

What is the Bible?

Why understand what the Bible is?

“Any responsible look at a single Christian belief should be based on what God says about that subject. Therefore, as we begin to look at a series of basic Christian beliefs, it makes sense to start with the basis for these beliefs—God’s words, or the Bible.” (Wayne Grudem / Christian Beliefs)

Breathed out by God Himself.

- The Bible is the work of God Himself.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV)

*¹⁶All Scripture is **breathed out by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

- θεόπνευστος (theopneustos) = “Breathed out by God” and “Inspired by God”
- How could something that humans were involved with be inspired by God? How can we consider the Bible His work with the involvement of people?

Romans 16:22 (ESV)

²²I Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord.

- Amanuensis = “Someone employed to copy manuscripts or write down what someone is saying”
- The Bible is Authoritative.
 - The Bible is God’s view and understanding of Himself and the world.
 - The Bible’s authority comes from itself.
 - The Bible has authority in our life.

The issue is whether we submit to the authority of the Bible or not.

Clear on all necessary topics.

2 Peter 3:16 (CSB)

¹⁶He speaks about these things in all his letters. There are some things hard to understand in them....

- We gain clarity on what Scripture is saying when we understand that the Bible’s clarity is impacted by three things.
 - Interpretation by the reader

Proverbs 22:6 (ESV)

⁶Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Our inability to have clarity in God’s Word is not because the Bible isn’t clear, rather it is because we aren’t interpreting different portions of Scripture in the way they should be interpreted.

- Intention of the original author

2 Kings 22:11–13 (CSB)

¹¹ When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes. ¹² Then he commanded the priest Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Achbor son of Micaiah, the court secretary Shaphan, and the king's servant Asaiah. ¹³ "Go and inquire of the Lord for me, for the people, and for all Judah about the words in this book that has been found. For great is the Lord's wrath that is kindled against us because our ancestors have not obeyed the words of this book in order to do everything written about us."

Clarity of Scripture comes when we understand the intention of the original author to the original audience.

- Illumination of the Holy Spirit

"The Holy Spirit's ministry is not to create new ideas or give new information, but to enable us to grasp the truth and the reality of what God has already said in the written word." (Author Unknown)

It should come as no surprise that a collection of books that sets out to not only glorify God, but also reveal His Character and love is a little (ok, very) complicated and hard to understand... But the Holy Spirit will illuminate our hearts, and help us understand His Word.

Sufficient for Doctrine and Practice

- The Bible is sufficient for teaching Doctrine

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV)

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2 Thessalonians 2:15 (ESV)

*¹⁵ So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word **or by our letter**.*

- Sola Scriptura = Scripture Alone
- Sola Gratia = Grace Alone
- Sola Fide = Faith Alone
- Solus Christus = Christ Alone
- Soli Deo Gloria = For the Glory of God Alone

"Sola Scriptura served as the foundation for the other four solas. What would you use to teach someone the doctrine of grace? How would you seek to persuade someone that Jesus was the Christ, the one and only Son of God? What would you use to explain to someone the nature of God, and what it means to worship Him? You would use the Bible, and the Bible alone, to teach and understand the doctrines of grace, faith, Christ, and worship. The protestant reformation was centered on, grounded in, and built upon the doctrine of the sufficiency of the Bible." (Rob Rienow, Reclaiming the Sufficiency of Scripture)

Any doctrine that is not rooted in the sufficiency of Scripture alone is not a doctrine we can hold to. If we cannot prove our doctrines with the Scriptures alone, then they are not true doctrines.

- The Bible is sufficient for practicing a Godly life, corporately and individually.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV)

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, **for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,** ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

- The most recent decision (whether big/small, or difficult/easy) you made, did you ask “what does the Bible have to say about this?”
- The most recent difficult season you went through, what (or who) did you go to for comfort and guidance?
- The most recent good season you went through, what did you primarily go to for enjoyment/entertainment?
- When seeking answers on how to rid yourself of guilt and shame that is a result of your failures and sins, who or what do you turn to?

No matter the season we find ourselves in, nothing else is sufficient to teach us how to walk in a way that honors God and bring true joy, comfort and peace to our hearts. If we are turning to other things, then we are declaring through our actions that the Bible is not enough, it is not sufficient for us.

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Necessary to receive the blessings of God.

Genesis 2:18–23 (ESV)

¹⁸ Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” ¹⁹ Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹ So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man.”

- The Word of God is necessary to reveal what is lacking.

The way in which we come to understand WHAT is lacking is from the written Word of God.

- The Word of God is necessary to reveal God is willing and able to supply what is lacking.

God’s willingness to supply to our needs never exceed His ability.

Philippians 4:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

- The Word of God is necessary to show that what God has supplied was His own Son.

John 1:1 (KJV 1900)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 (CSB)

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 5:39–40 (ESV)

³⁹ You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

From Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21 the bible points to Jesus Christ!

Supplemental Notes

The Bible is a Narrative.

*“It **reveals** the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried.” (Baptist Faith and Message 2000, on “The Scriptures”)*

My intention in discussing this briefly is not to cause confusion whatsoever... but the reality is that this study will be dealing with the essential doctrines of our Christian faith. The truth is that some of the doctrines we hold to are not explicitly shared in the text. For example, there is no verse within the Bible that says God is a triune God, yet we hold to the doctrine of the Trinity because we believe that is what the Bible teaches. So the question then is “how did we come to the understanding that God is a Triune God?”

The answer is through Biblical Theology... which leads to Systematic Theology.

- Difference Between Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology

- Biblical Theology

To be clear... this definition is my own definition of what Biblical Theology is... the same can be said for the definition of Systematic Theology.

“Biblical theology is the revealing of God's character (who God is) through the narrative of scripture (the whole Bible). Through the developing story of the Bible, we understand who God is and His plan, not for man's glory, but for His own glory.”

- Systematic Theology

“Systematic theology is using what we have learned about God from biblical theology to articulate a doctrine (or truth) about a specific topic.”

- Example
Abortion...

Through the narrative of scripture, we do not see God explicitly tell mankind that it is wrong to abort a baby in the womb. However, with biblical theology, and through the reading of the narrative of scripture we can see God's characteristics, in that he cherishes the unborn. We see Jesus in the gospel tell the disciples not to hinder the children from coming to him. The children in that day were considered to be the lowliest part of society, not worthy of anyone's time. But through the narrative of scripture, we see that God himself and Jesus Christ seek out and care for those who society deems to be unworthy. Where systematic theology comes into play is we then from what we have learned about God through biblical theology articulate a doctrine (or truth) about the fact that it is sinful to abort a baby in the womb.

So if we swing back around to the Doctrine of the Trinity, we now know that the reason we have come to this belief is not because there is one single proof verse that says this necessarily. Rather we hold to this belief because the narrative of the Bible reveals that to us. And the Doctrine of the Trinity is our way of systematically articulating what the Bible teaches..