

BIBLE DISCOVERY

“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart...”. (Jeremiah 15:16)

Dear Friend,

I want to begin by commending you for taking the time to study this important booklet about the Bible! All of us live such busy lives that to stop and give time to anything new demands real commitment. I really believe that the time you spend learning about the Bible will be worth every minute that you put in to it!

This booklet is designed for all ages and stages of previous Bible knowledge. So, even if you've never opened the scriptures before, this study will be a great beginning to understand the magnificent message of God to man!

Our only motivation in producing and advertising this study is to expose people to the wonder of the Bible. Sadly, people often pre-judge things before actually looking into them for themselves. This can be tragic when it comes to the most important document ever known to mankind.

We pray that you will have an open mind to learn all that this booklet will teach you, and that, when you're done, you'll know more of the Bible's origin, author, and purpose than you did before you started! May God Himself, the main subject of scripture, make Himself known to you through the understanding of His word!

Pastor James Hamilton

I. WHERE DID THE BIBLE COME FROM?

The Bible is actually a collection of “books” or parts that were written down over a period of 1,600 years by over forty different human writers.

Though it records events from creation itself, the Bible wasn't written down until 1,500 BC. The first books were penned by the Jewish leader Moses when he wrote the first five books of scripture; Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Even earlier than the books of Moses, came the book of Job, though it is found later in the order (canon) of the books.

All of the writers of scripture were Jews (ie. Israelites) – a special people that started with the patriarch Abraham, as recorded in Genesis. God the Creator came to Abraham and revealed to him the way of salvation and called him to leave his homeland of Mesopotamia and go to the land of Canaan, later to be called Israel. God intended to use Abraham to start a new people from which God would later send a promised Savior known as the Messiah!

The earliest events recorded in the Bible like creation, man's first sin, the flood, and the founding of Israel were originally handed down orally from generation to generation until God led Moses to write them down as scripture. After Moses, many other writers would add other books continuing the story of Israel leading up to the coming of the Messiah.

These writers would be from different places, in and outside of Israel, and would often not even know each other. There were kings like David and Solomon, prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah, priests like Samuel and Ezra, political leaders like Daniel and Nehemiah, fisherman like Peter and John, and even a former enemy of Christianity named Paul! All that they wrote fit perfectly together without error or contradiction because they wrote only what God told them to write.

Inspiration is the Bible's own declaration that the scriptures came from God. In II Timothy 3:16 we read, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God”. That means that God literally spoke to each of these writers telling them exactly what to write. The human writers were simply the means of getting God's

word to the world much like a pen writes a letter but does not take credit for what the human mind first wanted and used the pen to write down.

Furthermore, once God finished His word around 100 A.D. with the last book of the Bible, Revelation, He would no longer give us any more scripture. He promised instead to preserve (keep going in a pure form) His word forever. Psalm 12:6 says of God keeping His words, "Thou shalt keep them O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation forever"!

This preservation would include God leading people to translate His word into many, many different languages. In fact, the Bible is the most widely translated document of all time; nothing even comes close! It was first given in Hebrew and Greek in the Old and New Testaments but now can be found in thousands of languages and dialects. Whenever translators have remained faithful to stay with the original copies of the Bible (manuscripts), God has blessed the translation of His word in those new languages including the Authorized King James Version in English!

So, to conclude our first question in our Bible Discovery booklet we can say with confidence that the Bible came from God to man in a supernatural and miraculous way!

II. HOW IS THE BIBLE PUT TOGETHER?

The Bible is a large book! It contains two major divisions, sixty-six books, 1,189 chapters, and 783,137 words (that's 3,116,480 letter characters in the AKJV). Because it seems like an overwhelming task to read and understand, it's important to divide it up into its parts like the old saying, "How do you eat an elephant? - one spoonful at a time"!

The following points will help to break down the Bible into its smaller divisions:

Old Testament	New Testament
Genesis	Matthew
Exodus	Mark
Leviticus	Luke
Numbers	John
Deuteronomy	Acts
Joshua	Romans
Judges	1 Corinthians
Ruth	2 Corinthians
1 Samuel	Galatians
2 Samuel	Ephesians
1 Kings	Philippians
2 Kings	Colossians
1 Chronicles	1 Thessalonians
2 Chronicles	2 Thessalonians
Ezra	1 Timothy

Nehemiah	2 Timothy
Esther	Titus
Job	Philemon
Psalms	Hebrews
Proverbs	James
Ecclesiastes	1 Peter
Song of Solomon	2 Peter
Isaiah	1 John
Jeremiah	2 John
Lamentations	3 John
Ezekiel	Jude
Daniel	Revelation
Hosea	
Joel	
Amos	
Obadiah	
Jonah	
Micah	
Nahum	
Habakkuk	
Zephaniah	
Haggai	

Zechariah	
Malachi	

B. A general outline of these books:

Old Testament	
Genesis – Esther	History
Job – Song of Solomon	Poetry
Isaiah – Malachi	Prophecy
New Testament	
Matthew – Acts	History
Romans – Jude	Doctrine
Revelation	Prophecy

C. The thirty-nine books of the OT were written in Hebrew, the language of the Jews, and the twenty-seven books of the NT were written in Greek, the universal language at the time of Christ's first coming.

D. The OT covers events from creation around 4000 BC to 400 BC – the NT covers the period from around 4 BC to 100 AD. The period between the OT and NT when God gave no scripture is often called the "Silent Years".

E. The relationship between the OT and the NT is crucial:

1) The OT is mainly the story of Israel and her leaders – the NT is mainly the story of Jesus Christ and the first churches.

2) The OT predicts the coming of the Savior, Messiah – the NT tells that He came in the person of Jesus Christ.

3) The OT mainly shows man's ruin in sin – the NT mainly shows man's rescue by salvation!

4) The OT stresses law and judgment – the NT stresses grace and deliverance!

5) The OT ends with Messiah about to come – the NT ends with Messiah about to come again!

F. Each of the sixty-six books has its' own theme but they each fit perfectly into the whole. Examples are:

- Genesis; the book of beginnings
- Exodus; the book of redemption
- Psalms; the book of comfort in trials
- Proverbs; the book of wisdom
- Matthew; presents Jesus Christ as King
- John; presents Jesus Christ as God
- Acts; presents the history of the early church
- Romans; presents a legal case for salvation
- Revelation; presents the end of the world

G. The Bible speaks either directly or indirectly to every subject possible. Things like:

- God, the devil, angels, creation, history, morals, family, marriage, sexuality, cultures, friendship, science, medicine, geography, worship, music, gambling, nations, government, crime, drugs, evil, good, sorrow, disease, warfare, death, heaven, hell, eternity

III. IS THE BIBLE THE WORD OF GOD?

Without doubt, the key issue in judging the Bible as worthy of your attention, and in comparison with other supposed holy books, is the one posed here. Is the Bible the word of God, or just the words of men? Can that question even be answered with certainty?

There are many sacred writings of world religions that claim to be divine in origin such as the Koran of Islam, the Veda's of Hinduism, the "ex-cathedra" claims of the Roman Catholic pope, and the "Book of Mormon" to name a few. However, just claiming that a sacred writing is divine is not the same as proving it to be so.

Moreover, the reason this question is so important is that if a document comes only from man than it cannot be fully trusted because all men fall short of perfect knowledge either about the past, right and wrong in the present, or, of course, knowing the future. So, only if a document can be proven to be outside of man's making and from a divine source can it be trusted as inerrant, infallible, and worthy of our complete trust and obedience.

The Bible is the only sacred writing ever given to man that meets these qualifications. Consider the following proofs that the Bible is the word of God:

I. Internal evidence

In other words, the Bible itself claims to be the word of God, so for anyone to say otherwise, they are making God a liar (I John 5:9-11).

- A. Hundreds of times the Bible uses phrases quoting God like "Thus saith the Lord" or "God said" (Exodus 4:22 / Judges 6:8 / Ezekiel 36:22).
- B. The Bible is referred to as the "word of God" in many places (Romans 10:17 / Hebrews 4:12).
- C. God says that His word is pure and has been preserved perfectly (Matthew 24:35 / Proverbs 30:5).
- D. God commanded for His word to be written down and then kept for every generation (Deuteronomy 31:24).

- E. God tells us that He gave us His word (Psalm 68:11).
- F. We are told to hear God's word, believe God's word, and share God's word with others (Jeremiah 31:10).
- G. Throughout scripture people accepted the Bible as the word of God (I Thessalonians 2:13).
- H. New Testament speakers and writers often quote the Old Testament as authoritative and from God including Jesus Christ Himself (Matthew 1:22, 5:18 / John 5:39).

But it's true that any book can call itself the word of God, but only the Bible passes other tests to back up that claim!

II. External Evidence

A. Historical

1. The Bible is the oldest continually copied, translated, and distributed document in the history of man.
2. It has the greatest number of manuscript copies of the originals of any ancient document.
3. All of its' claims of people, places, and events of the past have been proven to be true. The Bible speaks of kingdoms like Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome in their historical, chronological order along with leaders such as Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, and Augustus Caesar – all real historical figures.
4. In fact, the Bible is filled with genealogical lists of thousands of real people in real places – something a man-made, fictional, fairy tale would never do!

B. Scientific

1. The Bible has always been way ahead of its' time stating truths before men even knew them such as the earth being round and at the center of the solar system (Job 26:7 / Isaiah 40:22).
2. Medical facts like our blood being the source of our life (Leviticus 17:11), that harmful, unseen germs can be washed away in running water (Leviticus 15:13), and that man can be put under such a deep sleep as to perform pain-free surgery (Genesis 2:21-22) are all found in the Bible!

3. Evidence of a divine creation by an all-powerful, all knowing Intelligent Being (God) is all around us such as the amazing complexity and design of the universe that could not have happened by natural, present processes. Also, a world-wide flood (Genesis 6-9) that left all the fossil evidence further verifies that the Bible is true and came from God!

C. Prophetic

1. The Bible contains thousands of detailed prophecies about the future, which have come true exactly like the Bible predicted; such would be impossible for any mortal man to foretell (Isaiah 46:9-10).
2. The Old Testament predicted exact details about the coming, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ hundreds and thousands of years before He was born (Matthew 2:5-6, 3:3, 4:14-16, 12:17-21, 27:35).
3. God foretold the rise of empires before they ever came to be (Daniel 2:39-40).
4. God even predicted that the Jewish people would return to their ancient homeland of Israel after centuries of captivity, suffering, and persecution (Deuteronomy 28:64-67 / Ezekiel 36:24, 37:11-13 / Amos 9:14-15). This was, of course fulfilled in our time by the modern state of Israel!

It's impossible to conceive of forty different men over a period of 1,600 years writing anything that agreed without contradiction, but that's exactly what happened when God inspired the Bible! As it claims and proves to be – it is the word of God!

IV. WHAT IS THE BIBLE'S MAIN MESSAGE?

By its' very size and content, the Bible can be very intimidating! But even though it deals with every subject directly or indirectly, it has one main message throughout! It's the history of God dealing with mankind from the beginning to the end of time!

The following eight categories give us the flow of the Bible's message throughout history:

Creation: the beginning of all things.

Calamity: the fall of man into sin.

Cataclysm: God's judgment by a world- wide flood.

Confusion: the separation of peoples by languages.

Covenant: God's choice to work through one special people called Israel.

Christ: His coming, life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension back to heaven.

Church Age: the time since Christ when God would use His churches to reach the world.

Consummation: when Christ returns and the final state of all men is determined.

These eight truths make up the main message of the Bible which is salvation – God's desire to rescue mankind from our sins!

I. God's Part

A. Show us our sins

By way of our conscience, His word, and experiencing the consequences of sin, God shows us that we are sinners; that means we have all broken His laws, summed up in the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17 / Romans 3:10, 23).

B. Separates us from Himself

Sin's final consequence is being separated from God forever in an eternal place of punishment that the Bible calls hell (Romans 6:23 / Matthew 25:41,46 / Revelation 20:15).

C. Sent His Son to save us!

God didn't want anyone to end up in hell so He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ on a rescue mission to earth to save sinners from that awful place (John 3:16 / Luke 19:10 / I Timothy 1:15). Jesus came as the God-man (Matthew 1:21-23) to live a perfect life without sin, so that He could die for our sins on the cross, be buried, and rise from the dead after three days to show that sin had been paid for and man could be forgiven. (I Corinthians 15:1-4 / II Corinthians 5:20 / Ephesians 1:7 / I John 2:2)

D. Extends His grace and mercy to us

Since man could never save himself, God had to reach down and save us by His mercy (withholding His judgment that we all deserved) and grace (giving us salvation that we did not deserve)! Man cannot take away even one sin by his own good works, so God has to be the author and finisher of salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9 / Titus 3:5 / Hebrews 12:2).

B. Man's Part

1. Repentance: which means we must admit, be sorry for, and be willing to turn away from our sinful, selfish life (Acts 17:30 / Luke 13:3).

2. Faith: which means to trust only Jesus Christ and His death, burial, and resurrection as the means to save us – not religion, ritual, or routine (Acts 16:33). Believe on Him to the point of giving your life to Him in obedience as you would in gratitude for anyone who gave their life to save yours! (Luke 9:23 / John 12:26 / James 2:14-17 / I Thessalonians 1:9)

Jesus' first sermon summed up the part that we have in salvation. He said in Mark 1:15, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel"!

The moment any sinner, being led of God to be convicted of their sins, turns to Him in repentance and faith, God's grace then performs a miracle in them called the "new birth" which simply means that sinner is declared by God "not guilty" and given a new life in Christ! (John 3:3,7 / Romans 3:19-24) Much like a death-row inmate whose only hope is a pardon from the governor, the only hope for us as sinners is God's pardon through the work of His Son, Jesus Christ on our behalf!

V. HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS?

As we've seen from our previous points, the Bible is unlike any other book, so we can expect it to be different than anything else we've ever read:

A. It's God's word, so it will naturally be above our normal understanding. In fact, the Bible says that without knowing the author, who is God Himself, we cannot hope to understand His word by ourselves (I Corinthians 2:14).

Yet, don't give up on what you read even when you don't understand it. Ask God for help and He will guide you (James 1:5). Remember when all of us started a new subject in school, it seemed way over our heads, but the more we learned, the more we understood!

B. The Bible was meant to be studied and not just read (II Timothy 2:15).

The Bible is not like a newspaper, magazine, or internet article that you read once and forget; it was meant to be read and reread over and over for a lifetime. No matter how often we read scripture, God keeps giving us more and more like digging deeper and deeper for precious buried treasure.

Think of how the news media dissects every word when a great leader speaks. How much more should we investigate every word of the most important Being in the universe – God!

C. Finally, the Bible is to be believed and obeyed (Psalm 119:1-16 / James 1:22).

To the Jewish mind, one only believed in what they actually lived by. To say that we believe the Bible is God's word, but to not obey it is a contradiction. (Deuteronomy 11:27-28 / II Thessalonians 3:14)

God gave us His word to teach us, first about salvation, and then about how to live a life pleasing to Him in which we will find great contentment and reward (Psalm 119:105,165 / Joshua 1:8).

The greatest reward that the Bible brings is eternal life since it is the Bible that instructs us about Jesus Christ and the great salvation only He gives! (Romans 10:17 / I Peter 1:23-25)

Our prayer is that this Bible Discovery book has helped you understand what the Bible is really about. If we can be of further help to you, or you would like to go deeper into your own learning of the Bible, please contact us through the information below. May God richly bless you for what you have learned!

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