

BASIC BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

3. THE BIBLE

Text: 2 Timothy 3:16;
Psalm 119:89, 105:130;
2 Peter 1:20-21.

What some great men said about the BIBLE

1. **Abraham Lincoln:** I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Saviour of the world is communicated to us through this book.
2. **George Washington:** It is impossible to rightly govern the world without GOD and the BIBLE.
3. **Charles Dickens:** The New Testament is the very best book that ever was or will ever be known in the world.
4. **Sir Isaac Newton:** There are more sure marks of authenticity in the BIBLE than any other profane history.
5. **Sir Winston Churchill:** “**The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture**”. We rejected with scorn all those learned and laboured myths that Moses was but a legendary figure. We believe that the most scientific view, the most-up-to-date and rationalistic conception, will find its fullest satisfaction in taking the Bible literally and in identifying one of the greatest human beings with the most decisive leap forward ever made discernible in the human story.

We may be sure that all these things happened just as they are set out according to Holy Writ. The Impressions these people received were faithfully recorded and have been transmitted across the centuries with far more accuracy than many of the telegraphed accounts of goings-on today.

CONTENTS OF THE BIBLE

OLD TESTAMENT - 39 BOOKS

I HISTORICAL BOOKS - “Rise and Fall of the Jewish Nation”

1. Genesis (Book of Beginnings)
2. Exodus (Departure of the Israelites out of Egypt)
3. Leviticus (Religious life of Israel under the priests)
4. Numbers (Numbering of the Israelites in their wilderness wanderings)
5. Deuteronomy (The Second Giving of the Law)
6. Joshua (Conquest of the Promised Land under Joshua)
7. Judges (The Nation under the Judges)
8. Ruth (Of Royal lineage)
9. 1 Samuel (Israel under the kings)
10. 2 Samuel (Israel under the kings)

11. 1 Kings (Israel under the kings)
12. 2 Kings (Israel under the kings)
13. 1 Chronicles (A historical record of the Jews)
14. 2 Chronicles (A historical record of the Jews)
15. Ezra (The Jews in captivity)
16. Nehemiah (Rebuilding the City Walls)
17. Esther (God's hand in the Nation's affairs)

II. POETICAL BOOKS - "Literature of the Nation's Golden Age"

18. Job (Afflictions of a righteous man)
19. Psalms (Songs of the Jews, for worship)
20. Proverbs (The Wise Sayings of King Solomon)
21. Ecclesiastes (The Preacher reflects on life's problems)
22. Song of Solomon (Song of Supreme Excellence)

III. PROPHETIC BOOKS - "Literature of Dark Days"

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|-----|--------------|---|----------------|
| 23. | Isaiah |) | |
| 24. | Jeremiah |) | |
| 25. | Lamentations |) | Major Prophets |
| 26. | Ezekiel |) | |
| 27. | Daniel |) | |
| | | | |
| 28. | Hosea |) | |
| 29. | Joel |) | |
| 30. | Amos |) | |
| 31. | Obadiah |) | |
| 32. | Jonah |) | Minor Prophets |
| 33. | Micah |) | |
| 34. | Nahum |) | |
| 35. | Habakkuk |) | |
| 36. | Zephaniah |) | |
| 37. | Haggai |) | |
| 38. | Zechariah |) | |
| 39. | Malachi |) | |

NEW TESTAMENT - 27 books

IV. GOSPEL - "Good News of the King and Kingdom"

1. Matthew
2. Mark
3. Luke
4. John

V. ACTS - "Thy Kingdom Come"

5. Acts of the Apostles

VI. EPISTLES - "Further Teachings and Principles of the Kingdom"

6. Romans
7. 1 Corinthians
8. 2 Corinthians
9. Galatians

10. Ephesians
11. Philippians
12. Colossians
13. 1 Thessalonians
14. 2 Thessalonians
15. 1 Timothy
16. 2 Timothy
17. Titus
18. Philemon
19. Hebrews
20. James
21. 1 Peter
22. 2 Peter
23. 1 John
24. 2 John
25. 3 John
26. Jude

VII **REVELATION** – “Things that must shortly come to pass”.

27. Revelation

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

The BIBLE is **GOD’S WORD**.

The BIBLE is the account of GOD’S dealings with man, from the beginning until the end of all things. It tells of man’s **creation, fall and redemption**. It reveals GOD’S **PLAN** of SALVATION for man. It reveals **GOD’S WILL** for you and me.

The Old Testament message is: The Saviour is coming! The New Testament says: The Saviour is come! Both Testaments say: The Saviour is coming again!

The BIBLE has the solution to all the world’s complex and insoluble problems. It has the solution to your problems – every one of them.

The BIBLE IS THE WORD OF EVERLASTING LIFE.

HOW DID THE BIBLE COME TO BE WRITTEN?

THE AUTHOR WAS GOD HIMSELF

While human agents were responsible for the actual writing of the books of the BIBLE, the **AUTHOR** or **MASTER MIND** of the **BOOK** is **GOD HIMSELF**.

Let GOD’S WORD state the case:

“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**” (2 Peter 1:21).

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God ...” (2 Timothy 3:16).

In the writing of the book of REVELATION, the **LORD JESUS** addressed the Apostle John with these words: “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter” (Revelation 1:19).

What grounds are there for saying that the Author of the BIBLE was GOD HIMSELF? A good question! Let us give a reasonable answer.

The BIBLE has 66 BOOKS.

Written by some 40 men,
in many different walks of life
over 60 generations and 1,600 years

in widely separated areas
on 3 continents (Asia, Africa, Europe),
in 3 languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek).

Yet when the 66 Books are put together as the HOLY BIBLE, they form **one harmonious volume**, telling forth one story: **GOD’S LOVE FOR SINFUL MAN**. There is just one theme from beginning to end, with no self-contradictory or conflicting areas. **ONLY ONE HARMONIOUS BOOK – A DIVINE BOOK!**

How could this be, except for this one fact: behind the many scribes was **ONE AUTHOR, GOD**.

Therefore, throughout the Bible, “Thus saith the Lord ...” recurs again and again.

Then by way of contrast, let us consider this proposition. Supposing we were to call on 10 eminent writers in our generation, all from one walk of life, in one place, at one time, and in one language, to write independently on some controversial subject, what do you think would be the result?

Do you think there would be agreement and harmony when the ten essays or books are massed together? The result will very likely, be a conglomeration of differing and conflicting views. We may call it a sort of literary hotchpotch.

Considering then the manner in which the BIBLE came to be written, there can be no other explanation than this: **THE AUTHOR WAS GOD HIMSELF**.

OBJECTIONS TO THE BIBLE

Until some 200 years ago, the BIBLE was accepted without question as **GOD’S INFALLIBLE WORD**. Since that time, however, theologians and seminary professors began to cast doubts about certain parts of the BIBLE, in particular, those recorded accounts of miracles and supernatural events e.g. the Creation, the Flood, the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites, the fall of Jericho in Old Testament, and the miracles of Jesus, the Resurrection and the Ascension in the New Testament.

Whereas formerly the BIBLE was accepted in total as **GOD’S WORD**, now the modern scholars and critics said that the BIBLE “contains **GOD’S WORD**”, thereby injecting doubt and implying that the BIBLE also contained other things besides **GOD’S WORD**.

Scholars of the modernist-liberal school maintained that large sections of the BIBLE were “myths” and “legends”, while other parts which could not be reconciled with modern scientific knowledge were regarded as mistakes.

We shall not go into too many of these objections to the Bible, but we shall just consider a few of the more common ones.

1. **“The Bible is out-of-date”**

This implies that the BIBLE is **behind the times** and probably **irrelevant** for modern man.

To this objection we answer thus: GOD’S WORD may be “old” – the BIBLE dates back twenty to thirty centuries. However, GOD’S WORD does not grow old. It remains always fresh, relevant and up-to-date. The BIBLE has the solution to every human problem, now or 3,000 years ago.

Whereas textbooks, especially those of scientific subject, become outdated, and useless after only a few years (unless they undergo periodic revision) **the BIBLE remains the same** - unchanged and unchanging from the beginning until now – **ONE EDITION ONLY.**

To say that the BIBLE is out-of-date only betrays one’s **ignorance and unbelief.**

2. **“The BIBLE contains many mistakes”**

This is a serious charge and if substantiated must mean the down fall of the BIBLE. It can then no longer be regarded as the WORD OF GOD. Let us examine the statement.

What **“mistakes”** do the critics mean? To label those part which conflict with “scientific opinion” as “mistake” is not quite fair or correct. **Scientific** opinion is constantly **changing** and scientific knowledge is **strictly limited.** While science can study, observe and measure **present day physical phenomena,** it has no way of applying the same methods to events which happened a long time ago, or to events of the **spiritual or supernatural realm.**

Some forty years ago, Harry Rimmer of New York offered a substantial monetary reward to anyone who could prove in a court of law that there was any mistake in the BIBLE. He engaged a Christian lawyer James E Bennett to defend his case. When the reward was announced in the newspaper, many enemies of the BIBLE lodged their claims. Their cases were heard before a judge in the law courts.

Despite many varied charges and attacks on GOD’S WORD, not one person could prove that there was even one mistake in the BIBLE. **Nobody got the reward!**

While men’s opinions and scientific speculations keep changing, like ocean tides and currents, the BIBLE stands through every age, **FIRM and UNMOVED,** like the **ROCK OF GIBRALTAR.**

“For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven” (Psalm 119:89).

3. “The BIBLE is unscientific”

While the BIBLE is not a textbook of science (It was not meant to be such), no such statement of the BIBLE relating to any scientific topic has ever been found to be in error.

On the contrary, the BIBLE revealed many scientific facts centuries before scientists discovered them. Here are a few examples.

- a) Until the invention of the telescope in the 17th Century, astronomers used to count the stars (Ptolemy counted 1056, Kepler counter 1005).

Over 2,000 years before, the BIBLE has pronounced: “The host of heaven cannot be numbered” (Jeremiah 33:22).

- b) Ancient men had no knowledge of **what supported the earth**. The Greeks used to imagine that the world was held up by the strong man “Atlas”. The Indians pictured the earth being supported by four elephants.

A long time ago (over 3,000 years) GOD’S WORD said: He **hangeth the earth upon nothing** (Job 26:7). In recent years, space explorers and satellites in orbit have given us beautiful pictures of our earth “floating” in space, hanging on nothing.

- c) Until Columbus sailed round the world in the 15th Century, men used to think that the **world was flat**.

Over 2,000 years before that, the BIBLE said of GOD: “It is he that sitteth upon the **circle** (sphere) of the earth” (Isaiah 40:22)

We could go on further in “making a case for the BIBLE” but really there is no need to do so. For many a man’s mind, once made up, is set for good, and much argument will not change it.

God says to man: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8,9).

It is a fact that those who criticise the BIBLE most are often those who know it least! If our GOD cannot work **miracles**, but is limited by physical laws like man, then HE is no GOD. But HE is the CREATOR and HIS ACTS belong to the realm of the **SUPERNATURAL AND SUPERHUMAN**.

There is no searching of His understanding. The BIBLE records for us GOD’S MIGHTY ACTS!

WHAT IS OUR B-P CHURCH’S STAND ON THE BIBLE?

Our Bible-Presbyterian Church, in its Constitution states this:

“We believe in the divine, verbal, and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent **inerrancy and infallibility**, and, as the Word of God, the **supreme and final authority in faith and life.**”

We hold the “high view” of the Holy Scripture. We do not claim to understand every part of the BOOK. There are parts which we just do not fully understand. Of these, we say “We don’t know”. Some parts may puzzle and perplex. But that does not mean the BIBLE is wrong. Only, our understanding is incomplete.

We must be humble if we want to understand GOD’S WORD, and we must also PRAY for the HOLY SPIRIT to be our TEACHER. “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law” (Psalm 119:18).

POEM ON THE BIBLE

“Within this wondrous volume lies
The mystery of mysteries;
Happiest they of human race
To whom their God has given grace
To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,
To lift the latch, to find the way;
And better had they n’er been born
Who read to doubt, or read to scorn.”

Sir Walter Scott

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

May this light shine your pathway everyday!

BIBLE KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

3. THE BIBLE

Fill in the blanks (one letter for each space)

1. The BIBLE is an account of GOD's dealings with ____ .
2. It reveals GOD's _____ of Salvation for man.
3. The BIBLE has the solution to our _____ .
4. The author of the BIBLE was ____ .
5. All Scripture is given by _____ of GOD.

Multiple choice: Underline the correct answer

6. The BIBLE
(a) contains GOD's Words (b) rarely makes mistakes
(c) is GOD's WORD
7. Those who criticise the BIBLE most are often those who
(a) love it best (b) know it least
(c) preach the Gospel
8. We believe GOD'S WORD to be
(a) infallible (b) unreliable
(c) doubtful (d) inerrant
9. The BIBLE has
(a) 44 books (b) 99 books
(c) 66 books
10. We should read the BIBLE
(a) sometimes (b) daily
(c) yearly