

How to Answer the Most Common Question About the Bible

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

When it comes to the Bible, I like to say, “It’s all about Jesus!”.

Holy Bible means the “Holy Book.” The Bible is actually a small library. It contains 66 separate books (39 Old Testament and 27 New Testament), written in three languages (Hebrew, Greek and a bit in Aramaic), over a period of more than a thousand years, by more than 40 authors of varying ages and backgrounds who wrote on three continents (Asia, Africa and Europe).

The New Testament speaks of the Old Testament as “Scripture,” translated from the Greek word *graphe* meaning “writing,” while the word bible comes from the Greek word for book.

Authors of the Bible include kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen and scholars. The books of the Bible cover history, sermons, letters, songs and love letters. There are geographical surveys, architectural specifications, travel diaries, population statistics, family trees, inventories and numerous legal documents. It covers hundreds of controversial subjects with amazing unity. It’s also the best-selling book of all time and is now available in nearly 3,000 languages.

The Old Testament was written on papyrus—a form of paper made out of reeds; the New Testament was written on parchment (prepared animal skins). Because both forms of documents easily degrade under hot and dry conditions, it is providential that we have so many copies of ancient

manuscripts. Incidentally, the various chapter and verse divisions in the Bible were not part of the original books. A lecturer at the University of Paris created the chapter divisions in 1228. Its current chapter and verse divisions were not fully developed until 1551. They were added, like an address on a home, to help people locate things quickly and easily.

The Scriptures exist for many reasons, and chief among them is the revelation of the person and work of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. This is precisely how Jesus Himself taught us to rightly understand the Bible as the following examples indicate:

- “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish, but to fulfill.” (Matt. 5:17)
- “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.” (Luke 24:27)
- “He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms concerning Me.’ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.” (Luke 24:44-45)
- “You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe the One He has sent. You search the Scriptures, because you think in them you have eternal life. These are they who bear witness of Me.” (John 5:38-39)

How is your Bible reading going? If you do not know where to start, a good place to begin is the Gospel of Luke in the New Testament and continue reading from there. {eo}

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