

CHAPTER 1

THE BIBLE – ITS UNIQUENESS

The Bible is the Book of Books! It is unique. There is no other book like it in the entire world. It is the only Book God ever wrote. Books written by men come closest to the truth only when they accurately reflect the message of God's infallible Book. There is no man more ignorant than the man who does not know the truths found in this Book.

One of the most famous professors of English literature of our generation was William Lyon Phelps, for forty years a teacher in Yale University. He probably gave more lectures outside of his classroom on the great themes of English literature than any other one man of the twentieth century. In the Introduction to his book, *Human Nature in the Bible*, which he published when he was 57 years old, Phelps included a most remarkable paragraph on the necessity of knowing the Word of God. The man who wrote these words wrote them after he had been teaching for thirty years, and who lived the better part of every day among the greatest books of the world. The following is Phelps' tribute to the Bible and the importance of knowing it:

Everyone who has a thorough knowledge of the Bible may truly be called educated; and no other learning or culture, no matter how extensive or elegant, can, among Europeans and Americans, form a proper substitute. Western civilization is founded upon the Bible; our ideas, our wisdom, our philosophy, our literature, our art, our ideals, come more from the Bible than from all other books put together. It is a revelation of divinity and of humanity; it contains the loftiest religious aspiration along with a candid representation of all that is earthly, sensual and devilish. I thoroughly believe in a university education for both men and women; but I believe a knowledge of the Bible without a college course is more valuable than a college course without the Bible.

If you know the Bible you will know the truth: "If ye continue in my _____, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the _____ and the _____ shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). NO BIBLE, NO TRUTH. Jesus spoke of God's Word and He said, "Thy _____ is _____" (John 17:17).

It is interesting to note that the word "Bible" is never found in the Bible. The only place it can be found is on the cover and on the title page, not in the text itself. If you looked for the word "Bible" in a concordance, you would not find it.

Note: A concordance is a very helpful book which lists all of the words found in the Bible in alphabetical order. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* is recommended. Many study Bibles have a brief concordance in the back which is not exhaustive. This may be helpful but it does not contain all the words found in the Bible, just some of the words.

The following illustrates that the term "Bible" is not found in the Bible, but the idea behind the word is certainly there:

Nowhere in the Bible do we find the words, "Read the Bible," but see John 5:39.
Nowhere do we find the words, "Study the Bible," but see 2 Timothy 2:15.
Nowhere do we find the words, "The Bible is absolutely true," but see John 17:17.
Nowhere do we find the words, "The Bible is living and powerful," but see Hebrews 4:12.
Nowhere do we find the words, "The Bible is divinely inspired," but see 2 Timothy 3:16.

Why Do We Call the Bible the Bible?

The word "Bible" comes from a Latin and Greek term which means "BOOKS," and that is exactly what the Bible is: A COLLECTION OF SACRED **BOOKS**. [NOTE: Compare the English word "bibliography" (a listing of books referred to by an author.) Also the Greek words *Biblion* (John 20:30; 21:25; 2 Timothy 4:13; Revelation 20:12) and *Biblos* (Acts 19:19; Philippians 4:3) are both translated "BOOK" or "BOOKS" (plural).] God has given us a valuable and precious LIBRARY made up of 66 books and all bound in one volume! We call it "**the Bible**." What is so special about the books of the Bible?

The Bible Has the Answer

There are three ultimate questions which every person needs to answer:

Where did I come from?

Why am I here?

Where am I going?

Only the Bible, God's Word, can answer these questions. A professor in college cannot help you answer such questions, unless he consults God's Book. A philosopher can never provide solid answers to these questions because human reasoning and human thinking and human logic are not sufficient to find answers to life's most important questions. A scientist is very limited because he was not personally present when the world began and he also has no way to tell what the future holds or what lies beyond the grave. Man by himself does not have the answers to such questions, but God does.

God was present when the world began and God certainly knows where man came from. "Where wast thou (where were you) when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding" (Job 38:4). Each of us would have to answer, "Lord, I wasn't there. I have no direct knowledge of these events. In order to understand my origin, I need to listen to the God who was there in the beginning, and take Him at His Word."

God knows WHY we are here. God had a purpose for putting us on this earth and we will never find out the reason for our existence unless we find it out from God. God also knows where I am headed. He knows all about my future. He knows all about what lies beyond the grave. He knows all about where I will be five million years from now. If we are to find out about our destiny, we will have to find it out from God.

The answers to life's most basic questions are not a secret. They have been revealed. God has spoken. God has told us all about the past, the present and the future. He has told us about our origin, our purpose and our destiny. We don't need to be in the dark about these things. God has given us a unique Book which answers these questions. We simply need to believe what God has said.

Counterfeit Bibles

There are real hundred dollar bills and there are counterfeit hundred dollar bills. The counterfeit bills were made by dishonest men who desire to deceive people into thinking that their fake and phony dollar bills are genuine. They want you to think that their bills are real and valuable, but in reality they are counterfeit and worthless.

There are men who have written books about God that are counterfeits. These books claim to be a message from God, but they are not from God at all. These authors want to deceive people into thinking that these books are the real thing: A REVELATION FROM GOD. Many are deceived into thinking that these counterfeits are really true.

One such counterfeit is called *The Book of Mormon*, considered to be God's Word by those of the Mormon religion. Jehovah's Witnesses have distributed millions of copies of a small book entitled *The Truth That Leads To Eternal Life*. However, what this book tells a person to do to have eternal life contradicts what the Bible tells a person to do to have eternal life. Both books cannot be true; one must be a counterfeit. If one has the truth that leads to eternal life, then the other must have error that does not lead to eternal life. What does the Bible say a person must do to have eternal life (John 6:47)? _____ The counterfeit "Bible" of the Mohammedans or Muslims (the religion of Islam) is called the *Koran*. Mary Baker Eddy, who founded the Christian Science cult, wrote *Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures*. Keys not only open up things, they also lock up things, and sad to say, Mary Baker Eddy's book has locked up the truth and hidden it from many people. There are other books that claim to be holy books which bring God's message to man. Beware of counterfeits. Is there a difference between the Bible and all these other religious books? Is the Bible really unique and unequalled and in a category all by itself?

In Romans 1:2 the Apostle Paul referred to the Bible (in this case the Old Testament) as "the _____." This is similar to what we find on the covers of most Bibles today: the HOLY BIBLE. The basic meaning of the word "HOLY" is "SET APART."

Suppose you had a bag filled with 100 small, ordinary, dirty stones that you found in a field or near a pond. How could you make one of those stones HOLY? You could take one stone out of

the bag, clean it, polish it and mount it on a beautiful gold ring. In so doing, you would have made the stone HOLY—completely set apart and different from all the other stones in the bag. God in His grace has done this to every person who believes on His Son. He has set us apart (sanctified us—1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11), made us SAINTS (holy ones, set apart ones—Romans 1:7; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 3:12) and made us different from those who do not know God in a personal, saving way. Likewise, the Bible is and always has been HOLY. It is completely set apart and different from all other books! Here are some of the reasons the Bible is different and unique:

1) THE BIBLE IS THE ONLY BOOK WHOSE AUTHOR IS GOD!

Apart from the Bible, can you think of any other books which have been authored by God? The Bible is the only divinely inspired book. In 2 Timothy 3:16 we learn that "all _____ is given by _____ of God," Literally this means "All Scripture is **GOD-BREATHED**--breathed out from the mouth of God, as if God were actually speaking the very words. Whenever we speak we are breathing out words. If you do not believe this, try to say something while holding your breath! To say that all Scripture is God-breathed is the same as saying that all Scripture is the Word of God (see Psalm 33:6 where the "word of the LORD" is equivalent to "the breath of His mouth"). God has breathed out the Scriptures and the whole Bible is from the mouth of God. No matter what verse you might read in the Bible, you should always realize that "the _____ of the LORD hath _____ it" (Isaiah 40:5). He's the Author! It's His Book! No other book is like it!

"I don't understand. We know that certain men wrote the Bible: Moses, David, Isaiah, Matthew, Luke, Peter, Paul and many others. If men wrote it, then how can we say it is the Word of God?" The answer is found in 2 Peter 1:21--"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God (such as Moses, David, Isaiah, and others) spoke as they were moved (carried along) by the Holy Ghost (Spirit)." In other words, the Holy Spirit moved and guided these men in such a way that what they wrote was exactly what God wanted them to write. These men were God's penmen. God was the Author, but He used these men to actually write down the words.

Suppose a father wants to leave a message for his family so that they will know what time he will return to his home. For some reason he decides to use seven different pens or markers to write his message. Even though he uses these different pens or writing instruments, it is still his message.

I will be
back at
5:00 o'clock.

God decided to use many different men to be His penmen, but what these men wrote was the very message that God wanted them to write. Their styles were very different, just as each of the writing instruments used in the above message is different. For example, the Apostle John often used very short sentences and Paul often used very long sentences, but John's short sentences and Paul's long sentences both communicated God's Word with 100 percent accuracy.

Consider David as one example of a man God used. David grew up and became a shepherd. One day as he realized the loving care and protection of the LORD, he wrote, "The _____ is M_____ S_____ " (see Psalm 23:1). God the Holy Spirit was moving David in such a way that the words that David wrote were exactly the words that God wanted him to write. Listen to what David himself said at the end of his life in 2 Samuel 23:2 -- "The _____ of the L_____ S_____ by _____, and His _____ was in _____ tongue." According to this verse, who was the One who really spoke?
 _____ Whose Word was in David's tongue? _____

2) THE BIBLE IS THE ONLY BOOK WHICH IS ABSOLUTELY TRUE!

Many books contain statements which are true and helpful, and there is much that we can learn and should learn from the books which men have written. The Bible, however, not only says things that are true, but the Bible is TRUTH ITSELF! The Lord Jesus Himself said, "Thy Word is _____" (John 17:17). Thus, the Bible is the only book which is absolutely INERRANT and INFALLIBLE!

INERRANT means that the Bible is totally free from error of any kind. In God's holy Word there are no errors, no mistakes, no flaws, no contradictions, no discrepancies, no inconsistencies, no inaccuracies, no disagreements, no imperfections, no defects, no deceptions, no blunders, no misconceptions, no miscalculations (mistakes with numbers) and no misstatements. The Bible is absolutely "_____ from the _____" (Psalm 119:160).

INFALLIBLE means that the Bible is not liable to error (hence it is a synonym for inerrant). It is incapable of being wrong or mistaken or inaccurate or misleading. It is absolutely trustworthy and sure. The term is sometimes wrongly used of persons. Roman Catholics, for example, believe that the Pope is infallible when he makes official declarations. No Pope or Priest or Pastor or Professor is infallible, but God is infallible and thus His Word is infallible (John 10:35). People may err, but the Bible does not (Matthew 22:29).

The truthfulness of the Bible depends on the God of truth. God has an amazing reputation for truth. He has never failed to tell the truth. It is _____ for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18). He cannot _____ (Titus 1:2). In the past, men who testified in court would put their hand on the Bible and swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The Bible communicates the truth of God which men desperately need to understand.

3) THE BIBLE IS THE ONLY BOOK WHICH IS LIFE CHANGING!

If the Bible is really different and unique and if it really contains the answers to life's most basic questions, then shouldn't my life be changed as a result of believing what this Book says and by obeying what this Book commands? In Hebrews 4:12 we are told that the Word of God is QUICK and _____. The word "quick" means "LIVING." The Lord Jesus Christ Himself said, "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are _____" (John 6:63). Peter, who was sometimes confused about spiritual things, knew one thing very well: "Thou hast the words of _____" (John 6:68). In fact, the Bible is even called "the Word of _____" (Philippians 2:16). Has your life been changed and transformed by the living Word of the living God? If the Bible is really different, then it ought to make you different! If you have not experienced a changed and changing life, don't blame the Bible, blame yourself! If you really want God's Word to work in you, WHAT MUST YOU DO? See 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

For another study on the infallibility of the Word of God, see our paper entitled *The Bible, How Firm a Foundation!*

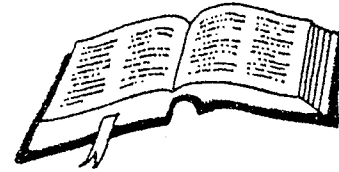
The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you.

It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here Paradise is restored, Heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good the design, and the glory of God its end.

It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be opened at the judgment, and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.

THY WORD IS TRUTH!

(John 17:17)



"Scripture does not depend for its truth upon man's belief. It is true whether he believes it or not. Blessed forever is the man who believes; doomed forever is the man who refuses to believe, but the Word of God is settled in heaven, and it is to be received on its own authority, apart from all human thoughts for or against it."

*Prevent TRUTH DECAY; read your Bible every day!
You can't break God's promises by leaning upon them!*

The Absolute Truthfulness of God's Word

Augustine: "I have learned to yield such absolute respect and honor to the canonical books of Scripture, that I most firmly believe that the authors thereof were completely free from any error."

Martin Luther: "The Scriptures have never erred. The Scriptures cannot err."

John Wesley: "If there be any mistakes in the Bible there may as well be a thousand. If there be one falsehood in that Book it did not come from the God of truth."

Charles Spurgeon: "Come, search, ye critics and find a flaw; examine it from Genesis to Revelation and find an error. This is a vein of pure gold."

J.M. Frost (founder and first Executive Secretary of the S.S. Board of the Southern Baptist Convention): "We accept the Scriptures as an all-sufficient and infallible rule of faith and practice, and insist upon the absolute inerrancy and sole authority of the Word of God. We recognize at this point no room for division, either of practice or belief, or even sentiment. More and more we must come to feel as the deepest and mightiest power of our conviction that a 'thus saith the LORD' is the end of all controversy."

The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Thy Word is truth" (John 17:17). The example of Jesus regarding the inerrant Scriptures has been followed by faithful men through the ages. Those who come after them must not forsake their Godly heritage. The Bible stands!

God means what He says and says what He means!

GOD SAID IT! I BELIEVE IT! THAT SETTLES IT!


TODAY AS ALWAYS



Psalm 19:7-11


The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

This is supplemental material about the Bible, its inspiration and its absolutely trustworthiness.
We hope that this additional material might be helpful.



The Bible--How Firm A Foundation!!

"Thy Word is truth"--John 17:17
 The Scriptures cannot be broken"--John 10:35
 "The Scriptures must be fulfilled"--Mark 14:49
 "All things must be fulfilled which were written..."--Luke 24:44
 "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words shall never pass away"--Matthew 24:35



The following are TERMS you should UNDERSTAND. They relate to the perfect inspiration, absolute truthfulness and complete trustworthiness of the Bible.

1. **INERRANT**--free from error *of any kind* (including historical, chronological, genealogical and scientific error), no errors, totally and completely exempt from errors, absolutely true, no mistakes, no flaws, no contradictions, no discrepancies, no inconsistencies, no inaccuracies, no disagreements, no imperfections, no defects, no deceptions, no blunders, no lies (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18), no falsity, no misconceptions, no false impressions, the **TRUTH, the whole TRUTH, and nothing but the TRUTH** (John 17:17; Psalm 119:160).

2. **INFALLIBLE**--not liable to error (hence a synonym for inerrant); incapable of being wrong or mistaken or inaccurate or misleading; absolutely trustworthy and sure. The term is sometimes used of persons. For example, it has been claimed by some that the Pope is infallible. No POPE or PRIEST or PASTOR or PERSON is infallible, but God is infallible and thus His Word is infallible (John 10:35). People may err, but not the Bible (Matthew 22:29).

3. **AUTHORITATIVE**--the Bible has absolute authority (power, dominion, rule, control) over me so that I must bow before the authority of the Word (Isa. 66:2; Ezra 9:4; 1 Sam. 3:9-10) without doubting it, debating it, questioning it (Gen. 3:1), contradicting it (Gen. 3:4), disbelieving it, changing it, redefining it, adding to it, subtracting from it (Rev. 22:18-19); or objecting to it ("but look what science says," "but that's old fashioned," "but I don't like that verse"). The Serpent (Devil) wants people to think that YOU CAN'T BE SURE (convinced, confident, positive, certain, settled, dogmatic, decided) ABOUT WHAT GOD SAYS. This is why the unsaved give the constant objection, "BUT THAT'S JUST YOUR INTERPRETATION." The believer who submits to the authority of the written Word can **KNOW** the certainty and assurance of "THUS SAITH THE LORD!" "THE MOUTH OF THE LORD HATH SPOKEN IT!" "GOD HATH SAID!" (compare Genesis 3:1).

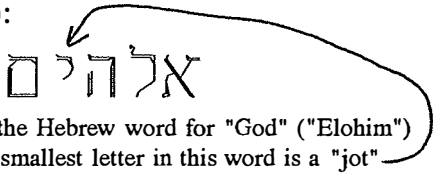
4. **INSPIRED**--the word is defined in 2 Timothy 3:16. The Greek word is theopneustos which literally means "GOD-BREATHED." To say that "all Scripture is God-breathed" is to say that all Scripture is breathed out from the mouth of God, as if God were actually speaking the very words. [Technically it might be more correct to speak of "expiration" rather than "inspiration."] Thus, in Psalm 33:6, according to Hebrew parallelism, the expression "the breath of His mouth" is equivalent to the expression "the Word of the Lord." Whenever we speak, we are breathing out words. To say that we are breathing out words is another way of saying that we are speaking. The Bible is GOD SPEAKING! God has breathed out the Scriptures and the whole Bible is from the MOUTH OF GOD! All Scripture is God's Word. After every verse in the Bible we could rightly say, "THE MOUTH OF THE LORD HATH SPOKEN IT!" Thus, to say that there are errors in the Bible is to say that God has ERRED in what *HE HAS SAID*. How blasphemous!

5. **PLENARY INSPIRATION**--the Bible is *fully and completely* inspired (2 Tim. 3:16--"**ALL** Scripture"), not just some parts (or the parts you like best). This would include Genesis chapters 1-11, the historical sections, the numerical listings, the chronological details, the genealogies and every other part of the Bible. It is totally erroneous to say that only "revelational" Scripture is without error. "Revelational" Scripture is said to be that which gives the message of salvation (that which makes a person "wise unto salvation") and instruction for living--the teaching or doctrine of the Bible and all that relates to matters of faith and practice. But 2 Timothy 3:16-17 declares that "ALL SCRIPTURE...is profitable for doctrine (teaching)." In other

words, this passage teaches that the entire Bible relates to matters of faith and practice—that's why God gave it. Thus, all Scripture is "revelational" and all Scripture must be inerrant. Let no man dare to decide which parts of the Bible are true! What folly for a mere man to choose what parts he will accept and what parts he will reject! How wise is that man who gladly receives ALL the Bible as God's truth!

6. **VERBAL INSPIRATION**--Even the very WORDS (not just the ideas) are inspired (Psalm 12:6; Prov. 30:6), as recorded in the original manuscripts (autographs) as penned by the Bible writers. Though we do not possess the original copies of Scripture, the manuscripts which we do have are of such quality and completeness and abundance that we can know with great accuracy what the original text of Scripture said.

7. **JOT AND TITTLE INSPIRATION**--A jot is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet and a tittle is a tiny mark which enables one to distinguish between two Hebrew letters which look very similar (see below):



This is the Hebrew word for "God" ("Elohim") and the smallest letter in this word is a "jot"

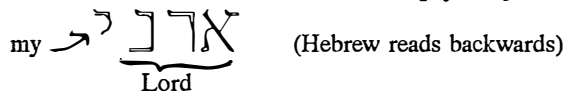


Three examples of a "tittle"

Every jot and tittle is inspired and will be fulfilled (Matthew 5:18; Luke 16:17). Or as we might say in English, every dotting of the "i" and crossing of the "t" is important in God's Word. Thus, inspiration extends even to the smallest details of the sacred text as originally given when "Holy men of God spoke (and wrote) as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

Some examples of the importance of "jot and tittle" inspiration:

1) In Matthew 22:44 Christ's masterful argument is based on the fact that David said, "MY Lord." This observation prepared the way for the unanswered question, "How can David's Son be David's Lord?" [This perplexing question finds its answer in Romans 1:3-4]. It is interesting to note that the word "MY" in Psalm 110:1 is not a separate word in the Hebrew. It is simply a "jot" added to the end of the word "Lord" as a suffix:



Thus we see that one little "jot" is very important. Our Lord's argument hinged on it.

2) In Galatians 3:16 Paul's argument rests upon the difference between singular and plural. The one letter "s" is very important!

3) How did the writer of Hebrews know that Abraham believed that God would raise Isaac from the dead (Heb. 11:17-19)? The key is found in Genesis 22:5 where Abraham said, "WE will come again to you" (or to paraphrase: "even though I am going to sacrifice Isaac, we both will return alive"). The difference between "we will come" and "I will come" (which would have suggested that Abraham would return alone) in Hebrew is one letter:



4) In Matthew 22:32 our Lord's argument rests on the fact that God said, "I am the God of Abraham" and not "I was the God of Abraham" (cf. Exodus 3:6). Here the overall context of the passage and even the TENSE OF THE VERB is highly significant in our Lord's skillful argument.

Thus, those who have a correct understanding of "jot and tittle" inspiration will study their Bibles in such a way as to give much attention to the details of the text (the tense of the verb, the personal pronouns used, the difference between plural and singular, the little words that we often overlook, and even the very letters that make up the words). "**FOREVER, O LORD, THY WORD IS SETTLED IN HEAVEN**" (Psalm 119:89)!