

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

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Definition of the Bible: The Bible is the word of God written by fallible humans who were under the direction of the Holy Spirit and contains all things necessary for salvation.

The Bible

A library or collection of books/written from ancient manuscripts/
consisting of two parts:

Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)---39 books; 929 chapters; 23, 214 verses

Books: Law [Pentateuch](5); History (12); Wisdom (5); (Major
Prophets (4/5); Minor Prophets (12)

New Testament----27 books; 260 chapters; 7,959 verses

Books: Gospels (4); Acts (1); Pauline Epistles (14 credited); Pastoral
Epistles (7); Revelation [Apocalyptic] (1)

Apocrypha---14/15 books; 183 chapters; 7,959 verses

Note: When reading the Bible we must remember we must be guided by
classification and not simply chronology.

Languages of the Bible:

Hebrew Bible (Old Testament): Hebrew

New Testament: Greek

Note:

The Septuagint (Greek translation of the Bible)

Daily language of Jesus, Aramaic

All English Bibles are translations including the King James Version
(KJV).

(While it may be the most popular and the most dearly cherished, the KJV
is not the original bible or the original English Bible)

Translations and Paraphrases

The Bible is word of God

God is an assertion of religious faith. Therefore Bible essentially is a book
of faith

The Bible is not a book of the empirical sciences

The Bible is not an accurate book of world history

As the word of God the Bible teaches us about God's

Identity

Character

Power

Actions

Standards for relationship with God

Standards for relationship and treatment of others

Standards for relationship for governance and stewardship of all of life

Note: The Bible knows nothing of the sacred/profane, spiritual/secular (or real) mental and emotional dichotomy or separation we make between God and the rest of life.

The Bible, like the perspective of tradition African religions, considers all of life to be sacred. All areas of life fall under the purview of God.

The Bible is the word of God written by fallible humans

The Bible is the story of a particular peoples' evolving human relationship and understanding of God

This particular people whom God used as paradigm and proxy were the Hebrews

The story evolved from henotheism to monotheism

The story evolved from tribal deity to ruler and divine king of a chosen people to divine king to God of all the earth

These humans were subject to their own limited vision of time.

Some issues we wrestle with now were not issues then, particularly those involving medical technology, such as invitro- fertilization. Some things that are common procedures now would be considered miraculous in times past.

However increased knowledge and human skill does not cancel what God alone can do such as heal. Some things God alone does and some things God does through human beings. Examples: the sermon, worship, salvation, and the bumblebee. I believe God inserts exceptions in nature to remind us of divine miraculous power.

These humans were subject to their own evolving understanding of the identity, nature and character of God. This truth may help us in our attempts to come to grips with passages that contradict our understanding of God's character and nature.

My personal approach to Scripture: Hermeneutics

Infallibility---What the Bible says regarding matters of faith, practice and salvation is eternally true. The essential teachings of the Bible are without error not the particular details that those teachings rest upon. (Different accounts of the resurrection)

The Bible cannot be understood without understanding of the context.

One has to be careful about giving contemporary meaning to passages that do violence to the intent of the author.

Rather than arguing over words and details, the questions we must always ask is, "What is the enduring lessons and teaching that this passage is giving us?" Is my understanding of this passage consistent with the teaching of the Old and New Testament?"

Social Implications of Scripture:

Conservative personal ethic but radical social ethic

Follower of the original intent of black theology---A just God must always be on the side of the oppressed. Mary's Magnificat

The Bible is the word of God written by fallible humans who were under the direction of the Holy Spirit

Although fallible human beings wrote the Bible the Holy Spirit was still guiding them.

Fallible human beings can still speak and teach eternal truth about God, life and salvation. II Timothy 3: 16 and II Corinthians

(Glass that is dirty on the outside but holds distilled water on the inside)

The Bible is the word of God written by fallible humans who were under the direction of the Holy Spirit and contains all things necessary for salvation.

The Bible is essentially salvation history

The Bible is the only written word of God revealing the eternal truth of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (John 5: 39)

A relationship with Jesus has social and political implications (Luke 4: 16-21)

Studying the Bible

Daily

Prayerfully

Commentaries

Instruction and guidance

Why We Come to Bible Study:

Psalm 119: 11, 105

Hebrews 4: 12-13

II Timothy 2: 15