

Haven Dojo- Overview of the Bible

Overview of the Bible--The Old Testament

- 1. The Pentateuch or Torah:** Genesis to Deuteronomy. Pentateuch means "5 books." Torah means "law" or "teaching."
- 2. The Historical Books:** Joshua to Ezra. These books deal with Israel's conquest of the Promised Land and their general failure to fulfill their covenant obligations to God.
- 3. The Poetic Books:** Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Lamentations. These books deal with a variety of life's issues. Psalms is a book of prayer and praise. Proverbs deals with how to live life skillfully. Job deals with the problem of pain and Ecclesiastes deals with the problem of pleasure. Song of Solomon is a portrayal of married love. Lamentations features Jeremiah's laments over the fall of Jerusalem.
- 4. The Major Prophets:** Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. These books focus on the sins of God's people, God's judgment, and the future promises of the New Covenant through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.
- 5. The Minor Prophets:** Hosea through Malachi. Denounces sins of God's people, means of God's judgment, and gives ultimate hope through prophecies of Christ's coming and redemptive work.

Overview of the Bible--The New Testament

- 1. The Gospels:** Matthew to John. The Gospels are designed to tell us about Christ's ministry (His doings and teachings) with a special focus on His birth and death. (Note how much space is devoted to the last week of His life.) They are divided into two sections: the Synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke--which share much of the same material) and the fourth gospel, the Gospel of John.
 - a. Matthew--**Writes as a Jew to Jews. future
 - b. Mark--**Writes to the action-minded Romans.
 - c. Luke--**Writes to the Gentiles, picturing Christ as full of compassion for the poor and sinful. The most complete gospel, written entirely in chronological order.
 - d. John--**Gives a theological portrait of Christ. He does this by demonstrating through several key signs and speeches that Jesus is Deity come in humanity in order to save His people from sin.
- 2. The Acts:** Luke wrote this book as a sequel to his gospel (Acts 1:1-2). It is a book of missionary history as it follows the spread of the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome.
- 3. The Epistles (Letters):** Includes the letters of Paul, Peter, John, James, Jude, and the writer of Hebrews. Most of these letters were written to churches, but some were written to individuals.

Paul's Letters (Romans through Philemon)

- a. Romans--**Written to the believers at Rome, setting forth the need for and the plan of salvation (Romans 1-11) and the practical implications of this salvation for godly living.
- b. I Corinthians--**Deals with church problems.
 - c. II Corinthians--**A defense of Paul's apostleship and his motivation for ministry. Chapter one has some helpful information on comfort and affliction.
 - d. Galatians--**Combats the problem of legalism and asserts Christian freedom through justification by faith alone. Chapter five speaks of the struggle in the Christian life, the works of the flesh, and the fruit of the Spirit. Chapter six opens with the mandate for all Christians to counsel.

Letters Written During Pauls' Imprisonment (Ephesians-Colossians)

- e. Ephesians--**Reveals the eternal plan and purpose of God in salvation (chapters 1-3) and how it forms the basis for the believer's walk with God and his fellow Christians (chapters 4-6). Chapter 4:22ff. Explains the process God uses to change believers and then illustrates how it works in solving the problems of communication that tend to divide believers. Chapter five gives the basic pattern for dealing with life dominating sins (v. 18) and then goes on to deal with God's pattern for marriage. Chapter six covers parent-child responsibilities and the Christian work

ethic as well as the armor of God.

f. Philippians--Written to assure the believers of God's unfailing purpose through Paul's imprisonment.

g. Colossians--Overlaps with much of the content of Ephesians. Both deal with the Church as Christ's body, but Colossians stresses Christ's role as the Head. **h. I Thessalonians**--Contains a key passage on sexual purity in chapter four as well as the great passage on the second coming of Christ and the rapture of believers.

i. II Thessalonians--Corrects errors regarding Christ's second coming.

Paul's Letters Written to Church Leaders (Timothy and Titus)

j. I Timothy--Important instructions on how to have a healthy church. It covers issues like the role of women in the church (2), guidelines for spiritual leadership (3), the importance of the pastor's own walk with God (4), and vital instructions about attitudes toward money (6).

k. II Timothy--Paul's "swan song." It contains a great chapter on the sufficiency of Scripture--even in the most challenging of times (3).

l. Titus--Instructions to Titus on how to organize a new church in a pagan society. Has a great section on Christian ethics in chapter two.

m. Philemon--Paul's letter in behalf of a runaway, converted slave. It gives a good model of how to raise a "sticky" issue with another believer.

Letters From Other Writers

n. Hebrews--Author unknown. It teaches the superiority of Christ to all that these Jewish believers left behind in Judaism.

o. James--Covers God's purpose in trials (1)--to make His people mature and complete. Shows that man's own desires are his greatest enemy (1), deals with partiality (2), the importance of controlling the tongue (3), and how that desires gone awry are at the root of interpersonal conflicts (4).

p. I Peter--Teaches believers how they can endure suffering for Christ in a way that pleases God. It focuses on suffering especially in the context of failing relationships--with legal authorities and workplace authorities (2), and with spouses (3).

q. II Peter--Warns against the infiltration of false teachers--and how to identify them.

r. I John--Key book on how to have a Biblically based assurance of salvation.

s. II John--Letter of encouragement to a Christian woman; warns against aiding false teachers.

t. III John--Short work on Christian hospitality.

u. Jude--Warns against false teachers--and how to rescue those who have been influenced by them.

4. The Revelation: Deals primarily with the second coming of Jesus Christ and the final act in God's unfolding drama of redemption.

:: RELIABILITY OF NEW TESTAMENT BASED ON MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE

There are presently 5,686 Greek manuscripts in existence today for the New Testament.¹ If we were to compare the number of New Testament manuscripts to other ancient writings, we find that the New Testament manuscripts far outweigh the others in quantity.²

Author	Date Written	Earliest Copy	Approximate Time Span between original & copy	Number of Copies	Accuracy of Copies
Lucretius	died 55 or 53 B.C.		1100 yrs	2	----
Pliny	61-113 A.D.	850 A.D.	750 yrs	7	----
Plato	427-347 B.C.	900 A.D.	1200 yrs	7	----
Demosthenes	4th Cent. B.C.	1100 A.D.	800 yrs	8	----
Herodotus	480-425 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs	8	----
Suetonius	75-160 A.D.	950 A.D.	800 yrs	8	----
Thucydides	460-400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs	8	----
Euripides	480-406 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1300 yrs	9	----
Aristophanes	450-385 B.C.	900 A.D.	1200	10	----
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1000	10	----
Livy	59 BC-AD 17	----	???	20	----
Tacitus	circa 100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	1000 yrs	20	----
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1400	49	----
Sophocles	496-406 B.C.	1000 A.D.	1400 yrs	193	----
Homer (Iliad)	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 yrs	643	95%
New Testament	1st Cent. A.D. (50-100 A.D.)	2nd Cent. A.D. (c. 130 A.D. f.)	less than 100 years	5600	99.5%

:: SELECTED MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

- Born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:21-23)
- A descendant of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3; 22:18; Matthew 1:1; Galatians 3:16)
- Of the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10; Luke 3:23, 33; Hebrews 7:14)
- Of the house of David (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Matthew 1:1)
- Born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:4-7)
- Taken to Egypt (Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:14-15)
- Herod's killing of the infants (Jeremiah 31:15; Matthew 2:16-18)
- Anointed by the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:2; Matthew 3:16-17)
- Heralded by the messenger of the Lord (John the Baptist) (Isaiah 40:3-5; Malachi 3:1; Matthew 3:1-3)
- Would perform miracles (Isaiah 35:5-6; Matthew 9:35)
- Would preach good news (Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:14-21)
- Would minister in Galilee (Isaiah 9:1; Matthew 4:12-16) Would cleanse the Temple (Malachi 3:1; Matthew 21:12-13)
- Would first present Himself as King 173,880 days from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem (Daniel 9:25; Matthew 21:4-11)
- Would enter Jerusalem as a king on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:4-9)

- Would be rejected by Jews (Psalm 118:22; I Peter 2:7)
- Die a humiliating death (Psalm 22; Isaiah 53) involving:
 - a. rejection (Isaiah 53:3; John 1:10-11; 7:5,48)
 - b. betrayal by a friend (Psalm 41:9; Luke 22:3-4; John 13:18)
 - c. sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12; Matthew 26:14-15)
 - d. silence before His accusers (Isaiah 53:7; Matthew 27:12-14)
 - e. being mocked (Psalm 22: 7-8; Matthew 27:31)
 - f. beaten (Isaiah 52:14; Matthew 27:26)
 - g. spit upon (Isaiah 50:6; Matthew 27:30)
 - h. piercing His hands and feet (Psalm 22:16; Matthew 27:31)
 - i. being crucified with thieves (Isaiah 53:12; Matthew 27:38)
 - j. praying for His persecutors (Isaiah 53:12; Luke 23:34)
 - k. piercing His side (Zechariah 12:10; John 19:34)
 - l. given gall and vinegar to drink (Psalm 69:21, Matthew 27:34, Luke 23:36)
 - m. no broken bones (Psalm 34:20; John 19:32-36)
 - n. buried in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:57-60)
 - o. casting lots for His garments (Psalm 22:18; John 19:23-24)
- Would rise from the dead!! (Psalm 16:10; Mark 16:6; Acts 2:31)
- Ascend into Heaven (Psalm 68:18; Acts 1:9)
- Would sit down at the right hand of God (Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 1:3)

:: APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Do you think you would pay more attention if God spoke to you from heaven or through the voice of a living prophet than if he spoke to you from the written form of Scripture? Would you believe or obey such words more readily than you do in Scripture?

2. Do you think your present level of response to the written words of Scripture is an appropriate one? What positive steps can you take to make your attitude toward Scripture more the kind of attitude God wants you to have?

:: SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR READING THE BIBLE

The best place to start is with the gospels, that is the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These books document the life of Jesus and help us to believe. They are at the beginning of the section called the New Testament. This is about three quarters of the way into your bible. Your bible should have a table of contents at the front so you can look up the various books of the bible. There are many translations of the bible available in English. Try and get a bible that speaks to your heart in a language that you can understand and which is accurate to the original text. Some suggested translations: New International Version, English Standard Version and the New Revised Standard Version.

When you read the Bible, always begin by praying/asking God to show you what He wants you to see and understand. After which take a pen and note book with you and write down the things you discover and the questions you have. Try and read about a chapter at a time and think it over carefully. Here are a few questions that will help you dig into the bible.

- § What is this passage saying about God?
- § What is this passage saying about Jesus?
- § Is there a command to obey?
- § Is there a principal to learn?
- § Is this saying something to my life right now?
- § How can I apply it in my everyday life?

Write the answers to these questions in your note book and you will soon build up a treasure house of scripture knowledge. It is important to be prayerfully listening to God as you read the Bible. The Bible is one of God's primary ways to communicate his truth to us.