

Our Amazing Bible...

The Written Word of God

We believe that our **God** and **Creator** has **communicated** the **knowledge** of **Himself** and **His purposes** to **man**¹.
We believe the **means** by which **God** communicates to **man** is through *general* and *special* revelation.

General revelation is *truth* about **God** that is **communicated** through **nature** and **surrounding environment**². It is available to **men** at **all times**.
Special revelation is *truth* that is given by **God** at “**special**” times to **specific** people. **God** gave **special revelation** to **human messengers** through various **means** such as **miracles**, **dreams** and **visions**, **angelic messengers**, and by **direct communication**³.

Many of these chosen **messengers** were known as **prophets**⁴ and **apostles**⁵.
The **holy scriptures**, both **Old** and **New Testaments**, are the *written record* of these “**special**” revelations.

These *written records* were recognized as being “**divinely inspired**”⁶ and the **authoritative word of God**⁷.

They were uniquely **preserved**⁸ throughout the **ages**, and were eventually **collected**⁹ and **grouped** together.

The **process** of **collecting**, **determining their authority**, and **grouping** them together was called **canonization**¹⁰.

The **end result** of this process---our **incomparable Bible**.

We believe the **Bible**, both the **Tanach (Old Testament)** and the **Brit Chadasha (New Testament)**, to be the *written record* of **God’s special revelation** to **man** concerning **His person**, *principles*, and *purposes*.

¹ (Deuteronomy 29:29) (Isaiah 45:18-19)

² (Psalm 19:1-3) (Jeremiah 51:15) (Romans 1:19-20)

³ (Deuteronomy 18:18) (Jeremiah 1:9) (Hebrews 1:1-2)

⁴ (Exodus 24:1-4) (I Samuel 3:1-3) (Zechariah 1:1) (Ephesians 3:4-5) (Hebrews 1:1)

⁵ (Galatians 1:1, 11-12) (Ephesians 3:4-5)

⁶ (II Peter 1:20-21) (II Timothy 3:16-17)

⁷ (Joshua 1:8) (II Kings 23:1-3) (Acts 2:42) (II Timothy 3:16-17) (II Peter 3:14-16)

⁸ (Psalm 12:6-7)

⁹ (Deuteronomy 31:26) (Ezra 7:6) (II Peter 3:14-16) (Colossians 4:16)

¹⁰ (The process by which certain books were recognized as possessing divine authority)

We believe the **Bible** to be the **divinely inspired word of God**¹¹. In the context of the **scriptures**, the word **inspiration** means “**God breathed**,” which literally means **God “breathing”** through **His Spirit**¹² into **God’s messenger** the **very words** He intends to **communicate**.

We believe the **Spirit of God** so **guided** and **superintended** the **writers** of the **Bible**, that they wrote **all** that **He wanted** them to **write**, but with their own **unique personalities** and **writing style**¹³ as a part of the **process**.

Because its *source* is from **God**, *we believe* the **Bible** to be **inerrant**¹⁴ in its **original writings**. This means that it contains **truth**, without any “**mixture of error**”. Though **copyist errors** have been detected in its many **translations**, no essential **meaning** or **truth** contained in the **texts** has been **changed**.

We believe the **Bible** to be completely **trustworthy**, and the **supreme** and **final authority** on **all** matters of **faith and practice**¹⁵. *We believe* the **scriptures** to be the source of **spiritual life**¹⁶, **sustenance**¹⁷, **light**¹⁸, and **righteousness**¹⁹.

We believe it is the **Holy Spirit** who **illuminates**²⁰ **believers** to **biblical truth**, and that the **learning of God’s word** is **essential** to **spiritual growth and maturity**²¹.

We also believe that **writings** such as the **Talmud**²², **Apocrypha**²³, and other **extra-biblical teachings**, and **rabbinical writings** may have valuable **commentary** on **scripture and history**. However, we do **not** consider **these** writings and commentary to be the **divinely inspired word of God**, and thus, do not accept them as having the **binding authority** over **faith** and **practice** that the **Bible** has.

¹¹ (Exodus 31:18) (Deuteronomy 18:18) (Nehemiah 9:30) (II Timothy 3:16-17) (II Peter 1:20-21)

¹² (Nehemiah 9:30) (Zechariah 7:12) (John 14:26) (I Corinthians 2:10-12)

¹³ (II Samuel 23:2) (II Peter 1:20-21)

¹⁴ (Proverbs 30:5-6) (Psalm 19:7-8) (I Thessalonians 2:13) (II Peter 1:12-21)

¹⁵ (Joshua 1:8) (II Timothy 3:16-17)

¹⁶ (Deuteronomy 32:44-47) (John 20:31) (I Peter 1:22-33)

¹⁷ (Deuteronomy 8:3) (Matthew 4:4) (I Peter 2:2-3)

¹⁸ (Psalm 119:105) (II Corinthians 4:4, 6) (Philippians 2:15-16)

¹⁹ (Psalm 119:144, 172) (II Timothy 3:16-17)

²⁰ (Exodus 31:3) (Isaiah 11:2) (John 14:26) (Ephesians 1:16-17)

²¹ (Psalm 1:1-3) (Psalms chapter 119) (Romans 15:4) (II Timothy 2:15) (I Peter 2:2)

²² Talmud (study or learning) The written arrangement of the “Oral Law” consisting of the Mishna and Gemara (non-scriptural laws and commentary regarded as having biblical authority).

²³ The Protestant designation for the 14 or 15 books of doubtful authenticity and authority, which are not found in the Hebrew Old Testament, but are in the manuscripts of the Septuagint (LXX).

Why we **Believe** that the **Bible** is *Divinely Inspired*

A. The **Claim** for *Inspiration*

1. Central Passages

All Scripture is **inspired by God** and profitable for *teaching*, for *reproof*, for *correction*, for *training in righteousness*; so that the **man of God** may be **adequate**, **equipped** for every **good work**. (II Timothy 3:16-17)

But know this first of all, that **no prophecy** of Scripture is *a matter of one's own interpretation*, for **no prophecy** was **ever** made by an **act** of human will, but **men** moved by the **Holy Spirit spoke from God**. (II Peter 1:20-21)

1. Old Testament **Claim**

- a. *Within* the **Old Testament** itself, it declares **3808 times** that it *conveys* the **express words of God** (Rene Pache)
- b. **Jesus claimed** the **Old Testament** to be the **word of God**. (John 10:34-35, Matthew 5:17-18, 19:4-5)

2. New Testament **Claim**

- a. **Every book** in the **New Testament** has been *authored* by an **apostle** or **close associate**, and has *within it* some **claim** to **divine authority**.
- b. The **early church** **accepted** the **New Testament writings** as the **word of God**.
- c. **Jesus guaranteed** the **inspiration** of the **New Testament** by **promising** to **lead His disciples** (the **apostles**) into "**all truth**" through the **Holy Spirit**. (John 16:13, 14:26)

B. The **Evidence** for *Inspiration*

1. Evidence from "within" our **belief system** and **believing community**

- a. The *evidence* of its **own authority**—The **Bible** speaks with its *own authority* when it says, "thus **says the Lord**." (Job 38)
- b. The *evidence* of the **testimony** of the **Holy Spirit**—The **Holy Spirit** bears **witness within** believers that the **Bible** is the **inspired word of God** (II Peter 1:20-21)

- c. The *evidence* of the **transforming ability** of the **Bible**—The **transforming power** of the Bible has always been one of the **strongest evidences** of its own **divine origin**. **Multitudes** down through the **centuries** have been **converted** and **changed**, and numerous **societal reforms** have resulted from the **powerful influence** of **biblical truths** and **principles**.
There is an **unending line of testimonials** giving witness to the **dynamic life-changing power** of the **divinely inspired Scriptures**.
2. **Evidence** that can be examined “**outside**” of our **beliefs** that *all* can **witness**
- a. The *evidence* from the **special unity** of the **Bible**—One of the most often repeated arguments for the **inspiration** of the **Bible** is its **amazing unity**.
Although comprised of **66 books**, written by **40 authors**, over a period of **1500 years**, the **Bible contains an unmistakable unity**.
- b. The *evidence* from the **historical accuracy** of the **Bible**—Because the **Bible** contains a **historical record**, it is subject to *tests of truth* and **accuracy**.
Archaeology, as well as the discovery of **written documents** (ex. **Dead Sea scrolls**), *confirm* the **Bible’s accuracy** when it cites **historical data**.
- c. The *evidence* of the **Bible’s apparent indestructability**—In spite of **incredible opposition** throughout the **ages**, the Bible’s **continuing existence** and tremendous **influence** give *evidence* that like its **Author**, it is **indestructible**.
- d. The *evidence* of the **influence** of the **Bible**—The profound **influence** that the **Bible** has had attests to its **divine inspiration** and **supernatural character**. Its **influence** is **powerful**, and it continues to be in **every age** at the **top** of the **all-time “best seller’s” list**.
- e. The *evidence* from **prophetic fulfillment**—The most **forceful testimony** that the **Bible** is **divinely inspired scripture** is ***fulfilled prophecy***. The **power to predict** and ***accurately bring to pass*** what was declared **belongs to God only**, for **He alone** knows the **end** from the **beginning**.
Prophecy fulfillment offers **concrete proof** of the **Bible** being the **word of God**, the **divinely inspired written record**, of **God’s special revelation**, of His *Person, principles, and purposes* to **man**.

Closing Exhortation