

OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE

By Alan Pence, Houston, Texas



A. Introduction

The Bible is not just an ordinary book. It is a library of 66 books, written by about 40 different men over a period of about 1500 years. The authors range from rich and powerful kings to poor, peasant preachers; from sophisticated statesmen to ignorant shepherds and fishermen. Bible books were written in various geographical and historical settings by men of varied backgrounds to a wide variety of audiences. In spite of this, the Bible has a single, clear and consistent message throughout that leads to the inescapable conclusion that the words of the Bible authors all originated from the same source. The authors of the Bible are unanimous in proclaiming that the words they wrote are not their own; they are the very words of the God of Heaven.

(all Bible verses are quoted from the NIV, unless otherwise specified)

Exodus 31:18 - When the LORD finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.

Jeremiah 1:9 - Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth."

2 Timothy 3:16, 17 - All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 1:20-21 - Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

B. Purpose

The Bible reveals eternal truths which man would be unable to discover for himself. The primary purpose of the Bible is to proclaim the glory and majesty of the One True God and tell the story of the relationship between the Almighty Creator and his creation; with special emphasis on the uniqueness of man. The Bible not only explains the origins of the universe, it also unveils the ultimate fate of it.

Proverbs 16:25 - There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

Jeremiah 10:23 - I know, O LORD, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps.



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1 Corinthians 2:9-10 - However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"¹⁰ but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.

Romans 1:18-20 - The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,¹⁹ since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

2 Peter 3:10 -But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

C. Overview of the Structure of the Bible

1. The Bible has 2 major divisions:

a. 39 books making up the Old Testament

- i. The Books of Law – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
- ii. The Books of History – Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
- iii. The Books of Poetry – Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
- iv. The Books of Prophecy – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

b. 27 books making up the New Testament

- i. The Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
 - ii. History – Acts
 - iii. Letters – Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3 John, Jude
 - iv. Prophecy – Revelation
2. The Bible has 3 major dispensations – characterized by the method by which God chose to communicate with man.

a. The Patriarchal Dispensation – God communicated with man directly through the patriarchs.

B. The Mosaical Dispensation – God communicated with man through Moses and other prophets.

C. The Christian Dispensation - God communicated with man through the sending of his only Son, who lived and walked on the earth to teach man by example and word. Jesus left behind certain men, inspired by the Holy Spirit to record his word in written form.

D. The Chronology of the Bible – Bible history can be divided chronologically into 16 time periods.

<u>Description</u>	<u>Approx Dates</u>	<u>Bible Books</u>	<u>People/Events</u>
1. <u>Antediluvian</u> ? –	2400 B.C.	Genesis 1-8	Adam, Eve, Abel, Creation to the flood Methuselah, Noah
2. <u>Postdiluvian</u> flood to Abram	2400 – 1930 B.C.	Gen. 9 – Gen. 17	Shem, Ham, Japheth, Abram, Sarah, Lot
3. <u>Patriarchal</u> Abram to Egypt	1930 – 1720 B.C.	Gen. 18 – Gen. 50 Job,	Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Esau, Joseph
4. <u>Egyptian</u>	1720 – 1510 B.C.	Exodus. 1 – 14	Moses, Aaron, Pharaoh
5. <u>Wilderness</u> Red Sea to Jordan River crossing	1510 – 1470 B.C.	Exodus 15 – 40 Numbers, Leviticus. Deuteronomy	Moses, 10 Commandments
6. <u>Canaan Conquest</u> Jordan to 1 st Judge	1470 – 1420 B.C.	Joshua, Judges	Joshua, Caleb, Rahab, Jericho
7. <u>Judges</u> 1 st Judge to 1 st King	1420 – 1090 B.C.	Judges, Ruth 1 Samuel	Gideon, Samson, Ruth, Samuel
8. <u>United Kingdom</u> 1 st King to division of the nation of Israel	1090 – 970 B.C.	1 Sam. – 1 Kings 12 Psalms, Proverbs Song of Solomon Ecclesiastes	Saul, David, Solomon The Temple
9. <u>Divided Kingdom</u> division to Samaria	970 – 720 B.C.	1 Kings – 2Kings 12 Obadiah, Joel, Amos Jonah, Hosea, Micah	Kings of Israel, prophets, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah
10. <u>Judah</u> Samaria to fall of Jerusalem	720 – 586 B.C.	2 Kings 19-25 Lamentations, Zephaniah	Isaiah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Nahum
11. <u>Babylonian Captivity</u> Jerusalem to Cyrus	586 – 516 B.C.	2 Chronicles, Daniel Ezekiel, Zechariah	Nebuchadnezzar, Haggai, Daniel
12. <u>Persian</u> Cyrus to restoration of the Temple	516 – 410 B.C.	Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Malachi	Ezra, Nehemiah

D. The Chronology of the Bible

<u>Description</u>	<u>Approx Dates</u>	<u>Bible Books</u>	<u>People/Events</u>
13. <u>Greek</u> Between the testaments	410 B.C. – 0	None	Alexander the Great, Caesars
14. <u>Life of Christ</u>	0 – 33 AD	Matthew, Mark Luke, John	John the Baptist, Jesus, disciples, Herods
15. <u>N.T. Church</u> Pentecost to Revelation	33 – 95 AD	Acts, Epistles Revelation	Peter, James, John, Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, Silas
16. <u>N.T Church</u> continues until Christ comes again (see notes below)	3 - ?	None	All Christians

Scriptures indicating there are no later revelations:

1 Corinthians 13:8-10 Love never fails. But where **there are prophecies, they will cease**; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

Galatians 1:7, 8 - which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even **if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!**

2 Timothy 3:16, 17 - All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be **thoroughly** equipped for every good work.

2 John 9 - **Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God**; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

Jude 3 - Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and **urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.**

Deut. 12:32 - See that you do all I command you; **do not add to it or take away from it.**

Revelation 22:18, 19 - I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: **If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book.** ¹⁹**And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.**

E. Great Themes of the Bible

1. There is one God.
 - A. Deuteronomy 6:4 - Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.
 - B. Isaiah 45:5, 6 - I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, ⁶ so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other.
 - C. Isaiah 46:9, 10 - Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.
 - D. Exodus 20:3, 23 - ³ "You shall have no other gods before me. Do not make any gods to be alongside me; do not make for yourselves gods of silver or gods of gold.
 - E. Romans 3:30 - since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.
 - F. 1 Corinthians 8: 4, 6 - ⁴So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. ⁶yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

2. God is characterized by (among other things) perfect holiness and perfect love.
 - A. Exodus 15:11 - "Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you- majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?"
 - B. 1 Samuel 2:2 - "There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.
 - C. Psalms 99:9 - Exalt the LORD our God and worship at his holy mountain, for the LORD our God is holy.
 - D. Matthew 5: 48 - ⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.
 - E. Luke 1:49—⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me-- holy is his name.
 - F. James 1:13 - When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God can not be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;
 - G. Revelation 4:8 - Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."
 - H. Titus 1:2 - ²a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time,
 - I. 1 John 4:8 - Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.
 - J. 2 Corinthians 13:11 - Finally, brothers, good-by. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.
 - K. 1 Peter 1:16 - for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

E. Great Themes of the Bible

3. God is the creator of all that is, including all of us who, although we share some of the characteristics of God, do not share his perfect holiness.
 - a. Genesis 1:1, 26-27 - In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
 - b. Romans 3:23 - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
4. As a loving parent, God earnestly desires a close relationship with his children.
Romans 5:8 - But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
5. Our sin separates us from God, and only God's love and grace enables us to be reconciled to him.
 - A. Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
6. God loved us enough to send his only begotten Son to earth, to live and die as the perfect sacrifice to redeem us from our sins.
 - A. John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that who ever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
7. God's eternal plan of salvation included the establishment of the Church, whose primary purposes are to glorify God on earth through worship and fulfill Jesus' mission to seek and save the lost.
 - A. Ephesians 1:4 - For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.
 - B. Matthew 18:11 - The Son of Man came to save what was lost.
8. Our response to God's offer of salvation will determine our eternal destination when Jesus returns to earth in glory and judgment.
 - A. Mark 16:16 - Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.
 - B. Acts 2:38 - Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
 - C. 2 Peter 3:11 - Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹²as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.

CHURCH GROWTH “KILLER GRASS”

Our back yard looked like a cross between grass and a beach. No matter how much we watered or fertilized, we could not grow a good crop of grass.

We had several trees in the back yard, most being large Hackberrys—a soft wood trash tree. Each year we would be concerned that one of them was becoming rotten at the core and would have it cut down. One year we decided to the heck with it and had them all cut down. Only 4 small oak and pear trees remained.

The next year they grew at an astonishing rate. Apparently the many Hackberrys were taking all the water and keeping the sunshine off the grass and prevented good growth. My lawnmower literally threw a piston rod trying to mow it. That is why we called it “killer grass”.

The overgrowth of the Hackberry trees had become an obstacle to grass growth. Reorganizing our back yard to one with fewer and smaller trees changed our back yard from a non-growth yard to a rapid growing situation.

A parallel can be drawn to this in some congregational situations. Has your bureaucracy and traditions become an obstacle to the grow of your congregation? If you have the same basic organizational style you had 5 years ago, it is probably true.

We must follow the plan of elders and deacons as stipulated in the Bible. However, in doing so if your system does not maintain adequate communication and feedback between elders, deacons, ministers, and other members, it is likely you are in a non-growing situation.

IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION! “TELLS”

A “tell” is a complicated design by God just to tell you that God is real. Something that would have nothing to do with getting food, reproducing, getting oxygen, or disposing of waste. Usually, other species which do not have the comparable feature would get along just fine.



I saw the feather above on my driveway and instantly knew that it was a “tell” from God to show us He is real. Bluebirds survive and Blackbirds get along just fine. There is no evolutionary reason for feathers to have stripes. Look at the enlargement below:



Consider how much design and planning it takes to go out a barb on the feather to a distance, turn the color from blue to black, go a predetermined distance further and thru back from black to blue. You must go a different distance on each barb to make a stripe. The bird didn't decide to do this. A designer was required. That designer is Jehovah.

THE CHRISTIAN ARRAY

DEDICATED TO SUSTAINED SCRIPTURAL CHURCH GROWTH IN OUR GENERATION

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The Impact Children's Ministry

The Impact Children's Ministry is accepting volunteer applications for teachers, big assembly/worship leaders, van and bus drivers, and classroom supply distributors. Please see Laurie Templeton or Chevone McKinney for an application. The classes seeking teachers are the Nursery, 4 years old, Kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd grade, 3rd grade, and 4th grade. These classes are available on Sunday mornings, Tuesday nights, and Wednesday nights. We are praying for God to provide an amazing team for the fall. For more information, please call the Children's Ministry Office at 713-426-6593. We look forward

FILL-IN PREACHERS

We are starting a pilot program to coordinate fill-in preachers for various congregations in the greater Houston Area. The presumption is that there are some larger congregations who have more men willing to present an occasional sermon than opportunities exist, and there are some smaller congregations where more opportunities exist that speakers.

Visit thearray.org and click on FILL-IN PREACHERS to see if any of the speakers / topics are interesting to you, or if you would like to add a topic to the list.

If you want to add a topic, you need to indicate your name, home congregation, phone number, and 1 to 4 topics. Each title and description of a topic should be 15-30 words. Send the list to info@thearray.org.

SUSTAINED SCRIPTURAL CHURCH GROWTH CONFERENCE

We are considering sponsoring a conference on sustained scriptural church growth in the greater Houston area. The presumed time would be this Fall, and potentially every Fall thereafter. If you would like to speak at such a conference, would attend, or be involved in any other way, let us know at info@thearray.com.

The conference would not address doing the same things to continue to not grow. It would be focused on what we can do to remain scriptural and grow.

IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION!

This publication continues (since 1991) to make a standing offer of \$100 to the first person who can give any reason (1 or more) as to why atheistic evolution is a better explanation for the universe and/or life than creation by God, The Father of Adam, Abraham, and Jesus; as revealed in the Bible.

We will also give you \$100 if we cannot give you 12 reasons why atheistic evolution is impossible as an explanation for our existence.

AREA WIDE ACTIVITIES

Oct. 11 - 6-8 p.m. Area Wide Singing at Memorial Church of Christ, 500 Echo Lane, 77024
For more information or to be on the song leader list contact Wade Price
at wprice@eprod.com

Feb 27-28, 2009 Area Wide Men's Retreat, Camp Holy Wilde, New Caney, Texas

HoustonCofC is a Yahoo group hosted by Steve Sandifer [steve.sandifer@sbcglobal.net] for the purpose of communicating Houston area news among the brethren. It is open to any member of the church at no cost.

The Christian Array Newsletter

This newsletter will be sent to members of the church on a monthly basis as an attempt to promote area wide activities and church growth. If you do not want to receive this newsletter, send an e-mail to info@thearray.org and it will be stopped.

If you know of anyone who would like to receive this newsletter, send their e-mail addresses to info@thearray.org. All past copies of the newsletter can be found on the website "thearray.org".

GUARANTEED CHURCH GROWTH

If your congregation does the following, BCE Publications guarantees that it will grow.

Poll your congregation three times at 6 months intervals with the following results:

- 50% of the members know who their elder is
- 50% of the members will say that a minister is their friend
- 50% of the members will say that they are uplifted by the song services
- 50% of the men will say that their input is considered before physical decisions are made
- 50% of the members will say they are an important part of the work
- 50% of the members will say they are aware of the goals of the congregation
- 50% of the members will say that they know what their part is in achieving your goals

GUARANTEE: For the first congregation which does this and does not grow by at least 10%, we will send \$1000 to the church related children's home of your choice in your name.

I have never met a person who said that if they did this their church would not grow. If your congregation is not growing, what have you got to lose?