



EXPLORING
THE
BIBLE



OVERVIEW

VIDEO ONE | What is the Bible?

VIDEO TWO | How is the Bible structured?

VIDEO THREE | What is the Old Testament about?

VIDEO FOUR | What is the New Testament about?

VIDEO FIVE | Why so many translations?

VIDEO SIX | How do I read it for myself?

What Is the Bible?

VIDEO ONE

The Bible is God's REVELATION.

"When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths." || 1 Corinthians 2:13, NLT

The Bible is INSPIRED by God.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right." || 2 Timothy 3:16, NLT

The Bible is ALIVE.

"For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires."

|| Hebrews 4:12, NLT

"As they wrote the original texts of Scripture, God breathed into the authors the words, concepts and ideas he wanted written, in the way he wanted them written. Somehow he did this through the unique personalities of each writer without compromising their free will."

|| Hal Seed, *The Bible Questions*

Notes

HOMEWORK

VIDEO ONE

- 1** Of the three words we used to describe the Bible - revelation, inspired, and alive - which is the most difficult to understand or believe? What questions do you still have?

- 2** The Bible is not simply a history book. It is the means by which the living God still speaks today. Read the following passage. What might God be trying to say to you through It?

"Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins."

(1 John 4:7-10, NLT)

How Is the Bible Structured?

VIDEO TWO

The Bible is a library of 66 books, written by 35 or so authors, over about 1,500 years.

The Bible tells one consistent and coherent story.

THE BIBLE	
Old Testament	New Testament
<p>39 books</p> <p>about 28 authors</p> <p>over 1,500 years</p>	<p>27 books</p> <p>about nine authors</p> <p>less than 100 years</p>

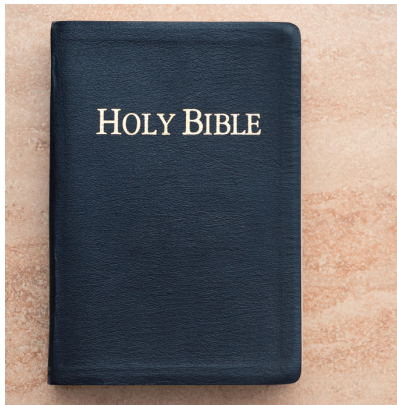
The Old Testament

Historical Books

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy
Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 Samuel
2 Samuel
1 Kings
2 Kings
1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

Poetic Books

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Songs



Prophetic Books

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

The New Testament

Historical Books

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John
Acts



Pauline Epistles

Romans
1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians
1 Timothy
2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon

General Epistles

Hebrews
James
1 Peter
2 Peter
1 John
2 John
3 John
Jude
Revelation

The Bible

The Old Testament

Historical
Books

Poetic
Books

Prophetic
Books

The New Testament

Historical
Books

Pauline
Epistles

General
Epistles

Notes

HOMEWORK

VIDEO TWO

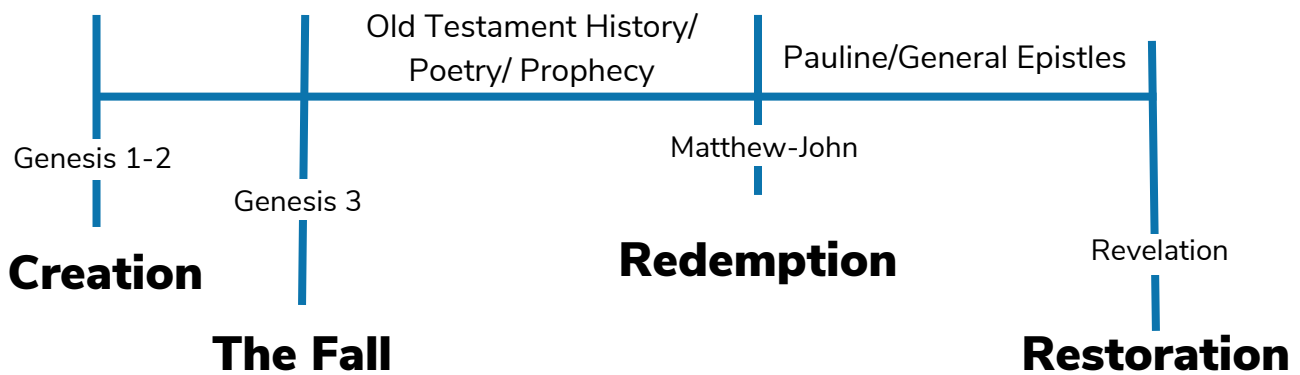
- 1** Have you ever tried reading the Bible for yourself? Did you find it easy or difficult to navigate? If difficult, what made it difficult?

- 2** Some religions believe that their sacred text is too difficult for an ordinary person without years of study and instruction to understand. Why do you think Christians encourage everyone to read the Bible for themselves? What problems might emerge from a person reading the Bible without a sufficient understanding of its context?

What Is the Old Testament About?

VIDEO THREE

The Bible could be broken into four chapters.



This lesson will cover the first two chapters; the next will cover the second two.

CHAPTER ONE: CREATION

The Bible is a book about God. It begins with Him and ends with Him.

The Creation

God is the Creator.

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." || Genesis 1:1, NIV

God creates everything out of nothing.



God speaks creation into being.

"Then God said, 'Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.'

So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Then God blessed them and said, 'Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.'" || Genesis 1:26-28, NLT

For relationship to be genuine, there must be the option to opt out.

God gave the man and the woman one command to obey:

"And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.'" || Genesis 2:16-17, NIV

CHAPTER TWO: THE FALL

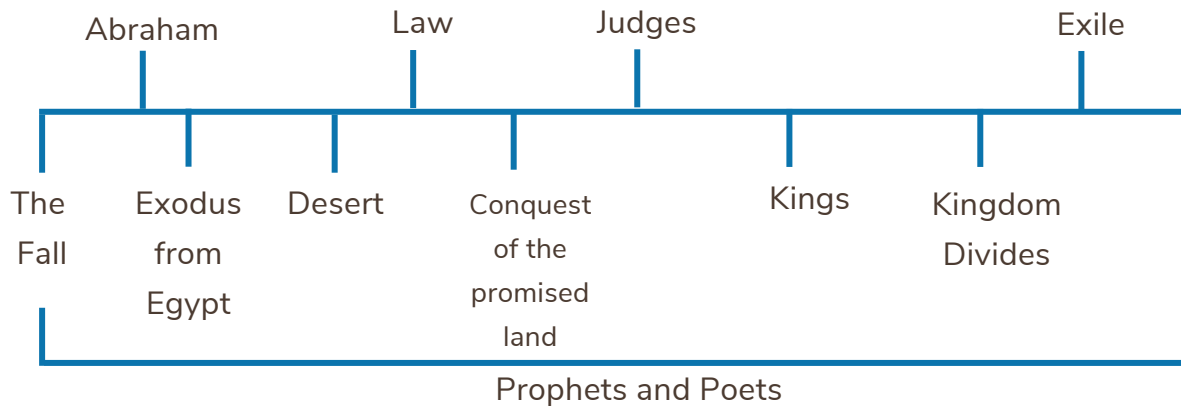
The man and the woman disobeyed God. The consequence for disobeying God is death.



"God's plan is to initiate a relationship with one man, and through him to extend community to as many as possible. His goal is to build a community of people who relate to Him by faith, and to one another in love so that He can bless them and, through them bless the world."

HAL SEED, *THE BIBLE QUESTIONS*

Old Testament Timeline:



HOMEWORK

VIDEO THREE

1

Take a quick tour of the Old Testament by looking at these snapshots from some of the major Old Testament passages. If you've never looked up a verse in the Bible before, start in the Table of Contents. If you're trying to find Genesis 2:15, Genesis will be the book you're looking for. Flip there. Then, look for chapter two (the larger numbers) and then verse 15 (the smaller numbers).

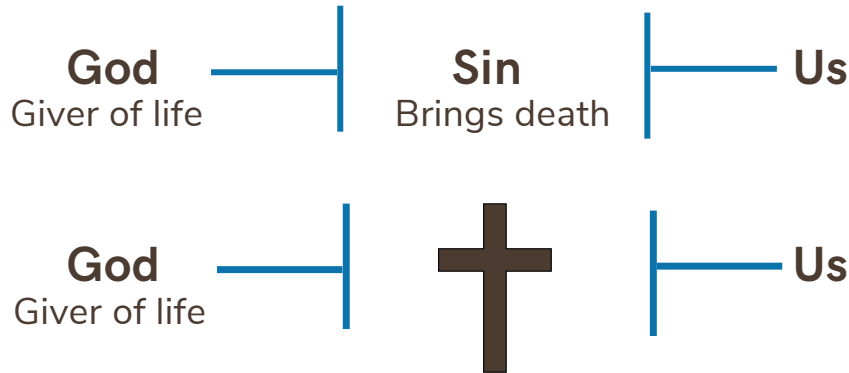
As you look up these passages, note the many connections between different parts of the Bible. Although they are written by different authors at different times, the themes of God's love and grace are consistent throughout the scriptures.

1. Where is Adam placed in Genesis 2:15?
2. What place are the Israelites leaving in Exodus 6:6? Who is their leader?
3. Where will the new king (David) be anointed in I Samuel 16:1?
4. Where did Solomon summon the people to dedicate the temple in I Kings 8:1?
5. What New Testament event is prophesied in Psalm 22: 1,7,17-18?
6. Where did Micah prophesy the Messiah would be born in Micah 5:2?

What Is the New Testament About?

VIDEO FOUR

CHAPTER THREE: REDEMPTION



"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on a level with the man who says he's a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great moral teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." ||

C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

CHAPTER FOUR: RESTORATION

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the older order of things has passed away.'" ||
Revelation 21:1-4, NIV

"I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." ||
Ephesians 3:16-19, NIV

Notes

HOMEWORK

VIDEO FOUR

1 As in the previous homework, take a quick tour of the New Testament by looking at these snapshots from some of the major New Testament passages.

As you look up these passages, note the many connections between different parts of the Bible. Although they are written by different authors at different times, the themes of God's love and grace are consistent throughout the Scriptures.

1. How did Herod find out where Jesus would be born in Matthew 2:7-8? (See also Micah 5:2 for an Old Testament connection.)
2. What did Paul contend was the key to righteousness in Romans 4:1-3? (See also Genesis 15:6.)
3. How does Peter describe God's people in 1 Peter 2:9? (See also Exodus 19:4-6.)

Why So Many Translations?

VIDEO FIVE

The Bible was written primarily in Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament).

Source Language
(Hebrew/Greek)



Receptor Language
(English)

Literal Equivalence
(Formal)

Dynamic Equivalence
(Informal)

Paraphrase
(Not quite a translation)



Books, Chapters, and Verses

Example: John 3:16

John - the book
3 - the chapter
16 - the verse

HOMEWORK

VIDEO FIVE

- 1** Compare these translations of John 3:16 (one of the best-known verses in the Bible). What similarities do you notice? What differences? Which do you find the most appealing?

"For God so loved the world,
that he gave his only Son,
that whoever believes in him
should not perish but have
eternal life."
(English Standard
Version)

"For God so loved the world
that he gave his one and
only Son, that whoever
believes in him shall not
perish but have eternal life."
(New International
Version)

"For this is how God loved the
world: He gave his one and
only Son, so that everyone who
believes in him will not perish
but have eternal life."
(New Living Translation)

"For God so loved the world that
He gave His only begotten
Son, that whoever believes in
Him should not perish but have
everlasting life."
(New King James Version)

- 2** If you don't yet own a Bible, consider buying one this week. If you're unsure which translation to choose, we'd recommend starting with one toward the middle of the spectrum (for example, the NIV or NLT).

How Do I Read the Bible?

VIDEO SIX

There are a lot of great ways to read the Bible - but there are a couple of important ways to NOT read the Bible.

The Read-at-Random Approach

The Reader-Response Approach

This approach assumes the reader, not the author, gets to determine meaning.

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

Start with prayer.

What does the passage say?

What does this mean for all believers?

How does this apply to me?

HOMework

VIDEO SIX

1

Use the Bible reading guide from this lesson to go through the following passage. You can also choose to use the guide on just a couple of verses at a time. There is space for you to write down your thoughts on the following page.

2 Peter 1:3-11, New Living Translation

3 By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. 4 And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.

5 In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.

8 The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins.

10 So, dear brothers and sisters, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Do these things, and you will never fall away. 11 Then God will give you a grand entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

HOMWORK: 2 PETER 1:3-11 (NLT)

Start with prayer.

What does the passage say?

What does this mean for all believers?

How does this apply to me?

Bible Reading Plans

A great place to start is with one of the gospels. Here is a one-week reading plan for each of the gospels:

	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
Day 1	Matthew 1 - 4	Mark 1-2	Luke 1-3	John 1-3
Day 2	Matthew 5 - 8	Mark 3-4	Luke 4-6	John 4-6
Day 3	Matthew 9-12	Mark 5-6	Luke 7-9	John 7-9
Day 4	Matthew 13-16	Mark 7-8	Luke 10-12	John 10-12
Day 5	Matthew 17-20	Mark 9-10	Luke 13-16	John 13-15
Day 6	Matthew 21-24	Mark 11-13	Luke 17-20	John 16-18
Day 7	Matthew 25-28	Mark 14-16	Luke 21-24	John 19-21

Additional Notes

Resource Library



BOOKS

["The Canon of Scripture"](#) by F.F. Bruce

["Learn to Study the Bible"](#) by Andy Deane

["Grasping God's Word"](#) by J. Scott Duvall & J. Daniel Hays

["How to Read the Bible Book by Book"](#) and ["How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth"](#) by Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart

["Living by the Book"](#) by Howard Hendricks

["Evidence that Demands a Verdict"](#) by Josh & Sean McDowell

["The Bible Questions"](#) by Hal Seed

["Knowing Scripture"](#) by R.C. Sproul

[FIND THEM AT THE GROUNDS](#)

BIBLES

[NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible](#)

[NIV Quest Study Bible](#)

[NLT Life Application Study Bible](#)

[The ESV Study Bible](#)

[FIND THEM AT THE GROUNDS](#)

INSTITUTE CLASSES

[How to Study and Interpret the Bible](#)

[The Big Picture Bible Study series](#)

[CHECK THE SCHEDULE](#)



