

The Christian Bible was written to give humankind a revelation of God and His purposes towards them. As one in love writes his innermost thoughts and desires to his beloved, so the Bible has been written as letters of love from God. The Bible is an unfolding of God's original purposes for us in the Creation; His persistent love and care towards us after our rebellion and fall, and His ultimate plans and actions to restore all things to their original perfection. The Bible is that which clearly identifies truth from error, good from evil, and right from wrong. The Bible's teachings establish the standards of morality, equity, and justice by which all may find peace with God and one another. The Bible also gives sound counsel that instructs us how to live in harmony with God's will, and those things that would make for man's happiness. Similarly, in loving mercy, God gives warning of that which would cause pain, suffering, and will ultimately lead to man's destruction. The greatest proof of the inspiration, truth, and power behind the Bible is seen in the countless lives it has transformed over the centuries!

The Bible is comprised of 66 canonical books, 39 in the **Old Testament**, written before the First Coming of Jesus Christ, and 27 in the **New Testament**, written after His ascension. The word *testament*, that is synonymous with the word *witness*, affirms that the Bible in its entirety serves as a witness to the love, character, and works of God. Though written over the course of approximately 1,500 years by as many as 40 different authors, there remains a consistency in thought, doctrine, and spirit in the canonized books of the

Bible. This fact is attributable to its inspiration by a single mind, God's (John 6:45; 1 Cor. 14:37). In this lesson, we will explore the Bible's self-declaration, its claims to authenticity, timelessness, and relevance in guiding each of our lives.

*"All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."*

2 Timothy 3:16, 17

The Bible clearly proclaims its inspiration by God and that it is given to all men for the following purposes:

- **Doctrine** - *teachings and beliefs*. Correct doctrine is essential for proper understanding, perspectives, faith, conduct, and is lastly an expression of Jesus (John 5:39)
- **Reproof** - *chastening and objection*. The counsels of the Bible are to bring conviction to the wayward so that they may ask forgiveness and repent, turning from evil
- **Correction** - *direction and guidance*. Once reproved, the Bible directs the repentant to the right way to walk
- **Instruction in Righteousness** - *godliness, holiness uprightness*. The Bible gives direction for pleasing God and living uprightly in His sight (See Act 20:32)

*"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake [as they were] moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:20, 21*

The Bible is comprised of several literary genre, including

letters, poems, songs, parables, and narratives. Highly prevalent within each of these writings is the prophetic word. Bible prophecy is the chronicling of events *past*, *present*, and *future*. It is written to instruct and strengthen the faith of those who read the Bible and who place their trust in God. Prophecy, spoken and written by upright men of God, who were inspired by the Holy Spirit, is given as a guide to all men, who by faith are willing to heed the counsels and instructions presented.

*"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned [them]; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 3:14, 15*

The Apostle Paul, who was not one of the original 12, had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. Paul was charged by Jesus to bear witness to the world by writing to Paul's apprentice Timothy. Paul was to instruct Timothy to continue to study and expand his knowledge of the Scriptures he had learned from childhood. Paul states that unlike other writings, the Scriptures would make one wise in the **Science of Salvation**, which was founded in Jesus Christ. The *Science of Salvation* is the highest field of study because of its power to transform lives, and for its eternal benefits. Paul counsels Timothy, and all who would hear, to pursue faith in Jesus Christ as written in the Bible.

*"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." Isaiah 40:8*

*"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Matthew 5:18*

The prophet Isaiah and Jesus Himself spoke of the permanence of the word of God. Jesus stated that heaven and earth must cease to exist before the dotting of an "i" or the crossing of a "t" in God's law and Scripture is removed.

*"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." John 17:17*

*"For the word of the LORD [is] right; and all his works [are done] in truth." Psalm 33:4*

*"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." Acts 20:32*

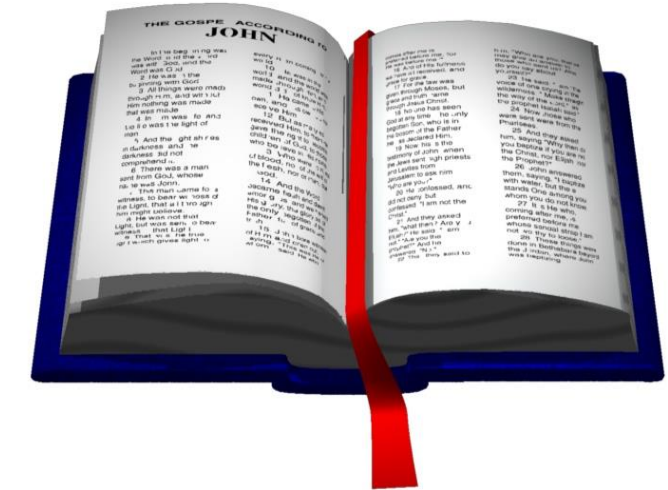
The Word of God, the Bible, is the universal standard of truth and has the power to build up the faith of the hearer so that he may be **sanctified**, set apart for holy, godly use.

*"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, [it is] because [there is] no light in them." Isaiah 8:20*

*"Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21*

As the standard of truth, all things must be measured, proved, and weighed against the Bible's testimony. If the teachings of another source are consistent with the Bible, only then are they safe to be heeded. Otherwise, the Bible declares, "there is no light in them", but rather darkness.

# The Authority of Scripture



Lesson 1

(Luke 10:25, 26). The knowledge gained from Scripture is intended to go beyond informational, but is to be transformational. The written Word of God is given to lead all in faith to the **Living Word of God**, Jesus Christ; then, may we “give an answer” to all who may inquire of our hope.

*“So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* Romans 10:17

*“But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* Hebrews 11:6

Faith in God and in His completed works of redeeming mankind through Jesus Christ are essential to man’s salvation. This faith, which first comes to all as a gift from God (Romans 12:3), must grow through diligent study and meditating upon Scripture, prayer, and trusting in Him.

*“The words of the LORD [are] pure words: [as] silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation forever.”* Psalm 12:6, 7

God’s inspired words, written in the Bible, are perfect, pure, and holy. God in His wisdom and might has maintained planets in their orbit, provided food to all His creation, and has conquered sin and the power of death through His Son Jesus Christ. Similarly, God, in wisdom and might can preserve from corruption His sacred words contained in the Bible throughout all time (Psalm 12:6, 7; John 10:35)! Let us **place our faith in the one thing on earth we can fully trust!**

doctrine and teachings, line upon line, precept upon precept. God knows that men learn best through repetition and by relating known facts to new ideas, therefore, He has placed “gems” of counsel and truth throughout the Bible that we must diligently seek to “unearth”.

*“The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.”* Psalm 33:11

The counsels, doctrine, and instructions found in the Bible are timeless, just as God is timeless. They stand forever and apply to all people in every generation.

*“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”* Acts 17:11

*“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”* 2 Timothy 2:15

*“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me [Jesus].”* John 5:32

*“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and [be] ready always to [give] an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:”* 1 Peter 3:15

The Bible contains the *Science of Salvation* and is to be the daily study, research, and meditation of every individual. God expects each person to understand that which is most relevant to their present happiness and eternal destiny

*“Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? [them that are] weaned from the milk, [and] drawn from the breasts.”* Isaiah 28:9

*“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:”* 1 Peter 2:2

*“For every one that useth milk [is] unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, [even] those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”* Hebrews 5:13, 14

Children as young as those weaned from their mother’s breast are to be taught the principles, doctrine, and wisdom found in the Bible. As pure milk is nourishing to newborn babies, so too, the Word of God is to be received as pure milk to those who accept **the gospel**, the **Good News** of Jesus Christ. However, as children are weaned from milk, we too must grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ, being able to receive “strong meat” by means of our daily study of the Bible, exercise of faith, and obedience to God’s commands.

*“For precept [must be] upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, [and] there a little”* Isaiah 28:10

God has given His endorsement upon a particular method of Bible study that will yield the greatest benefit to the reader. Just as a set of lines, equal distance from one another are parallel, we must diligently study the Bible from cover to cover, here a little and there a little, identifying parallels in