

Brief Overview of the Bible

1. The Bible is divided into two major parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The Bible contains 66 different books written by about 40 different authors at different times from about 1500 BC to 100 A. D. The Old Testament contains 39 books; the New Testament 27.

- A. The Old Testament is about God's dealing with his chosen people, Israel.
- B. The New Testament is about God's dealing with all nations through Christ.

["Testament" is similar in meaning to "Covenant"]

2. The Old Testament may be divided into three parts according to subject matter:

- A. Historical books (17) - Genesis through Esther
- B. Poetical books (5) - Job through Song of Solomon
- C. Prophetical Books (17) - Isaiah through Malachi

[These are further divided into Major Prophets (Isaiah through Daniel) and Minor Prophets (Hosea through Malachi). This distinction is because of length more than subject matter.]

3. The New Testament may be divided into four parts according to subject matter:

- A. Gospels (4) - Matthew through John

These tell the story of Jesus and their purpose is to produce faith in him.

- B. History (1) - Acts of Apostles

This book tells how Jesus' apostles preached the gospel throughout the world after Jesus' ascension to heaven, and how the church was established and grew. The church in the book of Acts is the ideal for today's church.

- C. Letters (Epistles) (21) - Romans through Jude

These books instruct Christians and the church about how to live, worship, and work for Christ.

- D. Prophecy (1) - Revelation

This book pictures in symbolic language the conflict between the kingdom of God and forces of wickedness, assuring us that Christ and his people will ultimately triumph. It was written particularly to encourage Christians undergoing trials.

