

INTRODUCTION: BACK TO THE BASICS

The movie *Hoosiers* retells the story of the “Milan Miracle,” when the coach of a small-town Indiana, U.S.A., high school basketball team accomplished the impossible. In 1954, the Milan High School, with a total enrollment of merely 161 students, won the state championship. However, when the season started, in the movie version at least, the team was far from championship material. What did the coach do? He started with the fundamentals. Fundamentals are the foundational principles, or the primary and central principles. Another word for the fundamentals is *the basics*. The coach went back to the basics. He allowed no shooting baskets and held no scrimmages in those early practices. It was running, dribbling, passing. Repeat. Repeat again. The basics came first, and the basics had to be mastered. Then came the games, then came victories, and then came the state championship.

This book offers some Bible basics as the foundation for discipleship and doctrine. Here you will find an

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overview of the biblical books, places, and events. We'll look at the big picture of the Bible by exploring the idea of the covenant. You'll find some key biblical passages to meditate upon and memorize, as well as prayers from the Bible. You'll also find key ideas from the centuries of church history. Together we'll walk through basic doctrines in order to have a better grasp on what the Bible teaches. You'll even find some hymns.

These basics provide a foundation upon which to build a solid faith. In fact, all of us, no matter where we find ourselves in our Christian walk, need these fundamentals. We need to go back to the basics. Repeat. Repeat again.

The Reformer Martin Luther once declared, "Though I am a great doctor, I have not yet progressed beyond the instruction of children in the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. I still learn and pray these every day with my Hans and my little Lena."

Luther was telling us that the basics matter. We all need to master these basics of the Bible. Let's get started.



THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

The word *Bible* comes from the Greek word, *Biblion*, meaning book. The Bible is one book made up of sixty-six books. Around AD 200, the church father Tertullian first referred to the collection of thirty-nine books as “The Old Covenant” or “The Old Testament.” The Jews referred to these thirty-nine books as “The Law,” “The Prophets,” and “The Writings,” referring to how they organized and grouped these books together. These books span a millennium, from the time Moses wrote the Pentateuch in the fifteenth century BC through the 400s BC.

Cannon Vs. Canon

Cannon with two “N”s goes boom! It shoots cannon balls to avoid.

Canon with one “N” does not go boom. It is the rule of faith and life we run into—not away from!

Tertullian, The Church Father

Tertullian lived around AD 160-220. In addition to coining the terms Old and New Testaments, he also coined the very important word, "Trinity." We call the leaders in the early church the Church Fathers because they helped the church grow in its early years and in the establishment of the historic Christian faith. The era of the Church Fathers spans from AD 100 - 400.

Tertullian also coined the term "New Testament." The New Testament consists of twenty-seven books all written in the first century AD. Most of these books are epistles or letters, a very common genre in first-century Rome. The New Testament also consists of books of history and a book of prophecy.

God divinely inspired the human authors of Scripture (2 Peter 1:16-21). These sixty-six books constitute the canon of Scripture. The word canon means "a reed" or "a measuring rod." The idea is of a standard or rule. The canon of Scripture is the rule or the measure for doctrine and life. Canon also refers to the standard or the criterion by which these books are considered divinely authored and, consequently, authoritative texts.

A book is in the canon of Scripture based on four criteria. First, it directly claims to be the word of God. Take for instance the Old Testament prophetic books with the refrain, "Thus says the Lord." Secondly, the content of the book is in keeping with the content of the other books. The teaching of the book is in harmony with the overall teaching of the Bible. Thirdly, the author is a prophet or apostle, or

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uniquely associated with a prophet or apostle and is called by God to write His word. Lastly, the book has wide acceptance and recognition. It doesn't simply represent a small group or one location.

We need to realize one more thing regarding the canon, Protestants believe the church recognizes these sixty-six books as the canon by seeing the book reflect these criteria. The key word here is recognize, as the church does not determines or establishes the book as part of the biblical canon.

**The Bible =
66 Books**

The Old
Testament = 39
Books

The New
Testament = 27
Books

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The Books of The Old Testament

Genesis	1 Chronicles	Daniel
Exodus	2 Chronicles	Hosea
Leviticus	Ezra	Joel
Numbers	Nehemiah	Amos
Deuteronomy	Esther	Obadiah
Joshua	Job	Jonah
Judges	Psalms	Micah
Ruth	Proverbs	Nahum
1 Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Habakkuk
2 Samuel	Song of Solomon	Zephaniah
1 Kings	Isaiah	Haggai
2 Kings	Jeremiah	Zechariah
	Lamentations	Malachi
	Ezekiel	

The Books of New Testament

Matthew	Ephesians	Hebrews
Mark	Philippians	James
Luke	Colossians	1 Peter
John	I Thessalonians	2 Peter
Acts	2 Thessalonians	1 John
Romans	1 Timothy	2 John
1 Corinthians	2 Timothy	3 John
2 Corinthians	Titus	Jude
Galatians	Philemon	Revelation

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Who Wrote the Bible?

The Bible is a book from God to us. In giving us the Bible, God used human authors to write the various books that comprise the Bible. God used highly educated authors like Moses, who had the very best education of the day in Pharaoh's house. God also used authors like Peter, a fisherman, who would have likely had a minimal education. God worked through the styles and personalities of these biblical authors. Every word of the Bible and all of the words of the Bible are true because every word and all the words come from God. Who were the different human authors? As for the Old Testament authors, we'll start with Moses.

Moses	Author of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, and also Psalm 90
Ezra	Author of 1 & 2 Chronicles and Ezra
Nehemiah	Author of Nehemiah
Solomon	Author of Proverbs (with others), Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs
Isaiah	Author of Isaiah
Jeremiah	Author of Jeremiah and Lamentations
Ezekiel	Author of Ezekiel
Daniel	Author of Daniel
Hosea	Author of Hosea
Joel	Author of Joel
Amos	Author of Amos
Obadiah	Author of Obadiah
Jonah	Author of Jonah

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Micah	Author of Micah
Nahum	Author of Nahum
Habakkuk	Author of Habakkuk
Zephaniah	Author of Zephaniah
Haggai	Author of Haggai
Zechariah	Author of Zechariah
Malachi	Author of Malachi

David wrote most of the Psalms, but other authors contributed. They include:

Asaph	Moses
Ethan	Solomon
Heman	The Sons of Korah

Some of the Psalms were written by anonymous people—we don't know who wrote fifty of the Psalms. The other anonymous books of the Old Testament include:

Joshua	Ruth	Esther
Judges	1 & 2 Samuel	Job
	1 & 2 Kings	

As for New Testament authors, we start with Matthew.

Matthew	Author of Matthew
John Mark	Author of Mark
Luke	Author of Luke and Acts
John	Author of John, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Revelation

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- Paul** Author of Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon
- James** Author of James
- Peter** Author of 1 & 2 Peter
- Jude** Author of Jude

There is one anonymous book in the New Testament, the book of Hebrews.

The Genres of the Old Testament

The word genre refers to a category of writing or literature. The Old Testament includes books of law, narratives and histories, poetry, and prophecy. The Hebrew Bible offers three major groupings for the thirty-nine books: the Law, the Writings, and the Prophets. Jesus, following this custom, used these designations when he referred to the Old Testament.

Law	Writings	Prophets
Torah	Ketuvim	Nevi'im

The Law specifically refers to the first five books of the Bible. These books contain historical narratives, poetry, and laws and treaties. The events of the Pentateuch span from the very first day of history on through the period known as the Ancient Near Eastern World. The word Pentateuch comes from two Greek words. *Penta* means five and *Teuchos* means scroll or book. The Pentateuch is the first five books of the Bible. Jews refer

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to these books as the Torah, from the Hebrew word that means “law.” As governments today write laws, so did governments back then. Also, nations would enter into treaties or covenants with other nations in Old Testament times. Consequently, we find the language of laws and of covenants or treaties throughout these five books. For an example of laws, see Exodus 20. For an example of a covenant, see the covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3.

Law Genesis
 Exodus
 Leviticus
 Numbers
 Deuteronomy

Jews refer to the Writings as the *Ketuvim*, the Hebrew word for *writings*. These books consist of two main genres, history (or narrative) and poetry. The historical books use the narrative genre form. In narrative, you have three main elements. You have the setting, you have the characters, and you have the plot. Look at Exodus 3. What’s the setting? Who are the characters? Now, what’s the plot or the development of the story?

Most English poetry uses rhyme. Hebrew poetry rhymes thoughts or ideas. The big word we use here is *parallelism*. There are different types of parallelism. The author can say the same thing twice to make a point. Or, the author can say two opposite things to make a contrast. Another feature of Hebrew poetry is to use as few words as possible, keeping it short and sweet.

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Can you find the parallel words in Psalm 100:4?

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise.

Writings

History

Joshua
Judges
1 & 2 Samuel
1 & 2 Kings
1 & 2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

Poetry

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon

The Jews refer to the Old Testament prophetic books as the *Nevi'im*. *Nevi* is the Hebrew word meaning *prophet*, and *nevi'im* is the plural meaning *prophets*. The prophetic books have the genres of poetry, history, and even law and covenant. They also contain, as their name has it, prophecy. Prophecy uses vivid metaphors and colorful descriptions to paint a picture of things to come. Sometimes we also use the word *apocalyptic* to describe the genre of prophecy. Look at Ezekiel Chapter 1 and you'll see his imagery of four living creatures, a wheel, and a

The Tanakh

Jews refer to the Hebrew Bible as the *Tanakh*. This is made up of words for the three divisions of the law, prophets, and writings.

Torah
+ Nevi'im
+ Ketuvim
= TaNaKH

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wheel within a wheel. The prophets are divided into the major prophets, which are longer books, and the minor prophets, which are shorter.

Prophets

Major

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel

Minor

Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zachariah
Malachi

The Genres of the New Testament

The New Testament consists of three major genres: history, epistles, and prophecy. We've already seen the genres of history and prophecy. The new genre in the New Testament is epistles, or letters. Epistles were a very important form of communication in the first century.