

Lesson 1

The Bible

Revelation

The Bible is God's revelation to mankind. God reveals Himself and His will through the Bible. Paul, the apostle, writes, "How that by **revelation** he made known unto me the mystery" (Ephesians 3:3). When writing about how he received the gospel, Paul further states, "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the **revelation** of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:12). God manifested Himself and disclosed His will to Paul and the other writers of the books in the Bible.

How did God reveal Himself and His will to the writers of the books in the Bible? He spoke to Moses "face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." Isaiah received a vision from the Lord. Many signs and wonders were seen by the disciples who followed Jesus Christ. The Lord spoke to Paul from heaven.¹ Thus, God revealed Himself and His will to the Bible writers in many different ways.

An Introduction

The word "Bible" comes from the Greek word *biblia* which means "books." All of the books through which God has chosen to give a revelation to humanity are contained in the Bible. Several titles are given to the Bible such as "the holy scriptures"; "the word of God"; and "the scripture of truth."² There are 66 books in the Bible. Commonly called the *Old Testament*, the first portion of the Bible contains 39 books. The remaining 27 books are called *the New Testament*.

The Bible was written over a period of more than 1500 years by about 40 authors. Almost all of the Old Testament was originally written in *Hebrew* and the New Testament was written in *Greek* (a small portion of the Old Testament was written in Aramaic).

Inspiration

It is very important to understand the *inspiration* of the Bible. "All scripture is given by **inspiration** of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16). Notice that it is *not* the writers who were inspired, but the *words* (the scripture). The word "inspiration" means that God had a divine influence on the Bible writers so that they always wrote the words chosen by God.

¹ Exodus 33:11; Isaiah 1:1; John 20:30-31; Galatians 1:12

² Romans 1:2; Hebrews 4:12; Daniel 10:21

There are many false ideas concerning the inspiration of the Bible. Some teach that only certain parts of the Bible are inspired, but II Timothy 3:16 says "**All** scripture." Some say that the Bible writers were inspired in a natural way like many other great authors such as Shakespeare, Milton, Homer, Confucius, etc. However, the Bible plainly states that it was "given by inspiration of **God**" and is therefore a supernatural book. Still others teach that God gave men a spiritual viewpoint and that these men then wrote with their own words. However, those who teach this are seriously mistaken. God did not merely give thoughts or ideas; He gave *words*.³ Thus every word written was the precise word that God willed to be written.

The proper understanding of the inspiration of the Bible is sometimes called "plenary, verbal inspiration." Plenary means "full" or "complete." The **entire Bible** was given by the inspiration of God. Verbal means "in words" or "by means of words." God gave specific *words* to the Bible writers, not just thoughts or ideas.

Review Questions

True or False

1. The statement "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery" was written by Peter.
2. II Timothy 3:16 says "All scripture is given by revelation of God."
3. The word "Bible" comes from a Greek word meaning "books."
4. The Bible writers received God's thoughts and then wrote these thoughts in their own words.

Multiple Choice

5. Paul, the apostle, says that he received his gospel by:
 - a. reading the Old Testament
 - b. talking to Peter
 - c. the revelation of Jesus Christ
 - d. talking face to face with God
6. The word "inspiration" means:
 - a. God chose some of the words written by Bible writers
 - b. God chose every word written by the Bible writers
 - c. God motivated the Bible writers and gave them ideas

³ Isaiah 59:21; Matthew 4:4; Matthew 5:18; Matthew 24:35; I Corinthians 2:13; II Peter 3:2; Jude 17

d. God enlightened the Bible writers so that they would know His thoughts

7. God's revelation came to humans:

- a. through nature
- b. through miracles
- c. through visions
- d. in many different ways

Fill in the Blanks

8. Another name for the Bible is the holy _____.
9. ___ scripture is given by the inspiration of God.
10. God gave ___ to the Bible writers, not just thoughts or ideas.

For Further Study

1. Are some parts of the Bible more inspired than others? How much of the Bible is for our profit today? (see II Timothy 3:16)
2. Is the entire Bible addressed to mankind as a whole? (see Genesis 6:13; Exodus 14:1-2; Isaiah 2:1; Matthew 10:5-6; Romans 11:13)
3. Did the Bible writers write according to their own will? Who was involved in the process of writing the Bible? (see II Peter 1:21)
4. How does Titus 1:2 give us confidence in God's Word?
5. Memorize the names of the 27 New Testament books in order. When you have completed this, memorize the names of the 39 Old Testament books.
6. List the names of at least ten Bible writers.
7. What do many people do according to II Corinthians 2:17? What are some ways that people might do this?
8. What comparison can we make between Jesus Christ and the Bible? (compare Revelation 19:13 with Hebrews 4:12; compare Hebrews 7:25 with James 1:21; compare Acts 17:31 with John 12:48)
9. Is it possible that the Bible could be completely reliable in spiritual matters, but contain historical and/or scientific errors? (see John 3:12; John 17:17; II Timothy 3:16)

10. Read Mark 12:35-36; Acts 1:16; Acts 28:25; and Hebrews 3:7. When the Bible writers wrote, who was speaking?

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