



Beginning with the Bible

The Bible is a book that tells the story of who God is, what God has done, and how God has made it possible for people to have a relationship with our Creator.

Who is Jesus Christ? Jesus means 'Saviour' and Christ means 'Messiah' or 'Anointed One'. Jesus is God in human form. He proved he was God by living a perfect life, dying for the sins of all people and then rising from the dead.

The Old Testament was written long before the coming of Jesus. It begins with the story of creation and tells the history of Israel, God's chosen people. God's principles and truths are revealed to leaders and prophets. Through Israel, God had a plan to bless all the peoples of the earth. The Old Testament contains 39 books written by numerous authors.

The New Testament tells the story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It also contains the account of early believers in Jesus, and how they spread the message and teachings of Jesus, which are still relevant today. The New Testament contains 27 books, also written by a variety of authors, many of whom were followers of Jesus during his years on earth.

How are the Old and New Testaments connected? All of the Bible reveals the ways and character of God. While the 66 books of the Bible are written by many different authors, the central theme of both Old and New Testaments is the person of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament there are more than 300 prophecies specifically pointing to Jesus. The New Testament tells about the fulfillment of those prophecies.

Why should we read and study the Bible? The first book of the Bible, Genesis, tells how God breathed life into human beings at creation. God has also inspired (or 'breathed into') the Bible. As we are eternal beings, so the word of God is eternal in nature and is filled with eternal truths and principles that are as relevant today as they were when they were written. By reading the Bible we learn who God is and who we are. It shows how God intends us to live lives of wholeness, justice, peace and blessing. The Bible contains answers to many of life's difficult questions, wisdom for living well, and hope for the future.

Where should I begin? If you are reading the Bible for the first time, a good place to begin is with one of the gospels, the story of Jesus Christ. Many start with the Gospel of John.

How do I look up a Bible verse? For convenience, the books of the Bible have been divided into chapters and verses. A Bible verse will be indicated with the name of the book, the chapter number and the verse number. For example, John 3:16 means that you will find the book of John, then look for chapter 3 and in that chapter you will look for verse 16.

Why are there different translations of the Bible? The Old Testament was originally written mostly in Hebrew and the New Testament was written in common Greek. Because translation is not an exact science and our use of language changes with time and according to culture, translators work to provide current versions of the Bible that will make sense to today's reader. Translations may also address various reading levels and competencies.

The Books of the Bible

OLD TESTAMENT		
Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy		Pentateuch - Referred to by Jews as the Torah, which means "written law," the first five books of the Bible, also known as the Pentateuch, are filled with foundational stories and fascinating characters who shaped the history of Israel.
Joshua Judges Ruth 1 and 2 Samuel 1 and 2 Kings 1 and 2 Chronicles	Ezra Nehemiah Esther	History - The colourful story of God's dealings with Israel through kings, prophets and everyday people is unfolded in these books. The best and worst of humanity is recounted in gripping stories that also demonstrate the love and patience of God.
Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon		Wisdom & Poetry Books - These books include personal experiences, authentic emotions, thoughtful reflections, and passionate prayers of the very human writers.
Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah	Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	Prophecy - Prophets were spokespersons for God. These books are the written stories and revelations of the prophets, containing messages from God pertaining to future blessings, judgments and promises.
NEW TESTAMENT		
Matthew Mark Luke John		Gospels - The word gospel means 'good news.' Each of the four gospels tells the story of the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ through a different lens.
Acts		History - This book tells the exciting story of the spread of Christianity after Jesus rose from the dead and returned to heaven.
Romans 1 and 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 and 2 Thessalonians 1 and 2 Timothy	Titus Philemon Hebrews James 1 and 2 Peter 1, 2 and 3 John Jude	Epistles - These are letters that were written by early Christian leaders to teach God's truth and principles, and to encourage people to live out the Christian message, even in the face of persecution.
Revelation		Apocalypse - Apocalypse means 'unveiling' and this last book of the Bible gives a deeper understanding of who Jesus is and how his disciples are to live in light of present and future events.