

How did we get the Bible?



Many Christians are content to say that we received the Bible from God. Full stop. While this is true, most sceptics find this explanation unsatisfactory and does nothing to ease their doubts about the Bible's authenticity and value. We should admit that it is an answer that does not really answer the question people are really asking.

Ultimately we believe the Bible is God's Word and God is responsible for everything that has been written in the Bible; however the Bible next to you right now didn't come directly from the hand of God to you. God didn't translate your Bible into English, bind it in leather, inscribe the words of His Son in red and then supernaturally transfer it to your possession. You probably either bought your copy of the Bible at a Christian book store, over the internet, or someone gave it to you.

In the coming lessons, we will learn **how** God's precious Word has come to us, **how** he has protected it, **how** it has been translated, and **how** we can know that it is true.

How can you know then that the words you find in the Bible you possess are actually the ones that God said or inspired others to write?

How would you answer these questions?

1. **Do you believe the Bible is the Word of God? Why or why not?**
2. **Do you believe that the Bible contains truth? Why or why not?**
3. **Do you believe the Bible contains any errors? Why or why not?**

1 Peter 3:15 instructs, "but in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect."

4. **What is the meaning of 1 Peter 3:15?**

General Overview of the Bible

The Old Testament covers the period from the Creation to about 400 years before Christ. Since we take a literal six day view of Creation, we believe that the Old Testament covers the timeframe of approximately 4,000 BC till 400 BC. The New Testament covers a much smaller period from the birth of Christ till about 95 AD when the book of Revelation was penned.

The Old Testament is about three times larger than the New Testament. The Old Testament was penned primarily in Hebrew while the New Testament was primarily written in Greek.

The word testament actually means covenant or contract or agreement. The New Testament records the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the beginning of the Church, and includes epistles describing how the Church should live and function.

According to tradition, the New Testament books were written between about A.D. 50-95. They were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, and Jude. In our Bibles the books are not arranged in chronological order. The Gospels, though written after some of the epistles record the birth of Christ. They are first in our Bibles because they record the first events of the New Testament era; actually it is accurate to say, they record the last events of the Old Testament era.

Often we divide the Old Testament into a number of sections: The first is called the **Law** or **Torah**. This word means guidance or teaching. These books are also called the **Pentateuch**. They are the first five books of the Old Testament written by Moses.

The second set of books is called the books of **history** and record the time of the judges and kings of Israel.

The next section is **poetry**. Some of these are also sometimes listed as wisdom literature.

The **Prophets** are divided into major and minor prophets. The major prophets have longer books. Together, these books make up the Old Testament.

The New Testament is also often divided into sections. The first are called **Gospels**. These are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Furthermore, the first three are called Synoptic Gospels because they share many of the same events.

There is one book of **history**, (Acts) which records the birth of the Church and the spread of Christianity in the early years of the church.

There are 21 **letters**. These are often divided in other ways, like **Prison Epistles**, **General Epistles**, and **Pastoral Epistles**.

Finally, there is one book of **prophecy**. This book is called Revelation.

In the next lesson, we will answer the questions: What makes these books so special and why are they in our Bible?

