



**“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,”**  
II Timothy 3:16.

## **God’s Standard for Faith and Practice**

**Lesson Aim:** To encourage believers to face daily life with full assurance that the Bible is the Word of God.

**L301. Date:** September 1974. **Text:** II Peter 1:19-21; II Timothy 3:16-17.  
**Topic:** Bible: Inerrancy of; Doctrine: Study of; Faith: Of Believers.

“Doctrine” is not a dirty word. It is a delightful word instead. It comes from a stem which means “to teach.” Gradually the term came to mean “the content of that which is taught.” Bible doctrine, therefore, means that which is taught in the Holy Scriptures.

You believe doctrines and rejoice in them. Consider these three affirmations; (1) Jesus is Christ, Acts 3:18; (2) Having died, He is risen from the dead, Acts 1:22; 2:24-32; (3) Salvation is by faith in Him, Acts 2:38; 3:10. Those three statements are a summary of the doctrine concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is a blessed doctrine, is it not?

It is essential that Christians study Bible doctrines. There are many false and death-dealing doctrines abroad in the world. Those are nothing less than “doctrines of devils” which are spread abroad through the influence of “seducing spirits,” I Timothy 4:1. Such false teaching will turn many so that “they will not endure sound doctrine,” II Timothy 4:3. Like children, many will be “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine,” Ephesians 4:14. The Christian should know Bible doctrine (the truth taught in the Word of God) that he may be protected from error and that he may restore those who are in error.

How important is doctrine? It is so important that the Apostle John gave this admonition, **“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed,”**

II John 9.

The Apostle Paul added, **“If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed,”** Galatians 1:9.

Pursue the next thirteen studies of Bible doctrine with a solemn sense of stewardship. You are responsible before God both to know and to do according to Bible teachings.

## THE BIBLE

“Bible” is the term by which we designate the collection of books called the Old Testament and the New Testament. The books are considered by Christians as the depository and authoritative record of God's revelations of Himself and of His will concerning His creation.

“Bible” is from a Greek word, **“biblia,”** which means “the books.” Since early writing was done on an inner bark of the papyrus plant, called **“biblos,”** it is natural that **“biblia”** should become the word for “books.” Christians adopted the term to refer to the Old Testament and to the New Testament. Jerome called the books “the Divine Library,” for so did Christians esteem them. Gradually there came a change in the name **“biblia.”** It was no longer considered neuter plural (books) but as feminine singular (book) in form. “The Books” became “The Book” as a common designation of the Holy Bible.

Other names have been used to refer to the Bible. It was called “the Law, the Prophets, and the (holy) Writings,” Luke 24:44. Often it was called “the scriptures” (writings), Matthew 21:24. Those “sacred writings” (II Timothy 3:15) are also called “the oracles of God,” Romans 3:2. Each title applied indicates that the Bible is a unique book—the message of God to man.

The Bible was written over a time span of about sixteen hundred years. It includes the writings of forty different men: kings, statesmen, herdsmen, tax collectors, fishermen, prophets, priests, and learned men. Its pages were written from the mountains of the wilderness of Sinai, the cliffs of Arabia, the hills and hamlets of Palestine, the dungeons of Rome, and the lonely island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. It is not a jumbled collection of myths, fables, and visions; it is a living textbook of true religion.

Can you imagine another book compiled in a similar manner that has the harmony, singleness of purpose, and absence of contradiction that the Bible has? Suppose sixty-six medical books, written by forty different physicians during a period of sixteen hundred years, of various schools of medicine, were bound into a single volume. Who would dare prescribe treatment for a patient from such a book? No one! The fact underscores the

truth that the Bible is a unique Book. Its uniqueness stems from its “inspiration.”

## AN INSPIRED BIBLE

**“All scripture is given by inspiration of God . . .”** II Timothy 3:16. There is the explanation of the reason that the Bible is different from all other books.

Inspiration is “the imparting of such a degree of divine influence, assistance, or guidance as to enable the authors of several Books of Scripture to communicate religious knowledge to others, without error or mistake”—Horne. The term, “inspiration,” means “breathed-in.” As related to the Bible, it means God breathed His words into the writers. What they wrote in human language was the message of God.

The Bible was written in human language. The Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language with some brief portions in the Aramaic language. The New Testament was written in the Greek language, the common language spoken by the average man on the street. God's Word was put into man's words. The Apostle Paul declared, **“ . . . We speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual,”** I Corinthians 2:13. That is to say, the words belong to man, but the message of those words is the revelation of God.

Revelation came before inspiration. Revelation is the act of God by which He “draws back the veil” and makes known divine truths to men. Inspiration is the process by which God guided the writers of Scripture so that what they wrote was not the erroneous opinions of men but the infallible message of God.

Read your Bible with full assurance that it is God's Word. It is! **“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,”** II Peter 1:21. The Bible is divinely inspired. Its words are God's words. Its message is truth. Read both the Old Testament and the New Testament with great confidence. **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God . . .”** II Timothy 3:16.

## AN INFALLIBLE BIBLE

An inspired Bible must, of necessity, be an infallible Bible. The Bible is so inspired of the Holy Spirit of God that we speak of its “plenary verbal” inspiration. “Plenary” means “full, complete, absolute.” “Plenary

inspiration” declares that each part—book, chapter, and verse—of the Bible is equally and fully inspired. All of it is the very Word of God. “Verbal” means “word by word.” “Verbal inspiration” means the very words, not just the thoughts, are of God's choice and direction. A Bible which is marked by “plenary verbal inspiration” must, of necessity, be an infallible Book.

Psalm 111:7 declares, “. . . **All his commandments are sure.**” Jesus said of God's Word, “**Thy word is truth,**” John 17:17. The Psalmist testified, “**The law of the Lord is perfect . . .**” Psalm 19:7. What a blessed truth; rejoice in it!

To say the Bible is exempt from error does not mean any particular version is infallible. “Infallible” means 'unerring,' being incapable of error in the original writings. That is not affirmed of translations, **per se**, else the translators must be as fully inspired as were the original writers”—D. N. Jackson. Faithful men have translated the Scriptures from the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages into our English tongue. We can rest assured that there is available to us in our own language the very Word of God.

Much doubt has been raised about the reliability of the Bible. Some deny that it is the Word of God. Others declare it only “contains” the Word of God, not wholly and truly His. The multiplication of different versions in the English language has caused question by many. Have no fear! God has revealed Himself. His revelation is recorded in a holy Book called the Bible. Your Bible is a copy of that revelation. Study it. Believe it. Obey it.

## AN ETERNAL BIBLE

The Bible is the truth of God. Since God is eternal, the truth of God is eternal. The principles set forth in Holy Scripture, therefore, will never cease to be valid. God's Word is one of the few truly enduring things of earth. It is enduring upon earth because it is forever settled in heaven (Psalm 119:89).

The eternal nature of God's Word is set in contrast to the temporary things of earth. The prophet Isaiah wrote, “**The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever,**” 40:8. Other passages agree. Jesus' words are recorded, “**Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away,**” Mark 13:31. He said, “**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. Truly, “. . . **the word of the Lord endureth for ever . . .**” I Peter 1:25.

Things of earth are constantly, and sometimes rapidly, changing. Within one generation, we have passed from horse and buggy days to the jet age. Yet the Word of God is still true and applicable. God does not change;

God's truth does not change. The Bible endures.

## A PURPOSEFUL BOOK

The Bible has been given for two great purposes: to reveal God and to save men. It might be better said that the Bible was given for redemptive purposes.

God is revealed in the Bible. He is revealed as a divine person with whom human persons may enter a personal relationship. To “know” God is to have eternal life, (John 17:3).

God is revealed in the Bible as a spiritual person (John 4:24). He does not have a body of flesh and bones as human beings do. He is invisible to the natural eye (Colossians 1:15). He cannot be represented by any picture or image (Exodus 20:4-6; Isaiah 40:18-31). Because God is Spirit, believers continue relationship and communion with Him even after the body dies and the spirit is separated from it.

God is revealed in the Bible as a triune person. He is not only a trinity (three persons), but a tri-unity (three who are one). He who is One (Deuteronomy 6:4; I Corinthians 8:4) is Three in One. The fact is taught in both Old Testament (Genesis 1:1,26; 11:7; Judges 6:35) and in the New Testament (Matthew 3:16-17; 28:20; II Corinthians 13:13).

God is revealed in the Bible as an infinite person. All his attributes are beyond limit. He has all knowledge (Romans 11:34). He is absolutely holy (I Samuel 2:2). He exercises all power (Matthew 28:18). He is everywhere at once (Psalm 139). He is the absolute perfection and expression of love (I John 4:8). He is unlimited by time (I Timothy 1:17) and absolutely sufficient in Himself, depending on none other for ought (Psalm 90:1-2).

The God of the Bible is the Father of Jesus Christ and of all who come to Him by faith. God's purpose of revelation is redemption. He does not come to reveal Himself to make us theologians, but to make us Christians. Man's greatest need is not knowledge of facts about God, but a redeeming contact with God.

God caused His Word to be written in the languages of men. He supervised the process as it was passed from generation to generation as men lived and died. He kept it from error in spite of the ravages of time and the limitations of men. Finally it has come down to the present generation. It is still the Word of God just as when He first gave it.

The Word is still working its designated ministry. In it men see themselves as they are (sinners) and as they ought to be (saints). They see God's just law and gracious provision. They learn of Christ's atoning deed

for sinners and are constrained of the Holy Spirit to trust Him as Savior. That is the ministry of the Word of God.

The Word continues its divine ministry after salvation, however. It not only tells man how to be saved, but it also guides him after he is saved. Thus it exercises the two-fold work of bringing men into fellowship with God (through salvation) and into the image of Christ (through sanctification). Blessed ministry! Blessed Word!

The Bible is the Word of God. The divine ideal is not intellectual but spiritual. We should study the Word of God that we might have personal fellowship with the God of the Word.

“The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy; its histories are true; its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise: believe it to be saved; practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be opened at the judgment; and remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, rewards the greatest labor and condemns all who trifle with its holy contents. It is the Word of the living God!”—Anonymous.

## Questions

1. What is the meaning of “doctrine”?
2. Why should we study Bible doctrine?
3. What is meant by the “inspiration of the Bible”?
4. How are inspiration and revelation related?
5. Why do we believe that the Bible is infallible?
6. What was God's purpose in giving the Bible?
7. How should the Christian use his Bible?
8. What is the most blessed doctrine of the Bible? Why?
9. How can you make the Bible more meaningful in your life?
10. How can you know your Bible better?

