
INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

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WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

- Divine Revelation
 - God *reveals* himself to us through his Word. Scripture is *inspired* (2 Timothy 3:16).
 - God delivered his Word in servant form, inspiring men to write his truth.
 - 2 Peter 1:16–21—¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. . . . ²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
 - We call God the primary author and the human author the secondary author.
- Historical
 - Scripture is not merely a delivery mechanism for ethical teachings or other types of timeless truths.
 - The Bible is an historical document. While the eternal God has *breathed-out* his Word, he has accommodated us by entering history. Scripture's accounts are accurate, historical records. These things happened in space and time.
- Authoritative
 - Scripture is authoritative. We ought to be obey it, for it is the Word of the living God—the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Scripture is a guide (Psalm 119:105)
 - Westminster Confession of Faith 1.4. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.
- Necessary and Sufficient
 - Scripture is sufficient to give the knowledge of God and of his will, which is necessary for salvation.
 - It teaches us everything we need for doctrine and life.

THE BIBLE UNDER ATTACK

- God's Word has always been under attack both from without and within the Church.
 - From without, people reject the Bible as God's truth. They denounce its teachings as controversial. They seek to relativize or marginalize the Bible.
 - From within the Bible is under attack from similar forces. People treat the Bible as a purely human book—complete with errors and flaws of all kinds. Others seek to treat the Bible merely as a collection of ethical teachings. They reject the supernatural and historical elements of Scripture.
- The Garden
 - The Word of God was under attack as early as Genesis 3:1.
 - The serpent sought to undermine the Word of God by questioning its authority and unsettling his people, eroding their foundation.
- The Reformation
 - During the Middle Ages and into the period of the Reformation Scripture was not considered the ultimate authority.
 - Church tradition bore interpretive authority *over* Scripture.
- The Modernist-Fundamentalist Controversy
 - In the early twentieth century, our forefathers fought the good fight of the faith in a battle against liberalism.
 - People rejected the supernatural character of Scripture. They rejected its inspiration and authority as taught in Scripture itself.

THE WORD AS A MEANS OF GRACE

- God communicates the blessings of Christ to his people through his Word.
 - Hebrews 4:12–13
 - Romans 12:1–2
- Westminster Larger Catechism 155
 - Q. *How is the word made effectual to salvation?*
 - A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners; of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ; of conforming them to his image, and subduing them to his will; of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions; of building them up in grace, and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.