



## **Bible**

The Bible is a famous book. Until recently, it was considered the number one selling book in the world. There are several interesting points about what we call “The Bible.” They say the Bible is the best-selling book of all time yet, since 2003 on Amazon it’s not even cracked the top one hundred. The Bible is listed as selling billions. There is a claim that the Little Red book (Communist China) devised by Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung) has sold billions too. Clearly, the Bible is famous, but is it popular?

I personally love the Bible. You might not find a book that contains history, sex, scandal, God, and tragic story all rolled into one. The Bible has all of this and more. There is a parting of a sea story. God sends his Son to earth as a baby. Sisters have a sibling rivalry that forces their husband to sleep with them and several hand-maids. The Bible is far more than boring, just ask the talking donkey.

This book is dated well back of 2000 years ago and beyond. How old is the Bible? There are varying views on this. The earliest writings in Genesis may extend back over 4000 years. This is a very old book. It’s broken into two main parts: The Old and New testament. There are around 35-40 writers of this set of books. The Bible is not one or two books but a collection of letters, wisdom statements, historical facts and stories.

In some form, the Bible is broken down into sections. The first five books of the Bible are called the Pentateuch. This set of five are the main historical and law sections. We also have

the annals of the kings. The wisdom books and the major and minor prophets. Further to this are the four Jesus Gospel accounts. Three of those are combined into what is known as the Synoptic Gospels. They share a large portion of the same story. John mostly stands alone. Then we are left with historical Acts and the letters of Paul. There are a few other short books called the epistles of John, James, Jude and Peter. Finally, the Bible ends with the epic conclusion to our world called Revelation. The whole Bible consists of 39 books in the old and 27 in the new testaments.

The most fascination part is what is called God breathed. 2 Timothy 3:16 says “*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.*” The laws of Moses to Revelation is said to be the word of God. Somehow and some way God inspired 35 (or so) authors over thousands of years to speak his word. It seems incredible but it gets even more awesome. An astute reader of the Bible will notice how intertwined the Bible is from Genesis to Revelation. It’s just seems impossible that this series of books could be so uniformed.

One of the cool parts of this book is a theme. They say that Gods word is alive. That means what? Through all those historical years the same message was relevant to them as it still is to us today. The word still speaks common truth. So, we say it’s still alive.

The Muslims will acknowledge many of the old testament saints like Abraham and Adam. These two religions tend to break away from each other with the birth of Isaac and Ishmael. Some other religions claim Jesus is a teacher or a prophet. Only Christianity claims Jesus is God. The Bible itself was formed in and around 400 AD. Over the years there has been arguments on which books should be in the Bible. The general rule of thumb in the New testament is the writer’s relationship to knowing Jesus or at-least knowing someone who was with Jesus. That is why some are in and others are not.

The Bible has some of the best wisdom in the world found in the Psalms and Proverbs. Two of Paul's letters (Romans and Hebrews) are the cornerstone of Christian faith. So, we call this controversial book "The Bible." This Greek word literally means "The Books." Wikipedia is interesting. It claims that only some parts of the Bible are considered the divine words of God. That is the trouble with the Bible. What is God's word?

In many ways this collection of books is an all or nothing thing. You either believe all of it or none of it. The problem with history is the middle ground. Many denominations and cults have taken some of God's word but not all of it. Exactly what parts are authentic? That is the eternal question. To me the Bible must be taken at face value. It's astounding that it's written over such a long period of time by so many different people. The fact that it does not shed good light on the Jews is amazing. Who would write bad things about themselves? Why is adultery, incest, and murder in the Bible? The reason I lean towards all the Bible being God's word is this. This is a story of God's relationship to sinful people. How can a holy God find common ground with a less than perfect creation? These books are a road map as to how God gets people back to him. In a way it's a love story between humans and God. His love for us.

There are boring parts of the Bible. Yet, even those are weaved into the theology of Jesus. The laws, sacrifices, and historical lineage paints a picture of why we are far from God. It also paves the way through Jesus to salvation in heaven. The Bible may not be on the best sellers list anymore. However, throughout history, God's word has found a way to survive thousands of years. Sometimes hidden in secret rooms and caves. The Bible is popular throughout time because it finds a way to survive.

Isaiah 40:8 *"The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever."*

Matthew 24:35 *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”*