

# BIBLE 101

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## Bible 101 - What is the Bible?

**Greg Wallace - June 25, 2023**

The Bible is a book made up of 66 pieces of writing (books within books), written by many different men over hundreds of years.

- 66 different pieces of writing (books)
- Written by a number of different men at a number of different times, with the oldest possibly 3,500 years ago and most recent probably 90-100 years after Jesus (approx. 1,900 years ago)
- There are 2 sections - Old and New Testaments (Testament means covenant, agreement, or contract)

### Old Testament (Hebrew Bible)

- Starts at "In the beginning" until sometime after the Jews returned to the land of Israel and rebuilt Jerusalem and the temple.
- There are 39 books, written in both Hebrew and Aramaic
- How is it organized?
  - TaNaKh (tawn-awk)
  - -Torah (tor-aw) - Law - Instruction - 5 books. Also called the Pentateuch
  - -Nevi'im (nev-i-eem) Prophets - History of Jewish people after the death of Moses.
  - -Ketuvim (ket-oo-veem) - Writings - Psalms, Proverbs, Job, etc

### New Testament

- Covers roughly 65+ years, from the birth of Jesus to Paul being imprisoned in Rome the first time.
- 27 books
- Written in - Koine (coin-ay) Greek (common Greek)
- How is it organized?
  - 4 Gospels - each of these tell about Jesus. They are four different perspectives of generally the same events. There is some overlap, but each author has their own style and purpose - for example, Luke was a doctor and recorded many healings.

- Acts of the Apostles - could also be called the "Acts of the Holy Spirit" and records when Gentiles became aware that God wanted them too.
- Letters - mostly written by Paul but does include a few other authors. The letters contain encouragement, correction, and instruction to individuals and churches of the time.
- Revelation - revelation literally means "uncover" or "reveal" - the Greek for "Revelation" is apokalypsis or apocalypse.

But the Bible is more than a literary text or ancient manuscript; it is the story of God.

**Genesis 1:1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

The main character, person, theme is God. He is first; in all things, in all ways, in every situation and story.

The Bible is a unified story leading to Jesus. Much of the Bible is a **narrative**, or story (David & Goliath, Noah & his family, Ruth, etc). Some is **law**. Law is conveyed as instruction- instruction to God's people about how to stay God's people.

There's **poetry**, where human emotion (passion, joy, grief, anger, sadness, etc) is expressed through scripture.

**Prophecy**, which is rarely foretelling (doesn't tell the future often), but is mostly reminding the king and people what God has already said. The work of the prophet was to speak truth to power. There are the **letters**, which encourage, guide and challenge. Finally, the **revelation**, which reminds us there are many things we don't understand yet.

*The Bible is a unified story leading to Jesus.*

*-The Bible Project*

To summarize:

- God created everything good, including humans. Everything had purpose and worked.
- People ignorantly rejected God.
- Everything fell apart.
- But God is faithful! So He is working to restore everything to its place.
- God sent His own son to usher in the correct way of being human that is characterized by:
  1. Love the Lord your God with all you heart, soul, mind, and strength.
  2. Love your neighbor as yourself.

In other words:

- God created life and made people to encourage and protect it.
- People rejected life and endorsed death.

- Death reigned where life was supposed to reign.
- God, through his son, invaded the kingdom of death and cast it down.

All this matters because the Bible tells us how we can choose to live.

- This is called wisdom. **Wisdom is the ability to correctly manage what you have responsibility of.**

Remember the example of non-biblical wisdom:

“You need to change the oil in your car.”

-What happens if you violate this? Does it matter if you don't know this rule? Do the consequences change? **NO.**

A biblical example:

**Exodus 20:3** You must not have any other god but me.

(nothing else in all of creation needs this instruction)

**Deuteronomy 22:1** If you see your neighbor's ox or sheep or goat wandering away, don't ignore your responsibility. Take it back to its owner.

This is instruction. It is **wisdom**, not legality. It is not ignoring your responsibility to God or your neighbor.

-What are the consequences of ignoring? Just like the car without an oil change, **things stop working.**

The Bible tells us **how** to live in a kingdom of life while existing in the kingdom of death. It shows us that the kingdom of death doesn't function correctly and everything that exists in it is backwards.

The Bible also tells us **why** to live according to its teachings. It gives meaning for the past and hope for the future. “Who am I?” is changed to “Whose am I?”.

*So, whose will you choose to be?*

Kingdom of death? Or kingdom of life?

**The kingdom of death is easy. It requires very little will power in the moment. The kingdom of life is hard. It requires the will to choose good and right while the easier choice is in sight.**

So why choose God?

**Psalm 68:5-6** He is a Father to the fatherless, defender of widows— this is God, whose dwelling is holy. God places the lonely in families, he sets the prisoners free and gives them joy.

*Today and every day you get to choose between two paths: Death or Life. Two paths; one is hard and the other easy, but only one works. One is true. One is right. One is what you were made for. **Which will you choose?***