

LESSON 1

WHAT IS THE WORD OF GOD?

Key Verses

1. II Pet.1: 20,21
2. II Tim.3: 16,17

In this Lesson we are dealing with the written word of God, the Bible.

1. THE WORD OF GOD IS

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|-----|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1.1 | Specific revelation to man. | 2 Pet 1:20,21; Heb. 1:1,2 |
| 1.2 | The Gospel of salvation for mankind | Rom 16:25,26; 1:16 |
| 1.3 | Authoritative and final | Heb 2:1-4 |
| 1.4 | Divinely inspired for godliness | 2 Tim 3:16,17 |
| 1.5 | Powerful and searching | Heb 4:12 |
| 1.6 | The way to prosperity and life | Josh 1:8; Prov 4:20-22 |

2. WHAT IS THE BIBLE

- 2.1 The Bible is God's inspired revelation of the original destiny of all things. Here heaven is opened, and the gates of Hell disclosed. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christians charter.
- 2.2 The Bible is the power of God unto eternal salvation and the source of present help, for body, soul, and spirit (Rom. 1:16; John 15:7). Christ is its grand subject, man's good its design, and the glory of God its end. It is a mine of wealth, the source of health, and a world of pleasure.
- 2.3 The Bible is God's will or testament to men in all ages, revealing the plan of God for man here and now, and in the next life. It will be opened at the judgment; and it will last forever. It involves the highest responsibility; will reward for the least to the greatest of labor; and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.
- 2.4 The Bible is the record of God's dealings with man in the past, present, and future. It contains His message of eternal salvation for all who believe in Christ, and eternal damnation for all who rebel

against the gospel.

- 2.5 As a literary composition, the Bible is the most remarkable book ever made. It is a divine library of 66 books some of considerable size, and others no larger than a tract. These books include various forms of literature – history, biography, poetry, proverbial sayings, hymns, letters, directions for elaborate ritualistic worship, laws, parables, riddles, allegories, prophecy, and all other forms of human expression.
- 2.6 The Bible is the only book that reveals the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts binding, its histories true and its decisions immutable. It contains light to direct, spiritual food to sustain, and comfort to cheer. Man should read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy; he should read it that it might fill his memory, rule his heart, and guide his feet in righteous and true holiness. He should read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully, meditatively, searchingly, devotionally; and study it constantly, perseveringly and industriously through and through – until it becomes a part of his being, generating faith that will move mountains.

3. WHAT THE BIBLE IS NOT

- 3.1 The Bible is not an amulet, a charm, a fetish, or anything to work wonders by its very presence alone. It does not claim to be such; it does claim that if one will study and practice its teachings he will see wonders worked in his life both now and in the hereafter.
- 3.2 The Bible is not a book of chronological events or an unbroken series of divine utterances. It was given, here a little and there a little, to many men through eighteen centuries (Is. 28:9-11): but regardless of this it forms a perfect unity.
- 3.3 The Bible is not a book of heavenly utterances in supernatural languages; it is God's revelation in the simplest human language possible.
- 3.4 The Bible is not a book of mysteries; it explains its so-called mysteries, and is so self-interpreting that no mystery remains.
- 3.5 The Bible is not a book that says one thing and means another. Generally, the passages have one simple meaning. In the few, which have a double meaning this fact, is quite clear, either from the verses themselves or from parallel passages. One cannot, as is sometimes said get a thousand different meanings from the scriptures.

- 3.6 The Bible is not a specimen of God's skill as a writer or logician. It is a book written by men who he used to record his revelation. The method was by giving them ways of expressing truth, and freedom in the use of their own language. What inspiration guarantees is unity of truth, not sameness of words and expressions.
- 3.7 The Bible is not a book of systematic discourses on any one subject; but it does give divine information on practically every subject. One must collect together from here and there all God's information through various writers, in order to know the whole truth. When this is done there is perfect harmony, and everything, which a man really needs to know about a subject, is clear.
- 3.8 The Bible is not a book adapted to the tastes, customs and habits of any one nation or people; it is not for any one age or period of time. It is a book for which all people in all ages can conform and yet retain their own lawful customs and habits, which are not contrary to the will of God.

MEMORY VERSE:

**2 Pet. 1:20,21: 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.**

LESSON 2

THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE

Key Verses

1. Rev 22:18,19
2. Jn 20:30,31
3. Deut. 4:2
4. Deut. 12:32
5. Prov. 30:6

1. MEANING OF THE WORD “CANON”

The word “canon” applied to scripture means the rules by which certain books were declared to be inspired and accepted as such.

The term “The Canon of Scripture” means the officially accepted list of books that are regarded as of Divine authority.

2. OLD TESTAMENT CANON

2.1 Factors determining the need for OT Canon

- ◆ The Jewish sacrificial system was ended by the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD. Even though the OT Canon was settled in the Jewish mind long before 70 AD, there was a need for something more definitive. The Jews were scattered and they needed to determine which books were the authoritative Word of God because of the many extra scriptural writings and the decentralization. The Jews became a people of one book and it was this book that kept them together.
- ◆ Christianity started to blossom and many writings of the Christians were beginning to be circulated. The Jews needed to expose them vividly and exclude them from their writings in their use in the synagogues.

2.2 The Hebrew Canon.

The following is the breakdown of the Jewish OT Canon. The books that were accepted as inspired by God.

| The Law (Torah) | The Writings (Kethubhim) |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Genesis | a. Poetical books |
| 2. Exodus | 1. Psalms |
| 3. Leviticus | 2. Proverbs |
| 4. Numbers | 3. Job |
| 5. Deuteronomy | b. Five Rolls (Megilloth) |
| The Prophets (Nebhim) | 1. Song of Songs |
| a. Former Prophets | 2. Ruth |
| 1. Joshua | 3. Lamentations |
| 2. Judges | 4. Esther |
| 3. Samuel | 5. Ecclesiastes |
| 4. Kings | c. Historical books |
| b. Latter Prophets | 1. Daniel |
| 1. Isaiah | 2. Ezra – Nehemiah |
| 2. Jeremiah | 3. Chronicles |
| 3. Ezekiel | |
| 4. The Twelve | |

Although the Christian church has the same Old Testament Canon, the number of books differs because we divide Samuel, Kings, Chronicles into two books each; the Jews also consider the minor prophets as one book. And the order of the books also differs.

2.3 Christ's witness to the Old Testament canon

Luke 24:44. In the upper room Jesus told the disciples "*That all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms concerning me.*"

With these words he indicated the three sections into which the Hebrew Bible was divided – the Law, the Prophets and the 'Writings' (here called, "The Psalms").

3. OLD TESTAMENT APOCRYPHAL LITERATURE

- ♦ From the Greek word *apokruphos* meaning "hidden or concealed". The Apocrypha consists of the books added to the Old Testament by the Catholic church that Protestants say are not canonical.

◆ **Why are they not canonical?**

1. They were not written or approved by a prophet.
2. They were not recognized by the Jews, as inspired and a part of scripture.
3. Jesus and the New Testament writers never once quoted from it although there are hundreds of quotes and references to almost all of the canonical books of the Old Testament. A fact that is more striking when we realize that Paul even quoted twice from heathen poets.
4. The last OT prophet predicted that the next messenger coming to Israel from God will be the forerunner of Christ (Mal. 3:1). Most of the apocryphal books were written during the period of Malachi and Christ.
5. Divine authority is not claimed by these authors and by some it is virtually disowned (2 Maccabees 2:23; 15:38).
6. The books contained statements at variance with the Bible history.
7. They are self-contradictory and in some cases opposed to doctrines of scripture.
8. The Apocryphal books were not a part of the ancient versions of scripture. They were first added after 300 AD. The Laodicean Council in 363 AD rejected them as being uninspired, thus proving that by that time some were claiming inspiration for them.
9. It was not until 1546 AD that the Apocryphal books received full canonical status by the Roman Catholic Church.
10. Jewish scholars like Josephus (Jewish historian), Philo (Jewish philosopher) did not regard the Apocrypha as scripture. Josephus stated that the OT books (the ones in our present version) were the only inspired writings.
11. Jerome, a great scholar and translator of the Latin Vulgate Bible rejected the Apocrypha as part of the canon. He even refused to translate the apocryphal books into Latin, but later made a hurried translation of some. After his death, literally over his dead body, the apocryphal books were brought into his Latin Vulgate directly from the Old Latin Version.
12. Martin Luther and the Reformers rejected the canonicity of the Apocrypha.

3.1 A List of some of the Apocryphal books

1 & 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus or Wisdom of Sirach, Baruch, 1 & 2 Maccabees.

4. NEW TESTAMENT CANON

4.1 Tests for including a book in the New Testament Canon.

The basic factor for determining NT canonicity was inspiration by God, and its chief tests: apostolic authority or apostolic approval.

4.2 The NT canonical books

Three Reasons for the Need to determine a New Testament Canon.

- a. A heretic, Marcion 140 AD developed his own canon and began to propagate it. The church needed to offset his influence by determining what was the real canon of New Testament scripture.
- b. Many eastern churches were using books in services that were definitely incorrect. It called for a decision concerning the canon.
- c. Edict of Diocletian 303 AD, declared the destruction of the sacred books of the Christians. Who wanted to die for just a religious book? They needed to know!

MEMORY VERSE:

Deut. 4:2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

LESSON 3

THE WORD OF GOD IS LIKE...

Key Verses

1. Ps. 119:105
2. Is. 55:10,11

14 Symbols of the Word of God

| | | | |
|------|--------------------------|--|------------------------|
| 1.1 | Lamp/light | : it illuminates, guides | Ps 119:105 |
| 1.2 | Seed | : it grows, multiplies | Lk. 8:11; 1Pet. 1:23 |
| 1.3 | Fire | : it devours | Jer 5:14 |
| 1.4 | Hammer | : it breaks | Jer 23:29 |
| 1.5 | Sword | : it arms and cuts | Eph 6:17, Heb. 4:12,13 |
| 1.6 | Mirror | : it reveals, reflects | Jas 1:22-25 |
| 1.7 | Food | : it makes you grow | 1 Pet.2:2 |
| | | - milk for babes | 1 Pet. 2:2 |
| | | - bread for the hungry | Matt. 4:4 |
| | | - meat for men | Heb. 5:12 |
| | | - honey for dessert | Ps. 19:10 |
| 1.8 | Soap | : it cleans | Jn 15:3, Jn 17:17 |
| 1.9 | Medicine | : it brings healing | Ps 107:20 |
| 1.10 | Guided spiritual missile | : it accomplishes its mission | Is 55:10-11 |
| 1.11 | Rain and snow | : it refreshes | Is 55:10 |
| 1.12 | More than Gold | : it enriches | Ps. 19:7-10 |
| 1.13 | Power | : it generates faith & eternal salvation | Rom. 10:17 |
| 1.14 | Water | : washes, cleans | Eph.5:26 |

MEMORY VERSE:

Ps.119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

LESSON 4

IMPORTANCE OF THE WORD OF GOD 1

Key Verses

1. Jn 6:63
2. Jn 8:31,32

It is God's love letter to us, the key to life and happiness, and the Creator's handbook.

1. THE WORD REVEALS GOD HIMSELF TO US

| | | |
|-----|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1.1 | He is Holy | Is 6:1-7; 1 Pet 1:15,16 |
| 1.2 | He is Just | Rev. 15:3,4 |
| 1.3 | He is Love | 1 Jn,4:8-10; Ps 86:15 |
| | He created us | Gen 1:26-30 |
| | He provides for our needs | Phil 4:19; Rom 8:32 |
| | He gives us abundant life | Jn 10:10 |

2. THE WORD GIVES US THE KEY TO LIFE AND HAPPINESS

| | | |
|-----|---|--------------------------|
| 2.1 | The Word of God gives life | Jn 6:63; Ps 119:49,50 |
| 2.2 | The Word focuses on Jesus Christ, the source of life | Jn 14:6; 1 Jn 5:11,12 |
| 2.3 | The Word unfolds the blessings of life in Christ | Eph 1:3-14, II Pet.1:3,4 |
| 2.4 | The Word builds up genuine disciples | Jn 8:31; Acts 20:32 |
| 2.5 | The Word liberates | Jn 8:32 |

Memory Verse:

Jn 8:31,32 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

LESSON 5

IMPORTANCE OF THE WORD OF GOD 2

Key Verses

1. 2 Tim. 2:15
2. Jas. 1:22

| 3. THE WORD INSTRUCTS US ON RIGHT LIVING | II Tim. 3:16,17; Is.2:3; Prv.6:23 |
|--|--|
| 3.1 Basic principles of right living | |
| The Ten Commandments | Ex 20:1-17 |
| The Beatitudes | Mt 5:1-12 |
| 3.2 Basic principles of knowing the Word | |
| Hear | Prov 4:20-22 |
| Read | Is 34:16; Neh 8:8, Deut. 17:9 |
| Study | Is. 34:16a; II Tim 2:14, 15; Acts 17:11; Jn.5:39 |
| Meditate & Memorize | Josh.1:8; Ps 1:2; Ps 119:11 |
| 3.3 Obedience and Practice enjoined | Deut. 17:19; Josh.1:8; Josh.23:6; Ez. 7:10; Rom. 15:4; Jas 1:22, 23 |
| 3.4 Relevant for modern life as warning to all | I Cor. 10:11 |

Memory Verse:

Ps.119:11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

LESSON 6

THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE AND THE WORD OF GOD

Key Verses

1. Ps. 119:89
2. 1 Pet. 3:15

1. THE WORD OF GOD IS ABSOLUTELY TRUSTWORTHY

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------------------|
| 1.1 | Promises made many generations earlier are kept | I Kgs. 8:56 |
| 1.2 | God stands by His Word till it comes to pass | Ez.12:25; Matt. 5:18; Jer. 1:12 |
| 1.3 | It is unchanging in a changing world | Mtt. 5:18; I Pet. 1:25 |
| 1.4 | It abides forever | Mtt. 24:35; Lk.21:33 |

2. TWENTY PROOFS THAT THE BIBLE IS GENUINE, AUTHENTIC AND RELIABLE

2.1 Its wonderful unity.

Over forty authors wrote sixty-six books in different lands over a period of 1,800 years. Many never saw the writings of the others and yet there is no contradiction between any two of them. Collect any group of books of any other forty men on any subject and see if they agree.

2.2 It's superiority to other books

It is superior to other books in its origin, formation, doctrines, principles, claims, moral tone, histories, prophecies, revelations, literature, present redemption and eternal benefits.

2.3 Its influence in the world.

It has blessed millions in every generation, made the highest civilizations and given man the highest hope and destiny.

2.4 The character and greatness of those who accept it.

The wisest, most godly, and honest of men acknowledge it as God's word. Only infidels and the ungodly reject it.

2.5 Man could not have written it if he would, and would not have written it if he could. No critic of scripture has ever been able to prove or disprove it.

2.6 Good men must have written it.

It condemns all sin and records the sins and faults of its writers as well as others. This, evil men would not do. Even good men would not do it unless inspired to do so to help others.

2.7 All man's present and eternal needs are met by the Bible.

Redemption and promised benefits have been given to all who believe in all generations and this will always be so.

2.8 Its preservation through the ages.

Whole kingdoms and religions have sought in vain to destroy it. It is still Victor and indestructible.

2.9 The heavenly and eternal character of its contents proves it to be of God.**2.10 The response of the soul to it.**

The Bible fits the soul as a key to a lock.

2.11 Its infinite depths and lofty ideals.

It is universal in its appeal, reasonable in its teachings, reliable in its promises, durable in its conflicts, everlasting in its usefulness, new and modern in its statements, indispensable to human civilization, indisputable in its authority, interesting in its histories, colorful in its biographies, accurate in its prophecies, individual in its messages, far reaching in its vision, complete in its laws, comprehensive in its knowledge, infinite in its detail, and unselfish in its purpose, simple in its application, just in its demands, righteous in its judgments, clear in its application, and masterful in its wisdom.

2.12 Fulfilled prophecy.

About 3,300 prophecies have been fulfilled, predictions made hundreds and even thousands of years before their fulfillment. Not one detail has failed yet. About 2,908 verses are being fulfilled or will be fulfilled.

2.13 Miracles.

Hundreds are recorded in scripture and many happen daily among those who pray and claim Bible promises.

2.14 Its perfection.

It is scientifically and historically correct. No one man has ever found the Bible at fault in any of its

many hundreds of statements of history, astronomy, botany, geology, or any other branch of learning.

2.15 Its adaptability.

It is always up to date on any subject. It fits the lives of all people of all ages and all lands.

2.16 Its spiritual and moral power.

It meets perfectly every spiritual and moral need of man.

2.17 Its doctrines.

They surpass all human principles in relationship, religion, culture, etc. (1Cor 2:14).

2.18 Claims of the Bible itself.

Over 3,800 times Bible writers claim God spoke what they wrote. The Bible itself claims to be the Word of God.

2.19 Secular history.

Many pagan as well as Jewish and Christian writers confirm the facts of the Bible, quoting it as being genuine, authentic, and inspired by God.

2.20 Its inexhaustible proofs.

It would take many volumes to deal fully with the many thousands of facts that confirm the Bible to be the Word of God.

The book must be divine. If one will use it properly it will confirm itself to him as the inspired Word of God.

3. THE UNIQUENESS OF THE BIBLE

Webster must have had this “Book of books” in mind when he wrote the definition for “unique”.

Definition of unique:

1. *One and only, single, sole*
2. *Different from all others, having no like or equal*

Professor M. Montiero-Williams

Professor M. Montiero-Williams, former Boden professor of Sanskrit, spent 42 years studying Eastern books (books of Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.) and said in comparing them with the Bible:

- ♦ **Pile them, if you will, on the left side of your study table; but place your own Holy Bible on the right side – all by itself, all alone – and with a wide gap between them. For, ... there is a gulf between it and the so-called sacred books of the East which severs the one from the other utterly, hopelessly, and forever ... a veritable gulf which cannot be bridged over by any science of religious thought.**

The Bible is Unique. It is the book “different from all others” in the following ways:

A. UNIQUE IN ITS CONTINUITY.

Here is a book:

- i. Written over a 1,500 years span
- ii. Written over 40 generations
- iii. Written by over 40 authors from every walk of life including Kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, scholars, etc.:
 - ♦ Moses, a political leader, trained in the universities of Egypt
 - ♦ Peter, a fisherman
 - ♦ Amos, a herdsman
 - ♦ Joshua, a military general
 - ♦ Nehemiah, a cupbearer
 - ♦ Daniel, a prime minister
 - ♦ Luke, a doctor
 - ♦ Solomon, a king
 - ♦ Matthew, a tax collector
 - ♦ Paul, a rabbi.
- iv. Written in different places:
 - ♦ Moses in the wilderness
 - ♦ Jeremiah in a dungeon
 - ♦ Daniel on a hillside and in a palace
 - ♦ Paul, inside prison walls

- ◆ Luke, while traveling
 - ◆ John, on the isle of Patmos
 - ◆ Others in the rigors of a military campaign
- v. Written at different times:
- ◆ David in times of war
 - ◆ Solomon in times of peace
 - ◆ Paul in bonds
- vi. Written during different moods:
- ◆ Some writing from the heights of joy and others writing from the depths of sorrow and despair.
- vii. Written on three continents:
- ◆ Asia, Africa, and Europe.
- viii. Written in three languages:
- ◆ Hebrews: Was the language of the Old Testament.
II Kings 18:26-28 called “the language of Judah”.
In Isaiah 19:18 called “the language of Canaan.”
 - ◆ Aramaic: Was the “common language” of the Near East until the time of Alexander the Great (6th century BC – 4th century BC)
 - ◆ Greek: New Testament language. Was the international language at the time of Christ.
- ix. Its subject matter includes hundreds of controversial subjects. A controversial subject is one, which would create opposing opinions when mentioned or discussed.

Biblical authors spoke on hundreds of controversial subjects with harmony and continuity from Genesis to Revelation. **There is one unfolding story: “God’s redemption of man.”**

F.F. Bruce observes:

- ◆ “Any part of the human body can only be properly explained in reference to the whole body. And any part of the Bible can only be properly explained in reference to the whole Bible.”
- ◆ “The Bible, at first sight, appears to be a collection of literature – mainly Jewish. If we

inquire into the circumstance under which the various Biblical documents were written, we find that they were written at intervals over a space of nearly 1400 years.

- ◆ The writers wrote in various lands, from Italy in the west to Mesopotamia and possibly Persia in the east.
- ◆ The writers themselves were a heterogeneous number of people, not only separated from each other by hundreds of years and hundreds of miles, but also belonging to the most diverse walks of life. In their ranks we have kings, herdsmen, soldiers, legislators, fishermen, statesmen, courtiers, priests and prophets, a tent-making Rabbi and a Gentile physician, not to speak of others of whom we know nothing apart from the writings they have left us.
- ◆ The writings themselves belong to a great variety of literary types. They include history, law (civil, criminal, ethical, ritual, and sanitary), religious poetry, didactic treatises, lyric poetry, parable and allegory, biography, personal correspondence, personal memoirs and dairies.

B. UNIQUE IN ITS CIRCULATION

The Bible has been read by more people and published in more languages than any other book. There have been more copies produced of its entirety and more portions and selections than any other book in history.

Some will argue that in a designated month or year more of a certain book was sold. However, over all there is absolutely no book that reaches or even begins to compare to the circulation of the Scriptures.

Hy Pickering

Hy Pickering says that about 30 years ago, for the British and Foreign Bible Society to meet its demands, it had to publish:

One copy every three seconds day and night,
22 copies every minute day and night,
1,369 copies every hour day and night,
32,876 copies every day in the year.

And it is deeply interesting to know that this amazing number of Bibles was dispatched to various parts of the world in 4,583 cases weighing 490 tons.

C. UNIQUE IN ITS TRANSLATION

The Bible was one of the first major books translated (Septuagint: Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, ca 250 BC).

The Bible has been translated and retranslated and paraphrased more than any other book in existence.

Encyclopaedia Britannica says “by 1966 the whole Bible had appeared ... in 240 languages and dialects ... one or more whole books of the Bible in 739 additional ones, a total of publication of 1,280 languages.”

3,000 Bible translators between 1950-1960 were at work translating the Scriptures.

The Bible factually stands unique (“one of a kind; alone in its class”) in its translation.

D. UNIQUE IN ITS SURVIVAL

i. Survival through time

Being written on material that perishes, having to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years before the invention of the printing press, did not diminish its style, correctness or existence. The Bible, compared with other ancient writings, has more manuscript evidence than any 10 pieces of classical literature combined.

John Warwick Montgomery

- ♦ To be skeptical of the resultant text of the New Testament books is to allow all of classical antiquity to slip into obscurity, for no documents of the ancient period are as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament.”

John Lea

John Lea in *The Greatest Book in the World* compared the Bible with Shakespeare’s writings. He had this to say:

- ♦ It seems strange that the text of Shakespeare, which has been in existence less than two hundred and eight years, should be far more uncertain and corrupt than that of the New Testament, now over eighteen centuries old, during nearly fifteen of which it existed only in manuscript.

- ◆ ... With perhaps a dozen or twenty exceptions, the text of every verse in the New Testament may be said to be so far settled by general consent of scholars, that any dispute as to its readings must relate rather to the interpretation of the words than to any doubts respecting the words themselves. But in everyone of Shakespeare's thirty seven plays there are probably a hundred readings still in dispute, a large portion of which materially affects the meaning of the passages in which they occur."

ii. **Survival through persecution**

Sidney Collett

Sidney Collett in *All about the Bible* says:

- ◆ Voltaire, the noted French infidel who died in 1778, said that in one hundred years from his time Christianity would be swept from existence and passed into history. But what has happened? Voltaire has passed into history, while the circulation of the Bible continues to increase in almost all parts of the world, **carrying blessing wherever it goes.**

Concerning the boast of Voltaire on the extinction of Christianity and the Bible in 100 years, Geisler and Nix point out that "only fifty years after his death the Geneva Bible Society used his press and house to produce stacks of Bibles." **WHAT AN IRONY OF HISTORY!**

In AD 303, Diocletian issued an edict (*Cambridge History of the bible*, Cambridge University press, 1963) to stop Christians from worshipping and to destroy their Scriptures:

" ... An imperial letter was everywhere promulgated, ordering the razing of the churches to the ground and the destruction by fire of the Scriptures, and proclaiming that those who held high positions would lose all civil rights, while those in households, if they persisted in their profession of Christianity, would be deprived of their liberty."

The historic irony of the above edict to destroy the Bible is that Eusebius records the edict given 25 years later by Constantine, the emperor following Diocletian, that 50 copies of the Scriptures should be prepared at the expense of the government.

The Bible is unique in its survival. This does not prove the Bible is the Word of God. But it does prove it stands alone among books. Anyone seeking truth ought to consider a book that has the above unique qualifications.

iii. **Survival through criticism**

H.L. Hastings

H.L. Hastings has forcibly illustrated the unique way the Bible has withstood the attacks of infidels and skeptics:

- ◆ Infidels for eighteen hundred years have been refuting and overthrowing this book, and yet it stands today as solid as a rock. Its circulation increases, and it is more loved and cherished and read today than ever before.
- ◆ Infidels, with all their assaults, make about as much impression on this book as a man with a tack hammer would on the Pyramids of Egypt.
- ◆ When the French monarch proposed the persecution of the Christians in his dominion, an old statesman and warrior said to him, '**Sire, the church of God is an anvil that has worn out many hammers.**' So the hammers of infidels have been pecking away at this book for ages, but the hammers are worn out, and the anvil still endures.
- ◆ **If this book had not been the book of God, men would have destroyed it long ago. Emperors and popes, kings and priests, princes and rulers have all tried their hand at it; they die and the book still lives.**

Bernard Ramm

Bernard Ramm adds:

- ◆ A thousand times over, the death knell of the Bible has been sounded, the funeral procession formed, the inscription cut on the tombstone, and committal read. But somehow the corpse never stays put.
- ◆ No other book has been so chopped, knifed, sifted, scrutinized, and vilified. What book on philosophy or religion or psychology or *belles lettres* of classical or modern times has been subject to such a mass attack as the bible? With such venom and skepticism? With such thoroughness and erudition? Upon every chapter, line and tenet?
- ◆ **The Bible is still loved by millions, read by millions, and studied by millions.**

E. UNIQUE IN ITS TEACHINGS

i. Prophecy

Wilbur Smith

Wilbur Smith who compiled a personal library of 25,000 volumes writes:

- ◆ It is the only volume ever produced by man, or a group of men in which is to be found a large body of prophecies relating to individual nations, to Israel, to all the peoples of the earth, to certain cities, and to the coming of One who was to be the Messiah;
- ◆ The ancient world had many different devices for determining the future, known as divination, but not in the entire gamut of Greek and Latin literature, even though they use the words prophet and prophecy, can we find any real specific prophecy of a great historic event to come in the distant future, nor any prophecy of a Savior to arise in the human race;
- ◆ “Mohammedanism cannot point to any prophecies of the coming of Mohammed uttered hundreds of years before his birth. Neither can the founders of any cult in this country rightly identify any ancient text specifically foretelling their appearance.

ii. Personalities

The Bible deals very frankly with the sins of its characters. Read the biographies today, and see how they try to cover up, overlook or ignore the shady side of people. Take the great literary geniuses; most are painted as saints. The Bible does not do it that way. It simply tells it like it is.

F. UNIQUE IN ITS INFLUENCE ON SURROUNDING LITERATURE

Cleland B. McAfee

Cleland B. McAfee writes in *The Greatest English Classic*:

- ◆ If every Bible in any considerable city were destroyed, the Book could be restored in all its essential parts from the quotations on the shelves of the city public library. There are works, covering almost all the great literary writers, devoted especially to showing how much the Bible has influenced them.

Kenneth Scott Latourette

Kenneth Scott Latourette, former Yale historian, says:

- ◆ It is evidence of his importance, of the effect that he has had upon history and presumably, of the baffling mystery of his being that no other life ever lived on this planet has evoked so huge a volume of literature among so many peoples and languages, and that, far from ebbing, the flood continues to mount

THE CONCLUSION

- ◆ **The above does not prove the Bible is the Word of God, but it proves that it is unique (“different from all others; having no like or equal; alone in its class”).**
- ◆ A professor once remarked:
“If you are an intelligent person, you will read the one book that has drawn more attention than any other, if you are searching for the truth.”

MEMORY VERSE

Ps. 119:89 : Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven.

LESSON 7

WHAT IS THE MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE?

Key Verses

1. II Tim. 3:16-17
2. Eccl. 12:13,14
3. Jn. 20:30,31

The Bible unfolds the drama of God's dealing with mankind revealing His character, our condition, and His redemption and eternal purpose for us.

1. CREATION

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1.1 God the Creator | Gen. 1:1-2; Col. 1:16-17 |
| 1.2 Universe commanded into existence | Gen. 1:4, 6, 9, 14; Heb. 11:3 |
| 1.3 All life given by God | Gen. 1:11, 12, 20-26 |
| 1.4 Man created in God's image given dominion over the earth | Gen. 1:26, 27; 2:7 Gen. 1:28-30 |

2. FALL

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 2.1 Temptation and sin | Gen. 3 |
| 2.2 Judgment by flood | Gen. 6-7 |
| 2.3 Grace to Noah and family | Gen. 6:8, 18; 9:1-4 |

3. COVENANT

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 3.1 Abraham: Father of faith | Gen. 12:1-4; Heb. 11:8-10 |
| 3.2 Israel: Chosen Nation Election by love | Ex 19:5-6 Deut. 7:6-8 |
| Promise of inheritance | Deut. 11:8-17 |
| Judgment by exile | 2 Chron. 36:15-21; Jer. 11:10-11 |
| Restoration of the nation | Jer. 29:10-14; Dan 9:2, 24-27 |

4. WORD MADE FLESH

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Virgin birth | Matt. 1:18-25; Gal 4:4 |
| Ministry: preaching, healing, deliverance | Mk 1:15, 32-34; Acts 10:36-38 |
| Death on the cross | Lk. 23:44-48; Col. 2:14-15 |
| Resurrection | Jn. 20:1,11,15-19; 1 Cor.15:17,18 |

Ascension Lk 24:49-53; Eph. 1:20-21

5. MISSION OF THE CHURCH

| | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| Pentecost | Acts 2:1-4 |
| Jerusalem | Acts 2:37-41 |
| Judea | Acts 8:1-4 |
| Samaria | Acts 8:5-8 |
| World | Acts 13:1-4, 47 |

Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8

6. FINAL JUDGEMENT

| | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Eternal life | Jn. 3:16-17 |
| Eternal death | Jn 3:18-19 |

Rev 20:11-15

7. NEW CREATION

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| New heaven and earth | Rev 21-22 |
| People in the Book of life | |
| Presence of God | |

Rev 21-22

MEMORY VERSE:

II Tim. 3:16,17 : **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.”**

LESSON 8

HOW TO INTERPRET THE BIBLE

Key Verses

1. II Pet. 1:20,21
2. Is. 28:9,10

The Holy Spirit is the ultimate author of the Word of God.

Therefore, He is the only one who can illuminate the Scripture and give correct interpretation. Jn. 16:13

The following steps could be considered when interpreting the scripture:

1. READ THE TEXT IN ITS CONTEXT

- 1.1 A verse out of context is pretext. Do not read into the text.
- 1.2 Pay attention to repeated words, phrases, connectives (e.g. and, but, for....).
- 1.3 Write down your ideas clearly, think, analyze and bring out the meanings.

2. NOTE THE FORM

2.1 Literary form:

- Narrative
- Poetic
- Didactic (teaching) – allegory, parable, letter
- Special forms – prophetic, apocalyptic, wisdom

2.2 Language features:

- Metaphor
- Mood (emotional...)
- Simile

3. UNDERSTAND THE BACKGROUND

3.1 Grasp the purpose of the writing

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Author's intention | Jn. 20:31; Lk 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-2 |
| Situation of the readers | 1 Cor. 1:11; Gal 1:6 |
| The structure of the book | Rom. 12:1; Eph. 4:1 |

3.2 Consider contemporary extra biblical material:

- Archaeological

Historical
Geographical
Cultural

4. INTERPRET THE SCRIPTURE BY SCRIPTURE

- 4.1 Interpret each passage in the light of the Bible teaching as a whole.
- 4.2 Read parallel scriptures.
- 4.3 Scripture cannot contradict itself; God cannot contradict Himself.

MEMORY VERSE:

Jn. 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.

LESSON 9

HOW TO HAVE A PERSONAL QUIET TIME

Key Verses:

1. Ex. 34:1-10
2. Josh. 1:8

To succeed in the Christian life let God speak to you each day. Quiet time is a daily personal time with God. Moses had a quiet time with the Lord. We can get a few quiet time ideas from there (Ex. 34:1-10).

A. WHAT YOU WILL NEED

1. **A Bible.**
2. **A notebook.** v.1 "Hew thee two tables of stone."
3. **A good time.** v.2 "...be ready in the morning..."
"... and come up in the morning"
The best time for quiet time is the morning.
(It must be regular – an integral part of your daily routine.)
4. **A good place.** v.3 And no man shall come up with thee...
A place where you can be alone with God.
5. **A daily Bible reading guide (optional).**

B. SIX STEPS TO EFFECTIVE QUIET TIME

1. **Pray to Begin**
 - a. Praise and Worship – pray thanking the Lord for another day, thank Him for who He is, what He has done and what He can and will do.
 - b. Ask God to speak to you using Ps. 119:18
- v.6-8 The Lord passed before him amidst praise and worship.

and Eph. 1:16,17.

2. Read

Read the passage for the day expecting
God to speak to you from it.

v.10 And he (the Lord said...
*(today God's voice is
heard through the Bible)*

Either:

- 1) Follow a systematic order going
book by book beginning from the New
Testament; e.g. Ephesians.

Read a few verses at a time.

or

- 2) Take the passage suggested in your
daily reading guide.

3. Meditate

Ps. 119:148; Josh 1:8

- Think through, ponder over, soberly
reflect on what you have read for awhile.
- **How to do effective meditation.**

Look through the passage again for as many of the following as possible:

1. What does the passage teach me about the nature of God: the Father, the Son, or the Holy
Spirit?
2. Is there a promise for you to believe, and so claim, taking careful note of any conditions
attached?
3. Is there a command for you to obey, or a good example for you to follow?
4. Is there a warning to you to heed or a bad example for you to avoid?
5. Is there a prayer for you to pray or remember?

4. Use your Bible Reading Guide (optional)

Now refer to your daily reading guide, ex. "Daily Guide", "Daily Power", "Light For Our Path", and "Daily
Bread". You will get further ideas about the passage.

5. Write down lessons

Write down in your notebook any points or lessons you have learnt from the day's passage which you will like to remember as God's message to you that day.

6. Pray to End

Finish with prayer, turning sentences from the passage into your own prayers and thanking God for what He has taught you. Remember to pray for your church, your pastors, and the general work of God.

7. Memory Verse

Write out the verse that particularly brings out the lesson for the day and memorize it (Col. 3:16).

8. Be a Doer of the Word (Jas. 1:22)

God has spoken to you. Now you need to do something about what He says. Let what you learnt during the daily quiet time become a guide for what you believe and how you will behave. It is most essential to practice what you read from the Bible.

MEMORY VERSE:

- 1. Ps. 119:18: Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.**
- 2. Josh. 1:8: This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then shall make thy way prosperous and then thou shalt have good success.**

LESSON 10

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Key Verses:

1. 2 Tim. 2:15
2. Acts 17:11
3. Rom. 15:4

1. TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE BIBLE STUDY.

It must be your life's goal to acquire the following for effective personal Bible study (Acts 17:11):

- Dake's Annotated Reference Bible (King James Version)
- Thompson's Chain Reference Bible (King James Version)
- New International Version
- Amplified Bible
- Revised Standard Version
- Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible
- Oxford/Webster's dictionary
- Notebook 1 (For personal revelation and messages from God to you.)
- Notebook 2 (For writing down notes when being taught.)

2. THE APPROACH

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------------|
| 1.1 | Recognize God as the author | Heb. 1:1-2 |
| 1.2 | Focus on Jesus as central in the Bible | Lk 24:26-27 |
| 1.3 | Be willing to receive instruction from the Lord | 2 Tim 3:16 |
| 1.4 | Allow God to change us | 2 Cor. 3:18 |

3. THE METHODS

A. Microscopic Bible study

1. Take a verse, analyse each single word in the verse
2. Find out the meaning of each single word in the dictionary

3. Check your Bible for any related verses
4. Look for any corresponding Hebrew or Greek words and find their meanings
5. What does this verse mean?
6. What does this verse mean to me (in my specific circumstance)?
7. What is God telling me personally?
8. What is the verse saying?
9. What is the verse not saying?
10. How can I apply it to my life?
11. Is there a command for me to obey?
12. Is there a warning for me to heed?
13. Is there a good example for me to follow and a bad example to avoid?
14. Is there an allegory (story, parable)?
15. Is there a promise for me to believe?
16. Is there anything for me to pray about?

B. Topical Bible Study

1. Define the topic with the dictionary
2. Look for all scriptures on that topic. Read each verse aloud
3. Study each verse you have found microscopically
4. Find the following:
 5. The why and the why not of the topic:
 6. The how and the how not of the topic:
 7. The where and the where not of the topic:
 8. The when and the when not of the topic:
 9. The what and the what not of the topic:
 10. The who and the who not of the topic:
11. Look for types of the topic:
12. Look for examples of the topic:
13. Look for mistakes of the topic:
14. Memory Verse: Acts 17:11

C. Telescopic Method

- ◆ read a whole book at a time, preferably in one sitting
- ◆ build up a complete picture
- ◆ locate the central theme, key verses or passages

MEMORY VERSE:

Acts 17:11 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.

LESSON 11

HOW TO APPLY THE WORD IN OUR DAILY LIFE

Key Verses

1. Ps. 119:133
2. 2 Cor. 10:11

Use the Word of God as:

1. STANDARD OF CONDUCT

- | | | |
|-----|------------------|--------------|
| 1.1 | Ten Commandments | Ex 20:1-17 |
| 1.2 | Beatitudes | Matt. 5:3-12 |

2. LIGHT FOR GUIDANCE

- | | | |
|-----|-----------|----------------|
| 2.1 | Direction | Ps 119:105,130 |
| 2.2 | Decision | Rom. 12:1,2 |

3. ROCK OF ASSURANCE

- | | | |
|-----|-------------|----------------------|
| 3.1 | Salvation | 1 Jn. 5:13; Jn. 5:24 |
| 3.2 | Forgiveness | 1Jn 1:9 |
| 3.3 | Victory | Rom. 8:37-39 |

4. SWORD AGAINST THE DEVIL

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 4.1 | Spiritual Warfare | Eph. 6:17; 2 Cor. 10:3-5 |
| 4.2 | Temptation | Matt. 4:1-11; 1 Cor. 10:13 |

5. FOOD FOR GROWTH

- | | | |
|-----|------|--------------|
| 5.1 | Milk | 1 Pet 2:2 |
| 5.2 | Meat | Heb. 5:12-14 |

6. ANSWERS TO PROBLEMS

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| 6.1 | When fearful or anxious | Ps 27:1-6; Ps 46 |
| 6.2 | When discouraged or depressed | Ps 23; Ps 34:1-10 |
| 6.3 | When frustrated | Heb. 12:1-7 |
| 6.4 | When in trouble | Is. 55:6-11 |
| 6.5 | When bereaved | 1 Thess. 4:13-18 |

MEMORY VERSE:

Ps. 119:133 Order my steps in thy word and let not iniquity be found in me.

LESSON 12

HOW DO WE USE THE BIBLE IN PRAYER?

Key Verses

1. 1 Jn. 5:14,15
2. Jas. 4:3

1. THE ROLE OF GOD'S WORD IN PRAYER

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1.1 Reveals God's will as basis of prayer | 1 Jn. 5:14 |
| 1.2 Instructs on | |
| 1.2.1 How to pray | Lk 11:2; 1 Tim 2:8 |
| 1.2.2 How not to pray | Matt. 6:5,7 |
| 1.2.3 What to say | Matt. 6:9-13 |
| 1.3 Gives us God's promises that we can claim in prayer e.g. the Holy Spirit | Acts 2:33-39; Gal 3:14 |
| 1.4 Shows us conditions to effective prayer e.g. forgiveness | Mk 11:25 |
| 1.5 Gives us many examples of prayer | Jn 17:1-26; Mt 14:30 |

2. USING GOD'S WORD IN PRAYER

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 2.1 It is our spiritual weapon | Eph. 6:17; Rev 1:16 |
| 2.2 It cleanses us spiritually | Eph. 5:26; Jn. 17:17 |
| 2.3 It prepares our hearts in righteousness for effective prayer | 2 Tim 3:16-17; Jas. 5:16 |

2. EXAMPLES OF THE USE OF GOD'S WORD IN PRAYER

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 3.1 The Apostles | Acts 4:23-26 (Ps 146:6) |
| 3.2 The Epistle to the Hebrews | Heb. 13:5,6 cf. Deut. 31:6 Ps 118:6 |

3. PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

- 4.1 When in prayer, allow the Holy Spirit to remind
 you of verses relevant to your prayer needs. Jn. 14:26
- 4.2 Pray according to the promises and conditions laid out in God's Word.
- 4.3 Be careful not to repeat Bible prayers without first
 understanding their meaning.

MEMORY VERSE:

1 Jn. 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

LESSON 13

HOW TO USE THE WORD IN MINISTRY

Key Verse

Jn. 6:63

Jesus said: "The Words that I have spoken to you are Jn. 6:63
Spirit and Life".

Use the Word of God in:

1. INTERCESSION

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| 1.1 According to the will of God | Col. 1:9-12 |
| 1.2 According to prophetic word | Acts 4:25-26 |

2. GROUP BIBLE STUDY

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| 2.1 Analyze | Acts 17:11 |
| 2.2 Discuss | Acts 18:26 |

3. PREACHING

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| 3.1 Proclaim | Acts 8:25; 2 Tim 4:17 |
| 3.2 Exound | Acts 28:23; 20:27 |

4. TEACHING

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 4.1 Explain | Acts 18:11 |
| 4.2 Instruct | Titus 1:9 |

5. COUNSELLING

- | | |
|------------|--------------------------|
| 5.1 Advise | Prov. 4:20-22; Rom. 15:4 |
| 5.2 Apply | Lev. 18:5; 2 Tim 3:16,17 |

6. PROPHECY

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| 6.1 Speak boldly | Acts 13:46,47 |
| 6.2 Speak faithfully | Acts 15:14,15 |

7. EVANGELISM

7.1 Personal witness

Acts 1:8

7.2 Power Evangelism

Mk 16:15-18; Acts 8:5-8,12

Have a filing system:

Develop a reliable note taking, daily Bible Study,
storage & retrieval system according to Biblical books &
Christian topics

MEMORY VERSE:

Jn. 6:63

The Words that I have spoken to you are Spirit and Life.

LESSON 14

WHAT GREAT MEN SAID ABOUT THE BIBLE

1. **GEORGE WASHINGTON (1st president of the USA)**

It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.

2. **Abraham Lincoln**

In regard to this great book, I have but to say, I believe the Bible is the best gift God has given to man.

All the good Saviour gave to the world was communicated through this book. But for this book we could not know right from wrong. All things most desirable for man's welfare, here and hereafter, are to be found portrayed in it.

3. **Thomas Jefferson (3rd president of the USA)**

A studious perusal of the sacred volume will make better citizens, better fathers, and better husbands.

4. **John Quincy Adams (6th president of the USA)**

I speak as a man of the world to men of the world; and I say to you, search the scriptures! The Bible is the book of all others, to be read at all ages, and in all conditions of human life; not to be read once or twice or thrice through, and then laid aside but to be read in small portions of one or two chapters everyday, and never to be intermitted, unless by some overruling necessity."

5. **Andrew Jackson (7th president of the USA)**

It is the rock on which our republic rests.

6. **Woodrow Wilson (28th president of the USA)**

You will know the Bible is the Word of God when you read it: for in it you will find the key to your own heart, your own happiness, and your success. I beg of you that you read it, and find this out for yourselves. ... A man has deprived himself of the best there is in the world who has deprived himself of this (the knowledge of the Bible).

7. **Herbert Hoover (31st president of the USA)**

There is no other book so various as the Bible, nor one so full of concentrated wisdom.

8. **Ulysses S. Grant (18th president of the USA)**

To the influence of this book we are indebted to the progress made in civilization, and to this we must look as our guide in the future.

9. John Bacon

What can I do with respect to the next world without my Bible?

10. Napoleon Bonaparte (famous French general)

The Bible is more than a book; it is a living being with an action; a power which invades everything that opposes its extension.

11. Alexander Cruden

All other books are of little importance in comparison with the Holy Scriptures.

12. Sir Isaac Newton

We account the scriptures of God to be the most sublime philosophy. I find more sure marks of authority in the Bible than in any profane history whatever."

13. Daniel Webster

The Bible is the book of faith, and a book of doctrine, and a book of morals, and a book of religion, of special revelation from God; but it is also a book which teaches man his responsibility, his own dignity, and his equality with his fellow man.

... If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can bury our glory in profound obscurity.

14. Horace Greely

It is impossible to enslave mentally or socially a Bible-reading people. The principles of the Bible are the groundwork of human freedom.

15. 800 Scientists of Great Britain, recorded in the Bodelian Library, Oxford.

We, the undersigned, students of the natural sciences, desire to express our sincere regret that researchers into scientific truth are perverted by some in our own times into occasion for casting doubt into the truth and authenticity of the holy scriptures. We conceive that it is impossible for the Word of God written in the book of nature, and God's Word written in holy scripture, to contradict one another... Physical science is not complete, but is only in a condition of progress. Signed by all 800 scientists.