

The Bible

I. Introduction

The Bible is composed of 66 books. These books are divided into two major divisions: The Old and New Testaments. The Bible has been divided into 1,189 chapters. These chapters have been divided into 31,101 verses. The whole Bible has been translated into over 429 languages. Portions of the Bible have been translated into many other languages. The New Testament is translated into 1,144 languages.

The Bible is probably the most translated, copied and widely distributed book in history. Yet what make this book different than any other book? In this section, we will explore the Bible, its parts and why it is so important for us.

II. Week 1

Bible – Written by Men, Inspired by God

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” II Timothy 3:16-17

There is one author of the Bible and yet there are 40 different authors of the books within the Bible. God is the ultimate author of the Bible but He inspired man to actually use a writing utensil and write the words down. Inspired means “God-breathed”. Repeatedly through God’s Word, we find that God has instructed men to

write what He showed them. For example, “*This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Write in a book all the words I have spoken to you.’*” (Jeremiah 30:2). God instructed Isaiah to write (Isaiah 30:8), He instructed Moses to write (Exodus 34:27) and He instructed John (Revelation 1:11).

These men were faithful and obedient to God. Because they were, we have in our hands today everything that we need to know God and to understand what He wants from us.

If you were asked to write out a story of what God has done in your life, what would be the most important part of that story?

The Bible is Complete

Write out Revelation 22:18-19 in the space below:

When has a teacher told you to write something out?

Were you careful to make sure that you had it right?

What happened if you wrote it down incorrectly?

When God instructed the people who wrote down the Bible, He made sure that they did it right!

The Bible is without Errors

“Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness and Your law is truth.” Psalms 119:142

God is amazing. He managed to coordinate the efforts of some 40 people separated out over some 1500 years of history to write portions of the Bible. The finished work came out exactly as He intended it to. The Bible does not contradict itself nor are there any mistakes! Think of the longest essay you have had to write for school. Was it five pages long? Was it ten pages long? No matter how hard you tried to make it perfect, there is usually something that doesn't come out quite right. A spelling error or a typo can creep in or you wrote something that you did not mean. Yet God supervised the Bible and got it right.

Archeologists digging in Israel continue to find proof of what the Bible says. In the Book of Joshua, it says that

Joshua burned the city. For many years, some “scholars” did not believe that could have been the case. Yet in the past ten years, archeologists have found evidence that the city did indeed burn. It burned so hot that the stones that the city was made of started to crack. The city was completely destroyed, just as it says in the Book of Joshua. God does not lie and His word is true.

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is a complete book that is in agreement with all of its parts. You don't find in the Bible where God changes His mind. In Hebrews 13:8 Jesus is described as being the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. God never changes. He remains the same and we can count on God.

Memory Verse:

II Timothy 3:16-17 “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

III. Week 2

The Bible is How God Communicates

Write out Psalm 119:9-11 in the lines below:

David asks how we can keep pure. What do you think is the way to keep a pure heart?

God's desire is for us to know Him. The Bible communicates God's plan for humanity. He created men to have fellowship with Him. He gave humans the ability to choose to obey or disobey Him knowing that men would choose to disobey. Knowing that we would disobey, He planned ahead and made a way that we could be reunited with Him. The Bible provides all of the information we need to know God and what He desires of us.

Read Hebrews 4:12. How does the Bible show us what He expects from us?

The Bible lets us know what God Expects

“Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.” (James 1:23-25)

Imagine being asked by a friend to play a game. You have never played this game before and don't know the rules. Your friend does not tell you the rules, but only tells you when you have broken one. It would be hard to play the game and do well, wouldn't it? God knows that if He did not tell us what He expects of us, we would have a hard time living like He would want us to.

Throughout the Bible, God tells His people (us) what He wants us to do. We learn about tithing, going to church and all sorts of things. In the Ten Commandments, God provided all of us with a basic set of rules that He expects us to follow. We know through the Bible that we must make a choice – follow God and God alone or live outside of God's will.

Read Exodus 20:1-19. What are five things we can learn from these verses about what God wants?

Given what is said in verse 19, aren't you glad that God communicates to you through His word in a book?

Memory Verse:

Psalms 119:105 "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."

IV. Week 3

Old Testament

The Old Testament is divided into three major sections: History, Prophets and Wisdom books.

The history section begins with the creation of the world (Genesis 1:1) and ends with the people of God receiving permission to return home (II Chronicles 36:23). The story is not just a dry historical account of what happened from the beginning of the earth forward. Instead it is a love story of God wanting to have a relationship with His creation.

Much of the history follows a pattern. The pattern starts with God's people victorious because they are obedient to God. Then the people are lazy and take God for granted. When they take God for granted, bad things begin to happen to them. God punishes them for ignoring Him and being disobedient. Then the people remember God and call out to Him to save them. God remembers His promises to His people and provides a way to save them and make them victorious again.

The second portion of the Old Testament is the Prophets. Prophets are people whom God has called to tell others about God's will. Being a prophet does not always mean that they give predictions on the future. But often that is part of God's message through His prophets. The prophets each had a specific ministry at a specific time yet the message that they gave is just as important for us to understand as it was for God's people 3,000 years ago.

The last section of the Old Testament is the Wisdom books. Some of the wisdom books are Psalms, Proverbs and Job. Psalms is a book of songs and poetry. In many ways, much of the book of Psalms is like getting to look inside of King David's prayer journal. We can see in Psalms that David went through all of the emotions that we have – happiness, sadness, anger and fear. When David felt these things, he cried out to God. Sometimes loudly! And God listened, just as He does with you. Proverbs is a collection of sayings written by King Solomon. They cover just about every part of life. How to handle money, to avoid temptation, how to behave – Proverbs has it all. Job is a moral story to make you think. These are examples of the kinds of books that are Wisdom books.

While there are several parts to the Old Testament, all of it points to the same main story – God loves us and wants us to be with him. Through stories of nations, families and individuals we see God move in the lives of ordinary people, just like us. People who make mistakes, sometimes really big mistakes, yet God still can use even them to do big things.

Take a few minutes and just open your Bible. Where did it open to?

Find the name of one person on that page where your Bible opened. Who is it? _____
Each person mentioned in the Bible is there for a reason. Nothing is in the Bible by accident. From Jabez who is mentioned in 2 verses to David who is mentioned all over the place, each person in the Bible gives us a little extra information about the God we serve.

Memory Verse:

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

V. Week 4

New Testament

The New Testament is divided into the Gospels, the Letters and Revelation.

The Gospels are first hand accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus. While there are a few verses about Jesus being born and a couple on His childhood, most of the Gospels focus on Jesus' ministry, His death and His resurrection from the dead. Through the four views of the life of Jesus, God provided us with everything we need to know. While some details are left out (like what was Jesus' dog's name), we have everything we need. We know why Jesus came, why He had to die and that God loves us so much that He raised Jesus from the dead. Probably the best summary of the gospels is in the verse John 3:16.

The next part of the New Testament is the letters. Once Jesus was raised from the dead, the disciples set about to do what Jesus told them to do.

Read Matthew 28:18-20. What did Jesus tell them to do?

Many of the letters of the New Testament were written by Paul. Now Paul is an interesting character. While Jesus was alive, Paul would have nothing to do with Him. In fact, once Jesus rose from the dead and the disciples went about telling the world about who Jesus is, Paul began to attack them. But after meeting Jesus while traveling, Paul became one of the most enthusiastic evangelists for Jesus that the world has ever seen.

The last book of the New Testament and the Bible itself is Revelation. The book of Revelation is a book of prophecy. Like all books of prophecy, it tells us what God wants from us. In this case, it also give us information on what God is planning to do in the future. Much of what John wrote in Revelation is very similar to what other prophets had seen – especially Daniel. The book deals with ‘end times’. ‘End times’ is a term that means that time period around which Jesus will return back to earth with us and the things that happen just before and after that. That will End the current times and bring in a whole new time with God as the center of everything. And the good news is, with Jesus, we will be there with him!

While some of what is written in Revelation can sound quite scary, the same theme is there. God wants everyone to come to know Him and God is willing to forgive sin. God will use just about anything to get our attention to do so.

Memory Verse:

Memorize all of the books of the New Testament:
Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1
Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians,

Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians,
1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews,
James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude,
Revelation