

Becoming a Christian

If you feel the call of God, do not resist - weighed down by pride, peer pressure or even fear.

There are millions who are here now (Christians) and elsewhere (in heaven), waiting to cheer you on, not counting Jesus our Saviour himself. Waiting to support you, to walk with you.

I urge you that just as you would diligently research something new with an open mind – do the same for this. Seek God and you will find him. Draw close to him, and he will draw close to you.

Becoming a Christian starts with confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord (Master, Saviour, Messiah, and God), believing that:

“Yet to all who did receive him [Jesus], to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. Children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”ⁱ

God further says in His Word in that:

“If we confess the Lord our God and believe in our hearts that God raised His son Jesus from the dead, we shall be saved.”ⁱⁱ

If you believe, then pray a simple prayer (pray it loud or silently) to ask Jesus to save you. The prayer can be as simple as this below:ⁱⁱⁱ

Prayer of confession and faith in Jesus

Jesus, I know that I have sinned and am in need of a Saviour.

I believe that when you went to the Cross, you went there for me and all my sins. I trust You to save me right now. I give you my life.

Today, I know I’m saved and that You forgive me, but help me to understand what it means to live for you every day. Amen.

Once you become a Christian, there are some 6 suggested steps^{iv} as you start the journey.

These steps in brief are:

1. Begin reading the bible^v .

To know how to read the bible, it is generally been divided in the following 3 ways or levels

- Books (e.g Genesis or often abbreviated to Gen)
- Chapters (e.g Chapter 1)
- Verse (e.g 1)

Hence where you see a reference such *Gen 1: 1* means Genesis, Chapter 1, verse 1.

In Appendix 1, we include a very useful section to know more about the bible. It covers:

- *A timeline of selected events - compared to world events (e.g Pyramids, Magna carta)*
- *How the bible is structured and how everything fits together.*

2. Begin praying

Praying is simply talking to God – your Father, my father. He says we should, pray always (without ceasing), give thanks always and rejoice always. This is all part of praying.

3. Become baptised

Just before he ascended to heaven (as you will read in the bible), Jesus commanded his disciples as follows (in what is called the “Great Commission”):

“I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.”^{vi}

What does baptism mean?

The bible says that it signifies: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. At Baptism, in going into the water and coming out - we “die and bury the old life” and “resurrect with Jesus in the new life”.

“Baptise” is a transliteration of the original Greek word *baptizw* (*baptizo*). In turn, *baptizo* comes from the root word *baptw* (*bapto*), a term used in the first century for **immersing** a garment first into bleach and then into dye, both cleansing and changing the color of the cloth.

4. Build friendships with other Christians, join a church

The Christian journey was never meant to be walked alone. Find a community to join. These are now your brothers and sisters.

5. Help others (God commands us to love our neighbours)

The bible makes it clear that “faith without works is dead” – If you believe, it is expected you will demonstrate God’s love as a “Light shining in darkness”. It starts with helping lift one another’s burdens.

6. Tell someone about your faith.

Just as you received the Good News, you will tell others – as the great commission in step 3 above shows. Think of 1 – 5 people you know. Who do you want to be with you having eternal life? Tell them about what God has done for you.

P.S I encourage you to do each of the above things regularly. The Christian journey is a marathon – not a sprint. Set your mind to come close to God, to win the race – he will come close to you.

Appendix 1: About the bible

The bible is for Christians God speaking. A popular verse ^{vii} explains it as follows:

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living, ¹⁷ so that the person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good deed.”

The bible is really a collection of books and is universally accepted to contain 66 books divided as follows:

- **Old Testament (OT)** which comprises of 39 books which are based primarily on the Hebrew bible (or Tanakh) ^{viii}
- **The New Testament (NT)** which comprises of 27 books which are based primarily on the writings/letters of the apostles of Jesus Christ, who are considered by Christians to be the “Messiah” – who was prophesied about in the Old testament/Hebrew scriptures.

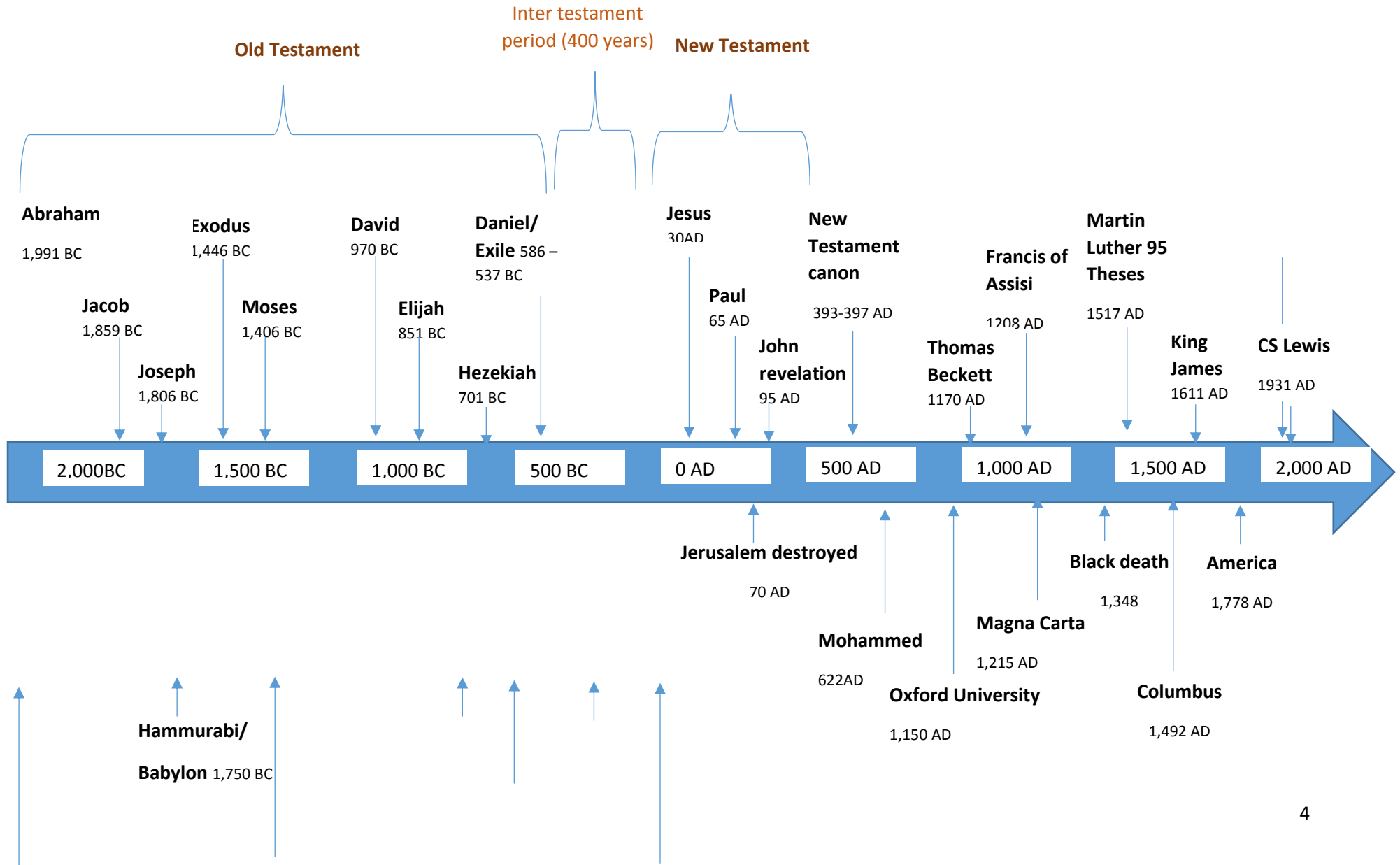
The bible was formally written over an approximate 1,500 year period but many parts would be based on earlier writings including oral history faithfully passed down from generation to generation. By c. 250 AD Old Testament was considered finalised and by 393 AD following a number of meetings and a process of assessing what was divinely inspired, the New Testament was similarly finalised.

How do you know that the bible is true?

Many of the events in the bible including places and people have been corroborated through witnesses, archaeology or other sources. The bible itself gives an example of a “test” for what is truly from God ^{ix}: *“If a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD but the thing does not take place or prove true, it is a word that the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; do not be frightened by it.”* On this basis, many of the predictions made by prophets many years earlier gave proof of this. Examples in the bible included the Prophet Isaiah who in around 700 BC prophesied that a virgin would give birth to a baby. This prophesy being fulfilled with Jesus’ birth amongst others. This gave the later readers further proof of the scriptures being the very breath of God.

Bible time line

When you read the bible, you will see many stories, how do these relate to other events in history? The timeline below can help you put this into perspective.^x



Assyria

900 BC

Alexander the

Great 330 BC

Buddha

400 BC

Pyramids of Giza

2,500 BC

Hittites

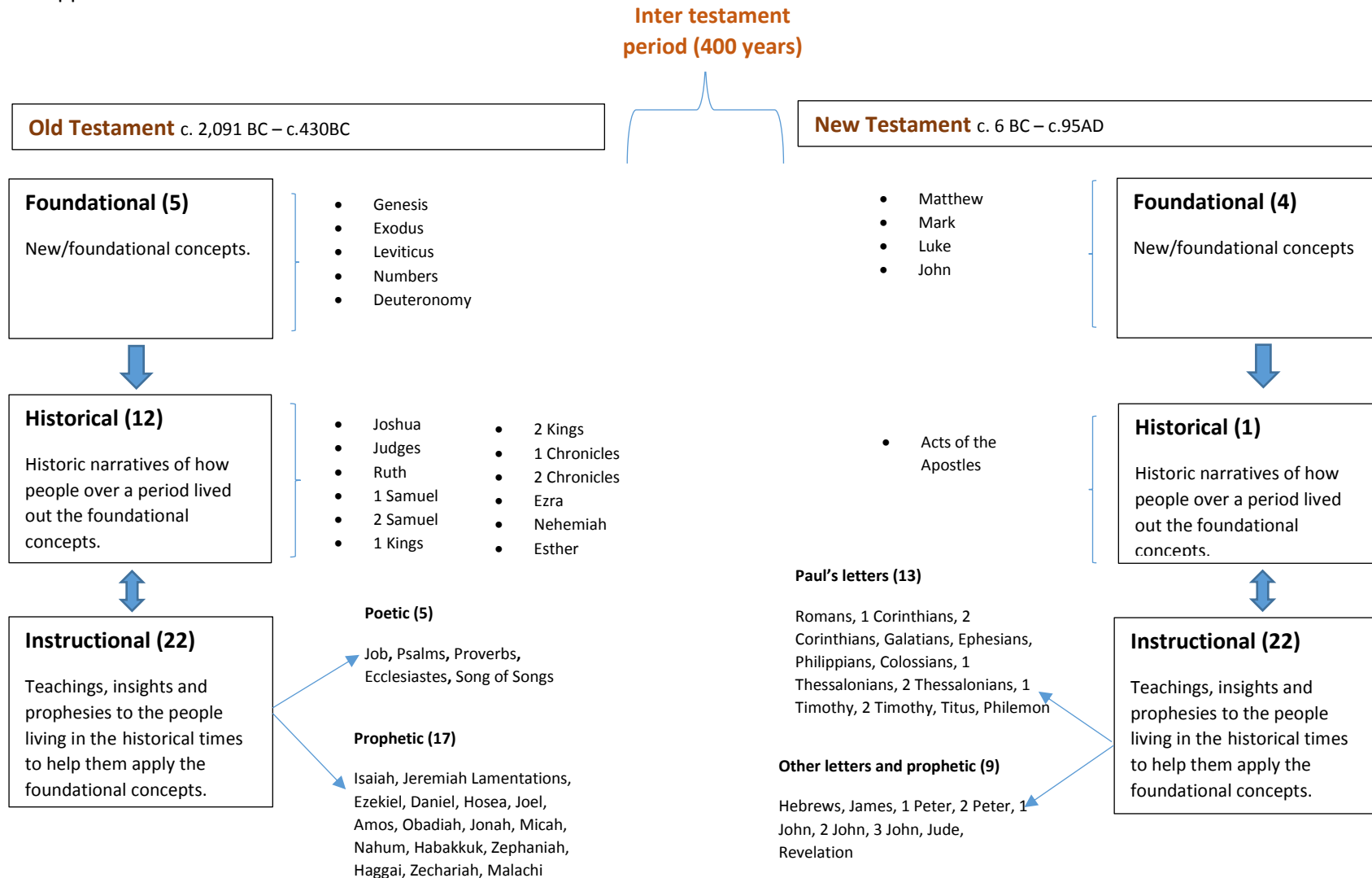
1,600 BC

Roman empire

100 BC

How the bible is structured

The overall structure of the books of the bible in order to understand how they relate to each other is diagrammatically shown as below. ^{xi} The dates used are approximate. ^{xii}



Notes

ⁱ John 1: 12-13

ⁱⁱ Romans 10:9

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://howtoknowjesus.joycemeyer.org/>

^{iv} <https://www.gotquestions.org/new-Christian.html>

^v <https://www.bible.com/en-GB>

^{vi} Matthew 28: 18 -20 (GNT)

^{vii} 2 Timothy 3: 16 – 17 (GNT)

^{viii} https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Testament

^{ix} Deuteronomy 18: 22

^x Sources: <http://biblehub.com/timeline/#complete>; <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-28/important-events-in-church-history-christian-history.html>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_ancient_history

^{xi} Adapted from Bible Survey, A Big Screen Perspective, Dr. Bert Downs from [www. biblicaltraining.org](http://www.biblicaltraining.org)

^{xii} <http://biblehub.com/timeline/#complete>