Introduction to the Writing and Purpose of the Bible

The Bible has two parts. It has an Old Testament and a New Testament.

The Old Testament is a record of the work of God and his people up until the time of Jesus, God's son.

The New Testament is a record of Jesus life on earth and a history of how the Christian church began.

The Gregorian calendar (used in America) is based on these Testaments as well.
B.C. means "before Christ".
A.D. means "the year of our Lord" which refers to Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament is BC. The New Testament is AD.

The Bible is a collection of 66 different books.
These books were written over a 1500 year time span by about 40 different authors. These authors were inspired by God to write the things that they observed and the things they heard from God.

The first book was likely written about 1400 B.C.
The last book in the Bible was likely written about 95 A.D.

The Bible contains History, Law, Wisdom, Poetry, Prophecy, Narrative, and Letters.

The purpose of the Bible is to:
1. Tell us about God the Creator of the World
2. Help us learn what God thinks about us
3. Show us how God wants us to live.

The Bible tells us about the struggle between good and evil.
It tells us how God, the Creator of the world, is the only one who has the power to bring good out of evil.

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Old Testament…

The first book of the Bible is Genesis. Genesis means the Book of Beginnings.

The Bible begins with the story of how God created the earth and the universe.
He made the stars and the planets and the earth.
He made the grass, the animals, and every living thing.

God spoke, and the universe came into being. He made everything in the universe by his own power.

Dead things cannot make something living. Only something that is living can make something else that is living. God was the living Being who made all other living things.

The last thing God made at Creation was humans. He made a man named Adam, and a woman named Eve and he put them in a special garden.

God made humans in his own likeness. We has humans can think, we can reason, and we can feel, in much the same way that God does.

God does not have a physical body. He is a Spirit. The Bible tells us that there are many spiritual beings in the universe and spiritual beings outside the universe that we cannot see.
God is all powerful. He can be present everywhere at the same time. He knows everything that ever happened, and knows everything that will happen in the future.

The first few pages in the Bible talk about how God made the world.
The next few pages talk about a beautiful garden God made for Adam and Eve to live in. Each day he would come to Adam and Eve and talk with them.

God told them they could eat the fruit of every tree in the garden except for one particular tree.

(If you tell humans they can do anything they want except for one thing, what do you think humans will want to do? They will want to do the very thing that you told them not to do.)

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So for awhile, Adam and Eve obeyed God and they did not eat from the one tree. But then Satan, an evil angel, came to Adam and Eve and tempted them. He encouraged them to disobey God and eat of this tree. Eve ate some fruit and gave some to her husband. Then they both realized that what they did was wrong. They were guilty. Guilt is the feeling we have when we know we did something that is wrong.

This was the beginning of sin in the world. Because Adam and Eve disobeyed, God told them they must leave the Garden of Eden.

No more could they talk to God person to person. Now they must pray if they want to talk to God.
No more could Adam and Eve live in perfect happiness. From now on there would be much sadness. Outside of the Garden of Eden, the ground does not grow good crops. There is much pain and suffering.

But God promised that someday, he would bring a Redeemer to make things right again. A Redeemer is someone who can take something bad and make it into something good.

The next part of the Bible records how people became very ungodly and how God needed to destroy the world with a Flood. He saved Noah and his family. Noah was a man who did what was right. Noah pleased God.

The rest of the first book of the Bible (Genesis) is about a few people in the Mid-East who decided to keep following God even though many people did not love God and serve Him.

The next several books of the Bible talk about God forming a nation around the children and grand-children of a man named Abraham. Abraham lived in what is now the country of Iraq and moved to what is now the country of Israel. Abraham was a man of faith. Faith is believing in something we cannot see.

Abraham believed in the God who lives in heaven. The city where God lives is not an earthly city. It is a heavenly city. It is a spiritual city. The Bible tells us that “Abraham looked for a city whose builder and maker was God.”

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People who believe in God, believe that someday God will create a new earth that is very beautiful and that when we die, we can go to be with God. Abraham believed this and that is why he is sometimes called, “The Father of the Faithful.”

All through the Old Testament we read that God wants his people to be holy. He does not want them to sin. God wants people to worship only Him. That is what we read about in the next four books of the Bible after Genesis. In these four books we can read about the laws God gave his people to obey. For example, there were laws that told the Jews to offer animal sacrifices for their sins. These sacrifices were to help them prepare for the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who would someday die for all the sins of the world. These laws were to help them live well together and help them prepare for the Messiah, the Savior who would come to earth someday as a king.

The next section of the Bible is history. This is a history of how the nation of Israel began.
We can read how that sometimes the Jews obey God. Sometimes they do not obey God and then God needs to punish them. (The Jews are also called Israelites or Hebrews in the Bible.)

Then there is a book of poetry called Psalms. These are poems that the Jews sang in their worship.

Then there are some books of wisdom. These books contain proverbs and wise advice.

The last part of the Old Testament is the writings of Prophets. The Prophets told the people God’s words and made predictions about the future. Often they talked about the Messiah who would come to earth and save the people from their sins. This Messiah was Jesus. Some of these predictions were made 700 years before Jesus came to earth as a baby.

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New Testament…

There are four books at the beginning of the New Testament called "the Gospels. The word Gospel means, "Good News".

The New Testament begins by telling us of the birth of Jesus. Just as the prophets predicted, Jesus Christ, God's son was born as a baby to a virgin. This took place around the year 0 A.D. This was very good news.

The first book of the New Testament is Matthew. Then there is *Mark, Luke, John.* These 4 books are records of the birth, life, death, and ascension of Jesus. Matthew and John were disciples of Jesus and wrote eye witness accounts of his life.

These are very important books of the Bible because they tell us how God the Father sent his son Jesus into this world to save us from sin and to help believers become part of his Kingdom, the Kingdom of God.

God's Kingdom is a heavenly Kingdom. God's Kingdom has a King, it has angels who serve as messengers, and it has ambassadors. Its ambassadors are Christians who follow the principles of God's kingdom. True Christians don't just believe in God. They talk with God through prayer. They obey God's commandments. They love God and want to do the things that make him happy.

In the Gospels, Jesus tells us that if we believe in him and accept his teachings, he will send his Spirit to live in our hearts and change our hearts. Jesus says we will have new goals and new reasons for living.

The fifth book of the New Testament is called, "The **Acts** of the Apostles". This book is a record of how the Christian church got started and records the acts of Jesus' disciples.

The rest of the New Testament is letters that the disciples of Jesus wrote to churches or individuals.
For example, the sixth book is Romans. This was a letter that the Disciple Paul wrote to the church at Rome in Italy.

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Now I would like to tell you about some of the principles of Jesus' Kingdom.

1. In Jesus' Kingdom, followers of Jesus are expected to forgive and bless people who make life difficult for them. Jesus teaches us that we should not punish people or distance ourselves from other people. Rather we should open our hearts and love those who make life difficult for us. This is a very hard thing to do, and only those who have Jesus' Spirit can love people who make life difficult for them.

2. In Jesus' Kingdom, there is no need for worry and anxiety. Jesus teaches us to trust him and not be burdened with stress. Jesus does not want us to be full of anger. He wants us to have the peace of God because we know that God is in control, and that God will make everything right someday.

3. In Jesus' Kingdom, women are treated with honor and respect. When the New Testament was written, women's testimony would not stand in court. That is how much they were looked down on. Jesus reversed this by treating women with love and respect.

   Writer Dorothy Sayers says, "Perhaps it is no wonder that the women were first at the Cradle and last at the Cross. They had never known a man like this Man [Jesus]-- there never has been such another.

4. In Jesus' Kingdom, there is a high respect for human life. No matter if a baby is still in the womb, or if a person is about to die, people are very valuable in God's sight. Jesus cares about everyone, not just those who are healthy and strong.

5. In Jesus' Kingdom, husbands and wives are expected to love each other and show honor and respect for each other for as long as they are both alive. Jesus teaches that husbands and wives should not divorce each other and remarry.

There are many other things that Jesus taught but these are just a few.

The Bible tells us that all of us have sinned. We have done things that are against the teachings of Jesus. The Good News is that Jesus will forgive our

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sins and make us part of his heavenly kingdom if we believe in Jesus, are truly sorry for what we have done wrong, and then worship him and serve him for the rest of our life. Someday, Jesus will come back to earth. This could happen anytime. We need to be ready for his return.

Many of us have believed in God and have promised God that we will be faithful to him until we die. This is a promise that anyone can make anytime. When we believe in God, God comes to live in our heart.

Being in a relationship with the God of the Universe and knowing that my sins are forgiven is not something I would trade for anything else in the world. It is a most blessed experience. I hope each of you will someday experience the same relationship with God.

Followers of Jesus believe that the Bible is the most important book in the world because it helps us understand God and the true meaning and purpose of life. I encourage you to read and study this Book.

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《圣经》的写作与目的导读

《圣经》可以分为两个部分，《旧约》与《新约》。
《旧约》是关于神及其子民的言行记录，这段记录的时间一直持续到神之子——耶稣诞生时。
《新约》是记录关于耶稣在人间的生活以及基督教会产生的历史。
美国公历或新历也是建立在《旧约》与《新约》的基础上。
B.C.（公元前）的意思是“before Christ”（基督之前）。
A.D.（公元）的意思是“the year of our Lord”（主之年），意指耶稣基督之诞生年。《旧约》讲述的是公元前的事情，《新约》讲述的是公元的事情。

《圣经》是由 66 本不同的书组成的合集。这 66 本书是由 40 多位不同的作者在长约 1500 年的时间里陆续写成的,这些作者从神那里获得启示与灵感才写出他们自己观察到的以及从神那里听到的事情。

第一本书大概写成于公元前 1400 年，最后一本书大概写成于公元 95 年。

《圣经》包含了历史、法律、智慧、诗歌、预言、叙事、和信件。

《圣经》写作的主要目的有以下：
1.告诉我们世界的创造者是上帝；
2.帮助我们了解上帝对凡人的安排；
3.向我们展示上帝希望我们如何生活。

《圣经》告诉我们有关善恶之间的斗争。它告诉我们，上帝——世界的创造者——是唯一一个有伟力将我们从恶中带出来的神。

旧约圣经的第一本书是《创世纪》，“创世纪”意思是 “起初的书”。

《圣经》以讲述上帝如何创造了地球和宇宙开始。上帝创造了恒星，行星和地球创造了植物，动物和每一个生物。

上帝说，宇宙应运而生，他用自己的伟力创造了宇宙中的一切。

死亡无法创造生命，只有生命才能创造生命，上帝就是那个创造了所有其他生命的生命体。

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上帝最后创造了人类，他创造了一个男性名叫亚当，一个女性名叫夏娃。上帝让他们生活在一个叫伊甸园的特别的地方。

上帝以自己的形象创造了人类，我们作为人类可以思考，可以思辨，可以有感情，很多地方都跟上帝一样。

上帝并没有肉体，他以灵体方式存在。《圣经》告诉我们这个宇宙里和宇宙外存在很多我们无法看见的灵体。

上帝是全能的，他无处不在，他对过去发生的和将来要发生的全知全晓。

《圣经》前几页谈到上帝如何创造世界，接下来的几页谈到上帝创造了一个非常美的花园供亚当和夏娃居住，并且他每天都会过去与亚当和夏娃交流。

上帝告诉他们可以吃花园中任何树上的果子，除了其中一棵很特殊的树上的果子不能吃。（如果你告诉一个人说，你可以做任何事情，但只有一件事情你不能做，你认为那个人会怎么做？他很可能就会去做那件你不让他做的事情）

在一段时间内，亚当和夏娃听从上帝的话，并没有去吃那棵树上的果子。但随后撒旦——一个邪恶的天使，来到亚当和夏娃面前并且诱惑他们违背上帝的话去吃不能吃的果子，夏娃吃了后也让她丈夫吃了。然后他们就意识到他们做错事情了，他们产生了罪恶感，罪恶感是一种我们做错事情就会产生的一种感觉。亚当和夏娃的行为是世界上罪恶的开始，他们违背了上帝，上帝告诉他们必须离开伊甸园。

他们无法再与上帝面对面交流了，如果他们想要与上帝交流，就必须通过祈祷的方式。亚当和夏娃再也无法那样全然幸福地生活了，他们的生活将会有很多磨难。在伊甸园之外，土地无法长出很好的庄稼，生活的痛苦和磨难也多起来了。

但上帝许诺，某一天，他会带来一个救世主，让事情回到正确的轨道上来。救世主就是能够将坏事转变为好事的人。

接下来圣经就记载了人们变得很不虔诚，而上帝想通过一场洪水毁灭世界。但他拯救了挪亚一家，挪亚做了正确的事情，上帝感到很高兴。

创世纪的剩余部分讲述的是在中东地区，即使有很多人并不信奉和服侍上帝，但仍然有小部分人决定继续跟随上帝。

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旧约接下来的几本书叙述了上帝如何为一个叫做亚伯拉罕的人的子孙们创建国家。亚伯拉罕曾经住在现在被叫做伊拉克的国家，后来搬迁到现在被叫做以色列的国家。亚伯拉罕是一个有信仰的人。信仰就是相信某种我们无法看见的事物。

亚伯拉罕信仰住在天国的上帝，上帝所居的城市不是人间的城市，而是天国的城市，是一座灵的城市。圣经告诉我们“亚伯拉罕在寻找一座由上帝创造的城市”。

信仰上帝的人认为，总有一天上帝会创造一个新的、很美的世界，当我们死亡之后，我们可以与上帝一起去那里生活。亚伯拉罕对此十分坚信，这也是为什么他会被称为“信徒之父”。

通过阅读旧约我们知道，上帝希望人们保持圣洁。他并不希望人们负罪。上帝希望人们只信仰他。这是我们从《创世纪》之后的四本书所读到的。在这四本书中，我们可以读到上帝给予人们去遵守的律法，例如，有一些律法告诉犹太人可以用动物祭祀来代表他们的罪，这些祭祀是帮助他们做好准备迎接弥赛亚——耶稣基督——那个在将来某一天将为全世界的罪而死的人。这些律法帮助他们更好地在一起生活，并帮助他们做好准备迎接弥赛亚——救世主——未来某一天将会来到人间成为王的那位。

旧约圣经的下一部分是有关以色列国家如何开始的历史，我们可以读到那时犹太人是如何信从上帝的。有时候他们背离了上帝，上帝要惩罚他们。（犹太人在圣经中也被称为以色列人或希伯来人）。

还有一本书叫《诗篇》，这些诗是犹太人在敬拜上帝时唱的诗。

还有一些书是关于智慧的，书里有各种谚语和明智的建议。

旧约的最后一部分是不同先知的著作。先知们教导人们上帝的话并预知未来，他们也经常讨论即将来人间拯救罪恶的救世主弥赛亚。这个弥赛亚就是耶稣。其中的一些预言是在耶稣诞生的 700 年前由先知所说的。

新约圣经

新约圣经的开头是四本福音书，“Gospel”意思是福音。

新约圣经开头讲述了耶稣的诞生。耶稣基督是上帝之子，是为纯贞处女所生的婴儿，这正如先知所预言的一样。他的诞生时间约为公元 0 年。这是非常好的福音。

新约第一本书是《马太福音》，接下来是《马可福音》、《路加福音》和《约翰福音》。

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这四本书记载了耶稣从出生、成长、死亡和升天的全过程。马太和约翰都是耶稣的门徒，他们都是耶稣生活的直接见证者。

这些是圣经中非常重要的书，因为它们告诉我们，上帝是如何派遣祂的儿子——耶稣来到世间，并从罪恶中将我们拯救出来，帮助信奉者加入上帝的国。

上帝的国是一个天上之国。上帝的国有国王，也有作为信使的天使，也有使节代表。它的使节代表是那些遵从上帝治国原则的基督徒。真正的基督徒不仅是信奉上帝，他们还可以通过祷告与上帝交谈，他们遵从上帝的诫命，他们热爱上帝，并想要做让上帝高兴的事情。

在福音书中，耶稣告诉我们，如果我们信奉他并愿意接受他的教导，他会让他的灵入驻我们的心灵并逐渐改变我们的心灵，耶稣说我们的生活将会有新的目标和新的理由。

《新约》的第五本书叫做《使徒行传》。这本书记录基督教会是如何产生的，并记录了耶稣门徒们的言行。

《新约》的剩余部分是耶稣门徒写给教会或个人的书信。例如，第六本书是《罗马书》，这是门徒保罗写给意大利罗马教会的书信。

现在，我想要与大家分享一些有关耶稣王国的原则：
1.在耶稣王国中，耶稣的信奉者们要去宽恕和祝福那些给他们生活造成困难的人，耶稣教导我们，不应该惩罚别人或远离人们，我们更应该敞开心胸去爱那些在生活中给我们造成困难的人们。这很困难，唯有那些真正拥有耶稣的圣灵的人才能做到如此。
2.在耶稣王国中，没有必要烦恼和忧愁。耶稣教导我们信任他，不要为压力所累，耶稣不希望我们充满了愤怒。他要我们拥有上帝一般的平和，因为我们知道一切在上帝掌握之中，上帝会将一切变得好起来。
3.在耶稣王国中，妇女深受尊重。在《新约》刚开始写作的那个年代，女性的证词是不被法庭采纳的，由此可见妇女被看得多轻。耶稣推翻了这一切，并以爱和尊重去对待女性。
作家多萝西·塞耶斯说到，这也许并不奇怪：妇女在耶稣还年幼时就去看望他，并一直陪伴他直到他为我们的罪死于十字架，因她们从未知晓有一个男人像耶稣一样，也再未出现第二个像耶稣这样的人。

4.在耶稣王国中，有对生命的高度致敬。无论是尚未出生的婴儿，还是即将死亡的老者，在上帝眼中都非常宝贵。耶稣关心每一个人，而不仅仅是那些健康强壮的人。
5.在耶稣王国中，丈夫和妻子要相亲相爱，在有生之年一直保持对彼此的尊敬和尊重。耶稣教导说，丈夫和妻子不应当离婚，不应当再婚。

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上面仅仅是耶稣教导的一部分，还有很多无法一一列举。

圣经认为我们人人有罪。我们已经做了有违耶稣教导的事情。福音是耶稣将会宽恕我们的罪，并允许我们加入他的国——如果我们能够信奉他，真诚反省自己所做的错事，并在我们的余生中敬奉他。总有一天，耶稣将会再次降临，我们需要为此做好准备。

我们中的很多人信仰上帝，并在上帝面前说会一直敬奉他直到死亡。这种承诺任何人在任何时间都可以做出，当我们信仰上帝，上帝就会来到我们的心间。

在与上帝的关系中，我们知道我们的罪将会被赦免，这是世界上任何其他东西都无法替代的。这是一种最受祝福的经历，我希望你们每一位在未来的某一天也能够与上帝有这样的关系。

耶稣的信奉者和追随者相信，《圣经》是世界上最为重要的书，因为它帮助我们理解上帝，理解生活的真正意义和目的。我很期待和鼓励你们也能够去阅读和学习这本书。

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The Story of the Father and Two Sons

11 Jesus said, “A certain man had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of your property.’ He divided his livelihood between them. 13 Not many days after, the younger son gathered all of this together and traveled into a far country. There he wasted his property with riotous living. 14 When he had spent all of it, there arose a severe famine in that country, and he began to be in need. 15 He went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed pigs. 16 He wanted to fill his belly with the husks that the pigs ate, but no one gave him any. 17 But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough to spare, and I’m dying with hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and will tell him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight. 19 I am no more worthy to be called your son. Make me as one of your hired servants.”’

20 “He arose, and came to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 21 The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

22 “But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe, and put it on him. Put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat, and celebrate; 24 for this, my son, was dead, and is alive again. He was lost, and is found.’ They began to celebrate.

25 “Now his elder son was in the field. As he came near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 He called one of the servants to him, and asked what was going on. 27 He said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and healthy.’ 28 But he was angry, and would not go in. Therefore his father came out, and begged him. 29 But he answered his father, ‘Behold, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed a commandment of yours, but you never gave me a goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this, your

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son, came, who has devoured your living with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.'

31 "He said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 But it was appropriate to celebrate and be glad, for this, your brother, was dead, and is alive again. He was lost, and is found.'"

Gospel of Luke, Chapter 15
World English Bible

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