

# WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE BIBLE

## Revelation

Start with the question: How do we know that there is a God? What do we know about him?

### TWO WAYS TO KNOW ABOUT GOD:

**General Revelation:** God speaks to all men everywhere through the structure of the physical universe and in man himself.

- *The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; it rejoices as a strong man to run his course. Its rising is from one end of the heavens, and its circuit to the other end of them; and there is nothing hidden from its heat. (Psalm 19:1-6 NASB)*
- *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. (Romans 1:20 NASB)*
- *For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus. (Romans 2:14-16 NASB)*

**Special Revelation:** This is the idea that says - there is a God and He has spoken to us. He has told us about Himself, about His will, about the realities of this world.

How has he spoken directly to us?

- Theophanies (God in human form) (Genesis 16:7-14)
- Dreams (1 Samuel 28:6)
- Urim and Thummim (Numbers 27:21)
- Prophets (2 Samuel 23:2)
- Lots (Proverbs 16:33)
- Visions (Isaiah 1:1, 6:1)
- Angels (Daniel 9:20-22)
- From a burning bush (Genesis 3:1-4)
- From a whirl wind (Job 38-41)
- One who claimed to be God – Jesus (Hebrews 1:1-3)

The primary way in which we receive God's special revelation is through His personally chosen spokesmen. In God's wisdom these essential revelations were recorded – written down.

### THE PROCESS OF REVELATION

God → A God appointed spokesman → Written down for others.

God has left His special information in written words – the sixty-six books of the Bible. Throughout the

centuries God's revelation was given until the process culminated in the first century A.D. With the writing of the book of Revelation, God's special revelation ended. The Old and New Testament are the only written documents that are God's very words. Through the words found in the Bible men may come to know God.

## Inspiration

If the Bible is the record of God's communications to man, then it is logical to say that the Bible is from God. This is the meaning of inspiration.

Inspiration = "In breathed"

To say that the Bible is the inspired Word of God is to say that the Bible comes from God.

## Inerrancy

Inerrancy = The Bible is without error and wholly true.

Another term that covers the same concept: Infallibility (not capable of deceiving or making errors).

Inerrancy demands that every part of the Bible is totally true.

Implications of Inerrancy:

1. All the Bible is true – we cannot pick and choose.
2. Although we do not have the original writings – through the science of textual criticism we know we have 99.9% of what was written. The one tenth of 1% deals with things like spelling and word order. No doctrine or historical fact or any other matter is affected.
3. If the Bible contains errors – how do we know what to believe and what not to believe?
4. Inerrancy does not demand that all statements in scripture are true (the devil is quoted) only that all the facts are correctly recorded.
5. Language is a product of culture and time, therefore we must strive to understand that culture and time in order to capture the truth and apply it to our own culture and time.

## Authority

What do we have so far?

God communicates to his creation man (Revelation)

Through specially appointed men (Inspiration)

Who recorded (or had recorded) the truth without error (Inerrancy); which was copied over time without error to produce our Bibles for today.

Therefore, when it comes to issues of faith we contain one unchanging authority – THE BIBLE (The sixty six books of the Old and New Testament).

Follow the logic:

Is there anything or anyone who has the absolute right to tell us what we are to believe (doctrine) and how we should live our lives (morality)?

Yes – God (Father – Son – Holy Spirit).

He is creator and has absolute authority over all things. He defines truth, reality and morality.

Since the Bible comes from God – then it carries with it the authority of the one from whom it originates.

Therefore, the Bible is the standard of faith and practice.

Based upon this truth – our response must be in submission to God's Word – as found in the inspired and inerrant scriptures.

## How Do We Get Our Modern-Day Version of the Bible?

Remember that all English versions of the Bible are translations.

The Bible was originally written in three languages:

1. Hebrew
2. Aramaic
3. Greek (Koine or common)

Translators have two approaches when translating the text:

- Word for Word approach: strive to translate each word in the original with the best corresponding English word.
- Thought for thought approach: strive to translate the concepts and ideas found in the original into English.

Each approach has its own set of issues:

- Word for word translations tend to be harder to comprehend by the modern reader. Not so easy to read.
- Thought for thought approach can be in danger of infusing personal opinions into the meaning of the text.

The question as to which is the “best” version of the Bible is a matter of opinion and/ or preference.