

Back to the Basics

The Awesome Bible

Memory Verse:
1 Peter 1:25

What is the Bible?

The Bible is a collection of sixty-six different books and letters. These sixty-six different books and letters are divided into two distinct volumes. The first volume of books we know as the Old Testament. The Old Testament begins with Genesis and ends with Malachi. The Old Testament is comprised of thirty-nine books.

The Old Testament can be divided into five major sections.

Law	Genesis thru Deuteronomy	5 books
History	Joshua thru Esther	12 books
Poetry	Job thru Songs of Solomon	5 books
Major Prophets	Isaiah thru Daniel	5 books
Minor Prophets	Hosea thru Malachi	12 books

The time span covered by the books of the Old Testament begins with the very beginning of time in Genesis 1:1 and ends with the writing of Malachi in approximately 425 B.C. (While Genesis records the beginning of the universe and the early history of man, the book was written by Moses probably during the wilderness exile sometime between 1446 and 1406 B.C.)

The second volume of books we know as the New Testament. The New Testament begins with the book of Matthew and ends with the book of Revelation. The New Testament is comprised of twenty-seven books. The New Testament can be divided into four major sections.

Gospels	Matthew thru John	4 books
History	Acts	1 books
Epistles	Romans thru Jude	21 books
Prophecy	Revelation	1 books

The time span covered by the books of the New Testament begins with the conception of Jesus and ends with the writing of Revelation somewhere around 98 A.D. (Some scholars differ upon the date of the writing of Revelation. Some estimate an earlier date around 68 A.D.)

The Validity of the Bible

The uniqueness of the Bible has a lot to do with its unity which is directly related to its origin. As we have already shown, there are sixty-six books comprising the Bible. The books of the Bible were written by forty different writers over a span of approximately 1600 years. Throughout this time, the theme of the Bible remained consistent: The redemption of mankind.

Genesis records the fall of man, the promise of restoration, and the family through which the redemption of man, Jesus Christ, would come. Throughout the rest of the Old Testament, we see the continuation of this family. We also see many prophecies referring to the coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. (We will see some of these prophecies later in this lesson.)

In the New Testament, we see God’s plan for man’s redemption fulfilled in Jesus Christ. This fact was revealed by the apostles. Read Ephesians 3:8-12. In this passage we see that Paul preached among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. (v. 8) In verse 9, we see that Paul referred to the mystery that had been hidden from the beginning of the ages. Paul then showed that it was the eternal purpose of God that His manifold wisdom be made known by the church. This eternal purpose of God (the hidden mystery (v. 9)) was accomplished in Christ Jesus. The eternal purpose of God was the redemption of man. (v. 10-12)

While the redemption of man was promised through various prophecies and promises, it was not made known until after the death of Jesus Christ. After Jesus’ death, the apostles began teaching the world about the mystery of man’s redemption through Jesus Christ. This unity from the Old Testament to the New Testament gives validity to the Bible being the Word of God.

Another proof of the validity of the Bible are the fulfilled prophecies found within the Old Testament. The Old Testament is filled with prophecies which foretold the fall of once great nations and cities. (See *Old Testament Prophecies - chart 1.*)

Isaiah prophesied the fall of the Babylonian Empire	Isaiah 13:19-22
Isaiah foretold the fall of the Egyptian Empire.	Isaiah 19
Nahum prophesied the fall of the city of Nineveh.	Nahum 1:1-3:19
Ezekiel foretold the destruction of the great city of Tyre.	Ezekiel 26
Zechariah prophesied the fall of five great cities of Phillistia: Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, Ashdod, and Ekron	Zechariah 9:5-7

In addition to the fulfilled prophecies regarding ancient cities and nations, there are fulfilled prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Regarding these prophecies, Jesus said, “*You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.*” (John 5:39, NKJV) (See *Old Testament Prophecies - chart 2* on next page.) While these are just a handful of the fulfilled prophecies found within the Old Testament, these are sufficient to validate the authority of the Bible as the Word of God.

While the Bible is not a book of science, it does contain several scientific facts, some of which were not fully recognized by man until these last three centuries. Consider some of the following examples:

- Q Several Bible passages state for a fact that the earth is round. (Job 26:10; Proverbs 8:27; Isaiah 40:22; Amos 9:6)
- Q The Bible’s reference to the “paths of the sea” (Psalms 8:8) led Matthew Maury (1806-1873) to discover the warm and cold continental currents.
- Q Sometime between 2000 - 1800 B.C., Job stated that God had hung the earth on nothing. (Job 26:7)
- Q Around 1444 B.C., in the Law given to the Israelites, God stated that life was in the blood. (Leviticus 17:11-14) Our modern discoveries in science and medicine have proven what the Bible had revealed hundreds of years earlier.

Isaiah 7:14	Born of a virgin	Luke 1:26-31
Genesis 22:18	Seed of Abraham	Matthew 1:1
Genesis 21:12	Seed of Isaac	Luke 3:23-34
Numbers 24:17	Seed of Jacob	Luke 3:34
Jeremiah 23:5	Seed of David	Luke 3:31
Micah 5:2	Place of birth	Matthew 2:5,6
Isaiah 9:1,2	Preached in Galilee	Matthew 4:14-16
Psalms 22:16; Zechariah 12:10; Psalms 34:20	His hands and feet were pierced, but no bones were broken	John 19:33-37
Isaiah 53:9	Buried in a rich man’s tomb	Matthew 27:57-60

In addition to the unity, the prophecies, and the pre-scientific facts, the Bible declares its own validity. In 2 Timothy 3:15-17, Paul states that all scriptures have been given by the inspiration of God. That is to say, all scriptures came from the mind of God. The “*all scriptures*” refer both to the Old Testament and the New Testament. Paul wrote that the “*Holy Scriptures*” had made Timothy “*wise for salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ.*” The Old Testament foretold the coming of Jesus Christ and established the events which led up to His coming. The New Testament recorded the fact that Jesus did come, why He came, and what He did to reconcile man to God.

When the letters and books of the New Testament were written, the writers were simply fulfilling Jesus’ command found in Matthew 28:18-20. The inspired writers were teaching people how to become disciples of Christ and how to serve Him as disciples. How do we know that the writers were inspired by God? Before leaving this earth, Jesus promised to equip His apostles for the task of convicting the world of its sin. This equipping came by way of the Holy Spirit. Take a moment to read the following passages from the book of John: 14:25-26; 15:26-27; 16:7-11; 16:12-14. These passages will show what Jesus did to make certain that His word would continue to be taught and practiced by His faithful followers.

Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit to teach and remind the apostles of God's word for man was a fulfillment of His promise found in Matthew 16:18-19. Jesus said, "*And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*" (Matthew 16:18-19, NKJV; cf. 18:18)

The apostles received the Holy Spirit and began their work fifty days after the death of Jesus, on the day of Pentecost. In Mark 9:1, Jesus had stated that His kingdom would come with power. In Acts 1:7-8, Luke recorded Jesus promising His apostles that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit had come upon them. At that time, the apostles would be witnesses to Jesus "*in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*" Then, in Acts 2, we see the record of the apostles receiving the Holy Spirit and the beginnings of their teaching Jesus "*in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*" (Acts 2:1-4, 14-39)

We benefit from the inspired efforts of the apostles and other inspired teachers of the first century. They, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, have given us all things that pertain to life and godliness. (2 Peter 1:2-4) As a result, Jude could accurately write, "*Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the **faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.***" (Jude 1:3, NKJV, emphasis added)

Just as the Word of God stood valid during the centuries leading up to the first century and during the first century, it is still valid and vibrant today. Just as Peter wrote, "*. . . having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the **word of God which lives and abides forever**, because 'All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the **word of the Lord endures forever.**' Now **this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.***" (1 Peter 1:23-25, NKJV, emphasis added)

The History Found in the Bible

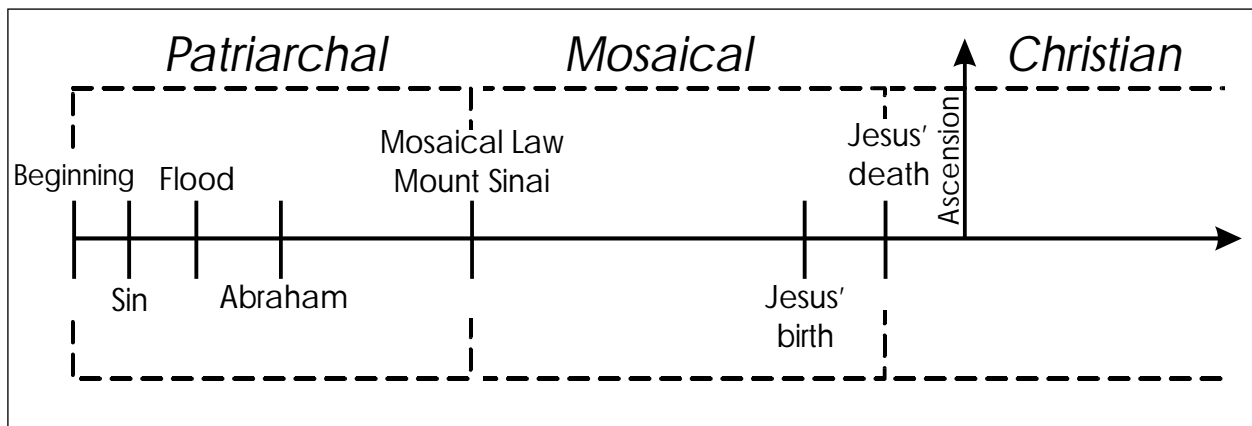
The history covered in the Bible is vast. The Bible begins with the creation of the universe, the creation of the earth, and the creation of all life on the earth, including mankind. Genesis 1:1 rightly begins, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" According to the genealogies found in Genesis 5 and 10, approximately 1600 years after the creation of Adam, God destroyed the world in a great flood, because of the wickedness of man. (Genesis 6-8) Standing apart from the rest of the world, only Noah and his family were found to be righteous. As a result, God spared Noah and his family. Approximately five hundred years later, God made a promise to Abraham, a promise that would directly impact the redemption of man. (Genesis 12-25)

The history found in the Bible goes on to cover the beginning of the Israelite nation, their enslavement in Egypt, as well as their deliverance by Moses. We see the rise and fall of the Israelites as a unified nation, then as a divided nation. Throughout the Bible, you see God raising up surrounding nations to punish the Israelites. He also would tear down nations in order to protect the Israelites. (Such surrounding nations used by God were the Philistines, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, etc.)

The Bible also shows us the fulfillment of the promised birth of Jesus in approximately 4 to 5 B.C. The Bible tells of His life, death, resurrection, and ascension. By studying the New Testament, you can clearly see the impact Jesus' life, death, and resurrection had on both the Jews and the rest of the world. The last book of the Bible, Revelation, was written to give Christians hope. It tells Christians that they can overcome sin and live forever with God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit in Heaven.

The history of the Bible can be divided into three distinct dispensations (time periods).

- Q The first period of time is known as the Patriarchal Dispensation. It lasted for about 2500 years. The Patriarchal Dispensation began with Adam and ended with God's covenant with Israel given on Mount Sinai. During this time period the religion was a family based religion. God spoke to the father of the family.
- Q The second period of time is known as the Mosaical Dispensation. This time period lasted for about 1500 years. This period of time began when God gave His Law to the Israelites on Mount Sinai and ended at the death of Jesus on the cross. During this time period, the religion was a national religion. God had given Moses the Law for the nation of Israel to follow.
- Q The third period of time is known as the Christian Dispensation. This time period began after Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection and continues today. This current dispensation will end with the second coming of Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Peter 3:10-13) During this time period, anyone can believe in God through faith in Jesus and obedience to His commands. It is a religion *"built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone."* (Ephesians 2:19-20) It is a religion of one church (body of Christ), one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God. (Ephesians 4:4-6)



Ten Questions

1. How many books are there in the Bible? _____
2. According to Genesis 1:1, what happened in the beginning? _____

3. What Did Paul preach among the Gentiles? (Ephesians 3:8) _____

4. According to God's eternal purpose, what was to be made known by the church? (Ephesians 3:10) _____
5. Who said, "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."? (John 5:39) _____
6. Give two Bible passages which state, in one form or another, that the earth is round. _____

7. What had made Timothy wise unto salvation? (2 Timothy 3:15) _____
8. For what are the scriptures "profitable"? (2 Timothy 3:16) _____

9. What did Jesus command His apostle to teach? (Matthew 28:20) _____

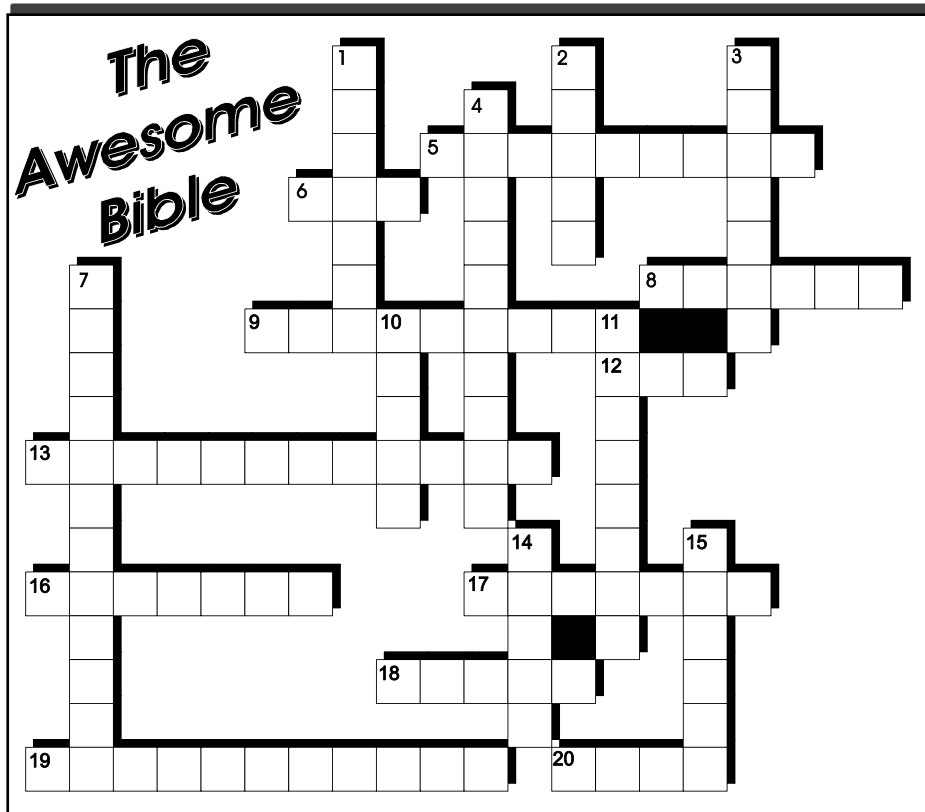
10. Who did Jesus promise to send to His apostles? (John 14:26; 15:26) _____

True or False

1. T or F : There are 49 books in the Old Testament.
2. T or F : The Bible was written by forty different writers.
3. T or F : Old Testament prophecies have nothing to do with the validity of the Bible.
4. T or F : Ezekiel foretold the destruction of the city of Tyre.
5. T or F : Numbers 24:17 foretold the birth place of Jesus.
6. T or F : Isaiah 9:1,2 foretold that the Messiah would preach in Galilee.
7. T or F : Matthew 18:18 records Jesus saying that He would send the Holy Spirit.
8. T or F : The apostles received power when the Holy Spirit came upon them.
9. T or F : The apostles were to be witnesses to Christ in Jerusalem.
10. T or F : Jude stated that the faith was once for all delivered to the saints.

A Little Fun

(Use the lesson text to answer these questions.)



Across

5. "In the _____ God created the heavens and the earth."
6. There are twenty-seven books in the _____ Testament.
8. Jesus promised to send the Holy _____ to teach the apostles.
9. The apostles were witnesses to Jesus "in _____, and all Judea and Samaria . . ."
12. There are thirty-nine books in the _____ Testament.
13. The Bible tells of Jesus' life, death, _____, and ascension.
16. The first book of the New Testament.
17. The last book of the Old Testament.
18. Who is the chief cornerstone?
19. All scriptures have been given by the _____ of God.
20. God spared _____ and his family from the flood.

Down

1. "But the word of the Lord endures _____."
2. What was once delivered to the saints? The _____.
3. The first book of the Bible.
4. The last book of the New Testament.
7. The first period of time is referred to as the Patriarchal _____.
10. The _____ of the Bible gives validity to it being the Word of God.
11. The second period of time is referred to as the _____ Dispensation.
14. This person prophesied the fall of the city of Nineveh.
15. The _____ is the body of Christ.

Passages in this Lesson

Genesis 1:1.....	pg 3,6	Acts 2:1-4	pg 6
Genesis 6-8	pg 6	Acts 2:14-39	pg 6
Genesis 12-25	pg 6	Matthew 28:18-20	pg 5
Leviticus 17:11-14	pg 5	John 5:39	pg 4
Job 26:7	pg 5	John 14:25-26	pg 5
Job 26:10	pg 5	John 15:26-27	pg 5
Psalms 8:8	pg 5	John 16:7-11	pg 5
Proverbs 8:27	pg 5	John 16:12-14	pg 5
Isaiah 13:19-22	pg 4	Ephesians 2:19-20	pg 7
Isaiah 19	pg 4	Ephesians 3:8-12	pg 4
Isaiah 40:22	pg 5	Ephesians 4:4-6	pg 7
Ezekiel 26	pg 4	1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	pg 7
Amos 9:6	pg 5	2 Timothy 3:15-17	pg 5
Nahum 1:1 - 3:19	pg 4	1 Peter 1:23-25	pg 6
Zechariah 9:5-7	pg 4	2 Peter 1:2-4	pg 6
Matthew 16:18-19	pg 6	2 Peter 3:10-13	pg 7
Matthew 18:18	pg 6	Jude 1:3	pg 6
Mark 9:1.....	pg 6		