

Bible Info Sheet

Who wrote the Bible?

There are 40 known authors from all walks of life, not every book has an identified writer. The Holy Spirit moved each of these men to produce His inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word. (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20–21)

What is the Bible?

The Bible comes from *Biblia*, which means “The Books.” 66 books. Steve Ridgell writes “*But early Greek Christians wanted to stress that these multiple books, written by different authors and across centuries, is truly one cohesive book, or “the Divine Library” as one 4th century historian called it, so they began to call it “The Book,” or, The Bible.*”¹ The Bible contains: Law, History, Wisdom, Poetry, Gospel, Epistles, Prophecy, and Apocalyptic Literature that reveal God to our heart, soul and mind. We see how important it is for us to have so many types of literature to grasp God’s revelation to man. The Bible is the story of relationship, God revealed. The variety of literature present real life so we can see God expressed in more than theory.

Richard Foster writes: *The Bible is all about life ‘with God.’ God with us is on every page of the Bible – with people whose stories form a mosaic illustrating how the ‘with’ life works in all circumstances of human existence.*

When was it written and compiled?

The Bible was written over a time span of 1400 years with many of the books written over 3,000 years ago. The Old Testament (covenant) which is also called a “Canon” was finished first, before the time of Jesus, and then the New Testament, Canon, was completed.

The term for the books that made it into *The Bible* is “canon.” Anne E. writes, “Canon in Greek meant a “measuring rod” or “ruler”. It was a carpenter’s term for judging something straight, so it started being used as a metaphor to describe those books that were considered to be spiritually superlative. There was some criteria for determining what was canon and not all books were accepted in one fell swoop. The Old Testament was passed down from the Jewish tradition and Jesus showed his acceptance of the Old Testament scriptures as God’s Word to man when he said, “Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35) and “Everything written about me in the *Law of Moses* and the *prophets* and the *psalms* must be fulfilled (Luke 24:44). This implies that Jesus accepted as scripture the writings that make up our Old Testament. So Christians received the Old Testament from the Jews and eventually officially declared it as canon. The books of the New Testament were included as canon at different intervals.”²

Where can I get the best translation?

There are a few different approaches translators use when translating the original languages into English:

1. The first is known as formal equivalence (or literal). These types of translations attempt to stay as close to the Hebrew or Greek in words *and* grammar, as can be said in understandable English. An example of this would be the ESV (or English Standard Version).
2. The second is known as functional equivalence (or dynamic) — in which translators attempt to keep the *meaning* of the Hebrew or Greek but re-word things into a more normal way of saying them in English— so they “update” language, grammar, and style. An example of this would be the NIV (New International Version).
3. The third is called free translation (or paraphrase) — where the goal is to translate *ideas* from one language to another with less concern with the exact words of the original language. Free translations try to remain faithful to the original text while transferring thoughts into more contemporary terms. An example of this would be The Message.

Some translations fall somewhere in the middle of these. An example is the New Living Translation (NLT) which would be considered a functional equivalent, but moves in the direction of a free translation.²

Why was it written?

John 20:30 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Steve Ridgell writes, “Remember that the Bible was written for one main purpose: to help you know Jesus. The gospel of John explains that it was written so that we might believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and by believing that we can have life in his name. Jesus did many things that are not recorded in the Bible. In fact, if everything Jesus did was written down, the whole world would not have room for the books it would take. But what is written is so we can know Jesus. So we can believe in Jesus. So we can live like Jesus. So we can live forever with Jesus. When I have trouble understanding the Bible, I try to remember that the focus is Jesus. He is the important thing to learn from the Bible.”¹

How do I know it has credibility?

1. Accuracy. Dr. Richard J. Krejcir writes, “Archeology has consistently proven the Bible's historical accuracy. Critics claim that the Bible is filled with errors and contradictions. Typically, those accusations are made with very little knowledge of the Bible and no 'real' research into the areas that they attack. When I read those books on Bible contradictions, they are mostly about verses taken out of their context or using outdated King James language and misinterpreting the English word meanings (they rarely go into the original Greek or Hebrew!) because language changes over time.”³
2. Prophecy. Excerpt from article by CBN⁴- “Down through history, God provided us a roadmap. He foretold various signs and conditions through His prophets. These prophets spoke of things that mankind should watch for so that the Messiah would be recognized and believed. These signs or prophecies were given to us in the Old Testament. The Old Testament is the part of the Bible written before Jesus was born. Its writings were completed in 450 B.C. The Old Testament, written hundreds of years before Jesus’ birth, contains over 300 prophecies that Jesus fulfilled through His life, death and resurrection. Mathematically speaking, the odds of anyone fulfilling this amount of prophecy are staggering. Mathematicians put it this way:
 - 1 person fulfilling 8 prophecies: 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000 1 person fulfilling 48 prophecies: 1 chance in 10 to the 157th power 1 person fulfilling 300+ prophecies: Only Jesus!
 - It is the magnificent detail of these prophecies that mark the Bible as the inspired Word of God. Only God could foreknow and accomplish all that was written about the Christ. This historical accuracy and reliability sets the Bible apart from any other book or record.

The New Testament was written after the death of Jesus Christ. Archeologists have found thousands of manuscripts of the New Testament. Some of these pieces of manuscript are dated less than 100 years after the original letters were written. In terms of historical reliability, the Bible is superior to any other ancient writings.

3. It’s Unity. Dr. Richard J. Krejcir writes, The Bible is composed of sixty-six books and was written during a span over 1,500 years by over forty different authors. They all wrote independently, and most of them knew little or nothing about the other writings. They include farmers, statesmen, poets, scholars, kings, physicians, and fishermen, people from every conceivable walk of life. Despite these factors, the Bible is a unified book with a running theme and purpose; it is the story of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament predicts what the New Testament records. Even with our modern technology and massive libraries and resources no work has ever come close!
4. It’s Preservation. Dr. Richard J. Krejcir writes, The fact that the Bible has survived and that we have an accurate copy is amazing because in those days books were copied by hand on materials not easily preserved. Yet there is more evidence for the authenticity of the Bible books than for any other ancient

literature. And there are more copies of early Bible manuscripts than any other historical source. In scholarly circles there is no debate with the authorship and contents of Aristotle, Plato, Homer or Socrates. Yet there is less than 1% of historical evidences for all of these works combined as compared to the Bible! And the nearest dated manuscript for any of them is over 400 years old. The Bible has manuscripts less than a hundred years old! See chart.

5. It's Influence. The Bible has influenced almost every area of life, from promiscuity to politics to academics to the arts. Its message has changed lives throughout the ages. More has been written about the Bible than any other book, and it continues to be a bestseller around the world.³

What are some roadblocks we might face?

1. Intimidation – don't have Bible school training. Some preachers may add to this because they add all sorts of explanations of words and back stories and we feel we can't read it on our own.
2. Hard to concentrate with so many difficult new words, the immense size and things that don't make sense. There are stories within the story. Once you start to get the big picture, the bird's eye view, many of those things make sense.
3. Lack of Relevance: you cannot understand the practical purpose of what you are reading. Things which don't seem pertinent to our everyday life and the Bible is written for all people for all times....and not just us in our time. Remedy: if this is you, start approaching the Bible to learn about God and his overall program for history. Always ask with each reading how what you are reading is relevant to his program rather than our personal program.
4. Too Impatient: We live in a micro-wave culture. We want understanding and we want it now. Remedy: if this is you, resolve in your mind that learning involves discipline and diligence. It doesn't happen overnight.
5. Too Conditioned for Excitement: As long as we are looking for something new, a fresh word from God, the next move of God or wanting to go to the next level we might be conditioned for excitement Remedy: resolve in your mind that learning will not always be exciting. But learning about God on his terms should be and provide the motivation to continually seek what he is communicating.
6. Incompatibility with Personal Agendas: similar to #2, if you are looking for the Bible to resolve a self-interested agenda and it does not, then reading what is not relevant to personal agendas can get old real fast. Remedy: if this is you, ask yourself the question of whom do you serve – self or God. It is a hard thing at times to loosen the grip of self-serving motives but surrendering to the lordship of Jesus Christ does require us to do just that.

1. Steve Ridgell http://www.heartlight.org/articles/201105/20110511_understand.html
2. Anne - <http://comebreakbread.com/tag/31-days-to-better-understanding-the-bible/>
3. <http://www.intothyword.org/apps/articles/?articleid=31647&columnid=3801&contentonly=true>
4. http://www.cbn.com/spirituallife/biblestudyandtheology/jesus_prophecy_fulfilled.aspx?option=print