

## MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

5-18-09

### WHAT DO I BELIEVE ABOUT THE BIBLE?

#### 1. Introduction

66 books; OT and NT; different kinds of books—history, poetry, prophecy, letters; languages of the Bible – OT in Hebrew; NT in Greek

**Question: "What are some interesting facts & stats about the Bible?"**

**Answer:** Books in the Bible: 66  
Books in the Old Testament: 39  
Books in the New Testament: 27  
Shortest book in the Bible: 2 John  
Longest book in the Bible: Psalms  
Chapters in the Bible: 1189  
Chapters in the Old Testament: 929  
Chapters in the New Testament: 260  
Middle chapter of the Bible: Psalm 117  
Shortest chapter in the Bible: Psalm 117  
Longest chapter in the Bible: Psalm 119  
Verses in the Bible: 31,173  
Verses in the Old Testament: 23,214  
Verses in the New Testament: 7,959  
Shortest verse in the Bible: [John 11:35](#)  
Longest verse in the Bible: [Esther 8:9](#)  
Words in the Bible: 773,692  
Words in the Old Testament: 592,439  
Words in the New Testament: 181,253

**Question: "Who were the authors of the books of the Bible?"**

**Answer:** Ultimately, above the human authors, the Bible was written by God. [Second Timothy 3:16](#) tells us that the Bible was “breathed out” by God. God superintended the human authors of the Bible so that, while using their own writing styles and personalities, they still recorded exactly what God intended. The Bible was not dictated by God, but it was perfectly guided and entirely inspired by Him.

Humanly speaking, the Bible was written by approximately 40 men of diverse backgrounds over the course of 1500 years. Isaiah was a prophet, Ezra was a priest, Matthew was a tax-collector, John was a fisherman, Paul was a tentmaker, Moses was a shepherd, Luke was a physician. Despite being penned by different authors over 15 centuries, the Bible does not contradict itself and does not contain any errors. The authors all present different perspectives, but they all proclaim the same one true God, and the same one way of salvation—Jesus Christ ([John 14:6](#); [Acts 4:12](#)). Few of the books of the

Bible specifically name their author. Here are the books of the Bible along with the name of who is most assumed by biblical scholars to be the author, along with the approximate date of authorship:

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy = Moses - 1400 B.C.  
Joshua = Joshua - 1350 B.C.  
Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel = Samuel/Nathan/Gad - 1000 - 900 B.C.  
1 Kings, 2 Kings = Jeremiah - 600 B.C.  
1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah = Ezra - 450 B.C.  
Esther = Mordecai - 400 B.C.  
Job = Moses - 1400 B.C.  
Psalms = several different authors, mostly David - 1000 - 400 B.C.  
Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon = Solomon - 900 B.C.  
Isaiah = Isaiah - 700 B.C.  
Jeremiah, Lamentations = Jeremiah - 600 B.C.  
Ezekiel = Ezekiel - 550 B.C.  
Daniel = Daniel - 550 B.C.  
Hosea = Hosea - 750 B.C.  
Joel = Joel - 850 B.C.  
Amos = Amos - 750 B.C.  
Obadiah = Obadiah - 600 B.C.  
Jonah = Jonah - 700 B.C.  
Micah = Micah - 700 B.C.  
Nahum = Nahum - 650 B.C.  
Habakkuk = Habakkuk - 600 B.C.  
Zephaniah = Zephaniah - 650 B.C.  
Haggai = Haggai - 520 B.C.  
Zechariah = Zechariah - 500 B.C.  
Malachi = Malachi - 430 B.C.  
Matthew = Matthew - A.D. 55  
Mark = John Mark - A.D. 50  
Luke = Luke - A.D. 60  
John = John - A.D. 90  
Acts = Luke - A.D. 65  
Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon = Paul - A.D. 50-70  
Hebrews = unknown, mostly likely Paul, Luke, Barnabas, or Apollos - A.D. 65  
James = James - A.D. 45  
1 Peter, 2 Peter = Peter - A.D. 60  
1 John, 2 John, 3 John = John - A.D. 90  
Jude = Jude - A.D. 60  
Revelation = John - A.D. 90

**Recommended Resource:** [The Quest Study Bible](#).

Note that many scholars disagree with these dates of writing.

## **2. Is this in the Bible?**

1. God helps those who help themselves.
2. If you want to understand, walk a mile in a man's shoes.
3. Neither a borrower nor a lender be.
4. Cleanliness is next to godliness.
5. God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.
6. God wants you rich.
7. God wants you well.
8. No clothes but our Sunday best on Sunday.
9. Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition!
10. God is just a prayer away.

## **3. What will I be asked about the Bible?**

1. What do you mean that the Bible is inspired?  
"God-breathed." 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 1 Corinthians 2:12-13
2. What do you mean that the Bible is inerrant?  
In the original manuscripts, not copies. God's law is perfect (Ps 19:7; Ps 119:89); Jesus, "Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35)
3. What is Bible numerology?  
Study of numbers in the Bible, such as 3, 10, 12, 40. Numbers carrying meaning.
4. What is a Bible code and are they valid?  
Idea that Bible verses carry codes for hidden meaning. No evidence that Jesus or Apostles taught this. Based on one ancient text when there are numerous texts.
5. Could more Bible books be added?  
No, the Bible is complete as it is.
6. How and when did the Bible get put together?  
OT – prophets and scribes; NT – apostles and church.

This recognition of God's Word is usually called "canonization." We are careful to say that God determined the canon, and the church discovered the canon. The canon of Scripture was not created by the church; rather, the church discovered or recognized it. In other words, God's Word was inspired and authoritative from its inception--it "stands firm in the heavens" ([Psalm 119:89](#))--and the church simply recognized that fact and accepted it.

The criteria the church used for recognizing and collecting the Word of God are as follows:

- 1) Was the book written by a prophet of God?
- 2) Was the writer authenticated by miracles to confirm his message?
- 3) Does the book tell the truth about God, with no falsehood or contradiction?
- 4) Does the book evince a divine capacity to transform lives?
- 5) Was the book accepted as God's Word by the people to whom it was first delivered?

### **7. Does the Bible contain errors?**

The original, signed, manuscripts were perfect, but copies can be seen to contain incidental errors of spelling, missing words or lines, words flip-flopped, etc.

#### **4. What do United Methodists think about Scripture:**

1. The Bible belongs to and leads the church.
2. The Bible as a whole informs the doctrine of the church.
3. The Bible is a revelation demanding a response--God's living Word.
4. The Bible must be confirmed in believers' experience.

Features of the Bible highlighted in the UMC:

1. Ageless for its stories and events (Moses, David, Jeremiah, Jesus)
2. Ageless for its revelation of God's purpose  
    "The Bible not only teaches that God made us for a sublime purpose. It reveals what that purpose is, namely, to realize moral and spiritual values in community" (Stokes, p. 29).
3. Ageless for its mighty affirmations (God as creator, humans as His creation, God's love for his creatures and His initiatives on our behalf)
4. Ageless for its ministry to human needs  
    "For every moral and spiritual need of the human heart there is an answering passage in the Bible" (Stokes, p. 31).

#### **5. Further Study:**

<http://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-stats.html>

F.F. Bruce, *New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1981.

David S. Dockery, *Christian Scripture: An Evangelical Perspective on Inspiration, Authority and Interpretation*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995.

Norman Geisler, *The Inspiration of the Bible*.

<http://www.4truth.net/site/apps/nl/content3.asp?c=hiKXLbPNLrF&b=784447&ct=1247651>

Bruce Metzger, *The New Testament: Its Background, Growth and Content*. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2003.