

The Structure of the Bible: Finding Your Way Around the Bible

When you are new to the Bible it can be difficult to find your way around it –many of the names of the people, places and titles of the books are unfamiliar and hard to pronounce. A major key for untangling much of our confusion about the Bible is to understand its structure. Here are some things you need to know to help you find your way around the Bible:

- ❖ The Bible isn't 1 book. It is actually ____ shorter "books." (Books range from 1 page to about 100 pages).
- ❖ About _____ different people who were inspired by God wrote the books of the Bible. They wrote using many different styles, over a 1500-year period.
- ❖ The Bible is separated into ____ major sections.
 1. The Old Testament has ____ books.
 2. The New Testament has ____ books.
- ❖ Here is another important thing to know: The Bible's books aren't arranged chronologically; rather they are order by _____ of writing (e.g. history, poetry, etc). (SEE: BIBLE STRUCTURE "MAP")

The Bible wasn't originally written with chapter and verse references. A man named Stephen Langton divided the Bible into chapters in the year A.D. 1227. Robert Stephanus, a French printer, further divided it with verses in 1551. They did this to help people find their way around the Bible.

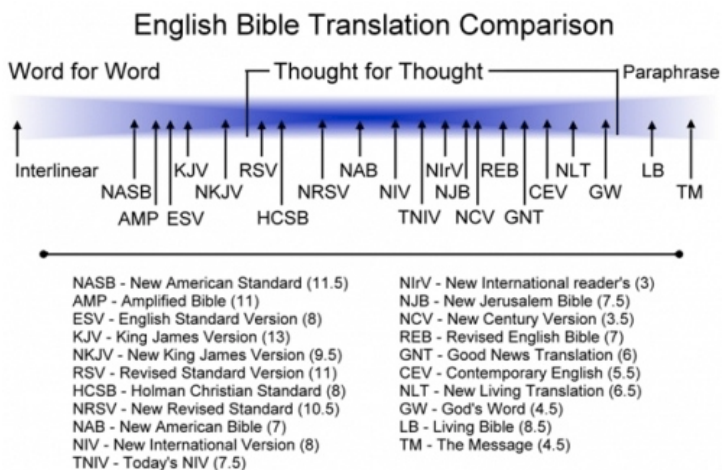
- ❖ To find a particular Bible book, you can look it up the index of Bible books at the beginning of your Bible. A typical Bible reference would be: Genesis 1:1 =

Genesis	1:	1
(book)	(chapter)	(verse)

Which Bible Version (Translation) Should You Use?

The Bible was written in Hebrew and Aramaic (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament). When it is translated into English, there are 3 ways of doing it:

1. **Word-for-Word:** Seeks the precise wording and word order of the original text.
2. **Thought-for-Thought:** Seeks the meaning of the original in the normal English way of saying it.
3. **Paraphrase:** Takes the meaning of the original and attempts to express the meaning in "plain language."



Translation Comparisons

2 Timothy 3:16

<p>KJV – All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness</p>	<p>NIV -- All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness</p>	<p>TM -- Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another —showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way.</p>
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The numbers in the parenthesis indicate reading grade level.

A Guided Tour of the Bible

Brian Mavis

BIBLE STRUCTURE “MAP”

THE OLD TESTAMENT is 39 “books” written about 3400-2400 years ago.

Books 1-5 Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

These first 5 books are called “The Law,” the Pentateuch (“five books”) or the Torah (“instruction”). Moses wrote them about 3,400 years ago. It tells the story of creation, sin, the flood, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, the exodus out of slavery in Egypt, and forty years in the wilderness.

Books 6-17 Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

These 12 history books continues the storyline, starting with the conquest of the Promised Land (about 3400 years ago), a cycle of disobedience during the time of the Judges, the formation of the kingdom, the division of the kingdom into northern (Israel) and southern (Judah) kingdoms, and finally the destruction and captivity of both kingdoms (about 2700-2600 years ago). The Assyrians and Babylonians forced many of the Israelites out of their homeland, but some returned.

Books 18-22 Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon (aka Song of Songs).

These 5 books are called the books of Writings, Poetry, or Wisdom. Though they don’t advance the storyline; they delve into heart issues—suffering, how to live a good life, love, and the character of God.

Books 23-39 Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

These 17 books are called “The Prophets.” The first 5 books are called the “Major Prophets” not because they are more important, but because they are longer. The next 12 books are called the “Minor Prophets” because they are shorter. They lived during the time of books 6-17. God spoke through them about three major themes: (1) point out the sin of the people and urging them to turn back to God, (2) warn people of judgment if they didn’t turn back, (3) to prophecy the fulfillment of God’s promise of a coming Messiah.

THE NEW TESTAMENT is 27 “books” written about 1950-1900 years ago by followers of Jesus.

Books 1-5 Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Acts

These 5 are the history books of the New Testament. The first 4 books are called the Gospels. They tell about the birth, teachings, life, death and resurrection of Jesus that was promised and prophesied in the Old Testament. The 5th book, Acts, tells about actions of the first churches and Christians—especially Peter and Paul. It shows how Christianity spread throughout the world.

Books 6-26 Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude

These 21 books are called Letters or Epistles (which is Greek for “letters”). Followers of Jesus wrote them. They often were sent to other people and churches to help explain Christianity. Sometimes they were written to counter heresy, or wrongful interpretations of the teachings of Jesus, or to encourage them during persecution.

Book 27 Revelation

John (one of Jesus’ best friends) wrote this book. It is a warning and encouragement to stay faithful. It also shows that God is in control even when times are bad. It closes with a wonderful glimpse of our future home in heaven with God.