



THE BASICS

INTRODUCTION

TO

BIBLE



FIRST EDITION

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**MOUNTAIN BIBLE
INSTITUTE**

MOLD ME I SHAPE THE WORLD

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Man is separated from God. Originally, man and God had fellowship with each other. God and Adam walked together in the Garden of Eden. Then Adam and Eve both sinned and were separated from God's presence. The Bible teaches in the first three chapters of Romans that all men, whether born in a non-Christian family or Christian family, have sinned. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"

(Romans 3:23 NIV).

Man desperately tries to build his own bridges across to heaven. The most common way that man tries to get to heaven is through his own good works. But even our good deeds are as dirty rags in the sight of a Holy God (Isaiah 64:6).

Other men try through ethics or good morals to reach God. But generally man does not live up to his own standard of values, much less God's standard of righteousness. Man is not able to keep the "Ten Commandments" which are only the elementary laws of God. The problem lies in man's deceitful heart (Jeremiah 17:9).

God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to be born as a man. Jesus is the Son of Man born of Mary, and the Son of God conceived through the Holy Spirit. He is not part man and part God, but 100% man and 100% God. In theology He is called "Very God" and "Very Man." There is but one qualified to become our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.



MOLD ME I SHAPE THE WORLD

Contents

Page	Main
02	Author's Note
08	Introduction to Bible
09	What is the Bible
12	The Old Testament
13	The New Testament
13	Version of the Bible
14	Reading the Bible
15	Testaments
15	The Section of the Bible
16	Books of the Bible
17	Old Testament Books
17	New Testament Books
Part One : Starting at the Beginning	
17	Ten commandments
17	Four Gospels
17	Twelve Disciples of Jesus
18	Structure of the Bible
20	How the Bible was written and by Who
22	The Authors
22	The Big Picture of the Bible
23	Where Should I start
Part Two: Is the Bible True?	
25	How Did We Get the Bible?
27	Accuracy of Transmission
28	How Do I Know it is True?
30	Old Testament Books of the Bible
36	New Testament Books of the Bible



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BIBLE EDUCATION

Introducing the Bible

In this first session of the course, we will look at some background information about this fascinating book. It is a book of amazing diversity: read the Bible and you will find a mixture of enchanting history, beautiful poetry, remarkable prophecy, great wisdom, simple proverbs and difficult teaching. No one can understand modern society without understanding the history and message of the Bible. It is a holy book for Christians, Jews and Moslems and it has played a major part in the development of world civilisation and social values. The Bible has played a key role in influencing the world. Whether you believe it or not, you cannot ignore it.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

The Bible was originally written in the Hebrew and Greek languages. The “Good News Bible - Today’s English Version” is an English translation of the Bible. There are many good English translations of the Bible. The translators of “Today’s English Version” made a special effort to use standard English that would be easily understood by those who have learned English as a second language.

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What is the Bible?

The Bible is a collection of books used by Christians. “Bible” is from the Greek “biblia” which means “little books”. It is separated into two main sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament (sometimes also called the Old and New Covenant). The Old Testament has 39 books, which were all written before the common era. The oldest were written about 1500 B.C. while the most recent ones were likely written before 300 B.C. The New Testament consists of 27 books that were all written in the first century A.D. Many of the books have odd-sounding names because they are named for their authors or for the main person in the book.

Christians believe the Bible to be the Word of God - written by men but given divine inspiration by God. They believe God speaks to people through His actions and words written in the Bible. Though the books were written over a span of thousands of years by over 40 authors, they still exist in complete compatibility with each other.

If you turn to the first page of one of the books in the “Good News Bible” (like the book of Genesis on page 1), you will first see an “Introduction” and an “Outline of Contents.” These were added by the translators to help you understand the book more easily. They were not in the original book.

The actual book starts just after the “Outline of Contents.” If you read the book, you will see that each book is divided into chapters a page or two long. The chapters are all numbered. Each chapter is divided into short verses a few lines long. Each verse is also numbered. The books originally were not divided into chapters and verses. The chapter and verse numbers were added later to make it easier to find things in the Bible.

When quoting something from the Bible, people will identify the location of the passage by book, chapter, and verse. You can look up the location of the book in the table of contents to find a page number for chapter 1. Then you look forward in the book to find the right chapter and verse. The page numbers start over from 1 in the New Testament, so be sure to notice whether the book you are looking for is in the Old or the New Testament.

The following verses describe some of the important things that God tells us in the Bible. Practice what we have just learned about finding passages in the Bible by looking up the verses.

Romans 1:28-31 (page 145 in the New Testament) describes what people are like without God.

Acts 17:24-28 (page 132, NT) describes how God intended things to be.

Isaiah 59:1-2 (page 577, OT) and Romans 6:23 (page 149, NT) talk about the results of man's disobedience to God.

Isaiah 53:6 (page 574, OT), Romans 5:6-11 (page 148, NT), and Romans 10:9-13 (page 152, NT) describe God's plan for bringing people back into a close relationship with himself.

In the advertising for the class, we mentioned that the Bible is not a book of European origin. That is a common misconception because many people think of the Bible as being Catholic from Rome, or as translated by Martin Luther in Germany, or translated by commission of King James in the early 1600s in England. But the Bible came out of the Middle East.

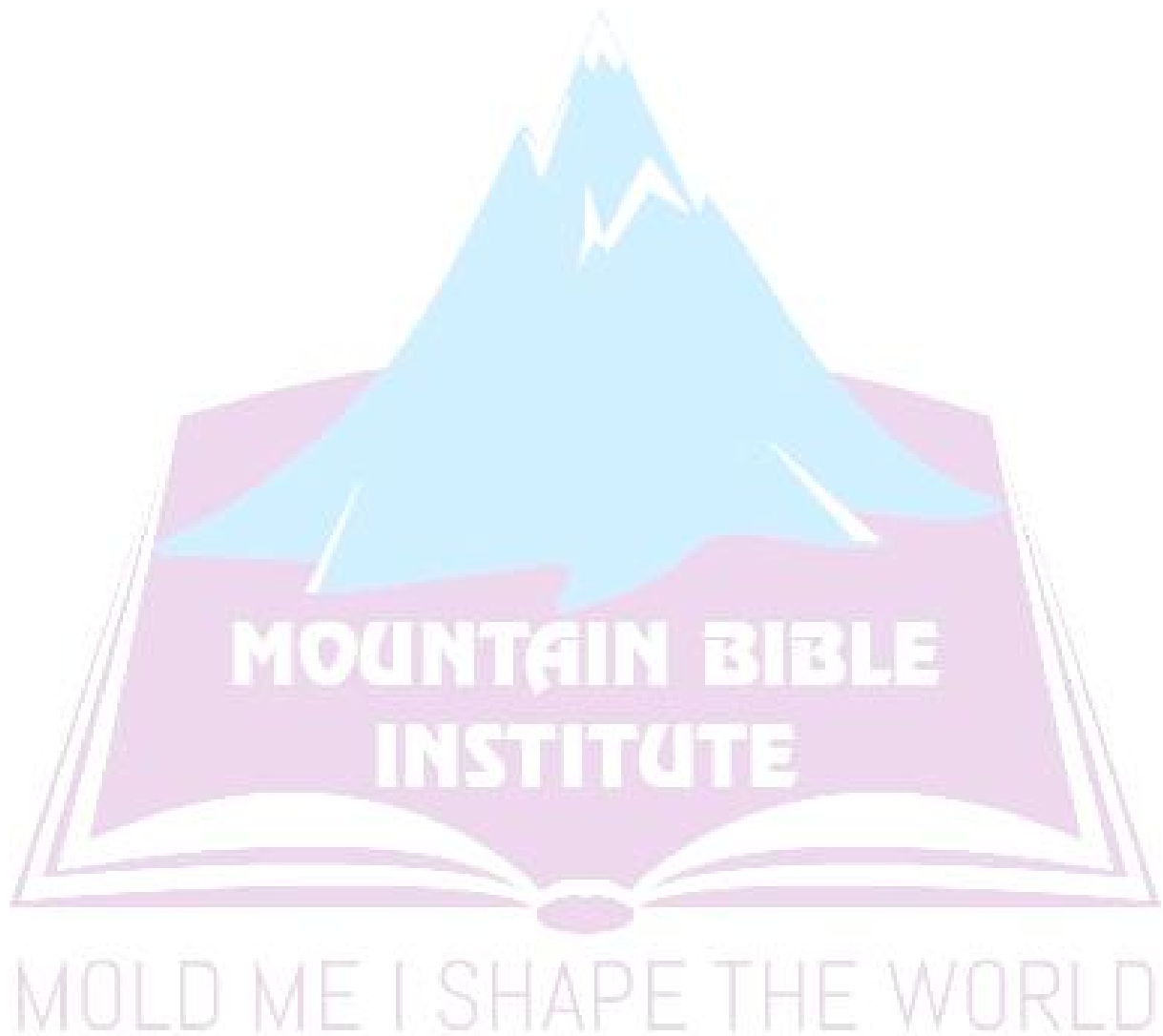
But the Bible is not a “white man's” book, as it might be called. Why?

1. It was written by Middle Eastern authors who wrote mostly in Israel. Later, some of the New Testament was written by Hebrew Christians as they traveled throughout the Mediterranean world. The apostle Paul who wrote half of the New Testament books was a Jew born in south central Turkey (known as the region of Cilicia at the time).
2. Many manuscripts of the Bible that give us evidence of what the original text included are of African origin. Most manuscripts are of Mediterranean origin as they came from countries that surround the Mediterranean on the north, east, and south.
3. The Bible includes black people in it. Simon called Niger is one who was almost certainly a black person (Acts 13:1).
4. People of many ethnicities are found in Scripture, including Egyptians, Ethiopians, Persians, and others. The Queen of Sheba is mentioned in 1 Kings 10; scholars believe she was from either Yemen or Ethiopia, and some tie her to Egypt.

The Bible was written over a span of about 1500 years.

1. The famous leader of Israel named Moses wrote the first five books (Pentateuch) of the Bible around 1400 B.C. as the nation of Israel moved back into Canaan from Egypt.

2. The New Testament books were written after the life and death of Jesus Christ, between 45 to about 95 A.D.
3. The apostle John wrote the book called Revelation sometime in the 90s A.D.



The Old Testament

“Testament” and “Covenant” are both words meaning “agreement”. The Old and New Testaments are about an agreement established by God describing the relationship between God and humans. The Old Testament deals with God’s covenant with the nation of Israel. It has books of history, law, and prophecy.

The first five books of the Old Testament are sometimes called the Pentateuch or the Torah. The Torah is significant in Judaism because it is seen as books revealed to Moses by God. These books are about the creation of the world, the early Israelite history, and the Jewish laws. As Christianity developed from Judaism, these books are important to Christians as well.

The Old Testament then has books relating to Israel’s rulers and history. These books talk about Israel before it had kings, the appointment of kings, the division of the kingdoms, and the later conquests by other nations.

The last section of the Old Testament is the prophets. The prophets were men chosen by God to deliver God’s message to Israel. Often they condemned the Israelites for their behavior, telling them to live in ways pleasing to God. They also looked forward to a coming servant and king who would save his people, whom they called the “Messiah.” There are over 300 prophecies about the Messiah, all written hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus, and Jesus fulfilled each one!

Much of the Old Testament is about God’s history with people. It shows how the relationship between God and men was constantly being broken because people sinned and disobeyed God’s laws. The Dead Sea Scrolls are the oldest surviving Bible manuscripts known to exist and contain every book of the Old Testament except Esther.

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The New Testament

The New Testament also talks about God's relationship with people, but this time it is a relationship built upon grace, now law. Grace comes through Jesus Christ - "Christ" means "Messiah" - who came as the fulfillment of the prophecies to pay the penalty required for breaking God's law. Jesus died and took the punishment of God's wrath in place of all humanity, then rose from the dead after three days to show God's superiority over death.

The first four books of the New Testament are the gospels, which means "good news". The good news is the news of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. These books each describe what Jesus did and said when he was here on earth.

The book of Acts immediately follows the gospels and is about Jesus' followers after Jesus returns to heaven. It describes what Jesus' followers did and how they spread his teachings across the Mediterranean area.

The rest of the books are letters from Jesus' followers to Christian churches or to other Christians. They describe how to understand the gospel of Jesus and how to apply it to our own lives. The only exception is the book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, which describes a vision by a follower of Jesus about the ending of the world.

Versions of the Bible

The Bible was originally written in Hebrew and Greek, but has been translated into many different versions - it is the most published book in the world! Because of this, it can be confusing when you try to start reading. The Good News Bible - Today's English Version is a translation that has standard English more easily understood by those who learned English as a second language. The Bible has also been translated into every major language.

Reading the Bible

The books of the Bible are divided into chapters and verses. Some Bible versions include topical headings before sections of verses, such as “The Greatest Commandment” or “David Anointed As King.” While these can be very helpful when reading, they were not originally part of the Bible. This is important to remember when studying the Bible. You always want to look at the surrounding verses in order to get the full context of what you are reading.

People quote from the Bible by using book, chapter, and verse. For example, John 3:17 is the book of John (in the New Testament), chapter 3, verse 17.

The Bible is meant to be read, understood, and studied. A good place to begin understanding the Bible as a whole would be to read one of the accounts of Jesus. The Gospel According to Mark and The Gospel According to John are both good places to start. Write down any questions you have when reading and ask a Christian about them later. You also might find it helpful to join a Bible study with a group of students. This would allow you to read the Bible and ask your questions with other people who are also asking questions and finding answers.

However you choose to do it, come to read with a heart ready to learn and look for truth. John Stott, author of Basic Christianity, suggests a prayer for those getting ready to read the Bible that goes like this:

“God I’ m an honest seeker after truth. I don’ t know if you exist, but if you do, please reveal yourself to me as you are. Show me if Jesus is your Son and Savior of the World. If you bring this conviction to my mind, I will trust Jesus as my Savior and follow him as my Lord.”

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Testaments

The bookcase shows the 66 books of the Bible divided into two sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. A testament was a covenant or an agreement. So the two parts of a Bible simply record two covenants, each between God and men.

The Bible is the collection of books used by Christians. Christians believe that God speaks to men through His actions and words as they are written down in the Bible.

The word “Bible” comes from the Greek word “biblia” which means “little books”. The Bible is actually a library of 66 books written by a least 40 different authors over a period of at least 1500 years. The oldest book was written about 1500 B.C. or earlier. The last was written about A.D. 100.

Good News Bible - Today’ s English Version

Sections of The Bible

See if you can find the “Table of Contents” in your Bible. You will notice in the contents that the Bible is divided into two main sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament has 39 books. The New Testament has 27 books.

A “testament” is another word for covenant, an agreement established by God setting out the relationship between God and human beings. In the Old Testament (or old covenant), the relationship was based on law. God chose a people for Himself and gave them His law. The people he chose was the nation of Israel, named for one of their ancestors. The history books in the Old Testament show that the relationship based on law failed because people always sin and disobey God’ s law.

In the New Testament (the new covenant), the relationship between God and human beings is based on grace (God’ s free acceptance of us) and peace. Grace and peace come through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God himself come to live among men. Jesus died in our place to pay the penalty required for breaking God’ s law. After three days, he rose up from the dead to give us eternal life.

Books of the Bible

Look at the list of names of the books in the Old and New Testaments. Some of the names will sound strange to you and be hard to pronounce. That's OK. Some of them are hard for Americans to say also. Many of the books are named for their authors. Other books are letters named for the people or groups to whom they were first sent. Other books are named for their subjects.

Old Testament Books

The contents of the books also vary. In the Old Testament there are books of history about the people that God called government records, moral and religious law, poetry, songs, and wise sayings.

There were also books written by prophets. Prophets were men chosen by God to deliver his message. They asked people to live in ways pleasing to God. They also looked ahead to the coming of a servant and a king who would save his people. A special word used for this person was the "Messiah," the one chosen to be king. The last Old Testament prophet wrote his book about 400 years before Jesus lived.

New Testament Books

The New Testament starts out with the Gospel - four books, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, named for the men who wrote them. Gospel means "good news." The Gospel describes the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ is the Greek word that means the "Messiah," the servant king looked for by the prophets of the Old Testament.

The next book in the New Testament, Acts, describes the acts of Jesus' followers following Jesus' return to heaven. The other New Testament books are all letters from Jesus' followers to early Christian churches or other Christians. These letters help us understand the good news of Jesus Christ and how to apply it in our own lives.

Part 1: Starting at the Beginning

10 Commandments

1. Have no other gods in front of or in place of the God of the Bible.
2. Make no idols.
3. Do not use the name of the Lord in a wrong way (without respect, for example).
4. Keep the Sabbath set apart by resting on it. It is the seventh day, because God created in six and rested the seventh.
5. Honor your father and mother, so that you may live long.
6. Do not murder.
7. Do not commit adultery.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not bear false witness/lie.
10. Do not covet.

Four Gospels

1. Matthew
2. Mark
3. Luke
4. John

Twelve Disciples of Jesus

1. Peter, son of Jonah
2. James, son of Zebedee
3. John, son of Zebedee
4. Andrew
5. Philip
6. Bartholomew
7. Thomas
8. Matthew the tax collector, also known as Levi
9. James the son of Alphaeus (the Less)
10. Thaddaeus
11. Simon the Zealot (a political faction)
12. Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus

There were actually two others, so “twelve” isn’t the whole story, even though it is the common way to speak of the list of apostles. The others were:

13. Matthias (chosen after Judas was gone)
14. Saul, also known as Paul, who was commissioned later

Introducing the Class

This is designed to be a stand-alone class that can be followed by other classes, as the audience’s interests may direct.

Our goals today are as follows:

1. To understand the basic structure of the Bible.
2. To understand where and when the Bible was written.
3. To understand how the Bible was written and by whom.
4. To have a basic idea of the story-line or “big picture” of the Bible.
5. To answer some of your questions about the Bible.

Introducing the Teachers

MBI have best and learned Teachers.

Structure of the Bible

1. The Bible is a book that is a collection of 66 smaller books.
2. We sometimes call the Bible by another name: the “Scriptures.” This word means “sacred writings.”
3. The Bible is divided into two parts called testaments. Think of the word testament as a synonym for the word “covenant.” A covenant is an agreement or contract between God and His people, just like you might be in a marriage covenant or have a contract with someone about some matter. The Old Testament has 39 books, and the New Testament has 27 books.
4. The Old Testament is the Hebrew Bible of the Jewish people. That is their entire Bible because they do not accept the New Testament. The New Testament builds on and completes the Jewish faith.
5. We abbreviate Old Testament and New Testament as OT and NT as shorthand.
6. In the Jewish approach to the Old Testament, they see the Old Testament divided into three segments: Law, Prophets, and Writings.
 - a) Law = Torah

- b) Prophets = Nebi' im
- c) Writings = Kethubim
- d) So the whole Hebrew Bible is known by the acronym TNK, TaNaK.

7. Christians typically see the sections of the Old Testament this way:

- a) The Pentateuch - the first five books, also known as the Law.
- b) The Historical Books - the next 12 books.
- c) The Poetic and Wisdom books - the next five books.
- d) The Major Prophets - the next five books.
- e) The Minor Prophets - the last 12 books.
- f) Detail: The Major Prophets are “major” because they wrote longer books; the Minor Prophets are “minor” because they wrote generally shorter books.

8. The New Testament has four sections:

- a) The Gospels - the first four books.
- b) History of the Early Church - the book called “Acts”.
- c) The letters of the apostle Paul - the next 13 or 14 books.
- d) The general letters, the last 8 books.
- e) Detail: some folks will include one of Paul’s letters in the group of general letters, and some will separate the last book, Revelation, into its own category.

9. The order of the books is not chronological as we might hope. The sections are generally arranged in chronological order as to the events they describe, but the books within the sections are not. There is just too much going on throughout the events covered in the Bible to make an easier linear arrangement of the material, so there is some complexity that we have to just deal with.

- a) Detail: The Hebrew Bible arranges the books in a different order than the Protestant Bible. The major and minor prophets are moved forward to be after 2 Kings, and the order ends with Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and finally 1 & 2 Chronicles.

10. For purposes of studying the Bible and looking things up, it is helpful to memorize the order of the books. Because there are many translations of the Bible into English, it is not really possible for me to say, “turn to page such and such in your Bible.”

11. Many centuries after the Bible was written, students of the Bible found it convenient to divide the books into chapters and then further into verses. The modern chapters divisions have been used since Cardinal Stephen Langton marked chapters in 1205 A.D., and verse divisions were in place since 1551 (NT) and 1571 (OT), thanks to Robert Estienne (Stephanus).
12. We identify a particular location in the Bible with its address in the form Book Chapter: verse or Book Chapter: verse-verse 2. For example, one of the most well-known verses in the Bible is at the address “John 3:16.” Another portion that tells about how one can obtain eternal life is at the address “Ephesians 2:8-9.” Some books are so short that they only have a single chapter. In that case, we can omit the chapter number and just say, for instance, Jude 17. That is equivalent to saying Jude 1:17.
13. The Catholic Bible has seven additional books in its Old Testament. We call these apocrypha and do not believe they are of Biblical quality because of their content and style. The names of these books are Tobit, Judith, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch.

How the Bible was Written and by Whom

1. The Old Testament was written mostly in the Hebrew language, and a few small parts in a related language called Aramaic. Therefore, we must read it in an English translation.
2. The New Testament was written in a type of Greek called Koine Greek—the common language of the people throughout the Roman Empire.
3. The texts of the Bible were written by hand and then copied manually by scribes until the invention of the printing press around 1440 A.D. by Johannes Gutenberg.
4. It is common to hear people say that the Bible was written by man just like any other book. This is only partly true because the authorship of the Bible is actually two-fold: God worked with human authors so that they would convey in the original manuscripts precisely what He wanted them to say. Christians call this divine superintendence of the words of the Bible by the technical term

inspiration. We can study that idea in detail another time. But what we want to grasp for now is that Christians truly believe and teach that the words of the Bible—a good translation of the Bible—are the very words of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13). The Bible is God’s words to man. The Scripture has dual-authorship.

There are about 40 human authors of the Bible. About 30 of them wrote in the Old Testament. They include:

1. Moses, a Hebrew raised and educated in the palace of the Egyptian Pharaoh, turned sheep herder, and then leader of a nation of several million people.
2. Other leaders of Israel such as Joshua (successor to Moses), and later kings probably had material written and archived which was later used to compose the history of Israel.
3. The Hebrew King David and his son King Solomon wrote much of the books called Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes around 1000–900 B.C.
4. Records of Israel’s history and conquest of their homeland were kept, and compiled at times that are not exactly known to us. Much of that work was completed by the time of the priest Ezra (480–440 B.C.).
5. Israel’s prophets spoke many messages to the nation and her neighbors, and wrote some of those down. One of them was Isaiah. Another was Jeremiah, a priest. Then there was Ezekiel, another priest who was about 20 years younger than Jeremiah. Contemporary to Ezekiel was Daniel who wrote a short but significant book that predicts the general course of world history. These authors wrote during the period 700–500 B.C.
6. Then there are the minor prophets, 12 of them: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. These books were written between the 800s B.C. and 400s B.C.

The authors also include eight men who wrote the New Testament:

1. Matthew, a tax collector turned Christian minister.
2. Mark, an associate of the apostle Paul, who as a young man witnessed the ministry of Jesus and particularly his betrayal, arrest, death, and resurrection.
3. Luke, a physician and accomplished historian. He was a travel companion to the apostle Paul. He wrote the gospel that is named after him, and also the early history of the church called Acts.
4. John, a young man who was a follower of Jesus during His time on earth, a witness of His miracles, death, and resurrection. He wrote a gospel, 3 short letters, and the last book of the Bible called Revelation.
5. Paul, from the Jewish tribe of Benjamin, was before his conversion to Christianity a Pharisee. This means he belonged to a conservative politico-religious party of the Jewish people who believed in strict adherence to the Old Testament. They went beyond what was written into all kinds of minutia. He was very zealous, well educated, and even was a persecutor of early Christians.
6. James, the oldest half-brother of Jesus (Mark 6:3) wrote a letter to Jewish Christians.
7. Peter, a fisherman, wrote two letters to Christian friends which are Scripture.
8. Jude, another half-brother of Jesus.
9. The author of the book of Hebrews is not known. It may be Paul, Luke, or possibly a man named Apollos who was an eloquent Christian preacher brought up in Alexandria, Egypt.

The Big Picture of the Bible

The Bible covers the very beginning of time through eternity future. It gives God's perspective on human history: where we come from, where we are going, how to know God, get to heaven, why death occurs, and many other things. It is important to note that the Bible is a book of actual historical events and facts in addition to its teaching of spiritual matters. The spiritual and the historical are intermingled in such a way that one could not be separated from the other without destroying the whole.

The central theme of the Bible has to do with God's kingdom. Namely, God created a realm for His subjects to live in and enjoy perfect fellowship

with Him, but they rebelled and then received the consequences of that rebellion. Subsequently, God began a restoration program in which His Son Jesus Christ would redeem fallen humanity and restore humanity to a perfect relationship with Him forever.

Where Should I Start Reading the Bible?

It would be good to read the entire first book, Genesis, and then the second book, Exodus, at least through chapter 24, and then read chapter 32.1 This will give you a good start in understanding things from the beginning.

You can also read the Gospel of John as a good starting point into the New Testament. Actually, any of the four gospels is a great starting point.

After that, you can read through the remainder of the books. It is generally good to do so in the order they are found in the Bible. It will take a couple readings through to start to get things organized in your mind, but it will be well worth your time!



Part 2: Is the Bible True?

Why Don't We Avoid Pork and Shellfish?

Similarly, can we eat a milk product with meat in the same sitting? Some have ridiculed Christians for not following the dietary laws of Jews. We find the answer by reading the passages about diet in their context: God gave them to the Jewish people for a limited time from about 1400 A.D. until the time of Christ. Those dietary laws never were given to Gentiles, and they do not apply to Christians today. We can eat a ham sandwich with cheese without being hypocrites in our belief of the Bible.

Truth or Fiction?

Now, to our question for this class: is the Bible true? This question is a bit controversial in our postmodern age. Can anything be "true"? Or are some things true for some people some of the time, and false for other people at the same time?

We believe there are things that are true, and things that are false, for all people, at all times, and in all places. For example:

- True: Sunlight takes about 8.3 minutes to travel from the sun to the earth.
- False: The moon is made of cheese.
- True: $2 + 2 = 4$.
- False: $2 + 2 = 5$. That answer is close, but it is still wrong.
- True: God exists, God created everything, and God has revealed Himself in the Bible

These are also all true, like any truth that we all hold to be obvious, like $2+2 = 4$. But not everyone accepts those facts as true.

But to understand the question "Is the Bible true?" we have to understand its origin and transmission down to our day, and then consider how we ourselves can know it is true.

How Did We Get the Bible?

1. Revelation. This is the starting point of God's communication to man. It is a supernatural expression of God's will to mankind using a variety of means. Nature, conscience, dreams, visions, direct speech, and the Bible are among the means God has used to disclose Himself and His plan to mankind.
2. Inspiration. Inspiration is a miracle by which God through the Holy Spirit superintended the action of the human authors of the Bible so that in their writing of His revelation, they did not err, omit, or add anything to the words God wanted recorded in the original manuscripts of Scripture. Inspiration applies to the process of writing or "reducing God's word to paper" and to the result of that writing. Inspiration applies to the very words of the Bible, and to every word of the Bible.
3. Preservation and Transmission. The Bible was copied by hand in the early years—in fact, for the first 2800 years of its existence. We have thousands of manuscripts of the Bible or portions thereof, which outnumber the manuscripts of any other ancient literature by orders of magnitude. Only since the printing press in 1440 A.D. have we had printed manuscripts that can be duplicated in large numbers with little, if any, variation between them. God promised to preserve his Word, not miraculously, but providentially. This does not mean that all of its books are available at all times to all people (), but it does mean that the Bible is generally available to humanity. There are no lost books.
4. Canonicity. It took some time for the church as a whole to recognize all the books that belong in the Bible. The process by which this recognition became formalized is called canonicity. The list of books so recognized is called the canon. The Biblical books were "canonical" from the moment they were written, but the process of recognition and acceptance took a bit longer. People did not just uncritically accept any book that came along purporting to be Biblical.

Of the 27 NT books, 20 have been almost universally accepted by Christians as Biblical from the beginning. The other 7 are the following, along with questions that caused them to be books which were "spoken against."

- Hebrews - question about authorship
- James - teaching on justification
- 2 Peter - style different than 1 Peter
- 2 & 3 John - arguments about authenticity
- Jude - reference to pseudepigraphal book of Enoch Revelation - premillennial teaching

Of the 39 books in the OT, only five were questioned or doubted. They were:

Ecclesiastes - written from a human perspective; focused on physical pleasure

Song of Solomon - too sensual

Esther - does not mention God

Ezekiel - the size of the temple in Ezek 40-48 is wrong compared to the first temple

Proverbs - some apparent contradictions.

Recognition was granted to books that met certain conditions. They had to be authored by a recognized apostle, or one of the close associates of the apostles. For a NT book, the book had to be universally applicable to the church, even if it was a letter written for a specific occasion. It had to teach correct doctrine, and agree with all the other books. Finally, the book had to be in regular use by the churches. With these qualifications, you soon come to a closed set of books.

For an OT book, it had to be authored by Moses or an accepted prophet, agree with the contents of the Torah, and had to be important for the nation of Israel.

5. Textual criticism. Because the text of the bible had to be hand copied, there were inevitably errors that arose in the copying process. As a result, if you look at 100 representative manuscripts of the same passage, you will undoubtedly find differences between them. Then the question is, "what was the original text?" This is the question that the science of textual criticism answers. "Criticism" is not meant to be negative. It is meant to indicate that discerning judgment has to be made if there are differences in order to ascertain which variations represent the original text. For instance,

if only 1 of the 100 manuscripts disagrees with the other 99, then it is most certainly the case that the 99 have it correct. Now, if you had 100 non representative manuscripts, the single one could be correct and the 99 wrong!

6. Translation. All of the above just brings us a Bible in Greek (NT) or Hebrew (OT). Then we need someone skilled in those languages who is able to translate the text into our mother tongue. In our case, we have a wealth of translations available. In many language groups (more than 1500), there are no portions of the Bible translated into that language. 1.5 billion people in the world are in this boat.
7. Reading. Now that you have a Bible in your own language, you have to actually pick it up off the shelf and open it, and then read it. It does no good if it sits there unused!
8. Interpretation. Finally, when you read the Bible you have to interpret it to extract the meaning of it. There are principles by which this is done to ensure that the God-intended meaning is understood.

Accuracy of Transmission

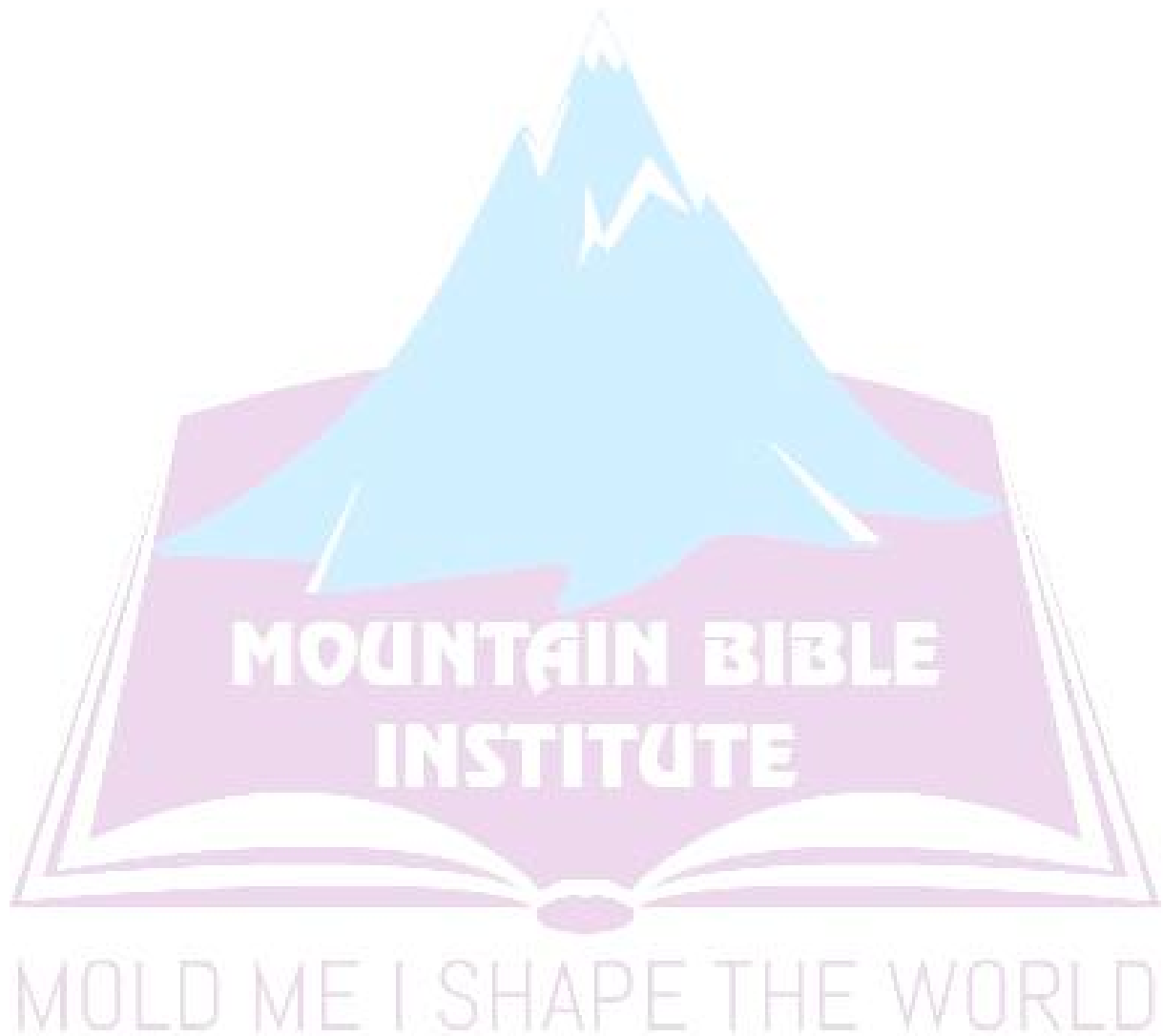
The Bible has been transmitted very accurately over the centuries. Consider data given by James White in his book *The King James Only Controversy*, p. 39 - 40. There are variants in about 10,000 locations in the New Testament. Only about 1/8th of these variants have any significance, the rest being trivial differences like spelling and so forth. This means if you compare the text behind the KJV with the text behind say the NIV or ESV, you will find the text is 98.33 percent without problems. This is remarkable for such an historic document with 5,300 Greek manuscripts of the NT. Of these variants, there are only about 400 that affect the sense of a passage, and 50 that are of enough weight to worry about. Schaff, a liberal church historian, said that none of these affected “an article of faith or a precept of duty which is not sustained by other and undoubted passages, or by the whole tenor of Scripture teaching.” Greek scholar A. T. Robertson says that only 1/1000th of the entire text is of any concern.

How Do I Know it is True?

The emphasis here is how to I personally know the Bible to be true?

1. The main way I know it is true is that God conveys to me, as a believer, certainty and acceptance of its truth. I know that it is the Word of God, and not the word of men (1 Thessalonians 2:13). That may be hard to accept at first, so I offer some other thoughts on the matter to show you the reasonableness of accepting God's Word as true.
2. Fulfilled prophecy. Detailed events were predicted in advance, and later these events in fact happened just as they were predicted. For example, Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1 name a Persian King—Cyrus—years before he ever came on the scene. Isaiah 53 expresses details about the Jewish Messiah that were fulfilled 700 years later. Daniel predicted the rise of Gentile kingdoms after Nebuchadnezzar, including Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, long before those events occurred.
3. Consistency of its contents despite being written over hundreds of years by about 40 authors.
4. Corroboration of eyewitnesses. One example is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Probably thousands saw him die on a cross outside of Jerusalem, and we have a record of over 500 people seeing Him after he was raised. Another example is the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. The entire nation of Israel at the time saw remarkable events on the mountain in which God spoke to Moses the fledgling nation's new "constitution."
5. The tremendous effect that the Bible, Judaism, and Christianity on the world. While not a bullet-proof argument, this is evidence for the truth of Scripture. It has "civilized" the society; it has touched music and art, technology and education, it has raised the place of women where it has been practiced, and has emphasized helping the poor. In 2009, Alvin J. Schmidt wrote an entire book on this subject entitled How Christianity Changed the World.² The Bible is the best-selling book of all time, with copies numbering into the billions.

6. The fact that the Bible depicts man as a sinner is another evidence that the Bible is not a work of fiction. It paints an un-retouched picture of the evil of mankind. It is not a glowing recommendation for the goodness of man, and it doesn't hide anything embarrassing about humanity.
7. That it has been corroborated by archaeological and scientific discoveries throughout the recent centuries.



Old Testament books of the Bible

The Old Testament includes 39 books which were written long before Jesus was born.

The first five books of the Bible are called the Torah, or the Law of Moses.

1. Genesis

Genesis answers two big questions: “How did God’s relationship with the world begin?” and “Where did the nation of Israel come from?”

Author: Traditionally Moses, but the stories are much older.

Fun fact: Most of the famous Bible stories you’ve heard about are probably found in the book of Genesis. This is where the stories of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and the Ark, the Tower of Babel, Abraham and Isaac, Jacob’s ladder, and Joseph’s coat of many colors are recorded.

2. Exodus

God saves Israel from slavery in Egypt, and then enters into a special relationship with them.

Author: Traditionally Moses

3. Leviticus

God gives Israel instructions for how to worship Him.

Author: traditionally Moses

4. Numbers

Israel fails to trust and obey God, and wanders in the wilderness for 40 years.

Author: Traditionally Moses

5. Deuteronomy

Moses gives Israel instructions (in some ways, a recap of the laws in Exodus - Numbers) for how to love and obey God in the Promised Land.

Author: Traditionally Moses

6. Joshua

Joshua (Israel’s new leader) leads Israel to conquer the Promised land, then parcels out territories to the twelve tribes of Israel.

Author: Nobody knows

Fun fact: You’ve probably heard of a few fantastic stories from this book (the Battle of Jericho and the day the sun stood still), but

most of the action happens in the first half of this book. The last half is pretty much all about divvying up the real estate.

7. Judges

Israel enters a cycle of turning from God, falling captive to oppressive nations, calling out to God, and being rescued by leaders God sends their way (called “judges”).

Author: Nobody knows

8. Ruth

Two widows lose everything, and find hope in Israel—which leads to the birth of the future King David.

Author: Nobody knows

9. 1 Samuel

Israel demands a king, who turns out to be quite a disappointment.

Author: Nobody knows

10. 2 Samuel

David, a man after God’s own heart, becomes king of Israel.

Author: Nobody knows

11. 1 Kings

The kingdom of Israel has a time of peace and prosperity under King Solomon, but afterward splits, and the two lines of kings turn away from God.

Author: Nobody knows

12. 2 Kings

Both kingdoms ignore God and his prophets, until they both fall captive to other world empires.

Author: Nobody knows

13. 1 Chronicles

This is a brief history of Israel from Adam to David, culminating with David commissioning the temple of God in Jerusalem.

Author: Traditionally Ezra

14. 2 Chronicles

David’s son Solomon builds the temple, but after centuries of rejecting God, the Babylonians take the southern Israelites captive and destroy the temple.

Author: Traditionally Ezra

15. Ezra

The Israelites rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, and a scribe named Ezra teaches the people to once again obey God's laws.

Author: Ezra

16. Nehemiah

The city of Jerusalem is in bad shape, so Nehemiah rebuilds the wall around the city.

Author: Nehemiah

17. Esther

Someone hatches a genocidal plot to bring about Israel's extinction, and Esther must face the emperor to ask for help.

Author: Nobody knows

18. Job

Satan attacks a righteous man named Job, and Job and his friends argue about why terrible things are happening to him.

Author: Nobody knows

19. Psalms

A collection of 150 songs that Israel sang to God (and to each other)—kind of like a hymnal for the ancient Israelites.

Author: So many authors

20. Proverbs

A collection of sayings written to help people make wise decisions that bring about justice.

Author: Solomon and other wise men

21. Ecclesiastes

A philosophical exploration of the meaning of life—with a surprisingly nihilistic tone for the Bible.

Author: Traditionally Solomon

22. Song of Solomon (Song of Songs)

A love song (or collection of love songs) celebrating love, desire, and marriage.

Author: Traditionally Solomon (but it could have been written about Solomon, or in the style of Solomon)

23. Isaiah

God sends the prophet Isaiah to warn Israel of future judgment—but also to tell them about a coming king and servant who will “bear the sins of many.”

Author: Isaiah (and maybe some of his followers)

24. Jeremiah

God sends a prophet to warn Israel about the coming Babylonian captivity, but the people don't take the news very well.

Author: Jeremiah

25. Lamentations

A collection of dirges lamenting the fall of Jerusalem after the Babylonian attacks.

Author: Traditionally Jeremiah

26. Ezekiel

God chooses a man to speak for Him to Israel, to tell them the error of their ways and teach them justice: Ezekiel.

Author: Ezekiel

27. Daniel

Daniel becomes a high-ranking wise man in the Babylonian and Persian empires, and has prophetic visions concerning Israel's future.

Author: Daniel (with other contributors)

28. Hosea

Hosea is told to marry a prostitute who leaves him, and he must bring her back: a picture of God's relationship with Israel.

Author: Hosea

29. Joel

God sends a plague of locusts to Judge Israel, but his judgment on the surrounding nations is coming, too.

Author: Joel

30. Amos

A shepherd named Amos preaches against the injustice of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

Author: Amos

31. Obadiah

Obadiah warns the neighboring nation of Edom that they will be judged for plundering Jerusalem

Author: Obadiah

32. Jonah

A disobedient prophet runs from God, is swallowed by a great fish, and then preaches God's message to the city of Nineveh.

Author: Traditionally Jonah

33. Micah

Micah confronts the leaders of Israel and Judah regarding their injustice, and prophecies that one day the Lord himself will rule in perfect justice.

Author: Micah

34. Nahum

Nahum foretells of God's judgment on Nineveh, the capital of Assyria.

Author: Nahum

35. Habakkuk

Habakkuk pleads with God to stop the injustice and violence in Judah, but is surprised to find that God will use the even more violent Babylonians to do so.

Author: Habakkuk

36. Zephaniah

God warns that he will judge Israel and the surrounding nations, but also that he will restore them in peace and justice.

Author: Zephaniah

37. Haggai

The people have abandoned the work of restoring God's temple in Jerusalem, and so Haggai takes them to task.

Author: Haggai

38. Zechariah

The prophet Zechariah calls Israel to return to God, and records prophetic visions that show what's happening behind the scenes.

39. Malachi

God has been faithful to Israel, but they continue to live disconnected from him—so God sends Malachi to call them out.



New Testament books of the Bible

The New Testament includes 27 books about Jesus' ministry and what it means to follow him. The first four books of the New Testament are called the Gospels.

40. The Gospel of Matthew

This is an account of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, focusing on Jesus' role as the true king of the Jews.

Author: Matthew

41. The Gospel of Mark

This brief account of Jesus' earthly ministry highlights Jesus' authority and servanthood.

Author: John Mark

42. The Gospel of Luke

Luke writes the most thorough account of Jesus' life, pulling together eyewitness testimonies to tell the full story of Jesus.

Author: Luke

43. The Gospel of John

John lists stories of signs and miracles with the hope that readers will believe in Jesus.

Author: John

44. Acts

Jesus returns to the Father, the Holy Spirit comes to the church, and the gospel of Jesus spreads throughout the world.

Author: Luke

45. Romans

Paul summarizes how the gospel of Jesus works in a letter to the churches at Rome, where he plans to visit.

Author: Paul

46. 1 Corinthians

Paul writes a disciplinary letter to a fractured church in Corinth, and answers some questions that they've had about how Christians should behave.

Author: Paul

47.2 Corinthians

Paul writes a letter of reconciliation to the church at Corinth, and clears up some concerns that they have.

Author: Paul

48. Galatians

Paul hears that the Galatian churches have been lead to think that salvation comes from the law of Moses, and writes a (rather heated) letter telling them where the false teachers have it wrong.

Author: Paul

49. Ephesians

Paul writes to the church at Ephesus about how to walk in grace, peace, and love.

Author: Paul

50. Philippians

An encouraging letter to the church of Philippi from Paul, telling them how to have joy in Christ.

Author: Paul

51. Colossians

Paul writes the church at Colossae a letter about who they are in Christ, and how to walk in Christ.

Author: Paul

52.1 Thessalonians

Paul has heard a good report on the church at Thessalonica, and encourages them to “excel still more” in faith, hope, and love.

Author: Paul

53.2 Thessalonians

Paul instructs the Thessalonians on how to stand firm until the coming of Jesus.

Author: Paul

54.1 Timothy

Paul gives his protégé Timothy instruction on how to lead a church with sound teaching and a godly example.

Author: Paul

55.2 Timothy

Paul is nearing the end of his life, and encourages Timothy to continue preaching the word.

Author: Paul

56. Titus

Paul advises Titus on how to lead orderly, counter-cultural churches on the island of Crete.

Author: Paul

57. Philemon

Paul strongly recommends that Philemon accept his runaway slave as a brother, not a slave.

Author: Paul

58. Hebrews

A letter encouraging Christians to cling to Christ despite persecution, because he is greater.

Author: Nobody knows

59. James

A letter telling Christians to live in ways that demonstrate their faith in action.

Author: James (likely the brother of Jesus)

60.1 Peter

Peter writes to Christians who are being persecuted, encouraging them to testify to the truth and live accordingly.

Author: Peter

61.2 Peter

Peter writes a letter reminding Christians about the truth of Jesus, and warning them that false teachers will come.

Author: Peter

62.1 John

John writes a letter to Christians about keeping Jesus' commands, loving one another, and important things they should know.

Author: John

63.2 John

A very brief letter about walking in truth, love, and obedience.

Author: John

64.3 John

An even shorter letter about Christian fellowship.

Author: John

65. Jude

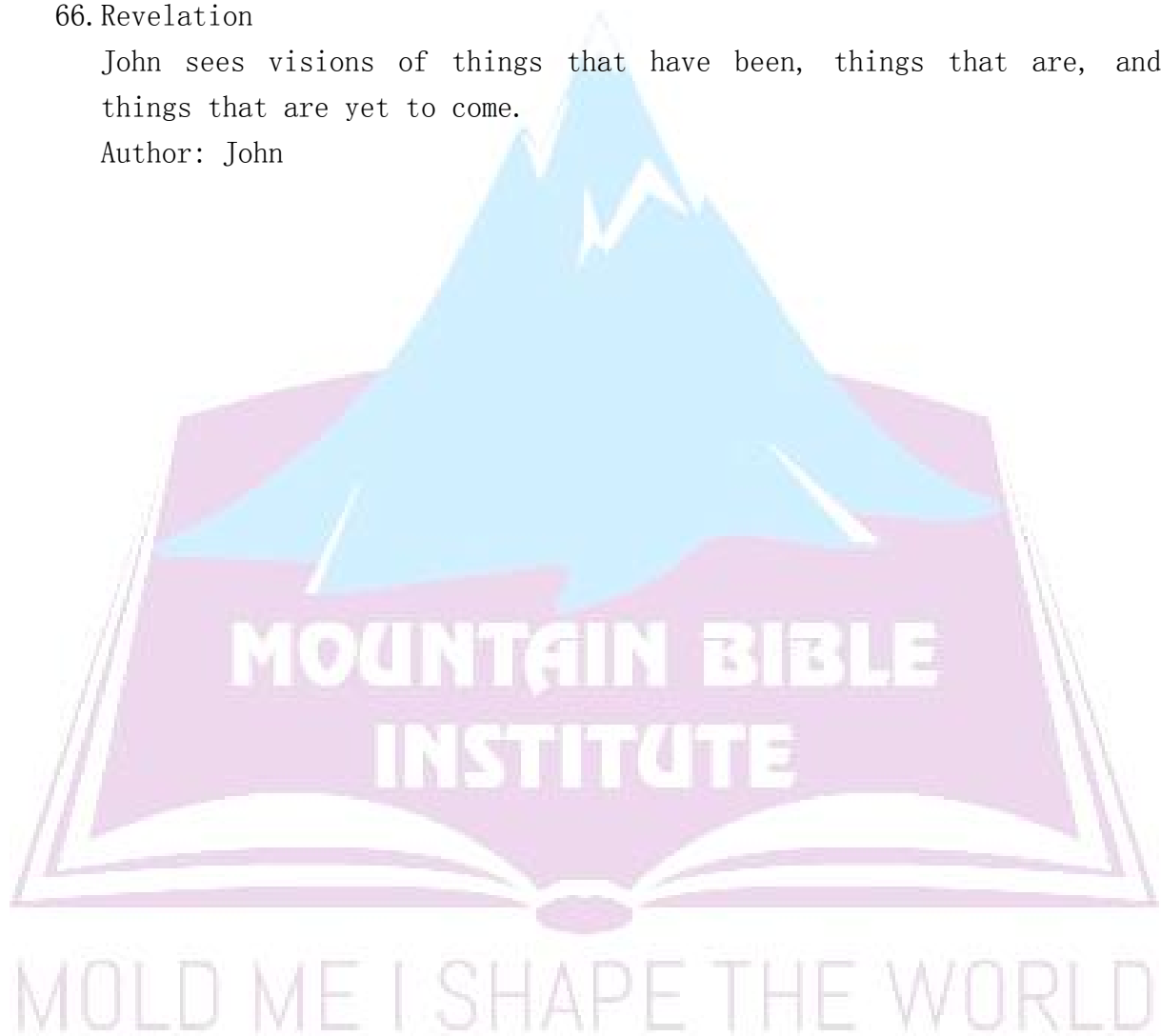
A letter encouraging Christians to contend for the faith, even though ungodly persons have crept in unnoticed.

Author: Jude

66. Revelation

John sees visions of things that have been, things that are, and things that are yet to come.

Author: John





MOLD ME I SHAPE THE WORLD