



# **Biblical Foundations**

## Course I - Bible Basics

### From History to Daily Use

Week 4 Organization

# Objectives:

- Understand how the Bible is organized generally
- Understand at a basic level the types of writing used in the Bible
- Understand the various parts of a modern Bible and how to use them

# The Bible's Organization

Canon

Books

Testaments (Covenants)

Chapters

Genres

Verses

# The Bible's Organization

## Canon

- The entire Bible is a collection of sacred books
- An anthology

## Testaments (Covenants)

## Genres

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# The Bible's Organization

## Canon

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## Testaments (Covenants)

- Old Testament
- New Testament

## Genres

## Books

## Chapters

## Verses

# Testament / Covenant

- two or more parties who come together to make a contract, agreeing on promises, stipulations, privileges, and responsibilities

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/covenant/>



# Old Testament

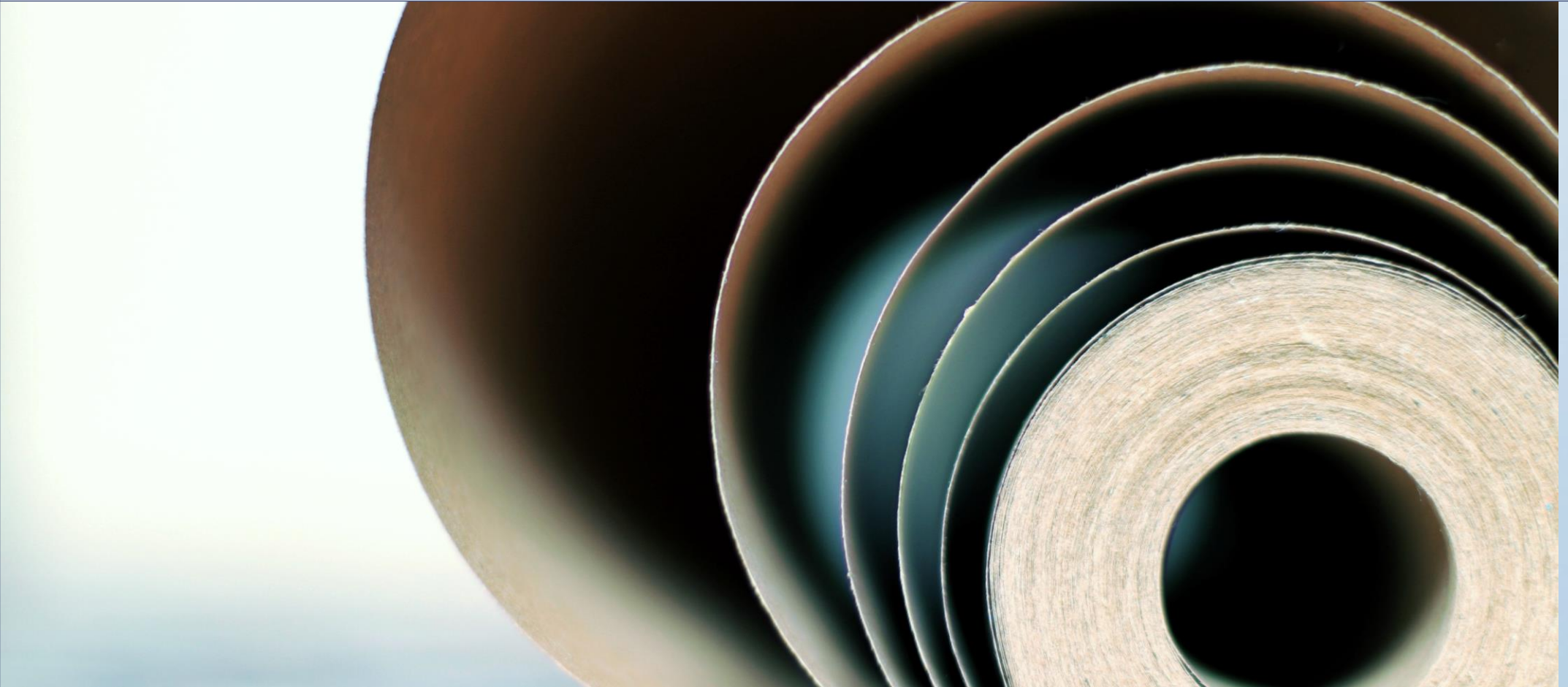
- 39 books
- Testimony / Covenants point forward to Christ
- Written approximately 1400-430 BC
- Contains all the writings associated with the covenant agreement God made with Israel in Moses' day (Exodus 24:8).
- Tells us how God relates to the people of Israel through the Law of Moses until the coming of the promised Messiah

# New Testament

- 27 books
- Testimony / Covenant fulfillment in Christ
- Written 45-90 AD/CE
- Concerns the agreement God has made with humankind through Jesus Christ.
- Tells us how God relates to mankind considering what Messiah has done.



The New is in the Old concealed,  
the Old is in the New revealed.





## Genre:

- a grouping of writing (music, movie, art...) similar in form, style, or subject matter.

*“Since it is after all literature, [the Bible] cannot properly be read except as literature; and the different parts of it as the different sorts of literature they are.”*

C. S. Lewis *(Reflection on the Psalms, 3)*

# The Bible's Organization

## Canon

- The entire Bible is a collection of sacred books
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## Testaments (Covenants)

- Old Testament – 39 Books
- New Testament – 27 Books

## Primary Genres

- Law, History, Poetry/Wisdom, Prophecy, Gospel, Letter/Epistle, Apocalyptic

## Books

## Chapters

## Verses

# Old Testament Organization by Genre

## Before Septuagint

- **Torah/Law** – the first 5 books of the Bible
  - Unchanging order
- **Prophets**
  - Major and Minor
    - Categorized by length
    - Order changed as records added
- **Writings** – Poetry, Proverbs
  - Order changed

## After Septuagint (LXX 250-280 BCE)

- **Law**
- **History**
- **Wisdom** (Poetry, Proverbs)
- **Prophets**
  - Major
  - Minor

# New Testament Organization by Genre

- Gospel
- History
- Letters
  - Pauline
  - General
  - Hebrews
- Prophecy



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## Books

- 66 individual books
- 40 Authors

## Chapters

## Verses

# Divisions

## Chapters

- Stephen Langdon
- 1205AD

## Verses

- Robert Estienne (Stephanus)
- 1555AD





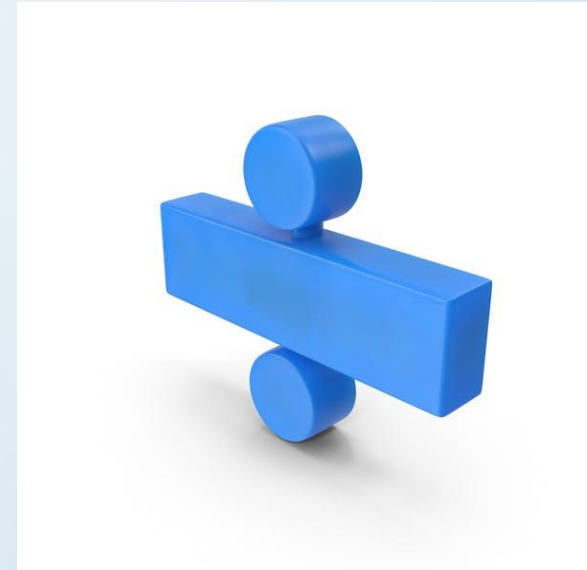
# Divisions: Not inspired nor authoritative!

## **Benefits:**

- Referencing – study, commentary
- Public Reading

## **Problems:**

- Arbitrary
- Interfere with the sense, meaning, clarity of the passage
  - Not what the authors intended
- Add an immense amount of visual clutter to distract from the text



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## Chapters

929 Chapters in the Old Testament  
160 Chapters in the New Testament

## Verses

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## Chapters

- 929 Chapters in the Old Testament
- 160 Chapters in the New Testament

## Verses

23,145 Verses in the Old Testament  
7,957 Verses in the New Testament

# Wait! What?



Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: **It is good for a man not to touch a woman.** 1 Corinthians 7:1 NKJV

You may ask me for **anything** in my name, and I will do it. John 14:14 NIV

I can do **all things** through Him who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13 NASB

Emphasis added

# DANGER:

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- Chapter and verse divisions give the impression that the Scripture should be read and studied in bits and pieces. This is not what the original authors intended. The entire context must always be considered. Consequently, the chapter and verse divisions should be ignored when one attempts to properly interpret the entire message of Scripture.



# Headings, Cross-references, Footnotes (commentary), Concordance, other helps

**Reference material added by the Translation Committee to aid effective study.**

- **Headings** – give a clear indication of what's ahead, or where the reader might find similar teaching
- **Cross-references** – leads reader to other passages of similar content
- **Footnotes** (commentary) – written by committee or member to interpret the passage for the reader
- **Concordance** – provides definitions for words as used in the original languages and other instances where the word is used in scripture

## **Problems:**

- Commentary may not agree with the reader's doctrine
- Referencing can create visual distraction
- Can lead to superficial / passive "study"
  - Does the work of interpretation and application **for** the reader
- Are not exhaustive tools

# Assignment

Genesis 1-3 using Bible tools

