

## SEVEN VIEWS OF THE BIBLE

With page numbers into Major Bible Themes for support or refutation.

View	The Bible is:	Reason, Experience, and Tradition are:	The point is:
INERRANT	The Word of God, inspired and free of error. Has complete authority in all matters of theology and behavior. <b>Support:</b> 17-18.	<u>ALL SUBORDINATE</u> and should be judged in the light of the Bible, NOT vice versa.	God is not the author of error, so the Bible cannot contain error. All other authority is fallible.
FOCUSED	The Word of God, trustworthy in its teaching on God, salvation, and Christian living. <b>Refutation:</b> 19 (partial inspiration theory.)	Useful for determining matters of faith or conduct, but not authoritative for history or science.	Reliable information on history or science <u>may</u> fall outside of God's purpose in giving the Bible.
CULTURE	The essential foundation on which Christian faith and life are built. <b>Refutation:</b> 18-19 (concept theory.)	REASON is <u>REQUIRED</u> to interpret the Bible's cultural context, and decide if or how it applies to us today.	Ancient cultural contexts do not automatically apply to us. Sometimes they require reason and hard work to interpret.
TRADITION	<u>An</u> essential foundation, but must be interpreted by the church.  (e.g. Two-Source Theory)	TRADITION is <u>REQUIRED</u> . It is of high importance as a practical source of authority.	The NT was written by the church; therefore it must be interpreted by the church as a whole, especially by its appointed leaders.
EXPERIENCE	<u>One</u> of the main ways God speaks to the believer. It can help interpret experience, but the movement of the Holy Spirit is free and unpredictable. <b>Refutation:</b> 18-19 (concept theory, partial inspiration, neo-orthodoxy.)	Christian spiritual experience is <u>REQUIRED</u> , as individuals and a community. It is our primary compelling authority.	What the Holy Spirit is doing today is of the greatest importance. Raising the Bible's status too high prevents us from hearing what God is saying today.
WITNESS	<u>The</u> witness to God's revelation of himself through history and supremely through Christ. <u>HOWEVER</u> , it is not itself that revelation. <b>Refutation:</b> 11-12, 19-20 (neo-orthodox theory, naturalistic inspiration.)	All three are <u>REQUIRED</u> to judge where and to what extent the truth of the gospel is witnessed in the Bible. They are just as important as the Bible.	The Bible <u>mediates</u> the Word of God but is not <u>identical</u> to it.
ERRANT COLLECTION	A diverse and often contradictory collection of human writings. <b>Refutation:</b> 12, 14, 15, 20 (naturalistic inspiration.)	All <u>REQUIRED</u> and <u>PRIMARY</u> . The Bible is useful to the extent that it records evidence of Christ.	It is a human work that has errors, but is a useful resource for following Christ's example.

Source: A Lamp to my Feet and a Light to my Path: The Nature of Authority and the Place of the Bible in the Methodist Church, 1998 Methodist Publishing House, pp36-39. <https://methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-a-lamp-to-my-feet-1998.pdf>.