



# Scripture

part 1

***“Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.”***

Proverbs 30:5–6

## What are the Scriptures?

The New Testament refers to the Old Testament as Scripture, for which the Greek word is “graphe”, meaning writing. The word “bible” comes from the Greek word for book. The Holy Bible means the “Holy Book”. It contains 66 separate books (39 Old Testament and 27 New Testament), written in three languages (Hebrew, Greek, and a bit in Aramaic), over a period of more than a thousand years, by over 40 authors (of varying ages and backgrounds), on three continents (Asia, Africa and Europe).

Authors include kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, scholars, etc. Books cover history, sermons, letters, a hymnbook, and a love song. There are geographical surveys, architectural specifications, travel diaries, population statistics, family trees, inventories, and numerous legal documents. It covers hundreds of controversial subjects with amazing unity. It is the best selling book of all time, and is now available in nearly 3000 languages.

The Old Testament was written on **papyrus**—a form of paper made out of reeds; the New Testament was written on **parchments** (prepared animal skins). Because both forms of documents easily degraded under the hot and dry conditions, it was difficult to obtain these ancient manuscripts.

A lecturer at the University of Paris created the Bible’s **chapter divisions** in the early 1200’s. Its current **verse divisions** were not fully developed until 1551.

## What does Scripture say about itself?

### Some statements from Scripture about Scripture

Inspiration by God – 2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Pet. 1:19–21

The very words of God – 1 Thessalonians 2:13

Are all we need to know God – Luke 16:29, 31

A perfect guide for life – Proverbs 6:23.

Pure – Psalm 12:6; 119:140

True – Psalm 119:160; John 17:17

Flawless – Proverbs 30:5–6

Perfect – Psalm 19:7

Effective – Isaiah 55:11

Precious – Psalm 19:10

Powerful – Hebrews 4:12

Nothing to be taken from, or added to – Deut. 4:2, 12:32

For everyone – Romans 16:26

To be obeyed – James 1:22

## Some poetic images from Scripture about Scripture

Sweet like honey – Psalm 119:103

A lamp to guide our life – Psalm 119:105

Food for our soul – Jeremiah 15:16

Milk that nourishes us – 1 Peter 2:2

A fire that purifies and hammer that breaks us – Jer. 23:29

A sword – Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12

A seed for salvation planted in us – James 1:21

## How did Jesus view Scripture?

### Actual people, historical events, and straightforward facts

Jesus treated Old Testament narratives as straightforward facts: **Creation** (Luke 11:51), **Abel** (Luke 11:51), **Noah** (Matt. 24:37–39; Luke 17:26–27), **Abraham** (John 8:56), **Sodom & Gomorrah** (Matt. 10:15, 11:23–24; Luke 10:12), **Lot** (Luke 17:28–32), **Isaac & Jacob** (Matt. 8:11; Luke 13:28), the **mannna** (John 6:31, 49, 58), the **wilderness serpent** (John 3:14), **Moses** as lawgiver (Matt. 8:4, 19:8; Mark 1:44, 7:10, 10:5, 12:26; Luke 5:14, 20:37; John 5:46, 7:19).

In matters of controversy, Jesus used the Old Testament as his court of appeals (Matt. 23:23; Matt. 5:17–20; Matt. 23:2–3; Matt. 22:29; Mark 12:24).

### Comfort in times of crisis

In times of crisis, Jesus quoted Scripture.

When tempted by Satan, (Matt. 4:1–11) Jesus quotes Deut. 8:3, 6:16, 6:13.

At the moment of his death, (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34) he quotes Ps. 22:1 “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” and in Luke 23:46, he quotes Ps. 31:5, “Into thy hands I commit my spirit.”

### Fulfillment of the Old Testament Law, Prophecies, and Revelation of Christ

Jesus claimed that all Scriptures, including the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, were fulfilled in him (Luke 24:25–47).

Jesus also taught that the entire purpose of the Old Testament was to reveal himself (John 5:39).

Jesus taught that Old Testament prophecy had been fulfilled (Luke 4:21; Matt. 11:10 cf. Luke 7:27; Mark 9:12–13; Luke 18:31–33; Luke 21:22; Matt. 26:24; Mark 14:21; Luke 22:37; Matt. 26:31 cf. Mark 14:27; Matt. 26:53–56 cf. Mark 14:49; Luke 24:25–27, 24:44–47; John 5:39–47, 13:18 cf. Ps. 41:9; John 15:25 cf. Ps. 35:19; John 17:12).

### Authentication of Old Testament authors

Jesus taught that Scripture was authored by **Moses** (Mark 7:10), **Isaiah** (Mark 7:6; Matt. 13:14), **David** (Mark 12:36), and **Daniel** (Matt. 24:15).

### Infallibility and Truth of the Scriptures

Jesus taught that the Scripture could not be broken (John 10:35; Matt. 5:18; Luke 16:17).

Jesus also promised that the New Testament would come (John 14:25–26, 16:23).

## How did the Apostles view Scripture?

### God's Word

Paul used Scripture and God's spoken word interchangeably (Gen. 12:3 cf. Gal. 3:8; Ex. 9:6 cf. Rom. 9:17).

The New Testament teaches that what the Bible says is akin to what God says (Gen. 2:24 cf. Matt. 19:4–5; Ps. 95:7 cf. Heb. 3:7; Ps. 2:1 cf. Acts 4:24–15; Isa. 55:3 cf. Acts 13:34; Ps. 16:10 cf. Acts 13:35; Ps. 2:7 cf. Heb. 1:5; Ps. 97:7 cf. Heb. 1:6; Ps. 104:4 cf. Heb. 1:7).

Peter and Paul claimed that Scripture has dual authorship by both men and God (1 Pet. 1:10–12; 1 Cor. 2:12–13).

### Sacred Scripture

The New Testament writers claimed that the Old Testament was sacred Scripture (Matt. 21:42, 22:29; 26:54, 56; Luke 24; John 5:39, 10:35; Acts 17:2, 11, 18:28; Rom. 1:2, 4:3, 9:17, 10:11, 11:2, 15:4, 16:26; 1 Cor. 15:3–4; Gal. 3:8, 3:22, 4:30; 1 Tim. 5:18; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20–21, 3:15–16).

Furthermore, the New Testament authors quote the Old Testament as sacred on roughly 300 occasions.

## Does Scripture have any errors or contradictions?

God cannot speak falsely (2 Sam. 7:28; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18), so **all of Scripture is true and without any error** or contradiction (Num. 23:19; Ps. 12:6, 119:89, 96; Prov. 30:5).

But, the Bible also teaches the following:

- **God's thoughts are much higher than ours** (Isa. 55:9).
- **God has secrets that He has not revealed to anyone** (Deut. 29:29).
- **We sometimes see dimly** (1 Cor. 13:12).
- **We tend to suppress the clear truth of God's word because of our unrepentant sin** (Rom. 1:18–19).

***Therefore, if it appears that there is a contradiction in Scripture, we must humbly assume that we—not God's Word—are somehow in error.***

God leaves provision for seeming “contradictions” by telling us that some things in His Scriptures are very hard to understand (2 Peter 3:15–16). This does not mean that we cannot know the truth; it does mean that we only know it in part (1 Cor. 13:9) and must live by faith and trust God.

***“For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”***

1 Corinthians 13:12