

The Basics of Grace

Part 2: The Bible

Nothing is more important to our beliefs than what they are based on. For, if the foundation is not sure, our beliefs are whimsical and meaningless. Fortunately, we have a sure foundation, a source of absolute truth by which we can know everything we need to know.

- I. What is the Bible?
 - a. Is it just a good book, full of ancient wisdom? (like Chinese proverbs). Is it just a devotional book or like a quote-of-the-day calendar?
 - b. It is God's Word
 - c. It is the foundation of our beliefs
 - d. It is the source of all we know about God
 - e. It is what separates Biblical Christianity from every other religion of the world. Only in Biblical Christianity does our source of truth rest *solely* on a God-inspired book, the Bible, and not in any way on man.

- II. Why is it Unique?
 - a. Why is it different than other religious books (Koran, book of Mormon, etc.)? (In this study, we are not going to compare other religious writings because one does not learn to recognize counterfeits by studying counterfeits. One learns to recognize what is false by studying that which is true.)
 - b. Historically unique
 - i. Written in 3 different languages
 - ii. Written over a period of 1600 years yet internally consistent (Psalm 22:18, Matthew 27:35. In fact there are numerous prophecies from the Old Testament fulfilled in Jesus.)
 - iii. Over 40 different authors
 - iv. Quoted and read from by Jesus himself (we'll look at this later)
 - v. Continues to be the most read and widely available book in the world
 - c. Satan himself uses God's Word—in so doing acknowledging it is God's Word (Genesis 3:1, Matthew 4:5-6). A further note: Satan desires to be worshiped; he seeks to destroy the authority of God's Word in order to undermine God. Also, take note of how Jesus responded in Matthew—with the Word of God.
 - d. **Declares itself to be the Word of God**
(Psalm 138:2, Jeremiah 1:9, , Luke 4:17-21 (see Isaiah 61:1), Romans 1:2, II Timothy 3:15-16.)
Addn'l rf: Ephesians 3:3, II Peter 1:20-21, and numerous others.
 - e. **Declares itself to be Truth** (Psalm 119:151, 160, John 17:17)
 - f. **It is equivalent to God himself** (John 1:1-3, 14, Romans 9:17, Revelation 19:13). If the Word of God is equivalent to God, then it has His attributes:

- i. true (Numbers 23:19, John 14:6 Titus 1:2, Hebrews 6:18)
- ii. unchanging (immutable) (Psalm 102:26,27, Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8, James 1:17,)
- iii. eternal. In other words, God's Word existed before the world and it will remain forever. This also relates to the issue of preservation (Deuteronomy 33:27, Psalm 90:2, Revelation 1:8)
- iv. omniscient (or the source of all wisdom) (Psalm 147:4,5, Colossians 2:3) This is a critical point; *ALL* wisdom comes from God.

Addn'l rf: Psalm 119:104-105.

- g. **It is living and powerful** (Genesis 1:3-4 (God's Word created), Psalm 33:6-9, Hebrews 4:12, Revelation 19:15). If we again consider that it is equivalent to God, it is as powerful as God Himself.
- h. These last 4 points are the most important. The Word of God is its own proof. (Analogy of stolen identity: someone else could impersonate me, have papers and proofs. However, the "real me" doesn't need proofs. My papers, ID, proofs will match, but they don't make me me.)

III. Is it infallible?

That is, has God's Word been preserved? There are two issues, inspiration and preservation, but they are inseparable. The preservation of God's Word is consistent with His purpose (I Timothy 2:4).

- a. Declares that it will be preserved (Psalm 12:7, 33:11, 119:89, 152, Matthew 5:18, 24:35)
- b. Jesus himself read from God's Word (Luke 4:17-20). He also made numerous references to Scripture being fulfilled (e.g. Luke 4:21)
- c. The Bible quotes itself. It verifies itself. (Deuteronomy 25:4, 24:14 with Matthew 10:10 and I Timothy 5:18 also Romans 3:10 with Psalm 14:1-3) Addn'l rf: II Peter 3:15-16
- d. Copies and translations referred to as Scripture (Proverbs 25:1, Romans 15:4, I Timothy 5:18, II Timothy 3:15)
Addn'l rf: Ezra 7:10-11, Jeremiah 8:8, and numerous others
- e. Jesus Himself refers to copies as Scripture (Matthew 22:29-31)
Also: Luke 4:17-20
- f. God instructs us to study and to know His Word (Colossians 3:16, II Timothy 2:15, II Timothy 3:16-17). The Bereans are a pattern (Acts 17:11)
- g. Historical proof. Though helpful, of limited value because it is of man (I Corinthians 2:12-14). Again the Word of God is its own proof.
 - i. Externally verifiable prophecy (Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:1-5). Numerous others. According to Pastor Bryan, there are 86 prophecies fulfilled in Jesus.
 - ii. Worldwide flood (Institute for Creation Research) (Genesis 7)

- h. The issue of translations and canon of Scripture. Beyond scope of this study.
 - i. Use of KJV.
 - ii. Which books are God's Word?
 - iii. In its *current* form, we possess the inspired, infallible Word of God.
(see Pastor Bryan's series: Locating God's Word in English available at www.gracelifebiblechurch.com)

IV. Is It Complete?

- a. Paul's Gospel completed (filled up) the Word of God (I Corinthians 13:9-12, Ephesians 3:9-11, 4:11-13, Colossians 1:25-26, compare with II Timothy 4:7 and 17)
- b. John's statement (Revelations 22:18-19)

V. What's It to Us? So, it is God's Word and true; is it just for theologians and pastors? Can I even understand it? How do I understand it?

- a. God's instruction to us (II Timothy 2:15, 3:16, Philippians 4:8, Colossians 3:16)
- b. Our interpretation (I Corinthians 2:13-16, II Peter 1:20-21)
- c. Our spiritual growth (Ephesians 5:18, Colossians 3:16). I want to emphasize Colossians 2:3. Everything we need to know comes from God. Philippians 4:8 gives us good direction. What things are true, honest, just, etc.? Anything from the world? No, only from God's Word.
- d. Right Division. This issue leads to our next topic (II Timothy 2:15). If we do not understand the Bible properly we will be confused. (Consider analogy of address book and groups or distribution lists)