of the Gentile nation of Moab, who chose to serve the God of Israel. She became the great grandmother of David.

I Samuel: This book centers on three persons: Samuel who was the last of the judges of Israel; Saul, the first king of Israel; and David who succeeded Saul as king.

II Samuel: The glorious 40 year reign of King David is recorded in this book.

I Kings: King Solomon's reign and the kings of the divided kingdom through the reigns of Ahab in the north and Jehoshaphat in the south are the subjects of this book.

II Kings: The final decline of Israel and Judah is recalled in this book. God's people fell into deep sin.

I Chronicles: The reign of David and preparations for building the temple are recorded here.

II Chronicles: This book continues Israel's history through Solomon's reign with focus on the southern kingdom. It closes with the decree of Cyrus which permitted the return of the people from Babylon to Jerusalem.

Ezra: The return of the Jews from Babylonian captivity is detailed.

Nehemiah: The rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls under the direction of Nehemiah is recalled by this book. The project was begun about 14 years after Ezra's return with the people.

Esther: God's deliverance of the Jews through Esther and Mordecai is the subject of this book.

Poetry

Job: This book is the story of Job, a man who lived around the time of Abraham. The theme is the question of why righteous men suffer.

Psalms: The prayer and praise book of the Bible.

Proverbs: Divine wisdom for practical problems of everyday life.

Ecclesiastes: A discussion of the futility of life apart from God.

Song Of Solomon: The romance of Solomon and his Shulamite bride. The story represents God's love for Israel and of Christ for the church.

Prophecy

Isaiah: Warns of coming judgment against Judah because of their sin against God.

Jeremiah: Written during the later decline and fall of Judah. Told of the coming judgment and urged surrender to Nebuchadnezzar.

Lamentations: Jeremiah's lament (expression of sorrow) over the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon.

Ezekiel: Warns first of Jerusalem's impending fall and then foretells its future restoration.

Daniel: The prophet Daniel was captured during the early siege of Judah and taken to Babylon.

Hosea: Theme of this book is Israel's unfaithfulness, their punishment, and restoration by God.

Joel: Tells of the plagues which foreshadowed future judgment.

Amos: During a period of material prosperity but moral decay, Amos warned Israel and surrounding nations of God's future judgment on their sin.

Obadiah: God's judgment against Edom, an evil nation located south of the Dead Sea.

Jonah: The story of the prophet Jonah who preached repentance in Ninevah, capitol of the Assyrian empire. The book reveals God's love and plan of repentance for the Gentiles.

Micah: Another prophecy against Israel's sin. Foretells the birthplace of Jesus 700 years before the event happened.

Nahum: Tells of the impending destruction of Ninevah which had been spared some 150 years earlier through Jonah's preaching.

Habakkuk: Reveals God's plan to punish a sinful nation by an even more sinful one. Teaches that "the just shall live by faith."

Zephaniah: Judgment and restoration of Judah.

Haggai: Urges the Jews to rebuild the temple after a 15 year delay due to enemy resistance.

Zechariah: Further urging to complete the temple and renew spiritual commitment. Foretells Christ's first and second comings.

Malachi: Warns against spiritual shallowness and foretells the coming of John the Baptist and Jesus.

NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

27 BOOKS

Gospels

Matthew: Emphasizes Jesus Christ as King and was directed especially to the Jews.

Mark: Emphasizes Jesus Christ as the Servant of God and was directed especially to the Romans.

Luke: Presents Jesus Christ as the "Son of Man," the perfect man and Savior of imperfect men.

John: Presents Jesus in His position as the Son of God.

History

Acts: Records the early growth of Christianity from the time of Christ's return to Heaven through Paul's imprisonment in Rome.

Letters

Romans: A presentation of the Gospel which stresses salvation by faith alone.

I Corinthians: Written to correct errors of Christian conduct in the local church.

II Corinthians: Speaks of the true ministry of the Gospel, stewardship, and Paul's apostolic authority.

Galatians: Deals with the error of mixing law and faith. The theme is justification by faith alone.

Ephesians: Encourages believers regarding their position in Christ.

Philippians: Emphasizes the joy of Christian unity.

Colossians: Deals with the error of "Gnosticism," a false teaching which denied Jesus was truly Son of God and Son of Man. The book also emphasizes Jesus as head of the Church.

I Thessalonians: Counsel in Christian living and emphasis on the return of Jesus.

II Thessalonians: Further instruction on the Lord's return and how knowledge of this should affect everyday life.

I Timothy: Stresses sound doctrine, orderly church government, and principles to guide the church in the years to come.

II Timothy: Describes the true servant of Jesus Christ. It also warns of the apostasy (spiritual decline) which had already started. It presents the Word of God as the remedy to correct all error.

Titus: Paul's letter to a young minister named Titus who was serving God on the island of Crete. Doctrine and a Godly life are stressed.

Philemon: Paul's intercession for a runaway slave of a wealthy Colossian Christian. It illustrates the intercession of Jesus on the behalf of believers who were once slaves to sin.

Hebrews: Explains the superiority of Christianity over Judaism. Presents Jesus as the Great High Priest and the mediator between God and man.

James: Teaches that true faith is evidenced by works, although salvation is by faith alone.

I Peter: A letter of comfort and encouragement to believers, especially those suffering spiritual attacks from outside the church through unbelievers.

II Peter: A warning against spiritual attacks from within. For example, false teachers who had already "crept" into the Church.

I John: Written to combat Gnosticism which denied Christ's position as Son of God and Son of Man. The book emphasizes fellowship and love among believers and assures true believers of eternal life.

II John: Warns against any compromise with doctrinal error and emphasizes that the truth must be guarded in love.

III John: Warns of the sin of refusing fellowship with those who are true believers.

Jude: Another warning against apostasy and false doctrine. The theme is similar to that of II Peter.

Prophecy

Revelation: Tells of the final events of world history. It tells of the things which were, are, and which will be in the future plan of God.

VERSIONS & TRANSLATIONS

The Bible was originally written in three languages. Most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew except for parts of the books of Daniel and Nehemiah which were written in Aramaic. The New Testament was written in Greek.

None of the original manuscripts of the Bible are now in existence. Some good manuscripts exist which are copies of the original. Versions are translations of these copies of the original manuscripts. From early times men saw the necessity of translating the Bible so everyone could read it in their own language.

No translation is exact because no two languages are exactly alike. Some words used in the Bible do not even exist in different languages. For example, there is a tribe of Indians in Ecuador, South America, called the Auca Indians. When missionaries first contacted them, these Indians did not know how to read or write. There were no words in their language "writing" or "book."

The Auca Indians did have a custom of carving identification marks on their property. Since there were no words in their language for scriptures, writing, or book, when the Bible was translated for them it was called "God's Carving." This identified it as something belonging to God. This is just one example of the difficulties in translating the Bible into various languages.

There are many different versions of the Bible. The word "version" means a Bible written in a language different from those in which God's Word was originally written. There are two main types of versions of the Bible: Translations and paraphrases.

A translation is an effort to express what the Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic words actually say. It gives as nearly as possible a literal word by word translation. Extra words are inserted only when it is necessary in order for the reader to understand the meaning.

A paraphrase does not attempt to translate word for word. It translates thought by thought. A paraphrase is a restatement of the meaning of a passage. Paraphrase versions are easier to read and understand because they are written in modern vocabulary and grammar, but they are not an exact translation of God's Word.

Several versions of the Bible come in what are called "red letter editions." In red letter editions of the Bible the words of Jesus are printed in red. The rest of the text of the Bible is printed in black ink.