

*Introduction to the Bible:  
It's Value, Source, Preservation & Proper Translation*

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## **Why is the Bible so important?**

In 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul teaches four key functions of the Bible:

1. Doctrine: It teaches us what is right;
2. Reproof: It teaches us what is not right;
3. Correction: It teaches us how to "get right" with the LORD;
4. Instruction in righteousness: It teaches how to "stay right."

In Matthew 4:4, Jesus taught that we are responsible to live according to his words:

"...It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4

## **So, where did the Bible come from?**

In Revelation 1:1, John teaches that God the Father gave His words to Jesus (God the Son) and that Jesus gave them to human writers through the Holy Spirit, i.e.

Father → Son → Spirit → Men

In the book of Revelation, John documents the process:

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John (Revelation 1:1)"

## **How did men receive God's words?**

In the Old Testament, the prophet Jeremiah wrote:

"Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth." (Jeremiah 1:9)

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In the New Testament, Peter wrote:

"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)

And Paul wrote to Timothy that:

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" (2 Timothy 3:16)

**The Bible is clear that the LORD both inspired the words of Scripture – and preserved them for his people. We may know with certainty that Gods words are still available to believers today.**

In the Old Testament, the Book of Psalms teaches:

"The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. <sup>7</sup>Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever." (Psalm 12:6-7)

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus taught that even the smallest parts of His words would be preserved *in writing* for us:

"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." (Matthew 5:18)

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matthew 24:35)

In 1 Timothy 3:15 Paul teaches that local churches are God's agencies for teaching His words:

But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:15)

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**Why do we use the King James Bible?**

- The Kings James Bible is an accurate translation of the underlying Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament. It uses the Hebrew and Greek texts that have been received by God's people throughout history. These underlying texts are commonly known as the *Textus Receptus* – which simply means “received text.”
- **All of the other modern Bible translations used a different underlying Greek New Testament.** They made this decision because, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, additional Greek manuscripts were discovered. These newly-discovered manuscripts were judged to be “older and therefore better” than the words of God that have been traditionally received by God's people. Consequently, the newly-discovered manuscripts were used by academicians to produce a new version of the Greek New Testament (the so-called Wescott-Hort or Critical Text). This is the Greek that underlies all modern translations, including the New International Version (NIV), New American Standard Version (NASB), New Living Translation (NLT), The Message, New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), and the New Living Translation (NLT).
- **At Long Hill Baptist Church, we reject the notion that God could have hid his true words from his people until the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.** To do so would have made it impossible for God's people to live according to His words – *as required by Matthew 4:4*. Furthermore, the clear Biblical teaching that God promised to preserve His words obliges us to reject the idea that His true words would need to be restored by man through an academic process.
- **We also recognize the some of the modern Bible versions used an undesirable approach to Bible translation.** The so-called *dynamic equivalence* (or paraphrase) technique was used to produce many of the modern Bible translations, including the New International Version (NIV) and the New Living Translation (NLT). This approach to translation attempts to preserve the basic ideas of each scriptural passage – *without attempting to make a word-for-word translation*. While this approach produces translations that are generally easy to understand, it necessarily denies readers access to “every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” (Matt 4:4). Fortunately, our King James Bible uses a more rigorous technique – *formal equivalence*. This approach attempts to preserve the meaning of each individual word and phrase – and therefore results in a translation that is closer to the original Greek and Hebrew.

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## **How is the Bible structured?**

The 66 books of the Bible may be divided several different way. The easiest way think of the Bible is to see it's two major divisions:

**Old Testament:** 39 books of history, poetry and prophecy that predict the coming of Christ.

**New Testament:** 27 book that deal with (1) the life of Christ (the gospels), (2) the spreading of the Gospel message through missionary work and church planting (Acts), (3) a group of letters that provide instruction for living a Christian life (the epistles) and (4) teachings regarding future events (Revelation).

## **What's the Best Way to Begin Learning the Bible?**

- Recognize that the Holy Spirit helps our understanding. Pray and ask Him to help you understand God's words;
- Be baptized and join a local church. Never forget that "the house of God, ... is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Timothy 3:15)
- Attend Sunday School and worship services. Also, make every effort to attend the Wednesday night Bible Study and prayer meeting. These are our primary times for teaching and preaching the words of God.
- Get involved in one-on-one discipleship. Benefit from those who have gone before you!
- Be sure to take time to inquire about and to learn the meaning of unfamiliar words used in the King James Bible, e.g. ye, thee, thou. These aren't just "old words." Rather, they represent very precise translations of the underlying Greek and Hebrew – a level of prevision that would be nearly impossible in modern English.
- Read good books that introduce the Bible in simple, easy-to-understand language. See the Pastor for recommendations.