

# Foundations Course

## 2. THE BIBLE Knowing our text book.

### Introduction

The Bible is the world's all-time "best seller". It has sold more copies than any other book and has been translated into more languages than any other. To many it is a most beautiful piece of literature. To Christians it is God's Word to us.

God has revealed himself to us in three ways:

- in creation *Romans 1:20*
- through the Bible *Hebrews 1:1-2*
- and through the life of Jesus *John 1:14*

### Contents

The Bible is a book which contains 66 "books" – a kind of library. It covers 60 generations, over 1,600 years, written by 40 authors, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The Old Testament is made up of 39 books, divided into several categories:

Law	5 books	<i>Genesis to Deuteronomy</i>
History	12 books	<i>Joshua to Esther</i>
Poetry	5 books	<i>Job to Song of Solomon</i>
Prophecy	17 books	<i>Isaiah to Malachi</i> (5 major prophets, 12 minor prophets)

The New Testament is made up of 27 books:

Gospels	4 books	<i>Matthew to John</i>
History	1 book	<i>Acts</i>
Letters	21 books	<i>Romans to Jude</i>
Apocalypse/ prophecy	1 book	<i>Revelation</i>

The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and the New Testament in the common Greek of the time. It covers hundreds of subjects and involves many kinds of literature, but has a central theme.



### Apostles

Jesus also looked ahead to the New Testament and promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth (*John 16:13*), and that the Holy Spirit would help them to remember what he had said (*John 14:25,26*).

The apostles who recorded the gospels and letters and New Testament history for us had this promise from Jesus. They were also eye-witnesses to his life, death and resurrection.

Paul the apostle was not an eye-witness, but Jesus appeared to him in person after his resurrection and the other eye-witness apostles accepted the writings of Paul as scripture (*2 Peter 3:15-16*).

### Prophecy

God established the fulfilment of prophecy as proof of divine authorship (*Deuteronomy 18:20-22*). The Bible is full of prophecies about nations, cities, events, individuals. Hundreds have been fulfilled in detail. (See Appendix page 4)

The Old Testament contains 332 specific prophecies that were fulfilled in Jesus. The probability of this occurring by chance is virtually impossible. The fulfilment of these prophecies confirms Jesus' credentials as well as confirms the Bible as coming from God.

### Archaeology/history

Many archaeological discoveries support the accuracy of the Bible. It is too detailed to pursue here, but there are interesting books available, and some study Bibles include archaeological notes. Also, ancient historians, such as Josephus, have recorded events which verify Bible facts.

### Endurance

Over the centuries many have tried to undermine or discredit the Bible (atheists, cynics, philosophers, liberal theologians), but it has survived stronger than ever. There are more ancient manuscripts of the Bible (tens of thousands) in existence today than of any other ancient writings. Many non-Biblical events and characters which we generally accept as historical have far less written verification and in some cases evidence is almost non-existent.

## Translations

There were many centuries when the Bible was not widely available to the general public. People neither owned a copy, nor could they understand the Latin translation, if they could read at all. The men who struggled to have the Bible translated into the language of the people often paid for their efforts with their lives. Wycliffe (1382) and Tyndale (1525) were early English translators who were persecuted. They must have thought the Bible worth suffering for.

The printing press opened the way for mass production in 1454 by Gutenberg. Since then billions of copies have been printed.

One of the most long standing English translations of the Bible is the King James Version (1611). It was widely in use until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but now we have a great many new translations. These are desired not because the Bible needs changing, but because language changes.

Some translations in use today:

King James Version (KJV) 1611  
 Revised Standard Version (RSV) 1952  
 New American Standard Bible (NASB) 1971  
 New International Version (NIV) 1978  
 New King James Version (NKJV) 1982

} All translated by a committee of scholars.

Paraphrases:

Living Bible (LB)  
 J. B. Phillips' Translation

} Paraphrased by one man.  
 Helpful, but not true translations.

## The Message

### NOTE:

Not everything in your Bible is the inspired Word of God. The verse numbers, chapter numbers, and chapter headings were not in the original manuscripts, neither were margin notes, study notes, or dates. Some scholars (such as Usher) have tried to date certain events which are shown in the margins of some older Bibles. These were based on incomplete genealogies and are not considered accurate today.

### Helps to understanding

1. Good tools: a Bible, Bible dictionary, handbooks, commentaries, concordance.
2. Being in a Bible-teaching church.
3. Having enlightened common sense.
4. Having an attitude of openness and honesty and a preparedness to obey God's Word. Our own agenda can get in the way and warp our understanding.  
"Correct interpretation brings relief to the mind and a prod to the heart." Dr. Gordon Fee
5. Most of all we need the help of the Holy Spirit. Ask him to help.

### APPENDIX - PROPHECIES

The following are 27 selected examples from over 300 distinct prophecies relating to Christ:

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|---|---|
| • Born in Bethlehem                     | <i>Micah 5:2/ Luke 2:4-7</i>              |
| • Born of the tribe of Judah            | <i>Genesis 49:10/ Luke 3:23, 33</i>       |
| • Born of a virgin                      | <i>Isaiah 7:14/ Matthew 1: 18, 24, 25</i> |
| • Referred to as Immanuel               | <i>Isaiah 7:14/ Matthew 1:23</i>          |
| • He would be a king                    | <i>Psalms 2:6/ Matthew 27:37</i>          |
| • He would be preceded by a messenger   | <i>Isaiah 40:3/ Matthew 3:1, 2</i>        |
| • Entered Jerusalem on a donkey         | <i>Zechariah 9:9/ Luke 19:35-37a</i>      |
| • Rejected by his own people            | <i>Isaiah 53:3/ John 7:5, 48</i>          |
| • Betrayed by a friend                  | <i>Psalms 41:9/ Matthew 10:4</i>          |
| • Betrayed for thirty pieces of silver  | <i>Zechariah 11:12/ Matthew 26:15</i>     |
| • Silver thrown into temple             | <i>Zechariah 11:13b/ Matthew 27:5a</i>    |
| • Money used to purchase potter's field | <i>Zechariah 11:3b/ Matthew 27:7</i>      |
| • Forsaken by his disciples             | <i>Zechariah 13:7/ Mark 14:50</i>         |
| • Wounded and bruised                   | <i>Isaiah 53:5/ Matthew 27:26</i>         |
| • Smitten and spit upon                 | <i>Isaiah 50:6/ Matthew 26:67</i>         |
| • Mocked                                | <i>Psalms 20:7, 8/ Matthew 27:31</i>      |
| • Didn't answer his accusers            | <i>Isaiah 53:7/ Matthew 27:12-19</i>      |
| • Hands and feet pierced                | <i>Psalms 22:16/ Luke 23:33</i>           |
| • Crucified with thieves                | <i>Isaiah 53:12/ Matthew 27:38</i>        |
| • Interceded for persecutors            | <i>Isaiah 53:12/ Luke 23:34</i>           |
| • Lots cast for his garments            | <i>Psalms 22:18/ John 19:23, 24</i>       |
| • Given gall and vinegar to drink       | <i>Psalms 69:21/ Matthew 27:34</i>        |
| • Bones weren't broken                  | <i>Psalms 34:20/ John 19:33</i>           |
| • His side pierced                      | <i>Zechariah 12:10/ John 19:34</i>        |
| • Buried in a rich man's tomb           | <i>Isaiah 53:9/ Matthew 27:57-60</i>      |
| • Ascended to God                       | <i>Psalms 68:18/ Acts 1:9</i>             |