



Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry is a mission work of the American Association of Lutheran Churches.

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Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry provides on-site pastoral care and Bible discussion groups for the students, faculty, staff, and administration in the collegiate communities in and around Columbia, Missouri.



Acknowledgments:

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Next Week:

How do people use the Bible? What is a foundational framework for interpretation?

Bring a friend, make a friend!

Heidelberg Colloquy 02: What About the Bible?

Christians believe the account of God, man, sin, and salvation is accurately preserved for us in the Bible, a collection of writings assembled over time and recognized by the late 2nd century A.D. For this reason, we use the Bible as our primary resource when we consider Christianity.

Translation

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic; the New Testament in Greek. While the originals no longer exist many copies of copies of the manuscripts do exist (several thousand). Because the Bible is pertinent to everyone, it has been translated into many languages. While no translation perfectly reproduces the original, many faithful translations have accurately maintained the original sense.

In the English language, several very good translations have been produced. The better translations are:

New King James Version (NKJV)
English Standard Version (ESV)
New American Standard (NAS)
Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB)
New International Version (NIV)

Some other translations may be useful as commentary but are not as good at reproducing the original.

The Hebrew and Greek manuscripts still are the ultimate authority in cases of doctrinal dispute. The translations can aid us.

The word “Bible” means “book.” Christians confess that the Bible is the Word of God, the “Book of Books,” God’s revelation of himself to humans. It speaks to every generation and every culture.

What claim does the Bible make for itself?

2 Timothy 3:14-16

1 Peter 1:22-25

Two Divisions

The Bible has two parts: *Old Testament* and *New Testament*.

Jesus Christ is the center of each and becomes the dividing point between them. The Old Testament points ahead to Jesus Christ. The New Testament reveals his coming.

John 5:39

Galatians 3:7-9

Jesus Christ is not only the dividing point in the Bible, but he is the dividing figure in history.

B.C. “Before Christ” (sometimes, B.C.E. = “Before Common Era”)

A.D. “*Anno Domini*” (“in the year of the Lord”) (sometimes C.E. = “Common Era”)

The different writings in the Old and New Testaments are often classified as follows:

Old Testament:

5 books – Law

12 books – History

5 books – Wisdom Literature

5 books – Major (longer) Prophets

12 books – Minor (shorter) Prophets

New Testament:

4 books – Gospels

1 book – History

13 books – Paul’s Letters

8 books – General Letters

1 book – Prophecy

Verbal Inspiration

The Holy Spirit “breathed into” (inspired) the writers the thoughts and words they were to write.

2 Timothy 3:14-17

2 Peter 1:19-21

The Purpose of the Bible

(See 2 Timothy 3:14-17. Passages in parentheses suggest applications)

1. make wise to salvation (*John 14:6*)
2. training in righteousness (*Romans 15:4*)
3. correct doctrine (*Ephesians 4:11-16*)
4. rebuking (*2 Thessalonians 3:6-15*)
5. comforting (*1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*)
6. equipping (*Ephesians 4:11-16*)

For Further Consideration:

What are the ruling documents for different world religions and philosophies?

Why is it helpful to have some sort of documentary evidence or other teaching for a religion?

Is the Bible a book you should have if you wish to understand Christianity better? Could it possibly help you understand many people in your world?