

What Is the Bible?

The Bible—which is also called **Sacred Scripture**—tells the story of the loving relationship between God and humankind. Through the sacred writings, God reveals to humankind the truth about God and God's will for us.

The Bible is a **library of books** that is **divided into two parts**:

- the Old Testament (before Jesus)
- the New Testament (after Jesus' birth)

Each part consists of a **collection of books** that are **grouped into** these **sections**:

Pentateuch

The Pentateuch (five books) tells about God's chosen people, the Israelites. You will read about their early stories, their history, and the laws God gave them.

Historical Books

The historical books pick up Israelite history from 1250 BC to 100 BC. You will find accounts of the Israelites' settling the promised land, the rise and fall of their kings, their dispersion into exile, and their eventual return to the promised land.

Biblical Novellas

The biblical novellas are three books that contain entertaining stories told to instruct and encourage the people of God during critical times. They illustrate truths that transcend history.

Wisdom Books

The wisdom and poetry books are a collection of hymns, poems, proverbs, and stories. They use imaginative language to make their points.

Prophets

The prophets are people who speak God's word. In these books, you will find comfort and promise, and you will be challenged to act with justice and mercy.

Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles

The gospels (good news) focus on the person and teachings of Jesus.

The Acts of the Apostles shows how the Church was formed and how the first Christians spread the good news. These books cover the time period from 5 BC to the early AD 60s.

Letters and Revelation

The letters, or epistles (written by Paul, his followers, and other disciples), are actual letters that describe the new Christian faith, give advice, and offer words of hope. Revelation is a collection of mystical visions written to encourage the early Christians who were being persecuted.