

God's Word – Our Guide

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Introduction

On the “Path to Righteousness” we need a road map, or guide to get us where we want to go. The purpose for this journey is to live forever with Jesus in His eternal home, heaven. What do we use to give us the directions and help we need to arrive? God has provided the guidance and help we need through His Word.

Where Did the Bible Come From?

The Almighty God used three tools to give us this guidebook we call the Bible:

1. Revelation - the way God spoke to humanity and revealed Himself to their finite minds and hearts. He used many ways of doing this, as supported by Hebrews 1:1-2. *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.”*

Here are some of the ways God spoke:

- 📖 Through angels – Genesis 18, 19; Daniel 9:21-27; Luke 1:11-20; Matthew 28:5-7.
- 📖 Directly to men in a loud voice – 1 Samuel 3:1-14; Exodus 20:1-17; Genesis 6:13-21.
- 📖 Directly to men in a still, small voice – 1 Kings 19:11-12; Psalm 32:8.
- 📖 To one man through the mouth of a donkey – Numbers 22:28.
- 📖 To men through nature – Psalm 19:1-3; Acts 14:15-17; Romans 1:18-20.
- 📖 To men through dreams – Genesis 28:12; 1 Kings 2:4; 9:2; Matthew 1:20; 2:12.
- 📖 To men through visions – 1 Chronicles 21:16; Isaiah 6:1-8; Daniel 10:5-9; Acts 16:9; 10:10-16.

How did God speak His Word to the forty men who wrote the Bible? We do not know. We only know each of them heard directly from Him. *“And God said”* (Genesis 1:3).

2. Inspiration - involved God's guidance as what He had spoken was written down on paper, parchment, or scroll. What must take place for the voice of God to be put in terms understood by man? In 2 Timothy 3:16, the word “inspiration” comes from the Greek, *theopneustos*, and literally means “God-breathed.” The Bible speaks of this inspiration in several key passages, as explained in *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible* from the study entitled “The Doctrine of the Bible”:

- 📖 No Old Testament scripture was thought up by the prophet himself (2 Peter 1:20).
- 📖 All Old Testament scriptures were given by the Holy Spirit as He moved upon men (2 Peter 1:21).
- 📖 This Spirit-breathed inspiration was given in many ways (Hebrews 1:1).
- 📖 Once it was given, the inspired writing:
 - Could not be broken or shaken down (John 10:35).
 - Is exact in detail, down to the smallest stroke and letter (Matthew 5:18).
 - Would abide forever (Matthew 5:18; 1 Peter 1:25).
- 📖 The Old Testament writers did not always understand everything they wrote (Luke 10:23-24; 1 Peter 1:10-12).
 - They did not completely understand the details of Christ's suffering.
 - They did not understand that the mysteries would be clearer to another generation.
- 📖 The four Gospels were given by inspiration of God (Hebrews 1:1; 2 Peter 3:2).
- 📖 Paul believed his writings were inspired by God (1 Corinthians 2:4; 15:3; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 4:15).
- 📖 Paul used the Holy Spirit's words to explain His facts (1 Corinthians 2:13).
- 📖 Paul's writings were received through a special revelation from Christ (Galatians 1:11-12).
- 📖 Paul's writings were to be read by all (Colossians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:27).
- 📖 Peter believed his writings were inspired by God (2 Peter 3:2).
- 📖 Peter believed Paul's writings were inspired (2 Peter 3:15-16).
- 📖 John believed his writings were inspired (Revelation 22:18-19).

3. Illumination – the tool by which God shows men His Word is true and guides them as they listen and obey its teachings. Illumination goes from the written word to the human heart and bears fruit. Why does God use this tool? Is not it enough that He reveals Himself to man and then helps man communicate that revelation?

What are the reasons for illumination?

- 📖 Man's natural blindness (1 Corinthians 2:14)
- 📖 Satanic blindness (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)
- 📖 Carnal blindness (1 Corinthians 3; Hebrews 5:12-14; 2 Peter 1).

What happens when the scriptures are illuminated?

- 📖 Sinners are saved (Psalm 146:8; 119:130).
- 📖 Christians are strengthened (1 Peter 2:2; 1 Corinthians 2:10; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Psalm 119:105).

How Was the Bible Written?

God's Spirit moved on the different authors of His Word. They used whatever writing materials were available during their period in history (Jeremiah 17:13; Exodus 24:12; 2 John 12; 2 Timothy 4:13; Job 19:24; Matthew 22:19-20). What language did these different writers use?

Old Testament – with a few exceptions, the Old Testament writings were in the Hebrew language. Scholars believe this was because:

- 📖 Hebrew was a language of pictures, using vivid, bold symbols and dramatized stories. The Old Testament presents a vivid picture of the acts of God among people who became examples for future generations (1 Corinthians 10:11).
- 📖 Hebrew is a personal language. It speaks to the heart and emotions more than the mind or intellect. This language conveyed to the individual believer and community of worshippers the personal relationship of their God. He was very much alive in the recorded history of the nation of Israel.

New Testament – The New Testament, was written in Greek. This was believed to be because:

- 📖 Greek was the language of the intellect – more a language of the mind than the heart. In the Old Testament, Hebrew expressed the true story of the birth and growth of a nation. But it was not sufficient to portray the proposed truths of a modern world. The Greek language could precisely present these truths for all to see and understand.
- 📖 Greek was close to being a universal language. The truth of one true God was revealed in the Old Testament to one nation – Israel – in their language. In the New Testament, the truth as revealed in the fullness of Jesus Christ was for the whole world. *“Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things”* (Luke 24:45-48).

Why Was It Written Down?

God’s Word was revealed and inspired. He planned for it to be understood by every nation in the world. What a plan! God used the written method to keep a record of His acts and plan for man. It is still the best way to communicate with men of all ages. Writing has several advantages:

- 1. Precision is the accuracy and exactness of the order of events and their importance.** To write, you must take time to order your thoughts, as they appear strange if not in some type of order. Speaking or storytelling is not like this, one can skip around and still be understood.
- 2. Propagation is the sharing of something with others who were not a part of the experience.** The most accurate way to send a message is to write it down. That way, one can be sure his words are used. The message will not lose its power and impact with the different expression of another voice.

3. Preservation is making sure something valuable is not lost. Men die, memories fail, and sometimes people are too busy to tell stories. But a written record remains. The New Testament had specific reasons why it was written down:

- 📖 The early church needed direction (1 Thessalonians 5:27; 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 2:16-17).
- 📖 False doctrines needed to be corrected by some authority.
- 📖 Missionaries needed something to leave with people when forced to move on.
- 📖 Because of persecution and politics, it took more than the spoken word to pass along the message of hope and redemption given by Jesus.

Can We Trust Its Accuracy?

How can several men, over a period of many years, be involved in writing a book that agrees scientifically, historically, socially, and morally? An Almighty God – in sovereign wisdom – breathed on mortal men His divine Word and inspired them to write it down. *The New Schofield Study Bible* gives seven reasons why this is true:

- 📖 Throughout its pages, the Bible bears witness to one God who is consistent with Himself and the revelation concerning Him.
- 📖 The Bible gives one continuous account of humanity in relation to God.
- 📖 The Bible makes predictions about future events that are unlikely, then records their fulfillment when they come to pass.
- 📖 The Bible is a progressive unfolding of truth. Several writers, moved by the Holy Spirit but separated by centuries, add new details until the whole revelation takes form.
- 📖 From beginning to end, the Bible testifies of one redemption.
- 📖 The Bible has one great theme throughout – the person and word of Jesus Christ.
- 📖 Forty-four writers have produced a perfect harmony of doctrine over a two thousand-year period.

“The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it” (Psalm 68:11).

How does it fit together?

- 📖 The Old Testament is the preparation for Christ;
- 📖 He is manifested to the world in the Gospels;
- 📖 In Acts He is preached and the gospel is propagated to the world;
- 📖 The Epistles explain Him;
- 📖 The purposes of God in Christ are brought to a climax in Revelation.

Ten Proofs the Bible is the Word of God:

- 📖 Its Amazing Unity – the Old and New Testaments agreed in all areas.

- 📖 Its Ability to Remain in Spite of All Attempts to Destroy It – The Bible has endured political, religious and philosophical persecution.
- 📖 Its Historical Accuracy – World historians and archaeologists have found proof that the recorded history in the Bible is accurate.
- 📖 Its Scientific Accuracy – Scientific statements in the Scriptures can be taken at face value. They have been proven to be true, including the fact that all living things are reproduced after their kind.
- 📖 Its Prophetic Accuracy – The Bible predicts future events with correctness, including those about Israel and all Gentile nations.
- 📖 Its Universal Influence Upon Civilization – All civilization is founded on the Bible and its teachings.
- 📖 Its Care and Copy – No other book in history has been copied as many times with as much care and sacrifice as the Word of God.
- 📖 Its Amazing Circulation – No other book in history has been around as long or translated into as many different languages and dialects. How many other 2,000-year-old books have you read?
- 📖 Its Absolute Honesty – Man could not possibly know all the history and scientific understanding, much less the prophecy found in the Bible. It had to be a sovereign author who inspired its writing.
- 📖 Its Life-Transforming Power – No other book in history has been so able to change corrupt humanity by the doing of its precepts.

We do not have to look anywhere else – God’s Word is the only guide we need.

What Does the Bible Mean to Me?

Nave’s Compact Topical Bible gives a list of things that let us know the Bible is:

Tried	2 Samuel 22:31
Pure	Psalms 12:6
Cleansing	Psalms 119:9
The Sword of the Spirit	Ephesians 6:17
Food for the Soul	Job 23:12
Divinely Inspired	Acts 1:16
Written in my Heart	Romans 10:8
A Light	2 Peter 1:19
A Lamp for my Feet	Psalms 119:105
Mighty in Its Influence:	
A devouring flame	Jeremiah 5:14
A crushing hammer	Jeremiah 23:29
A life-giving force	Ezekiel 37:7
A saving power	Romans 1:16
A defensive weapon	Ephesians 6:17
A probing instrument	Hebrews 4:12

A Blessing to the Reverent
Purity for My Life
The Standard of Faith
Sacred
To Be Studied
Seed-Corn for the Sower
Absolutely Trustworthy
Profitable for Instruction

Matthew 7:24
John 15:3
Proverbs 29:18
Proverbs 30:6
Romans 15:4
Mark 4:14
Psalm 111:7
Isaiah 2:3

*"The Bible is the unfailing guide which points the way for men to the perfect life."
– J. Edgar Hoover*

Study Questions

1. List and briefly explain the three tools God used to give us this guidebook we call the Bible.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

2. List (with scripture reference) the seven (7) ways God speaks to humanity.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

3. List (with scripture reference) two results when the scriptures are illuminated.

1) _____

2) _____

4. List and briefly explain the two (2) reasons why the whole New Testament was written in Greek.

1) _____

2) _____

5. Give four (4) specific reasons why the New Testament was written down.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

6. List ten proofs (with brief explanation) that the Bible is the Word of God.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____
