

## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The Holy Bible is literally the best selling book in the world. The word “bible” simply means books, so the Bible is a collection of 66 separate books written by forty authors over a period of about 2000 years. There are 39 books in the Old Testament (covenant) and 27 books in the New Testament (covenant). The contents of the Bible includes God’s Law, the Torah (first five books of the Bible); the history of God’s people, wisdom literature, psalms, and prophecy.

But the Bible is more than a collection of books; it is Holy, Divinely Inspired and called the Word of God. It was written by human authors, but it is definitely God breathed and inspired. Many have tried to say the Bible is merely a book of philosophy, only good teachings, and mostly the opinions of man. As you read your Bible you will soon discover it is so much more. It contains the very oracles of God, carefully crafted to give us everything we need to know about Him, His love, His Kingdom, His power, His salvation, His mercy and His eternal glory. From the creation of the world, through the fall and the entire plan of redemption, the Bible records it all.

### The Bible is God Breathed

The testimony of scripture it’s self is that it is “God breathed”. *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:16-17)* (NIV). Other translations like the NKJ and NAS say scripture is inspired by God. But the point is clear. This book is not of this world. It came from God into this world through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit working through individuals.

### The Bible is Supernatural

One of the amazing things about the Bible is that it writes history in advance. Did you know there are over 44 different prophesies written about Jesus hundreds of years before they came to pass.

- *Micah 5:2* tell us Jesus would be born in Bethlehem;
- *Isaiah 7:14* tells us Jesus would be born of a virgin;
- *Psalms 78:2-4* – tells us Jesus would speak in parables;
- *Isaiah 53:3* – tells us Jesus would be rejected by his own people;
- *Zechariah 9:9* – tells us Jesus would ride into Jerusalem triumphantly on a donkey;
- *Psalms 41:9* – tells us Jesus would be betrayed by a close friend.

As amazing as these prophecies are, there are still a large number of prophecies regarding the return of Christ that have yet to be fulfilled. We know there will be a period of tribulation, there will be an antichrist, there will be a great falling away, and there will be a huge upheaval in the natural order and a great out pouring of the Holy Spirit on the church.

### **The Bible is Eternal**

It is interesting to note that Jesus quoted a great deal from the Old Testament. He quoted from the Genesis, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Psalms, Jonah and many other places. What was written in ages past was being quoted by Jesus validating their authority. Jesus addresses the issue of divorce by quoting Genesis; Jesus chastised the Pharisees quoting from Isaiah He replied, "*Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me*". (Mark 7:6). Jesus also redefined the Law of Moses in the Sermon on the Mount. Paul made extensive use of the Old Testament as he wrote his Epistles, and Peter made references as well. The point is, scriptures that were written centuries ago are relevant for us today.

*The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever. (Is 40)*

*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. (Matthew 5:17-18)*

*Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. (Matt 24:25)*

### **The Bible Produces Faith**

*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Rom 10:17)* From this short passage in Romans we learn a great deal about the Bible. The Word of God produces faith in people. When we hear God's Word (the Bible) read, taught and proclaimed it produces faith. One of the great benefits of spending time in the Bible is that it yields a greater knowledge and understanding within us which in turn grows our faith. And God loves faith. In fact He tells us in Hebrews: "*And without faith it is impossible to please God.*" (Heb 11:6).

### **The Bible is Our Daily Bread**

Jesus equated the Word of God (the Bible) with food. It is absolutely necessary for us to eat if we are going to survive so we feed the body "daily". Just as food is essential for the body, so it is that the Word

of God is essential to feeding the spirit. Jesus said it this way, *“It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Matt 4:4)*. It is absolutely critical for the Christian to feed daily on the Bible. We must read it to renew our minds (*Rom 12:1-4*) and become strong in the faith. When we fail to feed our physical bodies we wither and atrophy. If we do not feed on God’s Word daily the same thing will happen to our spirits. We will become dull of hearing, and our hearts will grow cold toward the faith.

### **The Bible Penetrates the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart**

One of the amazing things about the Bible is how it penetrates our hearts. Because it is the “truth” it is powerful. It exposes us like no other book known to man. The Bible has the ability to cut to the heart and deal with all our justifications, false motives, selfishness, pride, seeking the praises of others, lust, greed, and all our sins. It is without a doubt a most painful book when it comes to speaking the truth.

*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. (Heb 4:12-13)*

This passage tells us that God’s word is powerful, it is living, it is sharp and it can discern the thought and the intents of our hearts. As we read God’s word it reveals our thoughts, our motivations and exposes us to God’s truth.

### **The Bible is Truth and Light**

Christianity is founded on the truth that is contained in the Bible. Jesus himself declared that He alone was the Way, the Truth and the Life (*John 14:6*) and that no one could come to the Father except through Him. Jesus came to bring us the truth and set us free from all the lies of the enemy. (*John 8:32*)

The Old Testament bore witness of Jesus and wrote of Him: *You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, (John 5:39)* And again: *If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. (John 5:46)* The Bible points to Jesus and in the New Testament Jesus is revealed as the eternal Son of God. His word gives life, light, truth, freedom and deliverance.

## CONCLUSION

There is much more we could say about God's Holy Word. In this study you will be introduced to some very practical insights as to how best to *Handle the Word of God*. This study is designed to help you study your Bible as a life long journey.

May the Lord bless you in this study.

Alan W. Hansen  
President and CEO  
ACTS 29 Ministries  
Atlanta, Georgia