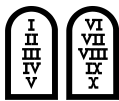


The Bible



A Wonderful Book

The Bible is a wonderful book. It is the best-selling book in all of history. It has been translated into more languages than any other book. It has had tremendous impact on millions of people throughout the world. The word “bible” means “book.” Actually, the Bible is a book of many books. The Bible is comprised of 66 books,¹ written over a period of roughly 1500 years by more than 40 different human authors. The Bible contains two main sections: the Old Testament (old covenant) and the New Testament (new covenant).²



The Old Testament

The Old Testament contains **39 books**, written over a period beginning at least 1400 years before the time of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament, written in the Hebrew language and some Aramaic, has different types of literature, including:

- ❑ **The Law & the historical books** (17 books, including Genesis through Esther): These books record the history of what God did, primarily through the people of Israel. They record the formation of Israel and the history of the nation prior to the time of Jesus Christ.
- ❑ **Poetry and wisdom books** (5 books, including Job through Song of Songs)
- ❑ **Prophecy** (17 books, including Isaiah through Malachi): These books record the prophets, those who spoke God’s message. The prophets spoke mostly in the context of Israel, but many prophecies apply to the whole world, and many relate directly to Jesus Christ.



The New Testament

The New Testament contains **27 books**, written within the first century after the time of Jesus Christ. The New Testament, written in the Greek language, includes:

- ❑ **The Gospels** (4 books, including Matthew through John): These are historical books recording the life of Jesus.
- ❑ **The Acts** (1 book): This historical book records the beginning and spread of the Church.
- ❑ **The Epistles** (21 books, including Romans through Jude): These books are epistles (letters) written from Church leaders to other Christians for various reasons, mostly instruction in the Christian faith.
- ❑ **The Revelation** (1 book): This book speaks about the return of Jesus Christ to the earth, the end of this age, and the consummation (completion, fulfillment) of the age to come.

¹ The Roman Catholic Bible contains other books from the Old Testament period, but these books (the Apocrypha) are omitted from the Hebrew and Protestant Christian Bibles since they do not meet the standard of the other books.

² “covenant” – an agreement between two parties that establishes a relationship and in which obligations or mutual responsibilities may be enacted. Some Bible covenants provide only divine promises while others entail obligations. God enacted a “new covenant” with the coming of Jesus – providing a new way of relating to God.



The Scope of the Bible

The Bible spans the entire history of the earth. The first book (Genesis) begins, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” The last book (Revelation) talks about the end of this earth, and the making of a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1).



The Unity of the Bible

Though written over a period of roughly 1500 years by more than 40 different human authors, the Bible is remarkably unified. **The Bible is unified because of one Divine Author.** Christians believe the Bible is the “Word of God.” God used the human authors to record what He wanted to say (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21). So we call the Bible “God’s written revelation.” Not only is the Bible unified because it has one Divine Author, but also because it is **one story**. It is the story about God’s relationship to humankind.



The Theme of the Bible – ‘God’s Story’

Genesis records the creation of man, and speaks of humankind’s good relationship with God. But man rebelled against God, resulting in humankind’s separation from God under His judgment. The rest of the Bible reveals God’s plan to provide a way through which humankind can be reconciled to God, resulting in salvation and eternal blessing for those who respond. It starts in Genesis with God’s promise to Abraham, continues through Israel (the descendents of Abraham), and eventually leads to Jesus, through whom all nations can be restored to God.