



THE BIBLE OUR GUIDE

Reading: Psalm 22

The Bible is God's Word

The Bible is the Word of God. It says that *"All Scripture is breathed out by God"* (2 Timothy 3:16). In some versions of the Bible this verse reads, *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God"*. The Bible word 'inspiration' means 'God-breathed'. God 'breathed' His message into the minds of the men who wrote the Bible, so that they wrote His words. In this way God is the true author of the Bible. Many times the Old Testament prophets say, *"Thus says the LORD ..."* If the Bible is not the Word of God, then it is not important. But since it really is God's message to mankind, then it is vital that we read it and try to do what it says. If we ignore the Bible, we are ignoring the Creator of the Universe.

How do we know that the Bible is true?

Here are five reasons.

- The Bible tells the future.
- Archaeologists have found evidence of many things spoken of in the Bible.
- The Dead Sea Scrolls show that the Bible text has not changed with time.
- Jesus believed the Old Testament.
- The Jews still exist!

We will look at each of these in more detail.

1. The Bible tells the future

We cannot be sure what will happen tomorrow. Yet in many places the Bible said what would happen in the future, even hundreds of years before the event happened. These prophecies have come true, even to the little details. The prophets who wrote these words were inspired by God. Here are some examples of Bible prophecies.

a. The birth of Jesus

Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Matthew 2 tells us that the wise men came to Herod (a ruler in Jerusalem) and asked, *"Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?"* When Herod asked the chief priests this question, they answered, *"In Bethlehem of Judea"*. How did they know? They knew because hundreds of years before, Jesus' birth had been prophesied in the Old Testament (Micah 5:2).

b. The death of Jesus

In Psalm 22 there is a prophecy of the crucifixion of Jesus. The end of verse 16 reads, *"they have pierced my hands and feet"*. Psalm 22 was written about 1,000 years before Jesus was crucified. This was a time when crucifixion was not known and criminals were put to death by stoning. The writer of this Psalm must have been inspired by God to

John 19:23,24 When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfil the Scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots."

be able to give this detail about the death of Jesus. In verse 18 the Psalm continues, *"they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots"*. John 19:23,24 show that this is exactly what the soldiers did after they had crucified Jesus.

c. Great events foretold

"And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendour and pomp of the Chaldeans, will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them. It will never be





inhabited or lived in for all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there; no shepherds will make their flocks lie down there” (Isaiah 13:19,20).

When the prophet Isaiah wrote these words about the city of Babylon, it was the rich and powerful capital of one of the greatest nations in the world at that time. Today, in Iraq, where Babylon once stood, there are only ruins in an area of semi-desert. This prophecy of Isaiah has been fulfilled (come to pass). Only God could know that Babylon would be destroyed and that no-one would ever live there again.

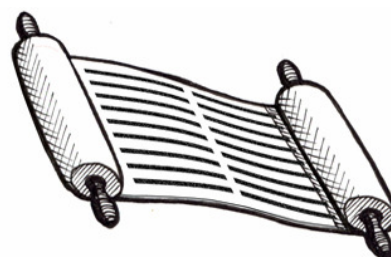
There are many other prophecies like these that have been fulfilled. Only God Himself can see into the future. Bible prophecies prove that the Bible is God’s Word.

2. Archaeologists have found evidence of many things spoken of in the Bible

Archaeologists have found that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19) did exist. They have also found that many other places mentioned in the Bible did exist, including: Ai, Ashkelon, Bethel, Beth-shemesh, Gibeah, Hazor, Jericho, Lachish, Megiddo, Samaria and Shechem. Similarly, archaeologists have found evidence of people mentioned in the Old Testament, e.g. these kings from four different nations: Jehu, Mesha, Cyrus and Nebuchadnezzar.

3. The Dead Sea Scrolls show that the Bible text has not changed with time

Old Testament books were carefully copied on to scrolls about 2,000 years ago and hidden in caves near the Dead Sea, in the south of the land of Israel. They were not discovered until 1947. The scroll containing the book of Isaiah has been compared with what is written in our Bibles today, and the words written are almost exactly the same. The Bible text has not changed with time.



4. Jesus believed the Old Testament

There are people today who mock the idea that Adam and Eve were real people, or that Noah built an ark and took all those animals on board. They think that they know better than to believe a story like Jonah being swallowed by a big fish. But Jesus believed these things!

Jesus believed the Old Testament teaching about ...

Adam and Eve	Matthew 19:4,5
Noah and the flood	Luke 17:26,27
Lot and his wife	Luke 17:29-32
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob	Matthew 8:11
David and Solomon	Matthew 12:3,42
Jonah and the great fish	Matthew 12:40

We cannot ignore the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was brought back to life by God after he had been dead for three days. Such a miracle could only have been performed by the power of God.

5. The Jews still exist!

God chose the people of Israel (the Jews) to be His own special people (Exodus 19:5). He said that they would never be completely destroyed (Jeremiah 30:11; Romans 11:1,2). They have been very wicked, even putting to death God’s own Son, but they still exist today – after more than 3,000 years. The same is not true of other ancient peoples.

Some facts about the Bible

- The Bible was written over a period of about 1,600 years.
- It has 66 books – 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament.
- God used shepherds, kings, fishermen, a doctor, a tent-maker and others to write it.





- All the writers combine to give us one complete story – the story of God’s purpose with mankind.
- Nearly all the writers were Jews – much of the Bible is about the Jewish people.

Here is a quick guide to the various parts of the Bible.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

BOOK	WHAT IT IS ABOUT
GENESIS	The beginning of the world, the first man and the start of the Jewish race.
EXODUS to DEUTERONOMY	These books tell us how God chose the Jews to be His own special people and brought them out of Egypt and gave them the land of Canaan (Israel) as a home.
JOSHUA to ESTHER	The history of the Jewish people is continued in these books.
PSALMS to SONG OF SOLOMON	These are books of poetry and wisdom.
ISAIAH to MALACHI	Books of the prophets. They told the Jews how to obey God and also spoke about many important events that were to happen in the history of the world. Some of these are still coming true in our time and some are still future.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

BOOK	WHAT IT IS ABOUT
MATTHEW MARK LUKE JOHN	These are four separate accounts of the life of Jesus, his death and resurrection from the dead. They are often called the Gospels.
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES	This is about the first churches (ecclesias) and how they were organised.
ROMANS to JUDE	Various letters written to help the newly formed ecclesias.
REVELATION	A book of prophecy with symbols and picture language.

You will find a complete list of the books of the Bible in the front pages of your Bible.

Are there other written revelations from God?

The answer to this question is, “No”. The Bible is the only reliable way that we can learn about God and His purpose.

However, there are many religions in the world that have their own ‘holy book’. The Muslims, for example, have the Koran. The Church of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) has the Book of Mormon, which they claim was sent to them by God. Some of these books take part of their teaching from the Bible; some give wise and sensible advice; but in many places these books do not agree with the Bible message. It is quite clear that God would not say one thing in one book and something different in another. Only one can be the inspired Word of God. The Bible claims to be this Word.



The Bible – a guide for living

God saw the hopelessness and sorrow that sin caused in the lives of men and women and sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die on the cross, to make it possible for us to have our sins forgiven. The Bible shows us the way to salvation and offers us the hope of a wonderful life in the future when Jesus Christ returns to the earth.

Jesus showed us how God wants us to live. The Bible has many examples of people who pleased God. It also shows us how some failed. The story of the Jewish people helps us to learn from their mistakes. The Bible is a guide for living and shows us how to live a life pleasing to God.

Finally

It is a tremendous thought that God in heaven has given us a book so that we may come to know Him and live as He wants us to. God actually tells us why He made the world and what will happen in the future. The Bible tells the story of God's dealings with mankind, from the creation of the first man through to the time when the earth will be filled with the glory of God.

The Bible is the guide God has given us. There is no other book like it. It is not a dead textbook – it is a living Word. It is God's gift to us. If we read it every day, carefully and prayerfully, it will completely change our lives and make them pleasing to God.

Summary

1. The Bible is the Word of God. It is God's message to men and women.
2. It is the only reliable way that we can learn about God and His purpose. There is no other book like the Bible.
3. The Bible shows us how to live a life pleasing to God. It offers us the hope of a wonderful life in the future when Jesus Christ returns to the earth.
4. There are many proofs that the Bible is true. For example, its history is proved by modern discoveries and it contains many prophecies that have been fulfilled.
5. Jesus believed the Old Testament.
6. The Bible is God's gift to us. We should read it every day.

Verses to learn: 2 Timothy 3:16,17

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

Chapter to read:

Psalm 1

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

