

## WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

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What is the Bible? This sounds like a child's question, or one that a stranger to all literature would ask, yet the answer is all important. By definition it is a miracle book for it reveals God to men and it restores men to God.

Without the Bible we do not have sufficient knowledge of the true God and without the Bible man has no answers to the great questions of life and eternity. It is the most important book in the world. It has also been the most loved book and the most hated book in the world.

**Alban Douglas stated that its miracle is seen in 7 ways:**

1. **Its formation** one book written in one place in one language and another book written in another country centuries later in another language. Yet it is one book.
2. **Its unification.** 66 books, yet it has one author the Holy Spirit and one Saviour – the Lord Jesus is in every book, if not on every page.
3. **Its age-** it is the oldest of all books
4. **Its sale** - it is the best seller of all time. – See Amazon.
5. The wonder of its **interest:** read by all classes, rich and poor. By the Queen of England and the tea pickers of Sri Lanka – translated into over 400 languages and dialects.
6. **The wonders of its language.** It is a literary masterpiece for purity, power and literary genius.
7. **The wonder of its preservation.** It has been the most hated of books, abolished, burned and banned by governments of the world, yet it remains available to any who seek it today, even on the smart phone. The Bible survives all threats of extinction.

**There are seven symbols used for the Bible:**

1. A Library
2. A lamp
3. A Mirror
4. A sword
5. A Hammer
6. A fire
7. A seed

We want to draw lessons from each of these symbols on the Bible. They will help to answer the question, What is the Bible?

### 1. THE BIBLE IS A LIBRARY

## **The Bible is one book made up of 66 books – 39 OT and 27 NT**

It was written between the time of Moses, 1400 BC, and the end time of the apostle John of the first century A.D. John who wrote the book of revelation. You would expect that such a production over a vast period of time, (1 ½ millennia, or 1500 years) with so many writers in different languages under various political regimes, would produce a hodge-podge of information. Yet, as every Bible reader knows, the Bible is a marvel for its unity and accuracy. From Genesis though to Revelation the redemption of man is its continuous theme. It is always focused on man's redemption, reconciliation and restoration to God.

**In the book of beginnings – Genesis - sin comes into the world** a Saviour is promised. In the fulness of time He comes into the world to die and suffer for his people. And the Bible also reveals that in the future Christ is coming again for His people. Every history, prophecy, gospel narrative, doctrinal epistle and prophetic utterance are like a mosaic, or jigsaw puzzle that form a complete picture of the plan of God for His church – His people.

**How can this be?** The only answer is that the Bible is divinely inspired.

**How does inspiration work?** – Look at some key Bible texts on inspiration.

Here we will see that God spoke through men: **Matt 2:15, Matt: 3:3, Luke 1:70, Acts 1:16, Acts 3:18, Acts 4:25.**

The mouth, or the pen was man's part, but the speaking was done by God. This accounts for the miracle of this library of books coming together in perfect unity without contradiction. God's divine inspiration of the text of the Bible is our answer for understanding the miracle of the Bible.

## **2. THE BIBLE IS A LAMP**

[Psa 119:105](#) says, "Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

**The Bible is God's book to help man find his way in the darkness of this world.** This picture of a lamp for our feet depicts a man walking in the dark. I remember walking along dirt paths in the hills of Sri Lanka by flash light (Not an oil light). Out on the mountains it was so dramatically dark by 7 p.m. Plus, we were visitors and didn't know the paths. Without some form of light we would be lost and in danger of stumbling.

We need to learn that the blindness of the natural man without a Saviour is real. Men stumble and fall all the way through life until they are lost in hell. The fall of man in Eden is responsible for the loss of the knowledge of God. Because of sin in the heart corrupting the mind as well as the affections men have lost the ability to know God. God must reveal himself to us.

He does to a point in the world of creation. But we need special revelation to reveal the nature of God and to see our own sinful state before Him.

**There are two things we need to know.** First, that we are terrible sinners and, second, that God is a great Saviour.

The Bible reveals both these facts with abundant clarity. God desires to shine the light of truth into men's hearts and the Bible does this. That is why we call it special revelation. It is meant to work for our salvation.

So the Bible is a great gift as a lamp to our stumbling feet. Without the Bible we could never find our way out of sin, away from the paths of destruction onto the sure ground of redemption.

**Question:** Are you following the light of the Bible – has it pointed you to Jesus who is the light of the world? Your need of the Bible is like needing a flashlight to find the main light switch in a strange place.

### 3. THE BIBLE IS A MIRROR

If you want to really know yourself in the eyes of God, the Bible is a true mirror. This is the apostle James' analogy in James 1:23-25.

Mirrors are everywhere. They are in our homes, cars and here in church we have mirrors. You comb your hair at a mirror. Kids inspect their faces in a mirror to wipe away those evidences of chocolate on their faces. **A mirror is honest.** It doesn't play tricks on you. A mirror will not embarrass you, it is your friend.

**You know when you are reading your Bible properly when it's reading you.** When you read down the page and you see yourself and you see your sinfulness then the Bible is revealing the truth about you. The Bible will not puff you up in a false way. It will build you up by dealing with your sin and calling you to forsake it.

Like the prophet Nathan who said to King David, "Thou art the man." It brings conviction.

The Bible is not meant to make you feel as a goodie, goodie when you are black with sin from head to toe.

**Just like a mirror, the Bible, however, is powerless to cleanse from sin.** So it sends you to the cross of Christ to be washed in the blood of Jesus.

Think of the Bible as God's magnifying glass to help you see your need of a Saviour.

### 4. THE BIBLE IS A SWORD

“The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword...” (Heb 4:12). A sword in our hands to defend ourselves is a great asset, but this sword is piercing us!

- It pierces into the spirit, or soul-issues v12b “dividing soul and spirit”
- It pierces into the body, or the lust issues v12b “joints and marrow”
- It pierces into the mind, or the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
- It is God’s X-ray of my heart. We must expect that the sin-loving man will be convicted by the reading and the preaching of the word of God.

**Hebrew 4:12 should be read in conjunction with v13** “all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”

God turns us inside out to inspect us.

Like we do with a sack of potatoes that has one rotten potato, when we toss them all out into the light to find the rotten one, so God will search for the corruption of our hearts through His word.

So with a sense of guilt the Bible faithfully searches us, but also mercifully calls us to flee to the Saviour to save our souls.

It does not stop at the searching there is the gospel call to seek mercy in the person and cross-work of Christ. Are you doing that?

## **5. THE BIBLE IS A HAMMER.**

“Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer *that* breaketh the rock in pieces” (Jer. 23:29)?

The human heart is depicted here as a rock that is hardened against God.

These are stubborn characters who love their sin more than they love God.

There is need, therefore, of heart preparation before men will receive the word with faith. The rebellion of heart must be broken. The love of sin must be smashed in pieces.

Many hardened men and women have scoffed at the Bible only to be broken under its power.

Each convert to Christ through the Bible message of the mercy of God, can testify to a breaking off of the old prejudices and loyalties to the sinful ways of men. Human thinking, which is really pagan thinking, is broken down.

Consider these examples of the Bible’s power to break down man’s hardened ways:

The idea of man’s pride that he is good enough – the Bible will smash that.

“Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but given grace to the humble” (James 4:6)

The notion that God can be bought with our good works – the Bible will smash that.

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost (Titus 3:5).

The idea that there is no law of God over man – the Bible will smash that.  
The thought that a God of love has no law and no judgment - the Bible will smash that.

The thought that I am good enough – the Bible will smash that.

The idea that you are above average, that you are better in God’s sight – the Bible will smash that for it teaches you clearly that one sin, one sinful word, or thought will damn your soul. James taught, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10).

Paul the apostle stated it in these few words, “All have sinned....” (Romans 3:23).

Then there is the notion, I’m not religious. It has nothing to do with me! The Bible will smash that too. Think on these things:

- You are God’s creature.
- You have enjoyed the sunshine and the rain of God’s goodness.
- You are guilty of sins of omission – you have left things undone that you should have done. You stayed away from the house of God. You have refused to worship the Lord and Creator of the earth. You took the good things of this world, but have denied the Creator.

God will take the hammer of His word to all of these things and smash them to pieces. If you are interested in truth and interest in being right with God you will, let the hammer do its work in me.

## **5. THE BIBLE IS A FIRE.**

It is a fire to the reader to day and it will also be a fire on the judgement day. This is the same word by which God will judge the world. There will be no new standard. There will be no new information beyond what is already in the word of God.

Fire is meant to purify and purge. In this life God’s word will burn up the dross and give you grace to forsake all sin.

In eternity, on the judgment day, the word of God will be read out to condemn you to a burning hell. It will be a literal fire of burning in your heart and life. Among Christian people and among preachers of the word it gives a fire of power to live for God. There is an urgency and zeal for God’s glory when the word of God burns in a believer’s heart. It motivates and stimulates the soul to live for God.

Fire always cries out, “Purify”. It burns the dross, it clears away the sin and when he Bible takes hold of you it will reveal God’s love for holiness and declare his judgement on all sin.

There are only two ways for you to deal with your sin. Have it put out at the cross of Calvary, or have consume you at the judgment day.

## 6. THE BIBLE IS A SEED

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1Peter 1:23).

This is the saving power of God’s word. Where it is received by faith it works new life. It operates in the heart as a seed to bring forth a harvest of righteousness.

Regeneration is a miracle of new life. Just as the Bible is a miracle in itself, it works miracles in hearts.

Think of the seed that goes into the cold earth – those bulbs and flowers planted in the fall – yet true to their nature, in the spring life comes forth.

### **To make the Bible work in your heart you need to:**

1. Read it and receive it as God’s word to you.
2. Believe the promises of God’s salvation.
3. Pray for the life of Christ to be born in your soul.

**Conclusion:** If the Bible had never been given, there would be no Christians in the world. There would be no churches, no missionary works. The world **would** be in darkness. The world would be hopeless in the misery of spiritual darkness.

Today the world is a better place, and millions of souls will be in heaven because the Bible has been published, promoted and preached to the nations; to you.

Do you love God’s word? The time you spend in your Bible determines the kind of Christian you are. If you have no time for the Bible then there is no Christianity in you.

A maid found her mistress’s Bible and hid it, all to see how soon it would be missed. How long would it take for you to miss your Bible if it was hidden on you?

Become a daily reader of the Bible. Let God speak to your heart through the written word. Pray for faith to receive that word into your heart and lead you to personal trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour.

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