

Things We Should Know About Bible Study

I. Reasons For Bible Study

- A. We should study the Bible because it is **God's word**. (Exod. 24:4; 2 Sam. 23:2; 1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:3).
- B. We should study the Bible because **man is incapable of directing his own steps**. (Prov. 14:12; Jere. 10:23; Isa. 55:8,9; Psa. 119:105).
- C. We should study the Bible because it is **able to save our souls**. (Jn. 8:32; Rom. 1:16; Jas. 1:18, 21).
- D. We should study the Bible that we **might be able to teach others**. (Matt. 28:19, 20; 1 Pet. 3:15; Heb. 5:11-14).
- E. We should study the Bible to **make our salvation sure**. (Acts 17:11).
- F. We should study the Bible **for comfort**. (Psa. 23; 46:1; Jn. 14:1-3; 1 Cor. 15; 50-57; Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Heb. 13:5; Rev. 14:13; 21:1-22:5).
- G. We should study the Bible because it **answers the three great questions of life**.
 - 1. The Bible tells us **where we originated**. (Gen. 1:26, 27).
 - 2. The Bible tells us **why we are here** (Matt. 5:16; Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:12).
 - 3. The Bible tells us **where we are headed**. (Matt. 7:13, 14; 25:46).
- H. We should study the Bible because it **imparts spiritual strength to us**. (Matt. 4:4).
 - 1. Physical bread is vital to the physical being, but "bread alone" will not sustain man.
 - 2. Spiritual strength and spiritual victory depends on feeding on the words of God.
 - 3. Read Psalms 119.
- I. We should study the Bible because **it is a timeless book**.
 - 1. It is just as applicable as the day it was written.
 - 2. The Old Testament was written for our learning (Rom. 15:4), and the instructions found in the New Covenant are binding today.
- J. We should study the Bible because it will **make us better men and women**.
 - 1. It is impossible to sincerely read the Bible without great benefit.
 - 2. It inspires, teaches, motivates us to be better by drawing close to God and doing the things that please Him.

II. Some Important Facts About The Bible

- A. The word “Bible,” although it is singular in form, comes from the Greek word “Biblia” meaning “books.” The sacred writings were given this name by man because they contain a plurality of books.
- B. The Bible was written over a period of about 1550 years. (1450 B.C. - 100 A.D.) by about 40 different writers.
 - 1. Moses wrote the 5 books of law sometime after the giving of the law at Mount Sinai about 1446 B.C.
 - 2. The last book was likely written in 96 A.D., or perhaps a few years earlier.
- C. The entire Bible can be read in a year if an average of 3 ½ chapters are read daily.
- D. The Bible contains 66 books and 1,189 chapters.
 - 1. The Old Testament contains 39 books and 929 chapters.
 - 2. The New Testament contains 27 books and 260 chapters.
 - 3. The largest book in the Bible is Psalms with 150 chapters.
 - a. Five books of the Bible contain only one chapter: Obadiah, Philemon, 2 John, 3 John and Jude.
 - b. Third John is the shortest book by 1 line.
 - 4. The longest chapter in the Bible is Psalms 119 and the shortest chapter in Psalms 117.
 - 5. The longest verse in the Bible is Esther 8:9 and the shortest in the English Bible is John 11:35. The shortest verse in the Greek text is 1 Thessalonians 5:16.
- E. The Bible was not originally divided into chapters and verses except for the book of Psalms that was divided into chapters (Acts 13:3).
 - 1. The Bible was divided into chapters by Cardinal Hugo in 1250 A.D.. Stephen Langton, a doctor in the University of Paris and later Arch-bishop of Canterbury, has also been given credit at a date at least 25 years earlier.
 - 2. The New Testament was divided into verses by Robert Stephanus in 1551. The whole English Bible divided into chapters and verses first appeared in 1560, and was called the Geneva Bible.
- F. Words appearing in italics are not in the original text, but have been supplied by the translators to complete the meaning. (Acts 3:1).
- G. The books of the Bible are not in chronological order, but have been logically arranged. Events within a book are not always in chronological order.
- H. The Bible was originally written in 3 languages.
 - 1. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, the language of the Jews, except for portions of Daniel and Ezra that were written in Aramaic. (Dan 2:4-7:28; Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Jere. 10:11).
 - 2. The New Testament was written in Koine Greek, which was the common language of the world during the

first century.

III. Classification Of Books

A. The Old Testament books are sometimes classified as follows:

1. **Pentateuch** or 5 books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.
 - a. These books are also called the “Torah” (books of law) because they contain the Jewish law, that is, the law God gave the Jews. (Deut. 5:1-6).
 - b. They cover history from the beginning of time until the Jews arrives in the plains of Moab about to enter the promise land of Canaan.
2. **History**: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. These books cover the history of the Jews from the time they entered the promise land to about 400 years before Christ.
3. **Poetry**: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. These books are so called because they contain a great deal of poetry, but they are not poetry exclusively. The books also contain prose.
4. **Major Prophets**: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel.
 - a. This classification is based on the size of the books, not importance.
 - b. These books are not any more important than the books known as the Minor Prophets.
5. **Minor Prophets**: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. These books, as a general rule, are smaller than the Major Prophets.

B. The New Testament books are sometimes classified as follows:

1. **Biography**: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These books contain the study of Christ and are commonly referred to as “The Four Gospels.”
2. **History**: Acts. The book of Acts covers the history of the church from its beginning in about 33 A.D. until about 62 A.D..
3. **Pauline Epistles**: Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon.
4. **Anonymous Epistle**: Hebrew. The author is unknown.
5. **General Epistles**: James, 1 & 2 Peter; 1, 2, 3 John and Jude.
6. **Prophecy**: Revelation.

IV. Terms Used In Reference Books

A. **Antediluvian**. The period before the flood of Noah’s time. “Ante” is a prefix denoting “before” and “diluvian” means “flood.”

- B. **Apocalypse.** A term used especially for the book of Revelation. Apocalypse means an “unveiling.” The book of Revelation is given this name because it unveils future events.
- C. **Apocrypha.** Apocryphal books are uninspired books written at the same time of some Biblical books. Fourteen of these books are included in the Catholic Bible, but were not in the Hebrew Old Testament nor were they accepted by Christ.
- D. **Authorized Version.** The King James Version is quite commonly called the Authorized Version because it was authorized by King James I of England in 1611. It is abbreviated as the A.V..
- E. **Autographs.** A term used to refer to the original writings. It comes from 2 Greek words “autos” meaning “self” and “graphein” meaning “to write.” None exist today. There are, however, numerous copies of the autographs.
- F. **Canon.** This word refers to the list of 66 books which are regarded as having divine authority.
- G. **Canticles.** A term frequently used for the Song of Solomon. The word means “songs.”
- H. **Chronology.** Dates or events arranged in the order of the time of their occurrences.
- I. **Commentary.** A book written to explain or interpret the Bible.
- J. **Concordance.** A book listing words of the Bible in alphabetical order, and the texts where they are used.
- K. **Decalogue.** A term frequently used for the ten commandments.
1. The word comes from 2 Greek word “deka” meaning “ten” and “logos” meaning “word.”
 2. The term literally means “ten words” referring to the ten commandments.
- L. **Dispensation.** A system of principles, commandments, rules or promises of God. Thus the Jewish Dispensation refers to the laws of God for the Jews.
- M. **Harmony of the Gospels.** A book in which the four gospel accounts of any event in the life of Christ are placed together usually in parallel columns on the same page. It also arranges the life of Christ in chronological order.
- N. **Interpolation.** The insertion of new or foreign materials in a text. For example the translators of the K.J.V., wishing to justify the observance of Easter, put the word “Easter” in Acts 12:4. The Greek manuscripts have the word “Passover” here.
- O. **Lexicon.** A language dictionary. A Greek-English lexicon provides Greek words with their English definitions.
- P. **Manuscripts.** Hand-written copies of the Scriptures. Abbreviated as MS or MSS.
- Q. **Marginal Notes.** Notes placed in the center column or outside column of a Bible to explain a word or expression in the text. Synonyms and alternate readings are often given.
- R. **Marginal References.** References placed in the center column or outside column to direct the reader to similar texts or words.

- S. **Papyri.** Scrolls made from Papyrus, a writing material of the ancient Egyptians - paper.
- T. **Pentateuch.** The first five books of the Old Testament. The word comes from 2 Greek words “penta” meaning “five” and “teuchos” meaning “book.” The term literally means the “five-fold book.”
- U. **Postdiluvian.** The period following the flood in the days of Noah. The word “post” is a prefix meaning “after.”
- V. **Septuagint.** A Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament made around 280 B.C..
- W. **Synoptic Gospels.** A term applied to the first three gospels because they are so similar in their account of the life of Christ.
- X. **Talmud.** A collection of Jewish traditions and oral explanations of the Old Testament Scriptures that were committed to writing in the 2nd century A.D..
- Y. **Targums.** These were translations of the Hebrew Old Testament books into Aramaic, the language of Palestine after the Babylonian Captivity. The Targums also contained many paraphrases and interpretations of the Hebrew Old Testament books.
- Z. **Translation.** A Bible, or part, that has been produced in a native language from the Hebrew or Greek.

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