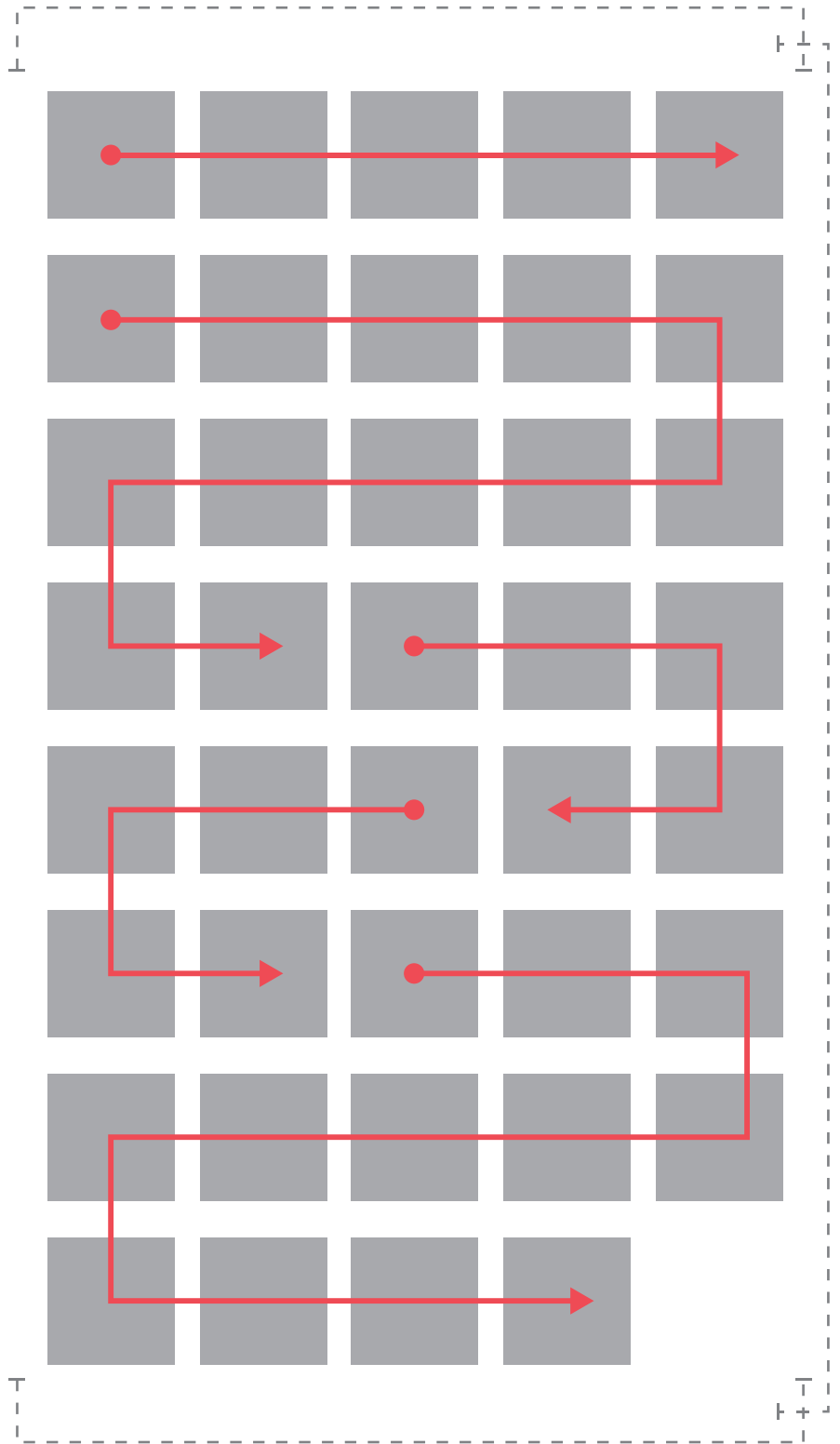
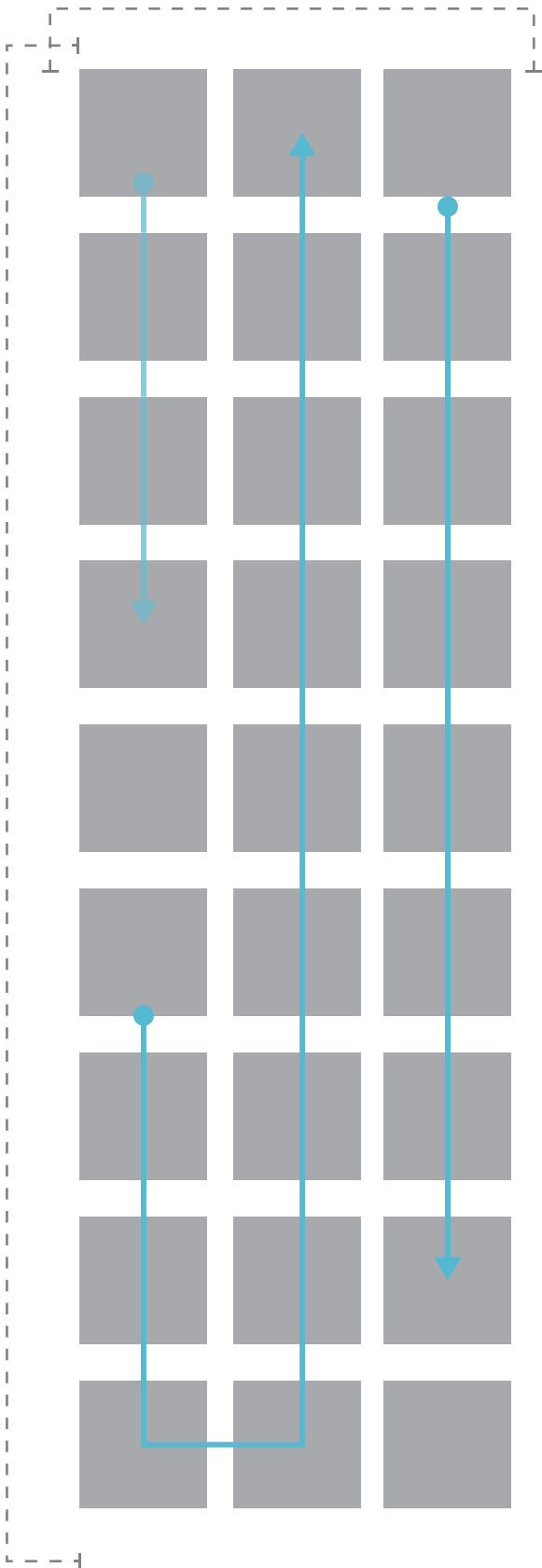


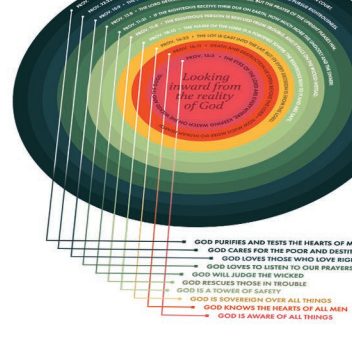
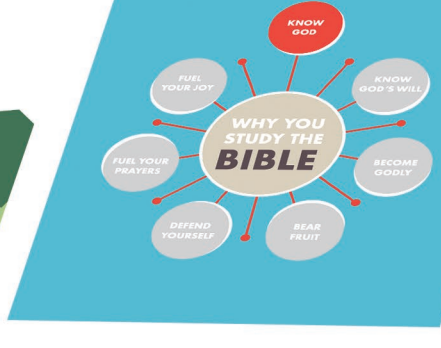
A VISUAL THEOLOGY

GUIDE TO THE BIBLE

LEADER GUIDE



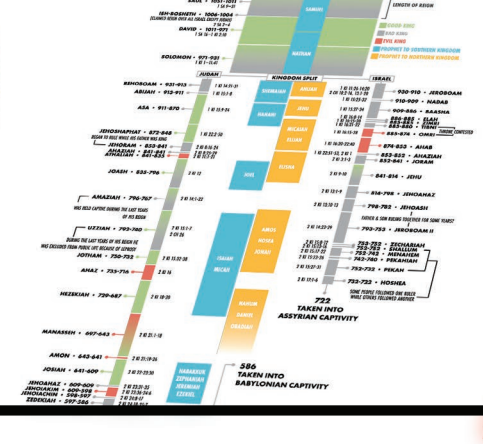
TIM CHALLIES + JOSH BYERS



HAS HISTORY PROVED THE BIBLE TO BE TEXTUALLY RELIABLE?

NT

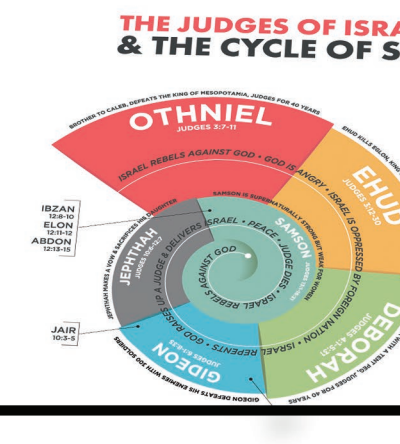
July 30,000 lines of text. Because there are 5,000 manuscripts to the New Testament, the text is so well attested that it is almost impossible to doubt its basic accuracy.



CHAPTER FIVE

CAN WE TRUST THE BIBLE?

- HISTORICALLY
- SCIENTIFICALLY
- CULTURALLY
- SPIRITUALLY



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THERE IS ONE STORY

Yet the biblical authors spoke with harmony & continuity

...never keeps the whole law and yet is guilty of breaking all of it.

James 2:10

Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant...

IF THEN

...out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be a special people for me, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you will be my treasured possession among all peoples, because you are so dear to me.



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A VISUAL THEOLOGY GUIDE TO THE BIBLE WORKBOOK

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HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Thank you for reading *A Visual Theology Guide to the Bible*. It is a tremendous honor for us to be able to create resources like this one, knowing they will be used around the world to teach the truth about God and his Word.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

The purpose of this workbook is to enhance and direct your attention to key concepts laid out in *A Visual Theology Guide to the Bible*. The blanks we've provided are not arbitrary. Rather, every one has been carefully selected to point out the big ideas we want you to know and the important terms we want you to remember.

WHO IS IT FOR?

This workbook can be used by individuals who are reading through the book on their own and wish to use a resource to help them understand and remember it.

The workbook is also extremely useful in a classroom or small group setting where a teacher is leading students through the material. In this context, it will keep students engaged with the content and help them identify and retain key ideas.

HOW IS IT USED BEST?

While the workbook is useful for individuals, it was originally made for use in a classroom setting. We also created accompanying presentation slides that perfectly pair with it, making it ideally suited to a teacher who is leading his or her class through *A Visual Theology Guide to the Bible*. (Visit visualtheology.church to learn more about the slides.)

It's our prayer that *A Visual Theology Guide to the Bible* and this workbook will be a blessing to you and to your students as together you see the beauty of God's Word in a new and exciting way.

Sincerely,
Josh & Tim

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INTRODUCTION

To Christians, the Bible is divine revelation, God's message to the world. It unveils the mind of God, reveals the will of God, describes the work of God, and calls the reader to faith in God.

THE BIBLE TELLS US:

- Who we are,
- Why we exist
- Why we are so messy,
- How we are to relate to God,
- And how everything will someday be made right.

THE BIBLE MAKES MONUMENTAL CLAIMS ABOUT ITSELF.

It describes itself as light to guide the lost,

medicine to revive the sick,

wisdom to correct the foolish,

inspiration to cheer the sorrowful,

balm to heal the blind.

It insists it is more valuable than gold and sweeter than honey. It declares it is able to teach truth and correct error, that it will guide us away from unethical behavior and toward behavior that serves and blesses others.

CHAPTER ONE: WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

Employing the word “bible” represents a claim of authority.

A bible is an authoritative source of wisdom or knowledge.

The word “bible” is derived from the ancient Greek biblos, which refers not to a particular book, but to the papyrus used to create an early form of paper.

WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF THE BIBLE?

The Bible is much like any other book in that it has internal cohesion. From beginning to end, it provides a unified picture of who God is, who we are, and what we need most.

TESTAMENTS

Its broadest structure is a division into two “testaments,” the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word we translate as “testament” could more accurately be translated as covenant so when we speak of Old Testament and New Testament, we are really speaking of Old Covenant and New Covenant.

A covenant is an agreement between two parties that governs the terms of their relationship. The Old Testament details the establishment of the Old Covenant and the promises of the coming Christ, and the New Testament describes the _ of the New Covenant that God had planned all along.

BOOKS

There are 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament for a total of 66.

The Old Testament books tell of the creation of the world, the founding of the Israelites, the establishment of those people in the promised land, their special relationship with God, their disobedience to God, and their resulting captivity by hostile nations.

A constant theme is the promise of a Messiah who will fully and finally liberate the Israelites from danger and oppression.

The New Testament books tell of the birth, life, and death of Jesus; they tell of the work of the earliest Christians to spread their message; they instruct Christians in how to live and tell how God intends to bring history to its close.

A recurring theme is that Jesus is the Messiah who was promised in the Old Testament.

NAMES

Each of the books in the Bible has a name.

They are often named after the author of the book or after one of its key characters. summarizes their content.

CHAPTERS & VERSES

Books are divided into chapters and chapters are divided into verses. These divisions were not present when the books were written but were added much later to assist with finding a specific place within the Bible.

GENRES

History books are meant to describe historical events as they happened in the past.

Examples include Genesis, Ruth, and Acts.

Law books tell how God intends the ancient nation of Israel to function religiously, politically, and socially. Examples include Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

Wisdom books are collections of aphorisms and wise sayings meant to guide the relationship to God and to one another. Examples include Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes.

Poetry books are poetic forms of praise to God or gratitude for his gifts to humanity. Examples include Psalms, Song of Solomon, and Lamentations.

Prophecy books are predictions of future events and warnings to be prepared for them. They are at times hopeful,

predicting an outpouring of God’s blessings and at times dreadful, predicting all manner of woe. Examples include Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Revelation.

Gospels are short biographies of Jesus. There are four of them, each written by a different author and for a different purpose: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Epistles are letters that usually have a section dedicated to teaching truth about God and a section dedicated to telling people how to live in light of that truth. Examples include Galatians, 1 Thessalonians, and 1 Peter.

Apocalypse writings are a specific form of prophecy predicting disaster and destruction. Examples include Daniel and Revelation.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE?

“Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.” - John Calvin

The Bible exists to impart true and sound **wisdom** from God to **humanity**.

The purpose of the Bible is to **show** mankind who God is and his plan to **save** mankind from their sin through his Son, Jesus Christ.

The Bible is God’s gift to you—**one** collection, **two** testaments, **66** books written, collected, and preserved —so that you might know him and his salvation in Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Many books have the word “bible” in the title (e.g., Jeep Owner’s Bible). List a few things, from chapter one, that makes the Bible different than these other books.

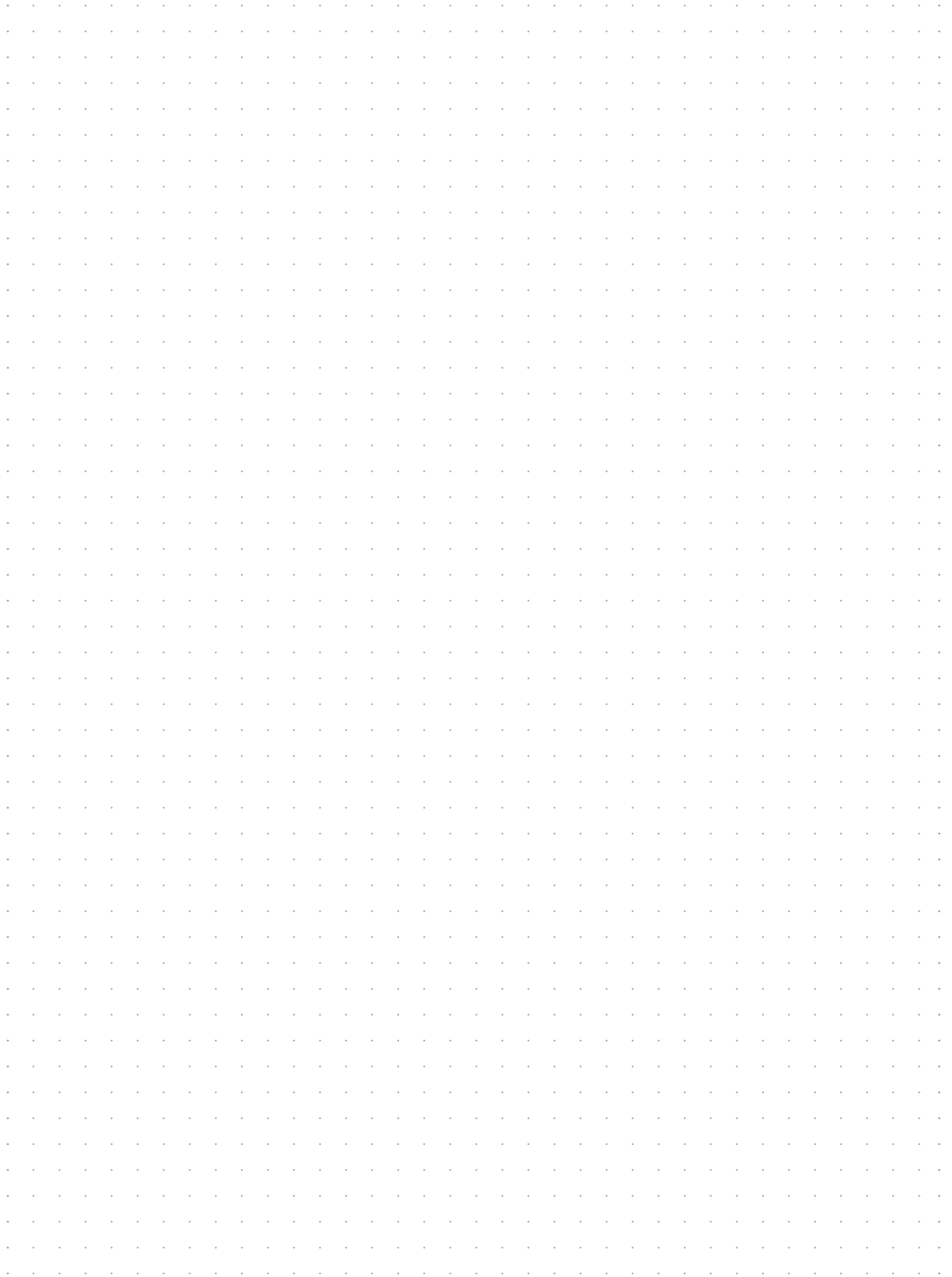
2. In your own words, describe the purpose of the Bible.

3. Review the list of genres on pg. 20.

How might the various genres impact the way you read different books of the Bible?

4. When you study the infographic on pg. 22-23, it’s clear that the Bible is an incredible book. What stands out to you the most as you review these pages?

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CHAPTER TWO: HOW WAS THE BIBLE WRITTEN?

THE BIBLE WAS GOD-BREATHED

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness ..."
2 Timothy 3:16

THE BIBLE WAS HUMANLY COMMUNICATED

While the Bible is from God, it is for humans. God breathed out his Word to communicate with us. This means that God chose written words in human language as his primary way of speaking to us.

The Bible was written in two primary languages, Hebrew and Greek, and one secondary language, Aramaic.

As God extended his covenant promises to all nations and commanded his people to proclaim good news to the ends of the earth, the language of his written word shifted to accommodate this transition.

THE BIBLE WAS CAREFULLY PRESERVED

While recent scholarship has questioned the preservation of the original manuscripts of the Bible, the truth is that the Bible has more evidence for its integrity than any other ancient book.

Recent archaeological findings confirm the faithfulness of the Bible we have in our possession.

THE PRESERVATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

What is the significance of this? It serves as just one of many evidences that over the course of many centuries, the Hebrew text was preserved. Because of the similarities in the manuscript, we can be confident that the Old Testament we have today is an extremely reliable copy of the original Hebrew Scriptures.

THE PRESERVATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

While the manuscript evidence for the Old Testament is encouraging, the manuscript evidence of the New Testament is unsurpassed by any other ancient book. There are more than 5,700 Greek manuscripts containing either parts or all of the New Testament text. Compare this to Homer's Iliad, which only has 1,757 manuscripts in existence, or Beowulf, which comes to us from only one manuscript.

FROM GOD TO YOU

While thousands of years have passed since God breathed out the Old and New Testament Scriptures, they remain the living, perfect Word of God today. Though the Scriptures have passed through countless scribes and many forms—from papyrus to paper to phone—you can be confident that the Word you read today is the very Word that was breathed out by God and written by the prophets and apostles.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. How do you most often read the Bible (i.e., physical copy or electronic copy)?

What are the advantages or disadvantages of each?

2. We understand from 2 Timothy 3:16 that the Bible is inspired (i.e., God-breathed).

Describe the difference between the inspiration of the Bible and the inspiration for a country song.

3. Is there anything new that you learned in chapter two? Explain.

4. Study the infographic on pg. 32-34.

How does this information strengthen your trust in the reliability of the Bible?

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CHAPTER 3: HOW WERE THE BOOKS COLLECTED?

The Bible is a complete collection. Not a single word is missing, and not a single word can be added. Every book that should be in the Bible is already there, and we can be confident that there is no unknown book that will be added. The Bible will never be released in an updated and revised version. The Bible we hold is finished and final.

The books of the Bible are not a special class of man-made books handpicked by the church. Instead, the books of the Bible are God's written Word, which were recognized by the church as such. That's why it's not quite accurate to say that the books of the Bible were "chosen" or selected by a church council. More accurately, we should say they were "recognized." Over time, God's people recognized the books that were written by God and rejected the books that weren't.

The collection of writings that have been recognized are called canon.

F. F. Bruce defines the term in this way: "The Canon of Scripture . . . is the list of writings delivered to us as the divinely inspired record of God's self-revelation to men—that self-revelation of which Jesus Christ our Lord is the centre."

Although many factors affected why certain books made it into the canon, the primary question was whether God had written and inspired the book.

If it wasn't from God, then it couldn't be a part of God's Word

THE CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

By the time of Jesus, there was widespread agreement about the canon of Old Testament.

The canon began. God himself wrote the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone for Moses and the people of Israel:

"The tablets were the work of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets." Exodus 32:16

Then I turned and came down from the mountain and put the tablets in the ark that I had made. And there they are, as the LORD commanded me. Deuteronomy 10:5

Moses's successor, Joshua, **continued** the practice of writing down words "in the Book of the Law of God."

And Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone and set it up there under the terebinth that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. Joshua 24:26

After Joshua, a succession of other men of God, most of whom were prophets, recorded the words of God, telling of God's great acts and his covenant promises to his people. The people of God **always believed** that these holy writings were God's words, just as God had told the prophet Jeremiah:

Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you. Jeremiah 30:2

Since 475 BC, nearly twenty-five hundred years ago, the books within the Old Testament canon have **remained the same**.

The Old Testament Scriptures were written with the **understanding** that they were God's holy Word, and they have **always** been understood in this way.

THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. John 16:13

The writings of the disciples show that they understood their work to be the **fulfillment** of Jesus' promise. They were **speaking** God's words with God's **authority**.

If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 14:37

And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. 2 Peter 3:15-16

Jesus' promise to guide the apostles' teaching provided the foundational litmus test for the New Testament canon: works **written** by or authorized by an **apostle** were accepted.

The inclusion of Hebrews in the canon demonstrates the second criterion for inclusion: there needed to be a general consensus or **recognition** by the church that the book was God's Word. If it was not in widespread use across the churches, it could not be recognized as Scripture.

Besides being authored or authorized by an apostle and receiving general recognition from the church, the book also could not disagree with other Scriptures. Because God never lies or contradicts himself, God's Word cannot contradict itself.

All of the books in both the Old and New Testament are time-tested, doctrinally sound, and divinely inspired. We that all of the books in the Bible belong.

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.. Hebrews 1:1-2

CAN ANY OTHER BOOKS BE ADDED?

The author divides God's spoken revelation into two eras: in the past and in these last days which is the era spanning from Jesus' ascension to Jesus' second coming. Once, God spoke through his prophets, but now, in the last days, he speaks by the Son.

Until that day when we see God face-to-face, there is no more Scripture to be added.

WHAT ABOUT THOSE OTHER BOOKS?

If you flip open a Roman Catholic Bible, you may notice several extra books that aren't included in the Protestant canon. These are called the Apocrypha and they were written during the period between Malachi and the coming of Christ (approximately 475 BC–AD 30). They include books like Tobit, Judith, Sirach, and 1 and 2 Maccabees.

Jesus and his disciples quote the Old Testament Scriptures as divinely authoritative almost three hundred times, but they never quote the Apocrypha as divinely authoritative.

While Jerome added the Apocrypha to the Latin Vulgate, he made it clear that they were "books of the church" and not to be treated as equal to the Scriptures. The Roman Catholic Church, however, increasingly relied on the Apocrypha until the Council of Trent in 1546, when they officially declared the Apocrypha to be a part of the canon. The Reformers, in contrast, returned to the traditional view of the Apocrypha as helpful for the church but not a part of the canon.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. We live in a world where things are continually changing and being updated.

Why is it so important that the Bible never changes?

2. The word "canon" refers to the books of the Bible recognized by the church as inspired (i.e., God-breathed).

In your own words, describe how this is different than choosing, which books are in the Bible

(hint: See page 36).

3. How do we know that the canon is complete (i.e., no Scripture will be added)?

In what ways does this increase your confidence in the Bible?

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