

## What is the Bible?

The Bible is a holy collection of books, 66 in total and placed in two testaments. The Old Testament details God's work with Israel. The New Testament details the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ for all people. Originally, these books were various scrolls from many different authors. However, these books, when read in context, work together to reveal God and God's will for humans.

## What makes the Bible special?

The Bible is recognized as the inspired written will of God. It is not merely a book of human speculation on God. Instead, Christians recognize it is the holy collection of books written in response to the Holy Spirit's inspiration. It speaks authoritatively to who God is and what God's plans are for the world.

The Bible is recognized as the infallible record of Jesus the Christ. Jesus, the Son of God, the full revelation (picture given to us) is longed for, anticipated, and revealed to us in the pages of scripture. The goal of the Bible is to know Jesus. He is the revelation of God and the Bible is the sufficient witness to Him.

## How do I read the Bible?

The Bible is meant to be read deeply and fully. It is meant to point us to a Living God found most fully in Jesus Christ. It is meant to change our hearts and reconcile us with God. Proof-texting and taking verses out of context are poor ways to read the Bible. Instead, we are meant to encounter God through the pages of Scripture.

Each book should be read with knowledge of its genre. For instance, poems should not be read as scientific truths. Clear declarations of God's work should not be read as abstract, nice ideas.

## What is a "biblical worldview?"

There's more than one conclusion that can be drawn from reading the Bible. Many assert their church's teaching is the "Biblical truth." However, a number of churches do this and can't seem to agree with each other!

The best way to know you have a biblical worldview and are reading it well is found in growing in the double bound love of God and all neighbors.

## Four great ways to start reading the Bible:

Read five Psalms a day for a month. There are 150 psalms (prayers of the Bible). Take five each day (1-5 on the 1st, 6-10 on the 2nd, etc.) and pray along with them.

Read the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). This is the longest section of Jesus' teachings without interruption. If your Bible has red letters, these are all red letters. Many of the biggest ideas of the Christian faith can be found here.

Read 1 John. 1 John is an excellent but short letter of the Bible. It is great for getting your feet wet and understanding bigger doctrinal thoughts within the Bible.

Read Romans. The Apostle Paul wrote the Letter to the Romans as his magnum opus, outlining the whole scope of the Christian faith. This is a challenging book. But, it is exceedingly worthwhile.



## The 5 C's of the Bible

### Creation

Humans are made in God's image and yet have fallen to violence and pride. Since the beginning, our condition as humans has been loved but separated from God.  
(Genesis 1-11)

### Covenant

God pursues a relationship with us, starting with Abraham. God promises us salvation and calls on us to live righteous and loving lives. This relationship continues as the Hebrew people make it to the promised land, Israel. However, we all too often forget God's will, leading to turbulence in life.  
(Genesis 11 - New Testament)

### Christ

Jesus is born under miraculous circumstances as God fully joins together with humanity once more. He lives a perfect, righteous, loving life and teaches us the way of living in line with God's will. He is crucified for offering forgiveness and mercy, acts only a true agent of God could offer. However, He is resurrected into eternal life, confirming He truly is the Son of God. He ascends to heaven and calls us to share His ways with all people.  
(Matthew - John)

### Church

Disciples of Jesus receive the Holy Spirit who leads us to Christlikeness. We love, learn, share, and serve in faithful obedience. A handful of leaders such as Paul, Peter, James, and John come forward to outline the message of Christ Jesus more clearly.  
(Acts - Jude)

### Commencement

Jesus returns at the end as mysteriously as He came to us the first time. Everything in the dark is exposed to the Light, for better or worse. God and God's people are reunited eternally.  
(Revelation)

## The Old Testament (Hebrew Bible)

### Pentateuch (Five books of Moses)

**GENESIS:** The beginning of the Hebrew people.  
**EXODUS:** The deliverance out of Egypt.  
**LEVITICUS:** Laws for people of Israel.  
**NUMBERS:** The nation of Israel in the wilderness.  
**DEUTERONOMY:** A review of the law.

### History of the Hebrew People

**JOSHUA:** Israel takes over the promised land.  
**JUDGES:** The reign of the judges of Israel.  
**RUTH:** A romance during the reign of the Judges.  
**I+II SAMUEL:** Israel's leadership, guided by God.  
**I+II KINGS:** Israel's kings and their stories.  
**I+II CHRONICLES:** Chronicles of Israel's history.  
**EZRA-NEHEMIAH:** The return from captivity.  
**ESTHER:** Israel's deliverance while in captivity.

### Wisdom and Poetry

**JOB:** An epic poem on God during suffering.  
**PSALMS:** A hymnal of praise and prayer to God.  
**PROVERBS:** Wise sayings of faithful people.  
**ECCLESIASTES:** The futility of life without God.  
**SONG OF SOLOMON:** Praise of romantic love.

### Major Prophets

**ISAIAH:** A prophecy of salvation in exile.  
**JEREMIAH:** The doom and restoration of Jerusalem.  
**LAMENTATIONS:** Mourning and a cry for mercy.  
**EZEKIEL:** The fall of Jerusalem.  
**DANIEL:** God's sovereignty over Israel in captivity.

### Minor Prophets

**HOSEA:** Unfaithful Israel called to repentance.  
**JOEL:** The promise of the Spirit.  
**AMOS:** Punishment of Israel for disobedience.  
**OBADIAH:** Predictions of destruction and aid.  
**JONAH:** A wayward Jonah learns to follow God.  
**MICAH:** Punishment and salvation outlined.  
**NAHUM:** The destruction of Nineveh.  
**HABAKKUK:** The vindication of God in history.  
**ZEPHANIAH:** God's judgment upon the nations.  
**HAGGAI:** Encouragement to rebuild the Temple.  
**ZECHARIAH:** Prophecy of the Messiah's kingdom.  
**MALACHI:** Prophecies of the Messiah.

## The New Testament

### Gospels

**MATTHEW:** Jesus Christ as Messiah, the King.  
**MARK:** Jesus Christ as the Suffering Servant.  
**LUKE:** Jesus Christ as the Son of Man for all.  
**JOHN:** Jesus Christ as the Divine Son of God.

### History of the Early Church

**ACTS:** The Church is established and empowered.

### Paul's Letters to Churches

**ROMANS:** The gospel outlined, summarized, applied.  
**I+II CORINTHIANS:** Basic Church disciplines.  
**GALATIANS:** Salvation via faith, not good works.  
**EPHESIANS:** A call for Christian unity.  
**PHILIPPIANS:** Christian joy and fellowship.  
**COLOSSIANS:** The Deity of Christ Jesus.  
**I+II THESSALONIANS:** Outline of the Second Coming

### Paul's Letters to Individuals

**I+II TIMOTHY:** The local church and its leadership.  
**TITUS:** Leadership, church duties, and exhortation.  
**PHILEMON:** A freed slave welcomed as a brother.

### Other Letters

**HEBREWS:** Jesus' fulfillment of Judaism.  
**JAMES:** The outworking of authentic faith.  
**I+II PETER:** Living faithfully during persecution and falsehoods.  
**I-III JOHN:** Fellowship with God and our neighbors.  
**JUDE:** A warning concerning falsehoods.

### End Times

**REVELATION:** Jesus will return. God's Kingdom will be on Earth as it is in Heaven. We will endure faithfully until then.