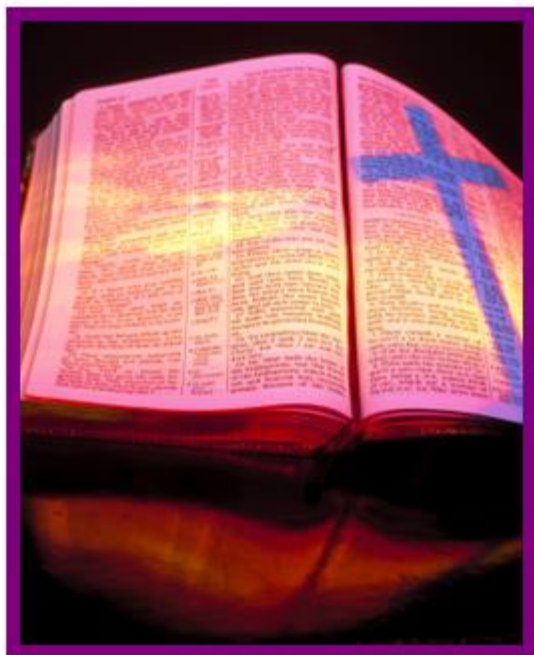


Volume IV

# The Essentials



# The Bible

**We'd like to welcome you to the educational series "The Essentials". These series of study books are designed to equip the believers of Christ with the essentials to live the life the scripture say we should have. This series will also help us to understand and embrace our anointed call to change our view about ourselves and give ourselves to become ambassadors of change in world around us.**

**To properly understand the calling of Christ it is mandatory that we give ourselves to grasping some clarity related to His call. The central resource to discover what Christ has called us to is the Bible. In the pages of the bible, we will discover that we have been made for a purpose. As a matter of fact, "we have been made for this time and this time is made for us". Since so much of who we are and who we are to be is held within the sacred scripture, we must develop a new mind-set in seeking to learn about our Lord's plan for us.**

**We must embrace this reality: “Our assured purpose is rooted in the word of God. To understand our assignment and the father’s destined will for us, it is imperative that we engage the searching of the scriptures as a lifetime journey”. 1 John 3:2 ...it doth not appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear we shall be like him...**

**There are principle fundamentals that God has laid out for our benefit that will help us to understand that “there is nothing that has happened to us that God is not aware of and has made to work for us”. We discover these truths as we study our God and His ways.**

**Special thanks to Bishop Timothy J. Clarke of the First Church, Columbus, Ohio for his permission to use the Foundation class material.**

# **The Bible**

## Introduction:

God has revealed Himself in a number of ways: in nature, in creation, in history, in miracles, visions given directly to the prophets. But primarily, God has revealed Himself in the person of Jesus Christ, the Living Word, and in the Bible, the Written Word. But what we learn about the person and work of Jesus Christ, we learn from the Bible in both the Old and New Testaments. The majority of that which we can know about God comes from the Bible.

## What is the Bible?

It was said previously that God has revealed Himself in several ways. Nature and creation are proofs that God exists and that He is powerful (Rom 1:19-20). God, by His dealings with Israel and the nations surrounding her, has shown

Himself in history. Through the prophets we see that God's revelation came to man not only through events themselves, but through the words of the prophets who interpreted the events. God's fullest revelation came in the person of His Son Jesus Christ.

But what about the people who were not present and so did not see God's involvement in history or the events surrounding Christ's incarnation, life, death, and resurrection? To reach all people, obviously, a written record was needed. God has given this to us in the Bible, through which He revealed Himself.

Our English term bible is from the Greek word biblion, which means "book" or "roll." The Bible consists of two sections: the Old Testament (or Covenant),

consisting of thirty-nine books, and the New Testament (or Covenant), consisting of twenty-seven books. In the Hebrew Bible, the books of the Old Testament are arranged in three divisions—the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.

In the Septuagint, a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek made during the third century B.C.,

The Bible originated in the mind of God, not in the mind of man. It was given to man by inspiration. It is important to understand this term because its biblical meaning is different from that which we often give in everyday language. The Bible is not inspired as the writings of a great novelist, or as a composer's music is inspired. Inspiration, in the biblical sense, means that God so superintended the writers of Scripture that they wrote

what He wanted them to write and were kept from error in doing so. The words inspired (2 Tim 3:16) actually means “out breathed” (by God). Inspiration applies to the end result—the Scripture itself—as well as to the men who God used to write the Scripture.

This does not mean that the human writers of Scripture were practically machines through who God dictated. Nor does it mean that they were human typewriters who God punched. On the contrary, their full personalities entered into their writings. Their individuals writing styles are evident, for instance. Their backgrounds also are often apparent in what they wrote. But though their human capacities came into play, they were superintended and borne along in a unique way by the Holy Spirit.

Because of this, the Bible is called “the Word of God” (Mk 7:13; Heb 4:12)

Review:

The Bible originated in the mind of \_\_\_\_\_, not in the mind of \_\_\_\_\_.

How do we know the Bible is completely true?

As a direct result of the God’s superintendence over the human writers, the Scriptures are inerrant. The word inerrancy means “freedom from errors or untruths.” The Bible itself claims inerrancy. This inerrancy is along two lines, logical reasoning and the teachings of Jesus.

the books are arranged according to similarity of subject matter. The Pentateuch (the Law, or the five books of



Moses) is followed by the historical books. Then came the books of Poetry and Wisdom and, finally, the Prophets. This is the order of the books in most Christian editions of the Bible today. The writing of the Old Testament covered a span of a thousand years.

The twenty-seven New Testament books are in four groups: the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, twenty-one letters (epistles), and the Revelation. These books were written within the span of a century. The earliest documents were the first letters of Paul, which, along with perhaps the letter of James, were written between A.D. 48 and 60, and the Gospels and other books between A.D. 60 and 100.

Review:

But primarily, God has revealed Himself in \_\_\_\_\_, the Living Word, and in \_\_\_\_\_, the Written Word.

The Bible consists of two sections: the \_\_\_\_\_ (or Covenant), consisting of \_\_\_\_\_ books, and the \_\_\_\_\_ (or Covenant), consisting of \_\_\_\_\_ books.

How did the Bible come to be written?

Two clear statements from the New Testament answer this questions:

“Understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet 1:20-21);  
“All Scripture is God –breath and it useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16).

Logical reasoning is proven by the following: The Bible is God's Word (Matt 4:4-11), and God is always truthful (Tit 1:2; Heb 6:18), therefore the Bible is completely true. Jesus also taught the inerrancy of the Bible: Matt 4:4—"every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.", Matt 5:18—"the smallest letter or stroke shall not pass away from the law until all is fulfilled.", and John 10:35—"scriptures cannot be broken." Inerrancy still allows for variety in style, in details in explaining the same event, departure from standard forms of grammar, and for problem passages. Inerrancy does not demand verbatim reporting of events, but it does demand that the account does not teach error or contradiction.

Review:

The word inerrancy means

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How can believers understand the bible? The writer of Psalms 119:105 tells us something about the Word of God, “Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path. Later in the same Psalms he wrote, “The unfolding of your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple” (vs. 130). However, for the Scripture to give us light, it must be understood properly, then believed and applied in faith. But for man to understand the Bible properly he must have two things: (a) he needs the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, and (b) he needs the proper method of interpretation. Without the proper method of interpretation, one is left on a sea of uncertainty.

Though the Bible is pure light that can direct our lives and bring us into an understanding of God and His salvation in Christ, man needs special enablement from God due to the Bible's spiritual dimension that raises it above man's natural abilities. Due to Adam's fall into sin and his

Consequent spiritual death, humanity was rendered incapable of understanding the truth of the Bible. As seen in the way Jesus opened the eyes of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, the work of illumination is necessary to enable us to comprehend the Word of God (Lk 24:44-45).

Illumination can be defined as "the special ministry of the Holy Spirit whereby He enlightens men so they can

comprehend the written Word of God.” Illumination begins with the pre-salvation work of the Spirit to bring proof of the claims of the Gospel that people might trust in Jesus (Jn 1:9; 16:8-11; 2 Tim 1:10; Heb 6:4). Generally, illumination is used in reference to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in enabling believers to understand the Scripture (Eph 1:18, 3:9).

The illuminating work of the Spirit goes hand-in-hand with the interpretation of Scripture. Although illumination is assured for believers, it does not always guarantee accurate interpretation. If the interpretation is wrong, so will the understanding of the passage in question.

When interpreting the Bible, we should use the plain or normal method of

interpretation. By plain or normal we mean the words of Scripture are to be understood in their normal meaning just as we would normally understand words in our normal everyday communication. When we read the newspaper or a recipe in a cookbook, how do we read those words? We understand them according to their literal or normal meaning. If the recipe says two cups of flour, you don't symbolize that to mean, a great quantity to be chosen at your discretion. If, however, it calls for a pinch of salt, you understand it to be somewhat symbolical of a very small amount.

It has been said that the Scripture is its own best commentary. Often a verse or a passage becomes clear when studied in

the light of other Bible statements on the same subject. Though humanly the Bible has many writers, in the final analysis there was only one Author—God Himself. As we compare Scripture with Scripture, we are guarded against becoming unbalanced in our views. We need to study individual books of the Bible and we also need to trace themes through the whole Bible.

Review:

Illumination can be defined as”

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\_\_\_\_\_.”

When interpreting the Bible, we should use the \_\_\_\_\_ method of interpretation.

Some final thoughts on the Bible



Many passages in the Bible point to it as being animated or life-giving:

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.

Psalms 19:7:9:

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether.

The Scriptures are powerful and life-changing. Unlike any other book known to man, the Bible possesses a living quality that comes from its divine origin as the unique God-breathed book. This power is manifested in two primary ways.

First, the power of the Bible is seen in the way it reveals God and His glorious plan of salvation in the person and work of Jesus Christ; it is the power of God unto salvation (Rom 1:16). The stress here is on the power of the Bible on the unsaved.

Second, the power of the Word is seen in the lives of the saved as God uses it along with the illuminating and empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit to conform us into the image of the Lord Jesus. Our Lord had this in mind in His prayer in John 17:17 when He prayed.

“Sanctify them through Your truth, Your Word is truth.” God’s Word is truly alive and powerful.

Review:

The Scriptures are

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