

THE BIBLE

The Bible Discussion Leaders' Notes

The Bible is a Book from God, about God—the story of His love for man. Its central figure is Jesus Christ, God robed in humanity; the record of His origin, birth, life, death, and resurrection. Its message is stranger than fiction—that the God who spun the worlds in space once visited earth to provide a way to heaven, and that man may share a new Kingdom in His very own family. The Bible is no ordinary Book—it is strangely different, because men who listened to the voice of God wrote it. The words they penned were more than human. They live like fire to each new generation, fresh as wind and pure as rain.

The Bible is a unique record of man's problem, and God's answer—the Good News of salvation from sin through Jesus.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God... no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation; for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:19-21)

How it came to us:

Revelation → inspiration → manuscripts → translations

God revealed himself and his deeds to people (**revelation**). Under his guidance certain men wrote his words and story so that we could all know God's truth (**inspiration**). The words were recorded and became the original writings of the Bible (**manuscripts**). Then over time these manuscripts were copied and translated into various languages so that all men and women could read God's truth for themselves (**translations**). (How We Got our Bible, Bill Donahue, IVP, 2000.)

Survival/Reliability of the Bible

“Heaven and earth may pass away, but My Word will never pass away.” (Matt. 24:35)

- Voltaire, the French philosopher and author said, “In one hundred years, this book will be forgotten.” Voltaire is forgotten. One hundred years exactly after his boast, his house was being used as the headquarters for the Geneva Bible Society.
- Remains the best selling book year after year
- The accuracy of a document depends on the number of original manuscripts it has

There are over 5,000 Greek manuscripts containing all or part of the New Testament. Compare this to the Iliad, written by Homer in the ninth century B.C. which has only 643 copies.

Structure of the Bible

- Written in two parts—the Old Testament and the New Testament with 39 books in the O.T. and 27 in the N.T.
- There are at least 600 Old Testament quotations and references in the New Testament, interlacing and interlocking the two Testaments as one united whole
- Took about 40 different authors, over a period of about 1500 years.
- They came from all walks of life—doctors, shepherds, kings, and fishermen. They wrote on religion, poetry, health, ethics, science, morality, and philosophy. They wrote about future events, the meaning of life, the mystery of existence, and man's final purpose.

It all comes together to be the love story of history—God seeking rebellious man.

The Bible and Science

Science and Scripture always agree because they have the same author

- The scientific method and motivation for inquiry is really a child of Scriptural concepts; that the universe is the orderly product of a Divine Mind, and that man can discover the secrets of His creation, since he is made in rational, finite miniature likeness of his maker. Science has primarily expanded where the Bible was most freely read. Galileo, Newton, Pascal, Copernicus, and many others knew the Bible and its Author.

Prophetic Nature of the Bible

God's challenge to the world is, "Prove Me now – I am the LORD... I will speak; and the Word that I shall speak shall come to pass." (Jer. 28:9; Ezek. 12:25; 24:14; Lk. 21:22)

- There are about 3,856 verses directly or indirectly concerned with prophecy in Scripture—about one verse in six tells of future events!
- In the life of the Lord Jesus Himself there are over 300 fulfilled prophecies.

Impact on Society

- The Bible has produced consideration for others, tenderness and

compassion for the old, sick, and needy. It has dignified womanhood and guided childhood. Whenever the Scripture is freely circulated in the language of a people, it releases astonishing power for good, elevating society, overthrowing superstition, and opening the door to progress in the sciences, arts, and humanities.

- Wherever the Bible is loved and applied, the nation is exalted. Whenever men become forgetful of its Author and ignorant of its truths, fear, war, disease, and hatred stalks the streets. The Bible injunction is clear; “Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord”