

What Is The Bible?



All scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness. 2 Timothy 3:16 (NASB)

General Revelation

The greatest mystery in the universe is this world and everything in it came into existence. We believe in cause-and-effect. That is, something is created by something. We can not understand how nothing causes something to come into existence. Science cannot explain the mystery of how the universe could come into existence out of nothing. The wise and serious person eventually realizes that is true. The universe should not exist, nor should our world. So, why does it exist? Romans 1:20-22 gives us the answer,

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools. Romans 1:20-22 (NASB)

This passage teaches that God has revealed Himself through the creation. Our universe and world can only exist by something that caused it to come into existence. The creation screams that there is something beyond this universe. The passage teaches that those who deny that God created the universe are *not* wise but fools. In theology, general revelation refers to God revealing Himself to us through the creation of the world and universe (Psalm 19:1). That is, God has left signs or evidence that He

exists. Those signs are telling the wise person that God does exist. So, what signs has God left to help us discover He exists?

The heavens or the creation. It reveals His attributes.

- What signs has God left that reveals He exists (Acts 14:16-17)? —
He did good. Gave them rains and fruitful seasons.
- According to Romans 2:14-15 what else reveals God exists? —
His moral standard is written in our conscience.
- What does Job 38-39 reveal about our universe? —
God created it.

Specific Revelation

But the creation does not give us specific information about God. The Bible does. The Bible is a unique book. It is the only book that God wrote to teach us about Himself and ourselves. It is like a very long text or email. When it speaks about a topic, it always speaks truth. When it speaks about science, history, or spiritual matters, it always speaks truth. It is unlike any other book ever written. God has put accurate historical data and fulfilled prophecies in the Bible so that we can know it comes from Him. Those are signs that He wrote the book.

So, how has God spoken to us? One way God has spoken to us in the past is in a theophany. A theophany is an Old Testament appearance of God as a person or as an angel (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:9, 11; 16:7-13; Exodus 3:2-4; Deuteronomy 5:4; Judges 6:11-13). God has also spoken to us in other ways. Write down the different ways He has done this according to the following verses.

Dreams, Visions, & Prophecies

- Daniel 2:19, 28 — **Visions**
- Jeremiah 1:4-5, 16-17 — **Prophecies**
- Isaiah 1:1; Ezekiel 1:1; Daniel 8:15; Nahum 1:1 — **Visions**
- Revelation 1:10; 9:17 — **Visions**

Various Signs

- Exodus 3:1-6, 13-15 — **God spoke to Moses**
- Exodus 7 - 13 — **God performed signs and wonders.**
- Exodus 3:1-15 — **God performed signs and wonders.**

Inspiration of the Bible

In addition to appearing as a theophany, and God speaking to us through dreams, visions, miracles, and signs, He has also written the Bible for us to read. That is the message of 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB)

The word “inspired” in this verse comes from a Greek word, *theopneustos*. That word means that all Scripture is “God-breathed.” This may seem strange, but when we talk we expel air through our vocal cords and people hear us. This helps us understand the words contained in the Bible are God’s words. God selected the words and the Holy Spirit moved men to write the various books that are contained in the Bible.

It is amazing that God wants us to know Him. He could have been silent, ignored us, but He did not. God went to great effort to make sure the Bible was written accurately. How did God do this? 2 Peter 1:21 gives us the answer. We are told the Bible was not a creative idea of human minds. Instead the Bible was written by God. That is the message of 2 Timothy 3:16, and 2 Peter 1:21 tells us how He did this. 2 Peter 1:21 says that God the Holy Spirit wrote the Bible by moving human authors to write what He wanted written. The following verses are examples that help us understand 2 Peter 1:21. Therefore, answer the questions below to discover how 2 Peter 1:21 worked.

- According to Acts 4:25 who spoke through King David when he wrote Psalm 2:1-2? This is called dual authorship.

The Holy Spirit

- Acts 28:25-27 gives us another example of how the Bible was written. In this passage, the apostle Paul tells us that there are two authors of Isaiah 6:9-10. What are the names of the two authors?

The Holy Spirit and the prophet Isaiah

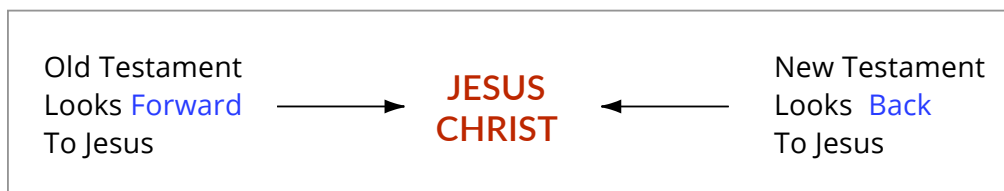
- Even though the prophets wrote the Old Testament books, they did not understand everything they wrote. What did they not understand (1 Peter 1:10-11)?

What the Spirit of Christ or the Holy Spirit was telling them about Christ.

- What do all of these passages reveal about who wrote the Bible?

The Holy Spirit and a human wrote every book in the Bible.

The message is that the Bible is the Word of God. It does not just contain the Word of God; it *is* the Word of God. The central theme of the Bible is Jesus Christ. The Old Testament looks forward to Jesus and the New Testament looks back to Jesus. It also looks forward to His second coming! The New Testament shows that 1) Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Savior who died for us in order to take away our sins. 2) He returned to life after being dead for three days. 3) He is in heaven now, and 4) He is coming again. It is through this One, Jesus, that we can have life. Why did He do this? The answer is that God loves you.



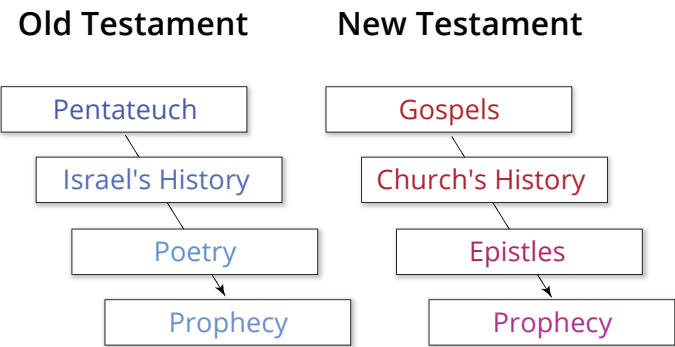
Authority of Scripture

Because God wrote the Bible, it is called the Words of the Lord (Psalm 12:6), Word of God (1 Samuel 9:27), the Law of the Lord (Psalm 19:7), and the Message of Christ (Colossians 3:16). This means the Bible is authoritative since it was written by God. God is the real author of Scripture - both the Old and New Testaments. Consequently, the Bible does not contain errors, contradictions or mistakes. Why is the Bible without any errors? Numbers 23:19 gives us the answer. The answer is found in

the character of God. Write down the answer in this space.

God is not a man that He should lie. That is, God does not lie.

Also, God has given us a test that we can use to determine that the Bible was written by Him. The test is found in Deuteronomy 18:21-22. This passage says that we can know God has spoken through a prophet when the prophecy comes true. The Bible is a very unique book with over 1,800 prophecies recorded in about 8,500 verses. That is about twenty-five percent of the Bible. There are prophecies in both the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament prophets, the New Testament apostles and Jesus Christ all made prophecies about the future. The prophecies that have not been fulfilled already are future ones that look to the future.



The book of Daniel contains over one hundred prophecies. The book was written about 538 B.C. The book contains prophecies about the rise and fall of four great empires: the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires. There are many detailed prophecies in Daniel 11 about the Grecian empire after Alexander the Great died. But the most amazing prophecy in Daniel is a prophecy about the year in which Jesus Christ would die on a cross. Daniel 9:25-27 is that prophecy about Jesus Christ, the Messiah. It prophesied that He would die in the year of A.D. 33. Jesus died on 10 Nisan A.D. 33. Can you imagine that a prophecy given in 530 B.C. could be so accurately fulfilled? Amazingly, Jesus not only died in the week that was prophesied, He also fulfilled a great number of other Old Testament prophecies. The book of Isaiah contains seventeen specific prophecies about Jesus Christ (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; 11:1; 28:16; 29:18; 35:5; 40:1-3; 50:6-7; 53:1, 7-9, 11; 55:3; 62:11). The message is that Jesus came to die so that our sins could be forgiven. Jesus returned to life. That was also prophesied in Ps. 16:10. Today, Jesus is in heaven and plans to return to earth someday. Prophecy is the fingerprint of God. It is the proof the Bible is His book. There are many other prophecies in the Bible which have been fulfilled.

Some years ago a man asked why God does not reveal Himself to the human race so that we can know He exists. He wanted to see God and have proof that He existed. He was asked how often God should do this and he said once was enough. Then everyone would know. Then the man was told that God already had done that. He came in the person of Jesus Christ (John 5:18; 8:58; 10:31-33; 21:25; 1 John 4:14; 2 John 7). God appeared to us long ago so that everyone would know about Him.

Inerrancy of Scripture

So, the Bible provides us specific revelation about God. He wrote the Bible using human authors. He has given a test for determining what He wrote. We can trust what He wrote because He knows everything and He always tells us the truth. He

is not like us; He never lies.

The Bible was written over a period of 1,600 years by God the Holy Spirit and forty human authors. These human authors were kings, prophets, fishermen, priests, peasants, scholars, doctors, rich men and poor. It was written in different places such as in the wilderness, in homes, in king's palaces and in prisons. It was written in different geographic areas such as Asia, Europe and Africa.

The Bible is composed of the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament contains thirty-nine books. The first five books, the Pentateuch, are an introduction to God, angels, our world, man, sin, and the beginning of our world. The next 12 books record the early history of God's workings with Israel from about 1445 B.C. to 400 B.C. It starts with Israel entering Palestine, covers the establishment of the royal line of the Kings, Israel being deported into Babylon as captives, and concludes with Israel back in the land after the seventy years of captivity in Babylon. The five books of poetry start with the oldest book in the Bible, the book of Job. The other books of poetry include Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. The remaining seventeen books are prophetic and include such books as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Jonah. These books are divided into the major and minor prophets. The terms "major" and "minor" refer to the size of the books.

The New Testament starts with four books called the gospels. They are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They record the birth, ministry, death, and return to life of Jesus Christ. The book of Acts which follows is the only historical book in the New Testament. It records the acts of the apostles and the history of the early church. The other twenty-two books are called the epistles and contain the writings of the apostles Paul, Peter, John, and Jesus' brothers named James and Jude. The last book, Revelation, is the only book of prophecy in the New Testament. It records the prophetic events related to the tribulation, the second coming of Christ, the millennial kingdom, and the eternal state. This brings the total of New Testament books to twenty-seven for a grand total of sixty-six books in the Bible.

Canon of Scripture

Now how do we know which books belong in the Old and New Testaments? A quick look at a number of passages in the New Testament reveal that Jesus directly quotes the Old Testament Scriptures as inspired and authoritative (Matthew 21:42; 22:29; 26:54; Luke 16:31; 24:27; Luke 24:44; John 5:39). Some important passages reveal that Jesus referred to one or more of the divisions of the Hebrew Bible, also called the Tanakh. At the time Jesus and the apostles walked this earth, the Old Testament books were called the Scriptures. They were divided into three sections: The Law, The Prophets, and The Writings. Psalms was the largest book in the third section. Now notice how Jesus endorsed the Hebrew Bible as being Scripture. Jesus spoke these words,

But he said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead." Luke 16:31 (NASB)

Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. Luke 24:27 (NASB)

Then in Luke 24:44, Jesus endorsed the entire Old Testament as Scripture. Here is the verse,

Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Luke 24:44 (NASB)

The Hebrew Bible (Tanakh)

The Law	The Prophets	The Writings
Torah (Pentateuch) Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Former Prophets Joshua Judges Samuel (1 & 2) Kings (1 & 2) Latter Prophets Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel The Twelve Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	Poetry Psalms Proverbs Job Five Rolls Song of Songs Ruth Lamentations Esther Ecclesiastes History Daniel Ezra-Nehemiah Chronicles (1 & 2)

Now by studying the chart above, can you explain why we know that Jesus endorsed all of the books of the Protestant Old Testament?

Jesus referred to “The Law,” “The Prophets,” and “The Writings” as Scripture. Psalms in the largest book in “The Writings.”

These passages reveal that Jesus considered the Old Testament books to be written by God and to be authoritative. It is important to know that neither Jesus nor the apostles ever quoted from the Apocrypha or the Pseudepigrapha.

The New Testament and early church history also reveal the apostles determined which books belonged in the New Testament. For example, 2 Peter 3:15-16 reveals that Peter stated Paul wrote Scripture. In turn, Paul indicated that Luke wrote Scripture in 1 Timothy 5:17 when he quoted a sentence from Luke 10:7 as being Scripture. Now, who wrote the gospel of Luke 10:7?

The medical doctor, Luke.

This means that Peter endorsed Paul who endorsed Luke as writing Scripture. This reveals the apostles were reviewing the writings of one another and determining who was writing Scripture and what was Scripture. The writings of the apostles were also distributed among the churches (Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27). The apostle John wrote the last book of the New Testament, the book of Revelation. It is safe to conclude that the books of the New Testament were approved by the apostles as Scripture.

By the end of the first century, the canon or the Bible was complete. The Muratorian Fragment (A.D. 150-170) lists all of the books of the New Testament, except for Matthew, Mark, Hebrews, James, 1-2 Peter and 3 John. The document is called a fragment because portions of the document have been torn off. The well-known biblical scholar Westcott states that the missing books were probably included initially because the document is torn where they should have been listed! By the end

Human Authors of the New Testament

Books	Apostles	Companions	Jesus' Half- Brothers
Matthew	Matthew		
Mark		John Mark	
Luke		Luke	
John	John		
Acts		Luke	
Romans-to-Philemon	Paul		
Hebrews	-	-	-
James			James
1 & 2 Peter	Peter		
1, 2 & 3 John	John		
Jude			Jude
Revelation	John		

of the second century, the early church fathers had quoted from all of the New Testament books. This means that the Bible had already been established by A.D. 200. In the years that followed, the authority of certain books was challenged and church councils were convened to review and verify the contents of our Bible. The Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) is usually pointed to as the council which finally put the debates to rest. But unfortunately, there will always be those who will challenge the authority of various books in the Bible.

Today's Bibles

The original documents were written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. Today's Bibles have been translated from the ancient languages into many modern languages. There are also a large number of speciality Bibles. These Bibles are all based on copies of the original manuscripts, sometimes called autographs, of the sixty-six books of the Bible. The Old Testament was a collection written in Hebrew and Aramaic. Today the Jews call the Old Testament the Tanakh. The Greek version of the Old Testament is called the Septuagint and was written about 280-150 B.C. The Septuagint is abbreviated as LXX. Its Greek words are sometimes used to understand word meanings in the Old and New Testament. The New Testament was written in Greek and Aramaic.

In A.D. 383-405 the Latin Vulgate was created. This is a Latin version of the entire Bible. Since then at least thirty-four different versions of the Bible have been published. Some of the significant versions of the Bibles today are the 1611 King James Version, New American Standard (NASB), New King James Version (NKJV), the English Standard Version (ESV), and in 2022 the Legacy Standard Bible (LSB) was published. It is considered to be the most accurate Bible for study since it is the closest to the original languages. The NASB, NKJV, ESV, and LSB Bibles were the best Bibles available at the time this document was written. They are all very close word-by-word translations of the original books of the Bible. The Living Bible is called a free translation because it tries to accurately communicate the idea of the passage. The NIV is somewhere in between. If you desire to study the Bible by yourself without knowing the original languages, obtain a copy of the NASB, LSB or the ESV. They are best for Bible study since they do not inject words, ideas, and meanings that do not exist in the original

manuscripts.

Things To Ponder

1. The Old and New Testaments point us to one person. Who is that person (John 5:39)?

Jesus Christ

2. Some people claim that Nostradamus (A.D. 1555) is a prophet because some of his predictions came true. They are not aware that he made many mistakes. For example, he predicted that France would be victorious in a struggle with Spain during the 16th century. In fact, the opposite happened and France was driven out of Italy by the Spanish in 1559. Nostradamus predicted that World War III would start on July 4th, 1999 between Russia, Turkey and Iran with Iran launching weapons of mass destruction into Europe. Why is this enough to know that he is not a prophet from God according to Deuteronomy 18:21-22? How can we know when God speaks?

The prophecies given by a prophet come true.

3. Do you believe the Bible is without error and written by God? If so, why?

Yes. 2 Timothy 3:16 says that God, all of Scripture, and Numbers 23:19 says God does not lie.

4. How did men write the books of the Bible according to 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:21 and Acts 28:25?

Men wrote the Bible as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. 1 Peter 1:10-12 reveals they knew the Holy Spirit was directing what they wrote.

5. What does 1 Peter 1:10-12 reveal about God's heart attitude toward you?

God wants us to know about Christ.

6. Which is the best view of 2 Timothy 3:16? (Circle one)

- a. The Bible is nothing more than a group of words some men wrote.
- b. The Bible is very encouraging and inspirational.
- c. Only the parts of the Bible that speak to me in a personal way are inspired by God.
- d. Only some parts of the Bible are inspired.
- ☒ e. Every word and concept in the Bible was written by God.

7. 1 Peter 1:10-12 tells us that the prophets wanted to understand what they wrote. Who will help us understand the Bible according to 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 and John 16:13-14? Why does He do this?

The Holy Spirit.

8. What are the three best translations of the Bible for Bible study? Why?

NASB, NIV, and the LSB.

9. The Old Testament prophesied that Jesus was coming. He came and died just as Daniel 9:25-27 had prophesied. The Bible also says He is coming again. Are you ready for Jesus' return? That is, are you a Christian?

10. What unanswered questions do you have about the Bible?

11. Why did God give us the Bible according to 2 Timothy 3:15 and then 1 Timothy 3:15-16? Look for at least three reasons.

Any three of these four: teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

12. This lesson has an attachment called "Overview of the Books of the Bible" This is an overview of the books of the Bible. Which Bible book best goes with the following personal questions you might have?

TOPIC OF THE BOOK OF THE BIBLE

Evidence that I have true faith	<u>1 John</u>
Am I being legalistic?	<u>Malachi</u>
I want to understand salvation	<u>Romans</u>
Discovering Godly wisdom	<u>Proverbs</u>
Jesus is the Messiah	<u>Matthew</u>

What Is The Bible?

Answer true (T) or false (F) to each of the following statements:

1. The Bible is composed of the Old Testament and the New Testament. **T**
2. The Bible was written by men only. **F**
3. Only parts of the Bible are inspired. **F**
4. Parts of the Bible have been proven to be false and do not apply today. **F**
5. When 2 Timothy 3:16 says the Bible is inspired, that means the Bible is exciting to read. **F**
6. The King James Version was the original Bible. **F**
7. The Bible contains 66 books. **T**
8. Jesus is the central focus of the Bible. **T**
9. Ecclesiastes is in the New Testament. **F**
10. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are located in the New Testament. **T**