**A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE** *Dated-6/14/12*

The **Bible** is the infallible word of God and considered as sacred book of [Christianity](http://www.theopedia.com/Christianity), a collection of ancient writings, written by various men as they were [inspired](http://www.theopedia.com/Inspiration) by [God](http://www.theopedia.com/God). It comprises the 66 books, of both the [Old Testament](http://www.theopedia.com/Old_Testament) and the [New Testament](http://www.theopedia.com/New_Testament).

**Total Books-** 66 Books

**Old Testament**-39 Books

**New Testament**-27 Books

The Bible is a collection of books, accepted by Christians as sacred and inspired by God, providing the basis for beliefs about spiritual matters and providing guidelines for moral, holy and spiritual living. Many verses throughout the Bible attest to its divine origin (Genesis 6:9-13, Exodus 20:1-17, 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21, Revelation 1:1-2, etc.)

The most amazing fact was that the Holy Bible was written by about **40 /forty men** from all walks of life ranging from Kings, fishermen, Physicians, Prophets etc. The different writing skills, writing styles, personalities, world views, and cultural backgrounds of the human authors can be seen in their works.

It was **composed for about 1600 years** /sixteen hundred years. From the fact that **Moses started** it about the year **1500 B. C**. and **John finished** it about the year 90 A. D.

**-The Bible got its name from Greek word** which means **“the little book”.** As time goes on, it **was called “the book”,** and then **“the holy book”, and finally “the Holy Book of Books”.**

**Bible can be Broadly Divided into 2 Testaments: The Old & New Testament**

1. **The Old Testament**:

The Old Testament is again subdivided into 4 Categories

1. **Pentateuch :**

**Pentateuch means “five volumes”,** it is also called **Torah.** It was written by Moses during the 40/forty years that the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness (1450 BC- 1410 B.C.).

**Five Books**:

Genesis

Exodus

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

These books include mostly **history of creation, fall of man, narrative stories**, **as well as the Law that God gave Israel**.

1. **Historic Books: (12 Books)**

These books contain narratives that follow Israel’s up-and-down history.

**Twelve Historic Books:**

Joshua

Judges

Ruth

1 & 2 Samuel

1 & 2 Kings

1 & 2 Chronicles

Ezra

Nehemiah

Esther

The 12 historical books of the Old Testament continue to record the history of the people of Israel under the leadership of Joshua, through the period of the Judges and the reign of the kings of Israel.

1. **Poetry OR Wisdom literature:**

These books artistically incorporate poetic or proverbial elements of wisdom.

**Five Poetry OR Wisdom Books**:

Job

Psalms

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Song of Solomon

Scholars have been unable to determine with any specificity when Job was written. Based upon the manners and customs recorded in the text, many believe that the book was written during the time of the Patriarchs of the faith. The individual Psalms, comprising the entire collection, were written from the days of Israel's Exodus to its restoration after the Babylonian captivity. Many of the Psalms were written by King David during his reign over Israel. The entire book was compiled between 1000 - 300 B.C., King David's son, Solomon is credited with writing Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon, during his reign (971 - 931 B.C.).

1. **Prophets:**

The prophets lived during Israel’s history. They were God’s spokespersons who challenged the rebellious people to turn back to God. The 17 Prophetical books of the major and minor prophets span Israel's history from 700 BC - 450 B.C.

**Five Major Prophets/ Books**

* [Isaiah](http://www.theopedia.com/Book_of_Isaiah)
* [Jeremiah](http://www.theopedia.com/Book_of_Jeremiah)
* [Lamentations](http://www.theopedia.com/Book_of_Lamentations)
* [Ezekiel](http://www.theopedia.com/Book_of_Ezekiel)
* [Daniel](http://www.theopedia.com/Book_of_Daniel)

**Twelve Minor Prophets**

* [Hosea](http://www.theopedia.com/Book_of_Hosea)
* [Joel](http://www.theopedia.com/Book_of_Joel)
* [Amos](http://www.theopedia.com/Book_of_Amos)
* [Obadiah](http://www.theopedia.com/Book_of_Obadiah)
* [Jonah](http://www.theopedia.com/Book_of_Jonah)
* [Micah](http://www.theopedia.com/Book_of_Micah)
* [Nahum](http://www.theopedia.com/Book_of_Nahum)
* [Habakkuk](http://www.theopedia.com/Book_of_Habakkuk)
* [Zephaniah](http://www.theopedia.com/Book_of_Zephaniah)
* [Haggai](http://www.theopedia.com/Book_of_Haggai)
* [Zechariah](http://www.theopedia.com/Book_of_Zechariah)
* [Malachi](http://www.theopedia.com/Book_of_Malachi)
1. **THE NEW TESTAMENT**

For 400 years after the writing of the Book of Malachi, the Lord was silent and the Old Testament was closed.

**There are 4 Sub Categories of NT Books**

* 1. **Gospels & Acts :**

These historical accounts follow Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, and the rise of the early church.

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

Acts of Apostles

It is generally agreed that the Book of Mark was the first Gospel written and that it was written between A.D. 50 and 75. Of the four Gospel's, John's is considered to have been the last one written, around A.D. 85. The Book of Acts, a historical account of the establishment of the early Christian church, is believed to have been written by one of the Apostle Paul's associates, around A.D. 62 (near the end of Paul's imprisonment in Rome).

* 1. **Letter of Paul/ Pauline Letters**: Paul’s letters were written to individuals OR churches and often explain the nature of the Christian life.

**Thirteen Pauline Letters**:

Romans

1 & 2 Corinthians

Galatians

Ephesians

Philippians

Colossians

1 & 2 Thessalonians

1 & 2 Timothy

Titus

Philemon

The Pauline Epistles (the Apostle Paul's letters to the early church) were authored between A.D. 50 - 67. The author of Hebrews is unknown, but the book is commonly thought to have been written around A.D. 70. The epistles of the other Apostles were written between A.D. 48 - 90.

* 1. **General Letters :** These letters were written by others and often focus on the church in general.

**Eight General Books:**

Hebrews

James

1 & 2 Peter

1, 2 & 3 John

Jude

* 1. **Apocalyptic Literature:**

**Book of Revelation**

"[Apocalypse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apocalypse)" is a [Greek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_language) word meaning "Revelation", "an unveiling or unfolding of things not previously known and which could not be known apart from the unveiling. The apocalyptic literature details the authors' visions of the end times as revealed by a heavenly messenger or [Angel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angel). It is a vision of the future that gives hope in the present. The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ is believed to have been penned by the Apostle John between A.D. 70 - 95.

**What does the Revelation of God means?**

The revelation is the way by which God to reveal him selves. While God revealed himself through prophets, apostles, and most fully in his [Son](http://www.theopedia.com/Jesus), he has identified his Word with the words of Scripture.

**(**[**Hebrews 1:1**](http://bib.ly/He1.1.ESV)**-2a**, NKJV)

“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son,"

**Unity of the Bible**

**Despite the diversity of the Bible books and their separation in time, there are several unifying themes that run through both the Old and New Testaments**:

* **There is only one true God**. He created all that is the universe and takes an active, ongoing and loving role in its maintenance.
* **God loves His people of all races, nationalities and religions, and seeks their love in return.**
* **God created men and women with the power to choose between good and evil.** We are called to do good by serving God and respecting our fellow human beings of the world. Evil is a constant temptation that we must do our best to resist.
* **God seeks the salvation of all people, individually and collectively, from the power of sin and evil.** God has intervened directly in human affairs and has also sent the prophets and, finally, His Son Jesus, the Messiah or Christ, to help us with that salvation.

**What does the term Transmission means?**

**"After the original biblical text was penned by the authors** (or by the secretary of the author, cf. [Romans 16:22](http://bib.ly/Ro16.22.ESV)), **it was copied for the purpose of circulating the writing to God's people.** **This process of copying is known as transmission."**

**Concept of Historicity:**

Historicity means **Historical authenticity of the Bible.**

* + - 1. **Historicity of the Old Testament**

The historicity of the Old Testament seeks to establish the historical trustworthiness of the Old Testament. Historicity of the Old Testament in based on the two major factors.

**This is based on two factors:**

1. The reliability of the Old Testament Manuscripts.
2. The reliability of Authors/ those who were involved with writing and putting the OT together.
3. **The Reliability of the OT manuscripts**

To establish the reliability of the OT manuscripts one must look at 3 things:

1. **The Amount Manuscripts:**

As early as the 1700s Benjamin Kennicott published 615 OT manuscripts, and a few years later Giovani de Rossi published 731 manuscripts. Furthermore, beginning around 1890 around ten thousand manuscripts were discovered in Cairo Geniza.

In addition to these manuscripts, more were discovered in the caves by the Dead Sea at Qumran in 1947, also known as the [Dead Sea Scrolls](http://www.theopedia.com/Dead_Sea_Scrolls). The Dead Sea Scrolls dating back to 300 BC, were discovered in a series of 12 [caves](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave) around the site known as Wadi [Qumran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qumran) near the Dead Sea between 1947 and 1956 by the [Bedouin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bedouin) people and [Archeologists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archaeology).

The largest collection of manuscripts in the world, the Second Firkowitch Collection in Leningrad, which contains 1,582 items of Bible and Masora (manuscripts from the 6th-9th century AD) text, plus 1200/ twelve hundred Hebrew fragments.

* + 1. **Their Dates:**

Most of the OT manuscripts in our possession are dated between A.D. 800-1100. However, due to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, dating as far back as the 300 century B.C., the accuracy of these later manuscripts has been attested/ established.

* + 1. **Their Accuracy:**

In evaluating the evidence there is both internal and external evidence. The Dead Sea Scrolls provide the best external evidence and show that the later manuscripts that we possess were in fact preserved through close to 1,000 years. We can be confident that the texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls were used to transmit the text that is found in the later documents. Comparative studies have been made and the results reveal a word-for-word identity in some 95% of the text. Due to the help of the [Septuagint](http://www.theopedia.com/Septuagint) (Greek version of Jewish Scriptures), we can also cross-check the accuracy of the transmission of the texts. Through internal evidence we can view the duplicate passages we have in the OT (i.e. [Isaiah 36-39](http://bib.ly/Isa36.ESV) and [2 Kings 18-20](http://bib.ly/2Ki18.ESV); [Jeremiah 52](http://bib.ly/Je52.ESV) and [2 Kings 25](http://bib.ly/2Ki25.ESV), and others) and realize that they are accurate as well.

* 1. **The Reliability of the Authors:**

The authors of the OT present real history, about real people, and in real locations. Much of this has been proven through the finds of [biblical archaeology](http://www.theopedia.com/Biblical_archaeology). World-renowned archaeologist William F. Albright states, "There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of the Old Testament tradition”.

**Historicity of the New Testament**:

Christianity is "built upon the foundation of faith in the historical Jesus who is revealed by the historical New Testament documents. It is of utmost importance that these documents show themselves to be trustworthy and reliable since they are the primary documentary sources substantiating the object of the Christian faith, who is Jesus Christ.

**It is established on the basis of 2 facts:**

Given the extraordinary historical events that the Bible records, it is crucial to determine two things:

**(1) The reliability of the New Testament documents and**

**(2) The reliability of the New Testament witnesses.**

If we cannot establish the reliability of these sources, then we have no objective way to evaluate the historical sayings, deeds, and claims of Jesus and his disciples."

**What is Biblical Archaeology?**

Traditionally, biblical archaeology is the name given to the study of the archaeological aspects of the history of the Jewish and Christian churches as provided in the Judeo-Christian bible, including but not limited to the [Dead Sea Scrolls](http://archaeology.about.com/od/biblicalarchaeology/ig/Dead-Sea-Scrolls/). Near Eastern archaeology is the term that refers to the same region, but, since not all archaeology in the area is referred to in the Old or New Testament, covers a broader range of topics.

**What does Inspiration Means?**

Inspired Scripture is the written revelation of God & His will.

Inspiration establishes that the Bible is not only a human but also a divine Product. In other words, Scripture is divinely inspired in that God actively worked through the process and had his hand in the outcome of what Scripture would say. Inspired Scripture is simply written revelation. "Scripture is not only man's word, but also, and equally God's word, spoken through man's lips or written with man's pen"

**What does the term Inerrancy stands for?**

Inerrancy is the view that when all the facts become known, then Bible is correctly interpreted & is entirely true and never false in all it affirms.

"Inerrancy is the view that when all the facts become known, they will demonstrate that the Bible in its original autographs and correctly interpreted is entirely true and never false in all it affirms, whether that relates to doctrines or ethics or to the social, physical, or life sciences"

**Translation of the Bible**

Throughout history, the text of the [Bible](http://www.theopedia.com/Bible) has been translated into many different languages so that peoples of all cultures and times can understand God's redemption story for His chosen people.

**The** [**Old Testament**](http://www.theopedia.com/Old_Testament) was **mostly written in** [**Hebrew**](http://www.theopedia.com/Hebrew), except for example, a few sections in the [book of Daniel](http://www.theopedia.com/Book_of_Daniel) that were written in [Aramaic](http://www.theopedia.com/Aramaic).

**The** [**New Testament**](http://www.theopedia.com/New_Testament) was originally **written in** [**Koine Greek**](http://www.theopedia.com/Koine_Greek)**.**

##  Timeline of Bible Translation History

The following timeline presents some of the key events in translation history, with particular reference to English-language translations.

* **1400 BC:** **Perhaps the first written Word of God.** **The** [**Ten Commandments**](http://www.theopedia.com/Ten_Commandments) **delivered to** [**Moses**](http://www.theopedia.com/Moses)**.** The biblical narrative of the **revelation at Sinai begins in** [**Exodus 19**](http://bibref.hebtools.com/?book=%20Exodus&verse=19&src=HE) after the arrival of the children of Israel **at** [**mount Sinai**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_Mount_Sinai)**, also called** [**Horeb**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Horeb)**.**

-**There are three versions of the Ten Commandments in the Hebrew Scriptures** (Old Testament). They are at **Exodus 20:2-17**, **Exodus 34:12-26**, and (Repetition 10 commandments)**Deuteronomy 5:6-21**.

* **500 BC:** **Completion of all original Hebrew manuscripts** which make up the **39 Books of the** [**Old Testament**](http://www.theopedia.com/Old_Testament)**.**
* **200 BC:** **Completion of the** [**Septuagint**](http://www.theopedia.com/Septuagint)[**Greek**](http://www.theopedia.com/Greek) **manuscripts** which contain the **39 Old Testament books and 14** [**Apocryphal**](http://www.theopedia.com/Apocrypha) **books.**
* **1st century AD/Anno-Domini :** **Completion of all original Greek manuscripts which make up the 27 Books of the** [**New Testament**](http://www.theopedia.com/New_Testament)**.**
* **AD 367:** [**Athanasius**](http://www.theopedia.com/Athanasius)**, the Bishop of Alexandria, identifies the 27 books of the New Testament** which are today recognized **as the canon of Scripture.**
* **AD 382:** [**Jerome**](http://www.theopedia.com/Jerome)**'s Latin** [**Vulgate**](http://www.theopedia.com/Vulgate) **manuscripts produced** **which contain all 80 books** (39 OT + 14 Apocrypha + 27 NT).
* **AD 500:** **The Scriptures have been translated into over 500 languages.**
* **AD 600:** Latin declared the only language permitted for Scripture.
* **AD 995:** **Anglo-Saxon** (early roots of English language) **translations of the New Testament produced.**
* **AD 1384:** [**John Wycliffe**](http://www.theopedia.com/John_Wycliffe) **is the first person to produce a (hand-written) manuscript copy of the complete Bible, all 80 books in English language.**
* **AD 1455:** **Gutenberg invents the printing press**. Books may now be mass-produced instead of individually hand-written. **The first book ever printed is Gutenberg's Bible in Latin.**
* **AD 1516:** **Erasmus produces a Greek/Latin** parallel **New Testament.**
* **AD 1522:** [**Martin Luther**](http://www.theopedia.com/Martin_Luther)**'s German New Testament.**
* **AD 1526:** [**William Tyndale**](http://www.theopedia.com/William_Tyndale)**'s New Testament.** **The first New Testament printed in the English language.**
* **AD 1535**: **Myles Coverdale's Bible. The first complete Bible printed in the English language** (80 Books: O.T. & N.T. & Apocrypha).
* **AD 1539:** **The "Great Bible" printed.** **The first English language Bible authorized for public use (80 Books).**
* **AD 1560:** **The** [**Geneva Bible**](http://www.theopedia.com/index.php?title=Geneva_Bible&action=edit&redlink=1) **was printed.** **The first English language Bible to add numbered verses to each chapter (**80 Books).
* **AD 1568: The** [**Bishop's Bible**](http://www.theopedia.com/index.php?title=Bishop%27s_Bible&action=edit&redlink=1) **printed.** **The Bible of which the King James was a revision (80 Books).**
* **AD 1611: The King James Bible is a translation named after** [**King James I**](http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/King-James.php) **of England**, **who recognized a need for a better English Bible translation.** King James initiated the project to be **completed by the Church of England** **(1604- 1611 AD), to** complete one of the most thorough and detail oriented translations in history. **In 1611, the King James Bible was completed and King James 'authorized' the new translation to be read in churches in England.** **The** [**King James Bible**](http://www.theopedia.com/King_James_Version) **printed**, drawing on the Bishop's Bible and also Tyndale's earlier work, originally with all 80 Books. **The Apocrypha was officially removed in 1885 leaving only 66 books.**
* **AD 1881:** **The** [**English Revised Version**](http://www.theopedia.com/English_Revised_Version) **Bible;** **The First Major English Revision of the KJV.**
* **AD 1901:** **The** [**American Standard Version**](http://www.theopedia.com/American_Standard_Version). **A major revision of the KJV, still in use today.**
* **AD 1971:** **The** [**New American Standard Bible**](http://www.theopedia.com/New_American_Standard_Bible) is published as a modern translation of the Bible using the principle of [formal equivalence](http://www.theopedia.com/index.php?title=Formal_equivalence&action=edit&redlink=1).
* **AD 1973:** **The** [**New International Version**](http://www.theopedia.com/New_International_Version) **is published** **as a modern translation of the Bible using the principle of** [**dynamic equivalence**](http://www.theopedia.com/Dynamic_equivalence).
* **AD 1982:** **The** [**New King James Version**](http://www.theopedia.com/New_King_James_Version) **is published as a modern revision of the King James Version.**
* **AD 2002: The** [**English Standard Version**](http://www.theopedia.com/English_Standard_Version) **is published as a translation to bridge the gap between the accuracy of the NASB and the readability of the NIV.**

**What does the term Hermeneutics mean?**

The interpretation of the bible, also called "hermeneutics", involves establishing the key principles for interpretation and understanding of any part of the Bible, and then interpreting it so its message is made clear to the reader or listener.

**Concept of Clarity:**

The "meanings of the text can be clear to the ordinary reader, [and] God uses the text of the Bible to communicate His person and will."

**Concept of Sufficiency:**

Concept of sufficiency is the teaching that Scripture is the Church's only infallible and sufficient rule for the People of God.

[**Sola Scriptura**](http://www.theopedia.com/Five_Solas)is the teaching that Scripture is the Church's only infallible and sufficient rule for deciding issues of faith and practices that involve doctrines.

**Apocrypha:**

Books are those discovered manuscripts which are questionable in its authenticity. Apocrypha refers to several ancient texts that are considered not divinely inspired. And as such, are not accepted as part of either the Hebrew or Protestant biblical canon.

These are presented here for reference.

* 1 Esdras
* 2 Esdras
* Tobit - Judith
* Rest of Esther
* Wisdom
* Sirach
* Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremy
* Song of the Three Children
* Story of Susanna
* The Idol Bel and the Dragon
* Prayer of Manasses
* 1 Maccabees
* 2 Maccabees
* 3 Maccabees
* 4 Maccabees
* [Psalm 151](http://bib.ly/Ps150.ESV)

**What are the fundamentals of Systematic theology in Biblical Study means?**

Systematic theology is a discipline which addresses theological topics one by one (e.g. [God](http://www.theopedia.com/God), [Sin](http://www.theopedia.com/Sin), [Humanity](http://www.theopedia.com/Humanity) etc.) and attempts to summarize all the biblical teaching on each particular subject. Sometimes called constructive theology or even dogmatic theology, the goal is to present the major themes (i.e. [doctrines](http://www.theopedia.com/Doctrine)) of the Christian faith in an organized and ordered overview that remains faithful to the biblical witness.

**General areas of systematic theology**

## Prolegomena/ pro·le·gom·e·non - The study of methods and presuppositions before one does systematic theology.

## Bibliology - The study of the [Bible](http://www.theopedia.com/Bible).

* **Theology Proper** - The study of the doctrine of [God](http://www.theopedia.com/God).
* **Christology** - The study of [Jesus](http://www.theopedia.com/Jesus).
* **Pneumatology** - The study of the [Holy Spirit](http://www.theopedia.com/Holy_Spirit).
* **Anthropology** - The study of [humanity](http://www.theopedia.com/Anthropology).
* **Soteriology** - The study of [Salvation](http://www.theopedia.com/Salvation).
* **Ecclesiology** - The study of the [Church](http://www.theopedia.com/Church).
* **Eschatology** - The study of last things or [end times](http://www.theopedia.com/End_times).- Ex. Revelation
* **Angelology** - the study of the angelic beings.

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