

BASED ON

The
JESUS
BOOK

READING AND UNDERSTANDING
THE BIBLE FOR YOURSELF

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What is the Bible?

- The Bible is one unified story of God's work in the world, which centers on Jesus.
- John 20:30–31; Hebrews 1:1–3; and Philippians 3:8–11
- The Bible is the story of God – Father, Son, Holy Spirit – and His covenant relationship with humanity.

What is the Bible?

- As the saying goes, it's not history; it's His Story (p. 13).
- The overall, big-picture story of God's relationship with humanity is like a romance:
- The characters fall in love (God's love for us); they break up (the Fall); and then they get back together (redemption in Jesus) (p. 120).

What is the Bible?

- The climax of that story is our redemption in Jesus.
- Everything before it leads up to that point and everything after it applies it to our lives, showing us what it looks like to live in that reality.
- Jack Graham: “The Bible is the Jesus Book. He is the point of the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments. All of Scripture is about Him and centers on Him” (p. 13).

What is the Bible?

- The Bible is “The Jesus Book” because the Scripture is God’s written Word.
- Jesus is God’s Word incarnate – God’s Word made flesh, God’s living Word (John 1:14).
- The whole purpose of Scripture is for people to come to know Jesus.

What is the Bible?

- The Old Testament points ahead to Christ.
- When Jesus explained the Scriptures to the disciples on the road to Emmaus after His Resurrection, He started with Genesis and went all the way through the Old Testament, explaining to them how what was said in the Old Testament Scriptures was about Him (Luke 24:25–27).

What is the Bible?

- The Bible is one continuous story, written over a 1,500-year period covering more than 40 human generations, written by more than 40 human authors from every walk of life, in a host of different places on three continents, in three different languages, covering many different subjects, written in many different genres, and including many different literary forms (p. 31–32).
- And yet it tells one story.

What is the Bible?

- The purpose of reading the Bible is to come to know Jesus, so we can be saved (John 20:30–31). But it's not just about salvation or eternal life; it's also about knowing Jesus so we can walk with Him in this life, as His disciple.
- God's ways are not like our ways and His thoughts are not like our thoughts; they are so much higher than ours, as the heavens are higher than the earth (Isaiah 55:8–11).

What is the Bible?

- Scripture is God's way of reaching into our world and communicating His ways with us. In Scripture, repeatedly throughout human history, God has met us, humanity, where we were, spoken our language, and revealed Himself to us.
- Then in Jesus, God came down to our world and became one of us, so we could see in Jesus what He is like (John 1:1–14; Hebrews 1:1–3) (p. 34).

What is the Bible?

- The purpose of the Bible is to know Christ, which Paul said was worth losing everything else in life.
- He considered everything else – all his material possessions, all his accomplishments – to be garbage compared to knowing Jesus (Philippians 3:8–11).
- The only thing that matters is knowing Jesus.

What is the Bible?

- It is through Jesus that we can know the Father, through the Spirit that we can have fellowship with the triune God – Father, Son, Holy Spirit (John 14:6; Ephesians 2:18; 1 John 1:5–10).
- This is why in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said not everyone who calls Him Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of His Father.

What is the Bible?

- He was saying that those who really know Jesus will live by His ways, not just “call Him Lord,” giving Him lip service.
- Knowing Jesus isn’t just about eternal salvation; it’s about the way we live in the here and now.
- Not because our works earn us salvation but because when we live in fellowship with Jesus, we will walk in His ways. We will do the will of His Father.

Inspired Word of God

- We can trust the Bible because it is the inspired, infallible Word of God.
- Psalm 12:6; 1 Corinthians 2:9–13; 2 Timothy 3:16; and 2 Peter 1:20–21
- We can trust the Bible because it is the Word of God, not just a book people wrote about God but written by God through people.

Inspired Word of God

- Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16 that the Bible is “God-breathed” (NIV) or “breathed out by God” (ESV).
- This is a compound word (God + breathed) that is found only here in Scripture.
- Paul had to create a new word to describe the uniqueness of the Bible.

Inspired Word of God

- The word for “breath” can also mean “wind” or “spirit” and is the word the Bible uses for the Holy Spirit. Just as God breathed life into Adam at creation, so He breathed life into Scripture by His Spirit.
- Peter said prophecy of Scripture did not come from man’s own interpretation, but “men spoke from God as they were being carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21).

Inspired Word of God

- It's God's Spirit that makes the Bible authoritative, not any authority of the human authors.
- We don't believe everything ever written by Paul or Jeremiah or James was God's Word, just the books we have in the Bible.
- The writing of the biblical books was a unique supernatural process unlike any other book in history.

Inspired Word of God

- Critics of the Bible question the reliability of the text, but we have exponentially more original copies of the New Testament than any other ancient document – 5,664 in the Greek.
- For comparison, we only have 643 copies of Homer, five of Aristotle, and seven of Plato, but no one doubts their reliability.

Inspired Word of God

- Across all those copies of the New Testament, there are only a few minor discrepancies, none of which is theologically significant.
- The manuscripts of the Bible are shockingly reliable, because those who copied them knew they were performing a sacred task and the Holy Spirit guided and protected the entire process (pp. 24–25).

Inspired Word of God

- Psalm 12 says the words of the Lord are pure, like silver refined seven times, the ancient number of completion or wholeness. Silver may have to be refined more than seven times to be totally purified, but this was a poetic way to say it was perfect.
- Theologians use the words *infallible* and *inerrant* to tell us that everything the Bible says is true; it has no errors.

Inspired Word of God

- God reveals Himself to us, in part, through “general revelation”; the beauty and order of creation and the morality of the human conscience show us that there is a Creator God and a standard of right and wrong.
- But the details of who God is and how He interacts with His people can only be understood by “special revelation,” what He reveals to us through His written Word, His Word incarnate (Jesus), and by His Spirit.

Inspired Word of God

- Paul said God has revealed to us by His Spirit things no human mind can conceive, things we could never know apart from divine revelation (1 Corinthians 2:9–10).
- His Spirit also explains His Word to us as we read it, “explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words,” (NIV) making reading the Bible a supernatural experience for all those who have the Spirit within them (Proverbs 1:23; John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 2:6–16).

Inspired Word of God

- The Bible is authoritative. Submit yourself to it without reservation. Come with questions but stay until you allow God to answer them. Trust God to reveal His unique voice to you through His Word (John 7:17).
- The Bible is authentic. Remember that if God inspired the Bible, then He inspired all of it, so any part can speak to you. Each time you engage with the Bible, ask God to show you what He would like for you to learn.

Inspired Word of God

- The Bible is accurate. If Jesus Christ trusted in the accuracy of all that is written in the Bible, you can rest assured that the Bible can withstand your scrutiny.
- Strive to be like the Bereans who studied the Scripture daily to verify the accuracy of what the apostle Paul was teaching them (Acts 17:11).

Scripture Transforms People

- Scripture transforms people by the Holy Spirit.
 - Hebrews 4:12 and Psalm 19:7–11
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- The Bible is not just any book; it is living and active (Hebrews 4:12).
- God's Spirit is working and moving in His Word in a way that makes it alive.

Scripture Transforms People

- Not just words on page but an interactive supernatural experience that makes an impact on our minds, our hearts and our lives. Because the Word of God is alive, we can have a fresh encounter with it every time.
- Though God's Word never changes, each time we read it, we are in a different place than we were before, and God's Spirit can meet us where we are with the truth of His Word in a different way.

Scripture Transforms People

- Dr. Graham: “Unlike any other book, those who embrace, consume and surrender to the Word of God will be changed; they will be utterly transformed” (p. 42).
- Hebrews tells us that the Word of God pierces deep into our hearts, so deep that it even divides soul and spirit, joint and marrow (Hebrews 4:12).
- It is like a surgical knife, cutting open our own hearts.

Scripture Transforms People

- The parable of the sower (Matthew 13) teaches us that the Word of God is like a seed; it can produce fruit when it is planted in good soil, watered, and fertilized.
- God's Word can transform our lives, but we must water it and fertilize it.
- This means spending time in God's Word, in prayer, in meditation, in study.

Scripture Transforms People

- Time spent in God's Word will change your heart, aligning it with His heart and His will for our lives. How does God's Word transform us? Psalm 19:7–11 lists six ways:
- It revives the soul. This isn't just talking about the long-term resurrection of the soul to eternal life but the way God's Word revives our souls every day. It gives our souls nourishment, our daily spiritual bread. It brings our souls life, peace and joy.

Scripture Transforms People

- It makes wise the simple. God's Word brings wisdom to all of us; this is a supernatural process empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- The more we study God's Word, the more we get it into our heart and our head, the more we will think like Christ. The more we think like Christ, the more we will act like Christ.

Scripture Transforms People

- It rejoices the heart. In the Bible, the “heart” isn’t just the emotions; it’s the whole inner person. When you know God’s Word, you can find deep joy in your inner person no matter what mess is happening on the outside.
- Because your mind becomes increasingly aligned with God’s will, you can see His plan and His purposes in your suffering. You can trust He is working for your good. You can consider it all joy (James 1:2–4).

Scripture Transforms People

- It enlightens the eyes. The Bible transforms our vision. It helps us to see things the way God sees them. God's Word is a light and a clear direction amid the darkness. True wisdom is seeing things from God's perspective.
- It endures forever. The Bible transforms our future. In a world where everything is changing, God's Word is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

Scripture Transforms People

- It is righteous altogether. The Bible will transform our behavior. When we trust in God's Word, we will put it into practice (Matthew 7:24–27). We will live by His ways and follow His commandments, not out of obligation or guilt but because we believe it's the best way to live.
- When we are not only hearers of the Word but doers of the Word, our lives will change, and the world will change, too.

Scripture Transforms People

- Dr. Graham: “We discover in the Bible that we aren’t who we think we are or what the world says we are, but we are who God says we are (Psalm 145:13–14, 17).
- When you begin your day with God and His Word – praying, meditating, and worshiping Him – it changes everything, including how you live your day.” (p. 61).

Resources

