

Some Facts About the Bible

Several sources I read said that 100 million copies are sold each year. 50 copies are sold every minute. I don't know how they know that but it's an amazing statistic.

It is complex and we will never understand all of it from cover to cover and yet it can be understood by a child (probably better than adults sometimes). It is a book that causes controversy and debate and is quoted probably more than any other.

Bruce Hurt says, "The Bible is a remarkable book. Millions of copies are bought each year. It has been the number-one bestseller for decades. But the tragic paradox is that the Bible is the **least-read bestseller** of all time!"

So let's dig into some of the facts of this unique book.

The Bible is the Word of God given to us through many writers, 40 in all, and written in 3 different languages. The writers came from many backgrounds: kings shepherds, doctors, religious and political leaders, highly educated, illiterate, ordinary people and prophets.

Most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew with small sections written in Aramaic (Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26 and Daniel 2:4—7:28). The New Testament was written in Greek.

Donna Jones comments: "With this much disparity, one might expect the Bible to contain different assertions of the truth. But, in fact, the Bible has one continuing, unifying message from the first book to the last. The likelihood that 40-plus people, who wrote in three different languages, lived on three different continents, in different eras, would come up with one continual message, one continual theme, and one continual plan of salvation, is nothing short of miraculous. No other religious book shares the uniqueness of the Bible."

One continual message and we believe it does not contradict itself and it contains no errors. How can we be sure this is true? To answer that question let's look at what the Scriptures says about the "Word of God" and why we call it that?

Remember what Paul said to Timothy: All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, (God breathed in Greek) and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete thoroughly equipped for every good work. (1 Timothy 3:16-17)

So it is God breathed.

Or what about what the Apostle Peter said: "We also have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:20-21).

So it is God breathed

Written by men as revealed to them by the Holy Spirit

And Jesus tells us in John 16:13, "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."

So it is God breathed

Written by men as revealed to them by the Holy Spirit

And now the Holy Spirit speaks the God's truth to US.

Yes, the Bible is the word of God and does not contradict itself or contain errors.

B. B. Warfield was absolutely correct when he said, "The Bible is the Word of God in such a way that when the Bible speaks, God speaks."

It never gets old or stale. We can read a passage multiple times and the Lord will teach us something new each time.

The word "bible" means "book" or "books."

The Bible is a library of many different books--66 books altogether: 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New.

The Bible is not chronological but is divided into sections.

The Old Testament is divided into four major sections. First is the Pentateuch—the first five books of the Bible (Penta means five; teuch means scroll) which include Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. They were written by Moses and cover the history of the world from the Creation to the death of Moses (about 2500 years according to biblical chronology).

Next are the historical books which include Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. They cover about a thousand-year period of Jewish history from Moses (c. 1500 BC) down to the middle part of the Persian Empire (c. 440 BC).

Third, we have the Poetic and Wisdom books. This is where we find Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs (sometimes called Canticles and the Song of Solomon).

Lastly, we have the Prophets. There are 17 of them. One of these books is technically not a prophetic book. Lamentations was written by Jeremiah about the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians c. 586 BC. It is included with the prophets because it was written by Jeremiah.

The Prophets are often sub-divided into Major Prophets and Minor Prophets. The Major Prophets include Isaiah, Jeremiah (with Lamentations), Ezekiel, and Daniel. The Minor Prophets include Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

The Hebrew Bible, the Bible the Jews read today, includes the same content as the OT read by Christians, although the Jews have a different way of dividing the Old Testament. The Pentateuch is called the Torah (which means "Law" since a large portion of the first five books are the laws God gave to the Israelites through Moses – including the Ten Commandments).

The Historical and Prophetic books are called "The Prophets." The Historical Books are called the "Former Prophets" (Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings) while books such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, The Twelve are called the "Latter Prophets." Lastly, there are the "Writings" which include the Wisdom/Poetic books Job, Proverbs, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and some historical books Lamentations, Ruth, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah (as one book) and 1-2 Chronicles (as one book).

The Jews also number the OT books differently than Christians. Remember we have 39 books in the OT. Jews, however, number them at 24, and combine some books: 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, and combine the twelve prophetic books from Hosea through Malachi as one book called “The Twelve.”

The New Testament is often divided into four sections (although one can divide them differently).

First are the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) and Acts. These books cover the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ (the Gospels) and the rise of the church from the resurrection of Christ (c. 30 AD) down to the early 60s AD (Acts). Second, we have the Pauline Epistles (letters). The apostle Paul wrote 13 possibly 14 letters. They are Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. The anonymous letter, Hebrews, may also be written by Paul, but Bible scholars cannot say for certain.

Third, we have the General Epistles which include James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2, & 3 John, and Jude (and most of the time Hebrews). Lastly, there is the book of Revelation (which sometimes included with the General Epistles).

According to the Book of Bible Lists, “It was not until A.D. 1250 that the Bible was divided into chapters. At that time Cardinal Hugo incorporated chapter divisions into the Latin Bible. His divisions, although for convenience, were not always accurate; however, essentially those same chapter divisions have persisted to this day. In 1551 Robert Estienne introduced a Greek New Testament with the inclusion of verse divisions. He did not fix verses for the Old Testament. The first entire English Bible to have verse divisions was the Geneva Bible in 1560.”

The longest book in the Bible is Psalms and Psalms is found in the middle of the Bible.
The shortest book in the Scripture is 3 John.

Almost the entire Bible was written by Jews. The only author who is generally agreed to have been a Gentile is Luke (who wrote the Gospel of Luke and Acts) even though he learned practically everything he knew about Christianity from Jews.

The Old Testament was written from approximately 1500 BC through 400 BC.
The New Testament was written from approximately 50-100 AD.