

THE ONE STORY

Holidays provide unique opportunities to focus on specific sections of the Bible, God's written revelation to mankind. But you'd be selling it short if you thought it was merely an ensemble of various stories. The Bible is one great story, encompassing all of human history, as the record of God's own redemption of His people through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let's look at the outline from the infographic about the Bible found in Visual Theology, a helpful new resource by pastors Tim Challies and Josh Byers. ([Learn more at visualtheology.church](http://visualtheology.church) or challies.com/visual-theology). The Bible provides great conversation starters anytime, but especially in the midst of the Christmas season!

1- "The Bible is a collection." - *"The Bible is the authoritative collection of works given by God to humanity,"* writes Challies. *"The Bible is what we call a canon, a complete and authoritative collection of one person's written works."* The Bible is the most unique work ever produced, because God Himself is the divine author. God superintended more than 40 human authors over more than 1600 years, working through their personal lives, in the history and culture of the times. The Bible is authoritative because God Himself is the author, giving us an absolute standard of truth for life (2Timothy 3:14-17).

2- "The Bible has two Testaments." - *"The most significant division in the Bible is between two testaments, or two smaller collections of writings, the Old Testament and the New Testament,"* points out Challies. The Bible consists of 66 books, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. The word "Bible" refers to books, as used in Greek and Latin. "Scriptures" means writings, and as used in the Bible refers to the holy God-inspired books and records compiled in the Bible. A testament is a covenant or agreement which contains the testimony of the parties involved. The Old Testament basically records God's promises made to His people. The New Testament records God's promises are fulfilled in Christ.

3- "The Bible is a story." - *"The complete collection of God's revelation to humanity is in the form of a story -- the story of what God is accomplishing in this world,"* writes Challies. It's the story of redemption. God saving His people, from creation to consummation. From the perfect beginning and the fall into sin, on to the promises and prophecies of Christ, the cross, resurrection, heaven, and eternal salvation.

4- "The Bible is about Jesus." - *"The focus and hero of the Bible story is Jesus,"* notes Challies. *"In some way, every part of the Bible points forward to Christ or points back to Him."* The Bible is "His story" Passages such as Luke 24:44-49 and 1Peter 1:10-12 make this very clear, just as 2Peter 1:16-21 explain how the human authors were *"carried along"* by the Holy Spirit to write the very words of God.

5- "The Bible is God's Word." - *"God is present in and through the Bible in a special way, so that He continues to speak to us today. His voice reaches out to us today through the Bible,"* writes Challies. We hear God's voice as we read the Bible, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Bible itself explains how God "breathed out" His words by the Holy Spirit, who oversaw the men who wrote what God wanted recorded. The Holy Spirit is also the Bible's "illuminator" helping believers to understand what He wrote. The Bible contains about 750,000 words written by God for you. The Good News!

6- "The Bible is complete." - *"God has spoken and given us the Bible, and there is no reason to believe that He will ever add to it. What He means to tell us He has told us,"* says Challies. Jesus in John 14-16 promised the ministry of the Holy Spirit in order to complete God's written record. Do you want to hear from God today? To speak to your situation? Then read what God has written down for you, in the Bible!

7- "The Bible is trustworthy." - *"Because the Bible originates with God, it reflects the character of God. For that reason, we can believe that the Bible is without error and perfectly reliable. What God says is true,"* Challies affirms. The very words of God, *"it is written."* The Bible is true for all people in all times and in all places, because God is truth. Ultimate absolute truth. Because of its divine authorship, the Bible is remarkably consistent. It never contradicts itself, though there are mysteries and difficulties.

One of the greatest mysteries is the incarnation of Christ, which is what Christmas is all about. God becoming flesh in order to save His people. Thousands of years in the making. Read your Bible this season, especially Isaiah 9:1-7, Matthew 1-2, Luke 1-2, John 1:1-18, and all the other favorite Christmas passages. And thank God not only for the gift of Christ, the "living Word" - but also the Bible, the "written word" of God, which reveals the story of the one great Promise-Keeper! ☐