

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, January 21, 2015 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

ALL ABOUT THE BIBLE How We Got the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:19-21*

There truly are many questions that swirl around the Bible... this most mysterious, inspiring and often controversial book that believers cling to and devote themselves to. Many accept the Bible at face value, by faith and never question that it is God's Word and that they are to live by it. Others read the Bible with more skepticism struggling at times to make sense of what to them are apparent contradictions, outright inaccuracies, and blatant atrocities that God seems to condone and even carry out in the Bible. What do we think about the Bible? Where did the Bible come from and how did we get it? Is the Bible reliable... can it be trusted? Why are there so many translations today?

JUST FOR FUN... SOME FUN FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

The following are some fun facts about the Bible that you may or may not have known. The Bible truly is an amazing book.

15 Fun and Interesting Facts About the Bible:

- 1. Psalms 117, 118 and 119 are chapters with special significance in the Bible** - Apparently, Psalm 117 is the shortest chapter in the Bible, Psalm 118 is the central chapter of the Bible and Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible. It's a hat-trick for the Psalms!
- 2. 2 John and 3 John have the same number of verses (13)** - However, John 3 wins the title of the shortest book due to its fewer number of words.
- 3. Ezra 7:21 contains all the letters of the alphabet, except the letter 'J'** (*In the New King James Version*).
- 4. The word 'God' appears 3,358 times in the Bible.**
- 5. The two books, 'Songs of Solomon' and 'Esther' have no mention of God in them.**
- 6. The word "Christian" only appears three times in the Bible.**
- 7. The sheep is the most frequently mentioned animal in the Bible** - Did you know the only domesticated animal not mentioned in the Bible is the cat!
- 8. The number of promises in the Bible are 1,260** - How many have you found? 1,260 promises to claim! Wow!
- 9. The phrase 'do not be afraid' appears 365 times in the Bible, just as the number of days in a year** - This phrase is not a suggestion but a command. So as we live each day, we know God has commanded us to trust Him with all our heart and be at rest!
- 10. The total number of questions in the Bible is 3,294** - God's first question asked in the Bible is 'Adam, Adam where are you?' And God's question to us today is still the same. He calls out for his lost sheep. It is up to us to turn back to Him.

JUST FOR FUN... SOME COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE BIBLE

Just as there are many interesting and intriguing things about the Bible, there are also a lot of misconceptions about the Bible. Some of the most common misconceptions about the Bible are these:

5 Common Misconceptions About the Bible:

1. **The Bible is a single work** - This is a fundamental misunderstanding that even many religious people are not aware of. The Bible is not a single book that was handed down from heaven, but a collection of books written by different human authors, divinely inspired by God at different times in different places of different genres for different purposes.
2. **The Bible is intended to explain scientific or historical facts** – Although it does not contradict science, and is remarkable historically accurate, the Bible is not and never has been primarily a book of science or history. An amazing fact about the Bible is that many times it actually makes statements that are, in time, proven historically and/or scientifically accurate.
3. **Being divinely inspired means that every word of the Bible was dictated exactly by God** – We will study “inspiration” further in our study, but basically inspiration means that a person is moved to use their own talents to express something profound. It does not mean that a person becomes a mindless automaton. What makes Scripture absorbing and perennial is that it is colored by human experience and personality in various cultures, times and places.
4. **The Bible is a magic book of answers to every problem** - Scripture is a legacy, collected wisdom of the ages, an account of God's interaction with humanity, the inspired word of God who chooses to work through humans. It may or may not have an answer for a particular problem at hand, and one should be cautious not to just pick words out of context. The Bible is not, and never has been a book for quick fixes, easy answers, and magical formulas that fix all problems.
5. **The Bible should be used to prove a point** - It should not. This is called "proof-texting" and is one of the most dishonest and cynical uses of Scripture. Although the Bible may in fact prove many points, it should not be used primarily as a device for argument, debate, or to put others in their place. The Bible is primarily a book of redemption and should bring men to right relationship with God and others... not divide.

Again, there are so many questions that surround this book, the Bible. Perhaps a place to begin is with the question, “Where did the Bible come from and is it truly the Word of God?” Last week we explored what the Bible has to say about itself, and we discovered that the Bible claims to be the Word of God?

2 Timothy 3:16-17 *"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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (II Timothy 3:16-17 NKJV)*

2 Peter 1:19-21 *"And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1;19-21 NKJV)*

IS THE BIBLE TRULY GOD’S WORD?

Our answer to this question will not only determine how we view the Bible and its importance to our lives, but also it will ultimately have an eternal impact on us. Why? (allow time for response)

If the Bible is truly God’s Word, then we should cherish it, study it, obey it, and fully trust it. If the Bible is the Word of God, then to dismiss it is to dismiss God Himself.

The fact that God gave us the Bible is an evidence and illustration of His love for us. The term “revelation” simply means that God communicated to mankind what He is like and how we can have a right relationship with Him. These are things that we could not have known had God not divinely revealed them to us in the Bible. Although God’s revelation of Himself in the Bible was given progressively over approximately 1600 years, it has always contained everything man needs to know about God in order to have a right relationship with Him. If the Bible is truly the Word of God, then it is the final authority for all matters of faith, religious practice, and morals.

The questions we must ask ourselves are these:

3 Important Questions We Must Ask Ourselves About the Bible:

- 1. How can we know that the Bible is the Word of God and not just a good book?**
- 2. What is unique about the Bible that sets it apart from all other religious books ever written?**
- 3. Is there any evidence that the Bible is truly God’s Word?**

These types of questions must be seriously examined if we are to determine the validity of the Bible’s claim to be the very Word of God, divinely inspired, and totally sufficient for all matters of faith and practice.

There can be no doubt that the Bible does claim to be the very Word of God. This is clearly seen in our key text, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, *"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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

There are two types of evidence that are available to us to help us determine if the Bible truly is God’s Word.

2 Types of Evidence that Help Us Determine that the Bible is God’s Word:

- 1. Internal evidence**
- 2. External evidence**

There are both internal and external evidences that the Bible is truly God’s Word.

The Internal Evidence - The internal evidences are those things within the Bible that testify of its divine origin.

3 Internal Evidences that the Bible is God's Word:

1. **The Bible's Unity** - One of the first internal evidences that the Bible is truly God's Word is seen in its unity. Even though it is really sixty-six individual books, written on three continents, in three different languages, over a period of approximately 1600 years, by more than 40 authors who came from many walks of life, the Bible remains one unified book from beginning to end without contradiction. This unity is unique from all other books and is evidence of the divine origin of the words which God moved men to record.
2. **The Bible's Prophecies** - Another of the internal evidences that indicates the Bible is truly God's Word is the prophecies contained within its pages. The Bible contains hundreds of detailed prophecies relating to the future of individual nations including Israel, certain cities, and mankind. Other prophecies concern the coming of One who would be the Messiah, the Savior of all who would believe in Him. Unlike the prophecies found in other religious books or those by men such as Nostradamus, biblical prophecies are extremely detailed. There are over three hundred prophecies concerning Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. Not only was it foretold where He would be born and His lineage, but also how He would die and that He would rise again. There simply is no logical way to explain the fulfilled prophecies in the Bible other than by divine origin. There is no other religious book with the extent or type of predictive prophecy that the Bible contains.
3. **The Bible's Authority and Power** - A third internal evidence of the divine origin of the Bible is its unique authority and power. While this evidence is more subjective than the first two, it is no less a powerful testimony of the divine origin of the Bible. The Bible's authority is unlike any other book ever written. This authority and power are best seen in the way countless lives have been transformed by the supernatural power of God's Word. Drug addicts have been cured by it, sexual addictions freed by it, derelicts and deadbeats transformed by it, hardened criminals reformed by it, sinners rebuked by it, and hate turned to love by it. In other words, the Bible's unique ability to change people's life is internal evidence that it is God's Word indeed. The Bible does possess a dynamic and transforming power that is only possible because it is truly God's Word.

The External Evidence - There are also external evidences that indicate the Bible is truly the Word of God.

3 External Evidences that the Bible is God's Word:

1. **The Historicity of the Bible** - One is the historicity of the Bible. Because the Bible details historical events, its truthfulness and accuracy are subject to verification like any other historical document. Through both archaeological evidences and other writings, the historical accounts of the Bible have been proven time and time again to be accurate and true. In fact, all the archaeological and manuscript evidence supporting the Bible makes it the best-documented book from the ancient world. The fact that the Bible accurately and truthfully records historically verifiable events is a great indication of its truthfulness when dealing with religious subjects and doctrines and helps substantiate its claim to be the very Word of God.
2. **The Integrity of the Bible's Human Authors** - Another external evidence that the Bible is truly God's Word is the integrity of its human authors. As mentioned earlier, God used men from many walks of life to record His words. In studying the lives of these men, we find them to be honest and sincere. The fact that they were willing to die often excruciating deaths

for what they believed testifies that these ordinary yet honest men truly believed God had spoken to them. The men who wrote the New Testament and many hundreds of other believers ([1 Corinthians 15:6](#)) knew the truth of their message because they had seen and spent time with Jesus Christ after He had risen from the dead. Seeing the risen Christ had a tremendous impact on them. They went from hiding in fear to being willing to die for the message God had revealed to them. Their lives and deaths testify to the fact that the Bible truly is God's Word.

3. **The Indestructibility of the Bible** - A final external evidence that the Bible is truly God's Word is the indestructibility of the Bible. Because of its importance and its claim to be the very Word of God, the Bible has suffered more vicious attacks and attempts to destroy it than any other book in history. From early Roman Emperors like Diocletian, through communist dictators and on to modern-day atheists and agnostics, the Bible has withstood and outlasted all of its attackers and is still today the most widely published book in the world.

Throughout time, skeptics have regarded the Bible as mythological, but archeology has confirmed it as historical. Opponents have attacked its teaching as primitive and outdated, but its moral and legal concepts and teachings have had a positive influence on societies and cultures throughout the world. It continues to be attacked by pseudo-science, psychology, and political movements, yet it remains just as true and relevant today as it was when it was first written.

It is a book that has transformed countless lives and cultures throughout the last 2000 years. No matter how its opponents try to attack, destroy, or discredit it, the Bible remains; its veracity and impact on lives is unmistakable.

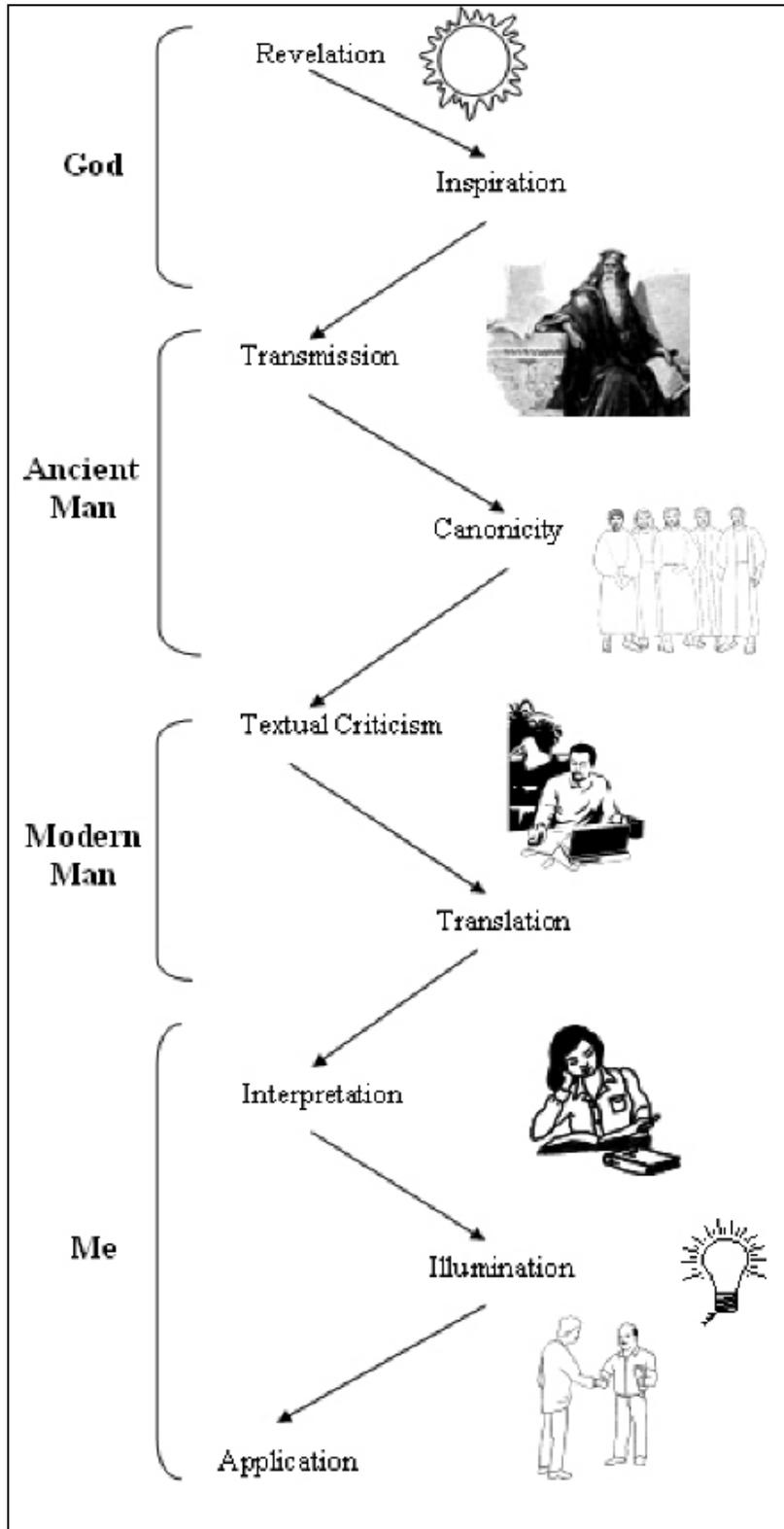
The accuracy which has been preserved despite every attempt to corrupt, attack, or destroy it is clear testimony to the fact that the Bible is truly God's Word and is supernaturally protected by Him. It should not surprise us that, no matter how the Bible is attacked, it always comes out unchanged and unscathed.

After all, Jesus said, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away"* ([Mark 13:31](#)).

After looking at the evidence, one can say without a doubt that, yes, the Bible is truly God's Word.

HOW THE BIBLE CAME FROM GOD TO US?

The following diagram give us an idea of how the Bible came from God to man... to us, along with some key words that are important in understanding the process of how God's Word, the Bible, actually came to us



9 Key Terms To Understanding How the Bible Come from God to Man:

- 1. Revelation** – God communicating to man what He wants us to know (Hebrews 1:1)
- 2. Inspiration** – God superintending human writers to compose and record His revelation to mankind (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21)
- 3. Transmission** – The ancient process of accurately copying Hebrew and Greek scriptures for successive generations
- 4. Canonicity** – God guiding the early church to recognize what books are inspired.
- 5. Textual Criticism** – The modern process of comparing existing Hebrew and Greek manuscripts to determine what is original
- 6. Translation** – The process of translating the Bible from the original Hebrew and Green into a modern language.
- 7. Interpretation** – The process of a reader studying to understand what God's Word means (2 Timothy 2:15)
- 8. Illumination** – The process of the Holy Spirit helping the reader understand and apply the Bible (John 16:13)
- 9. Application** – The process of putting into practice what the reader has learned (James 1:22)

THE BIBLE'S RELIABILITY FROM REVELATION BY GOD TO APPLICATION BY READER

How do we know that the Bible is reliable, and that what we hold in our hand as the Bible is actually what God said. Of course faith must be a part of the equation. Somewhere along the process of understanding how the Bible came to us, one must have in God's ability to preserved and give us His Word. The following chart may begin to help us to understand something of the Bible's reliability from revelation by God, all the way to us today.

		Definition	Degree of Certainty	Factors Determining Certainty
-----Completed in the past-----	Revelation	God communicating to man what He wants us to know (Heb. 1:1).	Revelation is settled and sure because there is only one Source of revelation.	Revelation rests upon the trustworthy character of God.
	Inspiration	God superintending human writers to compose and record His revelation to mankind (2 Tim.3:16, 2 Pet.1:21).	Inspiration is settled and sure because there in only one process of inspiration, even though there were many writers.	Inspiration rests on God's total control of the human-divine process.
	Transmission	The ancient process of accurately copying Hebrew and Greek scriptures for successive generations.	The transmission of the Bible texts was amazingly accurate, but it was many scribes copying.	Transmission depended upon scribes using a careful process that God protected.
	Canonicity	God guiding the early church to recognize which books were inspired.	Canonicity is settled and sure. There is only one final collection of inspired books.	Canonicity depended upon God controlling an otherwise human process of church councils.
-----Continuing in the present-----	Textual Criticism	The modern process of comparing existing Hebrew and Greek manuscripts to determine what is original.	Very reliable overall... Several different theories exist about which original manuscripts are the most reliable.	The accuracy of existing texts depends on the competence of the scholars involved in textual criticism and upon the tests available.
	Translation	The process of translating the Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek into a modern language.	We have many reliable translations in English and other languages.	Translations depend on the knowledge and accuracy of the translator(s) and, to some degree, upon their interpretive understanding

----Continuing in the present----	Interpretation	The process of a reader studying to understand what God's Word means (2 Tim.2:15).	The reliability of interpretation varies greatly. Many interpretations are suggested.	Interpretation depends upon the accuracy, the theology, and sometimes the honesty of the Bible student, teacher or writer.
	Illumination	The process of the Holy Spirit helping the reader understand and apply the Bible (Jn. 16:13).	The Holy Spirit's illumination is available to all believers, but accuracy will vary greatly.	Illumination depends upon the Bible reader's accuracy, honesty and even spiritual maturity.
	Application	The process of putting into practice what the reader has learned (Jms. 1:22).	Applications will vary greatly. Many applications are legitimately possible.	Specific application depends upon the person's needs and their willingness to obey God.