

BIBLE 316

What is the Bible?

What is the Bible? It is God speaking to you. It is not only about God. It is from God. It is more than inspiring. It is inspired (God-breathed). Read it. Listen to it. Think about it. Learn from it. Apply it to your life. The Apostle Peter wrote, *"Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,"* 1 Peter 2:2.

What makes the Bible unique? Its 66 books were written in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) by over forty men over a period of about 1,600 years with one common and consistent theme written throughout the centuries. The New Testament has been authenticated through over 5,000 ancient full or partial manuscripts. The Bible's accuracy has been verified in its fulfilled prophecy, through modern archeological discoveries, in geographical accuracy, and in the timeless wisdom of the Proverbs. The Bible is the most important and influential book ever written. No other book has had more copies printed, been more widely distributed, been translated into more languages, powerfully changed more lives, and endured for so many centuries. The Bible is the one ultimate authority in what we should believe and for how we should live. The Bible stands alone high above all other books.

What are the characteristics of the Bible?

The Bible is God-breathed. *"All Scripture is inspired by God,"* 2 Timothy 3:16.

The Bible is true. Jesus prayed, *"Sanctify them in the truth, Your word is truth,"* John 17:17.

The Bible is accurate to the finest details. Jesus said, *"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law until all is accomplished,"* Matthew 5:18. The accuracy of the original manuscripts has been maintained so that today's best word-for-word translations are over 99% accurate.

The Bible is pure. *"The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times,"* Psalm 12:6.

The Bible is eternal. *"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever,"* Isaiah 40:8. The Bible is as relevant today as when it was first written.

The Bible is powerful. Hebrews 4:12, *"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."*

What personal benefits come from the Bible?

The Bible equips us. *"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work,"* 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

The Bible helps us not sin. Psalm 119:9, 11 tell us how to make that happen. *"How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word"* and *"Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You."*

The Bible gives us guidance for today (our next step) and direction for our future (the path to follow). *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path,"* Psalm 119:105.

The Bible gives wisdom. *"The unfolding of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple,"* Psalm 119:130. Timeless wisdom is found in Proverbs in the Old Testament.

The Bible helps us through difficulty. Psalm 119:50 encourages us, *"This is my comfort in my affliction, that Your word has revived me."*

The Bible provides hope. *"For whatever was written in earlier times [referring to the Old Testament] was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope,"* Romans 15:4.

The Bible gives peace. Psalm 119:165 promises, *"Those who love Your law have great peace, and nothing causes them to stumble."*

The Bible brings joy. Jeremiah 15:16 gives an example, *"Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Your name."*

How should someone read or listen to the Bible? Examine more than one verse. Consider the four purposes of *"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness,"* 2 Timothy 3:16. As you read or listen, ask these four questions. What does this teach me? How does this reprove me? What corrections do I need to make? How does this train me to be more righteous?

What if I don't have a Bible? Make every effort possible to purchase a good translation of the Bible. If you cannot buy one, many are available for free online reading or listening. Consider buying a Bible with a friend or friends and sharing it. Or ask your church or fellow believers to have one person read a Bible to the group and listen intently. *"Blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it [obey and conform to it],"* Luke 11:28.

What are some special verses for Bible teachers and leaders? Be a disciple of Jesus abiding (living) in the Word. *"So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, 'If you continue [abide] in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine,'"* John 8:31. Study the Bible to be approved. *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth,"* 2 Timothy 2:15.

Why is the Bible eternally important? The Apostle John explained his purpose in writing his Gospel. That purpose can be applied to all the Bible. *"Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name,"* John 20:30-31. How do you believe in Jesus and have eternal life? Find out how at www.Gospel316.org.

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