

Discover the Bible



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of discovering this book
called the Bible here*



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SEMIANJUNG MALAYSIA



The Bible Basics Discovery Series

Discover the Bible



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Dr Ng Kam Weng

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New International Version ® NIV®
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Peter C. T. Lim

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Foreword

The Christian Bible is one of the most exciting books the world has ever had. It is a book which has been translated into the most number of languages, and has the record of the most copies sold. Many have claimed that the Bible is for all time and relevant in all situations. To Christians, the Bible is the Word of God - 'it can keep one from falling into sin; can understand and search the deepest soul of each person; becomes the light to one's path and lamp to one's feet; is the truth and can set one free...'.

This book **Discover the Bible** attempts to present to its readers a comprehensive overview of the whole Bible and the challenges and successes it has gone through the last few thousand years. It presents to us, the modern day readers, the many lives that were affected and changed for the better because of the Bible and its preservation. The testimonies of many people, some of which have been mentioned in this book, speaks loudly of the usefulness and dynamic effect of this book - the Bible.

I would personally like to recommend you to read The Bible, first with the help of this **Discover the Bible** and eventually the whole Bible itself. Because the Word of God is so powerful that the Bible claims that 'once it goes out, it will not return empty' but will accomplish what it is set out to do. (Isaiah 55:11)

May the good Lord continue to lead and bless you who seek and search for the truth.

'If you know the Truth, the Truth will set you free.' (John 17:17)



Rt. Revd. Datuk Ng Moon Hing
Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of West Malaysia

Preface

We live in an age where information is easily available and many young people have many questions about the Bible. How did the Bible come about? How reliable is it? Is it corrupted as claimed by some people? Is the Bible still relevant to the contemporary issues of today?

This book, **Discover the Bible**, is not the Bible itself but is a good companion to it. It helps to answer some of the questions that we have about the Bible. How did we come to have the Old and New Testament? Why can we trust the reliability and accuracy of the text? Why did so many men and women devote themselves, and some even sacrificed their lives, to bring us the Bible as we know it today?

Besides the focus on these questions, this book also shows us how the Bible has influenced societies and transformed social, political and public policies that affect us, in particular the lives of women and children. We are shown how the Bible has impacted social justice and education in a big way.

Besides reading this book, I would like to encourage you to read the Bible itself. This book gives you some suggestions on how you can begin reading the Bible. Who knows, your life might yet be transformed as mine was and continues to be by the Word of God.



Mr Koh Earn Soo
Executive Director
Scripture Union Peninsular Malaysia



Credits

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Why Read the Bible?

1.1 BOOKS THAT HAVE MADE AN IMPACT ON HISTORY



Hello readers, I am Jessica and this is my colleague Roy. Together we are going to bring you on a journey to learn more about this book called The Bible.

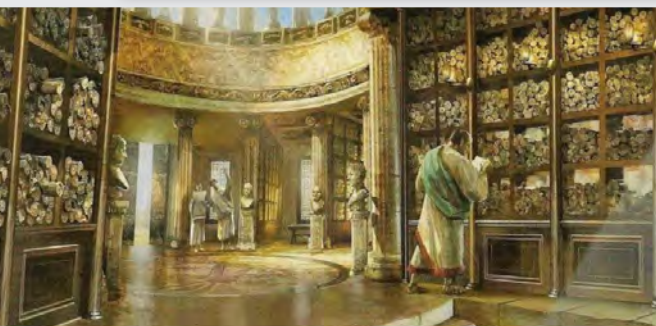
Books have played an important role in the advancement of the human civilization. The ability to record our thoughts, scientific discoveries, commercial transactions, history and inventions is all made possible because of books.

The written record whether on stone, clay, skin, paper, bound books or electronic media has helped us progress and shaped our world today.

Libraries of books, the original Google Cloud repository of knowledge, has helped us to catalogue and transmit our knowledge so that future generations not only can repeat what we have achieved but also to improve on it.



*Epic of Gilgamesh from Ashurbanipal.
Electronic mass storage devices.
Source: Wikimedia Commons*

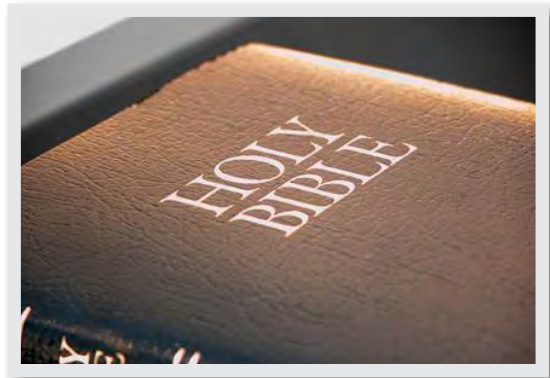


Artist impression of the Great Library of Alexandria c. 200 BC. Picture source: Wikimedia Commons



Inside the Library of Alexandria today. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Many great books have been written in the past which have impacted human civilisation. Examples include: Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*; *The Republic* by Plato, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*; *Procedure for Writing Words, Music and Plainsong in Dots* by Louis Braille; *The Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin, *Das Kapital* by Karl Marx and many others. In 2010, Google estimated that there were around 130 million titles of books in the world.



The Holy Bible

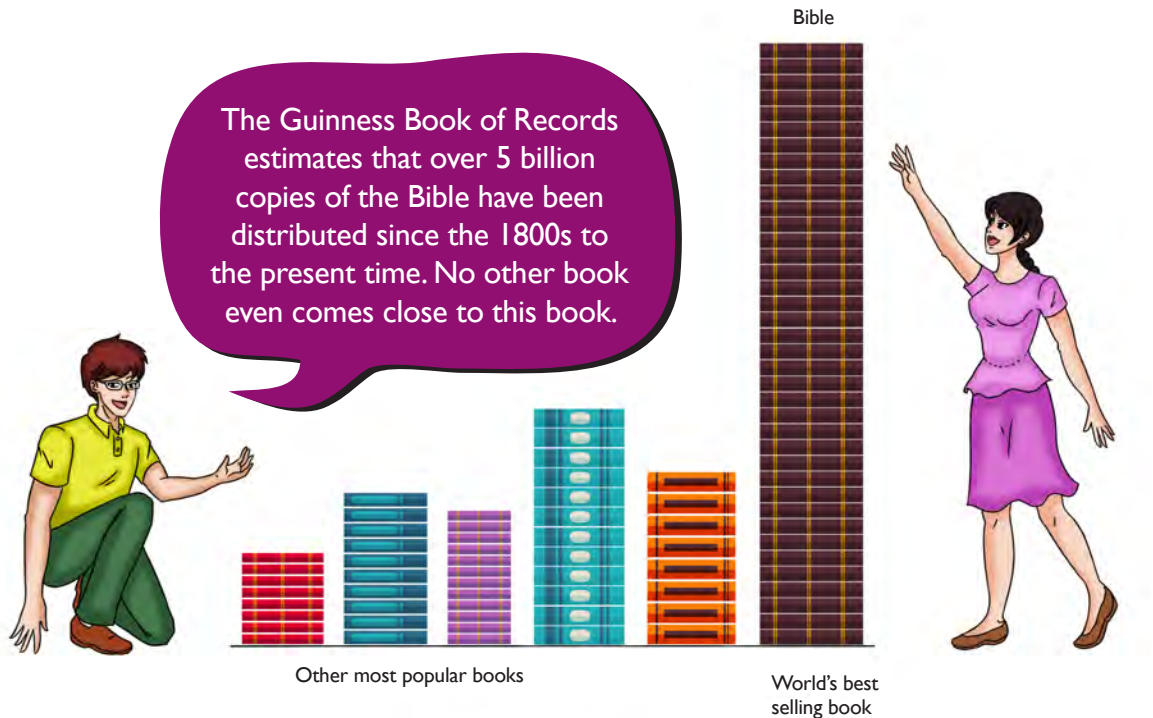
But if we were asked to pick one book that stands out as having made the biggest impact in shaping history and continuing to influence society today, most historians will put the Bible on top of the list.

Much of modern civilization, with its advancement in politics and technology along with its sense of social justice can be traced back to this book. Hence it is worth taking a closer look and discovering why the Bible is so important.



1.2 THE ALL-TIME BEST-SELLER

The Bible is the best-selling book of all time. According to the Guinness Book of World Records, there is little doubt that the Bible is the world's best-selling and most widely distributed book of all time. A survey by the Bible Society concluded that around 2.5 billion copies were printed between 1815 and 1975.



Source: Guinness Book of World Records

<https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/best-selling-book-of-non-fiction/>

1.3 MOST-TRANSLATED BOOK

Today, literally thousands of linguists have dedicated their lives to translating the Bible into every known active language on the face of the earth. Often, the Bible is the first book translated into previously unwritten languages.

According to Wycliffe Bible Translators, in October 2019, 1548 language groups had access to the New Testament in their native language and 698 language groups had the full Bible.



19th Century Bible Translators in Siam.
Picture source: Wikimedia Commons



Wycliffe Bible Translators in Ethiopia.
Picture source: www.wycliffeethiopia.org



Picture source: <https://www.wycliffe.net/resources/scripture-access-statistics/>

1.4 IT SHAPED OUR WORLD AND LANGUAGE

The Bible has played an incomparable role in shaping the English language, which in turn has influenced many other languages through modern technology and media.

For example, phrases such as ‘the blind leading the blind’, ‘turn the other cheek’, ‘walk the extra mile’, ‘the writing’s on the wall’, ‘love your enemies’, ‘good Samaritan’, ‘wash one’s hand of’ and many other phrases all come from the Bible.



“The whole range of English language and literature is much indebted to the Bible for its dignity and richness.”
Picture source: <https://www.eng-literature.com>

The English language is loaded with Biblical imagery that have become embedded in our cultural way of speaking and thinking.



The Parable of the Blind Leading the Blind.
Painting by Pieter Bruegel the Elder c.1568 from the National Museum of Capodimonte, Naples, Italy by Wikimedia Commons

1.5 THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL AND PERSECUTED BOOK

The Bible is the holy scripture for its 2.4 billion Christians. But it is also the most banned book around the world, in one form or another. Many countries may allow tourists to carry in a foreign language Bible such as an English Bible but would confiscate a Bible printed in the native or common language of their citizens.



Why are they afraid of the Bible? Is it because they are concerned that the teachings of the Bible will transform the lives and ways of thinking of their citizens?

Besides governments, how have individuals responded to the Bible?

While to many the Bible is a most beloved book, to many others, it is a most hated book.

The simple lessons it carries can be understood by children, and yet many of its complex messages have challenged the minds of intellectuals.

China has banned on-line sales of the Bible. Ironically, China is the largest source of printed Bibles but places severe restrictions on its own citizens on what versions of the Bible can be used in the 'state-approved' churches. Picture source: NYTimes

1.6 WHAT TOPICS OR ISSUES DOES THE BIBLE DEAL WITH?

What topics or issues does the Bible deal with that make it so interesting and sometimes controversial?

Very briefly, the Bible deals with basic questions like who we are and what is our purpose here on earth. It also shows us how God has created us; what He has created us for and how we have broken our relationship with Him through rebellion.

It helps answer questions like how do we deal with fear, anger, guilt, sadness. It gives us a social justice system based on God's view. But most importantly, it tells of how God has reached down to humankind in



Apostle Peter preaching to the family of Cornelius leading to their conversion. Picture source: Wikimedia Commons

the past and continues to do so even now, so that we can be reconciled back to Him.

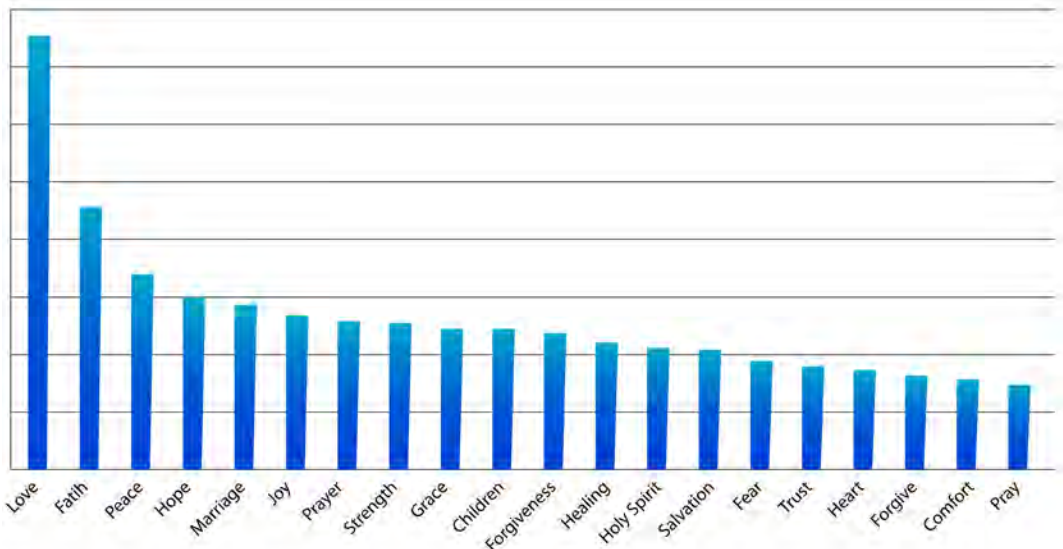
YOUNG PEOPLE WANT WISDOM FROM THE BIBLE

Millions of Americans say the Bible can help them address life's twists, turns and troubles. This is particularly true of Mosaics (ages 18-28), who are more likely than average to show interest in the Bible's wisdom on the topics below. This is a notable trend since Mosaics read the Bible less often, and with less interest than older generations.

| Interested in the Bible's wisdom on: | All adults | Mosaics |
|--------------------------------------|------------|---------|
| Dealing with illness / death | 28% | 33% |
| Addressing family conflict | 24% | 40% |
| Parenting | 22% | 42% |
| Romance and sexuality | 17% | 30% |
| Dating and relationships | 16% | 35% |
| The influence of technology | 12% | 14% |
| Dealing with divorce | 8% | 15% |

Source: American Bible Society's State of the Bible 2013 - Barna Group

Top Keyword Searches of the Bible



Source: BibleGateway.com

2 | What is the Bible?

2.1 THE BIBLE IS A VERY UNIQUE BOOK

It is actually a library of books which are divided into two broad sections:

1. The Old Testament
2. The New Testament



Testament means Covenant or special agreement. In the context of the Bible it means a special or holy agreement between God and mankind.



There are 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament. Some of the books are long and some are very short. For example, several books in the New Testament are basically letters written to the early church and so are short but some of the books of history are much longer.

2.2 HOW DID THE CHAPTERS AND VERSES OF THE BIBLE COME ABOUT?

Although not originally in the text, chapters and verses were added to help the readers identify specific passages in the Bible.

The chapter divisions commonly used today were developed by Stephen Langton, an Archbishop of Canterbury. Langton put the modern chapter divisions into place around AD 1227.



Stephen Langton
Picture source: Wikimedia Commons



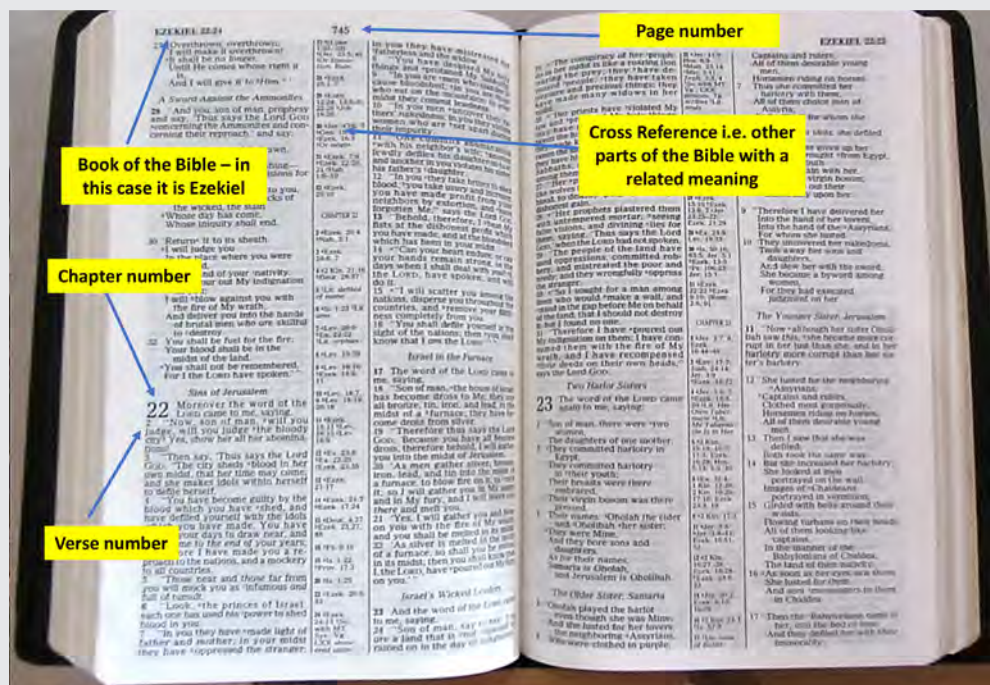
The Hebrew Old Testament was divided into verses by a Jewish rabbi by the name of Nathan in AD1448. Robert Estienne, who was also known as Stephanus, was the first to divide the New Testament into standard numbered verses, in 1555. Stephanus essentially used Nathan's verse divisions for the Old Testament. Since that time, beginning with the Geneva Bible, the chapter and verse divisions employed by Stephanus have been accepted into nearly all the Bible versions.



Robert Estienne Stephanus
Picture source: Public Domain
via Wikipedia

The first English Bible to use the modern standard chapters and verse division was the Geneva Bible, first published in 1560.

Today, we still follow this chapter and verse division. The picture shows a typical modern Bible. The Bible chapter and verses have been highlighted.



2.3 WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT STYLES OF WRITING OR GENRES FOUND IN THE BIBLE?

There are 66 books in the Bible. Sometimes we may find certain sections of the Bible difficult to understand. This is because there are many different genres or styles of writing in the different books of the Bible.

Sometimes there are multiple styles of writing within a book of the Bible for example the first five books of the Bible contain history and law.

Knowing the style of writing in a particular book is important because it helps us understand what message the writer intended to convey to his readers. We do this in modern times too.

For example, when we read a newspaper report of an event, we expect to read facts about the event. But if we read a comic, we do not expect everything in the comic to literally have happened but



rather it is a description of an event or person in a sometimes humorous or sad way.

2.4 WHY IS THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE?

The Bible was written and compiled over a period of about 1,500 years! No other book can make this claim.

Over such a long period of time, culture and historical context play an important role in understanding the message found in different portions of the Bible.

In the 1,500 years span of the Bible's history, several empires dominated the known world; The Assyrian, Babylonian,

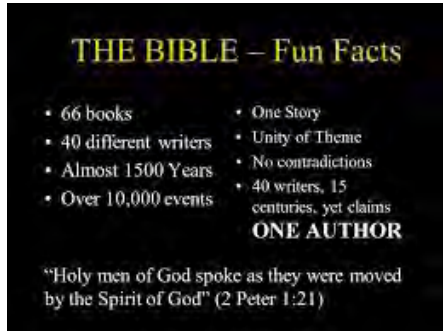
Persian, Greek and Roman Empires just to name a few. Each of these dominant powers had languages and cultures of their own. The message of the Bible is not limited to any one period. Although the original readers may have belonged to a certain century or era, the lessons are for all ages.

We have to understand what the message for the first reader was first to be able to discover what the lesson may hold for us in our present time.

2.5 WHO WERE THE WRITERS OF THE BIBLE?

While God is the ultimate author of the Bible, He used human agents to write different books of the Bible.

The Bible was written by 40 different authors.



For further reading look up

<https://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/who-wrote-the-bible>

Some of the authors were kings like David and Solomon. Moses who wrote the first five books of the Bible was a former prince of Egypt. Other authors included prophets and scribes who recorded the history of Israel. Yet many other books were written by ordinary people like Matthew, the former tax collector and the apostles who

originally were fishermen. One was written by a non-Jew named Luke, who was a physician.

God did not dictate the words to these authors but rather He gave them a message and allowed the author to write it in the best way possible in the context of their culture and history.

It is therefore important for us to know the genre and the historical and cultural context of the writing to gain a better understanding of the message.



Prophet Isaiah predicts the Return of the Jews from exile 1560-1565.



Nicolas Poussin - The Judgment of Solomon



Brooklyn Museum - The Communion of the Apostles (La communion des apôtres) - James Tissot.

WHO WROTE MOST IN THE BIBLE?



Source: OverviewBible.com, Jeffrey Kaaz

AUTHORS OF THE *New Testament*

| BOOK | AUTHOR | BOOKS | AUTHOR | BOOKS | AUTHOR |
|---------|-----------|-----------------|--------|------------|---------|
| MATTHEW | MATTHEW | ROMANS | PAUL | HEBREWS | UNKNOWN |
| | | 1 CORINTHIANS | | JAMES | JAMES |
| | | 2 CORINTHIANS | | 1 PETER | PETER |
| MARK | JOHN MARK | GALATIANS | | 2 PETER | |
| | | EPHESIANS | | 1 JOHN | JOHN |
| LUKE | LUKE | PHILIPPIANS | | 2 JOHN | |
| | | COLOSSIANS | | 3 JOHN | |
| JOHN | JOHN | 1 THESSALONIANS | | JUDE | JUDE |
| | | 2 THESSALONIANS | | REVELATION | JOHN |
| ACTS | LUKE | 1 TIMOTHY | | | |
| | | 2 TIMOTHY | | | |
| | | TITUS | | | |
| | | PHILEMON | | | |

3 | The Old Testament

3.1 GEOGRAPHY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

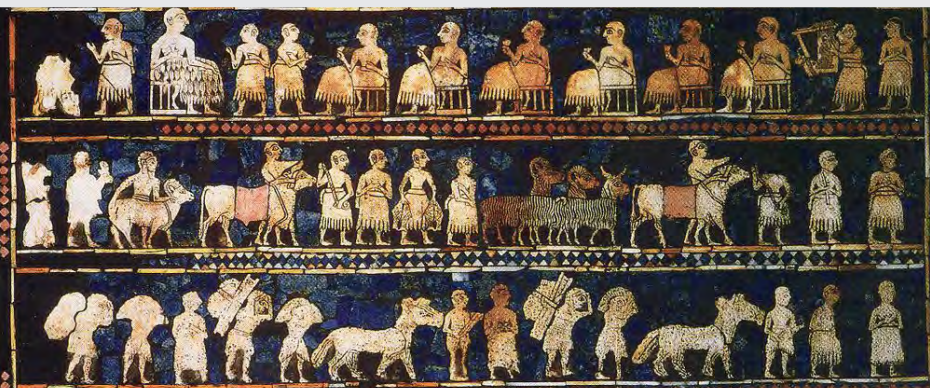


The book of Genesis begins with the creation of the world. After the flood, the story of Genesis focuses on the family of Abraham from Ur.



Map of the Old Testament World Bible, Source:bible-history.com

Then the rest of the Old Testament is set in the world of the fertile crescent from modern day Persia/ Iran in the East to Egypt in the West. It also covers from Turkey in the north to Ethiopia in the south.



Ur Mosaic Showing Migration of People c.2000 BC – British Museum

3.2 TIMELINE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament begins with the phrase “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” found in Genesis chapter 1 verse 1.

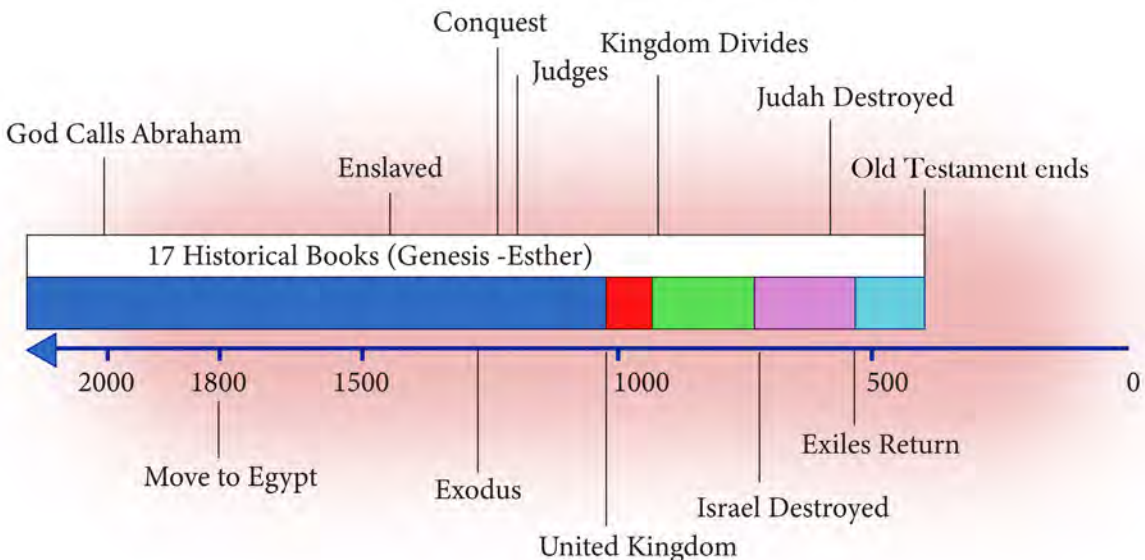
This was probably a part of the Hebrew oral history which was passed down from generation to generation. This was before we had written history and so is very difficult to place in a time that we know of.

However, when we come to the story of Abraham, we are given more information which tells us the place and roughly the date when the story occurs. Abraham came from Ur, and it was approximately 2000 years BC, before the birth of Christ or BCE, before the common era.

The Old Testament ends with the book of Malachi which was written around 400 BCE.



Genesis about Creation of world and Garden of Eden here. Source: Pristine World



<https://www.slideshare.net/Turnwall/old-testament-overview>

3.3 BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

There are 39 books in the Old Testament grouped in the following categories. The chart shows the books and their respective number of chapters.

The books are exactly the same as what is found in the Hebrew Scriptures except that in the Bible we have divided some of the books into two parts. For example, the book of Kings in the Hebrew Scriptures is divided into first and second Kings in the Bible.

The first five books of the Bible are called the Pentateuch or the books of the Law. They were written by Moses.

Then the next set of books are called the books of history. There are 12 books of history.

This is followed by 5 books of Poetry, 5 books of Major Prophets and 12 books of Minor Prophets.

The minor prophets are not any less important than the major prophets. They are called minor because they have fewer chapters.

BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

POETRY

| | |
|-------------|----|
| Genesis | 50 |
| Exodus | 40 |
| Leviticus | 27 |
| Numbers | 36 |
| Deuteronomy | 34 |

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| Job | 43 |
| Psalms | 150 |
| Proverbs | 31 |
| Ecclesiastes | 12 |
| Song of Solomon | 34 |

HISTORY

| | |
|-----------|----|
| Joshua | 24 |
| Judges | 21 |
| Ruth | 4 |
| I Samuel | 31 |
| II Samuel | 24 |
| I Kings | 22 |

| | |
|---------------|----|
| II Kings | 25 |
| I Chronicles | 29 |
| II Chronicles | 36 |
| Ezra | 10 |
| Nehemiah | 13 |
| Esther | 10 |

MAJOR PROPHETS

| | |
|----------|----|
| Isaiah | 66 |
| Jeremiah | 52 |

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Lamentations | 5 |
| Ezekiel | 48 |
| Daniel | 12 |

MINOR PROPHETS

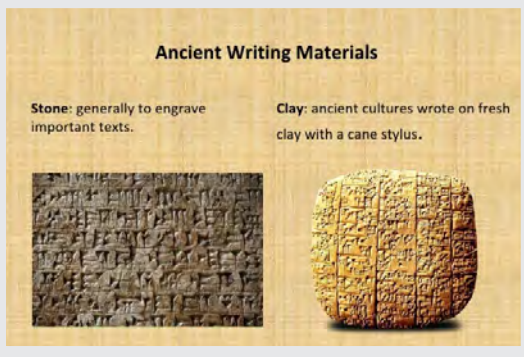
| | |
|---------|----|
| Hosea | 14 |
| Joel | 3 |
| Amos | 9 |
| Obadiah | 1 |
| Jonah | 4 |
| Micah | 7 |

| | |
|-----------|----|
| Nahum | 3 |
| Habakkuk | 3 |
| Zephaniah | 3 |
| Haggai | 2 |
| Zechariah | 14 |
| Malachi | 4 |

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3.4 HOW WAS THE OLD TESTAMENT WRITTEN AND GATHERED TOGETHER?

The Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew with small portions of it in Aramaic. Aramaic was the common language of the region much like Greek was during the New Testament times and English is today.



Cuneiform on stone and clay tablets.
Source: historic connections

Different types of writing materials could have been used. It could have been carved on stone, like the Ten Commandments, or chiselled on clay tablets, or written with special ink on papyrus and leather. Moses, who was fostered by a princess of Egypt, would have been taught these methods of writing.



Ancient writing on papyrus paper.
Egyptian reed from the Nile made the best papyrus paper and was excellent for writing.
Picture source: Metropolitan Museum of Art

Entire books of the Old Testament came to be written on scrolls of leather; and later, of papyrus. They were the pre-cursor of our modern day printed books.



Papyrus could be cut in square or rectangular sheets and then sewn together with a cover to look like a book. Sheets sewn together to form a book were known as a codex and became popular from the Roman era onwards.



Ezra reading the Law to the Jews. Illustration by Gustave Dore.

Around 450 BC, Ezra, a priest and scribe, collected some of the books of the Hebrew Bible and put them together to form their Jewish Scriptures. Over time, these books became the final list of books that make up the Old Testament.



3.5 WHY IS THE OLD TESTAMENT A PART OF THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE?

The Old Testament is an integral part of the Bible because it sets the scene for how God created the world good and perfect. This perfection was damaged when the man and woman rebelled against God.

Below is a chart showing how the Old and New Testament are different but yet complement each other.

The fellowship between God and man was broken. Then the rest of the story is about how God reaches out to bring mankind back to Him.

| Old Testament | New Testament |
|--|--|
| 39 books | 27 books |
| Written from around 1450 to 400 BC | Written from around 49 to 96 CE |
| Theme centres around humanities need for redemption | Theme centres around God's provision of redemption |
| Prophesying and preparing the way for Christ | Presenting the life and works of Christ |
| The Law is emphasised | Grace is emphasised |
| Animal sacrifices made repeatedly to temporarily forgive sins | Christ sacrificed once-for-all to forever forgive sins |
| The 12 twelve tribes of Israel are prominent | The 12 disciples of Christ are prominent |
| God wants to reveal His glory through Israel | God wants to reveal His glory through the church |
| Begins in a garden (of Eden) with God's creation being ruined by sin | Ends with God's creation of a new heaven and a new earth cleansed of sin because of Christ's sacrifice |

Reference: *Self-guided Tour of the Bible* by Rose Publishing

4 | The New Testament



The New Testament books start with the 4 Gospels, which are based in the country that we know today as Israel and its immediate surrounding regions.

Refer to the maps for the places mentioned in the New Testament:
4.1.1 - Israel in the Time of Jesus



Herod Temple - Pristine World Museum

After the Gospels, the book of Acts of the Apostles tells the story of how the apostles brought the Good News outside of Jerusalem and beyond. Then, the apostle Paul, carries the Gospel on his missionary trips and eventually ends up in Rome.



4.1.2 - Areas mentioned in the New Testament



4.1.3 - Seas mentioned in the New Testament



4.1.4 - Important Islands in the New Testament



4.1.5 - Roman Provinces in Europe in the New Testament era



4.1.6 - Roman Provinces in the East mentioned in the New Testament



Rome had conquered and subdued much of the land around the Mediterranean Sea. The peace under Rome allowed the apostles to travel and preach the Gospel relatively easier



4.2 TIMELINE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

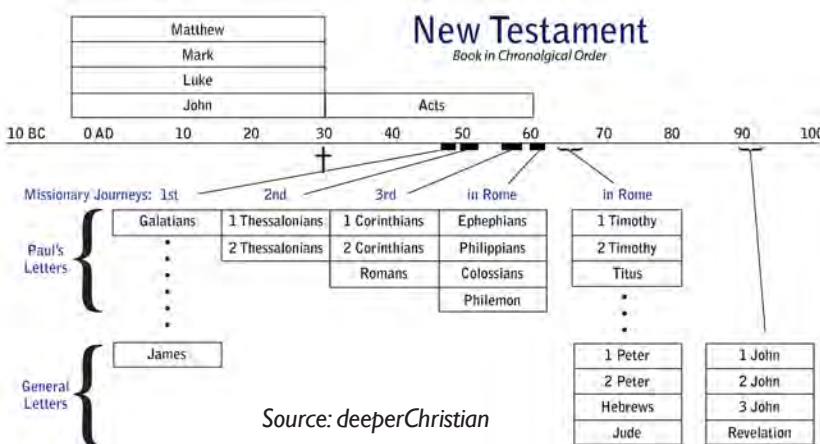
Most Bible scholars and historians date the birth of Christ at around 4 BC. This is because King Herod, who is mentioned in the Gospels as the king of Judea during the birth of Christ, died in 4 BC.

Jesus' time on earth was around 33 years from birth to resurrection. This means the events of the Gospel took place from approximately 4 BC to about 29-30 AD.

After the ascension of Jesus, the history of the early church continues with The Acts of the Apostles. The last book of the New Testament, Revelation, was written by the apostle John who was exiled to the prison colony island of Patmos in around 90-95 AD. The span of the New Testament is therefore around 100 years.

Apostle Paul's missionary journeys began around 47 AD and ended in house arrest

in Rome, where he was finally executed by Emperor Nero around AD 64-67. Many of his letters were written during this period. Paul's letters form about a quarter of the words found in the New Testament.



TIMELINE OF APOSTLE PAUL

| YEARS A.D | MAJOR EVENTS | ACTS | PERIOD | LETTERS |
|-----------------|--|-------|---------------------|---|
| 34 | Conversion, Damascus, Arabia | 9 | 3 years – Arabia | |
| 37 | Jerusalem, Tarsus, Syria, Cilicia | | | |
| 46-47 | Antioch, Jerusalem | 11 | 1 year – Antioch | |
| 48-49 | First Missionary Journey and Antioch | 13-14 | | Galatians |
| 50 | Jerusalem Council and Antioch | 15 | | |
| 51-53 | Second Missionary Journey | 16-18 | 18 months - Corinth | 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians |
| 54-57 | Third Missionary Journey | 19-21 | 3 years - Ephesus | 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians Romans |
| 57 | Jerusalem Arrest | 22-23 | | |
| 57-59 | Caesarea Prisoner | 24-26 | 2 years | |
| 59-60 | Journey to Rome | 27-28 | | |
| 60-67* circa | Rome House Arrest *Note: Scholars believe this period includes Paul's house arrest, initial release and subsequent re-arrest and execution. | 28 | 6 or 7 years | Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians, 1 Timothy, Titus 2 Timothy |

Source: conformingToJesus.com

4.3 BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

There are 27 books in the New Testament divided into 4 basic categories or genres

1. Biography/History/Gospel – They are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John

2. History – Acts of the Apostles

| BIOGRAPHY | HISTORY |
|-----------|---------|
| Matthew | Acts |
| Mark | |
| Luke | |
| John | |

3. Letters or Epistles – written by the apostles to the early churches. These letters were copied and read throughout a region. Over time, they were regarded as authoritative and used to teach doctrine.

13 of them were written by the apostle Paul, and another 8 by the other apostles.

4. Prophecy – The Revelation – the only book in this category and the last book of the Bible was written by the Apostle John

| LETTERS | | PROPHECY |
|-----------------|----------|------------|
| Romans | Titus | Revelation |
| 1 Corinthians | Philemon | |
| 2 Corinthians | Hebrews | |
| Galatians | James | |
| Ephesians | 1 Peter | |
| Philippians | 2 Peter | |
| Colossians | 1 John | |
| 1 Thessalonians | 2 John | |
| 2 Thessalonians | 3 John | |
| 1 Timothy | Jude | |
| 2 Timothy | | |

4.4 HOW WERE THE 27 BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT SELECTED

The 27 books of the New Testament were selected over a period of time based on the following criteria:

1. The books in the New Testament were written by an apostle or someone very close to an apostle. An apostle was someone who had seen Jesus, was a witness to the life and resurrection of Jesus or someone who had received instructions from Jesus.

2. The content of the book had to be consistent with both the Old Testament and the teachings of the apostles.



John Mark, writer of Mark's Gospel obtained eyewitness account of the life of Jesus from the Apostle Simon Peter.

Picture source of painting: Public Domain

3. The books had to have a wide acceptance by the church from its writing to around 300 AD. By the time the New Testament Canon was closed in the early fourth century AD, there were thousands of churches spread across three continents.

A Canon was a list. In this case the Canon meant the official accepted list of books that were believed to be authoritative and inspired by God.



Paul writing his epistles painting by Valentin de Boulogne c. 1620. Picture source: Wikimedia Commons

4.5 WHO ARE THE MAIN CHARACTERS DESCRIBED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

The most important person in the New Testament is the person of Jesus of Nazareth, described in the Bible as Immanuel or God in human form. He is both the Son of God as well as the son of Mary. Jesus is the central character of not only the New Testament but of the whole Bible.

The Old Testament promises the coming of the Messiah and describes in prophetic ways what Jesus would do. The New Testament describes the life and works of Jesus in more detail and what happens to the church after that.



Other than Jesus, many other characters played important roles in the Gospel story and the Acts of the Apostles. Some of the principal characters will include the 12 disciples of Jesus, who except for Judas Iscariot, later became the apostles... led by Simon Peter. Then there is Mary and Joseph the earthly parents of Jesus; John the Baptist, King Herod, Pontius Pilate the governor of Judea and Saul of Tarsus who later became known as the Apostle Paul.

Jesus Healing the Blind Man. Painting by Carl Bloch c. 1871

Picture source: Wikimedia Commons

5 | The Bible Taught in Many Ways Through the Ages

Over the centuries, the Bible has been taught in a variety of ways. Christians used open air preaching, closed door meetings, small group Bible studies, large cathedral paintings, music, drama, art, films, hymnals to modern digital media. Let's take a look now at how the Bible was taught through the ages.

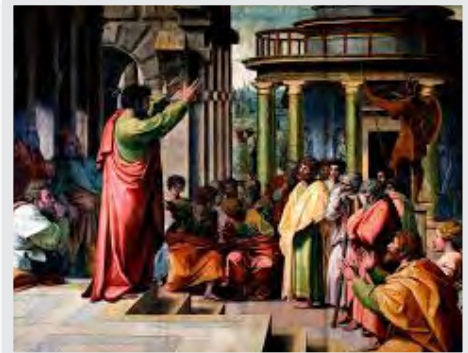
Students using different media to study and represent Bible stories.
Source: Pristine World



5.1 TEACHING BY THE APOSTLES

In the beginning, the holy scriptures were taught by the apostles, teaching in the Temple in Jerusalem. Later as the Gospel message was carried to and accepted by people outside of Israel, the apostles used open air markets, halls and small houses to teach. But it was always taught by teachers using the scripture as a reference.

Painting of Apostle Paul, preaching in Athens by Rafael c. 1515
Source: Wikimedia Commons



5.2 CLASSICAL ART

In the middle ages, various artists inspired by the Bible, created visual depictions of stories from the Bible.

They used these images to express their dedication and also to help others understand the Bible stories better because in that era, many peasants were illiterate. They could not read the Bible. So, the teachers used these images to help them understand the Bible story.



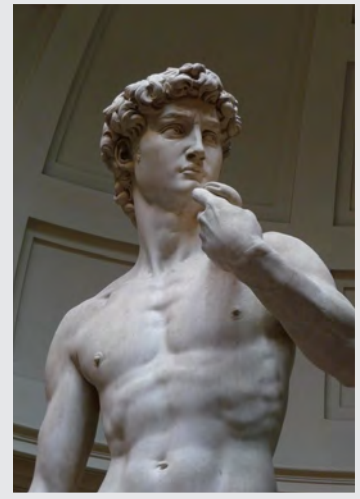
Painting by Rembrandt – Belshazzar's Feast c. 1635

5.3 THE BIBLE IN 3-D

During the renaissance, in the 15-16th century AD, famous artists such as Michelangelo created beautiful sculptures that depicted scenes from the Bible.

*Statue of David by Michelangelo
in Milan, Italy.*

Picture source: Wikimedia
commons



5.4 THE BIBLE INSPIRES CLASSICAL ART

Many of the artists in the middle ages were inspired to put their visions of the Bible stories in painting. With the mass of people being illiterate, art and illustrations was used as a form of teaching the Bible.

The art and painting in turn inspires many of the believers in their faith. Some of the most famous painters in the renaissance era include Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Rembrandt and Gustave Dore.

References:

- Michelangelo - <https://www.artbible.info/art/work/michelangelo-buonarroti>.
- Leonardo da Vinci – refer to <https://www.artbible.info/art/biography/leonardo-da-vinci>.
- Rembrandt – refer to <https://www.artbible.info/art/rembrandt-biblical-work.html>
- Gustave Dore – refer to <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/8710/8710-h/8710-h.htm>



*Painting of Christ leaving the Court
By Gustave Dore*



The Lord is my Good Shepherd.

5.5 DRAMA TO TEACH AND BRING LIFE TO THE BIBLE



The Great Passion Play in Arkansas, USA.

Picture source: materializing the Bible

Another way of bringing the Gospel and Bible stories to the masses was through open air plays. Actors would act out scenes from the Bible stories with minimum props. If the people could not read, they could certainly watch and listen.

One of the most famous plays which has been re-generated in many forms and in many countries is the Great Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany, which started in 1648 and plays once every 10 years. Other similar plays occur in many parts of the world.

Reference: <https://www.materializingthebible.com/live-biblical-theatre.html>

See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kA1asVO4eIU>

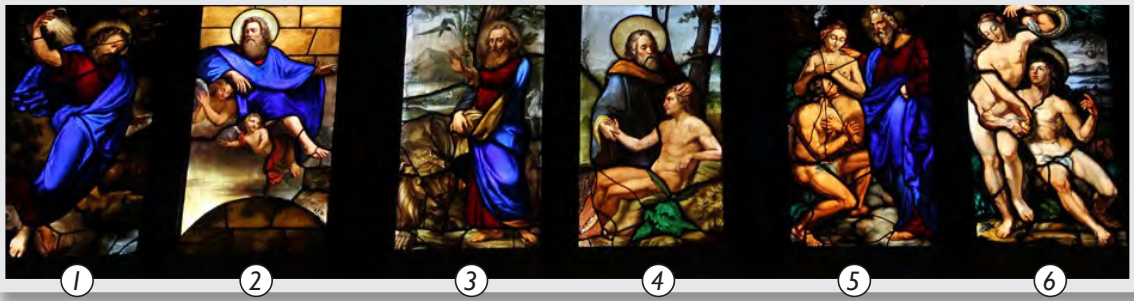
5.6 THE BIBLE IN STAINED GLASS ART

Many of the cathedrals built in the 11th to the 20th century are decorated by beautiful stained glass art that tell the Bible stories.



Main wall behind the altar containing multiple stained-glass art frames telling the Bible stories from Genesis to Revelations.

Photo by: Author



From left to right: 1. In the Beginning God creates the universe. 2. God creates the world. 3. God creates all living things on earth. 4. God creates Adam. 5. God creates Eve and brings her to Adam. 6. The serpent tempts Adam and Eve.

Again, this was so that peasants who could not read, could see the pictures of the Bible stories on the walls lighted up by the sun from behind.



Cathedral of Milan. Cathedrals were built to inspire people to worship. Inside, the stained glass contains pictures that depict the Bible stories as shown above. Photo by: Author

5.7 THE BIBLE IN MUSIC AND SONGS

One of the most important ways in which the ordinary people were taught doctrine and scripture was through songs or hymns.

In the Bible itself, we see many of the heroes composing or participating in singing as part of worship. The lyrics of the songs spoke of their feelings toward God. If they were happy, or sad, feeling guilty or exalted, these emotions were captured in many of the Psalms in the Bible. Likewise, Christians throughout the ages, used songs to inspire, encourage and teach the Bible lessons.



David playing the harp
Painting by Jan de Bray c. 1670
Source: Public Domain

5.7.1 Charles Wesley



Charles Wesley.

Picture source: Wikimedia Commons

When John Wesley started the Methodist movement in the 18th Century AD in England, his brother, Charles, provided much of the music and songs or hymns that their followers would sing.

Charles Wesley who lived from 1707 to 1788 composed over a thousand songs. Today, more than 150 of them are still in the Methodist hymnals sung in churches. His songs were popular and taught important Bible lessons.

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Charles Wesley

William H. Cummings

1 Hark! the her-ald an-gels sing, "Glo-ry to the new-born King: peace on earth, and
2 Christ, by high-est heav'n a-dored, Christ, the ev-er-las-ting Lord, late in time be-
3 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Right-eous-ness! Light and life to

mer-cy mild, God and sin-ners re-con-cited! Joy-ful, all ye na-tions, rise,
hold him come, off-spring of the Vir-gin's womb: veiled in flesh the God-head see;
all he brings, ris'n with heal-ing in his wings. Mild He lays his glo-ry by,

join the tri-umph of the skies; with th'an-ge-lic host pro-claim, "Christ is _born in
hail th'in-car-nate De-i-cy, pleased as man with us to dwell, Je-sus, our im-
born that we ne more may die, _ born to raise us from the earth, born to give us

Beth-le-hem! Hark! the her-ald an-gels sing, "Glo-ry to the new-born King."
ma-nu-el.
sec-ond birth.

12/27/2015

For example, one of today's popular Christmas Carols, Hark the Herald, was composed by Charles Wesley over 220 years ago. The lyrics teach us what the Gospel story is about: Christ coming to die for our sins, so that we may be born again. The story is found in the Bible in the Gospel of John chapter 3.

You can hear modern sample of Hark the Herald from Dublin from the internet: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xw38pGhPXIk>

5.7.2 John Newton

John Newton was another famous composer. In his early life, he was a slave trader. But after he was converted, he left his old profession and became a pastor. He encouraged William Wilberforce and other law-makers in England who eventually brought a law to ban slave trading. John Newton wrote the song Amazing Grace which reflected his life's journey from a slave trader to a pastor.

To listen to a rendition of Amazing Grace by Il Divo, click here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYMLMj-SibU>



*John Newton by William Ridley c. 1788.
Picture source: Wikimedia Commons*

5.7.3 Fanny Crosby

Fanny Crosby became blind shortly after her birth. She wrote over 8,000 hymns and gospel songs with over 100 million copies printed.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jfu_PQjQI18



*Fanny Crosby
Picture source: Wikimedia Commons*

5.8 THE BIBLE IN MOVIES

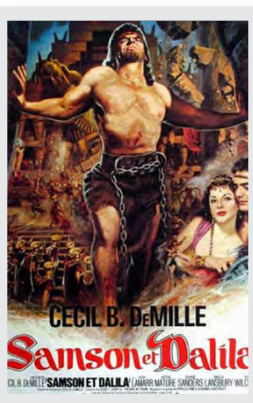
Many Bible stories have been made into movies. From as early as 1903 many film makers from Europe and Hollywood have sought to bring Bible stories to life in movies.



One of the most famous film makers was Cecile B. DeMille who made *The Ten Commandments* and *Samson and Delilah*.

Other famous and successful epics include *King of Kings*, *Jesus of Nazareth*, *The Greatest Story Ever Told* and *The Bible*. Some of these movies were faithful to the Bible story.

*The Ten Commandments c. 1956.
Source: Wikimedia Commons*



The Bible produced by Dino De Laurentiis c.1966 was a big budget movie that told the story of Genesis from Adam until Abraham.

Source: Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons

Others took dramatic liberties to dramatize the story so that it would be more attractive to the masses and earn more money at the box office. Some of these movies became controversial, like Jesus Christ Superstar.

Recently some Christian organizations have sponsored movies that stay close to the teachings in the Bible. The movies produced are then used for education as well as family entertainment.

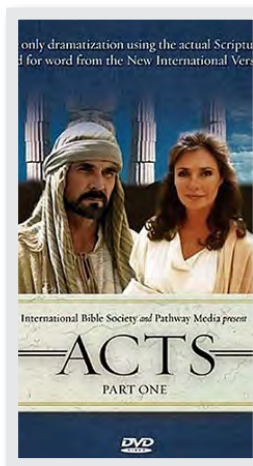
The Gospel of John, is a movie which is based on John's Gospel, word-for-word, taken from the the Good News Bible translation. Click here for the movie in Youtube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lchB_CEG5VI

Some Christian theatre productions have used the latest in modern technology to produce high quality theatre musicals that entertain as well as teach the Bible stories.

One excellent version is TBN's Light and Sound Theatres® production Jesus.

Reference: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Bible_in_film



The above are 'word-for-word' film productions based on the book of Acts and The Gospel of John respectively.

Source: IMDb



6

The Bible in the Common Language

How was the Bible made available for the common people?

As Christianity spread, people from many different ethnic groups and languages accepted the teachings of the Bible. Christianity flourished in many countries across Europe, Asia and Africa. For many years a complete Bible was only available in Hebrew for the Old Testament and Greek for the New Testament.



Picture source: <https://www.bibleinmylanguage.com/bibles/european-bibles/?sort=featured&page=4>

6.1 ST JEROME

In the fifth century AD, a Latin translation was made by St. Jerome for the Roman Church. This version of the Bible is known as the Vulgate. This became the official translation of the whole Bible.

Latin was the official language of the Roman Empire and for many centuries, it was the only language the Bible could be written in. This meant that only the clergy who were trained in Latin could read and teach the Bible as most of the people could not read Latin.

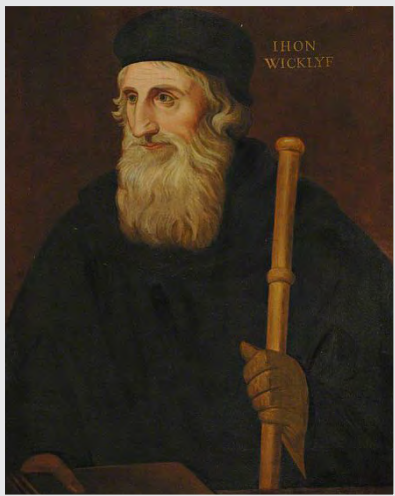
St Jerome in his study
Painting by Antonello da Messina c.1475.
 Picture source: Wikimedia Commons



6.2 JOHN WYCLIFFE - THE BATTLE FOR THE BIBLE IN ENGLISH BEGINS

By the 14th Century AD, the church had become rich, powerful and corrupt. They exercised their dominance over the people through their ignorance of what was actually in the word of God. Latin was the only language the Bible could be printed in. Anyone who tried to translate the Bible into the common language risked being

punished severely by the authorities. Some righteous scholars were convinced that the only way to break this tyranny of the clergy and rulers was to give the people the Bible in their own language. Thus began a long battle to make the Bible accessible to the common people.



John Newton by William Ridley c.1788.

Picture source: Wikimedia Commons

In 1382 John Wycliffe translated the Bible into English so that non-clergy people could read the Bible. This Bible was later banned and burned. Forty years after his death, the bones of Wycliffe were dug up and burned for his 'heresy'. However his legacy lived on through his followers who were called 'Lollards'.

Some people say the 'Lollards' were the precursor of the reformation. A hundred and fifty years later, another brilliant Englishman, William Tyndale, would pick up the torch and carry on the work of translation of the Bible into everyday English.

Exhume and burn – the bones of John Wycliffe.

Picture source: Wikimedia Commons



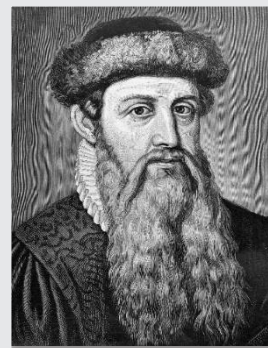
6.3 JOHANNES GUTENBERG

Up until the early fifteenth century, books were very expensive because they all had to be copied by hand.

Ordinary people could not afford to buy books. For a book like the Bible, it would take many months for a scribe to make a single copy.

How could the ordinary people get to own a personal copy of the Bible? First of all, people had to be able to make large quantities of the Bible at a much lower cost. Enter the story of Johannes Gutenberg.

Johannes Gutenberg was a metal smith, publisher and an inventor born in 1400 and died in 1468. In 1439, Gutenberg was the



Johannes Gutenberg c.1400

Source: Public Domain

first European to use a movable type metal press to print books.

This revolutionized and accelerated the way books could be produced. Instead of needing months for a single book to be copied, dozens of books could now be reproduced in a matter of days.

The cost of owning books was reduced by many times allowing ordinary people to own books instead of just the elite and nobles.



Gutenberg and his printing press.

Reproduction of a Gutenberg Press on display at the Printing History Museum in Lyon, France.

Source: Public Domain

6.4 THE GUTENBERG BIBLE



The Gutenberg Bible c. 1455.

Source: Wikimedia Commons



In 1455, the first Latin Vulgate Bible was printed with the Gutenberg press. The Bible could now be printed in large quantities and be available at a lower cost.

This means that ordinary people could afford to own a Bible. But they still could not understand it because all Bibles at this time were only in Latin or Hebrew and Greek.



6.5 THE BIBLE IN THE COMMON LANGUAGE



The next problem to overcome was letting the ordinary people read and understand the Bible. The authorities in the church had ruled that Latin was the only language the Bible could be printed in. Most of the ordinary people could not read Latin, not even many of the priests and clergy!

What follows next is the story of how a few brave people fought the authorities to translate the Bible into the common spoken language. Some of them were martyred for their efforts.

The beginning of John's Gospel in Tyndale's New Testament c. 1526. This was the first time the New Testament was published in the English language. This copy is now in the British Library. Source: Public Domain

6.6 ERASMUS

In 1516 Erasmus, in Holland, published a new Greek edition and a more accurate Latin translation of the New Testament. His goal was so that everyone could read the Bible. However, he stopped short of actually going against the church and translating the Bible into a common language. His version of the Greek New Testament became the basis of the text used by Martin Luther, William Tyndale and the King James translators later.

Painting of Erasmus by Hans Holbein c. 1525 in the Louvre Museum. Picture source: Wikimedia commons



6.7 MARTIN LUTHER

Meanwhile in Germany in 1517, Martin Luther issued 95 theses in his home town of Wittenberg, in which he was prepared to debate with the Roman church. This started a process which evolved into the Protestant movement. By this time, more and more people wanted to read the Bible in their mother tongue.



Painting of Martin Luther posting his 95 Theses by Ferdinand Pauwels c. 1872. Picture source: Wikimedia Commons

6.8 THE BIBLE IN THE GERMAN LANGUAGE



The Roman church wanted to arrest Martin Luther but he was protected by a German prince named Prince Philip. Due to extraordinary political circumstances, Luther managed to maintain his freedom and continue his work. He translated the Bible into the common German language. This made the Bible accessible to the ordinary German people. More and more German provinces began to break away from the Roman Church. The movement spread to other parts of Europe. Eventually, these protesters of the Roman church came to be called Protestants.

Cover of Luther's translation of the German Bible c. 1523

Source: Wikimedia Commons

6.9 WILLIAM TYNDALE - THE BATTLE FOR THE BIBLE IN ENGLISH CONTINUES

Back in England, in 1523, William Tyndale a brilliant Oxford scholar sought permission from the church to translate the New Testament into the common spoken English language of that time. But he could not get approval to publish it in England. He once famously told the church authorities "If God spare my life, I will cause the boy that drives the plough to know more of the Scriptures than you!"



William Tyndale from Foxes book of Martyrs.

Picture source: Wikimedia Commons

In 1524 Tyndale moved to Germany where he started his translation work. He spent almost a year with Martin Luther who encouraged him in his effort to translate the Bible into English. In 1525 he printed

his english New Testament and smuggled them back to England in sacks of corn and flour.

Providentially, at that time, Lutheran Germans dominated merchant trade in Europe. They willingly smuggled the Bibles for Tyndale. Now Tyndale was a hunted man. Moving around like a fugitive, always in disguise and working with a 'secret society' of Protestant sympathisers, he continued his translation work and in 1534 he published parts of the Old Testament while revising and improving his New Testament translation.



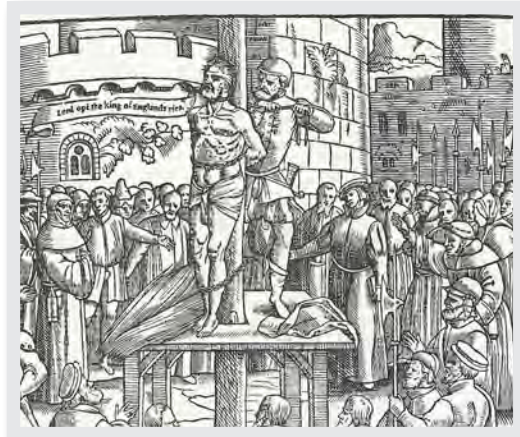
Tyndale's New Testament Bible 1526 Edition

Note the style of English at that time.

Source: from Pristine World Bible History Museum

Sadly, he was betrayed by an English spy and seized in Antwerp by imperial authorities in 1535. He was kept a prisoner in the castle of Vilvoorde near Brussels where he was tried and executed at the stake for heresy in 1536. His final words were “Lord, open the King of England’s eyes.”

Tyndale’s legacy is amazing. In the process of translating the Bible into English, Tyndale made great contributions to the development of the English Language that is so widely used even till today. Just google William Tyndale and you can read about his achievements and his legacy.



Tyndale strangled and burned at the stake c.1536
Picture source: Wikimedia Commons

6.10 JOURNEY FROM A MARTYR'S BIBLE TO THE KING'S BIBLE

Although Tyndale was now dead, two of his learned disciples, Miles Coverdale and John Rogers would continue his work with a great passion.

Tyndale’s prayer for God to open the eyes of the king of England was about to be answered.

Between 1535 and 1611 four significant English Version Bibles were printed. Translating the Bible into the English language was still dangerous business. The scholars who did it were passionate that the ordinary people should be able to read God’s word in their own language.



William Tyndale in stain glass



John’s Gospel in the Tyndale New Testament.

Picture source: Wikimedia Commons

The ability to do that meant that people would be able to question those in power in the church. Hence there was still opposition from those in high positions.

6.10.1 The Coverdale Bible 1535

The Coverdale Bible was translated by Miles Coverdale in 1535. It was the first complete Bible to be printed in English.



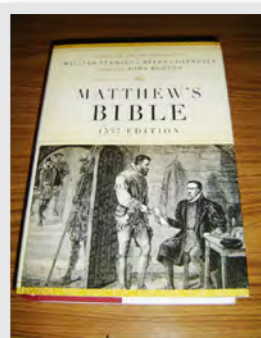
Coverdale used Tyndale's New Testament almost in its entirety and completed the Old Testament where Tyndale left off.

Title page of the Coverdale Bible c. 1535
Picture source: Wikimedia Commons

6.10.2 The Matthew's Bible 1537

It was translated by John Rogers. He disguised his name using Thomas Matthew as the translator. Even though it was the first Bible published with the king's permission, translation was still considered a dangerous thing to do.

Kings could change their minds or another monarch can take over, who was not sympathetic to the translation. It was printed just one year after Tyndale's martyrdom, so Tyndale's dying prayer was answered.



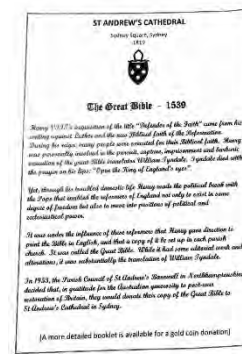
Matthew's Bible reproduction

Source: Pristine World's Bible History Museum

6.10.3 The Great Bible 1539

The Great Bible was printed by order of Thomas Cranmer, the archbishop of Canterbury who led the Anglican Church under King Henry the eighth. The Bible was called Great because it literally was big in size and it was chained to church pillars to discourage theft.

Both Thomas Cranmer and John Rogers were burned at the stake when Queen Mary, also known as 'bloody Mary', ascended the throne and banned the English translations of the Bible.



The Great Bible on display in St Andrew's Cathedral of Sydney. The Bible was printed in 1539 and donated to the Sydney parish in 1953 in gratitude for their donations at a difficult time. Photos courtesy of: C.S. Chai

6.10.4 The Geneva Bible 1560

Many English Protestant scholars fled to Geneva, Switzerland, during the reign of Queen Mary and in 1560 they published the Geneva Bible. It was a complete revision of the Great Bible with the Old Testament translated from the Hebrew.

The Geneva Bible was a Study Bible with commentary notes from famous Protestant scholars such as John Calvin, John Knox and Whittingham. It was the Bible used and quoted by William Shakespeare and the one which the Pilgrims carried to America in 1620.



The Geneva Bible c.1560
Permission by GFDL via Wikimedia Commons

6.11 RHEIMS-DOUAI BIBLE 1609



Rheims-Douai Bible

In the face of the Protestant movement, English Catholics wanted a Bible they could read in their own language.

The Catholic church translated an English Bible from the Vulgate, their official Bible in Latin. The complete Bible was finally printed in 1609. It was called the Rheims-Douai Bible. It was translated into English by Catholic scholars based in England and France and it became the standard translation for the Catholic church for many years.

6.12 KING JAMES VERSION OR THE AUTHORISED VERSION

When King James I ascended to the throne of England, he commissioned a new Bible translation with 54 scholars. In 1611, the King James Version was printed. It was also known as the Authorised Version, although King James never gave the finished version his royal approval. It was revised a few times and the edition used today was revised in 1769. It has been the most popular Bible in use for more than 300 years.



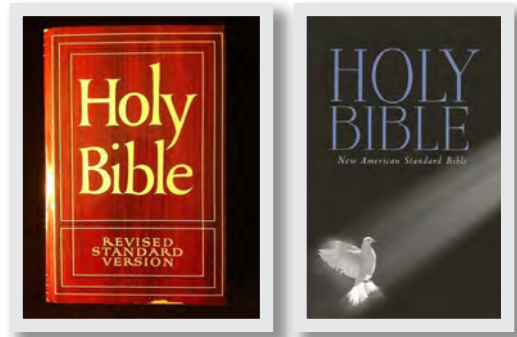
Cover page of the King James Bible c.1611
Picture source: Wikimedia Commons

6.13 METHODS OF BIBLE TRANSLATION

6.13.1 Formal Equivalence Method

Since then, many more translations have been published. Some translations stick to a direct translation of the Hebrew and Greek. They are called Formal Equivalence Translation or word for word translation. Examples are King James Version, The Revised Standard Version and The New American Standard Version.

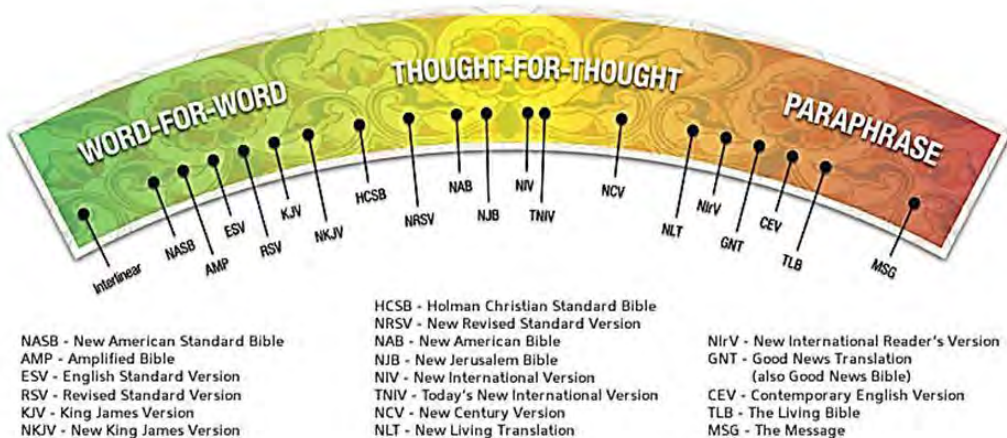
Picture source: Wikimedia Commons and American Bible Society



6.13.2 Dynamic Equivalence

Other translations try to translate and interpret the spirit of the message into modern spoken English. These are called Dynamic or Thought-for-thought method of translation.

Types of Bible Translations



6.13.3 Paraphrased Translation

Paraphrased translations mean that the translator has re-written many of the words to interpret the text according to modern ways of speaking. Examples of paraphrased translations include The New Living Translation and The Message.

Such Translations are popular because they can be easily understood. However, for

serious Bible study, most scholars prefer not to use such translations because the translator has put in their own interpretation of words from the original. Bible scholars normally prefer to work with word-for-word translations so that it follows the original text in Hebrew and Greek.

6.13.4 Hybrid Translations

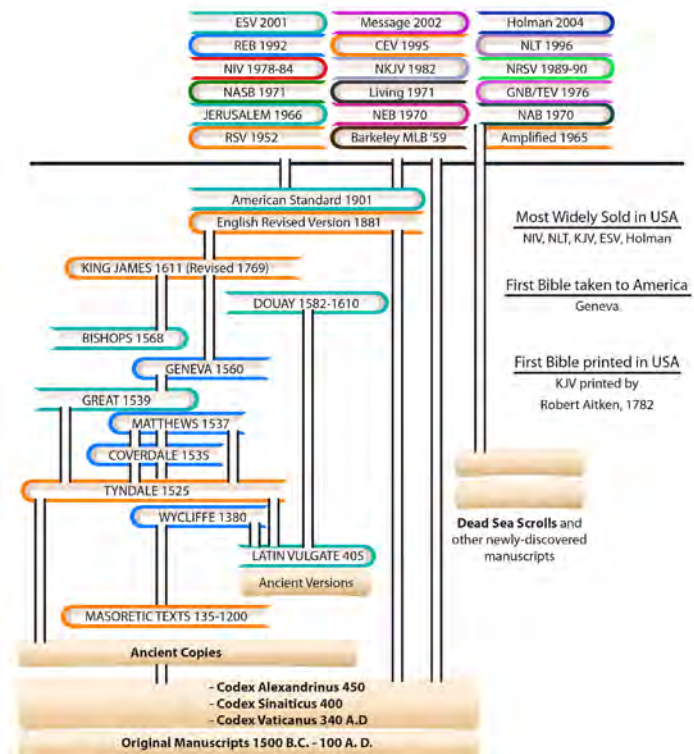
Then there are translations which are somewhere in between formal and dynamic translations. These include the New International Version or NIV.

New International Version Bible
Picture source: Wikimedia Commons



6.14 HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE

Refer to the following chart for a summary chart for a History of English Bible Translations. Below are some websites which will give more details.



<https://evangelicalbible.com/translations/bible-translation-guide/>
<https://redeeminggod.com/best-bible-translation/>

6.15 SUMMARY

In summary, today we have many choices for Bible translations and in several languages.

But let us not forget that many devoted Christians sacrificed their time and some even died to bring the Bible to where it is today.

7

Preservation of the Bible

The Old Testament of the Bible was written between 2400 to 3400 years ago. How do we know that the text has been preserved accurately?



Cuneiform tablets from ancient Mesopotamia 2nd millennia BC
Picture source: Wikimedia Commons



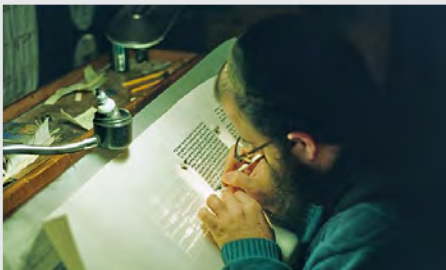
Archaeologists have discovered many ancient tablets and writings that corroborate the Bible Biblical text.

7.1 PRESERVING THE WORD - THE OLD TESTAMENT

Books in the Old Testament were recorded and placed in the care of Scribes. Hebrew scribes were a special kind of professionals in family-like guilds dedicated to recording holy scriptures. They were trained from young and probably spent their whole lives dedicated to preserving scriptures using strict methodologies. The Bible itself mentions 'Clans of Scribes who inhabit Jabez' recorded sacred texts in 1 Chronicles 2 verse 55.



Ancient Scrolls on Papyrus.

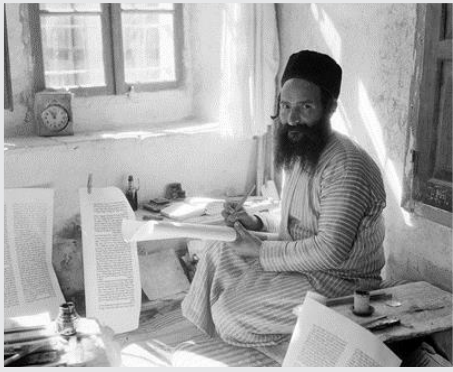


A sofer, Jewish Scribe

Picture source: Wikimedia Commons

The Hebrew word for scribe is 'sofer'. The root meaning of the word is 'to count'. The scribes were indeed very careful counters making sure that every word and letter tallied with the source text. They used very strict rules and regulations to do their writing and copying. For example, the Jewish Masoretic scribes, who made hand written copies of the Bible worked under the following rules to ensure the highest standards of accuracy.

7.2 EXAMPLE OF SOME RULES:



*Jewish scribe making copies of the Torah or the First five books of the Old Testament.
Picture source: Wikimedia Commons*

- No word or letter could be written from memory. The scribe had to say the word aloud.
- Before writing the sacred name of God, the scribe had to wipe his pen.
- A scroll was discarded if spelling errors were found.
- After copying, every single word and every single letter was counted to verify accuracy and to be sure the copy matched the original.
- Before beginning his work, a scribe would ritually cleanse himself to remind themselves of the seriousness and sacredness of the task.

7.3 COMPARISON WITH DIGITAL TRANSMISSION ACCURACY

The method used by the scribes can be compared to the way modern networks transmit data whether it is text, voice or images. In the digital transmission such as those using the internet, a stream of data is broken into small packages. Before each package is sent, a control data is sent to tell the receiving computer how much data is coming i.e. a count. After the data is sent, an end control data is sent to say that this is the end of the package and how much data has been sent. This should tally with the beginning control data. The receiving computer will also count the data received and make sure it tallies with the control data. If it does not tally, the receiving computer will tell the sending computer to send again. All this is done in split seconds and is usually transparent to the user unless there is a breakdown in the network or computer.



*Talmud Torah Scribe illustration by Ephraim Moses Lilien c. late 19th Century AD
Picture source: Wikimedia Commons*

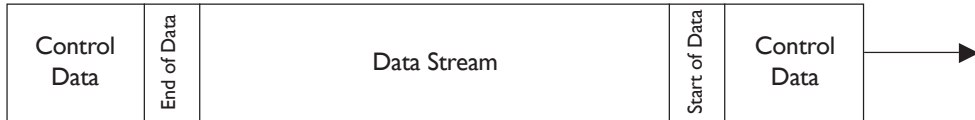
The Jewish scribes applied very rigorous rules in their copying process which preserved the accuracy of the copied text. Some of the rules can be seen even in modern electronic copying processes.

Copying Process of the Bible

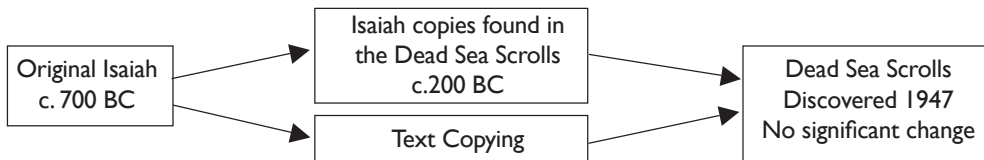
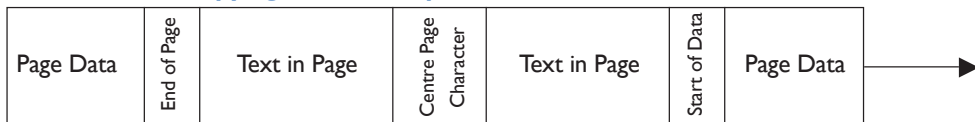
The Process of Copying the Bible down the ages

- Masoretic professional Hebrew Scribes - (500 -1000 AD) original documents still available.
- Masoretic Scribes applied rigorous and modern techniques to copying comparable to modern data networking.

Simplified modern data packet



Masoretic Copying Process Simplified



Source: Pristine World

7.4 THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest Old Testament text available was dated around 900 AD. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947, Bible scholars had scrolls which were the same as the Old Testament, but now dated back to about 100-200 BC. That is almost a thousand year difference.



Replica of how the Dead Sea Scrolls were kept in clay jars inside the caves of Qumran, Israel.
Photo by: AUTHOR



Caves of Qumran where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered.
Picture source: Wikimedia Commons



The Great Isaiah Scroll from the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Picture source: Wikimedia Commons

7.5 THE GREAT ISAIAH SCROLL

When the whole scroll of Isaiah was compared to the Isaiah of 900 AD, there were no differences in the meaning of the text. There were some spelling changes because the way words were spelled over the centuries had changed slightly.

Isaiah chapter 53 from the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Picture source: Wikimedia Commons



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkQXgSuFrzU>

7.6 PRESERVING THE WORD - THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament is a collection of books written from around 45 to 100 AD. The Bible was copied on Papyrus scrolls or later on papyrus sheets and bound in book form called a Codex. The Oldest New Testament fragment we have today is from John 18. It was copied in Greek on a papyrus codex around 110 to 130 AD.

The oldest complete copy of the New Testament is found in the Codex Sinaiticus which was discovered in St Catherine's monastery at the base of the traditional Mt Sinai. The Codex Sinaiticus is the oldest complete Greek Bible we have today.

A leaf from the Epistle of St Peter from the Byzantine era on Vellum c. 1084.
Picture source: Wikimedia Commons





The Codex Sinaiticus c. 330 AD is now in the British Museum.

Picture source: Wikimedia Commons

7.7 A VAST COLLECTION OF ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS THAT MATCH THE NEW TESTAMENT WE HAVE TODAY

The New Testament was written about 2,000 years ago. The original papyrus it was written on would have been destroyed by the natural process of aging. However, there are many copies of it which date back to around 250 AD which corroborate with the text that we see in the Bible today.

| Author | Title | Date Written | Earliest copy available | Interval date write and copy we have | #number of copies for comparison |
|------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Herodotus | History | 150 BC | 900 AD | 1,350 years | 8 |
| Julius Caesar | Gallic Wars | 50 BC | 900 AD | 950 years | 10 |
| Tacitus | Annals | 100 AD | 1100 AD | 1000 years | 20 |
| Piny | Natural History | 100 AD | 850 AD | 750 years | 7 |
| Multiple authors | New Testament | 50-100 AD | 250 AD | 200 years | 5,000 + |

Source: From Christian History Institute - Discovering the Bible.

More than 5,000 ancient copies of the New Testament have been found in different continents that carry the same message with minor differences.

We can be confident that the New Testament we have today is a faithful and accurate representation of the original

writings. Look at the chart for a comparison of ancient writings of history that we have and see how much more supporting documents the New Testament has in comparison to other historical documents which we accept as factual history.

7.8 SUMMARY

We have now established that the Bible, both the Old Testament and the New Testament has been corroborated by many other ancient documents to be accurate and close to the original. In the next section, we will take you on a 10-minute tour of the main stories of the Bible.

8

The Main Theme of the Bible

The Bible was written over a period of 1,500 years by about 40 authors. It describes many stories about how God dealt with people through the ages. How can we summarise the main theme in the Bible?

Earth's horizon as the sun sets over the Pacific Ocean.

Source: Nasa via Wikimedia Commons



8.1 CREATION OF THE WORLD



In the beginning God created the world perfect. Mankind was created in the image of God to rule over God's creation. God had a personal relationship with Adam and Eve.

Beautiful earth, Torres Del Paine.

Photo by: Christopher Michel via Wikimedia Commons

8.2 SIN BREAKS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

When Adam and Eve disobey God's command, they rebel against God. Sin comes into the world and breaks the relationship between God and mankind.

But a saviour is promised who would come to bring mankind back to God. This is told in Genesis, the first book of the Bible.

Adam and Eve are forced out of the paradise Garden of Eden after they disobeyed God.
Source: Pristine World



8.3 NOAH'S ARK

As the human population grows, sin becomes worse until the whole world is detestable in the sight of God. Only Noah and his family were found to be righteous and faithful. The world is judged and destroyed by a great flood. But Noah's Ark provides salvation for those who would believe.



8.4 ABRAHAM

After the flood, the story of God's Redemption focuses on one man, Abraham, and his family.

There is a promise of a world Messiah coming from one descendant of Abraham: Genesis 12:3 "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you."



8.5 THE FAMILY BECOMES A NATION

A famine in Canaan forces the children of Israel to move to Egypt. After 430 years of living in Egypt, the family clan grow and multiply but are enslaved by the Egyptians. God provides a deliverer, Moses who rescues the people through many powerful miracles. God gives the Ten Commandments and the Law through Moses. This story is found in Exodus, the second book of the Bible.



John Martin painting – *The Seventh Plague* c.1823.
Source: Wikimedia Commons

8.6 ISRAEL ENTERS THE PROMISED LAND

After the death of Moses, Joshua leads the Israelites into the Promised Land. The first king of Israel is Saul but after he persistently disobeys God, the prophet Samuel is sent to anoint another king.

He is David. David brings the Ark of the Covenant carrying the Ten Commandments to his capital, Jerusalem. This emphasises the importance of God's law.



Joshua and the Fall of Jericho.
Source: Wikimedia Commons



King David Playing the Harp.
Painting by Gerard van Honthorst c.1622
Source: Wikimedia Commons

8.7 THE KINGS OF ISRAEL

King David is succeeded by his son King Solomon. The later kings of Israel forget the importance of God's Law and worship gods of the surrounding countries.

Israel is then conquered by foreign countries. Israel defeated and sent into Exile by the foreign powers. This period from 1000 BC to about 400 BC is described in the historical books of the Old Testament.



By the Rivers of Babylon sat the Jewish Exiles
Painting by Gebhard Fugel c. 1920
Source: Wikimedia Commons



The Visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon –
painting by Edward Poynter 1890 Art Gallery of NSW
– Public Domain



Judah defeated and exiled to Babylon c. 590-586 BC

8.8 PROPHECIES OF THE COMING MESSIAH

During this period of time God speaks through many prophets about the coming of a Promised one who will save Israel. Some prophecies of the Messiah's birth:

- Malachi (c.400 BC) said a prophet like Elijah will come and prepare the way for the Messiah – Malachi 4 verse 5 to 6.



John the Baptist baptising Jesus

Source: © Pristine World



Photo by Dennis Jarvis, Painting inside church in Halifax Canada.

Source: Wikimedia Commons

- Micah (c.700 BC) said the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem – Micah 52.
- Isaiah (c.700 BC) wrote a virgin will give birth to the Messiah – Isaiah 7 verse 14 and He will be a descendant of David. He will rule with justice and righteousness. His rule will last forever – Isaiah 9 verse 6 to 7.

8.9 PROPHECIES OF WHAT THE MESSIAH WILL DO

- He will perform miracles of healing. Isaiah 35:4-6 says God will come. He will heal the blind, deaf, mute and the lame (Isaiah 35 verses 4 to 6).



Jesus heals a paralysed man described in the Gospels.
Source: © Pristine World



Jesus preaching and teaching in Galilee
Artwork: © Pristine World

- He will be compassionate and proclaim good news to the poor (Isaiah 42 verse 3).
- He will be a light to the non-Jews and bring salvation to the ends of the earth (Isaiah 49 verse 6).

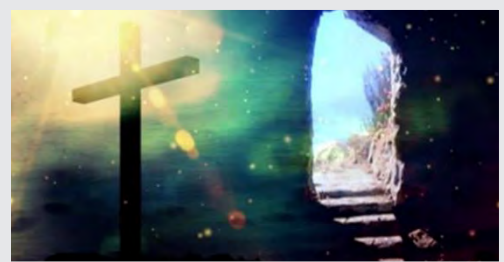
8.10 PROPHECIES OF THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF THE MESSIAH

- The Messiah will suffer and die but for those who believe in Him, this death will be a payment for their sins (Isaiah 53).
- Details of the Messiah's death on the cross is given in Isaiah and Zachariah 12:10 and the whole chapter of Psalms 22.



8.11 JESUS IS THE MESSIAH

Jesus is the Messiah who comes to fulfil all these prophecies and bring salvation not only to Israel but to all who would believe. This story is told in the Gospels found in the New Testament.



8.12 THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH BEGINS

After the resurrection, Jesus ascends to heaven. His followers, called apostles, are empowered by the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel to all peoples starting from Jerusalem to all the world.

At first the Jewish authorities oppose the preaching of the Word because they did not believe Jesus was the Messiah. But God's Word is unstoppable. The apostles preach the Good News beyond the borders of Judea and Samaria and the Word of God spreads.

The Ascension of Christ
 Painting by Gebhard Fugel c.1893
 Source: Wikimedia Commons



8.13 THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH GROWS

After the resurrection, Jesus ascends to heaven. His followers, called apostles are empowered by the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel to all peoples starting from Jerusalem to all the world.



Artwork: © Pristine World



Apostle Paul brings the Gospel to Athens and to Europe.

At first the Jewish authorities oppose the preaching of the Word because they did not believe Jesus was the Messiah. But God's Word is unstoppable. The apostles preach the Good News beyond the borders of Judea and Samaria and the Word of God spreads.

8.14 HOW DID CHRISTIANITY GROW AMIDST PERSECUTION?

In the beginning, Christians were persecuted by Jewish authorities. Later, when Christianity had expanded beyond Judea, they were persecuted by the Roman authorities. Christians were arrested, lost all their property and rights. Many were put to death in the arena or executed. Yet they were willing to accept oppression and even martyrdom.

What role did the Bible play in the past 2,000 years in shaping the world? We will look at this question in the next section.



The Torches of Nero

According to Christian historian Tacitus, Nero used Christians as human torches after the Great Fire of Rome in AD 64. Painting by Henryk Siemiradzki c. 1878 Source: Public Domain



The Fire of Rome AD 64.

According to Tacitus, Nero targeted Christians as those responsible for the fire.

Painting by Carl Theodor von Piloty c. 1861

Source: Public Domain CC by-SA3.0

9

How the Bible has Impacted the World

The Bible has been a major driving force in bringing progress to the world. It influenced the lives of many people who in turn brought changes and transformation to society.

*Earth from space by DLR German
Aerospace Center.
Source: Wikimedia Commons*



9.1 THE BIBLE AND THE SANCTIFICATION OF LIFE

Following the teachings of the Bible, the early Christians treated life as a gift from God. Human life was to be treated with the utmost respect and dignity.

The chart shows a summary of some of the ways Christians sanctified human life and how the early Christians upheld that principle.

Chart – The Sanctity of Human Life

| | Greco-Roman Culture | Other Cultures | Christianity |
|--------------------------|--|--|---|
| Infanticide | Once approved by many pagan philosophers and practiced long before and after Christianity | Practiced in many pagan societies in Asia, Africa and the Americas | Condemned by Christians. Their influence urged Roman emperors to outlaw infanticide in the middle fourth century AD |
| Child Abandonment | Condoned and practiced for centuries in pagan societies. | Practiced in many pagan societies before and after the birth of Christ | Condemned by Christians. Many abandoned Greco-Roman children were rescued and adopted by the early Christians |
| Abortion | Condoned and widely practiced before and after Christianity entered Greco-Roman society | Practiced for centuries | Condemned by the early Christians and by the church leaders and councils example Council of Elvira (Spain) AD 305 |
| Human Sacrifice | Roman gladiatorial shows were basically human sacrifice for public entertainment and for the emperor | The Canaanites and many other cultures sacrificed children, often to pagan deities. Aztec and Mayan Indians sacrificed captive warriors in their religious rites | Christian emperors outlawed gladiatorial games in the East in 390 AD and finally in the West in 404 AD |
| Suicide | Generally condoned | Permitted by the Japanese and some other cultures | Seen as a violation of the Commandment "You shall not murder" Formally condemned by many church leaders |

Source: How Christianity Changed the World.

9.1.1 Infanticide and Child Abandonment

Early Christians condemned the Roman practice of killing weak or deformed babies. They also opposed the culturally embedded custom of child abandonment in Roman times, often taking such human castaways into homes and adopting them.

“In Roman times infanticide or the abandonment of babies was not uncommon; often a christian family would adopt the baby and bring up the child.”

Reference: http://www.nbcnews.com/id/4291813/ns/technology_and_science-science/t/infanticide-common-roman-empire/

9.1.2 Gladiatorial Arena

Reference: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gladiator>

During Roman times, slaves and prisoners were made to fight and kill each other in Gladiatorial arenas for entertainment. The Bible's high views of life and the value of human life eventually moved the Emperors to ban gladiatorial fights.

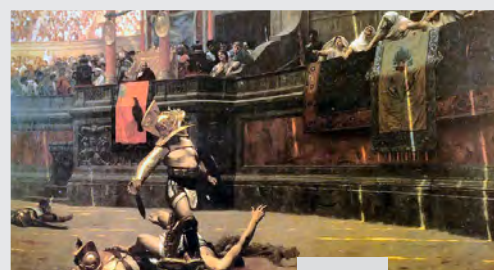
The gladiator games lasted for many centuries, reaching their peak between the 1st century BC and the 2nd century AD. The games finally declined during the early 5th century after the adoption of Christianity as the state church of the Roman Empire in 380 AD, although beast hunts continued into the 6th century.



Thumbs-down in Gladiatorial killing.



Christian Martyrs in the Roman Arena. Both paintings by Jean-Leone Gerome c. 1863-1883. Source: Public Domain



9.1.3 The Bible Speaks Against Human Sacrifice

In many cultures of ancient times, human sacrifice was not uncommon, as it was thought to appease the gods and cause them to grant favours.

In the Old Testament times, some Canaanite worship rituals required human sacrifice. God spoke through Moses and issued laws against such practices. The Bible teaches us to let our lives be a living sacrifice, meaning that we should live our lives in a good way that would bring honour to our God who created us.

Moses Lifting the Ten Commandments
 Painting by Rembrandt c.1659.
 Source: Wikimedia Commons



9.2 THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION



Let's jump forward in time now to the mid-eighteenth century. One of the greatest world changing events started around 1760 in the Western world called the Industrial Revolution.

The Industrial Revolution was basically the transition of hand-made production methods to machine based mass production methods. It started in Great

Britain and brought about much improved methods of production. Soon it was copied in many countries of Western Europe.

The Industrial Revolution was one of the most important events in the history of human progress. During this period, the Western countries began to make great advances in their technology and economic productivity. But the people who benefited most from the revolution were those who were either rich or in power.

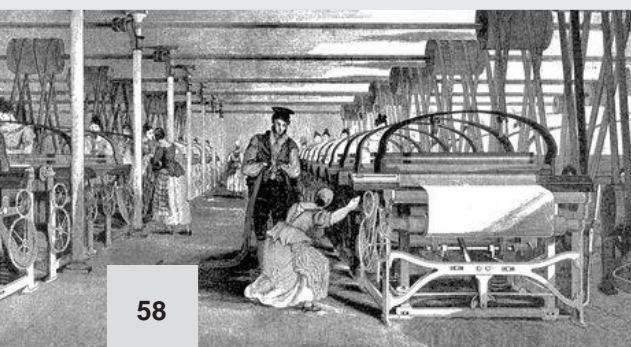
(Reference: McCloskey, Deidre (2004).
 Review of *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain* (edited by Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson), *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 15 January 2004)

A Roberts Loom in a weaving shed in 1835. Textiles were the leading industry of the Industrial Revolution, and mechanized factories, powered by a central steam engine were the new workplace.

Illustration by: T. Allom c. 1835

Source: Public Domain

Ref: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Industrial_Revolution



Sadly, during this time there was also much social injustice. The poor and those without political power were exploited. Many of the poor urban children were made to work long hours in factories under unbearable conditions for their employers. This was also the era of colonial expansion. The slave trade was a wicked and thriving business.



*Child Labour in South Carolina, USA in 1908
Source: National Child Labor Committee, Library of Congress via Wikimedia Commons.*

How did the Bible inspire Christians to act against such injustice?

The Bible speaks against exploitation of the poor. Jesus taught his disciples to care for the poor, the sick, the marginalised and to respect human dignity. Proverbs 31 verse 8 and 9 says, “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

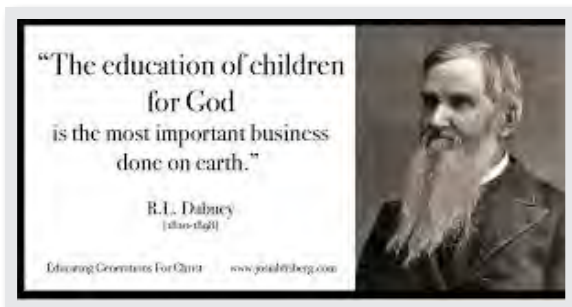


The Bible teaches that in God’s view, we are equal regardless of race, gender or vocation. Refer to Galatians 3:28.

9.3 EDUCATION

The Bible has encouraged learning as a way to improve our lives. Many verses in the Bible encourages us to respect our teachers and place a lot of importance on the vocation of teaching.

The Christian answer to poverty and illiteracy was mass education. Some milestones in Christianity’s influence on the development of education through the ages.



Proverbs 16 verse 16 says, “How much better to get wisdom than gold, to get insight rather than silver!”

| Education Organization or Milestone | Christian Initial Advocate and the Time Period |
|---|--|
| The New Testament Gospel | Jesus commands his disciples: "Teaching them" (Matthew 28:20) |
| The Didache (Teaching of the Twelve) | c.AD 85 – 110 |
| Catechetical schools or religious schools | Justin Martyr c. AD 150 |
| Monastery schools | Founder unknown c. AD 5 th Century |
| First University, Bologna, Italy | Emperor Frederick Barbarossa c. 1158 |
| Public Schools | Martin Luther, 1530s |
| Universal Education i.e. education for everyone | Martin Luther 1530s / John Calvin 1550s both of them were well-known church leaders |
| Tax-supported education | Martin Luther 1530s |
| Compulsory education | Martin Luther and Philipp Melanchthon 1530s |
| First American college – Harvard University | New Towne in 1636 but later renamed Harvard College after John Harvard a church leader in 1639 |
| Kindergarten schools | Friedrich Froebel, 1840s |
| Sunday Schools | Robert Raikes, 1780s |
| Deaf Education (Europe) | Abbe Charles Michel de l'Epee, 1775 |
| Blind education (Braille method) | Louis Braille, 1834 |

Source: *How Christianity Changed the World*.

9.3.1 Education for boys and girls

Jesus taught his followers who were from both genders. The apostles discipled church leaders, both men and women.



Source: © Pristine World

9.3.2 Education regardless of social class and compulsory for all

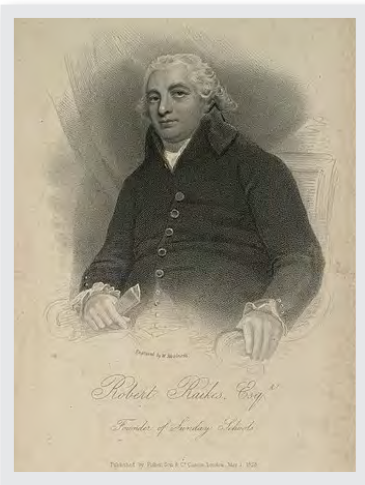
The Bible encouraged believers to teach all those who wished to learn, not just from the upper class.

Often, children of the poorer families were exploited for cheap labour. Christians pushed their governments to introduce compulsory education for children so that everyone could have the opportunity to receive a basic education. Martin Luther was one of the first prominent Christians who pressured the German authorities to use tax money to support Public Schools in the early 16th Century.



Source: © Pristine World

9.3.3 The Sunday School Movement



Robert Raikes
Painted by William Woolnoth c.1828
Source: Public Domain

The Sunday School movement was started by Robert Raikes, a newspaper owner in England. During the Industrial Revolution in England, education was a luxury for the upper classes only.

Because the children of the poor worked in factories all week, they could not go to school. They roamed the streets on Sunday.



Portrait of Robert Raikes
Source: Christianity Today

In 1780, Raikes decided to establish schools on Sundays to educate these children. After their lessons, they were taken to church and given spiritual lessons. The results were dramatic. The characters of many of the children were transformed and crime rates dropped in the city.



Poor children in London with nothing to do after work. Robert Raikes decided to give them schooling on Sunday - c.1780.

Source: 18th Century Religion, Literature, and Culture
Explorations of Cultural Intersections.



Sunday School class in the U.S. c 1946
Russell Lee (Public domain), via Wikimedia Commons

Sunday School was the only source of formal education for most of the poor children until 1893 when a law was finally passed to create compulsory education in England and Wales for children between the age of 5 and 13.

Reference: *Christianity in the Modern World*.

9.3.4 School for the disabled – The deaf

Abbe Charles Michel de L'Epee, Thomas Gallaudet and Laurent Clerc introduced the sign language in the 18th Century to start schools for the deaf.



Source: Perkins school for the deaf



For further reading refer to:

<https://www3.gallaudet.edu/clerc-center/info-to-go/deaf-culture/laurent-clerc.html>



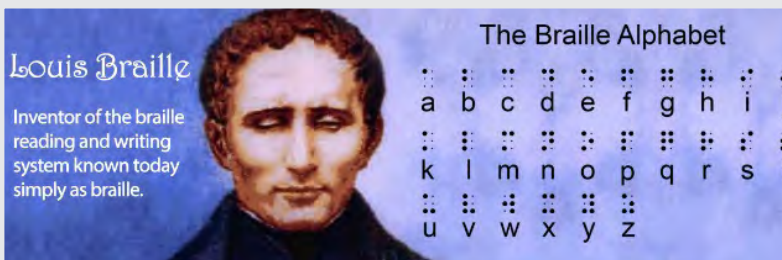
LAURENT CLERC

Laurent Clerc – Apostle to the deaf c. 1816.

Source: Disability History Museum

9.3.5 School for the disabled – The blind

Louis Braille, a dedicated Christian who became blind at the age of 3, developed from a military system of reading at night a method of touch-reading and came up with the Braille alphabet in 1844.



For more information refer to:

<https://braillo.com/braille-literacy/louis-braille-day/>

9.4 REFORMING GOVERNMENT

Christians were in the forefront of evolving government systems. In the early 1200s, the nobles of England had grown tired of the tyrannical King John who had constantly abused his absolute powers. In 1215, they got together in Runnymede, and with the help of church leaders, drafted a decree outlining how the country should be ruled. The decree was called the Magna Carta.

King John was forced to sign the decree. The 4 main principles the Magna Carta were:

- a. Justice could not be sold or denied to people.
- b. No taxes without representation.
- c. No imprisonment without trial.
- d. Property cannot be confiscated without compensation.

Historians trace the beginning of modern parliamentary democracy to this charter.



The Magna Carta of 1215.

Source: Public Domain



King John forced to sign the Magna Carta in 1215.

Source: Public Domain

9.5 WILLIAM WILBERFORCE - THE BATTLE AGAINST SLAVERY



William Wilberforce (1759 to 1833), was born to a wealthy family and spent his student life drinking and gambling. When he became a committed Christian in 1785, his values and lifestyle changed and he developed a strong passion for social reform.

Together with his Clapham friends and his position as a member of parliament, he supported the abolitionist movement and headed the parliamentary campaign against

William Wilberforce (1759-1833)

Painted by Anton Hickel c. 1794

Source: Wikimedia Commons



Slave Traders on the West Coast of Africa –
18th Century

By: Francois-Auguste Biard [Public domain], via
Wikimedia Commons

the British slave trade. Wilberforce battled against the slave trade for almost twenty years before it was made illegal in Britain in 1807. In 1833, just three days before he died, he saw his objectives met when slavery was finally outlawed throughout the British Empire.

*Refer to Christianity in the Modern World by
Pristine World for more details*



The capture of slaves by an African slaver in Africa
Source: CCO 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

9.6 CONCLUSION

There are many more examples of how the Bible has influenced people who in turn have contributed to the progress of human civilization.

The Bible is truly an amazing book that has shaped the world to what it is, more than any other book. We hope you will be encouraged to read and discover the treasures found in the Bible.

In our next section, we will show you a few ways you can begin the Bible, especially if you are a beginner.

10

How to Discover the Bible for Yourself

10.1 CHOOSING A BIBLE

First of all, decide what language you would like to read your Bible in. If you are looking for an English translation Bible to use, there are many excellent versions to choose from.



Table with many Bibles in different languages.

10.1.1 Suggestions for Easy to Read Bibles

If you are reading the Bible for the first time and want an easy-to-read Bible, these are some versions available:

- The Contemporary English Version - CEV
- The New Living Translation – NLT
- The Good News Bible - GNB

I like my
NLT Bible



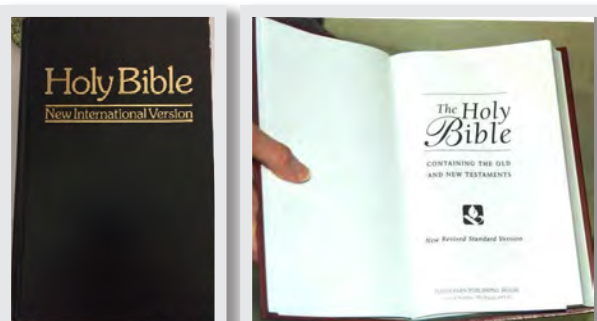
I like my
CEV Bible



10.1.2 Easy to read but can use for Bible Study

If you want to invest in a Bible that you can keep for a longer time; easy to read but closer to word for word accuracy then you can try for the following Bibles:

- The New International Version - NIV
- New Revised Standard Version - NRSV



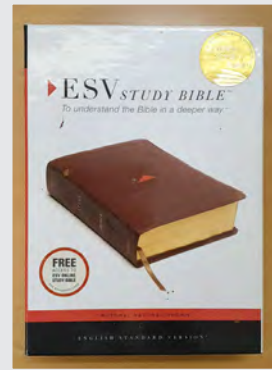
Source: Wikimedia Commons

10.1.3 For serious Bible study

If you want a Bible for serious Bible study, then you are looking for a word-for-word or formal equivalence translation. These translations try to use English words which are the closest to the original Hebrew or Greek scripture. It is good for accuracy, but sometimes the sentences can be constructed in a way that is more difficult to read.

Examples of such translations include:

- New King James Version – NKJV
- English Standard Version - ESV
- New American Standard Bible - NASB



ESV Study Bible
Photo by: Author

10.2 HOW TO START READING THE BIBLE?

Turn to the contents page. You will see that the Bible is divided into two broad sections called the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The Bible is a very unique book. You do not need to start from the first page and read it like a normal book to the last page. Each of the 66 books that make up the Bible is a complete book by itself.

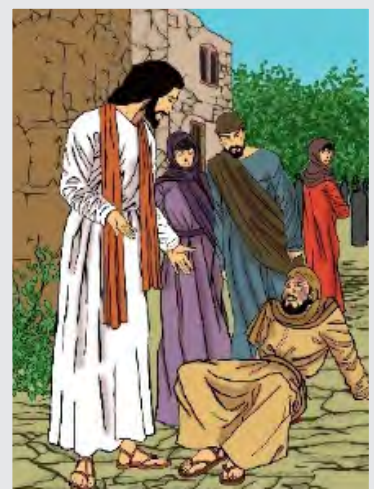
10.3 START WITH THE GOSPELS

If you are reading the Bible for the first time, it might be a good idea to start by reading the Gospels in the New Testament. Remember the Gospel is a biographical history of the life of Jesus Christ. So it is written in a historical and story-telling format.

Each of the Gospels is a view of the life of Christ. Some of the stories are repeated in each Gospel but it is told from a different view.



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Series published by
Pristine World



Contents page of an English language Bible the ESV
Photo by: Author

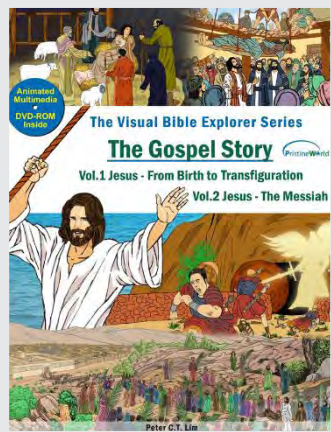
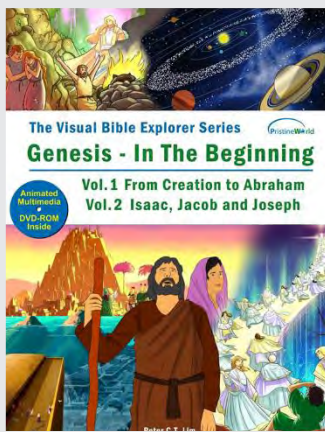
10.4 READING GENESIS

You can also start with Genesis. Genesis tells of how God created the world and how sin came into the world. But if you start with Genesis, you can move on to the Gospel when you have completed Genesis.

©Visual Bible Explorer Series published by
Pristine World



10.5 BIBLE LEARNING AIDS



Some titles from Pristine World's Visual Bible Explorer Series

You can read the Bible on your own. Or if you wish to have some resources to help you understand the books. Pristine World has a series of multimedia learning aids called the Visual Bible Explorer series that can help walk you through the Bible. You can visit their website at www.pristine-world.com for more information or email enquiries to pristineworld@gmail.com

You can test out their free e-Learning Module in www.pristineworld-learning.com and select Genesis. There are 26 chapters in this module.

10.5.1 Daily Bible Reading Devotion Aids

You can read small portions of the Bible everyday with the help of devotional guides. Scripture Union produces many devotional guides aimed at different age groups. Titles such as Daily Bread have helped many young Christians in their understanding of the Bible and its applications.

Today they have an online daily Bible reading devotion:
<https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive>



10.5.2 Bible App

Would you like to sit back and listen to the Bible read out for you? You can do that with various Apps like YouVersion Bible App. Or go to <http://www.bible.is/>



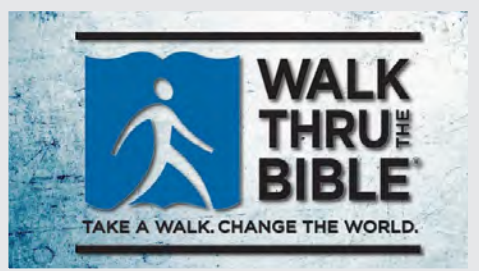
YouVersion Bible App is available on Apple Store as well as Google Play



Bible.is is a web site as well as an downloadable App. It allows you to read, listen and see many books of the Bible

10.5.3 Walkthrough the Bible

A series of Bible tools to help new Christians review the Bible either in seminars or videos or devotional books.



Reference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=92nHvXwtolk>

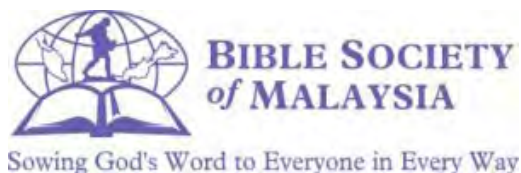
10.5.4 BIBLES IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH

If you are interested to purchase a Bible in a language other than English, you can visit the Bible Society. They have Bibles in many languages.

Go to: <https://www.unitedbiblesocieties.org/society/bible-society-of-malaysia/>

Watch a summary of the Bible in History from the Canadian Bible Society:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0Zm8_B_4wA



10.6 THE WORK OF BIBLE TRANSLATION

Many people groups around the world still do not have a Bible in their own language. Some do not even have a way to write down their spoken language. Bible translation organisations such as Wycliffe and United Bible Societies, in cooperation with language development organisations such as SIL, are continuing this work of bringing the Bible to people who do not have a Bible in their mother tongue.

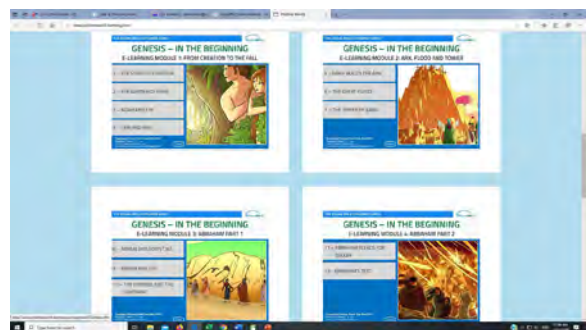
About 1,500 ethnic groups have a New Testament and close to 700 have the complete Bible in their native language.



10.7 START YOUR JOURNEY INTO DISCOVERING THE BIBLE

You can start your journey now in a few ways:

- Get a Bible – recommended to start with the Gospels in the New Testament or the book of Genesis in the Old Testament.
- Get a Daily Bread or Notes from Scripture Union and use it as a guide for Daily Reading.
- Get the YouVersion app and or Bible. Is app and see/listen to the Bible played for you.
- Go to www.pristineworld-learning.com and start with the Genesis module. If you wish to access an e-learning version of this book, Discover the Bible, please email your request to pristineworld@gmail.com.

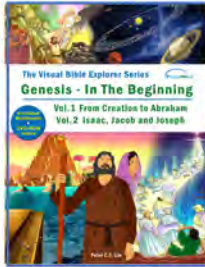


Happy Journey

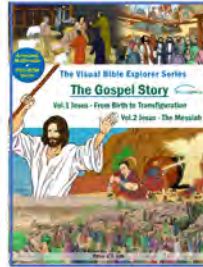
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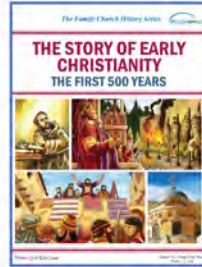
Other Titles from Pristine World



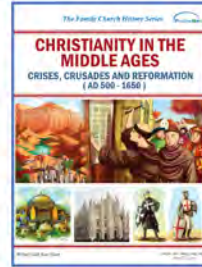
Genesis - In the Beginning



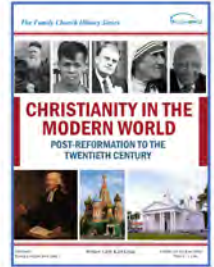
The Gospel Story



*The Story of Early Christianity
Vol.1*



*Christianity in the Middle Ages
Vol.2*



*Christianity in the Modern World
Vol.3*

Have you ever wondered about this book called the Bible? It was written over a period of 1,500 years from about 1,400 BC to 100 AD. That is a long time ago, yet it is still the single most widely read book today. Come and join our two intrepid investigators Roy and Jessica as they take you on a



journey to explore the many facets of the Bible: Where did the Bible originate from, which are the Bible countries, the history and cultures covered in the Bible and the impact the Bible has made on modern society. What is the main theme of the Bible behind its many narratives and how you can explore the Bible for yourself. We hope you will enjoy the journey.



Writer : Peter C. T. Lim
Advisors : Brian Spoelman
 Dr Ng Kam Weng
 Rev Dr Lim Kar Yong
Foreword : Bishop Ng Moon Hing



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