

The Bible is Truth

“And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness”

(Acts 26:24-25).

Long ago a man asked, “What is truth?” (John 18:38). This question has been repeated countless times throughout the ages. The world is quickly filling with various religions, and within these religions there is a multitude of varying opinions. Which one is correct? Which one teaches truth? The wise teacher admonished, “Buy the truth, and sell it not” (Proverbs 23:23). But, how do we find this truth in the maze of religions available? Truth can be found in the Holy Bible, the written Word of God. *The Word of God is the measurement of truth.* Jesus prayed, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). The “God of truth” wrote the Bible (Isaiah 65:16; Psalm 31:5). In fact, Jesus claimed to be “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

*“What is popular is not always right;
what is right is not always popular.”*

God’s truth is passed from generation to generation and is being passed to you today. Like David, a man after God’s own heart (1 Samuel 13:14), we believe that “thou desirest truth in the inward parts” (Psalms 51:6).

The Bible explains, “For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (2 Corinthians 10:12). It is dangerous to measure ourselves against what others believe, or solely on what our church says.

We need to measure ourselves with the Word. We cannot put confidence in tradition for the Bible warns, “Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye” (Mark 7:13). It has been said, “What is popular is not always right; what is right is not always popular.”

Paul was committed to preaching the truth. Throughout the Book of Acts the gospel is preached and truth explained. “The importance of the book of Acts is in its preservation of the main doctrinal themes presented in apostolic preaching” (*New Testament Introduction* by Donald Guthrie as quoted in the *MacArthur New Testament Commentary*).

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

Explain

The Christian and The Bible

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Ed Cole once said, "A person's beliefs hold the greatest potential for good or harm in life." What we believe about our salvation matters much as we consider our destiny. We need to adjust to the truth of God's Word. If someone says something that is wrong, and then a thousand people say that it is correct, it is still wrong.

Carlton L. Coon, Sr. in his Bible study series Take Root states, "What men are taught determines what they believe. What they believe determines what they do. What they do determines their destiny."

As each doctrine is discussed, a question needs to be asked, "Does the Bible really teach this? Is this what the Scripture says?" This should be the first question in assessing any sermon, tract, or book.

The Bible states clearly that you should "study to shew thyself approved unto God" (2 Timothy 2:15). Why must we study? So that you can "rightly divide the word of TRUTH." E. Stewart in his study, "Truth Never Changes" tells us this Scripture implies that the Word can be wrongly divided.

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Stewart says, "In 2 Peter 3:16 we find Peter writing about actual people who misapply or distort the scriptures to their own destruction." These are people who are "unlearned and unstable" who "wrest" (means distort, twist the nature or meaning of, divert to an improper use; misapply) the "...Scriptures, unto their own destruction." He further advises, "We should conform our lives to the Bible instead of conforming the Bible to our lives."

Let us begin to, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

Study Questions

1. Locate these Scriptures, or the reference that support the following statements:
_____ 1) "Buy the truth and sell it not."
_____ 2) "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
_____ 3) The Bible is our message from the "God of truth."
_____ 4) Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life."

- _____ 5) David was “a man after God’s own heart.”
- _____ 6) “Thou desirest truth in the inward parts.”
- _____ 7) These lessons are designed to “shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth.”
- _____ 8) In this verse, Peter writes about actual people who misapply or distort the Scriptures to their own destruction.
- _____ 9) “Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.”
- _____ 10) “Study to shew thyself approved unto God . . . rightly dividing the word of truth.”
- _____ 11) “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.”
- _____ 12) “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”
- _____ 13) We should follow the example of those “who received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”
- _____ 14) “For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves:”
- _____ 15) Long ago a man asked, “What is truth?”

2. What does Donald Guthrie claim to be the importance of the Book of Acts? _____

3. What question did Pilate ask in John 18:38? _____

4. What is the only measurement of truth? _____

5. What does John 17:1 say? _____

6. How is truth passed on? _____

The Bible is the Word of God

“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).

The Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God. All doctrine should be based upon, and be in harmony with, the Word of God. The Bible is not just partially inspired; it is totally inspired. All Scripture is inspired. The Bible is also inerrant. This means that as the Holy Ghost moved on men (2 Peter 1:20-21) all limitations and shortcomings of the writers were overcome. They were able to write without mistakes. The Bible can be trusted in all matters of faith.

The Bible is inspired, infallible, and inerrant.

- ✓ “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).

The word, “inspiration” in this Scripture comes from a Greek word that literally means, “God-breathed.”

- ✓ “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).
- ✓ “Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away” (Mark 13:31).
- ✓ “The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness. He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name” (Psalms 111:7-9).
- ✓ “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever” (Isaiah 40:8).
- ✓ “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein” (Jeremiah 6:16).

- ✓ “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Joshua 1:8).

Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix in their book, *Power in the Pulpit* suggests many benefits to the Word of God. This list contains:

1. Prosperity and success for those who obey the Word (Joshua 1:8).
2. Converts the soul, makes wise the simple, gives joy to the heart, and enlightens the eyes (Psalms 19:7-8).
3. The Word is everlasting, true, righteous, invaluable, and sweet. It provides warning and reward (Psalms 19:11).
4. The Word cleanses and helps us avoid sin (Psalms 119:9-11).
5. Provides guidance and direction (Psalms 119:105).
6. The Word is truth (John 17:17).
7. It results in faith (Romans 10:17).
8. The Scriptures give wisdom, teaching about what is right, rebuke when in the wrong, correction for those who have erred, and instruction on how to live righteously. All of these help us to become mature (2 Timothy 3:14-17).
9. The Word is alive, sharp, penetrating, and detects our thoughts and intents (Hebrews 4:12).
10. It provides us spiritual nourishment (2 Peter 2:2).

Study Questions

1. In 2Timothy 3:16-17, the word “inspiration” comes from a Greek word that literally means what? _____
2. List the benefit from the Word of God found in each of these scriptures.
 - 1) Hebrews 4:12 _____
 - 2) Psalm 19:7-8 _____
 - 3) Joshua 1:8 _____
 - 4) 1 Peter 2:2 _____

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	Psalm 12:6
Cleansing	Psalm 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	Romans10:8
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	Matthew 7:24
Purity for My Life	John 15:3
The Standard of Faith	Proverbs 29:18
Sacred	Proverbs 30:6
To Be Studied	Romans 15:4
Seed-Corn for the Sower	Mark 4:14
Absolutely Trustworthy	Psalms 111:7
Profitable for Instruction	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) _____

6) _____

7) _____

8) _____

9) _____

10) _____

7. Given the following Scripture references (what the Bible IS), list which thing the Bible reference mentions.

1) Ephesians 6:1 _____

2) Romans 10:8 _____

3) Romans 15:4 _____

Using the Road Map

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore, many of them believed...”
(Acts 17:11-12).

There is an old saying that says, “When everything else fails, read the directions.”

The Word of God is a guide, a road map on the road of life. It has been given to us to provide us with directions of how we should move on the journey of life.

The writer of Hebrews notes,

“These all died in the faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.”
(Hebrews 11:13-14)

We are pilgrims, travelers, sojourners on the road of life. The Word of God has been provided to give us the necessary directions of how to journey in life, and get from earth to heaven.

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” Psalm 119:105

The Word of God contains the spiritual understanding and guidelines that will help us avoid wrong turns in life.

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” (Matthew 7: 13-14)

This allows us to know that we shouldn't expect the majority of people to follow Jesus on the road that leads to eternal life. Few will enter into the gate of true repentance, baptism in Jesus name, and the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

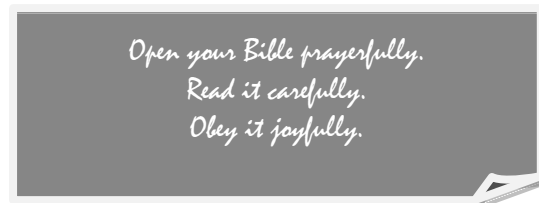
The Hidden Treasure

The Word of God is like a hidden treasure. We must find, treasure it, and obey it in all of life's situations.

In one part of Africa where there are plenty of diamonds, a traveler met two boys playing. They were playing a game of marbles. As the man looked closely at the objects used in the game he saw that they were playing with diamonds. They were playing with treasures. We need to be careful we don't treat the Word of God like that. We don't need to play with the Word of God. We need to obey it.

In *God's Word For My Life (Search For Truth Publication)* a story is related of an ancient Greek legend about a dying farmer. As he lay dying, he told his two sons, "My treasure is buried in my field. If you will be rich then you must dig for it."

After the old man died the two boys began searching for the treasure. Using spades and shovels they began digging everywhere but had no apparent success. They carefully turned over every inch of the soil, digging deeply into the ground. Yet, they could not find the treasure. When the planting season arrived they left the search and planted the crops.



When the harvest season came they had a great harvest. Never had they had such a great harvest before. They had never experienced such a rich crop before. In digging the soil so eagerly in search of the treasure, the boys had won the riches they sought. Their wise father's plan had worked!

Look For It!

We have also received a treasure that has come to us from many generations. It is also buried, but not in the ground. It is buried in the Bible. If you want the treasure, then you must dig for it.

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." (John 5:39)

In Matthew 13:44-45 we see that the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure in the field. When a man finds it, he hides it, and will sell all that he has to buy the field. It is also like a merchant man seeking costly pearls. When he has found one pearl of great price, he will sell all that he has to buy it.

However, many Christians fail to read their Bibles on a regular, daily basis. Therefore, we can easily be led down a wrong path.

“...Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.” (Matthew 22:29)

The Bible is the most circulated book of all times. Almost everyone is willing to admit that it is the best book of all times. It has lasted longer than any other book. It is printed in more languages than any other book in history and it has done more good than any other book. Yet, it is one of the least read books today.

For many, Bibles are only opened on Sunday morning or special occasions. The rest of the week it gathers dust on the table of our room. No wonder the Bereans were considered to be noble, for they searched the Scriptures daily.

The Treasure Examined

The writers of the Bible were kings, prophets, missionaries, shepherds; both educated and uneducated. It is a collection of 66 books (39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament) but they make up one book. The Bible is one book, that reveals one God, and His one plan for mankind.

A Look At The Road Map

1. The Bible has two main divisions. These are the Old Testament and the New Testament.
2. “Testament” refers to the will of a departed person. It is a covenant.
3. The Old Testament is the agreement between God and man concerning salvation before the time of Jesus Christ. Then the New Testament is the agreement between God and man for salvation after Jesus came.
4. Each Testament has five parts.

A. In The Old Testament there are five books of Law. (These are the first five books of the Bible). The next twelve books are History (of the Jewish people). The next five books are books of Poetry. Then there are five books called Major Prophets and finally twelve books called Minor Prophets. The difference in the minor and major prophets is that the major prophets are longer.

B. In the New Testament we have the four Gospels. These are books about the life of Jesus Christ.

C. There is one History book called Acts. This book shows us the birth and growth of the early church. It tells us the plan of salvation.

D. Next are fourteen Epistles written by Paul to the churches he started. These books show us how to live the life of a Christian.

E. Then there are seven books called General Epistles.

F. Finally there is a book of Prophecy called Revelation.

Preparing for a long trip, the young Christian said to his friend, "I am just about packed. I only have to put in a guidebook (map), a lamp, a mirror...a volume of fine poetry, a few biographies (life stories), a package of old letters, a book of songs, a sword, a hammer, and one set of books I've been studying."

"But", the friend objected, "you can't get all that into your bag."

"Oh, yes," replied the young man, "it doesn't take much room." He placed his Bible in the corner of the suitcase and closed the lid. (Taken from: Quotable Quotations: Compiled by Lloyd Cory)

Study Questions

1. In which way is the Word of God like a road map? _____

2. What happens when we fail to read our Bible? _____

3. What made the Bereans noble? _____

4. How many books are in the Bible? _____

5. How many books are in the Old Testament? _____

6. How many books are in the New Testament? _____

7. What are the two main divisions in the Bible called? _____

8. What does the word "Testament" refer to? _____

Mighty in the Scriptures

“And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John”
(Acts 18:24-25).

Acts Chapter 18 opens with an interesting testimony of a man called Apollos. In the opening verses we read of a man who was eloquent, mighty in the Scriptures, and received instruction. He also taught and preached what he knew. Beyond the descriptive phrases written about Apollos, we see a further hidden quality in his walk with God. This begins with “knowing only the baptism of John.”(18: 25) Apollos was a sincere man who was walking in every light of the Scripture that he had received. There was a longing in his spirit to obey all of what God had in store for him. His understanding of the Word of God and the things of God, led him to accept John’s baptism. For many, this would have been quite enough. What he had not learned was concerning baptism in Jesus name and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. He was probably in the same situation as the Ephesian disciples in Acts 19:2,6.

Further Truth For Serious Seekers

One day while Apollos was preaching in the synagogue he was heard by Priscilla and Aquilla. They took a special interest in him and “...expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.” (Acts 18:26) It should be noted that they did not treat him as someone who did not have any type of relationship with the Lord. When witnessing to others we must always be careful to acknowledge the relationship with God that they have, and yet lead them to a deeper understanding of truth. Apollos very quickly received the truth revealed to him, and started preaching it. What can be seen in Apollos is the attitude that “If God said it, then I will do it!”

Because Apollos was mighty in the Scriptures, and he was instructed in the way of the Lord, it can be assumed that he was someone who studied the Word of God. It is very important for every child of God to study God’s Word. This is how we can maintain God’s stamp of approval on our lives. We must obey the Word of God and not hold on to the man made religious traditions expressed by so many denominations.

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”(2 Timothy 2:15)

Paul further instructed Timothy:

“All Scripture is given by the 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)

We must be able to understand the Word of God to “...earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” (Jude 3)

When Jesus was tempted by the Devil in the wilderness, He answered each temptation with a Scripture.

It is interesting that the devil knows how to quote Scripture. He usually misquotes them. We see this in the Garden of Eden with Eve and even with Jesus in the wilderness (Luke 4:3-13). In Genesis 2:17 God said, “...thou shalt surely die.” The serpent later said, “...Ye shall not surely die.” (Genesis 3:4)

The devil, like false cults and religions, will twist the Scripture, take them out of context, or even change their meaning. How will we know when these things are being done if we do not become mighty in the Scriptures ourselves?

As Jesus walked with His disciples, He constantly used the Scriptures in conversations and teaching them. This shows us how we should also use the Scripture in our daily lives. You will also notice that Jesus was able to recall from memory many Scriptures from the Old Testament, which shows us the necessity of learning the Word of God through Bible verse memorization.

Rightly Dividing the Word

As we study the Scriptures we must always be “...**rightly dividing the word of truth.**”
(2 Timothy 2:15)

1. As we study the Word of God we must be careful not to build doctrines based on one Scripture only.
2. We need to look at both the pretext (what comes before) and context (the setting) of the verse we are studying. What comes before the verse? What is the setting of the verse?
3. We must remember that all truth will exalt Christ. When it comes to prophecies and other Gifts of the Spirit being used, they should also be in line with the Bible and exalt Christ.
4. Avoid giving far-fetched interpretations to the Word of God.
5. Don't add to the Scripture and don't take away from it.
6. Pray before you start studying your Bible.
7. Pray over what you have found from the Bible.
8. Keep in mind the purpose of the writing and to whom it is being written.

- 9. Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture. Therefore get understanding from other verses. Do not accept any doctrine if it is not in agreement with the general tenor of the whole teaching of the Bible.
- 10. Keep in mind that the New Testament is a fulfillment of the Old Testament.

A man was very immaturely trying to find direction for his life. His plan was to close his eyes, open his Bible and point to a verse and take that as direction from God. The first time he did this his finger touched down on, "...and departed, and went and hanged himself." (Matt. 27:5) He wanted to seek clarification and confirmation and repeated the procedure this time touching, "Go, and do thou likewise." (Luke 10:37) He again repeated the procedure and his finger landed on, "That thou doest, do quickly." (John 13:27) Had he followed the instructions and his plan he would have met a sad end to life. Let us be mighty in the Scriptures and when the Bible says it...let's do it!

Study Questions

1. In order to earnestly contend for the faith, what must we understand? _____

2. What is the best interpreter of the Scripture? _____

3. How did Jesus answer each temptation in the wilderness? _____

4. From the story of Adam and Eve, what do we learn about Satan's ability with the Scriptures?

5. Give five guidelines of how to study the Word of God.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Timothy Method

“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, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

All Scripture (every word) is inspired—spoken by God, and written by men (2 Peter 1:21). Timothy had been taught the Word of God since his childhood.

Paul affirms that Scripture is profitable—it has a purpose (a specific intention). The Bible is greater than any self-help book we read. It is useful to us and is applicable to our daily lives. The Bible is a flawless standard of right and wrong. It makes the man of God. Through obedience to the Word of God, we can become perfect and equipped for all aspects of ministry.

Consider a different translation of this passage:

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right”
(2 Timothy 3:16, *NLT*).

That sounds like four key reasons for Bible study:

- To teach us what is true.
- To make us realize what is wrong in our lives.
- To straighten us out.
- To teach us to do what is right.

These reveal four of the purposes of Scripture. Kevin Green in *Discipleship Journal's Best Bible Study Methods* says we can uncover a passage's intent with what he calls the “Timothy Method.” He asserts that, “asking questions about the four purposes of Scripture can effectively guide us as we evaluate and apply Scripture.”

The Psalmist said, “The commands of the LORD are clear, giving insight to life” (Psalms 19:8, *NLT*).

Doctrine

The first purpose of Scripture in 2 Timothy 3:16 is teaching. Paul often emphasizes doctrine in his writings. In the three small books to his helpers, Timothy and Titus, he mentions doctrine

fifteen times. Doctrine refers to teaching what is true. What do you do with false doctrine? Reject, correct, or replace it with the accurate teaching from God's Word.

As you read the Bible, ask:

- What does this passage teach?
- What did I learn?
- What is right?

Kevin Green believes everything in God's Word relates to the following simple questions (based on Matthew 22:34-40):

What does the passage teach us about...

- God?
- People?
- My relationship with God and others?

The Bible is a great teacher for humanity.

“Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name”
(Psalms 86:11).

Reproof

The Bible searches deep into our lives—uncovers sins, shortcomings, and improper desires.

“For the word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are” (Hebrews 4:12, *NLT*).

The Word of God rebukes us when we go astray. It exposes errors and convicts us of sin. God does not leave us in our sin. He does not stop with convicting us. He is looking for more than improvement, or trying to set things right on our own. His goal is transformation.

“Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is” (Romans 12:2, *NLT*).

As you read the Bible, ask:

- Where do I fall short?
- What is not right?

Correction

The Word of God corrects us. He disciplines us, rebukes, and restores us to an upright status. He corrects false ideas and misguided views. He sets us straight.

“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:14).

God loves us so much that He uses discipline to cause us to leave the crooked way for a straight path.

“And have you entirely forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you, his children? He said, ‘My child, don't ignore it when the Lord disciplines you, and don't be discouraged when he corrects you. For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes those he accepts as his children.’ As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Whoever heard of a child who was never disciplined? No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it is painful! But afterward there will be a quiet harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way” (Hebrews 12:5-7, 11, *NLT*).

As you read the Bible, ask:

- What should I do about it?
- How do I get right?

Instruction

“How can a young man stay pure? By reading your Word and following its rules. I have tried my best to find you—don't let me wander off from your instructions” (Psalms 119:9-10, *TLB*).

God's Word trains us in righteousness. What is righteousness? It is right living. God longs to bring about change in our lives. He nurtures us as a loving Father so that we will be fully equipped. Thank God for this Father-son relationship. He wants what is best for His children.

“...Bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4, *NIV*).

As you read the Bible, ask:

- How can I make this become a consistent part of my life?
- How do I stay right?

The Bible shows us how to apply God's Word to our everyday lives. It teaches us how to live victoriously.

*"If we be ignorant," said the translators of 1611, "the Scriptures will instruct us; if out of the way, they will bring us home; if out of order, they will reform us; if in heaviness, comfort us; if dull, quicken us, if cold, inflame us."
(Taken from the Biblical Illustrator)*

Study Questions

1. How much of God's Word is inspired? How do you know? _____

2. What are four key reasons for Bible study according to this lesson? _____

3. How many times is "doctrine" mentioned in the books of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus?

4. Kevin Green believes everything in God's Word relates to what questions?

5. Define "righteousness"? _____

6. According to Psalms 119:9-10, how can a young man stay pure? _____

7. What did the translators of 1611 say? _____

