

1. The Bible

What is the Bible?

The word 'Bible' comes from the greek word 'biblos' which translates as 'book' (Luke 4:17). In the New Testament, *biblos* refers to the Old Testament Scriptures. But the word Bible refers to the entire Old and New Testament Scripture. Observe how Scripture is described in the verses below.

*"The law of the LORD is perfect,
restoring the soul;
The testimony of the LORD is sure,
making wise the simple."
"The precepts of the LORD are right,
rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD is pure,
enlightening the eyes."*

Psalm 19:7&8

*"And the words of the LORD are flawless,
like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times."*

Psalm 12:6

*"And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit,
which is the word of God."*

Ephesians 6:17

- ✓ Circle how Scripture is described in each of the above verses.

From these verses, what is the Bible? _____

Who wrote the Bible?

*"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable
for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;"*

2 Timothy 3:16

- ✓ Underline how Scripture is described.

Foundations of Doctrine

Christian Doctrine is the foundational teachings of the Faith. It is the dogma that binds believers worldwide together.

Because Christian Doctrine is based solely on Scripture, a study of it must begin with Bibliology: the study of the Bible. A proper understanding of Scripture is essential for a proper understanding of Doctrine.

Notice that each description of Scripture ends with the phrase 'of the LORD' or 'of God'. The testimony of Scripture is that the Bible comes from God.

The word 'inspired' is *'theopneustos'* which means God (*theo*) breathed (*pneustos*). Dr. Carl Henry, the preeminent apologist for Scripture's divine origin, has suggested that instead of saying Scripture is inspired, we should speak of Scripture as being 'expired', or *breathed out* by God. The reason we do not is because of the word's association with *death* which may give an erroneous connotation.

But Scripture originates from the innermost part of God, imbued with God's very being. The Bible is the autograph of God Himself to us! It is life for our souls and food for our new born spirits!

How did the Bible come to us?

Scripture comes by way of God's revelation to man. This means that God took the initiative to reveal Himself and His Plan for Mankind by way of Inspiration. Dr. Charles Ryrie defines it this way:

"Inspiration is God's superintending of human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error in the words of the original autographs His revelation to man."

Dr. Charles Ryrie

- ✓ **Circle** the word that describes God's action toward the 'human authors.'
- ✓ **Underline** what God used.
- ✓ **Underline** where God's revelation was recorded 'without error'.

Although sections of Scripture are clearly direct dictations of God's very words to us, how does this definition allow for the various books that comprise the Bible?

God supernaturally and uniquely communicated His Word to certain individuals so that the words they wrote down were precisely what God intended. This divine and miraculous process is called 'inspiration'. But how did inspiration take place?

"Take a scroll and write on it all the words which I have spoken to you concerning Israel and concerning Judah, and concerning all the nations, from the day I first spoke to you, from the days of Josiah, even to this day."

Jeremiah 36:2

How would you describe how God communicated with Jeremiah here? _____

The Bible is not just one book, but 66 books written by 40 different human authors. And each bears the unique style of its composer, while at the same time, being absolutely true to what God intended to communicate. From the narratives of Moses, to the poetry of David or the didactic style of Paul, God conveyed precisely what He wanted to say to us.

God does dictate portions of Scripture directly to us. The prophetic books, more than the others, possess this sense of God's very Words.

*“Above all, you must understand
that no prophecy of Scripture came about
by the prophet's own interpretation.
“For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man,
but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
2 Peter 1:20-21*

- ✓ **Underline** how ‘no prophecy of Scripture came about’.
- ✓ **Circle** from where prophecy did not originate.
- ✓ **Underline** how ‘men spoke from God’.

What does it mean that ‘no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation’? _____

How did prophecy come? _____

If the Bible is God's Word, and it is, then reading and studying it would be well worth our time.

Why should we study the Bible?

*“This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth,
but you shall meditate on it day and night,
so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it;
for then you will make your way prosperous,
and then you will have success.”*

Joshua 1:8

*“Moreover, by them Your servant is warned;
In keeping them (God's commandments) there is great reward.”*

Psalms 19:11

- ✓ **Underline** the results of keeping God's Word in the above passages.

How would keeping God's Word result in prosperity, success and ‘great reward’?

The prophet must always be careful to speak the very words, and only the words, of God. He may not add nor subtract from what God the Holy Spirit inspired him to communicate, for that would have been punishable by death. (Deuteronomy 18:20)

There is the belief that God will reward His faithful with material prosperity. Although this is sometimes the case (Job 42:10ff), more often, God's faithful are persecuted and even executed (the prophets, the apostles & Jesus Himself). The prosperity of God is His reward awaiting those who forsake the temporal for the eternal.

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them,
may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

Matthew 7:24

- ✓ **Circle** what one must do besides hear Jesus' words.
- ✓ **Underline** what this person may be compared to.

How does the symbolism of a 'house built on the rock' apply to those who hear and do Jesus' words?

How might this be a positive application to your life? _____

2 Timothy 2:16-17 provides four more reasons to remain in God's Word.

*“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable
for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;
so that the man of God may be adequate,
equipped for every good work.”*

2 Tim 3:16-17

- ✓ **Circle** the four ways in which Scripture is profitable.
- ✓ **Underline** how the 'man of God' may be adequate.

How can the Scriptures equip a person for 'every good work'? _____

According to this verse, how significant is knowing the Word of God? _____

The image of a house built on rock projects permanence and solidness versus the house built on shifting and unstable sand. God's Word is eternal, and a life founded on God's Word will withstand the cataclysmic shock of His judgment that will annihilate lives built on the shifting promises of worldly wealth, beauty and success.

There can be no good work without God's direction and instructions. Our service for Him is simply the expression of our faith in and obedience to Him. It is impossible for these to occur without a clear understanding of His Word.

Is the Bible Reliable?

Unlike most books, the Bible speaks of extraordinary things. From the beginning of time itself to its end. Of origins and extinctions; of prophecies and fulfillments; of divine promises, imperatives and truths. But can we trust any of it? Of course! For its very words were born in the mind of the God who is **Faithful and True!**

*"Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel,
according to all that He promised;
not one word has failed of all His good promise,
which He promised through Moses His servant."
1 Kings 8:56*

*"For truly I (Jesus) say to you, until heaven and earth pass away,
not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law
until all is accomplished."
Matthew 5:18*

- ✓ **Circle** what 'has failed of all (God's) good promise'. *1 Kings 8:56*
- ✓ **Underline** what will not pass away until 'all is accomplished'. *Matthew 5:18*

What is Jesus saying in the above verse? _____

But not only is Scripture True, it is also **complete!** Though we are tempted to, we do not have the right nor the freedom to alter or edit it in any way.

*"Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do;
you shall not add to nor take away from it."
Deuteronomy 12:32*

- ✓ **Circle** what we are forbidden to do.

Why do people sometimes alter or change what the Bible teaches? _____

Every prophecy, every promise and every part of the Word of God will be fulfilled. Because God cannot lie, His Word is completely and absolutely trustworthy!

The only reason people alter God's Word is because they presumptuously think they know more than God! They believe God's Word is in error because it does not correlate with what they see or perceive to be true, and therefore needs correction. That is the height of arrogance!

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Walking in the Truth

In light of what you have learned, list things that are True of Scripture:

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

In light of what is True of Scripture, list what you will do.

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

*"Sanctify them in the truth;
Your word is truth."
Jesus*

(John 17:17)

How to Study the Bible
Download and work through
Discipleship Study 3 from
BiblestudyCD.com.