

# The Unity of the Bible

## I. Introduction

## II. Basic Definitions

### A. The meaning of “Bible”

1. *biblos* - “the outer coat of a papyrus reed” (a Greek word dating to 11th century Egypt;
2. the plural, *biblia*, was used by 2nd century A.D. Christians to refer to their writings,
3. the Greek *biblia* gave rise to the Latin, *biblia* (a transliteration by the same spelling)
4. the Latin, *biblia*, gave rise to the Old French *biblia* (same spelling)
5. Finally, the modern English word Bible came from the Old French, *biblia*, with its anglicized ending
6. Bible is synonymous with “scripture” and “Word of God” and represents the sum of those writings that were *inspired by God and recognized as canon* by the Church. These writings are the only infallible standard of matters of faith and practice for the Christian religion.

### B. The meaning of “Testament”

1. The two large parts of the Bible are referred to as “testaments”
  - a. The Hebrew, *berith*, means “covenant, or compact, or arrangement between two parties”;
  - b. The Greek, *diatheke*, (same definition)
  - c. The translators of the Septuagint (LXX) translated *berith* (Heb.) as *diatheke* (Gr.)
2. Relevant biblical passage
  - a. Ex. 24:8  
“7 Then he took the book of the covenant and read {it} in the hearing of the people; and they said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!” 8 So Moses took the blood and sprinkled {it} on the people, and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

- b. Jer. 31:31-34  
 31 “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. 33 “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 “And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”
- c. Matt. 26:27-28 (cf. I Cor. 11:23-25; Heb. 8:6-8)  
 “27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave {it} to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.”  
 I Cor. 11:23-25 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, “This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” 25 In the same way {He took} the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink {it,} in remembrance of Me.”  
 Heb.8:6-8 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. 7 For if that first {covenant} had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. 8 For finding fault with them, He says, “BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH;

**N.B.** These passages show why Christians refer to the early part of the Bible as the *Old Testament* (i.e. covenant) and the later part of the Bible as the *New Testament*.

### III. The Unity of the Bible as seen in its Ancient Divisions

#### A. Hebrew form of the Old Testament

##### 1. Earliest division: Law & Prophets

- a. confirmed by historical Jewish usage, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and New Testament authors.
- b. Relevant Passages:  
 2Kgs. 17:13 Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah, through all His **prophets** {and} every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments, My statutes according to all the **law** which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you through My servants the **prophets**.”  
 Neh. 9:26 “But they became disobedient and rebelled against Thee, And cast Thy **law** behind their backs And killed Thy **prophets** who had admonished them So that they might return to Thee, And they committed great blasphemies.  
 Jer. 2:8 “The priests did not say, ‘Where is the LORD?’ And those who handle the **law** did not know Me; The rulers also transgressed against Me, And the

**prophets** prophesied by Baal And walked after things that did not profit.

Lam. 2:9 Her gates have sunk into the ground, He has destroyed and broken her bars. Her king and her princes are among the nations; The **law** is no more; Also, her **prophets** find No vision from the LORD.

Zeph. 3:4 Her **prophets** are reckless, treacherous men; Her priests have profaned the sanctuary. They have done violence to the **law**.

Zech. 7:12 “And they made their hearts {like} flint so that they could not hear the **law** and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former **prophets**; therefore great wrath came from the LORD of hosts.

Matt. 5:17 “Do not think that I came to abolish the **Law** or the **Prophets**; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.

Matt. 7:12 “Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the **Law** and the **Prophets**.

Matt. 11:13 “For all the **prophets** and the **Law** prophesied until John.

Matt. 22:40 “On these two commandments depend the whole **Law** and the **Prophets**.”

Luke 16:16 “The **Law** and the **Prophets** {were proclaimed} until John; since then the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.

Luke 24:44 Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the **Law** of Moses and the **Prophets** and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

John 1:45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the **Law** and {also} the **Prophets** wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

Acts 13:15 And after the reading of the **Law** and the **Prophets** the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, “Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it.”

Acts 24:14 “But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the **Law**, and that is written in the **Prophets**;

Acts 28:23 And when they had set a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God, and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the **Law** of Moses and from the **Prophets**, from morning until evening.

Rom. 3:21 But now apart from the **Law** {the} righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the **Law** and the **Prophets**,

## 2. Less ancient times: Law & Prophets & Writings

- a. Luke 24:44 - Christ's words possibly confirm three-fold division  
“Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

- b. Philo (Jewish philosopher) - alluded to three-fold division
- c. Flavius Josephus (Jewish historian):
  - 5 books: "Moses"
  - 13 books: "prophets ... after Moses"
  - 4 books: "hymns to GOD ... precepts for the conduct of human life"

3. Why this division?

- a. Based upon status of writers:
  - Moses
  - Prophets
  - Non-prophets (wise men, kings, princes)
- b. Based upon chronology with the third section containing books arranged in order of descending size.

<b>THE HEBREW OLD TESTAMENT ARRANGEMENT</b>		
<b>The Law (<i>Torah</i>)</b>	<b>The Prophet (<i>Neviim</i>)</b>	<b>The Writings (<i>Kethuvim</i>)</b>
1. Genesis	<i>Former Prophets</i>	<i>Poetical Books</i>
2. Exodus	1.Joshua	1.Psalms
3. Leviticus	2.Judges	2.Job
4. Numbers	3.Samuel	3.Proverbs
5. Deuteronomy	4.Kings	
	<i>Latter Prophets</i>	<i>Five Rolls (<i>Megilloth</i>)</i>
	1.Isaiah	1.Ruth
	2.Jeremiah	2.Song of Songs
	3.Ezekiel	3.Ecclesiastes
	4.The Twelve	4.Lamentations
		5.Esther
		<i>Historical Books:</i>
		1.Daniel
		2.Ezra-Nehemiah
		3. Chronicles

B. Greek form of Old Testament - Hebrew scripture was translated into Greek in Alexandria, Egypt (c. 250-150 B.C.) and is known as the Septuagint (LXX).

- 1. Some changes made in format:
  - a. some reclassified, regrouped, renamed.
  - b. books arranged according to subject matter.
    - 5 books of Law
    - 12 books of History
    - 5 books of Poetry
    - 17 books of Prophecy

C. The New Testament

1. Classified into 4 groups

- a. Gospels (4 books)
- b. History (1 book)
- c. Epistles (21 books) - Pauline (13) and General (8)
- d. Prophecy (1 book)

D. The Modern structure of the Bible is logical. It is basically topical but semi-chronological

1. Four-fold Old Testament

- a. Law, History, Poetry, Prophecy

<b>THE OLD TESTAMENT</b>		
<b>The Law (Pentateuch) - 5 Books</b>		<b>Poetry - 5 Books</b>
1. Genesis		1. Job
2. Exodus		2. Psalms
3. Leviticus		3. Proverbs
4. Numbers		4. Ecclesiastes
5. Deuteronomy		5. Song of Solomon
<b>History - 12 Books</b>		<b>Prophets - 17 Books</b>
		<i>Major</i>
1. Joshua		<i>Minor</i>
2. Judges		1. Hosea
3. Ruth		2. Joel
4. 1 Samuel		3. Amos
5. 2 Samuel		4. Obadiah
6. 1 Kings		5. Jonah
7. 2 Kings		6. Micah
8. 1 Chronicles		7. Nahum
9. 2 Chronicles		8. Habakkuk
10. Ezra		9. Zephaniah
11. Nehemiah		10. Haggai
12. Esther		11. Zechariah
		12. Malachi

2. Four-fold New Testament

a. Gospels, History, Epistles, Prophecy

<b>THE NEW TESTAMENT</b>	
<b>Gospels - 4 Books</b>	<b>History - 1 Book</b>
1. Matthew	1. Acts
2. Mark	
3. Luke	
4. John	
<b>Epistles-21 Books</b>	
<b>A. Pauline - 13 Books</b>	<b>General - 8 Books</b>
1. Romans	1. Hebrews
2. 1 Corinthians	2. James
3. 2 Corinthians	3. 1 Peter
4. Galatians	4. 2 Peter
5. Ephesians	5. 1 John
6. Philippians	6. 2 John
7. Colossians	7. 3 John
8. 1 Thessalonians	8. Jude
9. 2 Thessalonians	
10. 1 Timothy	
11. 2 Timothy	
12. Titus	
13. Philemon	
<b>Prophecy - 1 Book</b>	
1. Revelation	

IV. The UNITY of Revelation (as seen in its themes or subject matter)

A. The Old Testament compared with the New Testament

1. Recognized by the CHURCH

a. Augustine -

“...the Old Testament revealed in the New, the New veiled in the Old...”

b. W. Graham Scroggie -

“The New is in the Old contained, and the Old is in the New explained.”

“The Old gathers 'round Sinai, and the New 'round Calvary.”

"Without the New Covenant, the Old is a start that has no finish; and without the old, the New is a finish that has no start."

(All from Know Your Bible by W. Graham Scroggie)

c. Norman Geisler

In the Old Testament Christ is:	In the New Testament Christ is:
in shadow	in substance
in pictures	in person
in type	in truth
in ritual	in reality
latent	patent
prophesied	present
implicitly revealed	explicitly revealed

2. Recognized by CHRIST

- a. Luke 24:27  
27 And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.
- b. Luke 24:44  
44 Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."
- c. John 5:39  
39 "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me;
- d. of 1,800 verses in the New Testament that are attributed to CHRIST, 180 come from the Old Testament.

3. Recognized by PAUL

- a. I Cor. 10:6 - "...happened as examples for us..."  
10:11 - "Now these things ... were written for our instruction... 11
- b. Romans 15:4 - "Now whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction..."

B. The Bible viewed as a whole

1. Christ the Theme of the BIBLE

- a. (J. Sidlow Baxter)
  - Old Testament - Anticipation of Christ
  - Gospels - Manifestation of Christ
  - Acts - Proclamation of Christ
  - Epistles - Explanation of Christ
  - Revelation - Consummation of Christ
- b. (Norman Geisler, et. al.)
  - LAW/Foundation for Christ/Downward Look
  - HISTORY/Preparation for Christ/outward Look

- POETRY/Aspiration for Christ/Upward Look
- PROPHECY/Expectation for Christ/Forward Look
- GOSPELS/Manifestation of Christ/Downward Look
- ACTS/Propagation of Christ/Outward Look
- EPISTLES/Interpretation and Application of Christ/Upward Look
- REVELATION/Consummation in Christ/Forward Look

## 2. A comparison of Genesis and Revelation (Lehman Strauss)

### Genesis - the commencement of heaven and earth (1:1)

“1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

### Revelation - the consummation of heaven and earth (21:1)

“1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer {any} sea.”

### Genesis - the entrance of sin and the curse (3:1-19)

“6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make {one} wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

14 And the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, Cursed are you . . .

16 To the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth. . .

17 Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you . . .”

### Revelation - the end of sin and the curse (21:27; 22:3)

“27 and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

. . . 3 And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him. . .”

### Genesis - the dawn of Satan and his activities (3:1-7)

“1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman. . .”

### Revelation - the doom of Satan and his activities (20:10)

“10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

### Genesis - the tree of life is relinquished (2:9; 3:24)

“9 And out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

. . . 3:24 So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life.”

### Revelation - the tree of life is regained (22:2)

“2 in the middle of its street. And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve {kinds of} fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

### Genesis - death makes its entrance (2:16-17; 5:5)

“16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and

evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.”  
 “. . . 5 So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died.”

**Revelation - death makes its exit (21:4)**

“4 and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be {any} death; there shall no longer be {any} mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

**Genesis - Sorrow begins (3:16)**

“16 To the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, In pain you shall bring forth children; Yet your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.” 17 Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. 18 “Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you shall eat the plants of the field; 19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread . . .”

**Revelation - Sorrow is banished (21:4)**

“4 and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be {any} death; there shall no longer be {any} mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

3. In the work and person of Christ there is a fulfillment of the Levitical Feasts:

<b>THE LEVITICAL FEASTS</b>	
The Feast (Leviticus 23)	The Fulfillment in Christ
Passover (vv. 4-5)	The death of Christ (I Cor. 5:7)
Unleavened Bread (vv. 6-8)	Holy Walk (I Cor. 5:8)
First Fruits (vv. 9-14)	Resurrection (I Cor. 15:23)
Pentecost (vv. 15-22)	Outpouring of Spirit (Acts 1:57 2:4)
Trumpets (vv. 23-25)	Israel’s regathering (Matt. 24:31)
Atonement (vv. 26-32)	Cleansing by Christ (Rom. 11:26)
Tabernacles (vv. 33-44)	Rest and Reunion with Christ (Zech.14:16-18)

4. In the Old Testament there are over 300 references to the Messiah that were fulfilled in Christ. (See Evidence That Demands A Verdict by Josh McDowell)

- His titles (Son of God, Immanuel, Prophet, Priest, King)
- His lineage (seed of Abraham, son of Isaac, line of Jesse, tribe of Judah)
- His birthplace (Bethlehem)
- His pre-existence ("from the days of eternity" "before all things")
- His ministry (healing, proclaiming the gospel)
- His resurrection (not abandon)
- His ascension (ascended on high)
- His position (seated at the right hand of GOD)
- His betrayal (by a friend, for 30 pieces of silver, thrown down in the house of the LORD, money used to buy a potter's field)
- His trial (spat upon, mocked)
- His crucifixion (hands and feet pierced, crucified with thieves) etc., etc.