

The Christian Arsenal

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What is the Bible?

It is our hope that this article will lead you into a deeper appreciation of the Bible and help you to become more confident of God's Word. You may want to get a notebook or journal to keep your study findings in. This will prove to be a valuable tool for you and is a key part of developing good study habits.

Objectives:

1. To introduce the student to some of the main doctrinal terms used to define the nature of the Bible.
2. To provide a brief introduction to the problems inherent in liberal views of the Bible.
3. To examine some key scriptures that speak about the Bible in relationship to the Christian, and especially the teacher.

It cannot be over stressed that the Bible is a unique book of **supernatural origin**. The Bible is **divinely inspired**. This is the first fact about the Bible that a Christian and especially a teacher of the Bible must understand. This is why the Bible is unique among all the books and literature of the world. It is God's message to man, not a collection of man's observations, thoughts and writings on what man thinks about God. A Christian who does not share a commitment to this view cannot possibly be an effective witness. Let's start with some terms that serve as foundations for understanding the nature of the Bible.

TERMS TO UNDERSTAND

- **Revelation** - The Greek word for revelation is "**apokalupsis**." The word means to **unveil** or **uncover** something that is hidden. The truth of the word of God requires revelation. There is no conceivable way for sinful, limited, finite mankind to discover God and His Truth. Revelation was a necessity. It took a revelation from God for us to truly know anything about Him. In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells us that there were mysteries and secrets hidden since before the beginning of time that He made known to us.

Matthew 13:35 "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." Ask yourself, "How could man search out and find things that God determined to be kept secret before the world was created?" There is only one answer and that answer is by revelation from God.

- **Inspiration** - 2 Timothy 3:16." All scripture is given by **inspiration of God**, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" The KJV uses the phrase "is given by **inspiration of God**". The Greek word used here is "**theopneustos**". It is a compound of two Greek words: "**theos**" meaning God and "**pnoe**" meaning breath or to breathe. The word means **God Breathed**. Consider 1 Peter 1:21"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."
- **Verbal Inspiration** - This term means that the inspiration was not just the thoughts, ideas or concepts but that the inspiration went all the way down to the very words of the original documents themselves. This is not however what some call "Mechanical Dictation" in that God took a person over and simply used their body like a puppet to write the Bible. God used many individuals who had different writing styles and vocabularies to communicate His truth. The bottom line is that it may have been in the writing style of Moses, Paul, John or King David but, God used these men and others to communicate **His** message just the way **He** wanted it.

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- **Plenary Inspiration** - Not only do we believe in the *verbal inspiration* of the scriptures but we believe in the *plenary inspiration*. But what does that mean?!?! To put it simply, it means that from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21, the whole thing is equally inspired. There are some that would say that only certain parts of the Bible are inspired. This idea is full of problems as we shall see in the next section below. See 2 Timothy 3:16 again.
- **Inerrant** - Because of the first four terms we have covered here, it would follow to reason that when Paul, Isaiah, or Matthew put pen to paper under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, no mistakes or errors were made.

Problems with a Liberal View

If you do not accept the Bible as described above and adopt what some call a "more intellectual or enlightened view", you put yourself in a morally dangerous and philosophically difficult position. Any position that calls into question the inspiration and truthfulness of the Bible carries a multitude of severe problems with it. Let's consider just a few:

If The Bible is not inspired in the verbal and plenary sense and if it is not inerrant then, you are saying that it is partially wrong in places.

If is partially wrong then there is a good chance that you are teaching and believing some things that are wrong. You certainly don't want that. Now this means you must find a way to figure out what is right and what isn't....

So the next questions would be

- "Who is going to figure out what parts are inspired?"
- "Who is going to tell us what we parts we should and should not believe?"
- "Who is responsible for or has the authority to assign people to do this task in the first place?"
- "Who is worthy and capable spiritually, morally and intellectually to do this?"
- "What qualifications do these people need to have?"
- "Who will come up with the list of qualifications needed for this type of project?"
- "What methods are they going to use to accomplish this?"
- "Where are they going to get these methods and who came up with them?"
- "How can we be sure these methods will give us the right or should we say "INSPIRED" results?"
- "What authorities, guidelines, or councils are they going to base these decisions on?"
- "Where do these authorities, guidelines, or councils get their authorization from in the first place?"

Some liberals believe it or not have answered these types of questions with, "through prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit." To them I would have to say "NO, that is not acceptable! Remember you don't believe that God can do that!" They will have to rely on man's limited, finite abilities to attempt to find and figure out God's revelation.

The list of problems and questions that this type of view causes go on and on. Not accepting the Bible as fully inspired and fully trustworthy is just asking for trouble. When you consider what the alternatives are, it's ridiculous.

The Bible and the Christian Teacher

There is a **unique reality** about the Bible that exists with the Bible and no other book. The **Author** of the book indwells every born again believer and desires a personal relationship with the student. The Holy Spirit is available to guide you in the study of the word of God.

John 16:13 "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall

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he speak: and he will show you things to come. Not only will He guide you but you have this promise too:"

James 1:5 "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

This **does not mean** that study is not necessary. It means that **through prayer and study, the Holy Spirit** will guide the believer into a greater understanding of the truths of the Bible.

2 Timothy 2:15 "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." We are to study and to grow.

The Bible expresses an **expectation of growth and maturity** in one's understanding and application of the Word of God. It is a book that you will never exhaust nor completely master.

Hebrews 5:13 "For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe." **14** "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

The Bible is **useful** and **relevant**. It is to be used is **every facet** of our lives every single day.

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

Deuteronomy 6:6 "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:" **7** "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

We have a **MANDATE** from **Jesus to teach it!**

Matthew 28:19 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" **20** "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

In summary, as a teacher of the Word of God you are entrusted with teaching the single most important book in the universe. You are instructed by Jesus to teach everything that he commanded. This is an awesome responsibility and a great privilege. To share the gospel of Jesus Christ and lead souls to the Lord is the highest calling imaginable. What better cause devote one's self to? The next time you sit down to study God's Word, think about what a wonderful Book and how wonderful the message you are studying and that you have the author dwelling in you!