

BASIC BIBLE DOCTRINES

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Developed as a study course by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

Basic Bible Doctrines

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STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

The Bible is a wonderful Book. Composed of sixty-six inter-related sections, which we also call “books,” it is truly a consistent, unified whole.

We can study the Bible in a number of ways—book-by-book, devotionally, biographically, topically, etc. The purpose of this course is to guide the student through a topical study of the major teachings of “doctrines” of Scripture. One important advantage of this method of Bible study is that all that the Bible teaches about any particular subject can be surveyed and reverently meditated upon by the inquiring student. “Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name” (Psalm 86:11).

It is beyond the scope of this course to present every verse related in any way to every line of thought in Scripture. That would require a much larger volume. However, we will attempt to present every major doctrine of Scripture, supported by the most pertinent verses and passages relating to each doctrine.

The student should be prepared to study the Scripture passages referred to in this course for himself and continue his own studies of Bible doctrines with an open Bible and a good concordance. As in all types of Bible study, he should depend prayerfully on the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Three cautions before you begin studying.

1. Study each verse or passage of Scripture with regard to the surrounding verses and passages. Failure to do this often results in false conclusions. This is evidenced by the many false teachings abroad today, supposedly “based on Scripture” but actually based on serious misinterpretations of one or two isolated verses.

2. Remember that it takes the whole Bible to tell the whole truth about God and His ways. Creeds or “statements of faith” serve a useful purpose if they are carefully and scripturally formulated (many are not, however), but no creed is a substitute for the Bible itself.
3. Exercise human reasoning with care. Remember that God’s ways are above our ways, and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts (see Isaiah 55:9). The Bible is perfectly logical, but the logic is God’s logic and often completely transcends human reason. It is proper to carefully draw conclusions about broad Bible topics, providing that all that God says about the topic is used as a base for the conclusion.

The following abbreviations occur from time to time throughout the text of this course: ASV—American Standard Version; JND—The New Translation by J. N. Darby; KJV—King James Version; RSV—Revised Standard Version.

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Course Components

This course has two parts: this study course and the exam booklet.

How To Study

This study has twelve chapters, and each chapter has its own exam. Begin by asking God to help you understand the material. Read the chapter through at least twice, once to get a general idea of its contents and then again, slowly, looking up any Bible references given.

Begin studying immediately, or if you are in a group, as soon as the group begins. We suggest that you keep a regular schedule by trying to complete at least one chapter per week.

Exams

In the exam booklet there is one exam for each chapter (exam 1 covers chapter 1 of the course). Do not answer the questions by what you think or have always believed. The questions are designed to find out if you understand the material given in the course.

After you have completed each chapter, review the related exam and see how well you know the answers. If you find that you are having difficulty answering the questions, review the material until you think you can answer the questions.

How Your Exams Are Graded

Your instructor will mark any incorrectly answered questions. You will be referred back to the place in the course where the correct answer is to be found. After finishing this course with a passing average, you will be awarded a certificate.

If you enrolled in a class, submit your exam papers to the leader or secretary of the class who will send them for the entire group to the Correspondence School.

See the back of the exam booklet for more information on returning the exams for grading.

Bibliology: The Study of the Bible

The study of what the Bible teaches about itself is called *Bibliology*. The Bible claims to be a revelation from God about Himself.

Revelation

There should be no question as to God's ability to reveal Himself. Any definition of God which denies His super-human power would be a contradiction of terms. To a large degree we can reveal our minds to other men; to a lesser degree to animals. It is clear that God could reveal Himself to man if He so desired. The question is, why would He want to do so?

If God expects His creatures to obey His will, He would have to reveal His will to the creatures. Otherwise it is hard to see how He would hold them responsible for disobeying.

Furthermore, entirely apart from the revelation of God's love in the Bible, it seems apparent that He would not create a race of men unless He desired to reveal Himself to them. On the other hand, finite man by his own efforts cannot attain to a knowledge of an infinite God. Human philosophy is an attempt to understand the nature of the universe. While this is a noble desire in itself, it usually starts with the avowed purpose of eliminating the need for a revelation from God, and thus turns out to be a series of self-canceling theories.

In brief, God is able to reveal Himself. It is probable that God would give man a revelation and that He would want to do so. The next question is, "Is the Bible God's revelation of Himself?"

Is the Bible God's Revelation of Himself?

There are many religious books in existence. Some of these, such as the *Koran* and the *Book of Mormon*, claim to be revelations from God. The Bible claims to be the revelation from God and, on the basis of evidence alone, is incomparably more likely to be so than any other religious book which man possesses. Consider a few lines of evidence.

There is to begin with *the unity of the Bible*. This one Book contains sixty-six different books. These were written by about forty different men—kings, shepherds, preachers, farmers, priests, and others. From the first writer until the last, probably 1500 years elapsed. Imagine a book today in which some parts were written in the year 500 A.D., others around 1000 A.D., many about 1200 to 1500 A.D., then after a gap of 400 years twenty-seven very important books were written and added to the collection since 1900.

You say they would all be different and contradictory. But the sixty-six books in the Bible were written over a similar period of time—about 1400 B.C., to 100 A.D.—yet they all tell of one great Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the unifying theme of the different books of the Bible.

Some people say that the Bible is not true because some verses “contradict” others. While it is true that there are problems in connection with Bible study, it is also true that practically all of the so-called “contradictions,” when studied carefully, can be resolved. This simply tends to bring out more clearly the beauties of Scripture. The remaining “contradictions” we may attribute to man’s limited ability to understand the infinite wisdom and knowledge of God.

Ancient history supports the Bible’s claim to be a divine revelation. Reliable secular history of the ancient world invariably supports the Bible. Archaeologists dig around the ruins of ancient cities and find records which help them to understand ancient history. At first some of these records seem to disagree with the Bible, and too often it is assumed that the Bible must be wrong and the ancient historian correct. The trend in recent years, however, even among secular historians, has been to substantiate the Bible as historically accurate after all.

Many objections to the historical accuracy of the Bible are based on the preconceived idea that miracles are impossible. Every thoughtful person, however, would have to concede that, if there truly is a God, He not only could but would be expected to act in a supernatural manner.

Another proof that God has revealed Himself in the Bible is found in *fulfilled prophecy*. Centuries before Christ came, the prophets of God foretold when, where and how He would be born, that He would die and rise again. Many details prophesied in the Old Testament are seen to be fulfilled in the New Testament. Only God can give this specific knowledge centuries ahead of time.

Unbelievers try to get around this remarkable proof by saying that the prophecies were written after the events had taken place, or that the New Testament writers brought in imaginary details suggesting that the prophecies were fulfilled. All this was to deceive the people, they theorize. But a careful, detailed study will show that these explanations are inadequate and false.

Another remarkable thing about the Bible is its *convicting power*—its ability to make men feel guilty of sin. The Old Testament gives God's holy law, so holy that no mere man has ever kept it perfectly. In the New Testament the life of the perfect man, the Lord Jesus Christ, is displayed. If anyone thinks he can keep God's law, let him strive to achieve the perfections of Jesus. The Bible sets a high standard indeed. Millions reading the Bible realize their own failure and feel condemned before God.

The *life-transforming power* of the Bible is another proof of its divine origin. We could have no peace or joy if the Bible merely left us feeling condemned. This, however, is only the preparation for the message of salvation. The Bible tells us of a Savior so wonderful that no one in any other book in the world can compare with Him. Basically every religious book tells men what to do to be saved. Only Bible Christianity tells us that Christ has paid the penalty of sin and that all is done. God's plan of salvation is much too wonderful, too simple, and too beautiful to be the work of a man. Many lives have been completely changed through the message of Christ; rich and poor, religious and worldly, heathen and agnostic—untold millions have found peace through the Bible message.

The *enduring value and preservation* of the Bible is one more proof of its divine character. Some people reject the Bible because it is old. The very fact that the Bible is so ancient is important. God has preserved it through many centuries. Of course there are some other ancient books too. However, none of these has been required to miraculously survive the numerous bitter attempts at destruction as has the Bible. God has kept it for us until now because it is His Word.

And what about today? If the Bible is so out of date, if science has proven it full of error, we might assume that it is no longer wanted. Actually it is sent out now in greater numbers than ever. At least a part of the Bible has been translated into over 1400 languages, according to the American Bible Society. Probably 95 percent of all the people in the world can understand one or more of these languages. Every year thirty million portions of God's Word are printed and distributed.

For these reasons, and others, any open-minded person can turn to the Bible and expect to hear the voice of God speaking to him through it.

Inspiration

We sometimes tend to use the words "inspiration" and "revelation" almost interchangeably. It might be better understood if the word "revelation" were used only for those parts of Scripture which the writer could not know apart from special communication from God. For instance, the story of creation could not have been known by Moses, the writer of Genesis, unless God had told him. On the other hand, many parts of the Bible are records of what the writer saw or did, or learned from others. These writers were inspired by God to write certain incidents of history and to omit many others. Why this selection? The Holy Spirit has given us in the Bible just what we need and no more. "All Scripture . . . is profitable." Thus we can say that the Bible contains many revelations from God, but the entire Scripture is inspired. *Plenary* inspiration means that all subjects dealt with in Scripture are fully inspired. *Verbal* inspiration means that the very words of Scripture are inspired. These statements will be seen to be true when we consider what the Bible says about itself.

The Old Testament claims to be inspired. Often in the Old Testament we read "Thus saith the Lord" or "God spoke unto Joshua," etc. These phrases and similar ones are found thousands of times in the Old Testament. For instance, Moses claimed that God spoke to him. "God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses" (Exodus 3:4). "The Lord said unto me" (Deuteronomy 1:42). "And the Lord commanded me" (Deuteronomy 4:14), etc.

David claimed that God spoke to him. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me" (2 Samuel 23:2, 3).

All sixteen of the writing prophets from Isaiah to Malachi claim that God spoke to them. Moreover, Christ taught that the Old Testament was inspired—The Law (Matthew 5:18; Mark 7:8); The Prophets (John 6:45);

in general (Luke 16:29-31; John 17:17). Furthermore, the apostles believed that the Old Testament was inspired. Peter said, "The Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of David" (Acts 1:16). "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). Paul wrote, "The Holy Ghost spake by Isaiah the prophet unto our fathers" (Acts 28:25). "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (literally "is God-breathed") (2 Timothy 3:16). 2 Peter 1:21 and 2 Timothy 3:16 are the classic verses on inspiration and should be memorized and meditated upon.

While Christ was on earth He promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit would help them to write *the New Testament*. He said, "The Holy Ghost . . . shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). This would help them write the Gospels. Jesus said, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). This would help them to write the Epistles, which give us the wonderful truths of the New Testament. Christ also said of the Holy Spirit, "He will show you things to come" (John 16:13). This promise was fulfilled partly when John wrote the book of Revelation and partly when other apostles wrote prophetic passages.

New Testament writers realized that they were controlled by the Spirit. Paul wrote, "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (1 Corinthians 2:10). "The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 14:37). "By revelation [God] made known unto me the mystery" (Ephesians 3:3, 5). "The Spirit speaketh expressly" (1 Timothy 4:1). John knew he was inspired (see Revelation 1:1; 14:13; 19:9).

Both Peter (1 Peter 1:12) and Paul (Galatians 1:12) knew that the gospel was from God. These men had known from youth that the Old Testament was inspired of God. The Holy Spirit showed them that the New Testament was equally inspired. For instance, the Gospels are linked with the Old Testament Scriptures and put on the same plane with them in 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4. The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ are recorded as "according to the Scripture." In 1 Timothy 5:18 Paul quotes from both Deuteronomy and the Gospel of Luke and calls them "the Scripture." In 1 Peter 1:25 the gospel is put on a level with the word of the Lord in Isaiah; both are inspired and eternal. In 2 Peter 3:2 the apostles are linked with the prophets, and in verse 16 Paul's epistles are linked with "the other Scriptures."

Are there any limits to inspiration? We have seen that the Bible teaches that it is fully and verbally inspired by God. To help in understanding what this means we will also consider what it does not mean.

The original writers retained their individuality. Although each was writing under inspiration, the personality of the writer was not destroyed. Each author expressed his own individuality in noticeable ways. For example, the style and ministry of Jeremiah, “the weeping prophet,” are quite different from those of Isaiah or Ezekiel. Matthew, a Jew, wrote his Gospel especially for the Jews, but Luke, a Gentile, seems to have had the Greeks especially in mind. It is notable that the personalities of Paul and Peter and James and John shine out through their inspired writings.

As far as we know, all *the original manuscripts* (“autographs”) of all the divinely chosen authors have been lost long ago. God in His wisdom has allowed this to happen, no doubt to avoid the worship of objects (compare 2 Kings 18:4). However, God has preserved very excellent copies, which are essentially the same as the original documents even to the wording.

Due to the differences between languages it is impossible to have a perfect translation. However, *the translations* we have are fully adequate for study and devotional reading. *The Authorized (King James) Version* is satisfactory for Scripture memorizing and public speaking. For a closer study the student could use the *New American Standard Bible* or the *New International Version*, both careful, scholarly, and faithful versions. Somewhat easier reading versions may be found in *The Berkeley Version*, *The New Testament in the Language of the People*, by Charles B. Williams, or *The New Testament in Modern English*, by J. B. Phillips. This latter version is really more of a paraphrase than a translation. The student should keep in mind that the easier-reading versions generally sacrifice some exactness of thought in order to make the English wording as fluent as possible.

The inspired writers were often restrained in what they wrote. Sometimes they would have liked to write more but the Holy Spirit restrained them. For instance, in the book of Revelation John was about to record the message of the seven thunders but was told not to do so (10:4). The writer of Hebrews wanted to write about Melchizedek (5:11), but was prevented. Jude planned to write about salvation, but instead found it necessary to exhort the saints earnestly to contend for the faith (v. 3). In what they wrote and in what they did not write, all these Bible authors were impelled and restrained by the Spirit of God.

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EXAM BOOKLET
AK '05 (2 UNITS)

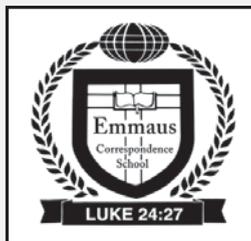
STUDENT NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

COURSE GRADE: _____

INSTRUCTOR



Exam developed by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

A NOTE ON THE EXAMS

The exams are designed to check your knowledge of the course material and the Scriptures. After you have studied a chapter, review the exam questions for that lesson. If you have difficulty in answering the questions, re-read the material. If questions contain a Scripture reference, you may use your Bible to help you answer them. If your instructor has provided a single page Answer Sheet, record your answer on that sheet. This exam contains the following types of questions:

MULTIPLE CHOICE

You will be asked to write in the letter of the correct answer at the space on the right. Here is an example:

The color of grass is

- A. blue C. yellow
B. green D. orange

 B

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Questions headed this way are designed to help you express your ideas and feelings. You may freely state your own opinions in answer to such questions.

RETURNING THE EXAM

See the back of this exam booklet for instructions on returning your exam for grading.

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CHAPTER 1 EXAM

BIBLIOLOGY THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE

EXAM GRADE

Before starting this exam, write your name and address on the front of this Exam Booklet.

Directions: Read each question carefully and write the letter of the correct answer in the blank space on the right. Use the separate answer sheet if provided.

1. The period of time which elapsed between the writing of Genesis and the writing of Revelation was approximately

A. 500 years	C. 1500 years	
B. 1000 years	D. 3000 years	_____

2. The apparent contradictions which some people claim to have found in the Bible

A. help confirm the fact that the Bible was written by men of diverse background, culture and ability	
B. cannot be helped because the Bible was written and collected over a very long period of time	
C. have all been “planted” there by men whose aim it was to discredit the Bible	
D. disappear when carefully studied	_____

3. The unifying theme of the Bible is

A. the Law of Moses	
B. the Lord Jesus Christ	
C. fulfilled prophecy	
D. the Jewish people	_____

4. The Bible was written

A. entirely by scholars	
B. entirely by “ignorant and unlearned men”	
C. by men “from every nation under heaven”	
D. by men of varying ability, social standing and education	_____

5. The true explanation of Bible prophecy is that
- A. the Bible is a supernatural book
 - B. the “prophecies” were written *after* the described events actually occurred
 - C. the prophecies are vague and artificial and are of such a nature that anyone with a shrewd insight into human character and human history could have written them
 - D. they fall into the same category as the prophesyings, soothsayings and horoscopes provided in all ages by palm readers, fortune tellers and astrologers
-
6. The Bible differs from all other religious books in its plan of salvation. This difference is highlighted in the Biblical emphasis on
- A. the need for men to do good works in order to win God’s approval
 - B. fasts, pilgrimages and acts of self-denial as a basis for salvation
 - C. ritual, ceremony and religious ordinances as a means of salvation
 - D. the fact that salvation is a free gift graciously provided by God for guilty men
-
7. Examine the following passages of Scripture. The one which particularly shows that the Bible is relevant even to our *science-oriented* generation is
- A. Genesis 18:1-8
 - B. 2 Peter 3:10-13
 - C. Daniel 9:1-2
 - D. Psalm 2:1-12
-
8. In John 16:13 the Lord Jesus promised the disciples the Holy Spirit would enable them to
- A. recall the things He had taught them
 - B. live a sinless life
 - C. be led into the truth and prophesy things to come
 - D. do all of the above
-

- 9. The expression “plenary, verbal inspiration” means that
 - A. God enabled men to know truths and facts they could not know by mere human reasoning
 - B. only those parts of the Bible which contain actual words or sayings of God Himself are inspired
 - C. all subjects covered in the Bible are inspired but were conveyed in uninspired language
 - D. all subjects and indeed the very words of Scripture in which those subjects are conveyed are divinely inspired

- 10. When we say that the Bible is verbally and plenary inspired we
 - A. restrict that statement to the original autographed manuscripts
 - B. extend that concept to all the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts still in existence
 - C. include in that concept *all* the translations and paraphrases available today
 - D. include in that concept only authorized translations, but not paraphrases

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What do you understand by the words “The Bible is inspired”?
