

## The Way of Christ Ministries

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# The Holy Bible

Matthew 4:4 *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*<sup>1</sup>

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## 1 Introduction

*“The Bible is the greatest of all books; to study it is the noblest of all pursuits; to understand it, the highest of all goals.”* — Charles Ryrie [34, pg. vi]

If we stand outside on a clear evening and look to the heavens, we can see an infinite expanse of stars. If we use a telescope, we can look even more deeply into space and see more stars and even other galaxies. As we look deeper and deeper into the universe, we see yet more stars, never coming to the end of the universe. And so it is with the Bible, which contains God’s words to us. We can study the Bible deeper and deeper, yet never reach a point where there is nothing new to learn from it. The Bible tells us of God’s infinite holiness, power, and wisdom. It fills our hearts with truth, hope, and joy.

Psalms 119:105 *Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.*

The *Holy Bible* is, without a doubt, the most influential book in all of human history. The study of the Bible itself is called *Bibliology*. Christians refer to the Bible as *The Holy Bible*, *The Bible*, or *scripture* (which means *holy writings* or *that which is written*) because we know the Bible is the word of God, i.e., God’s words to us for our benefit; we will explain that in greater detail a little later, in [subsection 3.1](#). Companies that sell printed copies of the Bible found that adding the word “Holy” to the title makes Bibles sell better. Given that God is holy,<sup>2</sup> and the Bible is God’s word, it stands to reason that the Bible is, in fact, holy.

Over 500 billion printed copies of the the Bible have been sold, making it the best selling book in history.<sup>3</sup> The Bible has been the number-one best-selling book for decades, although sales of printed bibles have declined somewhat since 2020. This

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<sup>2</sup> [Leviticus 11:44–45](#)

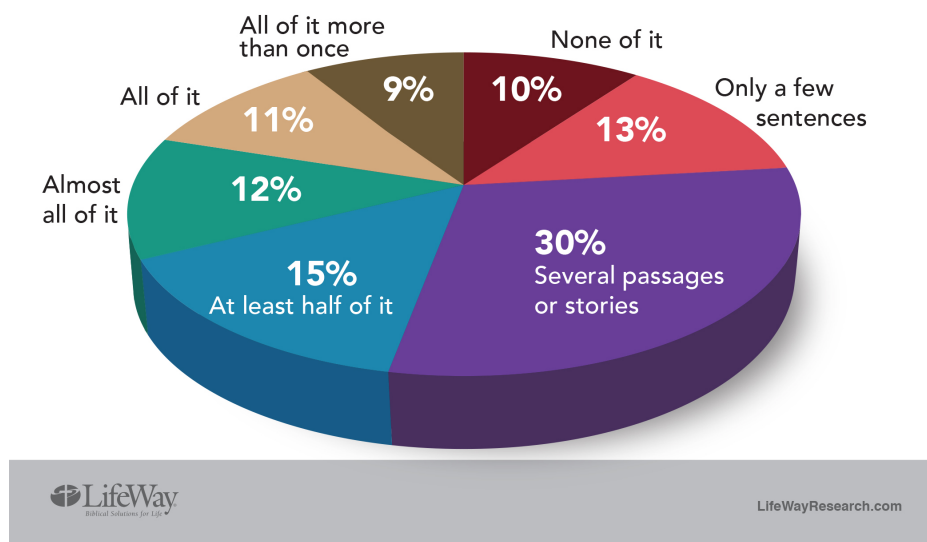
<sup>3</sup> <https://blog.gitnux.com/bible-statistics/>

maybe due in part to the COVID pandemic and/or the growth of online Bibles and Bible apps.

Chances are you have a Bible in your home; in fact various studies report that 85–88 percent of U.S. homes have one or more Bibles in them. Unfortunately, only a fraction of them are read in their entirety, even among self-described Christians. On average, studies have shown that only about one in five Christians have read the Bible completely through, at least once.

Among Americans:

### How much of the Bible have you personally read?



**Figure 1: Bible Reading**

The word *Bible* has Greek and Latin origins which literally means “The Book”. It is also based on a Greek word for the inner bark of the papyrus plant, which was used to make a paper-like material on which parts of the Bible were originally written; parts of the Bible have also been found written on animal skins and copper.

The complete Bible has been translated into 724 languages, and portions of the Bible have been translated into 3,589 languages.<sup>4</sup> See my teaching entitled *Choosing a Bible* about the various English translations and selecting a Bible.

The Bible has been described in many ways:

- A book of factual historical events, where God interceded in human history;
- A book about what God has said and God has done.
- An “Owner’s Manual” for human beings;
- A book that tells the truth about mankind and our fallen state;
- A book about the war between good and evil;
- A book of instructions about our obligations and responsibilities to God;

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.wycliffe.net/resources/statistics/>

- An acronym: Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth;<sup>5</sup>
- A book about every person’s greatest dilemma—where will you spend eternity?
- A book about God’s greatest dilemma—rebellious kids!
- A love story about a father seeking a bride for his son;
- A book about history and “His Story”;
- God’s revelation to his people;

The Bible has a single over-arching message, and that is our Lord and Savior Christ Jesushimself. Ultimately the Bible is a book about God and man’s relationship with God. Secondly, the Bible addresses mankind’s biggest problem—the need for salvation and our source of salvation—in the person Christ Jesus. The Bible is an account of God’s actions through history and of God’s son Jesus coming down from heaven to save us from our sins.

*“Very clearly, therefore, man needs infallible instruction concerning his most important problem in life, his eternal welfare.”* — Henry Thiessen [37, pg. 43]

*“As we read the written Word, if we are wise we shall hear the voice of the preexistent Son speaking to us in the Old Testament, the voice of the incarnate Son speaking to us in the Gospel records in the days of His flesh, and the voice of the exalted and glorified Son speaking to us from heaven in the other New Testament books.”* — Alva McClain [24, pg. 62]

## 2 The Canon of Scripture

Our Protestant<sup>6</sup> Bible consists of 66 books<sup>7</sup> written by 40+ authors, from many walks of life including prophets, kings, shepherds, fishermen, musicians, poets, and *Apostles*.<sup>8</sup> Their writings took place over a period of about 1,600 years.

I often hear or read of an analogy that the Bible is like a bookshelf containing 66 books, implying that one can pick and choose to read these at random. Nothing could be further from the truth. A better analogy is that the books of the Bible are like pieces to a jig-saw puzzle, and until you read all of them you do not have the complete picture. All the books of the Bible contain the same message: Christ Jesus.

The word *canon* comes from a Greek word which means “rule”, “measuring stick” or “standard”, and when we talk about the canon of scripture, we are referring to the official list of books to be included in the Bible [4, 25, 26]. The New Testament

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<sup>5</sup> There are songs by this title, my favorite is written and performed by the musical group *Burlap to Cashmere*

<sup>6</sup> The non-catholic Christian denominations.

<sup>7</sup> Technically, when the “books” of the Bible were written, books per se had not yet been invented. The original writings were on scrolls or parchments made from papyrus or animal skins, but today we refer them as books regardless of their original form.

<sup>8</sup> Apostles are special messengers appointed by God.

canon is comprised of 27 books and was ratified at the Council of Carthage in 397 AD. Some Bibles contain additional books, as described in [Appendix A](#), “The Apocryphal Books”.

## 2.1 The Two Testaments

The books are arranged into two main sections, usually referred to as the *Old Testament* and the *New Testament*. The thirty-nine Old Testament books make up approximately 3/4ths of the Bible, while the twenty-seven New Testament books make up the remaining 1/4. Theologians sometimes refer to these two sections as *dispensations*<sup>9</sup> or *covenants* (see [subsection 2.5](#)).

## 2.2 The Old Testament

The Old Testament covers a period of time from before the universe was created until about 400 years before the incarnate Christ Jesus, i.e., Jesus being born in the flesh as a human being. The Old Testament is written in the Hebrew language, with some passages written in Aramaic. In the Protestant Christian Bible, the thirty-nine Books of the Old Testament can be organized into groups as shown in [Table 1](#). The Old Testament tells us a great deal about God’s character, his holiness, and his actions through that era of history. (See my teaching entitled [About God](#).) Every book of the Old Testament anticipates the coming of Jesus Christ into the world.

<b>The Pentateuch</b>	<b>Historical</b>	<b>Poetry &amp;</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>Minor</b>
<b>Books of Moses</b>	<b>Books</b>	<b>Wisdom</b>	<b>Prophets</b>	<b>Prophets</b>
<b>The Law</b>				
<b>The Torah</b>				
Genesis	Joshua	Job	Isaiah	Hosea
Exodus	Judges	Psalms	Jeremiah	Joel
Leviticus	Ruth	Proverbs	Lamentations	Amos
Numbers	1 Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel	Obadiah
Deuteronomy	2 Samuel	Song of Songs	Daniel	Jonah
	1 Kings			Micah
	2 Kings			Naham
	1 Chronicles			Habakkuk
	2 Chronicles			Zephaniah
	Ezra			Haggai
	Nehemiah			Zechariah
	Esther			Malachi

**Table 1: Old Testament Books**

The first five books (hence the name *Pentateuch*) of the Bible are also called the *Books of Moses* who recorded them, or *The Law*, or in Hebrew *The Torah*. The Pentateuch describes the creation of world, the great flood during Noah’s lifetime,

<sup>9</sup> In Christian theology a dispensation is a divinely ordained order prevailing at a particular period of history.

how God formed the nation of Israel through the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the great exodus from Egypt, and how God gave his Law to the Israelites through his prophet<sup>10</sup> Moses.

The twelve historical books continue telling the history of Israel once they entered the promised land, their cycle of disobeying God, his wrath against them and their *repentance* or returning to God. The Old Testament clearly demonstrates that nobody (apart from Jesus) is able to keep God's laws perfectly, and that breaking any one law at any time makes us a sinner. Therefore, we all are in desperate need of a savior who can deliver us from our sins.

The books of poetry and wisdom contain a variety of literary forms including songs, poems, and proverbs.

God spoke to His people, the nation of Israel, through his prophets.<sup>11</sup> The major prophets are not so named because of their importance but rather because of the longer length of their writings. The messages of the so-called minor prophets are equally important, but shorter in length. Through his various prophets, God gave the people of Israel warnings of his coming wrath for their disobedience and promises of blessings and a hopeful future for their obedience. Perhaps most importantly to all of us, they foretold of the coming Messiah<sup>12</sup>—our Lord and Savior *Jesus Christ*.

Apart from the Pentateuch, the remaining books of the Old Testament are not in chronological order. The history books and the writings of the prophets that lived at various times overlap with each other. Theologians believe that the Book of Job may have been the first book of the Bible ever written.

The Old Testament contains many promises which were fulfilled by Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Every book of the Old Testament points to God's plan of salvation through his son and Christ, Jesus, a plan that was created even before the universe was formed.<sup>13</sup> The first promise of the *Good News* or *Gospel* occurs in Genesis 3:15:

Genesis 3:15 *[God speaking] And I will put enmity between you [the devil, Satan] and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he [Jesus] will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."*

This passage foretells us that Jesus will defeat the devil at the end of the age, as described in the book of "Revelation", the last book of the Bible.

There are numerous interesting parallels between the history of the Jewish people and the early life of Christ; for example, the Jews were tested in the desert for forty years, and Jesus was likewise tested in the desert for forty days. God also used the Old Testament experiences of the Jews to help explain spiritual matters

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<sup>10</sup> A prophet is a person regarded as an inspired teacher or proclaimer of the will of God,

<sup>11</sup> [Hebrews 1:1](#)

<sup>12</sup> Messiah is a Hebrew word for "anointed one"; "Christ" is a Greek word which means the same thing.

<sup>13</sup> [2 Timothy 1:9](#); [1 Peter 1:18-21](#)

to us which would otherwise be difficult to understand. The Old Testament is filled with analogous precursors of the coming Messiah, that he would suffer and die for our sins.

As you read the books of the Old Testament, look for the parallels such as the system of blood sacrifices to atone for people's sins. Look for precursors to Jesus in the great people of the Old Testament, such as Abraham, Joseph, and Moses, to name but a few.

All of the writings in the Christian Old Testament are the same material as the Hebrew/Jewish Bible, which Jews call the *Tanakh*, although organized differently. The Hebrew Bible is divided into three sections: The Law (Torah), The Prophets (Nebiim), and The Writings (Ketubim). It should be noted that Jesus quoted from all three sections, thus giving credence to the whole of Old Testament scripture.

## 2.3 The New Testament

The New Testament begins with the birth of Jesus and defines *Christianity*, the religion based on the person and teachings of Jesus Christ. The New Testament continues on past until the end of this age and describes a great climax at the end of time when Christ Jesus returns and the universe ends as we know it; after which God will create a new heaven and a new Earth, where God will reign over his people in peace (see [Revelation 21:1-4](#)). For Christians, this is the most exciting and highly anticipated event in the history of the universe.

The twenty-seven books of the New Testament can be organized as shown in [Table 2](#):

The Gospels	History	Pauline Epistles	General Epistles	Revelation
Matthew	Acts	Romans	Hebrews	Revelation
Mark		1 Corinthians	James	
Luke		2 Corinthians	1 Peter	
John		Galatians	2 Peter	
		Ephesians	1 John	
		Philippians	2 John	
		Colossians	3 John	
		1 Thessalonians	Jude	
		2 Thessalonians		
		1 Timothy*		
		2 Timothy*		
		Titus*		
		Philemon		

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\* These are collectively referred to as the *Pastoral Epistles*

**Table 2: New Testament Books**

The four Gospels, named after each of their respective writers, describe the ministry, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. These books

are sometimes mistakenly described as biographies of Jesus, but the word *Gospel* means *Good News*, and these books are in fact not biographies but news articles about Jesus. They proclaim that Jesus himself is the good news! The first three Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke are referred to as the *Synoptic Gospels* because they are similar in form and style to each other; they are sort of travelogs of Jesus’ ministry, whereas the Gospel of John is quite different. See my teaching entitled *The Gospels* for a deep dive into the Gospels.

The *Acts of the Apostles*, written by Dr. Luke (who also wrote the *Gospel of Luke*) describes the ministries of the Apostles after Jesus ascended into heaven. He focuses primarily on the adventure-filled ministries of Peter and Paul. He also writes of the formation of the Church (with a capital ‘C’), that is, the universal body of believers in Christ Jesus. The Book of Acts is the primary source of the purpose and source of the correct message of the Christian church; her message is commonly distorted in the present day.

*Epistle* is a Latin word for *letter* (think snail-mail), and the various epistles which follow the Book of Acts in the New Testament are letters written either to churches of Christian believers or to individual Christians. Many of the epistles were intended to circulate among the early churches. Each letter was written for specific purpose(s), sometimes to deal with problems in a church, or to correct false doctrines that may have been spreading, or to educate and encourage believers. When we become born again, we are infants in regard to Christian teaching, and the epistles teach us to grow us into spiritually mature Christians.

Jesus taught about the kingdom of God, his death and resurrection, however his teaching about Christian doctrine was limited. And he tells why that was:

John 16:12–13 *I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*

1 Corinthians 2:14 *The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.*

Only after receiving the Holy Spirit can people begin to fully understand Christian doctrine.<sup>15</sup> This is why it is so vital to read the epistles because they explain doctrine, clarify questions people tend to have about Christianity, and teach us how to live as Christians.

*“The epistles are only summaries; our job is not to give summaries of summaries, our job is to expand the summaries, to draw out the doctrines. That is the function of teaching and preaching.”*

— Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Sermon #3310 “One Body”

Three of Paul’s epistles were written to the early church leaders, *Timothy* and *Titus*, and these are often referred to as the *Pastoral Epistles*, as they deal with issues pastors may face when leading a church. However, everyone should be

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<sup>15</sup> See my teaching entitled *Baptism of the Holy Spirit*.



encouraged to read the pastoral epistles, as they contain fascinating and practical teachings about Christianity.

The last book of the Bible, the *Book of Revelation*, was written by the apostle John to correct and encourage churches. It tells of the end of the present world, that is, the apocalypse, God's victory over sin, the final defeat of the devil, and how God will create a new heaven and a new Earth, where he will reign and be with us for all eternity. Just as the Bible began with God, the Bible ends with God.

For an easy introduction and summary of the books of the Bible, I recommend *The Bible for Dummies* by Geoghegan & Homan [13]. For a deeper teaching of each book of the Bible, I highly recommend *Unlocking the Bible* by David Pawson [29].

## 2.4 Counterfeit Books

Many false gospels and false books were written centuries after the resurrection of Jesus. It was a common practice claim they were written by some notable person, perhaps an apostle in order to give the books credibility. None of these are not part of the canon of scripture. Here is only a small sample of book titles:

<i>Apocalypse of Peter</i>	<i>Gospel of Mary</i>
<i>Apocryphon of James</i>	<i>Gospel of Peter</i>
<i>Apocryphon of John</i>	<i>Gospel of Thomas</i>
<i>Gospel of Phillip</i>	

These books should only read with the understanding that they contain false teachings; heretical sects sometimes arose from these false teachings. A false religion called “Gnosticism”, which was based on so-called hidden knowledge and became prominent in the late first century AD driven in part by the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Apocryphon of John*.

## 2.5 The Two Covenants

As we saw in [subsection 2.1](#), the Bible is divided into two large sections or dispensations, called the *Old Testament* and the *New Testament*. However, these were originally called the *Old Covenant* and the *New Covenant*; in translating the Latin Vulgate, Jerome changed the word “Covenant” to “Testament”. It is important for us to think of these two section as two distinct covenants.

The Old Covenant was a covenant of works, meaning the Israelites had to follow all 613 of God's laws perfectly in order to not sin. Jesus was the only person to obey all the laws perfectly. The Old Testament law was never meant to save us, but instead to be a school teacher to us; the teach us about God and holiness.

Galatians 3:24–25 (NLT) *Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith. And now that the way of faith has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian.*

The New Covenant is a covenant of grace, meaning God forgives our sins and saves us through his mercy and grace by our faith in Jesus Christ. These *Two Covenants* are mutually exclusive, you cannot be under works and under grace at the same time.

## 3 Key Tenets of the Bible

1 Thessalonians 2:13 *And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.*

There is total agreement between Jesus and the Bible. You cannot believe in Jesus and disbelieve the Bible. You can't love God and not love his words. In the following sections we will look at some key tenets of the Bible which make the Holy Bible truly unique from every other book.

### 3.1 Inspired

Christians hold that the sixty-six books of the Holy Bible are the word of God, that is, they are God's words to us, or God speaking to us, through his prophets, apostles, and his son Jesus. Several passages describe this:

Deuteronomy 18:18 *I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him.*

2 Samuel 23:2 *"The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue.*

Jeremiah 1:9 *Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "I have put my words in your mouth.*

Galatians 1:11–12 *I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.*

2 Timothy 3:16–17 *All Scripture is God-breathed<sup>16</sup> and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Hebrews 1:1–2 *In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.*

2 Peter 1:20–21 *Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never*

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<sup>16</sup>The expression "God breathed" only occurs at one other place in the Bible, when God breathed life into Adam, see Genesis 2:7 (and also John 20:22). God's breath also created the starry hosts [Psalms 33:6](#). Scripture contains life.

*had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

Our Lord Jesus Christ tells us that even his own words came from the father:

John 7:16 *Jesus answered, “My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me.*

John 8:28 *So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.*

John 12:49–50 *For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.”*

In writing scripture, theologians call this *inspiration* and say that the writers were *inspired* by the Holy Spirit; therefore scripture is the inspired word of God. How inspiration works exactly is a great mystery that we do not really understand. We know that God did not mechanically dictate the words of the Bible as we can see that each writer had his own style and vocabulary. The apostle Paul writes differently than John, who writes differently than Peter, and so on; each writes in his own unique style, yet their writings are the spiritually inspired words of God.

Careful study of the Bible offers many proofs that it is not the work of human thoughts alone; e.g., the multitude of prophecies which have come true. Unfortunately some theologians have wasted a good deal of energy arguing over details of how the process of inspiration works, which remains a mystery to this day. The truth is, we do not know how God does a lot of things.

Theologians hold that all of the Bible is the inspired word of God, both the Old and New Testaments, and no part is more inspired than any other. We will not examine all the details of this, but many books have been written about the inspiration of scripture, e.g., [9, 11, 18, 40], and almost any book on Systematic Theology will discuss inspiration of the Bible as well.

The Bible claims to be the Word of God. Indeed, there are over 3,800 phrases in the Old Testament to the effect, ‘The Lord said...’, ‘The Lord spoke...’, ‘The Word of the Lord came to...’, etc. [22, pg. I:25]. All of these are instances of God Himself speaking either directly or through one of his many prophets. In other places, the Bible tells of people’s experiences and historical events, because God wants us to learn from those occurrences, often so that we do not commit the same mistakes.

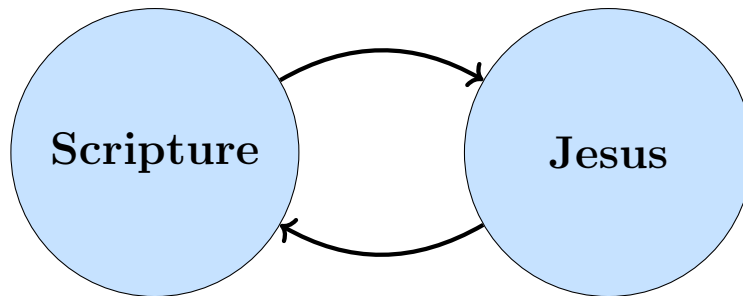
A great definition of this divine inspiration is this:

*“Inspiration is that mysterious process by which the divine causality worked through the human prophets without destroying their individual personalities and styles to produce divinely authoritative and inerrant writings.”* — Norman Geisler [9, pg. 39]

God chose his words carefully, therefore we should seek out the most accurate translation we can, and study it carefully to learn all the meaning behind God's words. (See my teaching entitled *Choosing a Bible*.)

Thus far we have said the Bible is the word of God because the Bible itself tells us it is the word of God, but this circular logic may not convince skeptics. There are numerous other arguments for the Bible being the inspired word of God, and we will only summarize some of them here:

1. If people are the creation of an intelligent being, it stands to reason that he (God) would find some means to communicate with us, telling us about himself, why he created us, and what he expects from us. The Bible certainly fulfills this.
2. Jesus considered the scriptures (which at the time just consisted of the Old Testament) to be the word of God; he quoted from various passages throughout the Old Testament and stated that his own teaching was from God the father. The Old Testament points to Jesus, and the coming of Jesus is fulfilled in the New Testament. If anyone believes in Jesus, they must also believe in the Bible because Jesus did.



**Figure 2: Jesus and the Bible**

3. While the Bible is not meant to provide a detailed account of ancient history, archaeology has confirmed hundreds of facts presented in the Bible. These include things like the reign of various kings, and the exact locations of cities, wells, etc., which are described in the Bible. This later point is rather amazing because parts of the Bible was written before maps were invented, yet archaeologists find “ruins that coincide exactly with the biblical narratives” [16, pg. 1,101]. See also [33, pp. 48–59] for details of 100 specific archaeological proofs of the Bible.
4. The Bible contains some 735 specific future prophecies; of these, 596 have already been fulfilled (81 percent) [31]. The remaining prophecies yet to be fulfilled deal with Jesus' future return and subsequent events at the end of this age (the study of which theologians call *eschatology*). Perhaps the greatest proof of the Bible's inspired authority are the prophecies regarding the birth, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus himself.
5. The Bible tells of countless miracles that were performed, in both the Old and New Testaments; these miracles all had eyewitnesses, sometimes hundreds of eyewitnesses who reported seeing the same phenomena.

6. Many events in the Bible have been corroborated by extra-biblical sources, such as ancient historians [3, 15], and [11, pp. 381–385]. Roman historians like Cornelius Tacitus (55–120 AD) and Flavius Josephus (37–97 AD) have written about Jesus, his crucifixion and his resurrection.
7. The Bible has a supernatural or divine quality that no other book has; it is alive. You can read one of its books many times and learn something new each time. See [subsection 3.6](#).
8. The Bible has survived many attempts throughout history to destroy it, giving it another type of supernatural quality [2, 5, 37]. See [subsection 3.7](#).
9. The Bible has changed so many people’s lives. Read the biography of any good Christian and see how God’s word has transformed them into effective servants of the Lord.
10. The deeper you study the Bible, the more you find minute details that reinforce the authenticity and accuracy of the Bible.

It would simply be impossible for the Bible to exist if it were not the inspired word of God as no ordinary human writing could withstand the attacks, scrutiny, and challenges undergone by the Bible. It is of utmost importance that Christians understand and accept that the Bible is the word of God. There are many things in the Bible which we do not fully understand. Yet these are taught in the Bible, and if they are in the Bible, and the Bible is the word of God, then they must be true. Therefore we must accept them as truth, even if we do not fully understand them.

Likewise, as the Bible is the word of God, we must accept and abide by its teachings even though we may not fully agree on some points, or find them distasteful, especially when we are new Christians. It is terribly arrogant and sinful to think that we know better than God. Many Christians fall into error and sin by cherry-picking only the parts of the Bible they agree with (see my teaching entitled [How to Read the Bible](#)).

## 3.2 Inerrant

*Psalms 33:4 For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.*

How can fallible men write an infallible and inerrant Bible? We say that the Bible is *inerrant*, that is, without errors or flaws, in the original autographs. The men who wrote the books of the Bible, as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit (see previous section), did so under God’s guidance and did not make any mistakes.

*Psalms 12:6 And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times.*

The Bible tells us that God and his words are perfect:

*Deuteronomy 32:4 He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.*

Psalms 18:30 *As for God, his way is perfect: The LORD's word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him.*

Proverbs 30:5–6 *Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.*

John 17:17 *Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.*

God's word is truth, therefore it must be inerrant.

Hebrews 6:18 *God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged.*

Therefore, if the Bible is the inspired word of God, and God is perfect, he never makes mistakes, and he never lies, it stands to reason that scripture is perfect in the original autographs. Yes, men wrote the words as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit, but even if they had made some sort of error, God would have seen to correcting it.

We know that the scribes and monks who made copies of the biblical writings over the past many centuries, long before copying machines were invented, were extremely careful in their work. In extremely rare instances, mistakes in copying were made, sort of like typographical errors, such as misspelling someone's name. None of the mistakes were serious enough to alter any doctrines of the Bible. While the original autographs no longer exist, we have so many manuscript copies, (over 5,500 of the Greek New Testament) that scholars are confident we have accurate copies the original writings. We are not saying that all copies are inerrant, however we do have good reliable copies of the original writings today and are confident of what was written in the original autographs.

Translating the Bible from the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek into English or any other language is very difficult, and the translations are not inerrant. This is a large subject in and of itself, and is discussed in my teaching entitled *Choosing a Bible*. Suffice it to say that while today's translations are not one hundred percent perfect, yet they are very good and we can derive correct doctrines from them. See William Mounce's book *Why I Trust the Bible: Answers to Real Questions and Doubts People Have about the Bible* [27].

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls between the years 1946 and 1956, date as far back as three centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ. These are copies of Jewish writings that today make up our Old Testament of the Bible. When compared to much more recent copies of the Old Testament, biblical scholars were amazed at how accurately and meticulously the generations of writings were produced.

Biblical inerrancy and difficulties are popular topics, and many books have been written on these subjects: [8, 14, 20, 10, 39].

Even though the Bible contains God's truths, not everything is God's prescribed behavior. There are many atrocities recorded in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament. Much of the Bible records events in history, but it does not suggest that we do these same things, especially today under the New Covenant. Many

evil people have used the Bible to justify murder, war, slavery, vigilantism, divorce and remarriage—all things the Bible condemns today, if you read all of it.

You can make a case for just about anything, by using some passage from the Bible, usually out of context. We must always derive doctrines by studying everything the Bible teaches about a particular subject. Failing to do so is an evil and gross misuse of scripture—something the devil did when tempting Jesus in the desert, as recorded in Matthew chapter 4. See [section 5](#) and [section 6](#) about how Bible verses are misused.

### 3.3 Authoritative

*“It is important for us to realize that whoever we are as believers, the supreme objective of Satan is to undermine and discredit the scripture. When the enemy has brought us to a place where we no longer believe and accept the authority of scripture, we are sunk. At that point, we have already become casualties.” — Derek Prince [32, pg. 18]*

*Zechariah 7:12 They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the LORD Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the LORD Almighty was very angry.*

The word *authority* comes from the word “author”, and we know that God is the author of the Bible. We have briefly shown that the Bible is the inspired Word of God ([subsection 3.1](#)). Therefore we must hold the Bible in its entirety as our highest authority. Whether you are reading the Bible to yourself, or you are listening to someone read it out loud to you, it is God speaking to you. These are God’s words, to you, without any intermediary; it is God talking directly to you. God’s words are binding on each and every one of us, but especially Christians. Therefore we must humbly submit to all of scripture. As our highest authority, the Holy Scriptures must take precedence over our personal beliefs, opinions, traditions, feelings, culture, sentiments, etc.

Unfortunately there are many people who fail to accept the authority of scripture. They like God’s mercy and love, but they treat his righteousness, holiness, justice, and rules as unloved vegetables, such as broccoli or spinach. Scripture is not a buffet, we do not get to pick and choose which parts we accept and which parts we reject. We cannot say some parts of scripture are right, yet disagree with other parts—in doing so we are placing ourselves above scripture. We are in effect saying we know better than God what is right and what is wrong! We are creating our own definition of morality. We are making up our own religion. This is a slippery slope. Sin begets sin and we begin to rationalize any beliefs or behavior we want. If God is our God and Jesus is our Lord and Savior, then we must submit to all his words, otherwise we make ourselves “lords of scripture”.

Moreover, if we begin to dissect scripture, throwing out parts we do not like or don’t understand, all of scripture begins to fall apart. For example, if you reject the doctrine of original sin, that Adam’s guilt has been imputed to all of us, how



then can you accept the Gospel, that Christ's righteousness has also been imputed on all who repent and believe?<sup>17</sup>

Being a Christian requires relinquishing our own agenda, our will, our self-centeredness, and especially our pride—surrendering ourselves to God, and to live according to God's agenda for us and God's will (see *Repentance*); to “take up our cross daily”.<sup>18</sup> To live our lives as God desires requires two things: the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and obedience to the Holy Scriptures. The Holy Spirit will never tell us something that contradicts with scripture. (See my teaching entitled *Baptism of the Holy Spirit* to learn how to receive the Holy Spirit.)

Throughout the past two-thousand years, we have seen the results of numerous *False Believers*, claiming to be Christians, ignoring parts of scripture and following their own agendas. Sometimes, they are focused on a single verse or doctrine, and fail to take into account all of scripture. This has resulted in errors, false doctrines, heresies, cults, and calamities not only in the lives of these individuals but in the Church, that is, the body of Christ as a whole. Overt examples are the Crusades and Inquisitions; however most heresies are more subtle, usually the work of the devil, who is an expert at subtleness. Moreover, when we step back and look at human history apart from scripture, we see the disturbing pattern of creating false Gods to our own volition and ever devolving moral standards.

No one can claim to be a Christian, to call themselves a disciple or follower of Jesus without accepting and submitting to all of scripture as the authoritative word of God. Not that all parts of scripture apply to us today, for we are under the New Covenant and not the Old, but all of scripture is the word of God and useful for our salvation and sanctification. There may be parts of scripture that we do not fully understand, that might be difficult to accept, or events in history that we find distasteful, but who are we to question God? A true Christian accepts and submits to all of scripture.

As we saw in *John 17:17* (on this page), God's word is truth. When we read God's Word, do we accept it as truth? Or do we sometimes hold onto long held beliefs and traditions, thus disagreeing with parts of scripture? A person who does not love and accept the truth will be deceived and not be saved.

*2 Thessalonians 2:9–12 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.*

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<sup>17</sup>Romans 5:17 *For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!*

<sup>18</sup>[Luke 9:23](#)



We must believe that God's Word is Truth. There are numerous spectacular and miraculous events recorded in the Bible. We must accept these as real historical events, from God's creating the universe, the devil tempting Eve, the great flood which Noah and his family survived in the ark, Jonah restored from having spent three days in the belly of a great fish, a talking donkey, the resurrection of Christ, and the miracles he performed. We cannot be like Thomas Jefferson, who took a knife to his Bible and removed all the verses describing miracles because found them too difficult to accept. If we do not believe all of scripture, we are calling God a liar.

Conversely, we must not expect unbelievers to submit to the authority of scripture nor understand it:

Romans 8:7–8 *The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.*

The Bible clearly states that an unregenerate person is incapable of obeying scripture, let alone God's laws, for they are still of the flesh, obeying their Adamic nature, as we all did at one time. The New Testament epistles (letters), were written to Christians to tell Christians how to live, not unbelievers. Christians are not to push biblical morals and ethics onto unbelievers;<sup>19</sup> instead we are to *evangelize* them and lead them to Christ, rebirth, and hopefully eternal salvation.

*“A man who is not a Christian cannot believe in the authority of the scriptures. We should not expect him to do so. We are wasting time if we argue with him about it.”*

— Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones [21, pg. 39]

The Bible is the only source that accurately explains the cause of all the world's problems today—that we have rejected God. Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones said for that reason alone, he would believe that the Bible is the authoritative word of God.

### 3.4 Sufficiency

The special revelation of the Bible given to us by God is complete and without deficiencies; the Bible tells us we are not to add or subtract from it.<sup>20</sup> After the last book of the Bible was written, the *Book of Revelation*, the canon of scripture was closed and there are no subsequent books or writings to be added to the Bible. Ever. Period. There is no need of papal pronouncements, new revelations, or newly discovered doctrines. Nor are we to repeat the mistakes the Jewish religious leaders in Jesus' day made—to create their own laws which conflicted with God's 613 laws.<sup>21</sup> Thus all religions based on people's dreams, other writings or revelations, even if they are loosely based on scripture are false religions; they are cults; people would be wise to avoid them.

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<sup>19</sup> Revelation 22:11 (ESV) *Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.*”

<sup>20</sup> *Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18–19*

<sup>21</sup> *Isaiah 10:1–2*

The scriptures fully equip us for service to God:

2 Timothy 3:16–17 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

The Bible contains all of the information we need to start our journey to salvation and to live upright and Godly lives. It tells us to *repent*, and to *believe* in our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus, how to be *baptized in water* and the *Baptism of the Holy Spirit* who guides and sanctifies us as we live out the remainder of our earthly lives. Our Lord Jesus Christ expects us to serve him while we grow into his likeness. See my teaching series entitled *Becoming a Christian*.

However, the Bible does not answer every question that we might have, indeed it sometimes raises new questions which is unsettling to some people. We have to accept that God’s word adequately equips us as sojourners for our temporary lives here on Earth. Yet there will always be things we may never know because we are not gods with infinite knowledge nor an infinite capacity for knowledge, and there are some things we are not meant to know. We must trust God to operate the universe according to his infinite wisdom and that he has revealed to us all we need to know for this earthly life, to prepare us for the next life. (See my teaching entitled *How to Read the Bible*.)

### 3.5 Perspicuity

*Perspicuity* means clarity, and when we talk about the perspicuity of scripture, we are talking about the clarity of scripture, that the things needed for our salvation are understandable. The Protestant position from the *Westminster Confession of Faith* is this:

*“...those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.”* — Westminster Confession of Faith; 1646.

Basically, it is saying that all the things we need to know for salvation can be readily understood from the Bible; however I am not saying everything in the Bible is easy to understand (more on that later). We can see that the Gospel is easy to understand:

1 Corinthians 15:3–4 *For I passed on to you as of first importance what I also received—that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures...*

Teens and even younger children can be taught and have an understanding of the Gospel. Even Jesus proclaimed that the Gospel can be taught to children:

Luke 10:21 *At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things*

*from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.*

Paul gives a discourse on this very idea, that in essence we don't have to be rocket scientists to understand what the Bible teaches us about salvation:

1 Corinthians 1:18–25 *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.*

People who are full of pride and arrogance, who think they are wise and clever in their own eyes cannot understand scripture. There are certain moral and spiritual qualities which are needed to properly understand scripture as we saw in [1 Corinthians 2:14](#) on page 27.

There are a great many self-proclaimed Christians running around today who do not have the baptism of the Holy Spirit, who think they understand scripture but do not.

1 Timothy 1:7 *They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.*

They are not connected to the vine, which is Christ Jesus, as described in [John 15:1–8](#). See my teaching entitled [False Believers](#).

2 Corinthians 3:14–16 *But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.*

2 Corinthians 4:3–4,6 *And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age [the devil] has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. . . . For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.*

God prevents some people from understanding:<sup>22</sup>

Mark 4:11–12 *He [Jesus] told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that,*

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<sup>22</sup> Particularly most Jews, as explained in Romans chapters 9–11.

*“they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!”*

We see that not all of scripture is easily understood:

*2 Peter 3:15–16 Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other scriptures, to their own destruction.*

Beware of evil people and the devil who distort scripture for their own purposes. See for example, how the devil misused scripture in [Matthew 4:1–11](#) for the purpose of tempting Jesus.

However, the scriptures tells us that it is meant to be taught by others, and that God provides scholars and teachers to help us understand scripture:

*1 Corinthians 12:28 And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues.*

*Ephesians 4:11–12 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. . .*

*Hebrews 5:12–14 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

The pastoral epistles 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus provide more information about teaching the scriptures. So scripture clearly shows us that some are appointed to be teachers of the word. The scripture also warns us to be wary of false teachers:

*2 Peter 2:1–3 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.*

*1 Timothy 1:3–6 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God’s work—which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk.*

1 Timothy 6:3–10 *If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions<sup>23</sup> and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.*

See also [1 John 4:1–6](#) and [Jude 1:4–16](#).

Lastly, it should be noted that not everyone who fancies himself a teacher should teach the word, but only those who live upright, Godly lives and are called to teach, for they are to be examples to those in their care:

James 3:1 *Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.*

The Bible clearly tells us that we need the indwelling Holy Spirit to understand scripture. See my teachings entitled [The Baptism of the Holy Spirit](#) and [The Doctrine of Illumination](#). Ultimately all Christians must understand the major doctrines of the bible well enough to share and discuss them with others. I myself do not understand all of it, but if it is in the Bible, and the Bible is the word of God, than it must be true and I accept it even though I do not fully understand it.

Beware! For the devil likes to take the complex things of God and use them to create confusion and divisiveness. Be on your guard and always strive to find truth and understanding. One can take verses from the Bible and prove just about anything; that is how heretics flourish. Scripture can be twisted misused by what people leave out or use out of context. See my teaching [Why Read the Bible?](#)

### 3.6 Living and Active

Hebrews 4:12 (ESV) *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

In verse Hebrews 4:12, the word “living” occurs first in the original Greek and therefore has the greater emphasis. The word of God is alive! This is also mentioned in [Acts 7:38](#) and 1 Peter 1:23. The word of God is not dead. It is not stagnant; rather it is relevant and timeless—applicable to all people in all times. It is applicable to any situation.

Even if you have read a particular book of the Bible several times, reading yet again will teach you something new, if you are growing in Christ. As you progress in Christian maturity, scripture will give you new light and understanding with each reading. As we saw in [1 Thessalonians 2:13](#) (on this page), God’s word as at work in all of us who believe.

The word “active” is translated from the Greek word “energēs” (ενεργες), from which we get our English word *energy*. In addition to active, the Greek word also

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<sup>23</sup>i.e. Conspiracy theories

means *effective, evident, and strong*, and God's word is certainly all those things. Given the power of God's word, we should fervently avoid being disobedient, as were are taught through example by those of the Old Testament who were justly punished.

In ancient times the two-edged sword was the sharpest weapon available, which could easily penetrate flesh and cut through bones. Today we might think of a surgeon's scalpel as one of the sharpest blades available. Due to the blade's fine sharpness, it divides everything it passes through, splitting everything to one side or the other. Likewise, the word of God divides our thoughts, intentions, and actions into good and evil, true or false, holy or unholy, moral or immoral, pure or impure. As with a scalpel there is no middle ground, everything falls to one side or the other. The Bible divides people into the saved and the lost.

The writer to the Hebrews reminds us that God's word is not to be taken lightly; if the reader does not take scripture seriously, he will have answer to no one less than God himself:

Hebrews 12:25–29 *See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire."*

### **3.7 Eternal and Indestructible**

Many places in scripture tell us that God's words are eternal:

Psalms 119:89 *Your word, LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.*

Psalms 119:160 *All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.*

Isaiah 40:8 *The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.*

Matthew 24:35 *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.*

1 Peter 1:24–25 *For, "All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.*

There have been various attempts throughout history to destroy the Bible, to eradicate it from existence, but these have always failed; the Bible is indestructible which further attests to its supernaturalness and its credibility and authority.

The Bible is vital to human beings, as it proclaims the Gospel and the knowledge of God to those who are being saved; and the message of eternal punishment to those who reject its message, so that they will be without excuse. A loving God



would not abandon us, leaving us without the Bible. For without the Bible, there would be no salvation, no morality, and no lawful societies.

During a discourse with the Jewish leaders, Jesus parenthetically states that “Scripture cannot be broken”:

John 10:35 (ESV) *If he called them gods to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be broken—*

The phrase “cannot be broken” in the original Greek means that scripture cannot be destroyed, abolished, or done away with. It cannot be made void or nullified.

### 3.8 Relevant

God’s word is timeless—all of the truths, doctrines, parables, precepts, and principles taught in the Bible are still applicable today. There is no need, as some argue, that the Bible needs to “keep up with the times”, that certain moral principles are outdated and need to be changed. These are feeble arguments by sinful people who want to live according to their own passions, to follow the desires of their flesh. God’s holiness, his laws, and his morality are absolute, they are not relative and they do not change over time. The Bible is still relevant today because mankind has not changed since Adam.

See how scripture tells us it is relevant to us:

1 Corinthians 10:1–11 *For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: “The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.” We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel. These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.*

Psalms 102:18–22 *Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the LORD: “The LORD looked down from his sanctuary on high, from heaven he viewed the earth, to hear the groans of the prisoners and release those condemned to death.” So the name of the LORD will be declared in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem when the peoples and the kingdoms assemble to worship the LORD.*

Romans 15:4 *For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.*

The Bible talks about finances, capitalism, communism, socialism, and taxes. It speaks about adoption, nepotism, good health, medical care, and a myriad of other issues; all practical things that are very much relevant today.

1 Timothy 4:1–3 *The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.*

2 Timothy 4:3–4 *For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.*

Today people live in “bubbles” of news, social media, and social circles to fit their own views, rather than seek the truth. They choose to believe lies rather than facts; just as Adam and Eve chose to believe the devil’s lies rather than the truth.

Jude 1:17–19 *But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, “In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.” These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.*

Mankind hasn’t changed in the last 2,000+ years. We still have the same sins today: murder, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, prostitution, greed, corruption, theft, false believers, mockers and scoffers.

Ecclesiastes 1:9 *What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.*

There are people today, false believers, who claim to be Christians yet promote hatred and divisiveness rather than love and unity which the Bible teaches. Such people have no part in God’s kingdom, Jesus, nor eternal life.

In their New Testament writings, the apostles warned us about false believers, Judeizers, Pharisees, the circumcision group, and legalism—these same kinds of people and problems are still with us today. See my teachings entitled [False Believers](#), [The Old Testament Law](#), and [Politics](#) for more discussion.

### 3.9 Conclusions

Accepting these tenants of the Bible is critical to getting to the truth about all things Christianity. Failing to do so has resulted in numerous false doctrines, sects, and cults to form over the past 2,000+ years. As you read extra-biblical books about theology, one must be careful to know the author’s doctrinal views, and whether they conform to scripture. The Bible must always be our basis for Christian doctrines, for truth, and any extra-biblical writings must be in complete harmony with the Bible. Throughout history, humanity has proven that everything in the Bible is true.



The single best and most comprehensive resource I can recommend on the defense and history of the Bible is Dr. Norman Geisler's excellent book, Volume One of a four-part series on *Systematic Theology* [12]. See my teachings entitled [False Doctrines](#) and [Sola Scripture](#) (Scripture Alone) for more information.

## 4 Common Misconceptions

The Bible has had more than its share of detractors; no book has been more thoroughly studied, scrutinized, analyzed, criticized, and disparaged. Yet nothing can stop God's word from accomplishing its purpose:

*Isaiah 55:10–11 As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*

The Bible is like an x-ray machine that can look metaphorically into our hearts (our character) and identify our flaws. It will change people's hearts, it will lead people to Jesus Christ and salvation, and it will condemn those who refuse God's plan for salvation.

Luke 1:37 *"For no word from God will ever fail."*

### 4.1 The Bible was Authored by Men

While it's true, men wrote the Bible, they did not use their own words, but instead wrote as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit, writing God's words. This was covered in [subsection 3.1](#).

### 4.2 We Don't Have Accurate Copies

We have more copies of books from the Bible than any other ancient writings, including those of Socrates and Plato. Through careful analysis, bible historians and theologians have carefully pieced all the parts together into the original texts that are thoroughly accurate; no doubts remain.

### 4.3 The Bible Contradicts Itself

*"If we are perplexed by any apparent contradiction in scripture, it is not allowable to say 'The author of this book is mistaken'; but either the manuscript is faulty, or the translation is wrong, or you have not understood." — St. Augustine's Against Faustus 11.5*

On the surface, there are places in the Bible that are *seemingly* contradictions, yet we know that scripture cannot contradict itself because it is divinely inspired. In every case, these apparent contradictions are due to a lack of understanding of the whole of scripture.

One of the most common areas of said contradictions are between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. We must remember that the Old Covenant was written for Israel and to Israel before the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. The New Testament is a new dispensation and it supersedes the Old Testament, and in that light there are no contradictions between the Old and New Testaments. See [subsection 2.5](#). Many books have been written to explain or rectify the apparent contradictions, for example, see [10, 39].

## 4.4 The Bible is Outdated

As we saw in [section 3](#), “Key Tenants of the Bible”, we learned that the Bible is eternal, relevant, living and active, etc. We continue to create updated translations using modern language, but the principles, doctrines, and the meaning of God’s words themselves have not changed. Society changes, as it continues to move away from God and holiness towards immorality and evil; but the Bible is still as meaningful, relevant, and current as it ever was; it is in no way outdated.

## 4.5 Too Many Versions

Skeptics have made comments to the effect that we have all these different versions of the Bible and are always coming out with new ones, so we don’t really know what the Bible said originally, or that we are making things up over time. These views come from pure ignorance of the facts.

As you read in the Introduction, the complete Bible has been translated to over 700 languages, and portions of the Bible have been translated into over 3,500 languages. There is a multitude of human languages and human languages are fluid, always evolving over time, so there will always be a need for new translations.

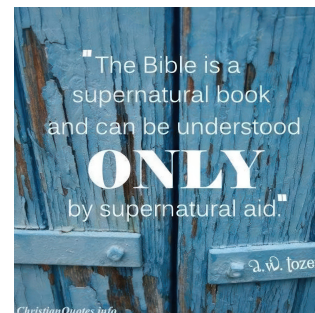
The King James Version (KJV) was written in 1611, using the same Old English language that Shakespeare used back in the day. The English language has evolved greatly since then even diverging into American English and British English, thus necessitating the ongoing need for modern translations. See my teaching entitled [Choosing a Bible](#) for more in-depth information.

## 4.6 Subject to Interpretation

The Bible is the word of God, and yes, it needs interpretation in order for us to fully understand its meaning and apply it in our lives. However, none of us is qualified to interpret scripture; how arrogant to think that we know for certain what God meant in all his words. The Holy Spirit is the only person capable of and authorized to interpret scripture.

*We must never think we know everything about the scripture because that shuts the Holy Spirit out.*

— Derek Prince [32, pg. 166]



Many people think they understand scripture, but the fact is, if they lack the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, they cannot understand it, often doing the opposite

of what scripture teaches!<sup>24</sup> They don't know what they don't know. You can attend seminary, memorize scripture, and study to your heart's content, and still be clueless about its meaning and application. We see this in the New Testament where the Jewish religious leaders, who were intimately familiar with Old Testament scripture, failed to understand Jesus' parables, and were actually enemies of God. Sadly, there are many churches today led by pastors and preachers who lack the baptism of the Holy Spirit; they are unable to teach correct biblical truths and they don't know they're talking about.<sup>25</sup> See my teachings entitled the *Baptism of the Holy Spirit* and *Illumination*.

It is important to be patient, we must wait for revelation and illumination from God, because he operates according to his own schedule. Therefore do not become frustrated if you do not understand a passage from scripture, rather meditate on it and pray about it; God will give you understanding at the proper time.

*“To the natural person the Bible can be the most boring book in the world. To the Christian, it's the book of life, the manual of the soul, it's the textbook of salvation, it's the most precious thing in the whole universe.”* — Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, sermon on *Acts 7:54–60*  
<https://www.mljtrust.org/sermons/book-of-acts/the-waiting-lord/>

## 5 Chapters and Verses

It will be helpful to know that the Bibles we have today, differ from the original manuscripts in that chapter and verse numbers have been added. The original Hebrew and Greek writings of the Bible did not contain chapter and verse numbers; they were written as books, with each book intended to be read in its entirety.

Archbishop Stephen Langton and Cardinal Hugo de Sancto Caro developed different schemes for the systematic division of the Bible into chapters in the early 13th century. It is the system of Archbishop Langton on which the modern chapter divisions are based.<sup>26</sup>

Various schemes were used to add verse numbers to the Bible chapters during the 15th and 16th centuries. The *Geneva Bible*, published in 1560, was the first English language Bible to utilize both chapter and verse numbers, and that numbering system is still used today.

Obviously the chapter and verse numbers are extremely helpful in locating passages of scripture. However, they create some potential problems:

1. The chapter divisions and verse numbers are often very poorly placed. The chapter divisions often break up passages that should be left intact as a

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<sup>24</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:14 *The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.*

<sup>25</sup> 1 Timothy 1:7 *They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.*

<sup>26</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapters\\_and\\_verses\\_of\\_the\\_Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapters_and_verses_of_the_Bible)

whole. Verse numbers often break apart sentences or contain multiple sentences. See David Pawson’s book [30] for specific examples.

2. The second problem created by the numbering allows passages to be easily lifted out of their context provided by the surrounding verses. Now passages can be easily misused—made to imply anything we want. This as led to wide-spread promoting of false doctrines and teaching from unscrupulous preachers. See section 6, Misapplied Verses.

*“The Bible was never created to defend our opinions. It was created to be meditated upon so that we would fully understand God’s opinions.”* — Mark Steele [36, pg. 59]

3. A third problem is that we look for doctrine in individual passages, but often fail to see the doctrines shown in the bigger picture. For example, there is no single verse I can point to justify the *Age of Accountability*, yet the Bible teaches it.

Or more importantly, we see throughout the Bible, and especially in the Old Testament, that nobody can keep God’s laws. Yet many still try to control unbelievers by passing laws, rather than evangelizing them. See my teachings entitled *The Old Testament Law*, *The Four L’s*, and *Evangelism*.

There are bibles available without chapter and verse numbers, see the Wikipedia link above. However, problems can be avoided by always reading the surrounding text of given passages, whole chapters, or even whole books. We must compare scripture with scripture and any doctrine or teaching must exist in harmony with the entirety of scripture.

## 6 Misapplied Verses

Here are some examples of misapplied Bible passages, taken from David Pawson’s book [30].

### 6.1 John 1:12–13

John 1:12–13 *Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.*

It is important to note that *received* and *believed* should both be in the past tense, however many translations fail to keep that vital detail, and change one or both verbs to the present tense. Why is this important? According to David Pawson [30, pg. 13], the verse is a historical description of when Jesus walked the Earth.

Therefore we can no longer receive Jesus since he is no longer on the Earth; rather we receive the Holy Spirit who has been given to us in the place of Jesus. Frankly, I understand Pawson’s point, but I’m not sure that I agree with him. There are plenty of passages which refer to Jesus residing in us, especially in John’s Gospel.<sup>27</sup> It becomes a question of whether Jesus resides within us directly, or by

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<sup>27</sup> e.g. *John 14:23*, *John 15:4*

proxy through the Holy Spirit, or both. Personally, I believe the answer is both, but I am not dogmatic about this.

## 6.2 John 3:16

John 3:16 is not correctly translated and is often used incorrectly. See my teaching entitled [Misunderstanding John 3:16](#).

## 6.3 Revelation 3:20

Revelation 3:20 *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.*

Holman Hunt's painting *The Light of the World*<sup>28</sup> inspired by Revelation 3:20's metaphor of Christ knocking at the door of the Laodicean Church is shown in [Figure 3](#). It is thought that perhaps this painting has caused Revelation 3:20 to be used out of context [[30](#), pg. 11].

Revelation 3:20 is frequently misused as an evangelical verse, regarding a person's conversion to Christianity. This is not the correct interpretation, as the verse is not referring to individuals, but to churches, specifically the church in Laodicea.

Jesus is standing at the door of church knocking, and if someone inside the church opens the door, and allows Jesus to enter the church; Jesus will sit and dine with that person.

It is not referring to some individual opening the door of their heart to Jesus. Nor is it about the Christian conversion process since it makes no mention of repentance, faith, or baptisms; see my teaching entitled [Becoming a Christian](#). Jesus gives the faults of the Laodicean church in a preceding verse:

Revelation 3:17 *You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.*

The Laodicean church felt they were self-sufficient and were oblivious of the fact that Jesus was absent from their church. It is a sad fact that Jesus is not present in many of today's churches. See my teaching entitled [Problems in the Churches](#).

## 6.4 The Tripartite Heresy

One of the many blessings of the New Covenant is that Christians are no longer under the Old Testament law; not even the Ten Commandments; although we uphold the Old Testament law.<sup>29</sup>



Figure 3: The Light of the World

<sup>28</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Light\\_of\\_the\\_World\\_\(painting\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Light_of_the_World_(painting))

<sup>29</sup> [Romans 3:31](#)

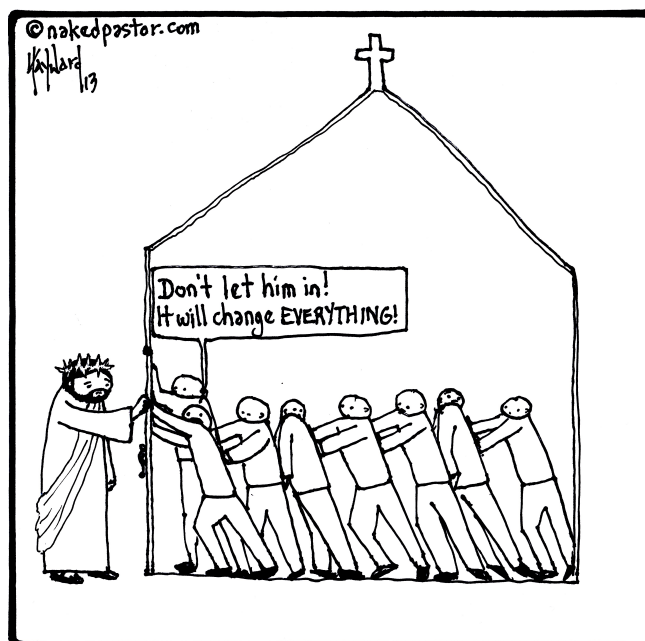


Figure 4: Jesus Knocking

Romans 8:1–2 *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.*

Romans 10:4 *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*

Galatians 5:18 *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*

This is wonderful news! Paul calls the Old Testament law the “law of sin and death”, since it defines sin but only brings death (eternal damnation). No one can be saved by obeying the Old Testament law because nobody apart from Jesus himself can obey the Old Testament law perfectly.

Now the *Tripartite Heresy* is this: *False Believers* divide the Old Testament law into three sections, ceremonial law, civil law, and moral law (the latter generally meaning the Ten Commandments). And they propagate a false teaching that we are still under the moral law.

The Old Testament Law is comprised of some 613 rules, and the law is a unit, indivisible, it is atomic, it cannot be divided up; it is all or nothing. See my teachings entitled *The Old Testament Law*, and *The Four L's*, or Charles Leiter’s excellent book *The Law of Christ* [19].

James 2:10 *... or whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.*

The people who tout the Old Testament law are false believers; they lack the baptism of the Holy Spirit and do not understand the New Covenant; they are



hypocrites because they impose laws on others but they themselves do not obey the law.

Acts 15:10 *Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear?*

Galatians 6:13 *Not even those who are circumcised keep the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your circumcision in the flesh.*

The fact that we are not under the law is not a license to sin, far be it! We are not promoting antinomianism (lawlessness or anarchy). Christianity is about living by the Law of Christ and being led by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 6:14–15 *For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means!*

Ironically, many atheists who do not have Jesus nor the Holy Spirit are kinder, more loving, and more caring than the false believers. They exhibit the qualities of Christ such as empathy, mercy, love, and grace.

Romans 2:14–15 *(Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.)*

While we are not under the Old Testament law, we are under the *Law of Christ*.

1 Corinthians 9:21 *To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law.*

What is the law of Christ? It is simple:

Matthew 22:37–40 *Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

Matthew 7:12 *So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.*

The law of Christ is short, sweet, and easy to remember. Plus we have the Holy Spirit residing in us to help us keep the law. Now if only all Christians would obey this law...

## 7 Application

I hope you enjoyed reading this teaching and at least learned a few new things about the Bible. The greatest takeaways from this teaching are these:

1. The Bible is the word of God.

2. You can trust your Bible. [27]
3. You must put what the Bible teaches into practice.

James 1:22–25 *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.*

A child of God embraces God's word, we love God's words to us and look forward to reading them as often as we can. How you receive God's word will determine where you spend eternity. Yet I have heard Christians and even pastors reject parts of scripture or ignore scripture to suit their own evil desires. I have seen churches fall and become houses of the enemy because they failed to follow scripture.

Read from the Bible everyday—the Bible is food for your soul, it is like an energy source that recharges us. We all need daily recharging through Bible reading and prayer because the world drains of our holiness.

Where do you go next? The following teachings (in order) will help you continue on your spiritual journey:

1. [Choosing a Bible](#)
2. [Why Read the Bible?](#)
3. [How to Read Your Bible](#)
4. [Becoming a Christian](#)

God's word is not only holy, it is able to make us holy if we let it take root in our hearts and read it regularly. By failing to read the Bible regularly, we slowly erode and become more like the world, more sinful, falling away and eventually reverting to our old-self before we became Christians. We also become more susceptible to the devil's lies and more evil.

Hebrews 5:11 *We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand.*

We must continue to strive to understand the Bible, and not be like those who gave up trying to understand it. Moreover, we must continue to accept that all of the New Testament teachings are still applicable today. Most all heresies and false Christian sects stem from deviating from what the scripture teaches us.

We must not just read the Bible to acquire knowledge. We must look at how the Bible applies to us. Christianity is not merely a teaching, it is primarily a way of life and our ongoing relationship with God. Doctrine comes first, but it is never meant to be doctrines only, the teachings must be put into practice, we must live as Christ lived. We must learn and apply godly [Wisdom](#).

Colossians 2:6–7 *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.*



When you finish reading a part of the Bible, or a book of the Bible, ask yourself some questions:

1. What did I learn from this?
2. What is God trying to tell me or teach me?
3. Is there wisdom I should learn from this?
4. How can I apply this in my life? (not your neighbor's life)

Please be sure to read my companion teachings entitled *Why Read the Bible?* and *How to Read the Bible*. I hope you will find them both most helpful. Also see my teaching entitled *Sola Scripture* (Scripture Alone) about why the Bible should be our exclusive basis for Christianity.

## 8 Prayer

*“Heavenly Father, thank you for your scripture to help me better know you and your will. Thank you for the gift of your Son Jesus, in whom we have eternal life. Please fill me with your Holy Spirit to give me light and understanding of your words. I pray in Jesus’ name that you will make me zealous for your words so that I will study them regularly, and that I will grow in understanding, knowledge, and wisdom. Help me put your words into practice in my daily life and to grow into the likeness of your glorious son Jesus. May you be glorified by the accurate understanding and practice of your words. Amen.”*

## A The Apocryphal Books

Some bibles include what are called *The Apocryphal Books*<sup>30</sup> (meaning hidden), which are intertestamental, that is, the historical time between the old and new testaments. These books are not considered part of the Protestant canon of scripture and most bibles omit them. The Roman Catholic and Orthodox religions tend to include them in their bibles.

Some of the apocryphal books are:<sup>31</sup>

- 1 Esdras (Vulgate 3 Esdras)
- 2 Esdras (Vulgate 4 Esdras)
- Tobit
- Judith (“Judeth” in Geneva)
- Rest of Esther (Vulgate Esther 10:4–16:24)
- Wisdom
- Ecclesiasticus (also known as Sirach)
- Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremy (“Jeremiah” in Geneva) (all part of Vulgate Baruch)
- Song of the Three Children (Vulgate Daniel 3:24–90)
- Story of Susanna (Vulgate Daniel 13)
- The Idol Bel and the Dragon (Vulgate Daniel 14)

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<sup>30</sup> Roman Catholics call these the *Deuterocanonical books*.

<sup>31</sup> See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical\\_canon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_canon) for a more extensive list.

- Prayer of Manasseh
- 1 Maccabees
- 2 Maccabees

This span of time between the Old Testament and the New Testament is sometimes referred to as the *400 Silent Years* among Protestants because it was a period when no new prophets arose and God revealed nothing new to the Jewish people. Specially, it covers the time period between Malachi (circa 420 BC) to the arrival of John the Baptist in the New Testament.

While the apocryphal books are not generally considered part of the Protestant canon of scripture, there is no harm in reading them.

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