

THE STRUCTURE/ORGANIZATION OF THE BIBLE

Text: 2 Timothy 2:15

INTRO: It is clear even to the casual observer that the Bible is divided into two main sections—the O.T. & the N.T. But more thorough understanding of its basic structure will greatly help us to learn and remember its message to us.

I. THE O.T. – 39 “books”

A. 17 books are primarily historical.

1. Genesis covers at least 2500 years of history of the early earth.
2. Exodus through Nehemiah/Esther covers the next 1100 years, from the time of Moses to about 400 years before the birth of Jesus.

NOTE: There is some overlap. The books of Samuel and Kings is duplicated to some extent by the material in the books of Chronicles.

B. 5 books of poetry. If a person wants to read the songs/poetry of Israel, he will find most of it in these 5 books, Job through Ecclesiastes. If, however, he wants to read about the life and times of the poets, he must refer **back** to the historical section. Most of the poetry was written by David and Solomon. They lived about 1,000 B.C., and the history of their times is found in 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles.

C. 17 books of prophecy. Again, if a person wants to read about the times when the prophets lived, he must turn **back** to the historical section of the O.T.

1. The work of the prophet was to forth-tell. He received direct revelations from God & relayed them to the people—messages about the present, the future, & sometimes about the remote past.
2. On several occasions we must turn backwards in our Bibles to the historical section to find the

fulfillment of the things the prophets had written about.

II. THE N.T. – 27 books.

A. 5 books of history.

1. Matt, Mark, Luke & John record the life & work of Jesus in His earthly ministry.
2. The book of Acts records the history of the first 34 years of the Lord's church. Most of the remaining books of the N.T. were written during the historical period dealt with in the book of Acts. Even the ones that were written after that time have definite connection with the events recorded in Acts.

B. 21 books (epistles, letters) of doctrine.

1. Several of these books were written to congregations.
2. There are also several epistles or letters to individuals: Timothy, Titus, etc.

C. 1 book of prophecy: Revelation. We must remember that this book was written nearly 2,000 years ago, and it dealt primarily with “things that must shortly come to pass” therefore, though it was mostly future for those to whom it was originally written, most of it has been fulfilled before our time.

CONCLUSION: In closing, let us note a couple of suggestions that will greatly help us to make the correct application of what we learn when we study the Scriptures.

A. The three basic rules of Bible study are context, context, and context.

1. There is first the historical context: by whom and to whom was this written? (We are reading someone else's mail. It was not written **to** us, but it has been preserved **for** us.)

2. There is the immediate context: the words and sentences immediately surrounding the passage we are studying.
3. There is the over-all context. What else has God said on this Bible subject in other passages.

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Highway 29, Liberty Hill, TX, June 4, 2004 (meeting)
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