

Lesson One ~ The Word of God

“What is the Role of the Bible in My Life?”



What separates Christianity from any “religion” in the world is its claim to an absolute, written authority from God. Having the Word of God is essential to a Christian’s growth in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. The standards by which a Christian is to govern his/her life in every detail are found in the pages of the Word of God.

The purpose of this lesson is to acquaint the new Christian with the basics of the Bible and how it relates to his/her everyday life, so he/she can begin to understand how its principles are to guide every facet of his/her walk with Jesus Christ.

I. Introduction to the Bible

It is universally accepted that there are two fundamental sources of human knowledge: reason and experience. Both are essential to the understanding of the world around us. Yet, reason and experience do not answer the most profound and important questions of life. Where did I come from? What is the purpose for my existence? Where am I going, if anywhere, after death? Is there a source that answers these, the three most important questions of life?

There is a third source of knowledge called revelation. This revelation is found primarily in the Word of God, commonly called the Bible. The Bible teaches us that God has revealed Himself and His commandments in the Holy Scriptures. In these Scriptures we have direct access to an infinite and personal Being who created all things for His pleasure, who is omnipotent (all powerful), omniscient (all knowing), omnipresent (all present), and immutable (unchanging).

The Bible describes two forms of revelation usually called general and special. According to verses in *Psalms* 19:1-6 and *Romans* 1:20, God has revealed Himself to us through His creation. This general revelation is available to us all. The Bible teaches also that God has implanted the knowledge of His existence in every human heart (*Romans* 1:18 and *II Thessalonians* 1:10).

Introduction to the Bible (continued)

God's special revelation involves a more direct communication with man including dreams, visions, angels, the person of Christ Himself and the Bible, God's written revelation. The Bible presents God's plan of redemption for mankind. All have sinned and all must be redeemed. God's will for man as he relates to God's plan for history is the theme and focal point of the Scriptures.

God chose to reveal Himself in a progressive way. As time passed, more and more was revealed and recorded about God, His will and His ways. At the completion of The New Testament, God's written revelation was complete.

Scriptures are unique in several ways:

- 1)** It is unique in its production. A book written by approximately forty authors over a 1600 year period of time making one complete integrated unit (*II Peter 1:19-21*).
- 2)** It is unique in its preservation. God not only inspired the Scriptures, but He promised to preserve them (*Psalms 12:6-7*).
- 3)** It is unique in its proclamations. Over 25% of the Bible was prophetic in nature when written. It touches the subjects of heaven and hell; eternal salvation and damnation; eternity past to eternity future. Yet, it cuts to the heart of all of the major issues of life (*II Timothy 3:16, 17*).
- 4)** It is unique in its product. No other book has so profoundly influenced the course of history and the lives of men. "The Word of God is quick (alive) and powerful..." (*Hebrews 4:12; I Peter 1:22,23*).

The Bible is a book which is composed of sixty-six books written by more than forty authors over a period of more than 2,000 years. It is totally accurate in its recording of history and prophecy fitting together as though one man wrote it without one contradiction. The middle verse of the Bible is *Psalms 118:8*; the middle words are "The Lord."

II. The Inspiration of the Bible

- The author of the Bible is The Holy Spirit of God.
- The Bible is the source book of our knowledge of God. It is the textbook of divine truth the guidebook to everlasting life.
- The word “Bible” is derived from the Greek word “biblos” meaning “a book.”
- The Bible is a library of sixty-six books divided into two main sections called The Old Testament containing thirty-nine books, and The New Testament containing twenty-seven books.
- “All scripture is given by inspiration...” (*II Timothy 3:16*). What does it mean “by inspiration”? *II Peter 1:21* says, “...holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” The Holy Ghost was miraculously present preserving the accuracy of the transcription of God’s Word in a man’s mouth to what we call the “original manuscripts.” God moved men to say (inspiration) and record (preservation) the very words He chose.
- We accept the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God completely inspired, undoubtedly preserved. *Hebrews 1:1; Jeremiah 1:9; 45:1; II Samuel 23:2; Ezekiel 2:2.*
- *Psalms 12:6, 7*, “The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.”

III. What Does the Bible Say About Itself?

Psalm 119 is well known for its thorough treatment of the Bible itself. Undoubtedly, there is no other passage of Scripture that deals with the subject of the Scriptures in such detail.

Psalm 119 is the longest Psalm containing 176 verses. All but three verses specifically mention the Scriptures (*verses 84, 90, 132*). The number eight is stamped all over this Psalm. Each of its twenty-two sections corresponding to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet contains eight verses. In the Hebrew text, every verse in each section began with the particular letter of the alphabet that it represented. The psalm uses eight different words to refer to the Scriptures, each numerous times;

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| 1) the law of the Lord | 5) statutes |
| 2) testimonies | 6) commandments |
| 3) ways | 7) judgments |
| 4) precepts | 8) word |

What Does the Bible Say About Itself (continued)

A. Psalm 199 teaches us that the Bible is eight things **to** the believer:

- 1) water for cleansing (v. 9)
- 2) wealth & treasure (vs. 14, 72, 127, 162)
- 3) a companion and friend (v. 24)
- 4) a song to sing (v. 54)
- 5) honey (v. 103)
- 6) a lamp (vs. 105, 130)
- 7) great spoil (v. 162)
- 8) an heritage (v. 111)

B. Psalm 199 teaches us that the Bible is eight things **for** the believer:

- 1) blesses (vs. 1, 2)
- 2) gives life (vs. 25, 37, 40, 50, 88, 93)
- 3) gives strength (v. 28)
- 4) gives liberty (v. 45)
- 5) imparts wisdom (vs. 66, 97-104)
- 6) creates friends (v. 63)
- 7) gives comfort (vs. 76, 92)
- 8) gives direction (v. 133)

What Does the Bible Say About Itself (continued)

- C.** Psalm 119 teaches us that the Bible **charges** the believer with eight responsibilities concerning the scriptures:
- 1) love them (*vs. 97, 159*)
 - 2) prize them (*vs. 72, 128*)
 - 3) study them (*vs. 7, 12, 18, 26, 27*)
 - 4) memorize them (*v. 11*)
 - 5) meditate on them (*vs. 15, 23, 48, 78, 148*)
 - 6) trust them (*v. 42*)
 - 7) obey them (*vs. 1-8*)
 - 8) declare them (*vs. 13, 26*)

IV. **The Scriptures have been inspired and preserved by God that we might have an infallible guide that will bring us to salvation and daily sanctification. For what purpose? That while we are here on this earth we might fulfill God's objectives of giving glory to Him while we carry out His will on earth found in what is called our Great Commission (*Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19, 20*).**

The teachings of Scripture fall into four major categories according to II Timothy 3:16:

- 1) doctrine – what is right
- 2) reproof – what is not right
- 3) correction – how to get right
- 4) instruction in righteousness – how to stay right

“...that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (3:17).

V. The Word of God is Active in Salvation.

- A.** I Peter 1:23 says a man is born again “by the word of God.” The Word of God is the agent which brings about the new birth.
- B.** *Ephesians 2:8-9* says, “For by grace are ye saved through faith...” and *Romans 10:17* says, “So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.”
- C.** *James 1:21* says the Word of God is, “...able to save your souls.”
- D.** Paul’s summary of the gospel contains four parts in I Corinthians 15:1-4:
 - 1)** Jesus Christ died for our sins.
 - 2)** Was buried.
 - 3)** Rose from the dead.
 - 4)** According to the Scriptures.
- E.** You must believe what the Bible says about sin, your condition, and God’s plan of salvation in order to be saved.

VI. Read This Famous Quote Concerning the Bible:

“The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable.”

“Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler’s map, the pilgrim’s staff, the pilot’s compass, the soldier’s sword, and the Christian’s charter.”

“Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.”

“Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given to you in life, will be opened at the judgment, and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, rewards the greatest labor, and condemns all who trifle with its holy contents.”

~ Author Unknown ~

Synopsis of the Bible: Old Testament

In **Genesis** the world was made by God's creative hand;
In **Exodus** the Hebrews marched to gain the promised land;
Leviticus contains the Law, holy and just and good;
Numbers records the tribes enrolled – all sons of Abraham's blood.
Moses in **Deuteronomy** records God's mighty deeds.
Brave **Joshua** into Canaan's land the host of Israel leads.
In **Judges** their rebellion oft provoked the Lord to smite,
But **Ruth** records the faith of one well-pleasing in His sight.
In **First** and **Second Samuel** of Jesse's son we read:
Ten tribes in **First** and **Second Kings** revolted from his seed.
Next, **First** and **Second Chronicles** see Judah captive made,
But **Ezra** heads a remnant back by princely Cyrus' aid.
The city walls of Zion **Nehemiah** builds again;
While **Esther** saves her people from plots of wicked men.
In **Job** we read how faith will live beneath affliction's rod,
And in the **Psalms** are precious songs to every child of God.
The **Proverbs**, like a goodly string of choicest pearls, appear.
Ecclesiastes teaches man how vain are all things here.
The mystic **Song of Solomon** exalts sweet Sharon's Rose:
Whilst Christ the Saviour and the King the 'rapt **Isaiah**' shows.
The warning **Jeremiah** apostate Israel scorns;
His plaintive **Lamentations** their awful downfall mourns.
Ezekiel tells in wondrous words of dazzling mysteries;
And kings and empires yet to come, **Daniel** in vision sees.
Of Judgment and of mercy **Hosea** loves to tell;

Synopsis of the Bible: Old Testament – (continued)

Joel describes the blessed days when God with men will dwell.
Among Tekoa's herdsman **Amos** received his call,
And **Obadiah** prophesies of Edom's final fall.
Jonah enshrines a wondrous type of Christ our risen Lord;
Micah pronounces Judah lost – lost, but again restored.
Nahum declared on Nineveh just judgement shall be poured.
A view of Chaldea's coming doom **Habakkuk's** visions give;
Next **Zephaniah** warns the Jews to turn, repent and live.
Haggai wrote to those who saw the temple built again,
And **Zechariah** prophesied of Christ's triumphant reign.
Malachi was the last who touched the high prophetic chord
whose final notes sublimely show the coming of the Lord.

Synopsis of the Bible: New Testament

Matthew and **Mark**, and **Luke** and **John** the holy Gospels wrote,
Describing how the Saviour died – His life and what He taught.
Acts proves how God the Apostles worked with signs in every place.
St. Paul in **Romans** teaches us how man is saved by grace.
Th' Apostle in **Corinthians** instructs, exhorts, reproves;
Galatians shows that faith in Christ alone, the Father loves.
Ephesians and **Philippians** tell what Christians ought to be.
Colossians bids us live to God and for eternity,
In **Thessalonians** we are taught the Lord will come from heaven.
In **Timothy** and **Titus** a bishop's rule is given.
Philemon marks a Christian's love which only Christians know.

Synopsis of the Bible: New Testament – (continued)

Hebrews reveals the Gospel as prefigured by the Law.

St. **James** insists that without works faith is but vain and dead:

And **Peter** points the narrow way in which the saints are led.

St. **John** in his epistles on love delights to dwell,

And **Jude** gives awful warning of judgment, wrath and hell.

The **Revelation** prophesies of that tremendous day

when Christ, and Christ alone, shall be the trembling sinner's stay.

Questions & Answers

Lesson 1 – The Word of God

1. Reason and experience do not answer the three most important questions in life. What are they?

A.

B.

C.

2. There is a third source of human knowledge other than reason and experience. What is it?

Answer:

3. Explain the difference between general and special revelation.

4. The Scriptures are unique in at least four special ways:

A. 1

B. 2

C. 3

D. 4

5. Describe the process of inspiration and preservation.

- 6.** *Psalm 119* extensively deals with the subject of the Bible. The Psalm uses eight words synonymously when referring to the Scriptures. Why do you suppose these eight words are used? (The answer to this question is not addressed in the lesson. It is for you to think.)

- 7.** The teachings of the Scripture fall into four major categories according to *II Timothy 3:16*. List them and explain.

- A. 1
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4

- 8.** Explain in your own words to your disciple how the Word of God is active in salvation.

- 9.** List five basic principles of Bible Study.

- A. 1
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4
- E. 5

- 10.** Explain the meaning of *II Peter 1:19-21* to your discipler.

Key Memory Verses:

II Timothy 3:15-17; II Peter 1:20, 21; Psalm 12:6, 7; 119:9

Note: Three popular attitudes about the Bible are:

1. The Bible is just another religious book written by men.
2. The Bible can only be understood by the “clergy” or by years of formal education.
3. In order to understand the true meanings of Scripture, you must study Greek and Hebrew.

From the Bible principles taught in this lesson, you should understand that these attitudes are wrong, and why.

Write any questions you may have concerning the subjects in this lesson.