

THE BIBLE - most amazing book of all!

The word 'Bible' is derived from the Greek word 'Biblia', which means "books" and refers to the sacred writings of Judaism and Christianity. The Bible consists of 66 books and has two parts. The first part is called the 'Old Testament' by Christians. It consists of 39 books of the sacred writings of the Jewish people which were written originally in Hebrew, except for some portions in Aramaic.

The second part is called the 'New Testament'. It consists of 27 books that was composed in Greek and records the history and teachings of Jesus Christ and His apostles and the beginnings of Christianity. It is translated in whole or in part into more than 2,300 languages. Apart from its impact on the personal faith and lives of hundreds of millions of people and on both believers who lived before and after Jesus Christ for over more than 3000 years - and its impact on Christianity, its general influence on religion, history and culture, including literature and the other arts, is incalculable.

The Bible is the best-selling book of all time. Bible portions are available in more than 2,300 languages, representing one third of the languages and dialects of the world. The complete Bible is available in at least 414 languages and the New Testament in at least 1068 languages.

Interesting 'Fast Facts' about the Bible!

1.How many books are in the Bible?

The Bible contains 66 books, divided among the Old and New Testaments.

2.How many books are in the Old Testament?

There are 39 books in the Old Testament.

3.How many books are in the New Testament?

There are 27 books in the New Testament.

4.What does 'testament' mean?

Testament means 'covenant', 'contract' or 'solemn agreement'.

5. The Bible was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by over 40 different authors from all walks of life: shepherds, armours, tent-makers, physicians, fishermen, priests, philosophers and kings. Despite these differences in occupation and the span of years it took to write it (1500 years), the Bible is an extremely cohesive and unified book.

6.When was the Bible written?

It was written over a period of some 1,500 years, from around 1450 B.C. (the time of Moses) to about 100 A.D. (following the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ).

7.What is the oldest book in the Old Testament?

Most scholars agree that Job is the oldest book in the Bible, written by an unknown Israelite about 1500 B.C. Some believe that the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) contains the oldest books in the Bible, written between 1446 and 1406 B.C.

8.What is the youngest book in the Old Testament?

The book of Malachi, written about 400 B.C.

9.What is the oldest book of the New Testament?

Probably the book of James, written as early as A.D. 45.

10.What is the youngest book in the New Testament?

The Book of Revelation is the youngest book of the New Testament, written 95 A.D.

11.What languages was the Bible written in?

The Bible was written in three languages: The Old Testament in Hebrew and Aramaic and the New Testament in Koine Greek.

12. When was the Bible canonised?

The entire New Testament as we know it today, was canonised before the year 375 A.D. The Old Testament had previously been canonised long before the advent of Christ.

13. What does "canon" and canonised mean?

'Canon' is derived from the Greek word 'Kanon,' signifying a measuring rod. Thus, to have the Bible 'canonised' meant that it had been measured by the standard or test of divine inspiration and authority. It became the collection of books or writings accepted by the apostles and leadership of the early Christian church as a basis for Christian belief. It is the standard by which all Christians throughout the ages live and worship.

14. When was the first translation of the Bible made into English?

1382 A.D., by John Wycliff.

15. When was the Bible printed?

Johannes Gutenberg who invented the 'type mould' for the printing press printed the Bible in 1454 A.D. It was the first book ever printed.

16. What is the oldest almost-complete manuscript of the Bible now in existence?

The Codex Vaticanus, which dates from the first half of the fourth Century. It is located in the library of the Vatican in Rome. There are older fragments of the Bible that are still preserved however-- the oldest being a tiny scrap of the Gospel of John that was found in Egypt, dating back to the beginning of the second century. (It is currently in the Rylands Library in Manchester, England).

17. What is the longest book in the Bible?

The book of Psalms.

18. What is the shortest book in the Bible?

3 John.

19. What is the longest chapter in the Bible?

Psalms 119

20. What is the shortest chapter in the Bible?

Psalms 117

21. Who were the two men in the Bible who never died but were caught up to heaven?

Enoch, who walked with God and was no more (Genesis 5:22-24).
Elijah, who was caught up by a whirlwind into heaven (II Kings 2:11).

22. Who does the Bible say was the meekest man in the Bible (not including Jesus)?

Moses (Numbers 12:3).

23. How many languages has the Bible been translated into?

The Holy Bible has been partially translated into more than 2,300 languages, with countless more small portions translated as well. There also are audio translations for unwritten languages. (This is an enormous amount of translations. In comparison, Shakespeare, considered by many to be the master writer of the English language, has only been translated into 50 languages.) The *2004 Scripture Language Report* of the Bible Society reveals that the Bible in its complete form is now available in 422 languages - an increase of 8 over the previous year. In addition, translations of New Testaments have now been registered in 1,079 languages, compared with 1,068 at the end of 2003.

24. How many translations are used in Africa?

158 complete Bible translations plus 292 translations of the New Testament and 223 portions are used in Africa. This makes the Bible accessible in 673 languages in the continent of Africa

25. How does Africa compare to other regions:

208 languages in Europe (*Africa 673*) with 61 complete European translations and 76 languages in Northern America (*Africa 673*) including 7 complete translations available, provide access to the Bible. The Bible is also available in 3 constructed (artificially made) languages. In Asia 223 portions, 236 New Testament and 130 complete Bible translations amount to the Bible being available in 589 Asian languages. The African continent has more Bible translations available than any other region

26. Is the Bible still the best-selling book in the world?

Yes, indeed!

27. What is the most loved verse in the Bible?

John 3:16

28. Does God speak through the Bible today?

Why not read it prayerfully and find out whether this is so, for yourself!

The website of the South African Bible Society can be found at www.biblesociety.co.za

The King James Version:

The King James Version is still the most widely used translation in the English language. King James, King of Great Britain, Ireland and France commissioned it and the translation was completed in 1611. The complete title page read as follows:

"THE HOLY BIBLE, Conteyning the Old Testament, and the New: Newly Translated out of the Originall tongues: & with the former Translations diligently compared and revised, by his Majesties Special Commandment. Appointed to be read in Churches. Imprinted at London by Robert Barker, Printer to the Kings most Excellent Majestie. IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1611."

Historic Background of the KJV:

As the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603) was coming to a close, we find a draft for an act of the British Parliament for a new version of the Bible: "An act for the reducing of diversities of bibles now extant in the English tongue to one settled vulgar translated from the original." One of the first things done by the new king, King James, was the calling of the Hampton Court Conference in January of 1604 "for the hearing, and for the determining, things pretended to be amiss in the church." Here were assembled bishops, clergymen, and professors, along with four Puritan divines, to consider the complaints of the Puritans. Although Bible revision was not on the agenda, the Puritan president of Corpus Christi College, John Reynolds, "moved his Majesty, that there might be a new translation of the Bible, because those which were allowed in the reigns of Henry the eighth, and Edward the sixth, were corrupt and not answerable to the truth of the Original."

The king rejoined that he:

"Could never yet see a Bible well translated in English, but I wish some special pains were taken for an uniform translation, which should be done by the best learned men in both Universities, then reviewed by the Bishops, presented to the Privy Council, lastly ratified by the Royal authority, to be read in the whole Church, and none other."

Accordingly, a resolution came forth:

"That a translation be made of the whole Bible, as consonant as can be to the original Hebrew and Greek; and this to be set out and printed, without any marginal notes, and only to be used in all churches of England in time of divine service".

The work was completed in 1611. Since then it remains the most read and preferred English translation.

The King James version of the Bible can be read online at:

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/kjv/browse.html>

More about the King James Version (KJV)

Total Number of Verses (KJV)

1. The Holy Bible-- 31,173

Old Testament -- 23,214

3. New Testament-- 7,959

Total Number of Words (KJV)

- 1.The Holy Bible-- 773,692
- 2.Old Testament -- 592,439
- 3.New Testament- - 181,253

IS THE BIBLE STILL READ TODAY?

About 98% of all people that say they believe in Jesus Christ have never read the Bible through once. 90% of all "Ministers of the Word" have never read the Bible through once. Many are students of the Christian faith, but they do not know the Author of the Holy Bible personally.

What about you? Have you read His Book? Do you know the Author? Does He speak to you? **Why not start reading and find out for yourself!**

The Bible Society, translator, publisher and distributor of the Bible world wide, needs financial and prayer support for this blessed ministry.

If you experience the Bible as God's gift to you, enabling you to know Jesus Christ the Lord, to grow Spiritually and hear the Lord speaks into your life, and if you are grateful for this blessing, why not consider supporting the Bible Society of South Africa on a regular basis?

Each donation of R20,00 enables the Society to place another Bible at an affordable price in the home of a family without a Bible. What a privilege it could be to know, that I am instrumental that the Lord speaks into the lives of another family, this month and every month of the year! *Debit order facilities are available.*

Discuss this with your local Minister, or visit the website of the Bible Society of South Africa:

www.biblesociety.co.za