

THE BIBLE SURVEY

VOLUME ONE

A Guided Journey Through All 66 Books of Scripture



SSENTABA RONALD SALONGO



THEOS TRANSFORMING MINISTRIES LIBRARY

2026 EDITION

THEOS TRANSFORMING MINISTRIES LIBRARY

The Bible Survey

Volume One

*A Guided Journey Through All 66 Books of
Scripture*

Ssentaba Ronald Salongo

2026 Finished Edition

Publication details

The Bible Survey — Volume One

A Guided Journey Through All 66 Books of Scripture

Ssentaba Ronald Salongo

Theos Transforming Ministries Library

2026 Finished Edition

Copyright © 2026 Ssentaba Ronald Salongo. All rights reserved.

Biblical references follow the Protestant sixty-six-book arrangement. Statistics identify the translation and counting method used. Consult the named research sources for historical discussion.

This handbook supports reading the Bible itself, personal study, family teaching, and church discipleship.

Contents

Introduction.....	5
How to use this handbook.....	10
Part One Foundations of Bible Survey.....	12
Part Two The arrangement of the books.....	21
Part Three The Law and the historical books.....	24
Part Four Wisdom poetry and worship.....	45
Part Five Major prophets.....	51
Part Six Minor prophets.....	57
Part Seven The Bible story in historical order.....	70
Part Eight The Gospels and Acts.....	87
Part Nine The letters and Revelation.....	93
Part Ten The New Testament story and the whole Bible.....	116
Sources and further reading.....	128

Book finder

Old Testament

Genesis 24
 Exodus 25
 Leviticus 26
 Numbers 28
 Deuteronomy 29
 Joshua 30
 Judges 31
 Ruth 32
 First Samuel 34
 Second Samuel 35
 First Kings 36
 Second Kings 37
 First Chronicles 38
 Second Chronicles 39
 Ezra 40
 Nehemiah 41
 Esther 43
 Job 45
 Psalms 46
 Proverbs 47
 Ecclesiastes 48
 Song of Solomon 49
 Isaiah 51
 Jeremiah 52
 Lamentations 53
 Ezekiel 54
 Daniel 55
 Hosea 57
 Joel 58
 Amos 59
 Obadiah 60
 Jonah 61
 Micah 62
 Nahum 63
 Habakkuk 64
 Zephaniah 65
 Haggai 66
 Zechariah 67
 Malachi 68

New Testament

Matthew 87
 Mark 88
 Luke 89
 John 90
 Acts 91
 Romans 93
 First Corinthians 94
 Second Corinthians 95
 Galatians 96
 Ephesians 97
 Philippians 98
 Colossians 99
 First Thessalonians 100
 Second Thessalonians 101
 First Timothy 102
 Second Timothy 103
 Titus 104
 Philemon 105
 Hebrews 106
 James 107
 First Peter 108
 Second Peter 109
 First John 110
 Second John 111
 Third John 112
 Jude 113
 Revelation 114

Introduction

The Bible is a library that tells one great story. Its books were written in different places and times, using different kinds of writing, yet Christians receive them together as God's Word. Genesis begins with creation. Revelation ends with the hope of creation made new. Between these two books, we meet families, nations, kings, prophets, ordinary workers, faithful servants, and people who fail. Above all, we meet the God who creates, judges evil, keeps His promises, and brings salvation through Jesus Christ.

This handbook has one purpose: to help a reader understand the whole Bible without becoming lost in its many books. A Bible survey is a guided overview of Scripture. It identifies the main features of each book, explains where it belongs in the larger story, and prepares us to read the actual biblical text with understanding. Like a map, a survey shows the road ahead. The map is useful because it helps us make the journey; it does not replace the journey.

Some readers know a few favourite verses but do not know the setting of those verses. Others know the stories of Noah, David, Esther, or Jesus, but struggle to place them in order. A survey connects those familiar passages. It shows why Abraham's promise matters to Israel, why the exile matters to the prophets, why the Gospels begin in a world ruled by Rome, and why the letters address real churches with real questions. Reading a passage in its setting helps us avoid using the Bible to support an idea the passage never intended to teach.

We will begin with the meaning of Bible, Scripture, covenant, inspiration, and other essential terms. We will then learn the arrangement of the Old and New Testaments. Every one of the sixty-six books has its own survey, including its authorship, approximate date, setting, purpose, a suggested key passage, main message, movement through the book, relationship to Christ and the Trinity, and practical application. A key passage is a teaching choice, not a claim that a book has only one important verse.

After surveying the Old Testament books, we will walk through the story in chronological order. The prophets will be placed beside the kings and crises during which they spoke. We will then examine the centuries between Malachi and the coming of Jesus. The page separating the Testaments is thin, but the history behind it is rich. Persian rule, Greek influence, persecution, the Maccabean struggle, and Roman power all help explain the world of the Gospels.

The New Testament section follows the life and work of Jesus, the growth of the early church, and the teaching of the apostles. Jesus is fully God and fully human. He truly died for our sins and rose bodily from the dead. His salvation is the heart of the Christian message. The Father sends the Son; the Son accomplishes redemption; the Holy Spirit brings God's people into life, holiness, and mission. These truths help us understand the unity of the Bible without flattening its different books into the same message.

This book uses simple words wherever possible. An unfamiliar term is explained when introduced. Its spiritual aim is equally simple: knowledge should lead to worship, obedience, love, and hope. We read Scripture to know God, to receive His truth, and to live faithfully among other people. A child, a parent, a teacher, or an older believer should be able to use this handbook to explain the main message of a biblical book in clear language.

Exile means forced displacement from a homeland. Preexilic means before the exile, exilic means during it, and postexilic means after it. Historical dates are often approximate. Some books name their writers; others do not. Traditional Christian attributions are identified as traditional rather than presented as signatures the text does not contain. A book's setting and the time when it reached its final written form may also differ. These distinctions help us speak honestly while continuing to receive and study Scripture with faith.

Bible statistics at a glance

The following counts use the usual sixty-six-book English Protestant arrangement and KJV verse numbering. Counts can change when a translation combines or separates verses, includes different books, or uses a different word-counting method. Chapter and verse numbers are reference tools added after the biblical books were written; they are not part of the original authors' manuscripts.

Measure	Old Testament	New Testament	Whole Bible
Books	39	27	66
Chapters	929	260	1189
Verses in KJV numbering	23145	7957	31102
Longest chapter by verses	Psalms 119 with 176	Luke 1 with 80	Psalms 119
Shortest chapter by verses	Psalms 117 with 2	Revelation 15 with 8	Psalms 117
Longest book by chapter count	Psalms with 150	Matthew and Acts with 28 each	Psalms
Shortest book by verse count	Obadiah with 21	2 John with 13	2 John
Single chapter books	Obadiah	Philemon and 2 John and 3 John and Jude	Five books

Psalms is also the longest book by ordinary KJV English word counts. Jeremiah is often described as the longest by original Hebrew word count. These statements use different measuring systems and should not be treated as a contradiction. The shortest New Testament book by usual English word count is 3 John, while 2 John has fewer verses. A verse is a numbered unit, not a fixed number of words. [3, 4]

Longest verse. Esther 8:9 is the familiar longest verse in the KJV, with ninety words when counted as space-separated words. Revelation 20:4 is commonly identified as the longest New Testament KJV verse, with sixty-eight words by that method. These results should always be named with their translation and counting rule. Changing translation can change the result.

Shortest verses. John 11:35, Jesus wept, is the shortest KJV verse by English letter count. Rejoice evermore in 1 Thessalonians 5:16 also has two words. In the Old Testament, 1 Chronicles 1:25, Eber, Peleg, Reu, has three words and is a short KJV minimum by letters. Job 3:2 is often called the shortest, but its KJV wording has six words, so it is not the shortest by that measure. Original-language results differ; Luke 20:30 is especially short in Greek although its KJV English translation is longer. [5]

Opening and closing. The first word of the KJV biblical text is In at Genesis 1:1. The final word is Amen at Revelation 22:21. The Old Testament ends with curse in Malachi 4:6 in the KJV; Matthew begins with The in Matthew 1:1. These observations exclude titles, publisher pages, and headings. Other translations and the Jewish ordering of the Hebrew Bible may have different closing words.

Middle chapter and middle verses. With 1189 chapters, the middle chapter by canonical sequence is Psalm 117, the 595th chapter. With 31102 verses there are two middle positions, 15551 and 15552, falling at Psalm 103:1-2 in the usual KJV sequence. Psalm 118:8 is therefore not the mathematical middle verse under this system. A memorable devotional claim should not be repeated as a statistic without checking the arithmetic.

Authors and word totals. Approximately forty authors and roughly fifteen centuries of composition are common teaching estimates, not exact totals established by a list of signed manuscripts. Several books are anonymous or composite. There is no translation-independent total

number of biblical words or letters. As a named example, KJV Audio Bible reports 789668 words in its own text under its stated method: 609277 in the Old Testament and 180391 in the New Testament. This is an edition-specific count, not a universal total. [4] A word total is meaningful only when its edition and counting method are named. Names, prayers, promises, and prophecies likewise cannot have one exact total unless we first define what is being counted.

Reading pace. Reading four chapters daily would cover 1189 chapters in about 298 days; reading three daily would take about 397 days. Chapters differ greatly in length, so these are planning figures rather than equal daily workloads. A slower reader who understands and obeys the message is not spiritually behind someone who reads quickly.

How to use this handbook

Read the foundations first, then keep the classification chart nearby. Before opening a biblical book, read its survey and locate its place in the timeline. Read the suggested key passage in your Bible. Follow the book's movement, noticing repeated words, important people, and the problem being addressed. After reading, explain the main message in your own words and choose one practical response.

For a family or study group, read one book survey at a time. Younger readers may begin with the main message and a selected story. Older readers can explore the historical setting and related passages. The questions are

invitations to discussion, not an examination. A useful pattern is to read, explain, apply, and pray. Do not rush through difficult passages simply to finish a schedule.

Part One Foundations of Bible Survey

What is the Bible

The Bible is the collection of sacred writings Christians receive as Scripture. In the Protestant arrangement followed by this handbook, it contains thirty-nine Old Testament books and twenty-seven New Testament books. Its authors use narrative, law, poetry, wisdom, prophecy, Gospel, letter, and visionary writing. Christians believe these human writings bear God's authoritative message through the work of the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

The Bible is both a library and a unified witness. A library contains distinct works; unity means those works belong to a connected purpose. Genesis explains creation and the entrance of sin. The covenants develop God's promises. Israel's history exposes human unfaithfulness and God's patience. The prophets announce judgment and hope. The New Testament proclaims that God's saving purpose comes to fulfilment in Jesus Christ and will reach its completion in the new creation.

Calling the Bible God's Word does not mean every speaker recorded in it speaks truth. The serpent lies in Genesis 3. Job's friends sometimes misunderstand his suffering. Scripture faithfully records what people said, while its larger context helps us judge those words. We must therefore distinguish a recorded statement from a command or teaching God asks us to follow.

How the Bible received its name

The English name Bible comes through Latin from the Greek expression *ta biblia*, meaning the books. The Greek words *biblos* and *biblion* could describe a book or scroll. Ancient writings circulated on papyrus or parchment before the familiar bound book became common. Over time, the plural expression for sacred books became the familiar singular name for the collection.

The Bible did not first become Scripture when someone bound its writings together or gave the collection an English name. Israel read sacred writings long before the church used the word Bible. Jesus refers to the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (Luke 24:44). The New Testament also uses expressions such as the Scriptures and the holy Scriptures. The name describes the collection; its Christian authority rests on God's revelation, not on the history of the English word.

The phrase Book of Books is a useful description, but it should not be mistaken for a literal translation of a biblical verse. Likewise, the Hebrew Bible has twenty-four books in its usual Jewish arrangement, containing the material of the thirty-nine Protestant Old Testament books. Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles are each counted as one; Ezra and Nehemiah are joined; the Twelve minor prophets are counted together. Different counting does not necessarily mean different content.

Key words for understanding Scripture

Survey means an overview that identifies major features and their relationships. A Bible survey asks what a book

says, who first received it, where it belongs in history, and how its message fits Scripture as a whole. It is wider than a verse study and shorter than a full commentary.

Scripture means sacred writing. Christians use the term for the biblical writings received as God's Word.

Revelation means God's disclosure of Himself and His purposes. Creation points to His power, while Scripture tells the story of His acts and words, reaching its clearest personal expression in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-3).

Inspiration describes God's work through the human writers of Scripture. It is more than an author feeling encouraged or creative. The biblical teaching is that Scripture comes from God and is useful for teaching and forming His people. Inspiration does not erase the writers' personalities, languages, research, or historical circumstances. Luke describes his investigation of earlier testimony in Luke 1:1-4.

Canon means the recognized collection of authoritative scriptural books. Its background is a word for a rule or measuring standard. **Canonicity** concerns a writing's status within that collection. The recognition of Scripture developed through the life of Israel and the early church; it was not the work of one person assembling all sixty-six books on one occasion.

Testament is a traditional name associated with covenant. A **covenant** is a binding relationship in which commitments are established. Scripture contains several covenants: with Noah, Abraham, Israel at Sinai, and David, and the new covenant promised through the prophets and established through Christ. The Old Testament collection

contains more than the Mosaic covenant alone. The New Testament collection explains the new covenant in Jesus and its consequences for God's people.

Israel may mean Jacob, the nation descended from him, or the northern kingdom after the monarchy divided. Context determines the meaning. **Judah** may mean Jacob's son, his tribe, or the southern kingdom. **Gentiles** means the nations beyond Israel. **Church** means the people called together in Christ, not merely a building. Jew and Gentile are reconciled in Him (Ephesians 2:11-22), while the history and promises of Israel continue to matter in biblical interpretation.

Gospel means good news. In Christian teaching, it announces salvation through Jesus Christ, especially His death and resurrection. The four **Gospels** are the biblical accounts of His life, ministry, death, and resurrection. An **epistle** is a letter, usually written to a church, a group of believers, or an individual.

Prophecy communicates God's message, including warning, correction, promise, and sometimes prediction. A prophet is not only someone who predicts future events. **Apocalyptic** writing uses visions and symbols to reveal God's rule, judgment, and final victory. **Apocrypha** is a term used in different ways for writings outside a particular recognized canon. Revelation is a canonical New Testament book with apocalyptic features; apocalyptic and apocryphal do not mean the same thing.

Context means the surroundings that help explain a passage: nearby sentences, the whole book, historical circumstances, and its place in Scripture. **Genre** means a

kind of writing. **Hermeneutics** is the study of interpretation. **Exegesis** draws meaning from the text; **eisegesis** reads an idea into it. **Application** asks how an understood teaching should shape life today.

Theophany means an appearance or manifestation of God. **Christophany** means an appearance understood as the pre-incarnate Christ. Christians interpret some Old Testament appearances in this way, but a passage should not be called an explicit identification of Jesus when it does not identify Him. **Typology** sees earlier people, events, or institutions as patterns fulfilled more fully in Christ. A type is not identical to its fulfilment in every detail.

Trinity names the Christian teaching that the one God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There are not three gods, and the Father, Son, and Spirit are not merely three temporary roles. The Old Testament strongly affirms God's oneness and speaks of His Word and Spirit. The New Testament brings the relationship of Father, Son, and Spirit into clearer view, especially in Jesus' baptism and the command to baptize (Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19).

Languages translation and the Septuagint

Most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew. Portions, including sections of Ezra and Daniel, are in Aramaic. The New Testament was written in Greek, commonly called Koine Greek, the widely used Greek of the period. Knowing this prevents the mistake of treating an English word as if it were the only possible expression of the original meaning.

A translation carries the meaning of a text from one language into another. Some translations stay close to the form of the original; others express the meaning in more natural contemporary language. Both involve interpretation. Comparing reliable translations can help us notice difficult wording, but it does not give permission to choose whichever wording supports our favourite idea.

The Septuagint is the traditional name for ancient Greek translations of Jewish Scriptures. Its abbreviation LXX is the Roman numeral for seventy. A tradition preserved in the Letter of Aristeas connects the translation of the Law with seventy-two translators under Ptolemy II in Alexandria during the third century BC. The rest of the collection was translated over time. Alexander's conquests helped spread Greek culture, but Alexander did not personally commission the whole Septuagint. [1]

How the collection was recognized

The Old Testament writings were preserved, copied, read, and received through Israel's religious life. The New Testament writings circulated among early Christian communities. Churches valued their connection with apostolic witness, their agreement with the received faith, and their widespread use. These are useful historical considerations, not a single universal five-question examination applied by one committee.

In his Easter letter of AD 367, Athanasius lists the twenty-seven books of the New Testament recognized today. His Old Testament list is not simply the modern Protestant list arranged in the same way. He is an important witness to

recognition, not the inventor of all biblical books or the sole person who gathered the entire Bible. His own letter makes these distinctions visible. [2]

This handbook follows the sixty-six-book Protestant canon requested for the survey. Catholic Bibles include additional Old Testament books, called deuterocanonical in that tradition, and Orthodox collections differ in their extent. We can state our arrangement clearly while describing other traditions respectfully. Judith and Maccabees will be discussed as background literature without being added to this handbook's sixty-six-book survey.

Reading faithfully

Begin with observation: who speaks, what happens, and what words are repeated? Then ask about meaning: what would the first audience have understood? Finally ask about application: what does this reveal about God, human life, and faithful obedience? Move in that order so personal application grows out of the passage rather than replacing it.

Narrative describes events, but not every action is an example to copy. Poetry uses images, so mountains clapping do not require a literal explanation of hands. Proverbs express wise patterns, not unconditional promises that every righteous person will become wealthy. Prophecy often addresses both an immediate situation and a wider hope. Letters answer particular pastoral problems. Visions use symbols whose meaning

should be sought first in Scripture and their historical setting.

The Bible's unity leads us to Christ, but it does not require us to turn every stone, colour, name, or number into a secret prediction of Him. The Passover connection is explicitly developed in 1 Corinthians 5:7. Joseph's rejection and later role as a rescuer provide a useful Christian comparison, but the New Testament does not identify every detail of Joseph's life as a type. Careful interpretation strengthens spiritual teaching by giving it a firm foundation.

Covenants and the thread of redemption

The covenant with Noah concerns the preservation of life after judgment (Genesis 9). The Abrahamic promises concern descendants, land, and blessing reaching the nations (Genesis 12; 15; 17). Sinai forms redeemed Israel into a covenant people with worship and social responsibilities (Exodus 19-24). The promise to David directs hope toward an enduring kingdom (2 Samuel 7). The new covenant promises forgiveness and inward renewal (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Luke 22:20).

These covenants develop the story rather than presenting five unrelated religions. God delivers Israel before giving the Sinai law. Grace is therefore present in the Old Testament, not absent until Matthew. The law exposes sin and orders Israel's life; Christ fulfils God's saving purpose. The new covenant does not mean God discovered that His earlier plan was a mistake. It reveals the fulfilment toward which the earlier promises pointed.

Some Christian teachers organize history into dispensations, often seven. A dispensation is an administration or arrangement of God's dealings. That scheme can be a useful teaching framework within its tradition, but the Bible does not give a numbered seven-part table. Other Christians use covenantal or redemptive-historical frameworks. This survey follows the biblical story and states the covenants directly, allowing readers to distinguish Scripture from later systems of arrangement.

Reflection: Explain Bible survey in one sentence. Why does translation matter when quoting statistics? How would you distinguish a prophecy, a type, and an illustration?

Prayer: Father, help us read Your Word with understanding. Keep us humble where we do not know, obedient where You speak clearly, and faithful to Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Part Two The arrangement of the books

Five Old Testament groupings

Pentateuch means the five-book collection: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These books are also called the Law or Torah.

The five broad Christian groups are the Law, historical books, wisdom and poetry, major prophets, and minor prophets. Major and minor describe the relative length of the prophetic collections, not the value of their message or the spiritual importance of their writers. Lamentations is placed with the major prophets in this arrangement although it is primarily poetic lament. Daniel combines narrative and apocalyptic vision.

Group	Books	Number
Law or Pentateuch	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	5
Historical books	Joshua Judges Ruth 1 and 2 Samuel 1 and 2 Kings 1 and 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther	12
Wisdom and poetry	Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon	5
Major prophets	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel	5
Minor prophets	Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	12

The Hebrew Bible uses the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. Joshua through Kings belong among its Former Prophets, and books such as Daniel and Chronicles occur in the Writings. These arrangements highlight different aspects of the same collection. Book order is a reading structure; it is not a complete chronological timeline.

New Testament groupings

The New Testament contains four Gospels, one history of the early church, twenty-one letters, and one book of apocalyptic prophecy. The twenty-one letters comprise thirteen bearing Paul's name and eight usually grouped as general letters, including Hebrews. The author of Hebrews is not named and should not be confidently counted as Paul merely to produce fourteen Pauline letters.

Group	Books	Number
Gospels	Matthew Mark Luke John	4
History	Acts	1
Letters bearing Paul's name	Romans through Philemon	13
General letters	Hebrews James 1 and 2 Peter 1 and 2 and 3 John Jude	8
Apocalyptic prophecy	Revelation	1

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels because they can be viewed together and share much material and a broadly related narrative shape. John is also a Gospel, but has a distinctive selection and arrangement. Synoptic does not mean that only three

books qualify as Gospels. The traditional portraits of Jesus as King, Servant, perfect Man, and divine Son are useful emphases, but every Gospel presents more than one aspect of His identity.

The pattern used for every book

Each survey begins with authorship and dating, followed by a key passage and purpose. The main message explains the book in connected paragraphs. The movement identifies its major sections or events. Christ and the Trinity distinguishes direct teaching from later Christian connections. Application shows how the message can shape faith and conduct. Read the suggested passages in their biblical context rather than memorizing only the survey.

Dates marked BC count backward toward the time before Christ; AD counts forward in the conventional Christian era. The abbreviation c. means approximately. Ancient regnal years, overlapping reigns, calendars, and uncertain composition dates can produce different scholarly dates. The charts below use approximate conventional dates and identify major uncertainties.

Part Three The Law and the historical books

Genesis

Authorship and date: Traditionally associated with Moses and the Pentateuch. The text does not name a single writer; its composition and final form are debated. Traditional Mosaic dating lies in the second millennium BC.

Chapters: 50.

Key passage: Genesis 12:1-3.

Purpose: To explain beginnings and God's promise of blessing through Abraham's family.

Main message: God creates a good world and gives humanity dignity and responsibility. Sin breaks fellowship and spreads through families and societies, yet God continues to seek, judge, preserve, and promise. The story moves from all humanity to a particular family through whom blessing will reach the nations. Abraham is chosen by grace; his family is not chosen because every member is morally superior.

The family stories teach faith amid delay and failure. Abraham waits for Isaac; Jacob learns that God's blessing cannot be secured safely through deception; Joseph discovers that evil human actions do not defeat God's purposes. Genesis ends in Egypt, with the promise still awaiting fuller fulfilment. Its ending prepares us for Exodus.

Movement and events: Creation and fall occupy chapters 1-3. Cain and Abel, the flood, and Babel show the spread of sin and