

4 THE HOLY BIBLE

Introduction to the Bible

It is universally accepted that there are two fundamental sources of human knowledge: reason and experience. Both are essential to the understanding of the world around us. Yet, reason and experience do not answer the most profound and important questions of life. Where did I come from? What is the purpose for my existence? Where am I going, if anywhere, after death? Is there another source of knowledge that carries us beyond the limitations of human reason and experience? Is there a source that answers these, the three most important questions of life?

There is a third source of knowledge called revelation. This revelation is found primarily in the Word of God, commonly called the Bible. The Bible teaches us that God has revealed Himself and His commandments in the Holy Scriptures. In these Scriptures we have direct access to an infinite and personal Being who created all things for His pleasure, who is not limited like His finite creation. He is a God who is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and immutable.

The Bible describes two forms of revelation usually called general and special. According to *Psalm 19:1-6* and *Romans 1:20*, God has revealed Himself to us through His creation. This general revelation is available to all. The Bible teaches also that God has implanted the knowledge of His existence in every human heart *Romans 1:18; 10:8, Acts 17:28*

God's special revelation involves a more direct communication with man including dreams, visions, angels, the person of Christ Himself and the Bible, God's written revelation. The Bible presents God's plan of redemption for mankind. All have sinned and all must be redeemed. God's will for man as he relates to God's plan for history is the theme and focal point of the Scriptures.

God chose to reveal Himself in a progressive way. As time passed, more and more was revealed and recorded about God, His will and His ways. At the completion of The New Testament, God's written revelation was complete.

I. The Scriptures are unique in several ways:

- A. It is unique in its production. A book written by approximately forty authors over a 1600 year period of time, making one complete integrated unit *2Peter 1:19-21*.
- B. It is totally accurate in its recording of history and prophecy fitting together as though one man wrote it without one contradiction. The middle verse of the Bible is *Psalm 118:8*; the middle words are "The Lord."
- C. It is unique in its preservation. God not only inspired the Scriptures, but He promised to preserve them *Psalm 12:6, 7*.
- D. It is unique in its proclamations. Over 25% of the Bible was prophetic in nature when written. It touches the subjects of heaven and hell; eternal salvation and damnation; eternity past to eternity future. Yet, it cuts to the heart of all of the major issues of life *2Timothy. 3:16, 17*.
- E. It is unique in its product. No other book has so profoundly influenced the course of history and the lives of men. "The Word of God is quick (alive) and powerful..." *Hebrews 4:12, 1Peter 1:22, 23*.

II. The Inspiration of the Bible

- A. The author of the Bible is The Holy Spirit of God.
- B. The Bible is the source book of our knowledge of God. It is the textbook of divine truth, the guidebook to everlasting life.
- C. The word "Bible" is derived from the Greek word "biblos" meaning "a book."

- D. The Bible is a library of sixty-six books divided into *two* main sections called The Old Testament, containing thirty-nine books, and The New Testament, containing twenty-seven books.
- E. "All scripture is given by inspiration..." *2Timothy 3:16*. What does it mean "by inspiration"? *2Peter 1:21* says, ". . .*holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*. "The Holy Ghost was miraculously present, preserving the accuracy of the transcription of God's Word in a man's mouth to what we call the "original manuscripts." God moved men to say (inspiration) and record (preservation) the very words He chose.
- F. We accept the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God completely inspired, undoubtedly preserved. See *Hebrews 1:1, Jeremiah 1:9; 45:1, 2 Samuel 23:2, Ezekiel 2:2, Psalms 12:6, 7; "The words of the LORD are pure* words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

III. What Does the Bible Say About Itself?

- A. Psalm 119 is well known for its thorough treatment of the Bible itself undoubtedly, there is no other passage of Scripture that deals with the subject of the Scriptures in such detail.
- B. Psalm 119 is the longest Psalm containing 176 verses. All but three verses specifically mention the Scriptures (*verses 84, 90, 132*). The number eight is stamped all over this Psalm. Each of its twenty-two sections corresponding to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet contains eight verses. In the Hebrew text, every verse in each section began with the particular letter of the alphabet that it represented. The psalm uses eight different words to refer to the Scriptures, each numerous times;
 - 1. The law of the Lord
 - 2. Testimonies
 - 3. Ways
 - 4. Precepts
 - 5. Statutes
 - 6. Commandments
 - 7. Judgments
 - 8. Word
- C. Psalm 119 teaches us that the Bible is eight things to the believer:
 - 1. Water for cleansing *V 9*.
 - 2. Wealth & treasure *Vs 14, 72, 127, 162*
 - 3. A companion and friend *V 24*.
 - 4. A song to sing *V 54*.
 - 5. Honey *V 103*.
 - 6. A lamp *Vs 105, 130*
 - 7. Great spoil *V 162*
 - 8. An heritage *V 111*
- D. Psalm 119 teaches us that the Bible does eight things for the believer:
 - 1. Blesses *Vs 1, 2*.
 - 2. Gives life *Vs 25, 37, 40, 50, 88, 93*
 - 3. Gives strength *V 28*.
 - 4. Gives liberty *V 45*.
 - 5. Imparts wisdom *Vs 66, 97-104*

- 6. Creates friends *V 63*
 - 7. Gives comfort *Vs 76, 92*
 - 8. Gives direction *V 133*
- E. Psalm 119 teaches us that the Bible charges the believer with eight responsibilities concerning the scriptures:
1. Love them *Vs 97, 159.*
 2. Prize them *Vs 72, 128.*
 3. Study them *Vs 7, 12, 18, 26, 27.*
 4. Memorize them *V 11.*
 5. Meditate on them *Vs 15, 23, 48, 78, 148.*
 6. Trust them *V 42.*
 7. Obey them *Vs 1-8.*
 8. Declare them *Vs 13, 26.*

IV. The Scriptures have been inspired and preserved by God that we might have an infallible guide that will bring us to salvation and daily sanctification. For what purpose? That while we are here on this earth, we might fulfill God's objectives of giving glory to Him while we carry out His will on earth found in what is called our Great Commission *Acts 1:8, Matthew 28:19-20.*

The teachings of Scripture fall into four major categories according to 2Timothy 3:16, 17:

- A. Doctrine - what is right
- B. Reproof - what is not right
- C. Correction - how to get right
- D. Instruction in righteousness - how to stay right "...that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"

V. The Word of God is Active in Salvation.

- A. *1 Peter 1:23* says a man is born again "by the word of God. "The Word of God is the agent which brings about the new birth.
- B. *Ephesians 2:8, 9* says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith..." and *Romans 10:17* says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
- C. *James 1:21* says the Word of God is, "...able to save your souls."
- D. Paul's summary of the gospel contains four parts in *1Corinthians 15:1-4*:
 1. Jesus Christ died for our sins.
 2. Was buried.
 3. Rose from the dead.
 4. According to the Scriptures.
- E. You must believe what the Bible says about sin, your condition, and God's plan of salvation in order to be saved.

VI. Basic Principles of Bible Study

- A. In his book entitled *Reality Living*, Pastor Jeff Adams lists fourteen basic principles of Bible study:
 1. Effective Bible study depends upon a correct heart attitude *Ezekiel 14:1-5.*
 2. All Scripture is to be understood within its proper context *2Peter 1:20, Isaiah 28:10.*

3. All Scripture is to be rightly divided *2Timothy 2:15*.
4. The individual words of Scripture are the key to correct understanding *Proverbs 30:5, 6*.
5. Understanding the Bible is not a matter of private interpretation *2Peter 1:20*.
6. The Bible must be understood by the normal and literal meaning of the words in the context in which you read them.
7. The Bible must be understood in the light of God's consistency *1Corinthians 14:40*.
8. Never violate a clear passage of Scripture with one that is more obscure.
9. The invisible things of God are understood by seeing them illustrated in God's creation *Romans 1:20*.
10. Never base doctrine on a question or rhetorical or hypothetical statement *1Corinthians 13:1; 15:29*.
11. Never base a doctrine on a single verse of Scripture *2Corinthians 3:1, Isaiah 28:9-10*.
12. Understanding the Scriptures comes in time through spiritual growth *1Corinthians 2:11-16*.
13. Always give the Bible the benefit of the doubt -innocent until proven guilty *Ezekiel 14:1-11, Isaiah 29:9-14*.
14. God teaches us through the use of similitude and pictures *John 15:5*.

VII. Read This Famous Quote Concerning the Bible:

"The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable.

"Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter.

"Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

"Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given to you in life, will be opened at the judgment, and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, rewards the greatest labor, and condemns all who trifle with its holy contents." - *Author Unknown*

Synopsis of the Bible: Old Testament

In Genesis the world was made by God's creative hand;

In Exodus the Hebrews marched to gain the Promised Land; Leviticus contains the Law, holy and just and good;

Numbers records the tribes enrolled -all sons of Abraham's blood. Moses in Deuteronomy records God's mighty deeds.

Brave Joshua into Canaan's land the host of Israel leads. In Judges their rebellion oft provoked the Lord to smite,

But Ruth records the faith of one well-pleasing in His sight. In First and Second Samuel of Jesse's son we read:

Ten tribes in First and Second Kings revolted from his seed. Next, First and Second Chronicles see Judah captive made, But Ezra heads a remnant back by princely Cyrus' aid. The city walls of Zion Nehemiah builds again;

While Esther saves her people from plots of wicked men.

In Job we read how faith will live beneath affliction's rod, and in the Psalms are precious songs to every child of God.

The Proverbs, like a goodly string of choicest pearls, appear .Ecclesiastes teaches man how vain are all things here.

The mystic Song of Solomon exalts sweet Sharon's Rose:
Whilst Christ the Savior and the King the 'rapt Isaiah' shows.

The warning Jeremiah apostate Israel scorns;
His plaintive Lamentations their awful downfall mourns.

Ezekiel tells in wondrous words of dazzling mysteries;
And kings and empires yet to come,
Daniel in vision sees.

Of judgment and of mercy Hosea loves to tell;
Joel describes the blessed days when God with men will dwell.

Among Tekoa's herdsman Amos received his call.

Obadiah prophesies of Edom's final fall.

Jonah enshrines a wondrous type of Christ our risen Lord;
Micah pronounces Judah lost, but again restored.

Nahum declared on Nineveh just judgment shall be poured.

A view of Chaldea's coming doom Habakkuk's vision give;
Next Zephaniah warns the Jews to turn, repent and live.

Haggai wrote to those who saw the temple built again.

Zechariah prophesied of Christ's triumphant reign.

Malachi was the last who touched the high prophetic cord, Whose final notes sublimely show the coming of the Lord.

Synopsis of the Bible: New Testament

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John the holy Gospels wrote,

Describing how the Savior died - His life and what He taught.

Acts proves how God through the apostles proved with signs ill every place.

St. Paul in Romans teaches us how man is saved by grace.

The Apostle in Corinthians instructs, exhorts, reproves:

Galatians shows that faith in Christ alone, the Father loves.

Ephesians and Philippians tell what Christians ought to be.

Colossians bids us to live for God and for eternity,

In Thessalonians we are taught the Lord will come from heaven.

In Timothy and Titus a bishop's rule is given.

Philemon marks a Christian's love which only Christians know.

Hebrews reveals the Gospel as prefigured by the Law.

St. James insists that without works faith is but vain and dead:

And Peter points the narrow way in which the saints are led.

St. John in his epistles on love delights to dwell.

And Jude gives awful warning of judgment, wrath and hell.

The Revelation prophesies of that tremendous day when Christ, and Christ alone, shall be the trembling sinner's stay.