

The Bible

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"The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul: the testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of Jehovah are pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring for ever: the ordinances of Jehovah are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the droppings of the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: in keeping them there is great reward." (Psalms 19:7-11). The word "Bible" is the equivalent of the Greek word *biblia*, meaning originally books. *Biblia* occurs with its article *ta* in the Septuagint version of Daniel 9:2 for the prophetic writings. It, with its article, was later applied to both the Old and the New Testament in a unique sense, becoming the books of the one supreme book -- the book of and from God.

This book or the bible has been the guide of man for thousands of years; it has been providentially copied and recopied by many hundreds of devoted scribes in order that it might be preserved and transmitted; it has been on the printing press for more than four hundred years and it has been translated into more than a thousand languages and dialects. It continues to be the best seller each year and is the most widely read and studied book in Western Civilization. Its influence on mankind cannot be measured. Its beneficent and guiding star will never set. As long as this creation stands, the Bible will still be guiding and comforting men. What about this wonderful book and what is its nature?

I. The Bible is From God -- Inspired by Him

The word "inspire" has a multitude of meanings. For example, on a clear night when one looks into the sky and sees the beauty of the stars, he is inspired as he is moved by that beauty and the wonders of the heavens. A painter may stand and look into the colors of a beautiful sunset and may be inspired to paint a striking picture. One may see the grandeur of the towering Alps, or view with awe the majesty of Niagara Falls or the Grand Canyon, and be inspired. One may read a great masterpiece in literature, or hear an accomplished musician, and be inspired. Is this the type of inspiration possessed by the writers of the Bible? Let us look closely at the question.

In 2 Peter 1:21, we read: "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." In this statement Peter had in mind primarily the prophets of the Old Testament. Each of these prophets when he spoke as a prophet was aware that it was not he who was speaking, but God speaking through him. In Exodus 35:1, Moses declared: "These are the words which the Lord hath commanded." Isaiah urged: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken" (Isaiah 1:2). Jeremiah said, "The word of the Lord came unto me" (Jeremiah 1:4). Ezekiel declared: "The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel" (Ezekiel 1:3). These expressed convictions, with many similar ones in the Old Testament, indicate that men of God in Old Testament times spoke and wrote from God, "being

moved by the Holy Spirit." As Peter stated. Thus the Old Testament was written by men of God, speaking from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.

Near the end of His ministry, Jesus announced His imminent departure from His apostles. He promised them: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16, 17). This Comforter or Spirit of truth would teach them all things and bring to their remembrance all that He had said unto them and would guide them into all truth. Read John 14:26 and 16:13 for such declarations. This Comforter came on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus in the person of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of the promise of Jesus. He, the Holy Spirit, guided the apostles into all truth and brought to their remembrance all that Jesus Christ had said unto them. This guidance was with them as they wrote the New Testament.

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, his son in the gospel: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

We have learned thus far that both the Old and the New Testament writers were inspired of God and that all inspired Scripture is profitable. What is meant by inspiration? We have seen that inspiration comes from an influence from without a person who is inspired whether that influence be from another person or in the heavens a ceiling of unsurpassed beauty, a gorgeous sunset, or some other handiwork of God. Does the inspiration which possessed the writers of the Bible differ from that which comes naturally by beauty or eloquence? It does differ as far as the east is from the west. The inspiration of Biblical writers was unique in that they possessed the Holy Spirit and were inerrantly guided in writing the bible, since they were inspired of God.

II. The Bible is the Eternal Word of God

There are some who believe there is no place for the Bible in our scientific age. In the past, many attempts have been made to destroy it, but it is still here. At the turn of the fourth century of our era, the Roman emperor, Diocletian, decreed death for any person in the Roman Empire who owned a copy of the Bible. He later boasted: "I have completely exterminated the Christian writings from the face of the earth." Some years later when Constantine became emperor he asked Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, if he could locate some copies of the Bible. Within twenty-five hours he found fifty copies.

Voltaire, the French skeptic of the eighteenth century, boasted that within fifty years the only Bibles to be found would be in the large museums of the earth. It is reported that within a short time after his death the press used to print his writings was employed to print Bibles and the house from which his writings were distributed was used by the Geneva Bible Society for the distribution of Bibles.

Where is Diocletian and where is Voltaire? They are gone and their influence is scarcely felt. Since Voltaire lived, hundreds of critics and enemies of the Bible have endeavored to destroy its influence, some of whom have hoped for its annihilation. Through the centuries the enemies of the Bible have come and gone, their works are little known, while the Bible is still here, known, loved and read by increasing millions as the years come and go.

Books come and books go, but the Bible lives on. The best seller today is a back number tomorrow. A best seller may come back temporarily, but soon will disappear from the book shelves of up-to-date books sellers. Jesus said: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). The Bible will outlive the heavens and the earth. When the sea is no more, when the sun will be turned into darkness, and the heavens rolled up as a scroll, the Bible will still be here. Jesus stated, "This word that I speak unto you will judge you at the last day" (John 12:48). The Bible is eternal. It is here to stay. It will be here when time is no more and beyond time into eternity.

III. The Bible is All Sufficient

As earlier quoted, the apostle Paul write to Timothy: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). NOTE: "that the man of God may be COMPLETE, furnished COMPLETELY unto every good work" by the Bible and not by the creeds of men. The Bible treats every relationship of life either directly or indirectly and concerns itself with the age-long and great questions of life.

Men have always asked: "Whence came the universe and from when did man come?" The only true answer to these questions is in the Bible. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). "And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). Man has also always been concerned with his duty on earth and has learned that it is to fear God and to keep His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

In the Bible man learns of the Hebrew people through whom the Messiah of the world came. All the prophets of the Old Testament told of His coming and pointed toward the birth of the Savior in Bethlehem of Judea. In the Gospels the story of His wonderful life is told. In the Book of Acts men and women are informed concerning the establishment and identity of the church and how to become Christians or followers of Christ. This they do by belief in Him, repentance from past sins, the confession of their faith in Him before men, and their burial in the waters of baptism for the remission of their sins. Letters to churches and to individual Christians follow the Book of Acts, telling men and women how to live the life of a Christian.

There is not a relationship of life for which the Bible is not relevant. Obedience to its teachings will make a man or a woman what he or she ought to be: it will make a home

right; a community ideal; a state and a nation a servant of God. Obedience to the Golden Rule will cause men to "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks"; and to learn war no more.

Not only is the Bible all sufficient in this life, it is the only book upon which we can rely in the hour of death, and we must all come to that moment. David said: "Yea, thou I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psalms 23:4). Paul exclaims, "Death is swallowed up in victory, Or death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:54, 55). Again he states, "For we know that if this earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5:1). John saw, by inspiration, that beautiful city prepared for God's people in Revelation 21:2-4.

This same all-sufficient Bible tells of the destiny of the unsaved beyond death. They will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:48).

What a wonderful book is the Bible to tell us of such a wonderful place as heaven. What a wonderful book to warn us about the horrors of Hell. The Bible is the all-sufficient guide, inspired by God, able to supply man's every need. Will you not, my friend, listen to its teachings, and determine right now, "I am going to follow, to obey its commands." May God give each of us the courage to so act and pattern our lives.