



Lecture # 1 Part 1

The Structure and Divisions of the Bible

THE BIBLE AND ITS TESTAMENTS: DEFINITIONS

MEANING OF “BIBLE”

The word *Bible* can rightfully claim to be the great-grandson of the Greek word *biblos*, which was the name given to the outer coat of a papyrus reed in Egypt during the **eleventh century B.C.** The plural form of *biblos* is *biblia*, and by the **second century A.D.** Christians were using this latter word to describe their writings. *Biblia* gave birth to the **Latin** word of the same spelling, *biblia*, which was in turn transliterated into the **Old French** *biblia* by the same process. The modern English word *Bible* is derived from the Old French, with the Anglicized ending. **The word is thus the product of four stages of transliteration and transmission.** The term Bible is often used synonymously with “Scripture” or “Word of God” (see section # 3).

“MEANING OF TESTAMENT”

Next to the fact that the Bible is a *biblos*, or one book, the most obvious fact is that it is divided into two parts called testaments. The Hebrew word for testament is *berith*, meaning a “**covenant, or compact, or arrangement between two parties.**” The Greek word *diathēkē* is often translated “**testament**” in the King James Version.¹ This is a poor translation, and is one of the corrections made in newer versions of the Bible that regularly translate it as “**covenant.**”²

The Greek version of the Old Testament, the **Septuagint (LXX)**, translates the Hebrew word *berith* as *diathēkē*, thus showing the derivation of the Greek term. The Old Testament was first called *the covenant* in Moses’ day (**Exodus 24:8**).

Exodus 24:8 (NASB)

⁸ So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

Later, Jeremiah announced that God would make a new “**covenant**” with His people (**Jeremiah 31:31–34**), which Jesus claimed to do at the Last Supper (**Matthew 26:28**, cf. **1 Corinthians 11:23–25**; **Hebrews 8:6–8**).

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NASB)

³¹ "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,"



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declares the LORD.

³³ "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

³⁴ "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

(Repeat) Later, Jeremiah announced that God would make a new “covenant” with His people ([Jeremiah 31:31–34](#)), which Jesus claimed to do at the Last Supper ([Matthew 26:28](#), cf. [1 Corinthians 11:23–25](#); [Hebrews 8:6–8](#)).

[Matthew 26:28 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁸ for this is **My blood of the covenant**, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

[1 Corinthians 11:23-25 \(NASB\)](#)

²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread;

²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

²⁵ In the same way *He took* the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the **new covenant** in My blood; do this, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me."

[Hebrews 8:6-8 \(NASB\)](#)

⁶ But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

⁷ For if that **first covenant** had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.

⁸ For finding fault with them, He says, "BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH;