

# Understanding the Bible

by  
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The study of the Bible is a fascinating one with all its supernatural origins, we will now discover the wonders of the Bible with all its unique attitudes, uniqueness and terminologies. Our English word Bible comes from the Greek word '*biblios*' which means a '*role*' or a '*book*'. When we speak of the Bible as a role or book we are speaking of it as a whole body of work known as the scriptures or the history of God and His works on earth with human kind.

## Scripture

A second more important word we have used is '*scripture*' the English word scripture, is a translation from the Greek word '*graphei*' which means '*writings*'.

The word in the Bible is used especially concerning sacred writings, or books that were inspired by God. In 2 Peter 3:16 the word '*graphei*' is used as of the Old Testament and is also used in Paul's writings. The very fact that Peter used the same terms as Paul, suggests that Paul writing was regarded as scripture.

So the word Bible is the inspired and emphasises the written revelation of God's word.

## The Word of God

The word of God is a common substitute for the word '*scripture*' and '*Bible*' but the term '*Word of God*' is used in both the Old and New Testaments. The key Greek term for '*word*' is '*logos*'. If we look at [Math 15:6](#) the term '*word of God*' is used specifically as [Law of Moses](#) while in [Rom 3:2](#) '*logion*' is translated as '*oracles*'. Also in [Heb 4:12](#) the expression '*Word of God*' is used of all scripture in the New Testament to emphasize God in written form.

## Testament

This is a very common term but it really is not as common as the word Bible, but the term really means '*covenant*' and the Bible is exactly that a combination of covenants. For God has made eight primary covenants with man, and now judges the world through a mediator, Jesus Christ the righteous.

## Attitudes Towards the Bible

Now since the writing of the scriptures people have developed certain attitudes concerning history as well as in our modern day. Some of them are as follows:

### Rationalism

The main argument of rationalism is that the mind is supreme, now there are two main points in rationalism which are Extreme Rationalism and Moderate Rationalism.

Extreme Rationalism denies the possibility of God revealing Himself, especially through the written word. So Extreme Rationalism is the view of Atheism or Agnosticism, in the early American history there was also Extreme Deism held by the American forefathers.

### Moderate Rationalism

This position at least allows for some revelation of God, but however goes on to say that this revelation is entirely subject to the human mind. Today this is seen in Modern Day Liberalism.

### Mysticism

The main point of mysticism is that experience is supreme and the final authority. In other words if it fits your experience it right, but if not its invalid. Its claimed that normal revelation can not be received in a normal way. Now those who hold this position will say that they accept that the Word

of God is real but that this is not a completed thing, because there is more divine truth available, and that truth can not be gained without experience of their souls being quickened to receive it. They will say that they hold truths beyond the scriptures and this truth is Mysticism. This type of theology is held by such as Pantheism, Quakerism, and people like Thomas a'Kempis. We must not conclude that all mysticism is wrong, because there is True Mysticism which is the illumination of the mind by the Holy Spirit through the scriptures. However false mysticism states that experience is the final verdict on what is true and what is false. We must always take the Bible as the soul revelation of truth, and we do not use experience to explain the Bible, we use the Bible to explain our experience.

### **Romanism**

Romanism teaches that the Roman church is supreme, and the Bible is the product of the Roman church so therefore the Bible can only be interpreted by them. They teach that the scriptures are incomplete and there is an a greater amount of revelation to the church from the church. Romanism says that the scriptures are obscured and only the church can clarify them. Therefore they are the one dominant factor to determine what each passage means.

Romanism is ruled by church tradition, therefore it gives much authority to the Latin Vulgate instead of the Hebrew and Greek scriptures. That is why they believe that the Roman church is supreme.

### **Neo Orthodoxy**

In Neo- orthodoxy the encounter is supreme, and the Bible is a fallible witness towards God in the word, therefore the Bible is not the word of God, but does contain the word of God.

It is for the individual to determine just what is the word of God or not. They say that to establish the true word of God one has to have a valid encounter. Alas nobody can determine what this encounter is, therefore everyone can determine what an encounter is, but they still come up with totally different conclusions.

### **Cults**

The basic position of the cults is that the Bible plus some other writings are supreme. The key mark of discovering a cult is that although they accept the Bible as the Word of God, they also give other writings equal status. For instance Mormonism has '[The book of Mormon](#)' which they consider to be inspired, Christian Science has Mary Baker Eddy's book '[Key to the Scriptures](#)' which they consider to be inspired. So in this category all these groups plus many others see the Bible as being on equal footing with these other writings.

### **Orthodoxy**

The Bible alone is the true understanding of scripture it is the infallible word of God and this and this alone would be acceptable to Orthodox believers. In the original Hebrew writings it is inspired and without error. It is the final authority on matters of faith and practice and is true in everything it affirms. In things concerning the mind or reason , it must at all times be subservient to the word of God. Also concerning matters of Mysticism, the Bible must be the final judge of experience, and experience must never determine the expounding of scripture.

Also concerning Romanism, it can never be the church that determines scripture, but the scriptures should determine church policy. Also man does not need an encounter to comprehend the word of God as the believer is regenerated by the word of God.

There is no inner light that determines scripture for the believer is illuminated by the Holy Spirit. There is definitely no authority but the Bible itself which is final.

### **The Formation of The Bible**

The Bible formation shows the unity and diversity of scripture. For example the period of time

between the writing of the first book and the last book was 1,600 years, but in spite of this not one section contradicts itself. Furthermore, God used about forty different men to write the books of scripture, there are a total of sixty six books and some of these men wrote more than one book. If you were to take any subject such as science and track it across 1,600 years and the difference of opinions would be staggering, but that is not true of the Bible as the themes continue right across the 1,600 years. So because the Bible has both unity and conformity there is not one contradiction in the book.

## **Diversity of Language**

A good example of the formation of scripture is that scripture was written in three languages most of which is the Hebrew language. The second largest portion was written in Greek and the smallest portion in Aramaic. So not only was there forty people writing 66 books but they wrote them in three languages and still there is unity and diversity.

To add to that most of it was written in the land of Israel others parts were written in Babylon, Egypt, Greece, Rome, and Arabia and perhaps other places we know not of, but it still retains its unity and diversity and remains in perfect harmony.

Further more its diversity of authors is truly mind blowing, it was written by Kings, Priests, Prophets, Soldiers, Statesmen, Shepherds, Fisherman, and a Tax collector, not to mention a Doctor, a Tentmaker and a Farmer. In fact these forty authors had eleven occupations and still it retains its perfect harmony.

## **The Preservation of The Bible**

There is an unbelievable sense of preservation about the Bible with its unaltered and indestructible state. First of all the text itself has remained intact and people ask how do we know the Bible is correct? The Lord has preserved many Greek texts, and because of these we are able to understand what the Greek New Testament was. But concerning the Old Testament there are almost as many Greek texts in the Old Testament, however we know that these texts are sound because of a very important fact, that before 1947 the oldest text was the Masoretic text which dated from AD 1000. Because it was so old many people poked fun at it saying it could not possibly be accurate. Then in 1947 the Dead Sea Scrolls was found which date at 100BC to show us that there was no variation, nor is there any change of meaning.

## **Indestructibility**

The evidence of the Bible's indestructibility is found in 1 Peter:23-25;

“Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which lives and abides, For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower fails, but the word of the Lord abides for ever, and this is the word of good tidings that was preached to you.”

God has promised that He would preserve His word, although many have tried throughout history to destroy the scriptures, but they have been preserved. The Roman Emperor Diocletian said “**The Christian religion is destroyed and the worship of the gods restored**” but only ten years later emperor Constantine declared the Christian religion to be the state religion. Also the French philosopher Voltaire said :”**Fifty years from now the world will hear no more of the Bible**” Exactly fifty years later the Geneva Bible Society bought the very press used by Voltaire to print the Bible. The opponents of William Tyndale said the Bible would never be printed in English, yet today the Bible is the best selling book of all time, and is sold around the world in English. There are many clear evidences that the Bible is indestructible.

## **The Subject Matter of the Bible**

The subject matter of scripture is unique above all books including other holy books. The Bible displays the personality, unity and triunity of God. The Bible speaks about mankind's origin and fall, it introduces the unique concept of the God-man in Yeshua. It deals with God's plan for salvation, the subject matter is as diverse as the Bible itself. In spite of the diversity of the Bible, there is still a unifying presence about it. It has the unifying principle of God.

### **The Influence of the Bible**

The Bible has been seen to have tremendous influence on people both unbelievers and believers alike. It has changed many peoples lives as well as inspired the writings of many classic books. It has had the most influence on men of the science, the arts and humanities.

There has also been great influence on many nations in the concepts of cleanness, honour, legality upon the nations of the world that have embraced them. Many of the law codes in the Western world have taken their influence from scripture. But more than any of that the greatest influence has been on individuals who gained a relationship with the living God.

### **The Supernatural Origins of the Bible**

The Bible is theocentric and God is at the centre of its pages, while other Holy Books only talk about God, the Bible makes Him a tangible presence by His Holy Spirit. The Bible presents God as monotheistic rather than polytheistic, the Bible is the holy Book that present God as the supreme being of the universe. Other holy books speak of God but only the Bible shows how you can be introduced to Him.

### **The Problem with Sin**

The Bible alone and only the Bible shows the problem of sin and how to deal with it. Only the Bible has the answer for the problem that wrecks the lives of many and it really works, and has been testified by thousands of people for many years.

### **The Bible and its Ethics and Morals**

A further supernatural origin of the Bible is it is unique in its ethics and morals. That is because they cover all manner of life and human conduct. It cover all manner of husband and wife issues, parent and child issues, conduct of employers, governments and citizens of the world. They cover in spheres like sexual, business and recreational issues and are comprehensive. It is also notable that the ethics and motives are judged, the Bible does not only deal with the outward conformity as other books do, but it deals with the very motives themselves. This is based upon the fact that God exists and will judge the motives of every heart.

### **The Bible and its Freshness**

The Bible is read and reread but still retains its enduring freshness, it is read and reread like no other book. Since I got my first Bible I have read completely through from cover to cover about sixteen times but I never find it boring. Because it retains its freshness over and over again.