

A WALK THROUGH THE BIBLE

If you would like a more thorough walk use the Good News Bible and read the introduction to each Book and look up each story as you go.

The word "BIBLE" comes from the Greek word "biblia" meaning "Books."

The Bible is a collection of ancient writings about God written over approximately 1,100 years from 1,000 B.C. to 100 A.D.

The Bible has 2 parts:

The Old Testament

The Old Testament contains stories about an old agreement between God and the Hebrews, as revealed to their leader Moses. It also tells how this agreement worked out.

"Testament"
means
"agreement"

The New Testament

The New Testament contains stories and teachings about a new agreement between God and people based on the teachings and life of Jesus.

The Bible is not a book of INFORMATION. It is not a history textbook though it is full of historical events. It is not a science handbook-though it talks of subjects studied by scientists. It is not a philosophical work -though questions of philosophy are introduced. It is not a literary masterpiece-though it contains some beautiful writing. The Bible is a Book about God. It is a book meant for TRANSFORMATION. We read the Bible so that we may hear God speak to us; so that we may come to know God and understand God's love and mercy; so that we may welcome the Holy Spirit into our lives and be transformed from mere mortals into children of God.

The Old Testament has 39 books

(* Denotes one story on the wall)

5 Books of the Law

Genesis - God created the world * - Beliefs about the origins of the human race* * *

Origin of the Hebrews and their place as the "Chosen People" * * * *

Exodus - God heard His people cry and brought them out of bondage * *

The laws God's people swore to observe when they made their covenant with Yahweh at Mt. Sinai * *

Leviticus - More laws - Regulations for sacrifices - How to observe Holy Days

Numbers - Census of people - Story of Israelites wandering in the wilderness *

This generation never entered the Promised land for they were afraid and did not trust God.

Deuteronomy - Story of Moses' last speeches - Repeats laws.

12 Books of History

- Joshua - Story of Joshua, successor of Moses as leader of Israelites - Conquest of Canaan * - The land is divided into 12 tribes *
- Judges - Troubles in the Promised Land - Fortunes of Israel depended on obedience to God's law - Rule of tribal chiefs *
- Ruth - A pastoral story - How a Moabite became a daughter of Israel and the ancestress of King David and of Jesus Christ *
- I and II Samuel - The Israelites demand that God gives them a king- Samuel anoints Saul - Samuel anoints David after Saul*
- I Kings - Solomon reigns as king after David and builds the temple*
- II Kings - The Kingdom is divided into two kingdoms. Israel is the northern kingdom, Judah is the southern kingdom * -Elijah and Elisha speak for God *-Events leading to captivity' of both Kingdoms *
- I Chronicles - History from Adam through David
- II Chronicles - History from Solomon through the Babylonian exile.
- Ezra - Story of the return of exiles from Babylon to Judea in 536 B.C.
- Nehemiah - Story of how a great leader left the Persian Court to help returned exiles rebuild Jerusalem and their lives *
- Esther - Story of a Jewish girl who became Queen of Persia and saved her people from destruction *

5 - Books of Poetry

- Job - A narrative drama that deals with the question - "Why do bad things happen to good people?" *
- Psalms - 150 songs of prayer and praise - many traditionally ascribed to King David, but authorship of most is unknown *
- Proverbs - A collection of wise sayings-religious and worldly-by Solomon and others*
- Ecclesiastes - An account of divine wisdom reflected in nature, sovereign and independent of humankind *
- Song of Songs - A love lyric which many feel is an allegory of God's love for Israel and Christ's love for the church *

5 Major Prophets

- Isaiah - (Proto Isaiah-chapters 1 through 39)-speeches of the prophet Isaiah on many subjects and occasions* (Deutero Isaiah-chapters 40 through 66)- prophecies of the Messiah
- Jeremiah - Prophecies to a nation in crisis during 40 turbulent years * - Talked about the New Covenant
- Lamentations - A book of dirges on the fall of Jerusalem with its consequent chaos and oppression. It reflects the spirit and style of Jeremiah.
- Ezekiel - Reproaches Israel for her sins * - Speaks of the promise of salvation in a New Covenant and explains the conditions of this New Covenant.
- Daniel - Story of a young Jew, taken captive to Babylon, who rose to become governor *-He gives an interpretation of history and hope for a new order.

12 Minor Prophets

- Hosea - First of 12 minor prophets - preached that Yahweh was a God of love and would forgive those who repented.
- Joel - Call to repentance through fasting and prayer - promise of the outpouring of the Spirit.
- Amos - Earliest recorded sermons of a prophet - preached to northern Kingdom that Yahweh would destroy Israel for its sins.
- Obadiah - Sermons denouncing Edom for joining Judah's enemies.
- Jonah - A parable of mercy which shows that God loves all, not just Jews.
- Micah - Judgment of Judah for infidelity - predictions of the birth of Christ in Bethlehem.
- Nahum - Sermons against Nineveh soon after Nineveh had terrorized Judah in the late 7th century B.C.
- Habakkuk - A prophet in Judah shortly after Nahum explaining that God used Babylon as a rod of chastisement for Judah.
- Zephaniah - Sermons against idolatry and foreign ways. He prophesied during the reign of Josiah.
- Haggai - He preached to Jews returning to Jerusalem after exile in Babylonia. His message was to rebuild the Temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem.
- Zechariah - He was a partner of Haggai in an effort to rebuild the Temple. He had a messianic vision of a Prince of Peace.
- Malachi - Means "My Messenger" - He preached against abuses and indifference.

Between the Testaments

There was a gap of 400 years from the time when the last book of the Old Testament was written until the time when Jesus was born. It was a time when no prophets arose to speak God's message to his people. During this time, the Jews were constantly under pressure from two empires - from the Seleucids who ruled Syria, and from the Ptolemies who ruled Egypt in the south.

The New Testament has 27 books

4 Gospels - "Gospel" means "Good news." - The story of Jesus.

Matthew - Written to Jewish Christians as a manual of membership. Matthew emphasizes the moral requirements in Jesus' teachings and reminds them of Christ's forgiveness and mercy. It presents Jesus as the promised Messiah and is full of Old Testament prophecies.

Mark - A short action packed account which presents Jesus as a person of action and authority. Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God. Mark's audience was Gentile Christians who were facing persecution and the possibility of being martyred.

Luke - Written by a Gentile Christian to someone named Theophilus, meaning "Friend of God." The writer presents Jesus as God's love that breaks through all the barriers between people. It is written especially for the neglected and the outcasts of society. Luke has chosen stories about the ways Jesus shows love to people.

These first 3 Gospels are called the "Synoptics," meaning "seen with the same eye." They cover the same events.

John - Written for cultured, sophisticated Christians, many of whom were influenced by Greek philosophy. The events are not presented chronologically. Instead, John has grouped stories and teachings into clusters, each summarized by an "I am" statement of Jesus. He heavily emphasizes doctrine and appears to be writing to Christians faced with various differences among believers, as well as controversies with others outside the faith. He presents Jesus as the eternal Word of God who descended from heaven and became man.

1 Book of History

Acts - Covers the first 30 years after Jesus' death. It's the only early account of the Christian community and tells how Christianity spread from Palestine to Rome, the capital of the world. It is a sequel to Luke, the 3rd Gospel, and written by the same author.

21 Epistles (letters)

13 Epistles written by Paul

Romans - Written from Corinth to the Roman Church to prepare the church for his visit. The principal theme is the relationship between Judaism and Christianity.

I Corinthians - Advice to the Corinthian Church on insubordination, chastity, and marriage. Discussed the Resurrection.

II Corinthians - Paul writes about his suffering and consolation. He warns he will get after evildoers on his next visit. He asked for a collection for the poor in Jerusalem.

Galatians - Paul is concerned about the Galatian converts to Christianity who were backsliding to strict Jewish laws. He writes about the true nature of Justification by faith.

Ephesians - A letter to a city in Asia Minor. Paul discusses the mystery of salvation and the mystery of the church.

Philippians - Written when Paul was a prisoner in Rome. Paul warns against false teachings and pleads for unity.

Colossians - Written to the church at Colloassae in highly developed Christology.

I Thessalonians - Written from Corinth. Paul praises the people and tells of Jesus' second coming.

II Thessalonians - A follow up to his first letter to Thesslonica. Paul is concerned about their attitude expecting a second coming of Jesus too soon.

I Timothy - Written after Paul's release from his first imprisonment in Rome. He gives advice to Timothy about handling wrong ideas of some Ephesians.

II Timothy - Written during the time of Paul's second imprisonment in Rome. Paul asks Timothy to protect the community against false teachings and expresses great love for him.

Titus - Written before the letters to Timothy. Paul gives advice to young co-workers to help them in Christianizing the social world.

Philemon - Paul writes this letter to the Christian whose slave Onesimus had run away, been converted, and was ready to return. Paul asks Philemon to be merciful and practice Christian brotherhood.

8 Epistles written by others

Hebrews - Author unknown. Written to a group of Christians who, faced with increasing opposition, were in danger of abandoning the Christian faith. The writer encourages them in their faith primarily by showing that Jesus Christ is the true and final revelation of God.

James - Probably written by a relative of Jesus who became head of the Church at Jerusalem although authorship is not certain. This letter stresses the importance of good works accompanying faith. "Faith without works is dead."

I Peter - Peter wrote this letter from Rome to Christian churches in Asia Minor. Peter writes of the value of Jesus' death and resurrection.

II Peter - Peter exhorts readers to be faithful and blameless. He also helps build hope for a second coming and warns against false teachers.

I, II, III John - Written to encourage the reader to live in fellowship with God and with his Son, Jesus Christ, and to warn them against following false teaching that would destroy this fellowship.

Jude - Written to warn against false teachers who claimed to be believers and encourage "to fight for the faith which once and for all God has given to his people."

A Vision

Revelation - A series of revelations and visions.