

# Why Should the Bible Interest You?

The Bible is by far the world's most popular book. Why? For one thing, it is easy to identify with. It contains true-life accounts of real people and their interactions with one another and with God. These accounts teach practical lessons using simple and straightforward words that can be translated into hundreds of languages and understood by people living in any place or time period. And the Bible's principles always work.

Most important, the Bible claims to be not just a book *about* God but also a book *from* God. It reveals God's name, his personality, and his unchangeable purpose in creating the earth and humans. The Bible also relates the historic struggle of good versus evil: a fascinating, universal drama with a happy ending. Reading the Bible with an open mind thus lays a basis for faith and hope.

In the Bible, we find information available nowhere else. For example, the Bible tells us the truth about such topics as these:

- Where we come from and why we suffer
- God's arrangement to redeem humankind
- What Jesus has done for us
- The future of the earth and humans

Why not take a brief look at the following pages and consider what the Bible is all about?

## FAST FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

**Theme:** How God's heavenly Kingdom will restore righteousness and peace to the earth

**Contents:** 39 books in Hebrew (with a few passages in Aramaic) plus 27 in Greek

**Written:** By some 40 writers over about 1,600 years, from 1513 B.C.E. to about 98 C.E.

**Languages:** Now translated in whole or in part into more than 2,500

# How Did We Get Here?

Simply, in few words, Genesis, the first book of the Bible, explains the origin of the universe: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1) After God created plants and animals, he created the first humans, Adam and Eve. They were different from animals because humans have a measure of God’s own

qualities, including free will. Thus, they were responsible for their actions. If they obeyed God’s instructions, they could share in God’s purpose as the first parents of a global human family that would enjoy peaceful, perfect life on earth forever.

However, a certain angel, or spirit creature, seized the opportunity to use humans to his own selfish advantage. He thus became Satan, meaning “Resister.” Speaking through a serpent, Satan deceived Eve, telling her that she would be better off without God’s guidance. Adam and Eve followed Satan, breaking their tie with their Maker. Because of their bad choice, our first parents lost out on endless life and passed on to all of us sin, imperfection, and unavoidable death.

Immediately, God declared his intention to rectify this sad situation and give Adam’s descendants a way to gain endless life. God foretold that a “seed”—a special individual—would ultimately destroy Satan and undo all the suffering that Satan, Adam, and Eve had caused. (Genesis 3:15) Who would that “seed” turn out to be? Time would tell.

In the meantime, Satan constantly tried to thwart God’s good purpose. Sin and wickedness spread rapidly. God determined to destroy the wicked in a flood. He instructed righteous Noah to build an ark—a huge floating box—to save himself and his family, along with the animals that he was instructed to take into the ark.

A year after the Flood began, Noah and his family stepped out of the ark onto a cleansed earth. But the “seed” had yet to appear.

—Based on Genesis, chapters 1-11; Jude 6, 14, 15; Revelation 12:9.



# God Arranges to Deliver Mankind

God promised faithful Abraham that the foretold “seed” would be one of Abraham’s descendants. By means of that one, people of “all nations” would obtain blessings. (Genesis 22:18) Abraham’s grandson Jacob later moved to Egypt, where his family grew to become the ancient nation of Israel.

Later, in Egypt, a tyrannical Pharaoh enslaved the Israelites until God raised up the prophet Moses, who led the nation out of the country through the miraculously parted waters of the Red Sea. After that, God gave Israel laws, including the Ten Commandments, to guide and protect them. Those laws specified offerings for forgiveness of sins. Inspired by God, Moses told Israel that God would send them another prophet. That prophet would be the promised “seed.”

More than 400 years later, God promised King David that the coming one, the “seed” foretold in Eden, would rule over a kingdom that would last forever. That one would be the Messiah, the Deliverer appointed by God to save mankind and restore Paradise to the earth.

Through David and other prophets, God progressively revealed more about the Messiah.



They foretold that he would be humble and kind and that under his rule hunger, injustice, and war would end. All mankind would be at peace with one another and even with the animals. Sickness, suffering, and death—never part of God’s original purpose—would disappear, and people who had died would return to life on earth.

God foretold through the prophet Micah that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem and through the prophet Daniel that he would later be killed. But God would raise the Messiah from the dead and appoint him as King in heaven. Daniel also foresaw that ultimately the Messiah’s Kingdom would permanently replace all other governments. Did the Messiah really come as prophesied?

—Based on Genesis, chapters 22-50, as well as Exodus, Deuteronomy, 2 Samuel, Psalms, Isaiah, Daniel, Micah, Zechariah 9:9.

## THE HOLY NAME OF GOD

Genesis 2:4 contains the first appearance in the Bible of the name *Jehovah*. This unique name occurs about 7,000 times in the original-language manuscripts of the Holy Scriptures. Its meaning—“He Causes to Become”—assures us that God is fully capable of carrying out all that he purposes and promises.



# “We Have Found the Messiah”!

Some four centuries after the last book of the Hebrew portion of the Bible was written, Micah’s prophecy about the Messiah was fulfilled: Jesus was born in Bethlehem. About 30 years later, in 29 C.E., the first part of Daniel’s prophecy about the coming of the Messiah was fulfilled. Jesus was baptized, and God anointed him with holy spirit. Right on time, the long-awaited Messiah, the Seed, had arrived!

Jesus immediately began his ministry, “declaring the good news of the kingdom of God.” (Luke 8:1) Just as it had been prophesied, Jesus proved to be kind, gentle, and genuinely concerned about others. His teaching was practical and loving, and he cured people of “every sort of infirmity,” demonstrating that God was with him. (Matthew 4:23) People of all ages flocked to Jesus and concluded: “We have found the Messiah”!—John 1:41.

Jesus foretold that just before his Kingdom took complete control, the world would experience wars, earthquakes, and many other troubles. He urged all to “keep on the watch.”—Mark 13:37.

Jesus was a perfect man who remained obedient to God, but he had enemies who eventually had him killed. His death thus provided the perfect offering to buy back for us what Adam and Eve had lost—the prospect of endless life in Paradise.

Jesus’ death fulfilled prophecy, as did God’s resurrecting Jesus as a powerful spirit creature three days later. Jesus then appeared to more than 500 of his disciples. Before ascending to heaven, Jesus commissioned his followers to

take the good news about him and his Kingdom to “people of all the nations.” (Matthew 28:19) How thoroughly did they carry out that assignment?

—Based on Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, 1 Corinthians.



# Good News for All Mankind

The resurrection of Jesus filled his disciples with conviction and zeal. The apostle Paul in particular traveled throughout Asia Minor and the Mediterranean, organizing congregations and strengthening Christians to stand firm in the face of moral pressures and violent opposition. Despite such challenges, Christianity flourished and spread.

Paul himself was put in prison. Yet, even there he wrote letters of encouragement and counsel to the Christian congregations. He warned of an even greater threat—apostasy. Guided by God’s holy spirit, Paul foresaw that “oppressive wolves” speaking “twisted things” would enter in among them and “draw away the disciples after themselves.”—Acts 20:29, 30.

By the end of the first century, this apostasy had begun. About that time the resurrected Jesus gave the apostle John the Revelation, a symbolic view of the future. As John then wrote, neither opposers nor false teachers would prevent God from completely realizing his original purpose for the earth and humankind. “Every nation and tribe and tongue and people” will hear the good news about God’s Kingdom. (Revelation 14:6) Paradise will be restored on earth, and anyone who wishes to do God’s will can be part of it!

Does that sound like “good news” to you? If so, learn more about God’s message for mankind as found in the Bible and how it can benefit you today and in the future.

You can read the Bible for yourself online at [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org). On that Web site, you can also examine the brochures *The Bible—What Is Its Mes-*

*sage?* and *Good News From God!* as well as the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* along with other publications that discuss why we can trust the Bible and how we can apply its practical counsel in our family and personal life. Or ask any of Jehovah’s Witnesses for further information.

—Based on Acts, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, 1 John, Revelation. ■

