

Introduction to Studying the Bible

What IS the Bible?

1. Truth

- ***“If you have a new and living relationship with God, then you will have a new and living relationship with God's Word. This relationship with God's Word is marked by three things: 1) you'll be humbled by the Word; 2) you'll be shaped by the Word; and 3) you'll be liberated by the Word.”*** -Tim Keller

-*“For years I thought that God could be active in my life through the Spirit and that the Bible was a book I had to obey if God was going to come in. I now realize that Bible is the way that, through the Spirit, God is active in my life.”* Tim Keller

-What do we believe about the Bible? In short, we believe there is absolute Truth and Falsity, (in both physical and spiritual world) and we believe that the **WHOLE Bible, is the inspired, infallible and authoritative Word of God**...therefore, it is our **rule of TRUTH**. (2 Tim 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:20, Matt 5:18, John 16:12-13)

-This will be what we work our way through over the course of the next few years.

-We need to commit to be IN this book, to wrestle with it, question it, turn to it, build our lives on it, let it shape and guide us. NOTHING ELSE is stable enough for our lives to be built on. Or our kids' lives. Or our marriages, futures or churches.

2. An ancient eastern book written by ancient eastern writers to ancient eastern readers. We are western.

We have to understand:

- a. Words v. pictures/images
- b. Quantity v. quality and symbols
- c. Perspective of Eternal Life (after death or now)
- d. Life is about me/Life is about community
- e. Styles of writing used (just as we deploy styles of writing now, so did the ancient Bible writers)

3. Made up of different types of writing

We call this book BIBLE

We divide it OT & NT (what do we mean by that?)

We will just focus on the OT for now since we won't even get all the way through it in one year

The Hebrew Bible (from which we take our Western Bible) is called TaNaK

TaNaK is an acronym for the Hebrew bible consisting of Hebrew letters TNK (there are no vowels in Hebrew) and they represent the 3 major parts of the Hebrew Bible (our OT)

- a. Torah meaning "Instruction" or "Law." Also called the *Chumash* חומש meaning: "The five"; "The five books of Moses." Also called the "Pentateuch." The Torah is often referred to as the law of the Jewish people.
- b. Nevi'im meaning "Prophets." This term is associated with anything to do with the prophets.
- c. Ketuvim meaning "Writings." This part of the Tanakh is further separated into different sections including a group of history books, wisdom books, poetry books and psalms.

According to the Jewish tradition, the Tanakh consists of 24 books (enumerated below). The *Torah* has five books, *Nevi'im* eight books, and *Ketuvim* has 11.

These 24 books are the same books found in the Protestant Old Testament, but the order of the books is different. The enumeration differs as well: Christians count these books as 39, not 24. This is because Jews often count as a single book what Christians count as several. However, the term *Old Testament*, while common, is often considered pejorative by Jews as it can be interpreted as being inferior or outdated relative to the *New Testament*.

The Torah ("Law") [also known as the Pentateuch] consists of: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

The books of Nevi'im ("Prophets") are: Joshua, Judges, Samuel (1 & 2), Kings (1 & 2), Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, & the 12 minor prophets

The *Kh'tuvim* ("Writings") are: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles (1 & 2)

Additional Note: it wasn't until later that chapters and verse numbers were added.

4. Canon

The Bible we use was canonized in (as early as) 200 AD but came to be accepted as we now have it in the 5th century AD.

Canon= the books that are divinely inspired so they belong in the Bible. Determining the canon was a process conducted first by Jewish rabbis and scholars and later by early Christians. Ultimately, it was God who decided what books belonged in the biblical canon. A book of Scripture belonged in the canon from the moment God inspired its writing. It was simply a matter of God's convincing His human followers which books should be included in the Bible.

5. Many Translations

KJV (issues: hard to understand/archaic language, used less reliable manuscripts for translation)

Other early translations NASB & NRSV are popular and close to original text

In general, think of translations on a sliding scale from “more formal” to “more functional”

More Formal: tries to stay as close as possible to the structure and words of the source language. The translator feels a deep responsibility to reproduce the forms of the original Greek and Hebrew whenever possible. On the downside, this approach is less sensitive to the language it’s being translated into so translations can feel awkward or clunky. Formal translations run the risk of sacrificing meaning for the sake of maintaining form.

More Functional: tries to express the meaning of the original text in today’s language. The translator feels a responsibility to reproduce the meaning of the original text in English so that the effect on today’s reader is equivalent to the effect on the ancient reader. Functional translations are not always as sensitive as they should be to the wording and structure of the source language. When it moves too far away from the form of the source language, this approach runs the risk of actually distorting the true meaning of the text.

What are using the translation for?

Scholarly study: use more formal, devotional, more functional

More Formal

More Functional

KJV NASB/NKJV/ESV NRSV NAB NIV/TNIV REB NLT GNB /CEV The Message

For serious Bible Study: NASB, NIV (2011), NRSV, ESV, CSB, NET,

New Translation CEB (Common English Bible which most editions include 14 books of apocrypha)

****Mention tools****