



Lesson 5: The Bible

Christianity is a faith based solely on a book, the Bible. Christians believe the Bible is God's holy Word. Thus it's important for us to know some things about the Bible.

Luke 11:28 *But He said, "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"*

Romans 10:17 *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

1 Timothy 4:13 *Till I come, give attention to [public] reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*

1. Where did the Bible originate?

2 Tim 3:16-17 – The Bible is the product of inspiration. I.e., it's God's Word, "God-breathed."

2 Pet 1:16-21 – The Bible is not a man-made book. *People didn't just write what they felt like. They wrote what God/the H. Sp. Wanted written. "Carried along" describes how the wind moves a sailboat.*

2. What are some of the benefits of the Bible?

Psm 19:7-11 *revives the soul, makes the simple wise; gives joy to the heart and light to the eyes, they warn and reward the reader*

Psm 119:9 *keeps your way pure*

Psm 119:105 *a lamp/light to guide your way*

Psm 119:111 *cause joy*

Psm 119:130 *gives you light/understanding*

John 17:17 *tells you the truth*

2 Tim 3:16-17 *profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction*

1 Pet 2:2 *source of growth*

3. What are some facts about the Bible?

Psm 119:160 *it's all true*

Isa 40:8 *it stands forever*

Matt 5:18 *it won't pass away; it will be fulfilled*

John 17:17 *it's true*

4. Biblical Terms:

➤ **Bible:** comes from the Greek word *biblos*, which is simply "book"

➤ **Scripture:** the sacred writings; comes from the Latin word *scriptura*

➤ **Inspiration:** the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit upon the Scripture writers which made their writings the Word of God

The word literally means "God-breathed." The Bible is God's Words written down. Many times, especially in the OT, the writer says, "Thus says the Lord." The Bible writers repeatedly claim that the words are God's and not their own. However, God did not dictate the Bible like a boss dictates to a

secretary. God influenced or moved various authors to write down what He wanted written. What men wrote under the influence of the Holy Spirit was the word of God.

Because of inspiration, we believe the Bible is:

☐ Inerrant – without errors in the original documents *Remember that inerrancy applies to the originals, not to subsequent copies or versions.*

☐ Infallible – incapable of leading one astray

☐ Preserved – kept by God throughout time so that it is still accurate and trustworthy today

- Version: A version is simply a type of translation. The Bible was originally written in Hebrew (OT) and Greek (NT). Translators convert those languages into other languages so anyone can read the Bible.

There are many different versions of the Bible in English. They are all roughly the same, although they vary in their use of language. Newer versions are more readable but tend to be less literal. Older versions stick more closely to the original language but tend to be harder for modern readers to understand. Versions such as the KJV, NKJV, NASB, ESV, and NIV are useful and reliable works.

- Revelation: God's communication of truth to man, or the content of the truth communicated.

“Reveal” means “to uncover, to expose, to show.” God has revealed information about Himself to us in the Bible. Revelation (the verb) happens when God reveals information directly to someone. Revelation (the noun) is the result of that happening. The Bible is God's revelation of Himself. Men wrote down what God inspired them to write. This is not the same as some composer or poet being “inspired.”

- Canonicity: the historical process whereby God, through the Holy Spirit, directed His people to recognize which writings were inspired. The word “canon” means an authorized list. Only those books which bore the marks of canonicity were included in the canon.¹ The canon is comprised of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. The canon was permanently closed with the writing of the book of Revelation at the end of the first century A.D. (Rev 22:18-19). Thus, we do not believe that God is directly revealing anything to people today.

What about the Apocrypha? The Apocrypha is the group of disputed books that are included in some Bibles but not in others. Protestants generally believe that the Apocryphal books are valuable historically, but are not inspired. Apocryphal books do not partake of the marks of canonicity, and thus should not be considered as part of the inspired canon of Scriptural books. Some information in the Apocrypha contradicts the rest of the Bible.

¹ Books were considered canonical if they were written by a recognized prophet or apostle, if they agreed with the other accepted scriptural books, and if the people of God (Israel or the church) accepted the book as authoritative.

- Illumination: the act of the Holy Spirit whereby He enables saved people to understand the true significance of the Word of God (John 14:26; 1 Cor 2:6-16; 1 John 2:20-21, 27). Unsaved people can understand the basic sense of Scripture, but they do not accept “the things of the Spirit of God” (1 Cor 2:14). The only way unsaved people can understand and apply the Gospel is if the Holy Spirit convinces them of the truth of the Scriptures.
- Interpretation: the process of arriving at the correct understanding of Scripture. One should interpret each passage according to its grammatical, historical, literary, and theological context. Generally speaking, one should interpret the Bible literally. That is, if the plain sense of the passage makes sense, one should seek no other sense. Words and sentences should be understood in their normal, regular way. One should not seek for hidden or “deeper” meanings. The primary task of the interpreter is to find the author’s intended meaning. Biblical interpretation is sometimes called *hermeneutics*.

5. How do we know that the Bible is really God’s Word?

There are many so-called “scriptures” that claim to be God’s Word. Christians believe the Bible is the one and only inspired source of revelation for two reasons:

- ▢ The Holy Spirit convinces us that the Bible is truly God’s Word (1 Cor 2:9-14). Faith comes through hearing the Word (Rom 10:17).
- ▢ Historical research and analysis, which shows that the Bible is trustworthy and credible, strengthens our assurance.

6. Conclusions about the Bible:

- ◆ Christians should have a high respect and regard for the Bible. It’s not like any other book. It’s the basis for their faith and life.
- ◆ Christians should read it often. Daily Bible reading should be the norm. It should be your goal to read the entire Bible.
- ◆ Christians should listen carefully as preachers and teachers explain it.
- ◆ Christians should obey it. *This is the correct response to learning new truth. Seek to obey what you learn, apply the principles to your life. Be “doers of the word and not hearers only.”*
- ◆ Christians should memorize it. *Psm 119:11. Memorize verses that you find important or meaningful. Start a list and go over it daily.*
- ◆ Christians should meditate on it. *Psalm 1.2 “His delight is in the law of the Lord...”*
- ◆ Christians should base their lives upon its principles. *Biblical principles apply to almost every aspect of life. Our lives reflect those principles in daily life. The Bible should influence our thinking and our behavior. Develop a Bible-soaked logic.*

Conclusion: Because the Bible is the word of God, it’s essential for Christians to access it on a regular basis. An essential discipline of the Christian life is daily Bible reading. Seek to read, understand and apply the Bible every day.

Discussion:

1. Define inspiration.
2. Define revelation.
3. What is a “canon”?
4. How do we know that God is not directly revealing information through inspiration today?
5. Why don't Protestants accept the Apocrypha?
6. How should one interpret the Bible?