

Lesson 1 THE HOLY BIBLE – GOD’S INSPIRED WORD

READING: PSALM 119:97-106; ISAIAH 43:8-13; 2 TIM. 3:14-17; 2 PET 1:19-21

AIM: To show that the Bible is God’s Inspired Word in which He reveals Himself to man.

1. BACKGROUND

The greatest foundation facts on which we base all understanding are:

- (1) The existence of God (which the Bible assumes and assures).
- (2) The claim of the Bible to be God’s inspired revelation to man.

The word “Bible” means “book” and the word “Holy” means “separate”. “Holy Bible” is therefore a Book which is separate from all others. It is entirely different from any other book because its author is God.

The Bible as a whole is God’s revelation to man, and both Old and New Testaments are equally to be accepted as such – there is no conflict between them. The writers of the New Testament repeatedly quoted from the Old in support of their teaching (e.g. Luke 24:27)

Before a person can believe the truth of the Bible, he must read it and know its contents. Although there is much external evidence both historical and archaeological that confirms what is written, its real proof comes from the unique and authentic nature of its contents.

2. WHAT INSPIRATION MEANS - 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21

The Bible is the inspired Word of God. By this we mean that although the scriptures were written by different men during the ages, yet what was written was just what God wanted written. He guided the writers as they wrote and sometimes they themselves did not fully understand the message they wrote.

The Bible claims to record many actual words spoken by God. In the first five books for example, it is recorded “The Lord said”, or “The Lord spake” over 500 times. But in addition, the Book itself claims that all the records – historical, prophetic, etc. – were written down under God’s direct inspiration (II Pet. 1:16-21); Heb. 1:1-2). Indeed the Bible frequently records God’s thoughts, motives and works which could only be known to man by revelations from God.

It must be remembered that the Bible was not written originally in English. Our present copy has been translated from copies of the original manuscripts which have been lost in antiquity. In some cases small errors have occurred in translation; but these errors do not destroy the essential truths or the Bible’s inspiration.

3. INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF INSPIRATION

The Bible consists of sixty-six books, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament, written by many different authors living in different ages. These men came from every class of society. Kings, statesmen, priests, scholars, shepherds, fishermen and others were among them. Some writers were separated in time from others by hundreds of years and thus they had no personal contact with each other.

Yet throughout this Great Book there is one uniform plan. It is God’s plan of redemption for the human race. This plan commences in Genesis with Adam. **It centres in Jesus.** It finishes when harmony is again restored

in all the earth and God is “all in all”. This uniformity, this perfect agreement in outlook and doctrine, testifies to the Bible being the Word of God.

No less an evidence of God’s hand in this Book of books is the complete integrity of the personal message in its pages. The believer finds a message of hope for the future and of wisdom for today; the unchanging principles and commands contained therein are upright and faultless, and only man himself is found wanting before the goodness of God. God himself is revealed as the Creator, just in all His ways and merciful to all.

4. **PROPHETIC EVIDENCE OF INSPIRATION - Isa. 43:8-13**

Only God could be the author of a book which, with complete accuracy, foretold the future, and indeed, tells of events yet unfolding. As predicted **Babylon** is still in heaps (Isa. 13:19-20); **Nineveh** still lies empty, void and waste (Nahum 2:10); **Egypt** is among the basest of nations (Ezek. 29:15); **Tyre** has been submerged by the sea, and is literally a place for spreading of nets (Ezek. 26:5).

Israel has been scattered among all nations (Deut. 28:64); has become “a proverb and a byword” among them (Deut. 28:37), but is today returning to their land as predicted – a token of the complete regathering yet to take place (Deut 30:3; Jer. 30:18-24; Ezek. 37:21-22).

To see how inspiration was a force within a prophet which could not be restrained read Isa. 55:11; Jer. 20:9; Amos 3:7-8; 2 Pet. 1:21.

5. **HISTORICAL EVIDENCE – 2 Kings 18:17; 19:32-36**

On many occasions, critics have attempted to discount the accuracy of the Bible as a record of past events; yet in no case has there been found any discrepancy between reliable historical records and findings; and the Bible.

It was once suggested, for example, that Moses could not write, and therefore did not write the first five books. Archaeologists have since discovered evidence of the art of writing before Moses’ time.

Again, it was denied that the miracle recorded in 2 Kings 19:35 could have occurred, when Sennacherib’s host gathered against Jerusalem was miraculously destroyed. Evidence has since been unearthed, showing the conduit and pool built by Hezekiah as an emergency water-supply during the siege.

Sennacherib’s own records have been found to describe his advance on Hezekiah, to take a spoil – but there is then a notable silence, his defeat not being recorded. God had intervened as the Scripture tells, and the city **was not taken**.

Events surrounding the birth of Jesus were challenged. Claims were made, for instance, that:

- (1) There was no census taken at the time of Jesus’ birth (Luke 2:1);
- (2) Quirinius (or Cyrenius) was not Governor of Syria at the time (Luke 2:2);
- (3) It was not necessary for Joseph to travel to Bethlehem to be taxed (Luke 2:4).

Later research has adequately vindicated Luke’s account.

6. JESUS AS EVIDENCE - Isa. 53; Psa. 22

The Old Testament was completed about four hundred years before Jesus was born. Yet in its pages are many prophecies concerning him; prophecies that were fulfilled in detail. We cannot consider all of them, but we will take two examples.

- **Isaiah 53** tells of Christ's divine origin, experiences, destiny, his sufferings and yet his triumphant perfection.
- **Psalms 22** was written by David about 1,000 years before Jesus lived. Below is a comparison of what this Psalm said would happen and what **did** happen.

Psalm 22	Matthew 27
Verse 1: "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"	Spoken by Jesus on the Cross: verse 46
Verse 8: "He trusted on the Lord ... Let him deliver him,	Spoken by the Jews about Jesus as he hung on the cross: verse 43. "He trusted in God; let Him deliver him now."
Verse 16: "They pierced my hands and my feet."	This they did to Jesus when they crucified him.
Verse 18: "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture".	When Jesus was dead the soldiers divided his garments among them casting lots: verse 35 "and upon my vesture did they cast lots"

7. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The Bible is God's Book, separate from all others, recording the will and purpose of its great Author. The Bible, as a whole, is God's revelation to man. Old and New Testaments are complementary.

No person who believes the Gospel can fail to see the hand of the Almighty on every page of Scripture. The Bible is not merely inspired, it inspires. No book has the power to change lives like this Book, no teaching is more calculated to build character than God's revelation.

We should seek its message, study its lessons and submit to its guidance and thank God for preserving this precious Book. Read: Rom. 15:4; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16 and John 5:39.

REFERENCE LIBRARY

- "The Ways of Providence", chapter 1.
- "Elpis Israel", part 1, chapter 1.
- "The Oracles of God", all chapters.
- "Vox Dei", all chapters.
- "Back to the Bible", chapters 2 and 3.
- "Understanding the Bible".
- "God's Way", chapter 1.
- "The way of life", chapter 1. R. J. Hyndman (ed.).

