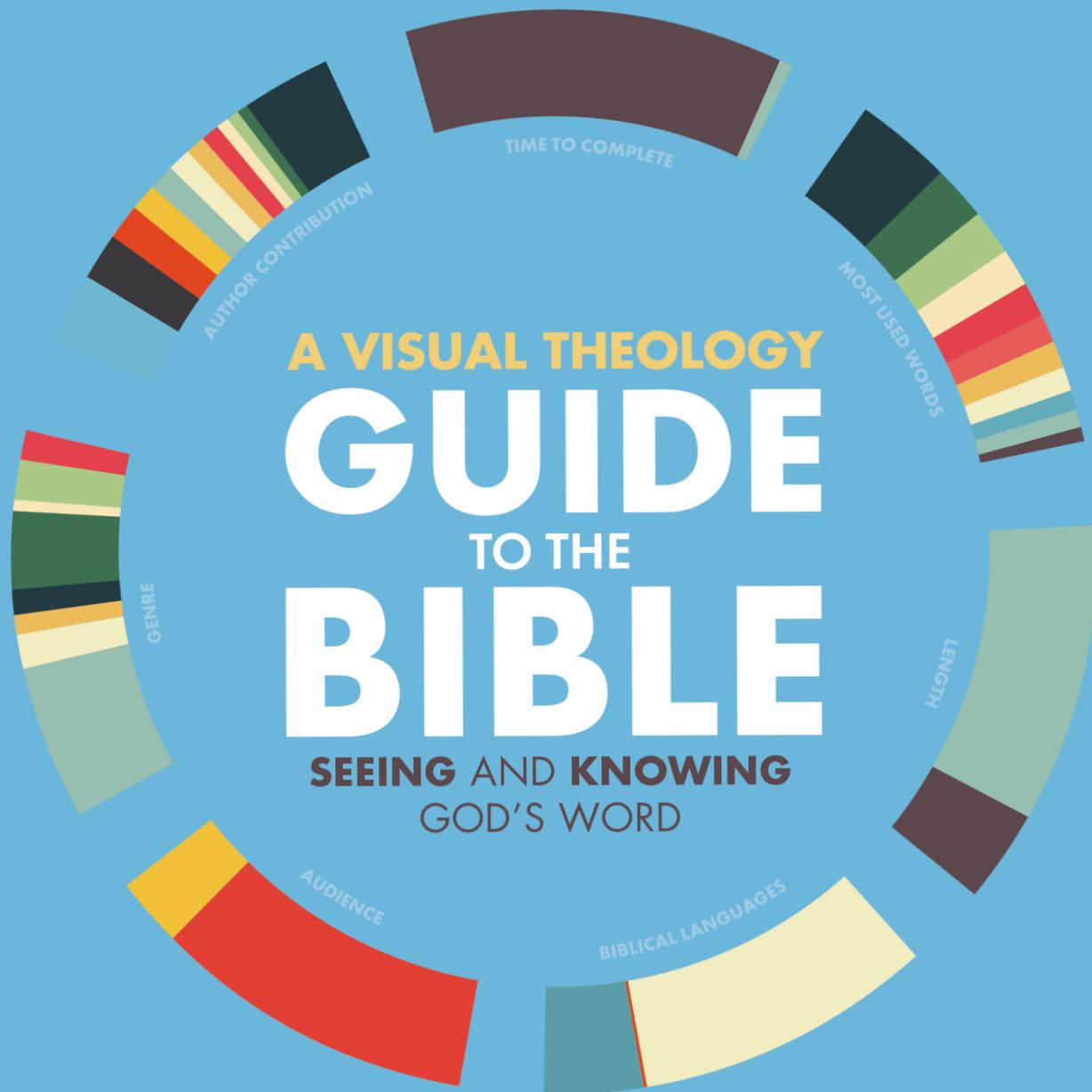


# TIM CHALLIES • JOSH BYERS

with JOEY SCHWARTZ



The follow-up to  
*Visual Theology*—with  
3x the infographics

Immersive graphics  
and text show how  
the Bible fits together

Learn how to develop  
a plan to read and  
study the Scriptures

**A VISUAL THEOLOGY**  
**GUIDE**  
TO THE  
**BIBLE**  
**SEEING AND KNOWING**  
GOD'S WORD

**TIM CHALLIES** and **JOSH BYERS**

with JOEY SCHWARTZ

 **ZONDERVAN®**

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*A Visual Theology Guide to the Bible*

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# INTRODUCTION

When it comes to books that stick around, none can match the Bible. Its words have been treasured through the ages, committed to memory, printed in scrolls, bound in books, narrated on tape, and programmed in apps. When it comes to books that sell, the Bible stands apart. Year after year, its sales skyrocket past the hottest *New York Times* bestsellers. When it comes to books with influence, the Bible is equally unique, its fingerprints manifest in the laws and constitutions of great nations, in key literary works and defining treatises. In endurance, influence, and sales, all other books pale in comparison.<sup>1</sup>

## IN THE UNITED STATES ALONE

AN ESTIMATED  
**40,000,000**  
COPIES ARE SOLD YEARLY

**82%**

OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS  
HAVE AT LEAST ONE BIBLE

**72%**

HAVE MULTIPLE

**13%** OF ALL PEOPLE  
PURCHASE A  
BIBLE EACH YEAR

**52%** OF AMERICANS SAY  
THEY READ THE BIBLE  
3-4 TIMES PER YEAR

THE *FULL* BIBLE IS AVAILABLE IN

**670**

DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

THIS GIVES

**5,371,000,000**

PEOPLE ACCESS TO THE ENTIRE BIBLE

THE NEW TESTAMENT IS  
AVAILABLE IN

**1,521**

ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES

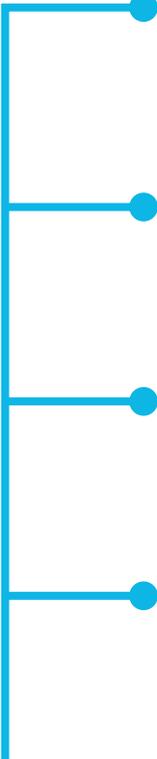
GIVING

**658,000,000**

ADDITIONAL PEOPLE ACCESS

**BUT TO CHRISTIANS, THE BIBLE IS MORE THAN  
A CULTURAL ARTIFACT OR A LITERARY CURIOSITY.**

TO CHRISTIANS, THE BIBLE IS DIVINE REVELATION  
GOD'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD.



**IT UNVEILS THE MIND OF GOD**

**REVEALS THE WILL OF GOD**

**DESCRIBES THE WORK OF GOD**

**CALLS THE READER TO FAITH IN GOD**

The Bible tells us who we are, why we exist, why we are so messy, how we are to relate to God, and how everything will someday be made right. It is reliable when it describes past events, theological when it describes divine truths, and inspirational when it calls for a heartfelt response.

The Bible makes monumental claims about itself. It describes itself as light to guide the lost, medicine to revive the sick, wisdom to correct the foolish, inspiration to cheer the sorrowful, balm to heal the blind. It insists it is more valuable than gold and sweeter than honey. It declares it is able to teach truth and correct error, that it will guide us away from unethical behavior and toward behavior that serves and blesses others.

A host of key historical figures attest to the Bible's unique significance. England's Queen Elizabeth II asked, "To what greater inspiration and counsel can we turn than to the imperishable truth to be found in this treasure house, the Bible?"<sup>2</sup> Abraham Lincoln declared, "[The Bible] is the best gift God has given to man. All the good the Saviour gave to the world was communicated through this book. But for it we could not know right from wrong."<sup>3</sup> Far above the world's greatest leaders and powers and institutions stands the timeless wisdom of the Bible.

This is a book about the Bible, and especially what the Bible contains. We have prepared it as enthusiasts who love the Bible, who attempt to understand it rightly and obey it truly. We have prepared it as pastors who love people and long to help them discover how the Bible answers their toughest questions and satisfies their deepest longings. We have prepared it as Christians, who have banked all we have and all we are on the Bible's great claims. We have prepared it as partners—an author and an artist—who each bring our individual passion to bear, one in the medium of words and the other in the medium of art.

If you are new to the Bible, we hope to motivate you to explore it for yourself, to read some of its key passages, to consider its claims, and to understand its most important themes. We will guide you from the beginning to the end to show how its many authors, hundreds of characters, and thousands of chapters together narrate one grand story that makes sense of this world and establishes your place in it.

If you are experienced with the Bible, we hope to motivate you to explore the Bible again, to read it with clearer eyes, and to come to a deeper appreciation of its central themes and supernatural cohesion. We know you will enjoy reading about this sacred Book and studying the graphics that illustrate it.



**PART ONE**  
TRUSTING THE BIBLE

CHAPTER ONE

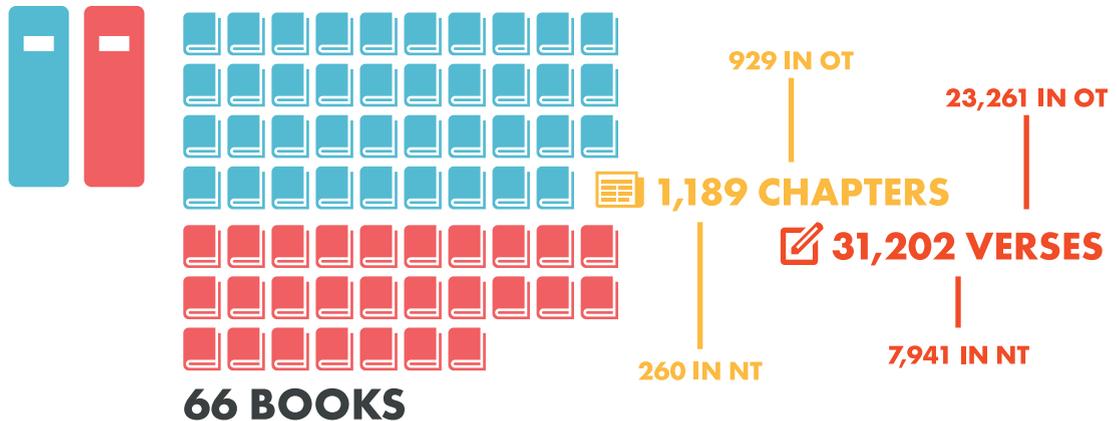
**WHAT  
IS THE  
BIBLE?**

What Christians call “the Bible” or “the Holy Bible” isn’t the only bible in the world, is it? Browse your local bookstore and you’ll find all kinds of books with the word *bible* in the title. A quick search turns up *The Furniture Bible*, a guide to identifying, restoring, and caring for antique furniture; *The Metal Detecting Bible*, the definitive guide for discovering lost valuables; and the *Jeep Owner’s Bible*, a guide for getting the most out of your Jeep. From these examples we see that employing the word *bible* represents a claim of authority. A bible is an authoritative source of wisdom or knowledge. The implication is that you can’t properly restore furniture without *The Furniture Bible*, and you can’t hope to tap every strength of your Jeep unless you read the *Jeep Owner’s Bible*.

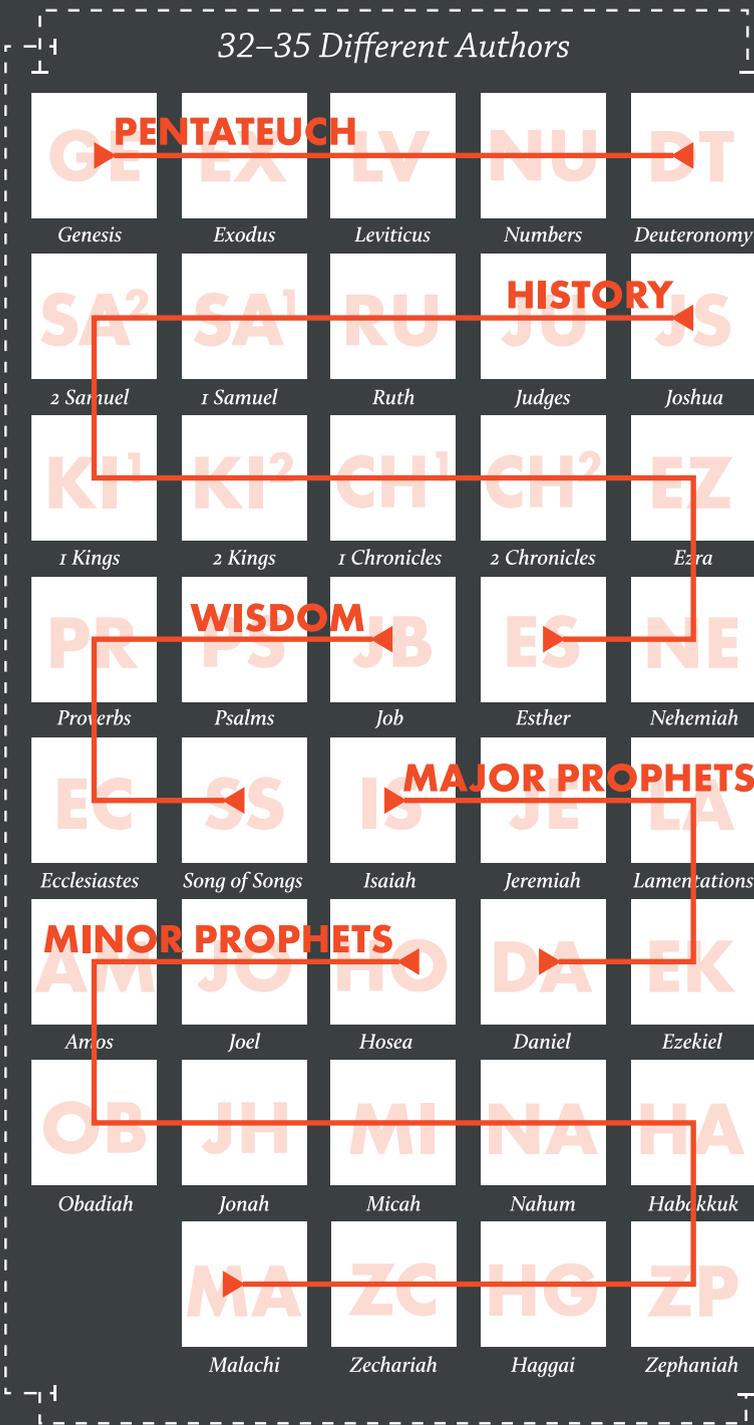
The word *bible* is derived from the ancient Greek word *biblos*, which refers not to a particular book but to the papyrus used to create an early form of paper. Soon the meaning of that word had been broadened to describe a book or scroll and then narrowed to refer to a sacred book or scroll. The word found its way into Latin and other European languages. Eventually, it came to refer to one particular book—the Christian Bible. There may be a *Jeep Owner’s Bible* and a *Metal Detecting Bible*, but there is only one Bible that needs no further explanation or qualification. And when we do wish to qualify it, we add the word *holy*, which means the Bible is set apart, a book unlike any other.

So, what is this Bible? Let’s begin to answer that question by looking at the Bible’s structure and purpose.

## 2 TESTAMENTS



Old Testament – 39 Books



Written approximately 1446–400 BC

76% of the Bible

WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF THE BIBLE?

The Bible is much like any other book in that it has internal cohesion. From beginning to end, it provides a unified picture of who God is, who we are, and what we need most. It is not merely a collection of words, sayings, and stories tossed together, but information that has been carefully collected and placed within a structure. The Bible moves from descriptions of the most distant past to predictions of a coming future. As it does that, it tells the story of humanity and the God who created us.<sup>1</sup>

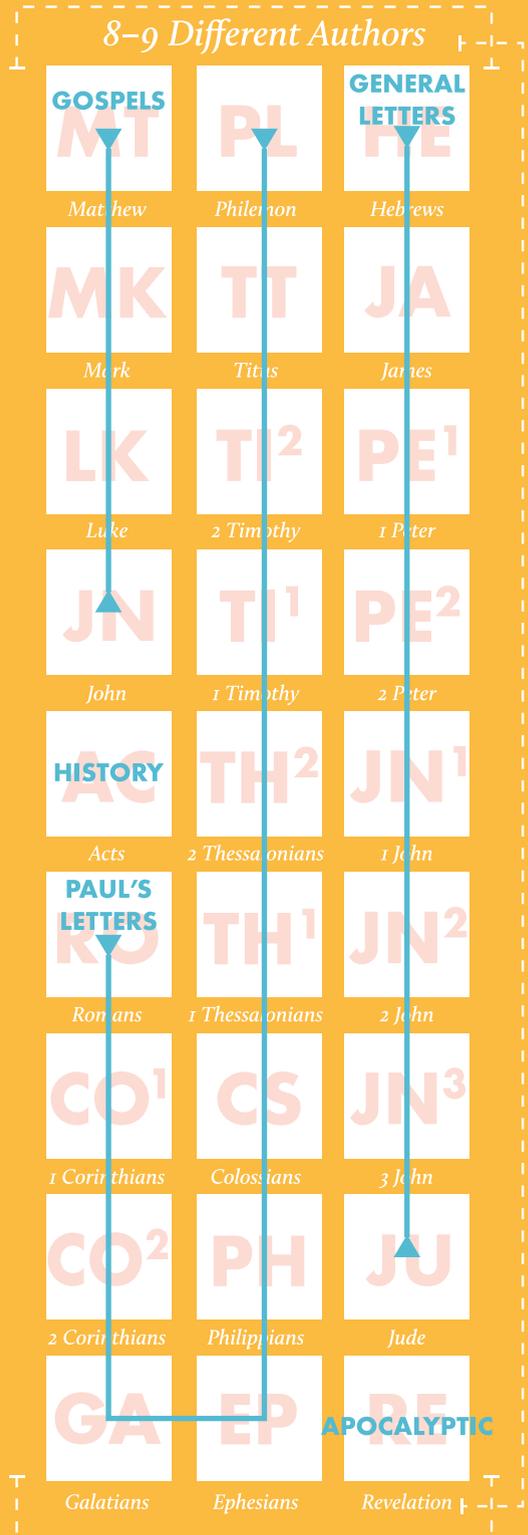
TESTAMENTS

Its broadest structure is a division into two “Testaments,” the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word we translate as “testament” could more

accurately be translated as “covenant,” so when we speak of Old Testament and New Testament, we are really speaking of Old Covenant and New Covenant. A covenant is an agreement between two parties that governs the terms of their relationship. The Old Testament details the establishment of the Old Covenant and the promises of the coming Christ, and the New Testament describes the inauguration of the New Covenant that God had planned all along. This shows why the Bible is divided in this way. The Old Testament includes all those parts of the Bible that were completed before the birth and death of Jesus Christ, and the New Testament includes all those parts of the Bible that were completed after his birth and death.

### BOOKS

Each of the Testaments is made up of what we call “books.” This is perhaps not the most helpful term, since some of these “books” are actually letters, some are collections of songs and poetry, and some are only a few hundred words long. Still, that’s the word that has stuck. There are thirty-nine books in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament for a total of sixty-six. The Old Testament composes roughly three-quarters of the Bible, and the New Testament approximately



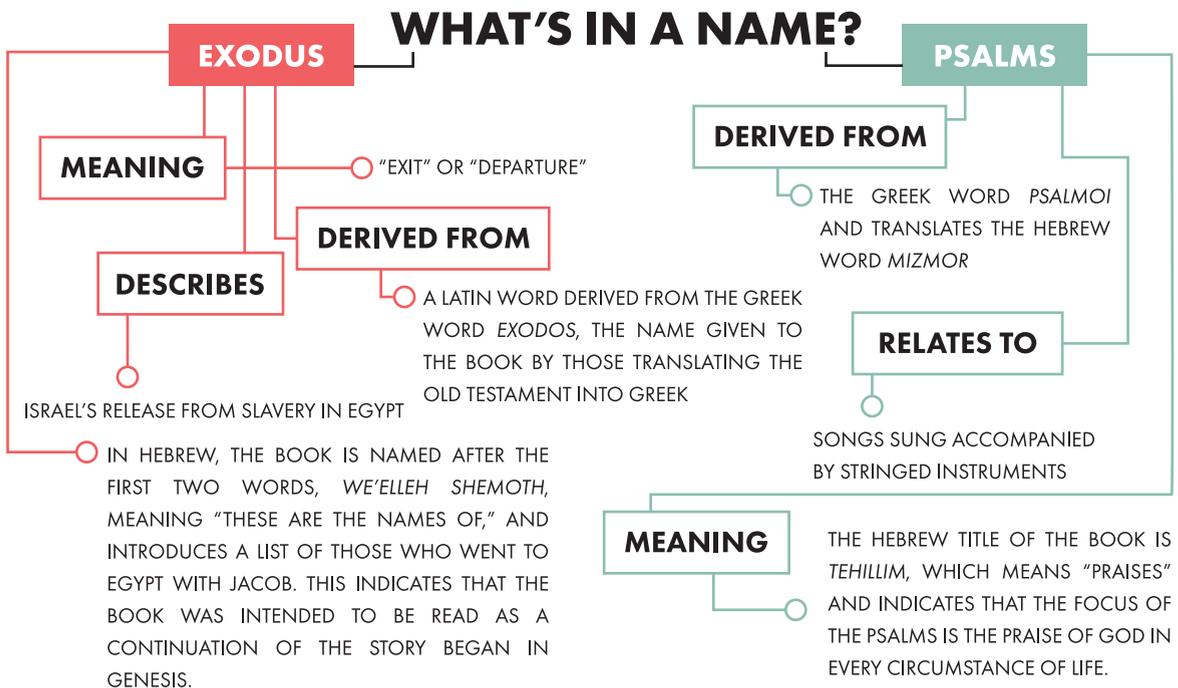
New Testament – 27 Books

*Written approximately AD 45–95  
24% of the Bible*

one-quarter. The Old Testament books tell of the creation of the world, the founding of the Israelites, the establishment of those people in the promised land, their special relationship with God, their disobedience to God, and their resulting captivity by hostile nations. A constant theme is the promise of a Messiah who will fully and finally liberate the Israelites from danger and oppression. The New Testament books tell of the birth, life, and death of Jesus; they tell of the work of the earliest Christians to spread their message; they instruct Christians in how to live and tell how God intends to bring history to its close. A recurring theme is that Jesus is the Messiah who was promised in the Old Testament.

## NAMES

Each of the books in the Bible has a name. The books were not often given names at the time they were written, so they took them on over time as people read and studied them. They are often named after the author of the book or after one of its key characters. Thus, Isaiah is both by and about a prophet named Isaiah; Luke is an account of the





## GENRES

If you visit a bookstore today and browse around, you'll find books divided into genres—books of different styles or with different purposes: historical novels, home decorating, modern history, and so on. Likewise, the biblical books fall into a number of genres. They include:

### HISTORY



HISTORY BOOKS ARE MEANT TO DESCRIBE HISTORICAL EVENTS AS THEY HAPPENED IN THE PAST. THEY CAN ALSO INSTRUCT AND WARN. EXAMPLES INCLUDE GENESIS, RUTH, AND ACTS.

### LAW



LAW BOOKS TELL HOW GOD INTENDS THE ANCIENT NATION OF ISRAEL TO FUNCTION RELIGIOUSLY, POLITICALLY, AND SOCIALLY. EXAMPLES INCLUDE LEVITICUS AND DEUTERONOMY.

### WISDOM



WISDOM BOOKS ARE COLLECTIONS OF APHORISMS AND WISE SAYINGS MEANT TO GUIDE THE RELATIONSHIP TO GOD AND TO ONE ANOTHER. EXAMPLES INCLUDE JOB, PROVERBS, AND ECCLESIASTES.

### POETRY



POETRY BOOKS ARE POETIC FORMS OF PRAISE TO GOD OR GRATITUDE FOR HIS GIFTS TO HUMANITY. EXAMPLES INCLUDE PSALMS, SONG OF SONGS, AND LAMENTATIONS.

### PROPHECY



PROPHETIC BOOKS CONTAIN PREDICTIONS OF FUTURE EVENTS, WARNINGS, AND PREACHING THAT CALLS PEOPLE TO REPENTANCE AND OBEDIENCE. THEY ARE AT TIMES BOTH HOPEFUL AND DREADFUL, PREDICTING GOD'S BLESSING AND WOE. EXAMPLES INCLUDE ISAIAH, JEREMIAH, AND MALACHI.

### GOSPELS



GOSPELS ARE SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF JESUS. THERE ARE FOUR OF THEM, EACH WRITTEN BY A DIFFERENT AUTHOR AND FOR A DIFFERENT PURPOSE: MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, AND JOHN.

### EPISTLES



EPISTLES ARE LETTERS THAT USUALLY HAVE A SECTION DEDICATED TO TEACHING TRUTH ABOUT GOD AND A SECTION DEDICATED TO TELLING PEOPLE HOW TO LIVE IN LIGHT OF THAT TRUTH. EXAMPLES INCLUDE ROMANS, TITUS, EPHESIANS, GALATIANS, 1 THESSALONIANS, AND 1 PETER.

### APOCALYPSE



APOCALYPTIC WRITINGS ARE A SPECIFIC FORM OF PROPHECY PREDICTING DISASTER AND DESTRUCTION. IMAGERY AND SYMBOLISM ARE THE PRIMARY DEVICES USED TO COMMUNICATE THEIR TRUTH. EXAMPLES INCLUDE DANIEL AND REVELATION.

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE?

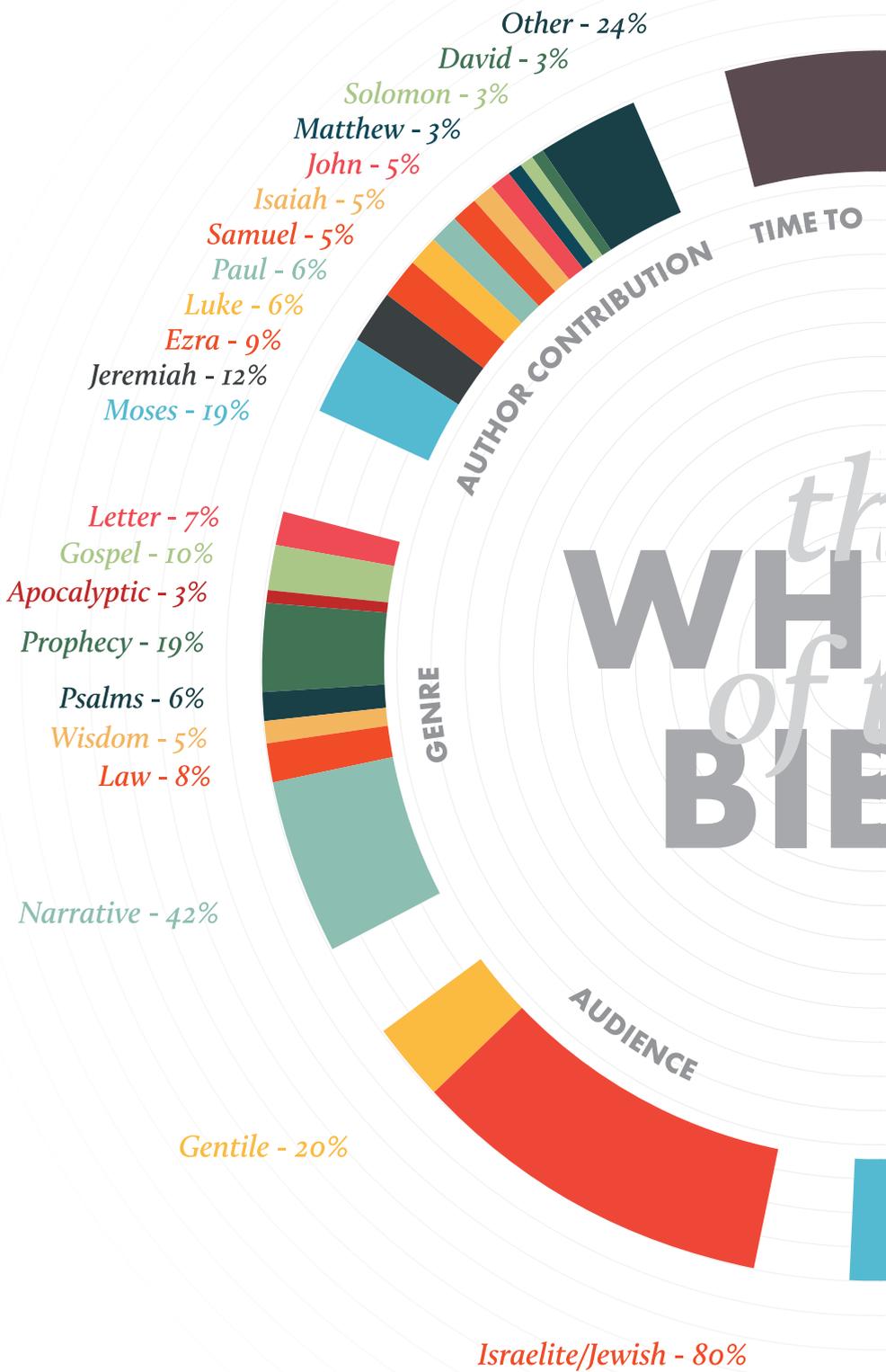
One of history's most influential Christian theologians began his magnum opus with this sentence: "Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves."<sup>3</sup> When he spoke of "wisdom," he was not referring to mere facts and stats, to the kind of trivia that might create a *Jeopardy* winner. He was not referring to only the kind of life lessons that may be passed down from a grandfather to a grandson. He was referring to something much greater and much more significant. Properly understood, wisdom is knowledge of the world as it really is. It is a correct knowledge of who God is and who we are in relation to him. And further, it is an understanding of how we are to live accordingly. In that way wisdom is not mere knowledge, but knowledge that has been deliberately put into action.

The Bible exists to impart true and sound wisdom from God to humanity. It is through the Bible that we come to a correct knowledge of God and of ourselves.

If we are to properly understand ourselves, we need knowledge that comes from outside ourselves. If we are to properly understand this world, we need knowledge that comes from outside this world. The Bible is the source of that knowledge. It is God's revelation of himself.

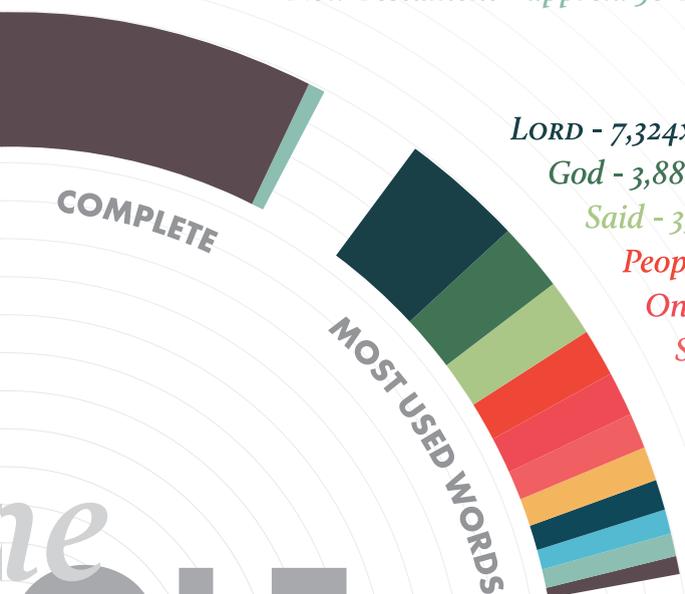
In chapter 8, we will say much more about the grand story of the Bible. But for now, it's important to know that the purpose of the Bible is to show mankind who God is and his plan to save mankind from their sin through his Son, Jesus Christ.

# the WHY of the BIBLE

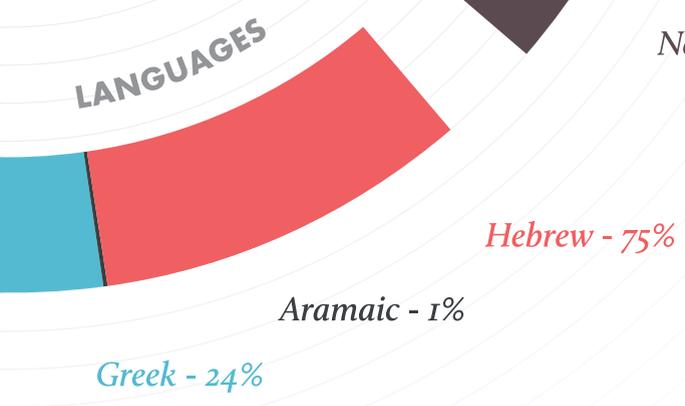
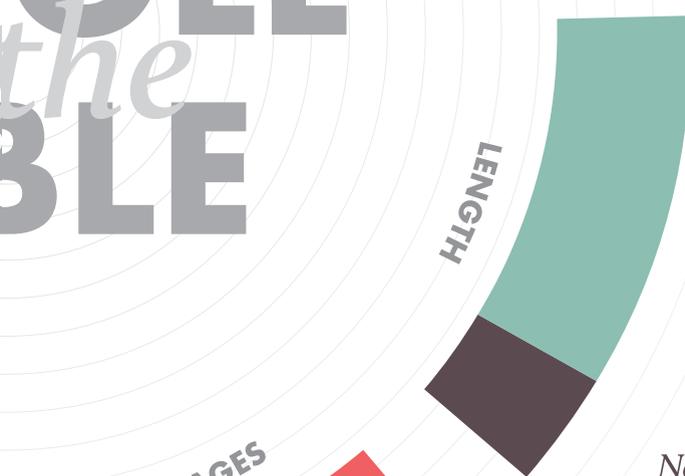


Old Testament - approx. 1,046 Years

New Testament - approx. 50 Years



# THE PEOPLE OF THE BIBLE



THE BIBLE IS GOD'S GIFT TO YOU



ONE COLLECTION



TWO TESTAMENTS



66 BOOKS



WRITTEN, ASSEMBLED, & PRESERVED



SO THAT YOU MIGHT KNOW HIM  
AND HIS SALVATION IN JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER TWO

HOW

WAS THE

BIBLE

WRITTEN?



AS AN ARTIFACT, THE BIBLE HAS BEEN PRESERVED AND PRESENTED IN A VARIETY OF WAYS THROUGHOUT HISTORY

In the dark corners of jail, the apostle Paul pens a letter to the church at Philippi. Through tears, he commands the church to rejoice in suffering and live in unity. After writing his final line, which would eventually be translated into English as “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit,” he drops his pen and prays.

Nearly two thousand years later, a teenage boy sits down in church, pulls out his iPhone, clicks on the “Bible” app, and scrolls down to the bottom of Philippians. As the preacher reads, he follows along: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.”

How did these words get from Paul’s calloused hands into a twenty-first century smartphone? For that matter, how did all sixty-six of the ancient letters and books within the Bible survive into the present day?

The Bible was not delivered to us from the sky. It did not come to us fully formed from the hands of an angel. The Bible came from men who wrote the words of

IT HAS TAKEN FORM IN WRITING, PRINTING, & CODE



God. It was communicated in ancient languages, and it was preserved over the centuries. And yet, while the Bible is a historical artifact, we can be confident that the Bible we have today is far more: it is the very words of God.

### THE BIBLE WAS GOD-BREATHED

In 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul writes to his protégé, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” This beautiful imagery shows that all of the holy Scriptures (*graphē*) are spoken out by God, so that every word comes from his breath. This is why it’s no stretch to read a passage of Scripture with the preface, “God says . . .” If it’s in the Bible, then God spoke it, and he continues to speak those words into the lives of his children today (Hebrews 4:12).<sup>1</sup>



### STONE & POTTERY PIECES

Inscriptions were carved or chiseled on blocks of broken pottery, loose stone, or larger edifices.



### CLAY TABLETS

Clay was inscribed while it was still damp or soft. It would then be dried in the sun or baked in a kiln.



### PAPYRI

Papyrus was made by pressing and gluing two layers of split papyrus reeds to form a sheet.



### ANIMAL SKIN SCROLLS

Animal skin scrolls were made from the hides of calves, deer, sheep, goats, and cows.

This characteristic of Scripture is often called *inspiration*, although the term has become so muddled in modern usage that *God-breathed* may be a better term. The Old Testament prophets and the disciples were certainly not “inspired” in the same way that a country music star is “inspired” to write her hit song. The word *inspired* today has come to connote a vague influence, but Scripture is not just influenced by God. Scripture is spoken by God.

## PRINTING

1456



### PRINTED BOOKS

Johannes Gutenberg invented an improved printing press with metal movable type. The first volume printed on this improved press was the Gutenberg Bible.

## CODING

1982



### COMPUTER PROGRAMS

Verse Search was the first commercial Bible program developed by “THE WORD processor” family, Kent Ochel and Bert Brown, at Bible Research Systems.

1993



### WEB PAGES

Bible Gateway was started in 1993 by Nick Hengeveld, a student at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

2008



### APPS

Life Church released the YouVersion Bible App on the iPhone in 2008.

2016



### VIRTUAL REALITY

VR Church launched Virtual Reality Bible and Church in 2016. It allows the wearer to view and browse virtual 3-D text in front of them.

## BIOTECH

?



### NEURAL DOWNLOADS

While not yet possible, scientists theorize in the future we'll be able to implant information directly into the brain and memory.