

FROM CHRISTIAN HISTORY INSTITUTE

Discovering *the* Bible

**A simple introduction to the Bible,
what it is, how we got it, and how to use it**



The adventure that lasts a lifetime!

Welcome to the Adventure!

Your discovery of the Bible could be an adventure that lasts your whole lifetime! Sound ridiculous? Maybe, but there is an incredibly long line of people stretching for thousands of years who would insist it is true. Stop and think. Long, long before the world knew anything of television, radio, CDs, airplanes, automobiles, electricity, long before the world ever heard of Coca Cola, IBM, SONY, or microwave ovens, a book that later became known as “The Bible” was written that would be like none other. This book was even finished centuries before printing was available to mass produce books, and in those earlier centuries every copy of this book had to be done by hand. In every generation since it was written, it has been revered and looked to as a source of understanding our world, our humanity, our relationships, our reason for existence. Accept the possibility that the best things in our Western world, a world that slowly and painfully emerged from barbarism to an advanced civilization, emerged largely from the inspiration provided by the Bible. It played a central role in the formation of our culture. But now the flowers of that civilization, as someone put it, are cut off from the roots and are already beginning to wilt in the vase. Look at the solutions and cures that are typically offered. Do they give you much hope? Might it be that the way forward is to go back to the path we drifted from, to recover our roots, to rediscover the Bible?

What Kind of Book is This Anyway?



The Golden Gate in Jerusalem

The Bible deals with life and history with real people and specific places. This was the most important gate to Jerusalem in Jesus' time as the entrance to the holy place of the temple. Christians proclaimed Jesus would return and enter Jerusalem through this gate. So, Moslem leader Saladin had it sealed in 1187. As you can see, it is still sealed.

The Bible is often thought of as a “Holy Book.” Various religions have their “Holy Books.” Often these are reported as “revelations” coming through various means such as visions, dreams, hearing directly from God, or an angel. But the origin of the Bible is accounted for in a quite different way. The Bible is rooted and grounded in history. The Bible came from the experience of specific people, in identifiable places, at particular times. The Bible deals with the meaning of human life on this planet from within the stories of people who lived on this planet. So it is not a “Holy Book” in the sense of an otherworldly esoteric philosophy. It is “holy” in the sense that it represents the interaction of God and people in our world in the midst of everyday life.

First—take the quiz

Before reading further, for a little fun and to check what awareness you might already have of the Bible, go now to page 31 and take the little quiz there. Then come back.



What to Look For

Contents



Part I:

General Overview

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What is this book that is like none other? It has shaped our civilization and our language. It has generated heated controversy. It speaks to the small child yet challenges the greatest intellects. It comes from a small part of the world and introduces a new view of history.



Part II:

The Old Testament

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The Hebrew scriptures were far more than ancient writings. They are still revered today as a love letter from God. What are they about? How were they collected? How were they so amazingly and accurately preserved?



Part III:

The New Testament

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It centers on one like none other in all of human history. It builds directly on the Hebrew scriptures. What is it about? Can we possibly still have the actual words of Jesus? How was the New Testament gathered and confirmed?



Part IV:

Preservation, Circulation and Influence

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It survived violent attempts to destroy. It took many forms and was expressed through various art forms. It was preserved over centuries. It is the most translated and circulated book ever, and over the ages it has produced amazing results.

Based on the four-part video curriculum series, *Discovering the Bible*.

What the Bible Deals With

The basic questions we all face, such as ...



What to think of ourselves



How to deal with guilt and fear



How we are to relate to nature



How we are to treat each other



How God reaches down to us



How we can find God

Part I: General Overview

A Book Like None Other



The world's all-time best seller

One of the writers of the Bible said, "Of making many books there is no end" (Ecclesiastes 12:12). An infinitesimally small number of books published rise up above their day and age and are considered worth preserving. Some become recognized as classics. But even among the classics the Bible stands out as incomparable. The Bible is the most circulated book in the history of the world. It's been this way since the innovation of the Gutenberg press in the 1450's when the Bible in Latin was the first large book to be printed by moveable type. Ever since, year after year, more copies of the Bible are printed and circulated than any other book. For the most recent year over 60 million complete Bibles, over 90 million New Testaments, and over 1½ billion scripture sections were published in over 2,000 languages. The press runs keep growing every year.



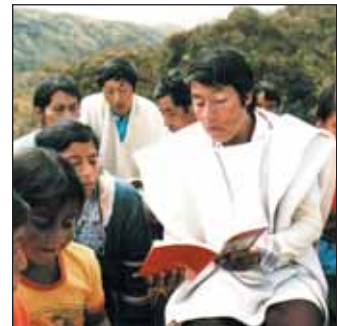
Gutenberg Press

It shaped our world and language

The Bible has had a singular role in shaping our Western world. Our language is laden with Biblical imagery that have become embedded in our cultural consciousness. For example, ...*The blind leading the blind, ...Turn the other cheek, ...Love your enemies, ...A "Good Samaritan," ...Go the extra mile, ...Separate the sheep from the goats, ...Our daily bread, ...For everything a time and season, ...The apple of my eye.*

The world's most translated book

The Bible has been translated into more languages than any other work ever written. There are now translations in more than 2,000 languages. Today literally thousands of dedicated men and women linguists pour out their lives to provide the Bible into every active language group on the face of the earth. Often they provide the first written version of oral languages.



Paez Indians in Colombia examine a Bible translated in their own language.

And a Most Controversial Book

Though the Bible may exceed all the rest in circulation, it also leads in the controversy that it generates. The Bible has always provoked heated debate, drawing passionate reactions from some of the most notable thinkers and leaders across the ages. The Bible will continue to have a major place in our society and the controversy is sure to continue.

A



B



C



D



Some love it

A Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919)

A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education.

B Horace Greeley (1811-1872)

It is impossible to mentally or socially enslave a Bible-reading people.

C Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated through this book...All things desirable to men are contained in the Bible.

D Emmanuel Kant (1724-1804)

The Bible is the greatest benefit which the human race has ever experienced.

Some hate it

E Voltaire (1694-1778)

If we would destroy the Christian religion, we must first of all destroy man's belief in the Bible.

F Robert Ingersoll (1833-1899)

The inspiration of the Bible depends upon the ignorance of the gentleman who reads it.

G Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

One does well to put on gloves when reading the New Testament...everything in it is cowardice and self-deception.

H Thomas Paine (1737-1809)

...It would be more consistent that we call it the work of a demon than the word of God. It is a history of wickedness that has served to corrupt and brutalize mankind.

E



F



G



H



A Book for the Greatest Intellectuals

...and yet even for the small child



More books have been written about the Bible than any other subject, and the single person about whom more books have been written than anyone else comes from the Bible. It is Jesus. Over the centuries brilliant scholars have spent entire lifetimes trying to analyze and understand even small portions of the Bible. Yet the key sections of the Bible even small children in Sunday Schools are able to grasp.

I heard one time the Bible being compared to a pool of water: A pool that in some parts is so shallow that a child can go wading, but a pool also that is so deep in other places that an elephant can go swimming there. Well, the Bible is a wonderful book that contains passages which in some cases are very deep and profound. Yet, in general the Bible as a whole is simple enough for anyone who is untutored to read it and understand what God's will and way would be for that person.

Noted New Testament scholar, Dr. Bruce Metzger



Dr. Metzger



Washington takes oath of office.

Stop and think of this

Why is it that the Bible has been used, and only the Bible, for the swearing in of Presidents going all the way back to George Washington? Why is it the Bible that witnesses place their hand upon in promising to tell the “truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God” before giving testimony in court?

What does “Bible” mean?

The word probably comes from the port of Byblos in Lebanon. Byblos was known to be an important place for the shipment of papyrus. “Byblos” in the old Greek language originally meant the inner bark of the papyrus plant. Papyrus was used for paper in the ancient world. We get the word paper from papyrus. It’s as simple as that. “Bible” simply refers to “book,” and what we think of as the Bible wasn’t even called the Bible until about the 4th century AD.

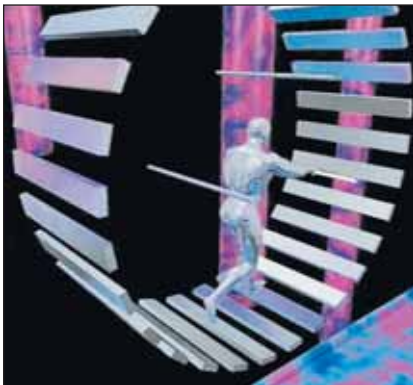
The World of the Bible



In this shot from NASA taken over the Nile River, you see the Mediterranean Sea in the center, the Nile Delta in the lower center, the strait international boundary between Israel and Egypt, where the coastline angles, and Asia Minor. This is the world where most Biblical events took place and where the Israelite nation and the Christian church were born and grew.

The Bible, for the most part, centers on a small part of the world—seen here from space—with the primary events taking place in the small land of Israel. Israel is roughly the same in size as the state of New Jersey. You can readily see why this region has always been a kind of crossroads of the world. Here Africa, Asia, and Europe meet. This is where most of the Bible was written and where most of the Biblical events happened. The focal point of the lands of the Bible, the small city of Jerusalem, is sacred today to Jews, Christians, and Moslems. This city is mentioned 656 times in the Bible. Over the centuries it has been destroyed 17 times, and 18 times has been rebuilt.

A Treadmill or a Track?



The Bible's view of what history is differs markedly from the typical views that prevailed. In Bible times it was common to think of the world as an endless cycle, tied to nature and the seasons, or a "wheel of unending recurrences," as the Greeks put it. Whereas the Bible's view is progressive or linear, with history having a purpose, and the world moving forward to a goal.



It's Not Really a Book, But a Little Library of Many Books

There are two major sections:

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy
Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1, 2 Samuel
1, 2 Kings
1, 2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther
Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon
Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

The Old Testament consists of 39 Books. The Hebrew Bible has 24 books, but those 24 books correspond exactly to the 39 books in Christian Bibles. The difference is that the Hebrew Bible combines 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles and Ezra & Nehemiah into single books, and counts the last 12 or “Minor Prophets” as one. The Old Testament was written over a very long time. It took at least a thousand years, from 1400-400 BC, and no doubt considerably more.



THE NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John
Acts of the Apostles
Romans
1, 2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
1, 2 Thessalonians
1, 2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
1, 2 Peter
1, 2 and 3 John
Jude
Revelation

There are 27 New Testament books. The New Testament was written over a much shorter time than it took to write the Old Testament. The New was written over a period of about 50 years from probably about 45 to 95 AD.



A word about terminology—“Old” and “New” can be misleading

In our novelty crazed culture we often think of what is “old” as obsolete. It would have perhaps been clearer if the parts of the Bible were called the “first” and “second” testaments, or “earlier” and “later.” It is becoming more common today to refer to the “Hebrew Scriptures” and the “Christian Scriptures” instead of calling them the “Old” and “New” Testaments.

Some Bibles Have More Books— The Apocrypha or Deuterocanonicals

Tobit
Judith
Esther (or the rest of)
Wisdom
Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)
Baruch
Song of the Three Holy Children
History of Susanna
Bel and the Dragon
1, 2 Esdras
Letter of Jeremiah (Baruch chap. 6)
Prayer of Manasseh
Psalms 151
1-4 Maccabees

There is an additional section in Roman Catholic and Orthodox Bibles usually called the Apocrypha, or Deuterocanonicals books (meaning a second canon). Some Protestant Bibles also include them as valuable for edification but not as authoritative Scripture. These books were written between 300 BC and 50 AD and provide most valuable information and insight on the life and trials of the Jewish people between the testaments. The events covered in the Old Testament ended at about 400 BC. The New Testament writings began in the 40's AD. Thus, the Apocrypha provides an important bridge between the two testaments.



Here are two sample selections from the Apocryphal Books.

Some practical wisdom from Sirach

Better off poor, healthy and fit than rich and afflicted in body. Health and fitness are better than any gold and a robust body than countless riches. There is no wealth better than health in body, and no gladness above joy of heart...Do not give yourself over to sorrow and do not distress yourself deliberately. A joyful heart is life itself, and rejoicing lengthens one's life span...Jealousy and anger shorten life and anxiety brings on premature old age. Those who are cheerful and merry at table will benefit from their food...How ample a little is for the well-disciplined person...Healthy sleep depends on moderate eating. From Sirach, Chapter 30

A savage ruler who tried to destroy the Jewish people and their book



Antiochus Epiphanes

Syrian King Antiochus IV Epiphanes, nicknamed “the madman,” tried to impose Hellenism on the Jewish people. He desecrated their temple and carried on a merciless persecution. The Jews revolted and the Maccabean Wars resulted.

Then the king wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people and that all should give up their particular customs...He directed them to follow customs strange to the land...They were to make themselves abominable by everything unclean and profane, so that they would forget the law...The books of the law that they found they tore to pieces and burned with fire. Anyone found possessing the book of the covenant, or anyone who adhered to the law was condemned to death by the decree of the king...But many in Israel stood firm and were resolved in their hearts not to eat unclean food. They chose to die rather than to be defiled by food or to profane the holy covenant; and they did die. 1 Maccabees chapter 1

Part II: The Old Testament

The Old Testament is revered by Jews

The Hebrew scriptures decisively shaped the living memory and identity of a unique people. They are revered as writings from antiquity, yet treasured even today as an ever living and unceasingly relevant word.

To grasp what the Hebrew Scriptures are about, think of them as revolving around some key concepts, which for simplicity we will summarize with words beginning with the letter “P.” They have to do with:

Providence—The Hebrew Scriptures manifest a constant awareness that the God who created all is involved with His creation and active in human history.

People—The people who descended from the great patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—are chosen and set apart by God for unique service in, to, and for the world.

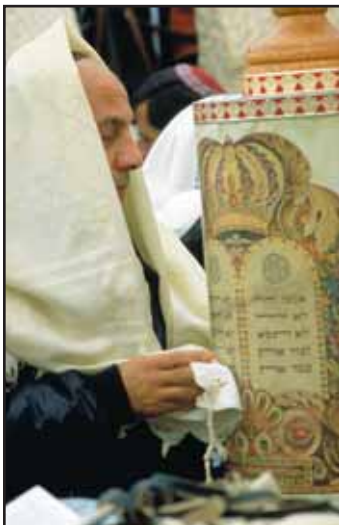
Place—The land of Israel promised to this people by God if they would faithfully follow Him.

Promise—This people and God were united by a covenant, or agreement, that God would be with them, guide them, bless them, if they would follow His ways.

Prophecy—Warnings against injustice, idolatry, and social evil, and prophecy predicting future events, including the coming of a Messiah to save and deliver.

A love letter from God

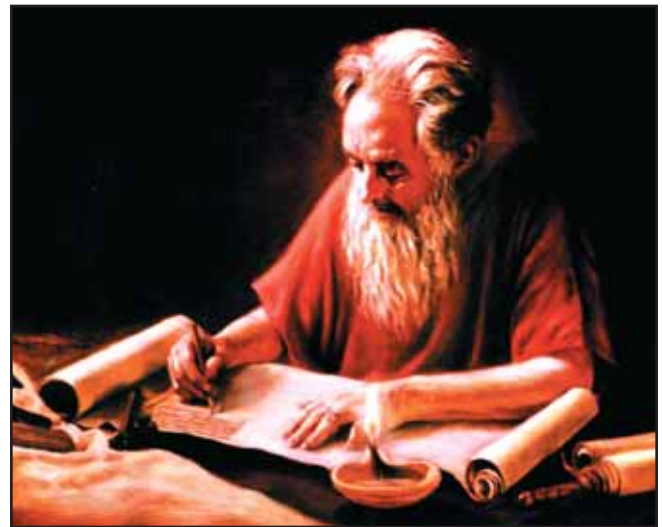
I read the Torah as Jews have read it and loved it for centuries. For example, I can tell you what is the middle word in the Torah. I can tell you what is the middle letter in the Torah. Over the generations Jewish scholars have read the Torah not as a novel to see how it ends, but as a love letter. For instance, ‘Why did he use this word instead of that word?’ ‘Why is there a space here?’ ‘Why a comma here instead of a period?’



That’s the way you read a love letter and wonder, ‘What did he or she mean by this word?’ We Jews have seen the Torah as not just a book of stories or law codes, but as a love letter from God.

Comment by Rabbi Harold Kushner on VISN TV

A man in present-day Jerusalem with an ancient scroll



Artist’s conception of Moses writing Torah.

At the end of his life, Moses admonished his people:

*Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. **They are not just idle words for you. They are your life.***

Deuteronomy 32:46-47

The Old Testament Books

LAW

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

HISTORY

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 and 2 Samuel
1 and 2 Kings
1 and 2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

WISDOM

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon

PROPHETS

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel

MINOR (OR SHORTER) PROPHETS

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

The first five books are known as **the Law** or *Torah* or *Pentateuch*. The first, Genesis, contains the account of Adam and Eve, Noah and the Flood, and the calling of Abraham to found a great people. Abraham's descendants go to Egypt to escape famine. They are later enslaved, and Exodus through Deuteronomy tells the story of their deliverance under Moses and the wandering in the wilderness in preparation to enter the promised land. Included are the giving of the Ten Commandments and the various ritual and communal laws given to guide Israel.

After the death of Moses the Jews were lead by Joshua, and then by various judges, as related in the books of those names. The people wanted a king, and the other **historical** books give accounts of the kingdom in Israel through Saul, David, Solomon, then the division of the land into two kingdoms. The story continues with the capture of the two kingdoms, the North by Assyria in 721 BC, the South by Babylon in 586 BC. Ezra and Nehemiah tell of the return after captivity to rebuild the temple and wall around Jerusalem.

The **wisdom** books supply us with the instructive story of Job, an exploration on the meaning of human suffering, the beauty and inspiration of a prayer and hymn book—the Psalms, and the down to earth practical wisdom of Proverbs. Then there is the earthly wisdom and analysis of Ecclesiastes and the rapturous love epic in Song of Solomon.

The **prophets** speak to the nation and interpret God's dealings with His people. They warn against idolatry, declare judgment on the people when they depart from God's ways, but they also show the love and compassion of God to forgive, call His people back, establish a new covenant, send a promised Messiah and ultimately fulfill the Divine purposes for the world.

The **minor prophets** are called minor not because they are unimportant but because they are briefer books. They are also known as "The Twelve." These various writers continue the tradition of judgment and comfort. They contain some of the most piercing social criticism ever written. The Jews are continually warned of the punishments for infidelity to God's ways, and the faithfulness of God to restore his people in spite of their sins. Within the prophetic books there are many accounts of the steep price these spokesmen paid for their bold and courageous pronouncements. As you might guess, their message was often rejected and the prophets themselves attacked.

Gathering the Collection



The Old Testament collection was written over many centuries as we have noted. Scholars observe that there were oral traditions as well as written accounts. Stories were told over and over, detail by detail, when the covenant people gathered around their campfires. And the stories were preserved on parchment, or animal skins, so the account of God's dealing with his people would never be forgotten. The parchments were rolled up into scrolls. Over the centuries more scrolls

were written and added to the collection. Some were recognized as having special importance and came to be regarded as sacred text or holy scripture.

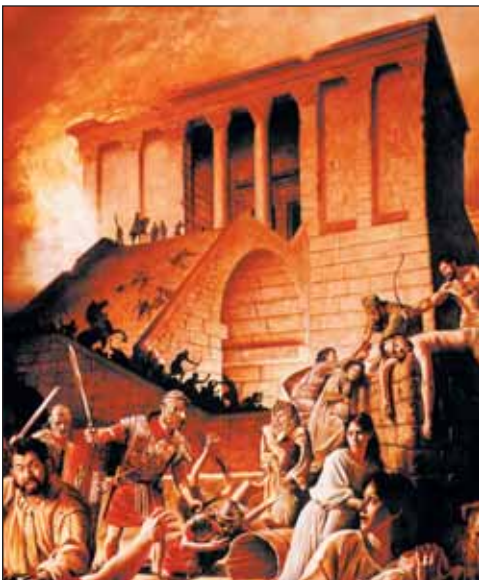
Of course, none of the original scroll writings has been preserved. Scrolls would wear out and were given an honored burial. But before they wore out, copies would be made and then copies of copies.

Inasmuch as the books were written over at least a thousand-year period, there was an ongoing process to gather the collection. The early books of the law were stored in the ark of the tabernacle (Deuteronomy 31:26). The nation reconsecrated its devotion to the sacred writings at different times (II Kings 23:1-3, Nehemiah 8:1ff).

By the time of Jesus it seems that there was general agreement on what constituted the recognized collection of sacred scrolls for the Jewish people. They are summed up in Jesus' reference to the three main sections of the Hebrew scriptures when He noted that "Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the *Law* of Moses, the *Prophets* and the *Psalms*." Luke 24:44

A major tragedy in the life of the Jewish nation occurred in 70 AD when the Jewish temple, the center of Jewish religious life, was destroyed by the Romans under Titus Livy. It is commonly thought that at a gathering of rabbis

in the city of Jamnia in 90 AD there was a re-affirmation and confirmation of what fully and finally constituted the Hebrew scriptures.



Artist's depiction of destruction of temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD

The Jewish historian Josephus, writing in the early 90's AD in his *Against Apion*, observed: *For we have not countless books among us, disagreeing and contradicting one another but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine...and how firmly we have given credit to these books of our nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one hath been so bold as either to add anything to them, to take anything from them, or to make any change in them, but it has become natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, to esteem these books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and if occasion be, willingly to die for them.*

An Amazingly Reliable Preservation

Are the copies of the Old Testament writings we have today anything like what was originally written down so long ago? Quite amazingly, the answer is yes. For the most part we can be confident that what we have today is nearly identical to the ancient copies. We back that up by drawing your attention to the scribes and the scrolls.

The Scribes

The copies of the scrolls of Hebrew scripture were made by a special group known as scribes. Israelite scribes learned their craft as a kind of holy profession in family-like guilds as is attested in the Bible that mentions “*Clans of Scribes* who inhabit Jabez” I Chronicles 2:55.

The Hebrew word for scribe is *sofer*. Its root meaning is “to count.” And scribes indeed were careful counters making sure every word and letter were accounted for. They worked under very strict conditions and regulations. They went about their work with a seriousness many would consider almost fanatical today.

For example, the Jewish Masoretic scribes, who made hand written copies of the Bible worked under rules designed to insure utmost accuracy.

- No word or letter could be written from memory (the scribe had to say the word aloud).
- Before writing the sacred name of God, the scribe had to pause and wipe his pen.
- A scroll was discarded if spelling errors were found.
- Perhaps most important—after copying, every single word and every letter was counted to verify accuracy and to be sure they matched the original.
- Before beginning his work, a scribe would cleanse himself in a ritual bath—a vivid evidence of the seriousness and sacredness of the task of writing a scroll. He was going to write the names of God and must do so with proper devotion and ritual purity.



Artist's depiction of scribe copying manuscript



Steps in the remains of an ancient Jewish bath used for ritual purification

The Scrolls



Qumran cave where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found

Then there are the Dead Sea Scrolls. Maybe you have heard the fascinating story of how a Bedouin shepherd boy in 1947 was out with his flock along the cliffs on the northwest side of the Dead Sea.

He thoughtlessly threw a rock into one of the caves.

He heard something break. He investigated and found ancient scrolls stored in large pottery jars.

The lad had accidentally stumbled across the greatest manuscript discovery of modern times. Many of these scrolls date back to before the time of Jesus, and they include copies of sections of every Old Testament book except Esther. There is an almost complete copy of the book of Isaiah. Up until the discovery of the scrolls, the oldest available copies of the Hebrew scriptures dated from around 900 AD. These Dead

Sea scrolls provided Hebrew text that was one thousand years earlier and would show if the text had been corrupted and changed over ten centuries. So it was a priceless opportunity to see if copies done so much later in any way resembled much earlier copies, that were themselves, of course, that much closer to the originals.

So, just how well had the scribes done their job over so many generations? Scholars analyzed and discovered there were some differences. That is not the surprising part.

What is surprising is that there were so few differences and they were primarily on small matters such as minor spelling variations. This is so amazing that it would almost seem impossible. The first ancient Qumran texts led to just thirteen minor yet clarifying alterations in the modern Revised Standard version of the Bible.



Section of scroll of Isaiah from the Dead Sea Scrolls

Part III: The New Testament

The Central Focus on Jesus

...the life, character, and teaching of Christ ...constitute the most fascinating feature in the history of Western man.

Historian Will Durant



Jesus seen as fulfillment of the promises

There are at least fifty predictions in the Old Testament about a coming Messiah, or Savior-Deliverer, that the New Testament writers saw fulfilled in Jesus. Here are just a few.

Old Testament Prediction	New Testament Fulfillment	Subject
Micah 5:2 Isaiah 7:14 Isaiah 35:5-6 Zechariah 11:12	Matthew 2:1 Matthew 1:23 Matthew 9:35 Matthew 26:14-15	Born in Bethlehem Born of a virgin Cure deaf and blind Sold for 30 pieces of silver
Psalms 41:9 Psalm 22:16	Mark 14:17-21 Luke 23:33	Betrayed by a friend Killed amidst criminals

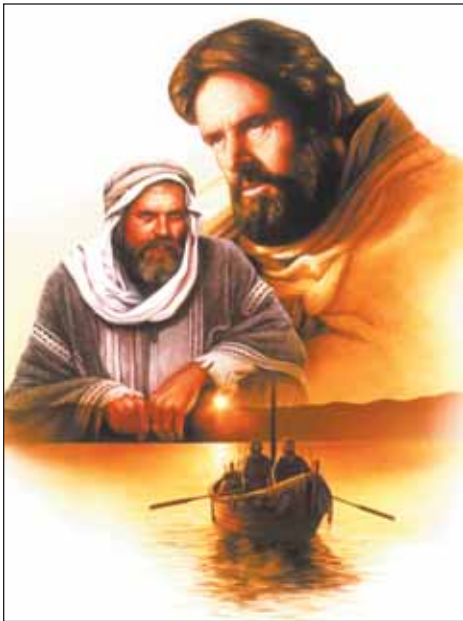
Obviously there would be no New Testament if it were not for Jesus. Jesus left us no writings. His life and ministry, and what He said they meant, were preserved and passed on by His key followers. They spread this message far and wide in spite of horrendous persecution. And their teaching was not set forth as just one more religious option among the dozens circulating in the multi-cultural Roman empire. The Gospel of Christ was boldly announced as God's ultimate word, God's manifestation in human flesh. Christ, they said, came to show us what God was like, how He would save us, and how we should live. For many, then as well as now, the whole idea was absurd. For some it sounds almost too good to be true. For others it is too true to be good. For those who believed, in countless cases—the record is indisputable—this message completely changed their lives.

So Jesus is set forth by the New Testament writers not as just a great religious leader. He is seen as the personal fulfillment of centuries of promise, prophecy, waiting, and hope that reverberate throughout the Hebrew scriptures, a collection whose last book was written some 400 years before Jesus was even born. And the New Testament also clearly and repeatedly speaks of Jesus coming again a second time to establish a kingdom of justice, love, truth and righteousness.

The Jesus of the New Testament is seen offering an invitation to every human being on the face of the earth. The invitation is to repent of our sins, turn to God, accept Christ's death on the cross in our place for our sins, turn to Him in love and faith, make Him central in our lives, and seek His strength to live our lives in a way that will please God.

Other Key Figures in the New Testament

It will help you navigate through the New Testament if you are aware of:

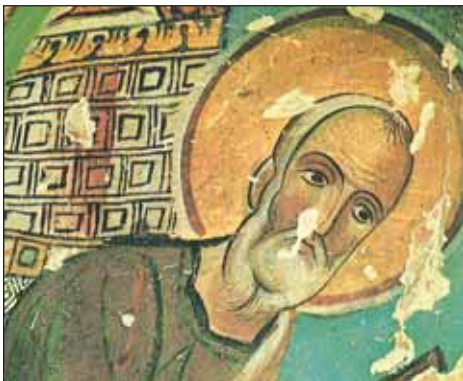


Artist's depiction of Peter and Paul

Peter and Paul

Peter is a prominent figure in the four Gospels, a major player in the expansion of the early church as seen in the Book of Acts. He is also credited with writing two New Testament books and is most probably the source for Mark's gospel. Christians in every generation have empathetically identified with Peter because of his impulsiveness, obvious flaws and outright failures. He could have easily been forgotten as just another loser. But he found forgiveness, renewed faith and bounced back to provide critical leadership for the early church.

Paul was not one of Jesus' direct disciples. In fact, he was a vicious persecutor of the church at first. His dramatic conversion led him to become perhaps the greatest missionary in the history (read it in Acts 9:1-12) of the church. He is credited with writing almost half of all the books of the New Testament, far more than anyone else. Paul's role was critical in interpreting how the Gospel was a universal faith for all peoples, in all places and all times.



Fresco of John from Karanlık Kilise, Göreme, Cappadocia

and John

Credited with writing five of the New Testament books and perhaps the closest friend of Jesus, John was the one Jesus asked, when on the cross, to take care of his mother. John is probably the one apostle who did not die a martyr's death. He lived on into the AD 90's to provide critical leadership for the churches in Asia Minor and other regions. His Gospel gives us the most reflective, personal and intimate account we have of Jesus.

The New is Deeply Rooted in the Old

The New Testament came some 400 years after the Old Testament. But the New is deeply rooted in the Old. The earliest Christian church did not really have a Bible of its own. Its Bible was the Old Testament. But even as the Christian scriptures were composed, they referred repeatedly to the Hebrew scriptures. There are over 220 quotes of the Old in the New, and if we count allusions or references it comes to over 400. 22 of the 27 New Testament books quote or refer to the Old Testament. These references include 58 of the 66 Old Testament books.

What the New Testament Books Are About

GOSPELS

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John

There are four **Gospels**, or narrative accounts of the life of Christ. They cover much overlapping material, but each has a particular perspective. You might think of them as being like four different camera angles as we are used to seeing in television coverage of sporting events. It seems that Matthew concentrated on addressing Jewish concerns; Mark is a briefer, fast action gospel; Luke, a Gentile doctor, wrote more for the Greek mind; John, the last to write, goes into more personal and theological reflection than the others.

HISTORY

Acts of the Apostles

The Acts of the Apostles is a historical account, written by the same Luke who wrote a Gospel, tracing the highlights in the history of the early Christian church from the time that Jesus ascended into heaven until the time of Paul's imprisonment in Rome around the year 60 AD.

PAUL'S LETTERS

Romans
1 and 2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
1 and 2 Thessalonians
1 and 2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon

Paul's Letters were written to various churches and individuals. In many cases these were to address problems that had arisen in churches that he had founded (e.g. I & II Corinthians), or to encourage his close associates (e.g. I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon). Some of his letters were written while he was a prisoner in jail (e.g. Philippians). Paul typically includes doctrinal material that sets forth Christian teachings and then draws practical applications for everyday life. His writing is passionate. The famous chapter of I Corinthians 13 is often cited as the greatest description about love ever written. A persistent underlying theme in Paul's writings is to know Christ and make Him known.

GENERAL LETTERS

Hebrews
James
1 and 2 Peter
1, 2 and 3 John
Jude

The General Letters are the collection of epistles written by others besides Paul, and they too were usually written to churches or groups of Christians to deal with needs, problems or questions that had arisen in the young churches. They encourage the believers to persevere in the faith in spite of many difficulties assailing them. They also warn against deviant teachings that were already creeping into the churches.

APOCALYPSE

Revelation

Revelation was written by John while a prisoner on the island of Patmos. He writes to churches that were under his charge in Asia Minor. His book is full of fascinating visions. He obviously is addressing a then present situation of persecution of Christians in the Roman empire but also looks to the future when God will providentially consummate history.

Do We Have the Actual Words of Jesus?

As we have pointed out, Jesus himself left us no records written in his own hand. Almost all we know about Him came from His immediate followers. They wrote their accounts some years after He left the earth. So can we trust the accounts they wrote about His life? For generations critics charged that we cannot be sure of His actual words and the Gospel accounts are the creation of the early church who selected and shaped material to fit their purposes. Clearly it was in the early church that the Gospels were composed. And surely the writers did select and organize the material to meet the needs of the young churches for reliable accounts about Jesus. But that does not mean the material they selected and organized was made up. In an oral culture why wouldn't the words of Jesus be remembered in detail? If there is one thing we can say for sure about Jesus' words, it is that they were memorable. His words stopped people in their tracks. "No one ever spoke the way this man does," was the conclusion of the temple guards (John 7:46). His style of storytelling and his cryptic summary observations indeed would be hard to forget. And it is important that we remember this:

The amazing memories of Jesus' people



Jewish worshippers at Western Wall in Jerusalem.



Copies of the Old Testament were very expensive in New Testament times. Only very rich people could buy them. For ordinary people books of the Old Testament were only available in the synagogues. Whoever wished to obey the Old Testament in daily life had to memorize important passages. Indeed, the church father Jerome knew in his times Jews who could repeat the five books of Moses, and even more, by heart. The first followers of Jesus were pious Jews. They were used to memorizing long portions of texts. Jesus summarized important points of his teaching in short and memorable sentences. He used the Hebrew poetic device of parallelism. For example, 'Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.' This can be memorized even after just hearing it once. Many of Jesus' teaching summaries were repeated before different audiences on different occasions. So, the disciples accompanying him all the time would have been able to memorize his sayings very well.

**Dr. Rainer Riesner, Lecturer in New Testament,
University of Tübingen, Germany**

Gathering the New Testament

How did the New Testament collection, also called a canon, come together? (Canon means a measuring stick—thus refers to those books that were measured and met the standard.)

Jesus left no written instructions for His followers. The earliest Christians did not have a Bible of their own. Their Bible was the Old Testament. But as time went on and the faith spread, the apostles could not be everywhere. It was necessary to have written and reliable accounts to share with the new churches.



Artist's depiction of Paul dictating one of his letters. Paul's writings were already recognized as authoritative within the New Testament itself, as Peter referred to them as "scripture" (II Peter 3:14-16).

Luke tells us that he wrote his Gospel because many were beginning to write and circulate reports about Jesus and he wanted to provide a carefully researched and accurate record (Luke 1: 1-4). Then as problems arose in the young churches, letters from leaders were written to address those situations. Almost immediately, some came to be recognized as having unusual authority and lasting value.

The gathering of the collection was a remarkable process. The 27 books were written at different times probably over a 50-year period, from different places, to different recipients and for different purposes. Churches that had some individual books would make copies to share with other churches.

Gradually the collections grew in the diverse church centers across the whole Roman empire. Amazingly, the various centers generally came to accept the same books. Most of the books of our present New Testament were recognized and accepted without debate. Some were discussed and questioned before being approved. A few others that were highly respected for their edifying contents were considered but finally not included.

At an official church council held in Carthage in 397 AD, the New Testament books that we have today were formally recognized. But this council did not so much *decide* what books were to be included but rather *recognized* and *confirmed* what was already largely accepted in the churches near and far. In fact, over three decades earlier, in his Easter letter of 367, the great church father Athanasius, bishop in Alexandria, Egypt, listed specifically the exact same 27 books that make up our New Testament today. He added: "These are the fountains of salvation, that they who thirst may be satisfied... Let no one add to these, neither let him take any from these." Thus the official church council ratified and recognized what had already been accepted and approved by churches across the empire.

A Vast Treasury of Texts

The original New Testament writings were all completed before the year 100 AD. That is such a long time ago that is not surprising that none of the original writings is known to exist today. What we have are copies of copies. Can we be confident that these copies are accurate transmissions of what was originally written?

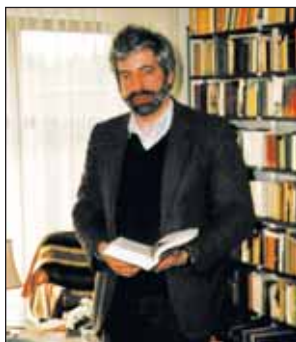
Scholars have unearthed a wealth of manuscripts, copies and fragments that substantiates the reliability of the New Testament writings far beyond that available for any other writings from the ancient world. The wealth of evidence is simply staggering.

Look at the chart below and you will see how the New Testament compares to other famous selections of literature. And new discoveries are being made all the time.

Author	Title	Date Written	Earliest copy available	Interval	# of copies for comparison
Herodotus	History	450 BC	900 AD	1,350 years	8
Caesar	Gallic Wars	50 BC	900 AD	950 years	10
Tacitus	Annals	100 AD	1100 AD	1,000 years	20
Piny	Natural History	100 AD	850 AD	750 years	7
(Various)	New Testament	50-100 AD	250 AD	200 years	5,000+

A Startling New Analysis

A PAPYRUS FRAGMENT FROM MATTHEW FROM THE FIRST GENERATION



Dr. Carsten Peter Thiede

In January, 1995 German scholar Carsten Peter Thiede published an article in an obscure papyrological journal that analyzed three small papyrus fragments from the Gospel of Matthew that are held at Oxford University. Earlier thought to have originated after 200 AD, Dr. Thiede, director of the Institute for Basic Epistemological Research at Paderborn, Germany, (and a production colleague for the video series on which this publication is based) now claims they should be more accurately dated to around 70 AD. This would make them the earliest surviving fragments yet discovered from the New Testament. Using a technique known as comparative paleography, an analysis of handwriting styles from ancient sources, Thiede's claims have attracted worldwide attention and will be debated for years to come. His claim

would confirm that Matthew's gospel was written within the lifetime of contemporaries of Jesus, upsetting cherished assumptions of many Biblical critics. *The London Times* observed that "not since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 has there been such a potentially important breakthrough in biblical scholarship." And don't be surprised if more findings are forthcoming, for Dr. Thiede and other associates are developing new laser scanning microscope procedures that can analyze over a dozen layers of papyrus material and even re-create the imprint of the stylus where the ink is no longer visible.

What the Bible Says About Itself

PROFITING

All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

2 Timothy 3:16

ILLUMINATING

Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Psalms 119:105

PENETRATING

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

GUIDING

How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. ...I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Psalms 119:9, 11

ENDURING

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

Matthew 5:17-18

GOD-SPEAKING

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things.

Hebrews 1:1-2

Part IV: Preservation, Spread, Influence

A Matter of Survival



Diocletian



Medieval Scribe



Illuminated Manuscript

The Bible is so readily available to us now in every conceivable format and in so many versions that we can easily overlook the marvel of how the Bible survived the centuries and the varied attempts to destroy it. We saw earlier (page 10) how the mad tyrant Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 BC decreed that “The books of the law (i.e. Jewish scripture) that they found they tore to pieces and burned with fire. Anyone found possessing the book of the covenant, or anyone who adhered to the law, was condemned to death.”

The Roman emperor Diocletian instituted the “Great Persecution” against Christians in the year 303 AD. He attempted to exterminate the church and decreed that every manuscript of the Bible was to be seized and destroyed. He had the words *extincto nomine Christianorum* (“the name of the Christians having been destroyed”) put over the ashes of a copy of the Bible.

But the Scriptures have obviously long outlasted Diocletian and Antiochus and other rulers who tried to do away with the Bible.

Other obstacles also kept the Bible from the people, including illiteracy, language and cultural barriers. The church in the Middle Ages spread to diverse peoples who spoke different languages. The “barbarian” peoples over several centuries were brought to Christianity. So the scriptures were taught in many different ways. The written word was still basic, and the monasteries carefully attended to the copying of the Bible. They made illuminated manuscript copies, sometimes magnificent and beautiful, reflecting the reverence the monks accorded to the Bible. And the Scriptures were preserved as civilization underwent major transformations. But these did little to feed the souls of the masses of common people.

This was before the advent of printing so every copy was done by hand. A single copy of the Bible could take up to a whole year for a scribe to write. But even if the Bible had been available, most of the population would not have been able to read it. For example in fourteenth and fifteenth century Europe, only ten percent of the population could read and only two percent could read effectively.

The Scripture in Many Forms

So through the Middle Ages the Bible was taught in an amazing variety of ways.



◀ **Sculpture** depicted Biblical people and events.

Pilgrimages took on great importance in the Middle Ages. Then, as now, there was special interest in visiting Jerusalem and the land of Israel to recall Biblical events in their original settings. ▶



◀ **Great artists** spent whole lifetimes painting only Biblical themes.

Stained Glass was used to tell the stories of the Bible. ▶



◀ **Drama** in church services in Medieval Europe told the stories of the Bible. At times many plays would be given on one day in the chancel of the church.

The dramas grew in popularity and moved outside to the **marketplace**. The plays could last up to three days. ▶



The Bible Recovered for the Common People

So even in periods and places of illiteracy, the Bible was imaginatively given to the people utilizing multiple art forms. But over the course of time, the church that was in so many ways a civilizing and spiritual influence, itself fell prey to lust for power and wealth. Corruption increased. Superstition infected and distorted the Gospel. Over and over reform movements emerged from within the church. The most far-reaching movement—the Protestant Reformation—centered on the recovery of the Bible for the daily lives of the people. Key figures included:



JOHN WYCLIFFE

A 14th century Oxford philosopher and priest in England, John Wycliffe was consumed with a burning passion to purify the church. Wycliffe and his followers began the momentous task of

translating the entire Bible into English for the first time. Church authorities, concerned about heresies and misinterpretations, moved against Wycliffe. His movement didn't succeed but he opened the door and inspired others. He is commonly called "The Morningstar of the Reformation."



MARTIN LUTHER

A German monk in the early 1500's, he played one of the most visible roles in bringing the Bible back to the churches. Luther's burden of guilt tortured his soul. He found no comfort in

religious ceremonies. But in his study of scripture Luther discovered the path to salvation and inner peace he so desperately sought. His teachings brought him into conflict with church authorities and eventual split. He translated the Bible into German for his people and inspired churches in many nations to return to the Bible as their teaching authority.



WILLIAM TYNDALE

In 16th-century England, William Tyndale, a brilliant young priest, took up where John Wycliffe left off to bring the Bible to the common people. He could not gain approval from his

church superiors so he worked as an outlaw on-the-run in Europe, translating the Bible into English from the original languages and smuggling them back into England to his countrymen. He was captured, condemned and executed in 1536. But his work became the foundation for our subsequent English Bibles.



MARY JONES

The advent of printing made possible the spreading of the Bible as never before. But it did not happen all at once, but a key surge was prompted by young Mary Jones. As a teenager

she saved her money and walked barefoot 25 miles to buy a Bible of her own. Her example is credited with inspiring the formation of Bible Societies which now provide millions of copies worldwide every year.

It Influenced the Lives that Influenced the World

The Bible has dramatically changed countless lives. This can be seen across history in people at different age levels, in different cultures, diverse races, varied educational levels, and religious backgrounds. When we look at the lives of some of the people who made the greatest contributions of all time to our civilization, we often find that the source of their vision and inspiration came from the pages of the Bible.



Augustine, born in North Africa in the year 354, was a brilliant young student. He chased after the popular philosophies of his age, lived with a woman not his wife, and fathered a child out of wedlock. One day he read the scripture and his life was turned inside out. He devoted himself entirely to God. As the old Roman empire crumbled before barbarian advances, the writings of Augustine, examining the ways of God with the world, became foundational for the Middle Ages, and his writings are still widely read even today.



Francis of Assisi in Italy was the son of a wealthy merchant. One day in church he heard the words from Matthew 10:7-10. These words of Christ in the Bible prompted him to forsake his fortune and take up a life of sacrificial service. His love of God, humanity and nature influences multitudes to our own day.



John Wesley said how his heart was strangely warmed in 1738 by Luther's preface to the New Testament book of Romans. Wesley went on to lead a movement based on the Bible that raised the whole moral climate of England. Some historians said his movement may have saved England from bloody revolution.



Billy Graham, a farm boy from North Carolina, was never head of any church or religion, yet he brought the message of God to more people than any other who ever lived. Why have so many millions from every continent wanted to hear him? Dr. Graham's message has always been based on the Bible.



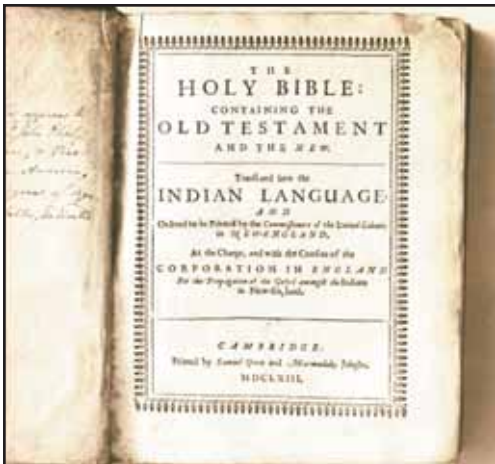
And who has not heard of the work of **Mother Teresa** caring for the most wretched and poor? She said her work is based on the words of Christ in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 24 where Christ said we minister to him when we care for the hungry, the poor, the naked, the sick.

To Every Tongue and People... the Most Translated Book in the World!



From the earliest days believers have hungered for the scriptures in their mother tongues. For centuries Bible translation proceeded slowly. In the chart below you see the number of translations that were in existence at the end of each century from the first century until now.

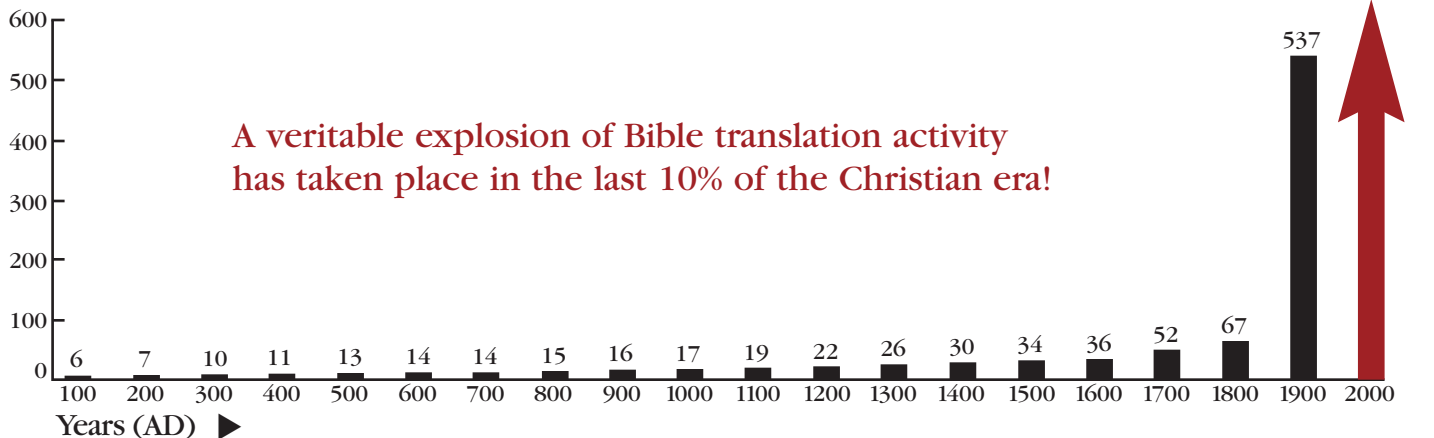
Note especially what has happened in the last two hundred years. The pace of translation activity exploded! Today it is envisioned that within a generation or two the Bible could be translated into every known language on earth. Thousands of gifted linguists work in remote areas of the world right now to achieve that goal. There are at least portions of the Bible now in over 2,000 languages. Exact numbers are not currently available on how many languages there are yet to go and that is now being surveyed world wide, but the day will come when every person on earth who can read will be able to read at least portions of the Bible in their own language.



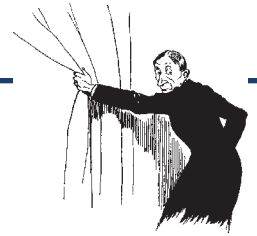
The first Bible printed in America was a translation for the Indians by John Eliot in 1663.

Progress of Bible Translation Over Past 20 Centuries

▼ No. of translations



Where to Begin



Perhaps you have come this far and are saying, “I’d like to explore this remarkable book for myself, but I need some help to get started. Where do I begin?”

It’s not an easy question, because the answer would not necessarily be the same for everyone. But the solution is **not** to just jump in and try to read through from cover to cover as fast as you can.

Here are some practical suggestions

- Develop some kind of plan or goal, along with some schedule of personal commitment. Start with something as simple as “I will plan to read at least fifteen minutes a day from the Bible.” Decide specifically what time you will put aside—first thing in the morning, at your lunch break, at home at night. Find the time when you will be alert and least likely to become distracted or interrupted.

- Put one of the Gospels high on your list. This will give you an acquaintance with the life of Christ. OK, you say, but which one? Select the emphasis that most appeals to you:

Matthew—how Jesus is related to the Old Testament

Mark—the shortest and quickest action-packed overview

Luke—how Jesus related to the poor, disadvantaged, women

John—the personal, most intimate and reflective portrait of Jesus.

- When you are pressed for time, the book of Proverbs can be dipped into for practical wisdom and advice almost at random.

- Almost everyone who has studied the Bible for many years would advise you to make sure you give the book of Psalms a high priority on your reading schedule. The Psalms have been proven over 3000 years to be a key place to camp out a lot. They speak to our inner aspirations, hurts, doubts, joys and thoughts as nothing else. They speak to every age and culture. Take one example. Alcuin, the Christian advisor to the Emperor Charlemagne in the 9th century offered guidance for

his leader’s private devotions and advised him: *In the Psalms, if you look carefully, you will find an intimacy of prayer, such as you could never have discovered without their help; you will find words for an intimate confession of your sins, and for a perfect supplication of the divine mercy. In the Psalms, too, you will find thanksgiving for all that befalls you. In the Psalms you confess your weakness and misery, and thereby call down God’s mercy upon you. You will find every virtue in the Psalms, if God in his mercy will deign to reveal to you their secrets.* Some rather bold advice, wouldn’t you say, for a subordinate to give to the most powerful man in the world in his day? But the Psalms have a way of altering our perspective on who and what is important in life!

Some general guidelines

- Don’t be in a hurry. It is not important how much ground you cover in terms of chapters and pages. Far better to take your time and give full attention to what you can realistically absorb at one sitting
- It is important to reflect. Stop as thoughts and questions occur to you.
- Keep a notebook to record your observations and also your questions.
- Don’t look on your Bible reading as a school course but as an adventure! Here you will continually discover thoughts, insights, and admonitions that help you discern what is the meaning of your life.
- Don’t worry about what you don’t understand. You will have more than you can handle in coping with what is perfectly clear.
- When you run into troublesome, difficult to grasp places, make a note of your question or confusion in your notebook and suspend judgment until you learn more.
- Persevere through the dry spells. They will come and

will pass. As you read, there will be moments of great exaltation and the joy of discovery. At other times the words will seem remote. Overall, the Bible gets better all the time if you ride out those inevitable times when you find it slow going.

- It is important to seek out the original context and intent of the Book you are reading. We have all heard of people who have sought guidance in the Bible by closing their eyes, flipping the pages, putting their finger down and trying to discern guidance from the passage they fall upon. It doesn't usually work that way. The Bible was first given to people in another time and another place. It is vitally important to seek to discover what it meant to them in their time to be able to draw application and implications for what it means to us in our time.
- Come with the right attitude and ask God to give you understanding. Most of all, open your heart to receive what is there. There is a little secret and assumption embedded in the Bible that unless you come open and ready to receive you really won't get it. Read I Corinthians 2:10-14 and see what it says regarding "spiritual discernment."
- Be aware of how important it is to eventually get an overall grasp of the continuity and progression within the Scripture itself. Scripture becomes its own best interpreter and for this you need the larger picture of the collection as a whole. That won't come all at once. In fact it will take years. That is part of the adventure!

Find and Join a Bible Study Group

We have to look upon reading as one of the last preserves of isolated individualism in our world. With the Bible there is a vast difference. While it was intended and always used as a resource for individual use, it was also intended for group experience. The Bible screams from cover to cover for community and assumes that its words will be used as part of gatherings of believers. You will find one of the best ways to get into the Bible is, in addition to your personal reading, to join a Bible study group. The great underreported story of our gen-

eration is the plethora of Bible study groups that meet everywhere you can imagine, from prisons to colleges to fire houses and mothers' groups. There is one near you! If you are interested in trying a group Bible study but don't know where to find one, call a local pastor. If that makes you uncomfortable, then put up a notice on a bulletin board at school, work or a community board in a bank or shopping center. Say, "I am looking for a Bible Study group. Tell me what you offer." Give a post office box for response if you want to remain anonymous. You will get some responses. If you find you cannot locate a group, then write us at the address on the back of this publication and we will find some contacts for you.

A Personal Word

Preparing this publication and the video series upon which it was based has been a supreme joy and privilege and something I wanted to do for years. I studied Greek in college and Hebrew in seminary, the primary original languages in which the Scriptures were written. I had hoped and expected that my life would be spent teaching the Bible. But it did not work out that way, and my vocation has been largely in film and video in the field of Christian history.

Nevertheless, the Bible comes to mean more to me every year. I started taking it seriously when I was 16 years old, and for the past 40 years I have read in and reflected on the Bible just about every single day. Its riches and diversity continue to amaze me. I find even in familiar passages things I never saw before. I now find a magnificent humor in the Bible that previously eluded me, and at other times I am reduced to tears from its pages as I discover in new ways what the Bible says to me and to our world today. If I had to sum up what the Bible is all about it would take just a few words—**From God, To You, With Love.**

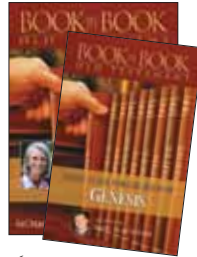
Discovering the Bible and what it reveals is indeed a lifelong adventure! Find out for yourself.

Dr. Ken Curtis, President
Christian History Institute

Some Video Resources to Help You Get Acquainted With the Bible

Book by Book

This series is a magnificent aid to personal or group Bible study. Hosted by pastor Richard Bewes and theologian Paul Blackham of All Soul's Church, London, the Bible is explored one book at a time using the NIV. Internationally renowned guest teachers provide insights. Each DVD includes a guide.



- Genesis** with Anne Graham Lotz, DVD - #501006D
- Exodus** with Joseph Steinberg, DVD - #501005D
- Leviticus** with Joseph Steinberg, DVD - #501268D
- Selected Psalms** with Stephen Lungu, DVD - #501003D
- Jonah** with George Verwer, DVD - #501004D
- John** with Anne Graham Lotz, DVD - #501000D
- Philippians** with Joni Eareckson Tada, DVD - #501101D
- I, II Thessalonians** with Rico Tice, DVD - #500998D
- II Timothy** with Vaughn Roberts, DVD - #501001D
- 1 Peter** with Dr. Don Carson, DVD - #500999D

The Essential Bible Truth Treasury

The Essential Bible Truth Treasury is an invaluable introduction and overview of the basics of biblical faith and life. It includes sixty fifteen-minute programs on ten DVDs. The programs cover the basic and major themes of Scripture through a distinguished worldwide cast of teachers. Accompanying the set is a leatherette-bound companion book and journal, a lifetime keepsake.



The Ten DVDs (six programs on each) are:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Tape 1: The Bible | Tape 6: God's Messengers |
| Tape 2: God | Tape 7: Salvation |
| Tape 3: Jesus Christ | Tape 8: The Christian |
| Tape 4: Holy Spirit | Tape 9: The Church |
| Tape 5: Humanity | Tape 10: The Last Things |

This series is ideal for personal study as well as group study at church or home, as lesson preparation for teachers, and for school and college use. DVD set with journal - #98515D

Jesus, the New Way

This multiple award winner introduces Jesus—who He is and why He came. Noted British scholar, Dr. Tom Wright, uncovers fascinating backgrounds from the first-century world of Jesus and shows how He was indeed a “new way,” both then and now. Wright’s acclaimed scholarship is delivered in a winsome and understandable way, showing how Jesus is the fulfillment of Israel’s ancient hopes and humanity’s deepest dreams. You will see Jesus as you have never seen Him before, in the context of His Jewish and Roman world. Six half-hour programs with comprehensive leader’s guide, reproducible student worksheets, and program scripts. 160 minutes total. DVD with printed materials - #500810D; DVD with PDFs - #500811D.



Peter and Paul This distinguished production captures the vitality, intensity, and humanity of two who were entrusted by Christ with the carrying of the Gospel to all the world. 194 minutes. DVD - #4628D (Also available is a comprehensive 112-page teacher’s guide, #4185)



Paul the Emissary This acclaimed drama on the life of the apostle Paul, filmed in high definition, provides an authentic feel for the world in which Paul lived and the opposition that he continually faced. Free downloadable PDF guide available at www.visionvideo.com. 54 minutes, DVD - #4636D



Galloping through the Gospels Here is a fast-moving exploration of the major sites in the Gospels. David Nunn, a captivating and inimitable host, follows the Gospel drama chronologically, providing illuminating insights into the life of Jesus. 43 minutes, DVD - #4830D



Biblical Drama from The Bible Collection

- Genesis** 93 minutes, DVD - #7459D
- Esther** 91 minutes, DVD - #7455D
- Solomon** 172 minutes, DVD - #74453D
- Jeremiah** 96 minutes, DVD - #7457D
- Abraham** 150 minutes, DVD - #6892D
- Jacob** 94 minutes, DVD - #6894D
- Joseph** 185 minutes, DVD - #6895D
- Moses** 184 minutes, DVD - #6896D
- Samson & Delilah** 200 minutes, DVD - #68972D
- David** 185 minutes, DVD - #68932D
- The Apocalypse** 97 minutes, DVD - #81728D
- Paul the Apostle** 180 minutes, DVD - #81729D



Time Travel Through the Bible An informative and entertaining trip through the Bible hosted by Jonathan Frakes. Part I explores “The Centuries Before Christ” and Part II explores “The World of Jesus and John.” Includes comprehensive study guide. 107 minutes total, DVD - #501072D



The Tabernacle Here is an intriguing walk through the ancient Tabernacle. This meeting place between sinful man and Holy God is seen in stunning 3-D computer-generated detail. Hard-to-visualize Scripture passages come to life in this award-winning program. 28 minutes, DVD - #4791D

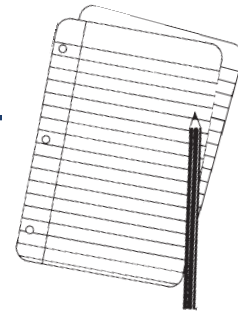


The Seven Churches of Revelation Revealed

Host David Nunn takes us to Turkey for a firsthand visit to the seven cities to which the messages of the Risen Christ were addressed in Revelation 2-3. 40 minutes, DVD - #4792D



A Brief Quiz About the Bible



#1-4 ANSWER TRUE OR FALSE

- ___ 1. At least two books of the Bible were named after women.
- ___ 2. The Bible took a very long time to write, in fact over a thousand years.
- ___ 3. The main writers of the Bible were Protestant pastors.
- ___ 4. Some of the Bible was actually first intended as mail, including some personal letters.
5. Name at least six major characters that appear in the Bible.
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

#6-14 MULTIPLE CHOICE—CHOOSE THE ANSWER THAT BEST FITS

6. Which of the following describes most accurately how the Bible came to be?
- ___ A. A rabbi and a priest got most of it one day in a vision at Rome when they were trapped under a tree during a lightning storm.
- ___ B. During a Jewish worship service in ancient Israel, an angel gave the Bible to the priests who were offering sacrifices.
- ___ C. The Bible primarily came out of the life experiences of the people of Israel and the followers of Jesus.
- ___ D. The Bible was composed by King James of England in thanks for his getting better after serious surgery.
7. If you had to describe the size of the Bible, the closest comparison would be:
- ___ A. About the length of one of Robert Frost's poems
- ___ B. About the size of the sports section of a daily newspaper
- ___ C. About the size of a substantial present day novel
- ___ D. About the size of the Encyclopedia Americana
8. What language(s) was the Bible originally written in?
- ___ A. Latin
- ___ B. Hebrew
- ___ C. English
- ___ D. Greek
- ___ E. Hindi
9. Which most accurately describes what the contents of the Bible deal with?
- ___ A. What denominations are closest to the truth
- ___ B. How to feel religious when you are sad
- ___ C. Our place as humans in the universe, our obligations, and privileges and the meaning of life
- ___ D. How to be a positive thinker even if you are really a loser

10. Which statement is most accurate?
- ___ A. The Bible is a collection of wisdom from most of the nations of the ancient world intended to show that all roads lead to the same God.
- ___ B. The Bible was born primarily within the life and experience of one small nation but intended as a message for all humanity.

11. If any one city can be said to be the primary focus of the Bible it would be:
- ___ A. Rome, Italy
- ___ B. Cairo, Egypt
- ___ C. Jerusalem, Israel
- ___ D. Wittenberg, Germany
- ___ E. Constantinople, Turkey
- ___ F. Calcutta, India
12. Which of the following about Jesus and the Bible is most accurate?
- ___ A. The Bible came before Jesus.
- ___ B. The Bible didn't come until after Jesus.
- ___ C. Some of the Bible came before Jesus and some after Him.
13. One of the best proven values of the Bible is that it:
- ___ A. Shows us which races are the most intelligent.
- ___ B. Shows us how to predict exactly when the world will end.
- ___ C. Teaches us why school prayer is important in public schools.
- ___ D. Reveals the hidden motives of our hearts and minds.
14. How many of the following topics does the Bible deal with? Check each for which there is clear content in the Bible.
- ___ A. The creation of the world
- ___ B. The end of the world
- ___ C. Meaning of life for human beings in the world
- ___ D. Our obligations in exchange for the gift of life
- ___ E. What God is like
- ___ F. How we can find God
- ___ G. How birth control should best be practiced
- ___ H. What age is best to marry
- ___ I. At what month abortions should not be permitted
- ___ J. How to understand astronomy

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ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. True—the Old Testament books of Ruth and Esther. 2. True. 3. False—the Bible was completed 1400 years before there were any "Protestant" pastors. 4. True. 5. There are hundreds, some of the most prominent—Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Isaiah, Jesus, Paul, Peter. 6. C. 7. C. 8. B, D. 9. C. 10. B. 11. C. 12. C. 13. D. 14. A, B, C, D, E, F.

This publication is based on a video series also titled DISCOVERING THE BIBLE, a project of Christian History Institute, produced by Gateway Films in association with EO TV, Holland; ERF TV, Germany; and International Films, England. While this is intended to accompany the video series, it is also designed to stand alone as a handy introduction for those interested in becoming better acquainted with the Bible. This is available in quantity for those wishing additional copies. For information on either the complete video series package or quantities of this publication, contact your distributor or inquire from us at:

Christian History Institute
P. O. Box 540
Worcester, PA 19490-0540

Phone: (610) 584-3500
Fax: (610) 584-6643
E-Mail: info@chitorch.org



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