

Study 1

THE BIBLE

The Bible is inspired by God and is without error. We base our beliefs upon no other book (2Tim. 3:16; 2Pet. 1:19-21).

We believe that the Bible is God's unique revelation to man. In it is contained perfectly what God needed to communicate to us. In it is to be found *sufficient* knowledge of God, our origins, our true condition, our actual predicament, our only hope. We should read it to be informed, study it to be wise, share it to be fruitful, memorise it to be prepared, and preach it to be faithful. It should renew our minds, fill our hearts, and guide our steps. It inspires true worship, induces God-listening prayers, and instructs in the ways of right living. The Bible has challenged the greatest minds, conquered the most powerful emperors, and baffled the most ardent critics. Read it daily. Study it often. Ponder it regularly. Listen to it read and taught - more than you watch TV, Facebook, eBay and Goooooogle combined. Hear it and heed it. It is your standard by which all other so-called revelations must be judged and filtered.

ABOUT THE BIBLE

1. The Bible was written by approximately how many men?
 - (a) Four
 - (b) Fourteen
 - (c) Four hundred
 - (d) Forty
 - (e) Four thousand

2. Who are some of the Bible's authors? (Note their usual jobs.)

The Bible was written over a 1600 year time span. It's oldest book is the Book of Job, which probably dates to around 2000BC. It's last book is Revelation which was written around 65AD. The word "Bible" simply means *books* (as in, *bibliography*). It is comprised of two major sections: The Old Testament, and The New Testament.

3. Put an X next to the statement which relates to the Old Testament, and a ✓ next to the statement which relates to the New Testament-

- It is largely the story of Israel
- It plainly tells the story of the life of Jesus
- It commands animal sacrifices and temple rituals
- It explains how the grace of God saves sinners
- It has epistles
- It has entire books of poetry

The Bible was written in three languages. Most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew with some portions in Aramaic. The New Testament, however, was written entirely in Greek.

WHAT THE BIBLE CLAIMS ABOUT ITSELF

The Bible consistently claims to be God's Word.

4. What is the claim of the Bible about itself from Second Timothy 3:16?

5. What are some of the purposes of the Bible listed in 2Timothy 3:16-17?

Note Psalm 18:20-22 but especially the entirety of Psalm 119 which talks about the power and benefits of God's Word. Can you list 4 of these benefits of applying the Bible to our lives?

6. If you had a conversation with a friend who was not yet converted to Christianity and they said to you, "The Bible? How could you possibly believe that!?" How might you respond?
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WHAT "INSPIRATION" MEANS

The Bible's claim is that it is the Word of God. While it is true that there were cases where God instructed certain Biblical authors to write down exactly what God was telling them to (for example, Exodus 34:27), God generally *inspired* the Bible instead of *dictated* the Bible.

7. Read 2Peter 1:21 and note how this verse describes how the Holy Spirit 'inspired' the writers of the Bible. What does this verse do to the suggestion that God mechanically dictated His Word to the Bible's authors?
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God's inspiration of His Word through these authors meant that He used their vocabulary, outlook, and even experiences. Despite thousands of attempts to show that the Bible is merely the product of man, no contradiction has been substantiated, no historic error found, and no scientific flaw discovered. Mind you, this can not always be said of the way people *interpret* the Bible.

God has ordained that His complete Word to mankind is contained in 66 books. The collection of these books together forms what is called *the Canon*. There is growing evidence that the Canon (the Bible's 66 books) was recognised even as early as the First Century as being the complete and final written revelation of God to man. This is why claims such as those made by Mormons that God has added to the Canon can be utterly rejected.

8. Peter regarded Paul's writings as "Scripture". How do we know this according to Second Peter 3:16?
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9. What does Luke 22:37 and John 10:35 reveal about how Christ must have regarded the Scriptures?

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10. Based on what Jesus said in Matthew 21:42, how did Christ expect people to treat the Scriptures?

 11. Read how the first dedicated evangelist of the Primitive Church would preach to the unsaved in Acts 8:35. What did he base his message on, and what might we learn from this?

 12. How should we use the Bible to develop our relationship with God?

 13. Do you have a regular Bible reading habit? [Share and Discuss]

Although the Bible was written by around 40 different authors living on three different continents over a time span of around 1600 years, it is entirely consistent and without contradiction. It is confirmed by science, history and experience. It claims to be 'Holy Writ' - God's unique Word to mankind. It contains everything a person needs to know in order to be saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. This is referred to as "sufficient" knowledge because it is sufficient to save. Its contents are inspired by the Holy Spirit in a way that employed the various authors' styles, vocabularies, and experiences. It was honoured by Christ as God's inerrant Word ("*Scripture can not be broken*" John 10:35). And the early church's ministers preached from it because they regarded it as God's Word.

We can be absolutely confident that the Bible is uniquely God's Word and is without error.

Amen.