

Foundation Study #1: THE BIBLE (Part One - Summary)

The Bible is divided into two main sections; The Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament is also divided into two main sections. The first section covers the first eleven chapters of the first book (Genesis 1-11) and the second section covers chapter twelve of Genesis through the last book in the Old Testament (Genesis 12 - Malachi). The first eleven chapters of Genesis cover the promise of a Savior to the human race. Chapter 12 of Genesis to the end of the Old Testament deals with the preservation of that promise through the Hebrew race. The New Testament describes the presentation of the promised Savior to the human race.

A Summary of the Bible		
Old Testament		The New Testament
Genesis 1-11	Genesis 12 - Malachi	Matthew - Revelation
<p>The promise of a Savior to the entire human race. See Genesis 3:15</p> <p>After learning of Adam and Eve's disobedience, God graciously promises a Savior. Since this I before the creation of the Hebrew race, this promise is for all humanity.</p> <p>The promise of a Savior is embryonic at this point. Not all the details are fully formed yet.</p> <p>By looking back we learn the "He" that God spoke of is Jesus.</p> <p>Satan caused Jesus to suffer (bruised His heel) through His crucifixion. Jesus brought a death blow to Satan (crushed His head) through His resurrection.</p>	<p>The preservation of the promised Savior thru the Hebrews. See Genesis 12:3.</p> <p>Having promised humanity a Savior, God then chooses Abram and creates the Hebrew people from him.</p> <p>God tells Abram that the promised Savior would come from him (the Hebrews) but that it would be for "all peoples" (NIV).</p> <p>The rest of the Old Testament is the account of how God preserves the promise (of a Savior) thru the Hebrew people.</p>	<p>The preservation of the promised Savior to the entire human race. Read John 4:25,26; 20:31.</p> <p>The Hebrews anticipated the appearance of the promised Savior. Jesus is the promised Savior of the Old Testament. Read Luke 2:21-38; Acts 13:23,32,33.</p> <p>Jesus was promised to everyone (Genesis 3:15), preserved thru the Hebrews (Genesis 12 - Malachi) and presented (John 4:26) to everyone!</p> <p>Read 2 Corinthians 6:2</p>

A Summary of the Old Testament

Type of Writing

The Old Testament is arranged by type of writing

Law	History	Poetry	Prophecy
<p><u>Creedal</u> in nature. Describing guidelines for godly living among people and nations that do not honor Him.</p> <p>*****</p> <p><i>Genesis:</i> The account of creation, the fall of man, the promise of a Savior for all humanity and preservation of the Savior through the Hebrews. Note: The preservation of the promised Savior included the promise of land (Genesis 15:18-21).</p> <p><i>Exodus:</i> The Hebrews deliverance from a foreign land (Egypt).</p> <p><i>Leviticus:</i> The establishment of blood sacrifice as a means to pleasing God.</p> <p><i>Numbers:</i> Hebrews wandering in a foreign land.</p> <p><i>Deuteronomy:</i> Preparation to enter the promised land.</p>	<p><u>Narrative</u> in nature. Describing the early existence of the Hebrew people.</p> <p>*****</p> <p><i>Joshua:</i> Entering and conquering the promised land.</p> <p><i>Judges:</i> Sin in the promised land.</p> <p><i>1,2 Samuel; 1,2 Kings; 1,2 Chronicles:</i> Historical narratives of Israel under different leaders.</p> <p><i>Ezra and Nehemiah:</i> The restoration of Israel to the promised land.</p> <p><i>Esther:</i> The account of personal courage and divine providence.</p>	<p><u>Emotional</u> in nature. Describing man's relationship with God and others.</p> <p>*****</p> <p><i>Job:</i> The account of human suffering and God's sovereignty.</p> <p><i>Psalms:</i> Stories of God's unchanging nature against man's ever-changing emotions and circumstances.</p> <p><i>Proverbs:</i> Wise sayings about man's relationship to man.</p> <p><i>Ecclesiastes:</i> Wisdom about what is most important in life.</p> <p><i>Song of Songs:</i> Passionate words about love.</p> <p><i>"Job teaches you how to suffer, Psalms teaches you how to pray, Proverbs teaches you how to live, Ecclesiastes teaches you how to enjoy, Song of Songs teaches you how to love."</i> J. Oswald Sanders</p>	<p><u>Predictive</u> in nature. Describing future events and God's just and gracious character.</p> <p>*****</p> <p>Prophecy speaks about God's punishment (and eventual restoration) of Israel. It also predicts much about the Messiah. See Isaiah 53.</p> <p>There are two types of prophecy books: The longer ones (called Major Prophets) and the shorter ones (called Minor Prophets).</p> <p><u>Major Prophets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isaiah • Jeremiah • Lamentations • Ezekiel • Daniel <p><u>Minor Prophets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosea • Joel • Amos • Obadiah • Jonah • Micah • Nahum • Habakkuk • Zephaniah • Haggai • Zechariah • Malachi

A Summary of the New Testament

Type of Writing

The New Testament is arranged by type of writing

Gospels	History	Epistles	Prophecy
<p>The <u>presentation</u> of the Savior the <u>first</u> time.</p> <p>Jesus comes the first time as the suffering Servant (Mark 10:45).</p> <p><i>Matthew:</i> Jesus as the King of men (Matthew 27:11).</p> <p><i>Mark:</i> Jesus as the Servant of God (Mark 10:45).</p> <p><i>Luke:</i> Jesus as the perfect man (Hebrews 4:15).</p> <p><i>John:</i> Jesus as the Son of God (John 20:31).</p>	<p>The <u>expansion</u> of Christianity.</p> <p><i>Acts:</i> A historical account of the first 25 years of Christianity.</p> <p>The first 25 years of the Church.</p> <p>Also a biographical narrative of the first Christian missionaries: Peter, Stephen, Philip, and Paul.</p>	<p>The <u>explanation</u> of Christianity.</p> <p>Epistles are letters written to various churches and individuals.</p> <p>They explain the deeper truths of the Christian faith to those who had already become Christians.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romans • 1,2 Corinthians • Galatians • Ephesians • Philippians • Colossians • 1,2 Timothy • Titus • Philemon • Hebrews • James • 1,2 Peter • 1,2,3, John • Jude 	<p>The <u>presentation</u> of the Savior for the <u>second</u> time.</p> <p>Jesus comes the second time as the ruling King (Revelation 19:11-21).</p> <p><i>Revelation</i> is New Testament prophecy. It describes what is and what is yet to come (Revelation 1:1,19).</p>

I. THE RELIABILITY OF THE BIBLE. Can we trust the Bible?

The reliability of the Bible is based upon the following evidence:

1. **ARCHEOLOGICAL evidence.** The Bible mentions hundreds of cities, structures and other archeological facts. Never in the thousands of years that people have been digging, has anything been found that contradicts any biblical account. *"It may be stated categorically that no archeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference."*¹
2. **HISTORICAL evidence.** Not one of the hundreds of historical events mentioned in the Bible is refuted by any of the historians of the New Testament era. Even secular historians of the time of Christ do not refute Biblical history. For instance, Josephus, a Jewish historian of the time of Jesus, wrote a lengthy historical treatise that corroborates many New Testaments events.
3. **TEXTUAL evidence.** One of the most powerful tests for determining the reliability of a modern text is to compare it with an ancient copy of the same text. The higher the degree of agreement between ancient and modern texts the greater the reliability. There was relatively little question about the authenticity of the Old Testament text until the middle of the twenty century. The accuracy of our modern Old Testament text was then confirmed by a remarkable discovery in 1947. A Middle Eastern shepherd boy was trying to scare some of his goats out of a small cave. When he threw a pebble into the darkness he heard the sound of the pebble hitting something brittle. When he went into the cave to investigate, he found several clay jars that contained one of the most important archeological discoveries of all time, the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Dead Sea Scrolls comprise over 200 individual scrolls, including the entire book of Isaiah and portions from all the other Old Testament books except Esther. The scrolls date to about 70 A.D. Before this time the most recent Old Testament texts dated to around 1100 A.D. The Dead Sea Scrolls bridged a gap of over a thousand years. Comparison of the texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls with our modern texts did not reveal any errors in doctrine. The amazingly high degree of agreement between our modern texts and the text of the Dead Sea Scrolls proved that the transmission of the text for that missing millennium was accurate. Therefore our modern Old Testament text is indeed, reliable. The New Testament text was originally written during the first century A.D. Our most modern manuscripts date to around 120 A.D. The interval period between the original manuscripts and the first generation copies of the New Testament texts (which we possess) is so small as to be considered inconsequential by experts in the field of textual criticism. Sir Frederic Kenyon, who was the director at the British Museum and second to none in authority and issuing statements about manuscripts concludes, *"The interval... between the dates of original composition and the earliest extent evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established."*² The gap between the original writings of the New Testament and the texts we possess is so small as to be considered extraneous.

Additionally, there are over 5,300 early Greek manuscripts of the New Testament in existence today. The agreement of these texts with each other (and the small gap between them and the original texts) also supports the conclusion that our modern New Testament text is indeed accurate and therefore reliable and trustworthy. *"There is no body of ancient literature in the world which enjoys such a wealth of good textual attestation as the New Testament."*³

1. Don Stewart, You Be the Judge, Here's Life Press, page 48.

2. Josh McDowell, More Than a Carpenter, Living Books Publisher, page 48.

3. F.F. Bruce, The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable? William B. Erdmans Publishing Company, May 2003

4. **INTERNAL evidence.** The Bible was written over a period of **1400** years in **three** languages (Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic) by **40** authors on **3** continents yet does not contain any errors in doctrine. This is amazing when one considers the unity of the writings. Many of the authors were not contemporaries of each other, had no overriding means or incentive to agree with each other and did not even speak the same language. In spite of these factors the Bible completely agrees with itself. *“The Bible is a marvelous unified whole. There are no contradictions or inconsistencies within its pages....It quickly becomes apparent that no human being(s) could have orchestrated the harmony of the teachings of the Scripture. The divine authorship of the Bible is the only answer.”*⁴

It is also remarkable when one considers the nature of the writings. No where would one expect to find a document that is so self condemning, so painfully honest and so unique in its story line. Any human attempt to gather this number of writers under these conditions would result in a text that contradicts itself to the extent it would be laughable and not worth reading. Certainly, not believable. However, the Bible agrees with itself. Testimony to its divine authorship. *“No where does Scripture in one place declare erroneous what it gives in another place, and this holds true for even the smallest details.”*⁵

5. **PROPHETIC evidence.** Much of the Bible is predictive in nature. One of the strongest reasons for accepting the reliability and inspiration of the Bible is the fulfillment of predictive prophecy. Not one prediction in the Scriptures has ever proven to be false. God’s ability to make known the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10) is one of the strongest pieces of evidence supporting the reliability of the Bible. *“Only I can tell you what is going to happen even before it happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish”* (Isaiah 46:10 NLT).

There are over **300** predictions about Messiah in the Old Testament. Jesus Christ has fulfilled over 100 to date. The rest will be fulfilled in the coming ages. These predictions were all made between 1,400 years and 400 years before His birth. Many of them center on issues that He had no control over. Events such as the place, lineage and nature of His birth (Genesis 22:18, Micah 5:2, Isaiah 7:14), the nature, means and details of His death (Isaiah 53) and the fact of His resurrection, (Psalm 16:10).

The chance of Jesus fulfilling just eight prophecies of the Old Testament is one in ten to the 17th power. This is illustrated by taking ten to the 17th silver dollars (that is 100,000,000,000,000,000) and laying them on the state of Texas. They would cover the entire state two feet deep. Now, mark one of these silver dollars and stir up the whole mass all over the state. Blindfold a man and have him pick just one dollar out of the entire pile. The chances of him getting the marked silver dollar the first time is the same as that of the prophets writing the Messianic prophecies and having just eight of them come true in one man. The chance that Jesus could fulfill 48 prophecies is ten to the 157th power. By comparison, the estimated number of electrons in the entire known universe is about ten to the 79th power.⁶ Mathematically speaking, anything that extends beyond ten to the 50th power is considered to be impossible.

Summary

Christianity is an evidential faith. More evidence exists to support Christianity than any other belief system. Christianity is not a blind leap into nothingness. It is not a “check your brain at the coat rack” religion. Instead, it incorporates logic and reason. It is an evidential belief system that stands the test of any objection, question, or challenge. The amount of verifiable facts, testimonies, signs and support for Christianity are overwhelming. In the words of Josh McDowell, the evidence “demands a verdict.” Such information begs for a response.

4. Paul Enns, The Moody Handbook of Theology, Moody Press, Chicago, Ill. page 155

5. Rene Pache, The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture, Moody Press, 1980. page 122

II. THE CANON OF THE BIBLE. How was the Bible put together?

The authenticity of the Old Testament text was recognized in stages. The Pentateuch (The Law or first five books of the Bible) was recognized as authoritative (canonized) as Ezra read it in 444 B.C. (Nehemiah 8-10). Much of the prophets writings were accepted between 200 and 300 B.C. as much of what they wrote about took place. The final recognition of the Old Testament text was affirmed at a synod of Jewish rabbis in Jamnia in 90 A.D. The authority of the Old Testament is furthered by the fact that the New Testament authoritatively quotes or alludes to it over 250 times.

The authority of all 27 New Testament books was finally affirmed in 397 A.D. at a council in Carthage. *“The Bible is self authenticating and the church councils have only recognized the authority already inherent in the books themselves... it is important to remember that the books of the Bible were authentic (canon) before any test of man was put to them. In the same manner as an intelligent person is intelligent before any test of intelligence is put to him/her. The test merely confirms what is already there. The early Church used several meetings (called Counsels) of learned men to verify, affirm, and recognize that certain books were indeed worthy of inclusion in the Bible. They did not create the authenticity of the Bible but merely confirmed what was already present.”*⁷ The three tests placed upon the New Testament writings to determine their authenticity were...

1. **AUTHORSHIP (Eye witness evidence).** All the writings had to be authored or backed by an apostle of Jesus Christ. Peter was the backer of Luke, Mark and Paul.
2. **AGREEMENT (Internal evidence).** The content of the writings had to agree with the revealed will of God. The Old Testament was a good source of comparison for this.
3. **ACCEPTANCE (External evidence).** All the writings had to receive unanimous acceptance by the early Churches. *“The early Church was in surprising agreement among itself as to which writings were authentic and which were not.”*⁸

Summary

The Bible is the most amazing book ever written. It stands alone as a one of a kind piece of literature. It is unique. It is the most fascinating writing humankind can ever come across. It's self agreement, prophetic fulfillment and transforming power puts it in a category all its own. It answers the deepest questions, addresses the most pressing needs and solves the most important problems of life. It transforms even the hardest of hearts. It comforts even the most grieving of hearts. It guides even the most lost of souls. It is a book of peace, joy, and hope. It is Scripture, the word of God.

“We also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe” (1 Thessalonians 2:13 NIV).

6. McDowell, Evidence That Demands a Verdict, Thomas Nelson Pub., 1993, page 167

7. Charles Ryrie, The Ryrie Study Bible, Moody Press, Chicago, 1978, page 1961

8. Ryrie. page 2018