**Bible history lesson**

**How we got it**

The bible is the most influential book ever written. It is important we know where it came from, how it came to be and why it guides our lives. This corner stone of our faith provides instruction and outlines for how we should live our lives. It offers advice for every situation and holds the key to a meaningful/eternal relationship with God.

The bible sells over 100 million copies every year. It has been translated into over 690 languages from its original 3. Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. And it’s the most stolen book of all time. There are pages and pages of random facts about the bible but we’re going to look at how it came to be, what makes it up and why it’s so important.

First off how we got the bible. If you look at 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and 2 Peter 1:20-21 they show us that the bible is inspired by God. From there it was passed down through oral tradition, for more information on this check out the Jewish tradition of the Oral Torah, as well as it was written down on various items. Starting with the Old Testament being written on stone, clay and leather approximately 1500-400BC, and the New Testament written approximately AD 45-100 on papyrus. The oldest new testament fragment (from John 18) was copied in Greek on a papyrus codex around 110-130 AD. A papyrus codex is a bound volume made from sheets folded and sewn together, sometimes with a cover. These were used more commonly than scrolls around 1-100 AD. From there they went on to hand copying the Bible onto animal skins from calves, sheep (parchment) or antelope (vellum). This went on for approximately 1000 years. 300AD to 1400AD. Roughly. The oldest vellum copies that exist today from 250-300AD. Those are the Vatican Codex and the Sinaitic Codex. From there we moved on to the Wycliffe Bibles which were inscribed by hand and took anywhere from 10 months to 2 years to produce and cost almost an entire year’s salary. Wycliffe was opposed to the teaching of the organized church, he believed it was contrary to what the Bible was for. So, he translated it from Latin Vulgate into English. This made the pope so mad that 44 years after Wycliffe’s death he ordered his bones dug-up and burned. Some say they were crushed and scattered in a river. The Bible was first printed on a press in 1455 on a Gutenberg printing press. Now the Bible is printed on paper in over 600 languages and digital formats.

A more lateral history of the Bible we have today goes like this

Original Manuscripts 1500BC-100AD

Early copies Codex Sinaiticus ~350AD

Codex Vaticanus ~350AD

Codex Alexandrinus ~425AD

Vulgate translation 400AD

Wycliffe 1380

Coverdale 1535

Geneva 1560

King James 1611

Revised version 1881

American Standard 1901

Upon discovery of the dead sea scrolls and other manuscripts these were factored into the TNIV in 2005. The dead sea scrolls were discovered in 11 caves in the northwest shore between 1947 and 1956. This has been called the greatest manuscript discovery of modern times. All in all, the scholars have identified the remains of about 825 to 870 separate scrolls.

Brief overview of our canonized bible. There’s many counsels that went into this, but the scriptures were judged by Jewish and Hebrew scholars based on 3 basic principles; progressive collection of authoritative scriptures, written by recognized anointed men of God such as prophets and apostles and recognized and accepted as authoritative by the community of God’s people. The English word canon comes from the Greek word KAVWV meaning rule or measuring stick.

10 key points for how we got the Bible

1. Inspired by God 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21
2. Made up of 66 books over 1600 years.
3. Old testament was mainly written in Hebrew, and some Aramaic. The New Testament is written in Greek.
4. The books of the Bible were collected and arranged and recognized as inspired sacred authority by councils or rabbis and councils of church leaders based on 3 points.
5. Before the printing press the Bible was copied by hand, by special scribes who would count words and letters to insure there were no erros.
6. The Bible was the first book ever printed on a printing press with moveable type, Guttenberg Press in 1455, Latin Bible.
7. Almost 5,900 Greek manuscripts from the new testament still exist today. The text of the bible is better preserved than the writings of Plato or Aristotle.
8. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls confirmed the astonishing reliability of some of the old testament copies. Although there are some variations in spelling the are no variations that affect the basic Bible doctrines.
9. The Bible has been translated into 3,324 languages including some sign languages. Completely translated into 2,189 languages. According to a 2014 survey
10. By 200 AD the Bible was translated into 7 languages but there are still over 2,000 groups with no Bible in their own language.

B**reakdown**

The Bible, this word come from the Greek word *Biblios* meaning book, even if you go back further in the Greek language it means parchment or scroll. The Bible is made up of 66 books, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. These are divided into 8 subsections.

The Pentateuch-This contains 5 books, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The Pentateuch contains the stories about the creation of the world, the flood, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the children of Israel, Their Journey to the promise land and also the law God gave to the people on Mt. Sinai. The Pentateuch is also called the Torah.

Next there are the Historical books; this covers the history of Israelites, conquest of the Promised Land, the continuous rise and fall God’s people due to sin, the kings and various invasions including the return to exile during the Persian rule. The Historical books are Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther.

There is the Poetry and Wisdom books, these are Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs. These books include hymns, proverbs, poems and dramas. They showcase the different ways the people of Israel expressed themselves to each other and God, among other inspirational and instructional lessons.

The Major prophets, not called this because of quality of message but more so the length of the books. These Prophets brought God’s word to the people about the near future along with warnings and hope in the distant future. Jesus.

Then there’s the minor prophets, also called “the book of the twelve” in the Hebrew Bible. This includes Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. This is the same purpose as the Major prophets but their books are shorter in length.

Now the New Testament is broken into 3 sections. The gospels & acts section records the good news of God’s plan for a Savior through the life, death and resurrection of His son Jesus Christ. Each writer has a unique style of writing to share Jesus’ story. As well as Act’s lays out the foundation of the new testament church, which is also the foundation of our non-denominational Church of Christ.

Next is the section of Paul’s Epistle, there are 13 letters written to young churches, pastors and friends in order to guide, encourage and correct them. Most of these epistles or letters are written to address specific questions or problems. This section includes Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon.

And finally, there is the general epistles and revelation. These letters were written by other apostles and leaders including Simon, Peter, James, John and Jude. These were written to early Christians to provide guidance, encouragement and warning of false teachings. The book of Revelation address seven churches in the Asia Minor (Turkey today) to help them to know that God is in control, and we were created to love and worship God. This section includes Hebrews, James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude and Revelation.

At the end of the of most Bibles you’ll find a small section of helps and maps, don’t underestimate the importance of these. They can help with understanding the terrain, the paths which Jesus traveled and even down to comparing weights and money from then to now.

In some churches there are additional books, such as the Apocrypha from the Greek meaning The hidden things. These were part of the early church’s Greek version of the old testament. The Catholic tradition considers 7 of these to be deuterocanonical but the Hebrew Bible deems them to be non-canonical, because they’re not useful for instruction. They are a part of the original Latin Vulgate, however. This book includes 1-2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, the Letter of Jeremiah, Prayer of Manasseh, 1-2 Maccabees. This is where you’ll find the traditions of purgatory, and penance or the practice of paying to atone for sins.

Another set of books not included in the canonized version of the bible is the books of Enoch. Although said to been available during the canonization of the Bible it isn’t accepted in most Christianity due to not meeting the 3 requirements. Some examples of this are the writings in this book are seen as speculation about the fallen angels, known as the section entitled the watchers.

There are many translations of the bible, as times change people feel the need to update due to the constant changing of vernacular and understanding of words. Most versions started as 2 versions, word for word and then interpretation. Meaning that some were a direct translation and some translated the meaning of the passage. Now there is another class, which combines the 2 categories. A few examples of the different translations are the King James version, New International version and the Message.

**Why it’s so important**

3 simple reasons why the Bible is so important; 1st It lays out the history of how we came to be, not just a series of random events or aliens but complex and divine creation. 2nd The Bible provides instruction on the rules or code or commandments about how we should live our lives to reach our fullest potential. A righteous life that puts us back into good standing in our relationship with God. 3rd It teaches the path to salvation, how we should live our lives in order to fulfill our debt of sin. More over that we cannot fulfill that debt but Jesus did for us.

1st Laying out the history of the world.

We’ve all been taught evolution, big bang theory and the whole gambit of science driven understanding of how life came to be. But the Bible tells a different story that accurately lines up with a balance of faith and science. Many of the founding fathers of science were devout students of the Bible. Francis Bacon the guy that came up with the Scientific Method was quoted in his own commentary on the Bible, On Gen 1:1 he wrote “I believe that nothing is without beginning, but God: no nature, no matter, no spirit, but one, only, and the same God. That God, as he is eternally Almighty, only wise, only good, in his nature: so he is eternally father, son and spirit, in person…” He also had a hand in the translation of the KJV. Sir Isaac Newton, you know the guy with the apple and gravity, saw God’s fingerprints everywhere in the “evidence of design” and “laws” that govern the physical world. He said “Gravity explains the motion of the planets, but it cannot explain who set the planets in motion. God governs all things and know all that is or can be done.” These are 2 specific examples but the list goes on and on of scientist that also believed in God. Thomas Paine, William Paley, Asa Mahan are a few others that pioneered the scientific field but were firm believers also. As the Bible lays out the creation of the world and of man, it matches up with string theory also. String theory claims that there are tiny vibrating strands of energy at the center of all matter. Like sound. This lines up with how God spoke the world into existence. A few more examples are how the big bang theory suggests that there was a massive explosion, or another way of looking at it would be that God spoke it and it happened. Suddenly? Or even how God hung the stars in perfect balance, so our planet has the perfect balance of hot and cold, the correct distance from the sun to sustain life.

Let’s take a look at another prime example. The biblical story of The Flood and Noah. God flooded the world as man was corrupt. Many ancient cultures, almost every one of them, holds an account of a great flood, or global flood. Just a few examples of these are; Africa, Egypt, Mesoamerica, South America, Canare, Inca, Mapuche, Maisca, Tupi, Mesopatamia, China, India, Indonesia, Mayalasia, Philippines and Thailand. Or how these massive receding flood waters would have deposited things in giant clusters. Like how the dinosaur fossils are usually found in clusters, with herbivores and carnivores’ side by side.

The Bible lays out an amazing account of our world’s history. With stories of kings, betrayals, List upon list of lineages. A trustworthy account that gives us a better understanding of how the world came to be that lines up with the evidence that the world isn’t as old as many may think. (For more on this there is a great documentary called “Is Genesis history?”)

**It sets the rules for how we should live to reach our fullest potential in society and our relationship with God**

It seems that everything we really need to know we learned in kindergarten. Treat others how you want to be treated and share. That works great when you’re 5 without a care in the world but we know that as we grow up life becomes infinitely more complicated. Fitting in and functioning in society, dealing with people of all backgrounds and personalities. Life is difficult but having a guide whether the Holy Spirit or God’s word to help us navigate life’s challenging spots is an amazing tool. The Bible does a great job at providing example after example of how we should treat people. When Jesus was questioned about the greatest commandment found in Matthew 22:34-40 He got straight to the point Love God with all your heart, soul and mind and Love your neighbor as yourself. (Sounds pretty close to what we learned in preschool treat others how you want to be treated) How much better would this world be today if we just followed that one simple rule. Would we be dealing with wars over oil or racism? Would children be growing up in split homes, if we listened to Paul’s writings in Ephesians 5:25-27 and husbands truly treated wives like Jesus treated the church? No! We would be in harmony, treating others with respect and love. Real love that helps each other grow in character and potential. Many of our historical figures like Abraham Lincoln or John Quincy Adams believed that the only way for government to be successful was with a strong Christian influence.

I doubt that if we followed the Bible’s teachings on controlling ourselves our prisons would be overflowing. If we followed Ephesians 4:29-32. This amazing book still works today, just as it did when it was written down. Setting the standard of behavior that God called us to live to. This is so that we may be righteous, a shining light for others to look to and think “That’s how we should live”

If we can follow the teachings of the Bible we will reach our fullest potential in relationships, both with people but more importantly with God.

**The path of salvation**

We cannot talk about how important the Bible is without looking at the great instruction of the pathway to salvation.

Sin. We’re all guilty of it. Resulting in us being separated from God. But God laid out the plan of salvation through His’ Son Jesus Christ. The plan of salvation refers to a way of coming to faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. Individuals may take different journeys to realize that they need salvation, but the way of salvation is the same for all—Jesus.  
  
The Bible is clear that the source of salvation is Jesus Christ alone. [John 3:17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.17) teaches, "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" ([John 14:6](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2014.6)). Jesus is the only plan for salvation.  
  
But why do we need to be saved? Human sinfulness. [Romans 3:23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%203.23) declares, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." The consequence of our sinfulness apart from salvation is spiritual death ([Romans 6:23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%206.23)) and eternity apart from God in hell ([Matthew 25:46](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2025.46)).  
  
How can we be saved? By grace through faith in Jesus. [Ephesians 2:8-9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%202.8-9) teaches, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." Salvation is a gift. It cannot be earned, only accepted. Through grace and baptism Matthew 3:13-17 we receive this outstanding gift.  
  
When can we be saved? Right now. [Second Corinthians 6:2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor%206.2) teaches, "now is the day of salvation." No one knows how long he or she will live. We must not delay, but place our faith in Jesus and be saved now while there is time. As John the Baptist taught, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" ([Matthew 3:2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%203.2)).  
  
How long does salvation last? Forever. When we have sincerely placed our faith in Jesus, He gives us eternal life that no one can take away. [Romans 8:38-39](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.38-39) shares, "For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." [First John 5:13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.13) adds, "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life."

The Bible lays out the plan in these verses as well as Acts 2:38-39 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

This is why the Bible is so important, showing us the way to God through Jesus. Through understanding of how the world truly came to be, how we need live our lives for God, and behave towards one another and the plan of salvation.