

Introduction to the Bible

“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.”
Isaiah 40:8

God, who is all good & all powerful, from all of eternity has a plan to create a people who are His very own, to conform them to the image of His Son, and to bring them safely to glory.

- The Bible is the inspired word of God (2 Timothy 3:16)
- The Bible is inerrant.

The Bible’s Influence:

1. *The Bible is preeminent in its circulation.*
2. *The Bible is preeminent in its influence*

I. What is the Bible?

II. What is the Bible About?

- Creation of the universe
- Fall of man
- Judgment flood over the earth
- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob—fathers of the chosen nation
- History of Israel
 1. Exile in Egypt—430 years
 2. Exodus & wilderness wanderings—40 years
 3. Conquest of Canaan—7 years
 4. Era of Judges—350 years
 5. United Kingdom—Saul, David, Solomon—110 years
 6. Divided Kingdom—Judah/Israel—350 years
 7. Exile in Babylon—70 years
 8. Return & rebuilding the land—140 years

II. Organization of the Old Testament

- The Law—5 (Genesis—Deuteronomy)
- History—12 (Joshua—Esther)
- Wisdom—5 (Job—Song of Solomon)
- Major Prophets—5 (Isaiah—Daniel)
- Minor Prophets—12 (Hosea—Malachi)

Intertestamental period—

OT & NT go from creation to consummation, eternity past to eternity future.

III. New Testament

Gospels—

Acts—

Epistles—

Revelation—

IV. Theme of the Bible

There is one God; the Bible has one Creator; it is one book. It is the story of God redeeming His chosen people for the praise of His glory.

Five recurring motifs:

- The character of God
- The judgment for sin & disobedience
- The blessing for faith & obedience
- The Lord Savior and sacrifice for sin
- The coming kingdom & glory

How Did We Get the Bible?

I. Scripture's Self Claims

Over 2000 times in the OT the Bible asserts that God spoke what is written within its pages.

The phrase "Word of God" occurs over 40 times in the NT.

2 Timothy 3:16

Isaiah 55:11

God's Word declares that it is inerrant (Ps. 12:6; 119:140; Pr. 30:5a; John 10:35)

II. The Publishing Process

A. Revelation (Hebrews 1:1)

God's revelation is most completely given through Scripture (1 Corinthians 2:6-16).

B. Inspiration

2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21

C. Canonicity

The Bible is actually one book with one Divine Author though written over a period of 1500 years and through the pens of almost 40 human writers.

Creation account—

Eternity future (Revelation)—

Principles used to validate the writings which came as the result of divine revelation & inspiration:

- A recognized prophet or apostle as the author (or one associated with them—Mark, Luke, Hebrews, James, Jude)
- The writing could not disagree with or contradict previous Scripture
- The writing had to have the general consensus by the church as an inspired book

D. Transmission

Nearly 25,000 early manuscripts of the Bible

New Testament was completed no later than A.D. 95; earliest manuscript is from A.D. 125.

Dead Sea scrolls—discovered in 1947; date back to 200 B.C.

There are over 5000 Greek NT manuscripts, some of which date back to within 25-50 years of the original writing.

Evidence from archaeology & science—

Prophetic evidence—

E. Summary

God intended His Word to abide forever (*preservation*).

His written self-disclosure (*revelation*) was protected from error in its original writing (*inspiration*) and collected in the 66 books of the OT & NT (*canonicity*)

Is there more to come? Scripture warns that no one should add or delete to its content (*Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Pr. 30:6; Rev. 22:18, 19*). The latter exhortation contains warnings of severe divine judgment for disobedience.

Suggested Reading:

“Seven Reasons Why You Can Trust the Bible”, Erwin Lutzer

“God Wrote a Book”, James MacDonald

“From God to Us”, Norman Geisler & William Nix

“Defending Your Faith”, R.C. Sproul

“Knowing Scripture”, R. C. Sproul

