

What Is The Bible?

by Bill Crews

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The Bible claims to be the revelation (uncovering, making known) of God and God's will to man. The universe declares His eternal existence and infinite power. *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork"* (Psalm 19:1). *"For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse"* (Romans 1:20). But only revelation could make known His character, His mind, His will for man. *"... the world through its wisdom knew not God..."* (1 Corinthians 1:21). *"For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God"* (1 Corinthians 2:11; read verses 12-13).

The Bible claims to be the writings of various men chosen by God and guided by the Holy Spirit of God. Nearly all the writers of the books of the Bible claim inspiration, divine guidance, to be writing the words given them by God. For example, in Exodus, the second book of the Bible, the words, *"And Jehovah (or the Lord) said, ..."* and the words, *"And Jehovah (or the Lord) spoke..."* appear 160 times. In many books are such expressions as, *"The word of Jehovah (or the Lord) unto, by, came to..."* Several writers in several books acknowledge other writers as teachers from God and their books as the words of God. Almost half of the words of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John purport to be the spoken words of Christ. The New Testament contains many quotations from the various books of the Old Testament. These are declared to be the words of God, or the words of the Holy Spirit by the various writers. And then there are general statements such as these: *"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation (or unloosing). For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit"* (2 Peter 1:20-21; note that Peter is talking about how prophecy of Scripture came). *"God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son..."* (Hebrews 1:1-2). Read also 2 Timothy 3:14-17 and 1 Corinthians 2:1-13.

3. What is the connection between the Old Testament and the New Testament? Bear in mind that the Old Testament is much larger in size than the New Testament, and was completed more than 400 years before any part of the New Testament was written. The entire Bible may be described as the history of God's dealings with the human race. The Old Testament contains the history of God's dealings with the Hebrew race, the Israelites, finally known as the Jews. The Old Testament also contains a record of the special law that God gave that people (the law of Moses). The Israelites, the law that God gave them through Moses, the entire Old Testament are portrayed as *temporal*, as means to an end, as paving the way for a universal Savior and for a better covenant which could bring to men forgiveness and hope. The old covenant fulfilled its purposes and gave way to the new covenant. Jeremiah 31:31-34 foretells the making of this new covenant and describes its superiority, and Hebrews 8:6-13 quotes this passage and declares its fulfillment in the new covenant of Christ. Many prophecies or predictions are found in the Old Testament — of Christ, His gospel, and His kingdom. These are fulfilled in the New Testament. It has been said time and again: *"The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed."* The meaning and purpose of the Old Testament are not clear without the New Testament, and the New Testament is difficult to understand without some knowledge of the Old Testament.

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