

## What is the Bible?

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The Bible is a lengthy, ancient text. The book can seem overwhelming and intimidating to read, let alone understand. Yet, the Bible is intended to be read, understood, and obeyed. In this article, we will consider several important features of the Bible.

**1. The Word of God.** We will notice some specific aspects of the Bible, but let's first consider that the Bible is the word of God. This is what distinguishes the Bible from all other books. This collection of writings is how God has communicated His will for us. The word of God reveals our hearts: "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

**2. The books of the Bible.** The Bible has been described as a library. It is a book that contains other books. There are sixty-six books in the Bible. They were written by many different authors who came from a variety of backgrounds. Some of the authors were kings. Some were poor, uneducated fishermen.

The books of the Bible were written across multiple continents. The books were written over a period of 1,000+ years. Despite the vast diversity, the message of the Bible contains a single theme: redemption. Starting in Genesis, the Bible tells us how God planned to redeem us through our obedience to His Son, Jesus.

**3. Divisions of the Bible.** There are two divisions of the Bible: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The first five books of the Old Testament are called the Pentateuch. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy contain accounts of the Creation and the development of the nation of Israel. The Pentateuch is considered the book of law. The laws were given by God to regulate Israel.

The Old Testament also contains wisdom literature: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. Additionally, the Old Testament contains writings of the prophets. The lengthier prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah are called the Major Prophets. The shorter books like Daniel and Hosea are called the Minor Prophets. The prophets contain warnings of God's punishment against Israel and other nations, as well as the promise of the Messiah and Kingdom.

The New Testament contains twenty-seven books. The first four books are called the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These give accounts of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah. Next, the book of Acts documents the beginning of the Kingdom/Church. This book also highlights the Gospel being preached throughout the world and people obeying the Gospel. Lastly, the New Testament contains epistles. These are letters that were written by the apostles to churches and individual Christians.

**4. The Bible and You.** If we unpack some of the writings of the Bible, it becomes clear that the writers intended their messages to be understood, believed, and obeyed. The Bible is not just a storybook. The Bible is God's message for you!

**Luke 1:1-4:** "Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught"

This is Luke's introduction to his account of Jesus. Luke was a physician. He was detail-oriented in his writing. He wrote a letter to Theophilus. As an eyewitness to Jesus, Luke wanted to clarify events surrounding Jesus so that Theophilus could be sure about Jesus.

This means that when we read Luke's gospel, we are reading an eyewitness account of Jesus. We can trust the accuracy of the account. More than trusting Luke's account, we can put our trust in Jesus.

**John 20:30-31:** "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

Near the end of John's gospel, he tells readers the purpose of what he documented. John writes about various signs/miracles of Jesus. Each of the signs pointed to the nature and purpose of Jesus. John intended us to read his account of Jesus' signs so that we would believe and obey Jesus, the resurrected Lord.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17:** "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

This passage is taken from Paul's second epistle/letter to Timothy. This text explains the purpose of the whole Bible. First, the Scriptures are breathed out by God. They come from Him. Second, the Scriptures are profitable. If we invest in them, they will produce good in our lives. Third, the Scriptures teach us. The Bible is more than a story. The Bible instructs us about how we are to live before God.

Fourth, this text shows more specifically how the Bible teaches us. The Bible reproves, corrects, and trains us in righteousness. The Bible reproves us by teaching us about our sins. The Bible convicts us of sins. The Bible also shows us how to correct our sins. We correct our sins by seeking God's forgiveness in Jesus and changing our behavior. The Bible trains us for righteous living. The Bible shows us how we can live by adopting new attitudes and behaviors which reflect the glory of God.

## **Conclusion**

The Bible is a wonderful book. The Bible tells us who God is, what He has done for us through sending Jesus, and what He plans to do for the world in the future. If we read the Bible like a story, we will miss its purpose in our lives. The Bible tells us how we can be forgiven of our sins. The Bible tells us how to live righteously. The Bible is how God speaks to us. But, don't take my word for it.