



...Set For the Defence of the Gospel. (Phil 1:17)

# DEFENDER OF TRUTH

## MAGAZINE

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# DEFENDER OF TRUTH

HOLY  
BIBLE

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**Editor:** Afolabi A. Akinyemi



# Editorial

**T**he *Defender of Truth* is a magazine devoted to the propagation of the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It was first published in 1967 under the name *Gospel Defender* by Ezekiel Afolabi Akinyemi (1932-2020) but was rested in 1973 due to fund constraints. The magazine was revived with the name *Defender of Truth* under the founding editor in 1981 and was published until 1989.

It had been the desire of the late editor of this magazine to resuscitate the publication in his lifetime, but this was impossible due to various reasons. The need for a magazine of this nature devoted to spreading the gospel and edifying Christians cannot be over emphasized hence the resuscitation as an e- magazine to facilitate easier and faster distribution.

The words of the founding editor in his editorial in 1981 are still relevant and shall remain our guiding principles in doing this work.

1. "The editor, his associates and all those who may write in this paper should never be esteemed above the Revelation of God which is the Bible. The sole authority of the church is the Bible, so whatever a man writes must be measured in the light of the Scriptures".
2. "The Editor, his associates and all writers in the journal will solemnly determine to publish nothing but the truth as revealed in the Bible".
3. "The paper shall defend the truth and expose error".
4. "It shall avoid attack of personalities."
5. "Since the editor carries the responsibility of whatever is published, we shall allow him, with the assistance of his associates, to determine what to publish".

This magazine shall be distributed free of charge through social and electronic media only and will be published quarterly. The theme of this edition is the Bible and I wish you happy reading.

***The Editor;***

Afolabi A. Akinyemi:

***The Defender of Truth Magazine  
is published quarterly  
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# The Bible

by Afolabi A. Akinyemi

**T**he Bible is reputed to be the best-selling book of all time. The Guinness World Records states that as of 1995, an estimated 5 billion copies had been sold and distributed<sup>1</sup>. With the advent of the Internet, smart technologies and phones, the Bible can be found in the possession of billions of people all over the world.

Unfortunately, many people who have the Bible in their possession do not read or study it neither do they know what the Bible is all about. The most common attitude of many people toward the Bible is that of non-commitment or indifference. There are those who believe the Bible is the word of God but do not read it. This belief does not translate to a recognition of the authority of the Bible which results in obedience and practice of its teachings. Many of those who read it do not care what it teaches. Some people think that only those who claim to be men of God should pay attention to the Bible. The Bible is for all mankind and can be read and understood by all. Ephesians 3:1-4

The Bible which means “the books” is a collection of 66 books without which we would know little or nothing about the creation of man. The authenticity and authority of the Bible is the foundation of Christianity. We would not know the truth about Jesus Christ, the way of salvation and the destiny of man without the Bible. Through our full knowledge of Jesus Christ, all things pertaining to life and godliness has been revealed to us 2 Peter 2:3. It is therefore fitting that this edition of this magazine is devoted to the Bible.

The Bible is divided into the Old and New Testaments which contain 39 and 27 books respectively. Jesus Christ divided the Old Testament into 3 sections. Then He said to them, “**These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.**” Luke 24:44<sup>2</sup> The New Testament comprises of the Gospels, the history of the church, the epistles and the book of prophecy.

The writing of the Bible is one of the most remarkable things about the book. It was written by approximately 40 different writers ranging from fishermen, farmers, scribes, and kings over a period estimated to be around 1600 years. This book shows amazing unity despite the varying backgrounds of the writers and the fact the most of them did not live in the same period.

These men were only instruments used by the Almighty God in revealing His will to mankind. Please consider these passages of Scripture.

“Listen, O coastlands, to Me, and take heed, you peoples from afar! The LORD has **called Me from the womb**; From the matrix of My mother, He has made mention of My name. And He has made **My mouth like a sharp sword**; In the shadow of His hand, He has hidden Me, and made Me a polished shaft; In His quiver He has hidden Me.” Isaiah 49:1-2<sup>3</sup>

“These things we also speak, **not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches**, comparing spiritual things with spiritual” 1 Corinthians 2:13<sup>4</sup>

This edition is meant to engender a change of attitude towards the Bible knowing full well that it will ultimately determine the destination of man at the end of the age. John 12:48

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<sup>1</sup> Best-selling book | Guinness World Records

<sup>2</sup> New King James Version of the Bible

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<sup>3</sup>ibid

<sup>4</sup>ibid



# The Bible:

## GOD'S REVELATION TO MANKIND

by Jobalo Oshikanlu

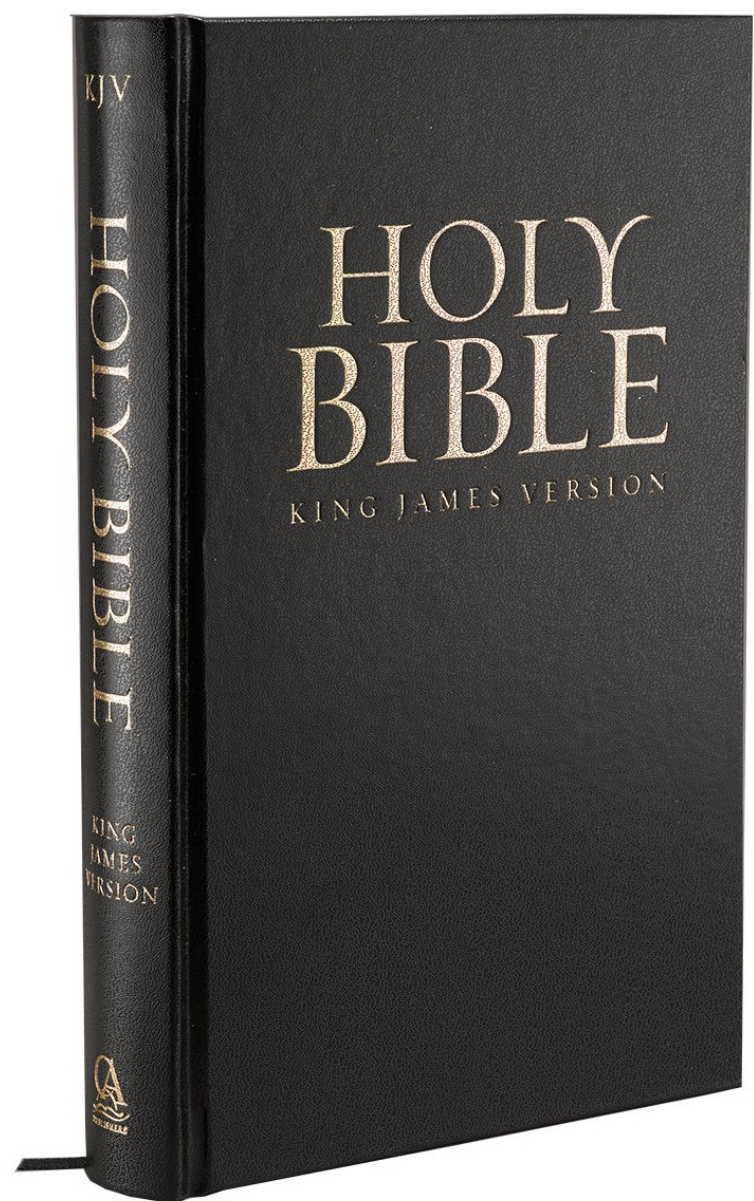
Bible Gems: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). “... For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21). “For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:11).<sup>i</sup>

The name “Bible” is an Anglicization of “*biblos*” and “*biblia*”, Greek and Medieval Latin words meaning “book” and “books”, respectively. The Bible is one composite book made up of 66 books. It is God's revelation to mankind compiled in 66 books (39 books comprising the Old Testament, and 27 books comprising the New Testament) written by about 40 divinely inspired writers over a period of approximately 1,600 years. It is the only source that reveals the will of God for mankind. Everything humanity needs to know about God and what He says about the universe, and about how mankind should relate with the Creator and amongst themselves, are all taught in this unique and exclusive book. This claim of divine inspiration may seem dramatic (or unrealistic to some), but a careful and honest study of the biblical scriptures will show them to be true. No other religious book comes even close to the Bible in the amount of evidence supporting its credibility, authenticity and divine authorship.

### *The Bible Gems Explained*

The first of our Bible gems quoted above states that the Bible is “given by the inspiration of God” (2 Tim 3:16). The literal meaning of the original Greek expression is that the Bible is “God-breathed”. This implies that God is the real Author of the Bible, and that the human writers were mere mouthpieces or megaphones (Jeremiah 1:14; Malachi 1:1; Haggai 1:1-3). David said, “*The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was upon my tongue*” (2 Samuel 23:2; cf. Matthew 22:43; Mark 12:36; Hebrews 3:7-8<sup>ii</sup>). The second Bible gem quoted above (2 Pet 1:21) tells us that the prophetic writers were moved (i.e. “carried along”) by the Holy Spirit. The original Greek word translated “moved” in the passage is *pheromene*, which was used to refer to a ship being carried along by the wind. The prophets raised their sails, so to speak, they were obedient and receptive, and the Holy Spirit filled their sails with the message of God. So the men spoke as God directed. The third Bible gem quoted reveals the identity of the Holy Spirit and Inspirer. The Holy Spirit is God. One biblical scholar puts it very aptly: *God the Father is the giver of the Holy Scripture; God the Son is the theme of the Holy Scripture; and God the Spirit is the author, authenticator, and interpreter of the Holy Scripture.*<sup>iii</sup>

The tallest building in the world as of this year 2020 is the Burj Khalifa, located in Dubai. It is correct to say that it was built by Emaar Properties, the developers, and Adrian Smith, the American architect, even though none of these laid a single piece of concrete or stone in place—they engaged others, contractors



and service providers, to do that. In the same way, the Holy Spirit used human writers for the Bible. He inspired them. He was the “architect” behind the Bible's construction. Just as every stone in a building is there because the architect intended it to be there, so every word in the Bible is in its place because the Holy Spirit so intended it.

Like God Himself, the Bible has rich, infinite resources, as one writer said: *We never get to the end of the Bible. It is as wise in its revelations as in its reservations. Enough is revealed to make faith intelligent. Enough is reserved to give faith scope for development. Everything needful to salvation and godliness is written with such clarity that all the simple-hearted may understand; but there are other matters which, with wise divine purpose, are presented less lucidly, or even enigmatically, so as to challenge enquiry—matters fascinating, mysterious, or more*





*intricate, but all yielding rich and sanctifying reward to devout exploration.*<sup>iv</sup>

The Old Testament, primarily, is the revelation of God to His creation. Moses “wrote all the words of the Lord”, according to Exodus 24:4. God “made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel” (Psalm 103:7). Without the Bible, we would be left to guess who the obviously powerful and intelligent being was who set this world in motion. On its part, the whole New Testament is a “revelation of Jesus Christ”. Paul wrote: “How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel” (Ephesians 3:3-6).

Jesus Christ, the central character in the Bible, is also the world's preeminent character. The dates in our letters, documents and on everything else that we date, derive from the year of His birth. The greatest event in the history of the world was the coming of Christ as a man. The greatest words ever spoken or written were His words. The greatest deeds ever done were accomplished by His hands. The greatest gift ever offered was His blood on the cross of Calvary. Whatever progress the human race has made has also been due to His influence.

The Bible is indeed a letter from God with each of our personal addresses on it.

### **The Power of Biblical Prophecy**

One of the powerful ways by which the Bible validates its divine authorship is through its fulfilled prophecies. As natural man is unable to foresee future events, prophecy would be an acceptable evidence of Divine inspiration. God has thus used prophecy as a primary test of divine authorship. An honest study of biblical prophecy will compellingly show the supernatural origin of the Bible, since a very vast number of biblical prophecies have been fulfilled.

One example of Biblical prophecy is found in Ezekiel chapter 26 which claims to have been written in the 11th year of the reign of King Zedekiah of Judah (around 586 BC). On nine separate occasions in the chapter, the writer uses statements such as “thus says the Lord God”. The text describes the fall of mainland Tyre to the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, which occurred the following year. It further describes the events of Alexander the Great's siege against the island fortress of Tyre (off the coast of mainland Tyre) which occurred 253 years later. The chapter describes how the invaders would tear down the ruins of mainland Tyre and throw it into the sea. That they would “scrape her dust from her and leave her as the top of a rock” (v4). That “they will lay your stones, your timber, and your soil in the midst of the water” (v12). “I will make you like the top of a rock; you shall be a place for spreading nets” (v14). Secular history records that Alexander the Great laid siege to the island fortress of Tyre in 332 BC. His army demolished

mainland Tyre and threw it into the sea. In their effort to construct a causeway to the island, they scraped even the dust, leaving only bare rock. Historian Philip Myers writes, “Alexander the Great reduced Tyre to ruins in 332 BC. Tyre recovered in a measure from this blow, but never regained the place she had previously held in the world. The larger part of the site of the once great city is now as bare as the top of a rock—a place where the fishermen that still frequent the spot spread their nets to dry”<sup>v</sup>. The fate of mainland Tyre was accomplished as foretold in the book of Ezekiel.

Another example of Biblical prophecy is in Daniel, chapter 9, verse 25. Written 500 years before the birth of Jesus Christ, it foretells the very day Christ would enter Jerusalem. The prophecy states: 69 weeks of years ( $69 \times 7 = 483$  years) would pass from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem, until the coming of the Messiah. This is according to the Babylonian 360-day calendar, since Daniel was written in Babylon during the Jewish captivity after the fall of Jerusalem. Thus,  $483 \text{ years} \times 360 \text{ days} = 173,880$  days. According to records found more recently (in 1835) by Sir Henry Creswicke Rawlinson<sup>vi</sup> in the Shushan (Susa) Palace<sup>vii</sup>, this decree was made on 14th March, 445 BC, by King Artaxerxes. Exactly 173,880 days later, on 6th April, 32 AD, Jesus Christ rode into Jerusalem upon a colt (fulfilling the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9). Jesus Christ died upon the cross only a few days later. Several occurrences at His execution and His last words were graphically foretold in Psalm 22<sup>viii</sup>. Three days later, Jesus rose from the dead, again fulfilling numerous other prophecies that foretold of this very event. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is an occurrence that also received corroboration from secular historians, one of them, the well-known Flavius Josephus, a court historian for three successive Roman Emperors, who wrote that Jesus rose from the dead after three days. Josephus, although not a Christian, mentioned several New Testament events and people in some of his works, thus corroborating the authenticity of the Bible.<sup>ix</sup>

### **Is it only Uneducated, Ignorant or Unbalanced People who believe the Bible?**

Don't be fooled or intimidated by unbelieving professors, philosophers or scientists. An intelligent, educated person can—and should—believe in God and in the Bible as His word. Some of the world's greatest individuals—whose intelligence has always been indisputable—were Bible believers.

Many of the major branches of science were founded by Bible believers. It is intriguing that the five greatest physicists in history (Newton, Faraday, Thompson, Maxwell, and Einstein) were all outspoken in their conviction about the Biblical account of creation. A shortlist of famous scientists who spoke in support of the Bible's account of creation include: Robert Boyle—scientist and chemist; Michael Faraday—physicist, formulated laws of electromagnetic induction, did groundwork for making dynamos, electric motors, and transformers; James Joule—science of thermodynamics; William Thompson (a.k.a. Lord Kelvin)—thermodynamics and the Kelvin temperature scale; Johannes Kepler—laws of planetary motion; Carl Linnaeus—botanist, professor; Matthew Maury—leading





scientist in oceanography and hydrography; James Clerk Maxwell—electromagnetic theory; Samuel F. B. Morse—invented the telegraph (Morse code is named after him); Blaise Pascal—invented early calculator, helped discover the theory of probability; Louis Pasteur—invented vaccination, immunization, and pasteurization; Sir Henry Rawlinson—archaeologist; George Stokes—physicist and mathematician.<sup>x</sup>

### Manuscript Reliability

Another challenge against the reliability of the Bible as the word of God today stems from questioning the reliability of the manuscripts from which today's copies of the Bible are translated. However, remarkably, there is widespread evidence for absolute reliability. There are more than 14,000 existing Old Testament manuscripts and fragments copied throughout the Middle East, Mediterranean and European regions that agree dramatically with each other, the foremost set known as the *Masoretic Text*. These texts agree with the Greek version of the Old Testament called *the Septuagint*, which was translated from Hebrew to Greek some time during the 3rd century BC. More recently, between the 1940's and 50's, what are now known as *the Dead Sea Scrolls* were discovered in Israel, and have also provided phenomenal evidence for the reliability of the ancient transmission of the Jewish Scriptures (Old Testament) even before our Lord Jesus Christ's time on the earth's surface as a Man. The Hebrew scribes who copied the Jewish Scriptures dedicated their lives to preserving the accuracy of the holy books, and clearly went to great lengths to ensure manuscript reliability. They were highly trained and meticulous, counting every letter, word and paragraph against the master scrolls. A single error would require the immediate destruction of the entire text.

The manuscript evidence for the New Testament is also dramatic, with over 5,300 known copies and fragments in the original Greek, nearly 800 of which were copied before 1000 AD. Some manuscript texts date to the early second and third centuries, with the time between the original autographs and our earliest existing copies being a remarkably short 60 years. Hence, manuscript evidence of the Bible by far surpasses the manuscript reliability of any other ancient writing existing with humanity. This, in itself, is a fulfilment of God's promise and prophecy in the Bible: "... All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, **but the word of the Lord endures forever.**" (1 Pet 1:24-25).

### Conclusion:

The Bible provides guidance in our journey through life to eternity, as well as leads us to a relationship with the God of the universe. As it is the Word of the living God, no other book gives us more insight into our lives, more hope for our future, and a true path to a relationship with God. It is not one of the books where the words of God can be found. **Rather, it is the only book that reveals the mind of God, and the penalty of eternal damnation is reserved for those who add to or subtract from its message** (Revelation 22:18-19). Search the Bible with openness and honesty and see for yourself what the Creator of the universe

wants to tell you! He is telling you to believe and confess your faith in Jesus Christ and the supreme sacrifice He made for our salvation (Acts 16:31; Romans 10:8-10), to repent and be baptized to receive forgiveness of your sins and membership of His body (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:37-38; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:26-27; 1 Peter 3:21) and to continue faithfully in His word till death (John 8:31-31; 2 Peter 3:17-18; Titus 2:11-14; Revelation 2:10).

<sup>i</sup> Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James' version (NKJV).

<sup>ii</sup> The quotation in Heb 3:7-11 is from Psalm 95:7-11. The psalm was written by David. But Heb 3:7 says "as the Holy Spirit says ..."

<sup>iii</sup> By the way, the Holy Spirit is the Interpreter of Scripture in the sense that one passage helps interpret another (which interpretation is gained through study – 2 Tim 2:15), not in the erroneous sense that the Spirit individually tells people what verses are supposed to mean.

<sup>iv</sup> J. Sidlow Baxter, *Studies in Problem texts*, p.5.

<sup>v</sup> Philip Van Ness Myers, history textbook, *General History for Colleges and High Schools* (Boston, Ginn & Co.) - pg.55.

<sup>vi</sup> Sir Henry Creswicke Rawlinson (1810 - 1895), British army officer who deciphered the Old Persian portion of the trilingual cuneiform inscription of Darius 1 the Great at Iran. His success provided the key to the deciphering of the Mesopotamian cuneiform script, a feat that greatly expanded knowledge of the ancient Middle East.

<sup>vii</sup> The Shushan Palace was referenced by Nehemiah in Nehemiah 1:1.

<sup>viii</sup> See the synoptic accounts of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in Matthew 27:32-50; Mark 15:21-37; Luke 23:26-49 and John 19:17-37.

<sup>ix</sup> Concerning Jesus, Flavius Josephus in his book, *Antiquities*, stated the following: "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."

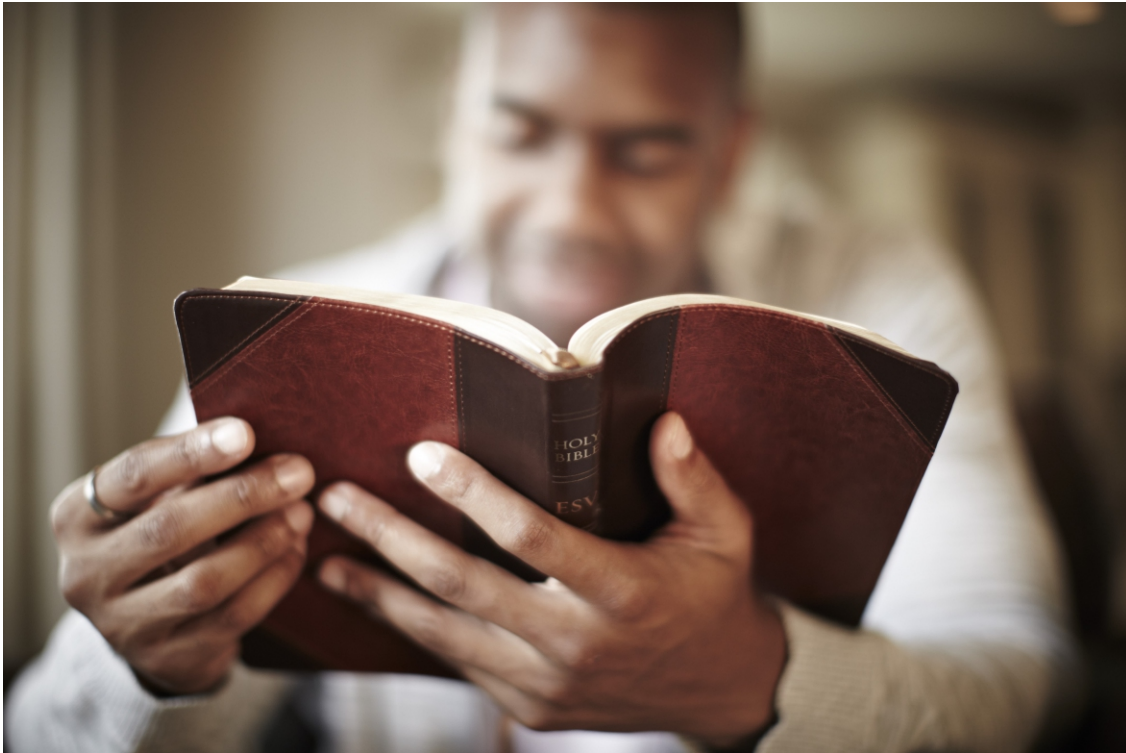
<sup>x</sup> Compiled by Allen Webster in his: *You gotta be dumb to believe the Bible. Right?*

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# The Bible is Relevant and Sufficient for all Ages

by Kayode Adekunle



**T**he Bible, also known as the scriptures contains the inspired word of God to mankind. Although it is viewed as one book, it's actually a collection of many books. It is called God's word even though it was not physically written by God. Instead, He worked through ordinary people, inspired by His Holy Spirit, to write the Bible. It contains prophecies spoken by **“the holy men of God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit”** 11Peter1:21. The Old Testament is primarily a record of God's dealings with the patriarchs, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the Hebrews or Jews. The New Testament contains the record of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, the establishment of the Church and the various letters written by the Apostles to the Christians.

The Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary defines the word relevant as **“something or somebody having ideas that are connected and valuable to people in their lives”**. While sufficient is considered to be **“something that is enough for a particular purpose”**.

## Relevance of the Bible

**It communicates the will of God to man.**

The relationship between God and man has always been characterized by communication. Ever since God created man, He has always been communicating His will to him. At every point in time, clear understanding of God's command and instructions by man and carrying them out accordingly has, by and large, determined the cordiality or otherwise of the relationship between them.

We have instances in the Bible when God frowns at man and even going ahead to punish him for flouting His instructions. We have few cases in the Old Testament like Adam Gen 3:1-24; Cain Gen 4:3-5, Heb11:4; Nadab and Abihu Lev10:1-2; Uzzah 11Sam 6:6-

7, Num 4:1-20. God used Moses to communicate His will to the Israelites, right from the time He took them out of Egypt to the time they got to Canaan, the high point of this was when the Law was given to them on Mount Sinai Ex 20: 1-17.

God has always been using His Laws to regulate both the religious and moral parts of the life of man. He gives His code of Conduct through His words as shown in the Bible to regulate the life of man. David said in Psalm119:11 **“your word I have hidden in my heart that I might not sin against you”**

In the New Testament, God speaks to man today through Jesus Christ Matt 17:5; Heb1:1-2. We are strictly commanded today to **“do and say all things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ”** that is, by His authority Col 3:17. Christ handed the word over to His Apostles and wants us to **“believe Him through their word”** John17:8; 20.

Hence, it is not surprising that when Christianity started in Jerusalem, all that were baptized **“continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine”** Acts2:41-42. How the Holy Spirit was used by God to assist the Apostles to reveal His mind to man is mentioned by Paul in 1Cor2:1013 **“these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words”**.

For the purpose of the salvation of man, Christ commands that His gospel must be preached, heard and believed Mark15:15-16; Rom10:13-14. Paul told the Romans that the Gospel of Christ has the **“power of God to save”** Rom1:16-17. The relevance of the Bible is underscored by the fact that it contains the Gospel of Christ which is the truth that can guarantee the salvation of man today John 8:32 1Tim2:3-4.

## The Bible is true

And he who was seated on the throne said, **“Behold, I am making all things new.”** Also he said, **“Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”** Rev 21:5. **‘The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever’** Psalm119:160. The two verses of the Bible quoted above from John and David, no doubt, give credence to the fact that the Bible is true. God our creator speaks His mind to mankind through the Bible and He **“cannot lie”** Titus1:2. The truthfulness of the Bible is further underscored by the accuracy of



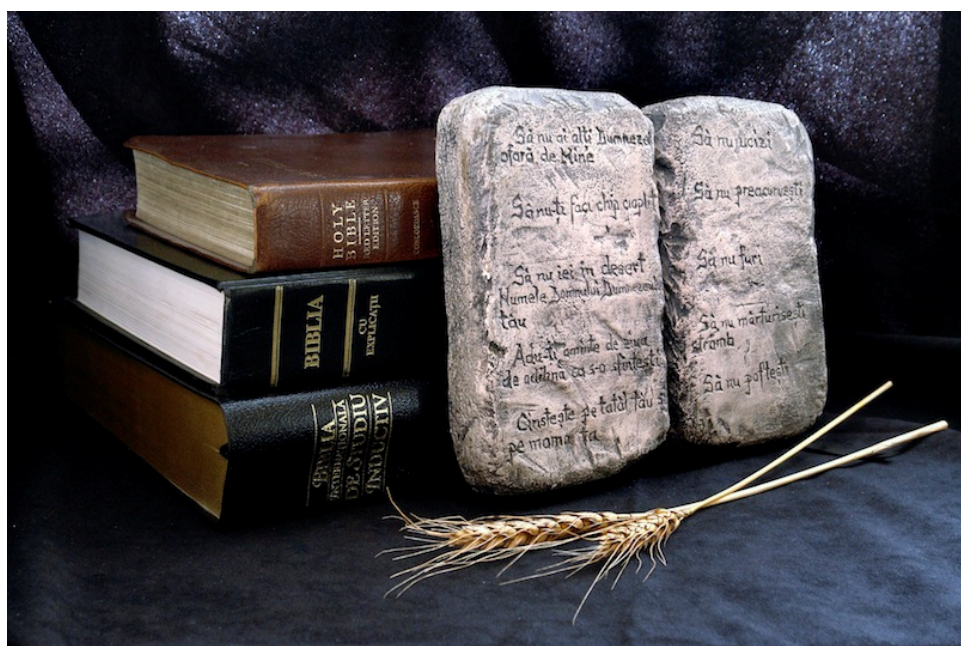


its recordings. It has been proven over and over that the people, events and places mentioned in the Bible tally accurately with history. Daniel's prophecies about the establishment of Kingdoms and eventual establishment of the Church during the reigns of the Romans are all accurate historical events.

The Bible record of God's work of creations no doubt further authenticates its content. David says **“The heavens declare the glory of God.”** Psalm 19:1. The existence of the firmaments and their essentials like the sun, moon and stars, earthly natural phenomenon like the sea, rivers, rocks and mountains all validates the Bible. Paul says this to the Romans **“What can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened”**. Romans 1:19-21.

One of the fundamental issues that confirm the truthfulness of the Bible is the issue of death. The story of Adam and Eve in the book of Genesis shows how sin and death came into the life of man. If anything else is doubtful. The issue of physical death is not. Since God made the pronouncement in Gen 3:19, man has been dying and the statement in Heb 9:29 **“Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment”** has been made true in the life of man. The truthfulness of the scripture is further confirmed when Jesus Christ said **“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”** John 17:17

## The Bible contains God's Law for Judgment



That man will be judged at the end of his sojourn on earth is as certain as death itself Heb 9:27. The judgment at the end existence will be based upon the deeds done in this life. Therefore man's eternal destiny is determined by his actions here on earth, not after he dies. Solomon has this to say **“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every**

**work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil”**. Eccl. 12 : 13 - 14. The power in the word makes it sufficient for judgment, the writer of the book of Hebrews has this to say **“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account”** Heb 4:12-13. While on earth, Jesus Christ warned all that **“rejected Him and His words, that the same words He has spoken will judge them on the day of judgement”** John 12:48

## Sufficiency of the Bible

The sufficiency of Scripture should simply be understood on the basis of the fact that it is only in the Bible God has given mankind all things that are essential for the proper understanding of who He is, who we are, how He has acted in the past and what He expects from us today. Peter has this to say **“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue”** 1 Peter 1:2-3

The fundamental fact about the sufficiency of the Bible is that it has to be accepted as the only medium through which man can have access to God. It is important for man to know and accept the fact that no other medium must be accorded such status, whether now or in the future. The completeness and finality of the scriptures underscores the sufficiency of the Bible. In other words, Scripture is complete and sufficient for belief, worship and behavior. Nothing needs to be added to them.

## Everything that Man needs to know about God and be saved has been revealed to him.

Moses has this to say to the Jews **“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law”**. Deuteronomy 29:29. The implication of this statement is that, God in His wisdom, has sufficiently revealed to man all that he needs to know about God and be saved ultimately. When the jailor asked Paul and Silas in Acts 16:30 **“what must I do to be saved?”** the Bible says **“then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house”** Acts 16:32. The Bible refers to a man in sin as **“a dead man”** Eph 2:1; 1 Tim 5:6. However, the dead man can only be made alive by the word. Christ says **“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are**





life”. John 6:63

## The Bible is Sufficient for our Faith



“So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God” Rom10:17. The scripture defines faith as **“the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”**. Heb11:1. The substance and evidence mentioned here are all revealed in the Bible and that is why man is expected to approach the scripture and the understanding of the will of God **“by faith”** because without it **“no one can please God”** 11Cor5:7; Heb11:6. The Gospel of Christ as revealed by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament **“reveals the righteousness of God from faith to faith”** and since **“the just shall live by faith”**, it is of utmost importance that the Bible must be accepted in its totality. As far as the issue of faith is concerned, the sufficiency of the Bible is further underscored by Jude when he says **“Beloved, although I have been eager to write to you about our common salvation, I now feel compelled instead to write to encourage you to contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints”** Jude 3. The implication of this is that the Bible is the final word of God to humanity.

## The Bible has sufficient answers for all human morals

Joshua says this to the Jews **“This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success”**. Joshua 8:1. The law was given to the Jews not only to guide their religious life but also their moral life. Moses warned them to **“learn the statutes of the law and be careful to observe them”** Deuteronomy 5:1. God made it clear to them that observing or failing to observe the law is like choosing between **“life and death”** Deuteronomy 30:19.

In the New Testament, Christians are told just like the Jews to **“love God with all their heart and also love their neighbours like themselves”**. Mark 12:30-31. The Bible reveals all the guidelines that are needed to live a decent and peaceful life. Paul

has this to say to the Christians in Thessalonica **“but concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing”**. 1Thess4:9-12.

Family relationship and how Christians are to relate with government are not also left out. God's directives as to how husband and wife on one hand, and children and parents on the other hand, should relate with themselves are clearly stated in the Bible. Eph5: 22-33; Col3:18-21; Rom13:1-7 and other Bible passages clearly indicate all this.

## Conclusion

Through the various stages of human history, God has given mankind relevant and sufficient information to believe in Him. From creation time till now, man has always had enough information to know that God existed and that He is the Almighty who created the heavens, earth and all the creatures in them. In addition, God has always been making it clear to man what He requires of him from generation to generation. In other words, man has never been left in the dark about God's existence or how He expected him to behave. The Bible is the only book that contains all this information. It is not surprising then that Paul, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote this to Timothy **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”**. 11Tim3:16-17

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# The Bible And Its Purpose – 2 Tim. 3: 16-17

by Opemipo Olusola



One of the greatest weapon employed by the Devil in fighting the Almighty Father of creation is to blind the eyes of men against the authenticity of the Bible and to harden their hearts against its Divine instructions, 2Cor.4:3-4, Rev.12:9. Satan achieves this to undermine God's power and to destroy the purposes for which the Bible was given to men. Thus, many other religious books are introduced into the world as well as multiple religious bodies to cause much confusion and distraction to any would-be-Bible believer. 1Cor.14:33.

Here in this lesson, we shall focus more on the uniqueness and the divine purposes of the Bible! The Bible is the only qualified book to be called the word of God due to its abundant internal and external evidence.

It was written by forty (40) inspired men over a period of sixteen centuries (1,600yrs). *"for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."* — 2Pet 1:21 (NKJV).

Those forty or more writers produced sixty-six treatises in several different languages- Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

They wrote poetry and prose. They Wrote on law and Grace, on Sin and morals, on blessings and cursing, on a Satan to shun and on a Messiah to embrace.

The Bible was written by the inspiration!

## THE PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE

### 1. To Communicate the Divine Will to the Sinful man!

**Man**, by his natural instincts cannot ascertain the will of God for his earthly journeys. Man cannot direct his own steps! (Jer. 10: 23) Thus, it becomes necessary for God to reveal His mind unto the depraved men through His Holy Spirit- I Cor. 2: 9-14, Heb. 1: 1,2, failure to know the scriptures often lead to many religious errors today. Matt. 22: 29.

**2. To give Evidence** – The Bible especially the Old Testament Scriptures are meant for evidence that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that the Bible itself is the Word of God by studying the fulfilled prophecies that are written in it. John 5: 39, Lk. 24: 44-48.

**3. To give Hope** – The Scripture is meant to be a source of hope to the oppressed or despised believers in the midst of the crooked and perverted modern societies. Rom. 15: 4. As we see the faithfulness of God in rewarding those who patiently obeyed Him, this gives us a good motivation and expectation! Heb. 6: 10-12, 11: 1-40, ps. 119: 49-50.

**4. To produce faith** – So then, faith comes by hearing and "hearing by the word of God". Rom. 10:17. The Bible alone is designed by God to build His trust in men, and to enable men walk with Him Amos3:3, 2Cor.5:7, Heb. 11:6.

**5. Any other faith that is sourced from other religious books apart from the Bible** – Is demonic and is vain, please check I Tim. 4: 1. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20: 30-31). Hence, the Bible faith is sufficient for us, there is no more need for new revelations! Gal.1:6-9, Rev.22:18-19.

**6. To perfect man; The purpose of the Bible is summed up in 2Tim.3:16-17; " All scriptures is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrines, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished (prepared) unto all good works". The Bible is capable of making man completed (perfected) as regards his moral life and religious duties toward God;**

**i. For doctrine:** - "a set of ideas or beliefs that are taught or believed to be true" (Webster dict.). Bible reveals that salvation is obtained by abiding in the doctrine of Christ only- 2Jhn.1:9-11.

Other three doctrines which cannot save are; Doctrine of Moses, Doctrine of Men, and Doctrine of Demons. (Jhn 1: 17, Matt. 15:8-9; I Tim. 4: 1).

Failure to divide the word of God rightly (i.e. not knowing the distinctions between the two testaments in the Bible) has led to much religious crisis and grievous errors today – 2 Tim. 2: 15.





**ii. For Reproof:** - It means “criticism for a fault”; “Rebuke”; “Reprimand”; “Condemnation” etc. The Bible is given to us for the purpose of exposing, criticising and condemning what is contrary to the word of God. Eph. 5: 11-13.

Sadly, modern religionists are resistant to rebuke from God's word, considering such practice as “judging others” or as “unscriptural” but the Bible has never encouraged us to be silent about a sinful practice or a falsehood! Jhn 7: 24, I Cor. 11: 31-32. We ought to use the Bible to test or assess our faith and practices! I Jhn. 4: 1, 6; Heb. 12: 8.

**iii. For correction:** - “a change that makes something right, true, accurate, etc”; Amendment; Punishment; a bringing into conformity with a standard” (Webster Dictionary). For those of us who are living in these last days, (i.e. the New covenant or Messianic times), the Apostles of Christ has been set forth as our standard in Christian faith, I Cor. 4: 9, Phil. 3: 17-19, Gal. 1: 6 – 9. Due to human weakness, we often fall short of this divine standard, hence each time our errors are pointed – out to us (whether in our worship practices or our morals) from the Bible, we ought to humbly receive the correction in order not to miss our eternal reward in Heaven! I pet. 1: 3-4, Jms 1: 21-22, Titus 3: 9-11. Won't you allow the word of God to convert your soul now? – Psalm 19:7, Heb. 3: 8,

**iv. For Instruction in Righteousness:** - Just like an apprentice to his master, the morally corrupt men need to submit to the righteous orders and the teachings of the Bible so as to live a holy live in the midst of the wicked world. Rom. 12: 1-2, Phil. 2: 12-14, IPet. 1: 15-17.

The Bible is meant to train us to become a full-grown man in Christ, that we may no longer be an infant or weakling in Christ. Eph. 4: 13-14, Heb. 13: 9, I Cor. 3: 1-4

## Conclusion:

Having learnt about the divine origin of the Bible, its proof of inspiration and the purposes for which God gave it. Do you study it daily? How obedient are you to its teachings? Like the Jews in the days of Stephen, are you not resisting the Holy Spirit's messages as revealed in the Bible? How shall you escape the impending Judgement of God as you neglect the Apostles' pattern and the teachings of Christ?

It is not too late to reject all these man-made creeds/ books, cleave to your Bible alone, repent of your morals and religious sins and be baptized into Christ's teachings for the remission of your sins as the Bible has commanded you in Mark 16: 15-16; Acts. 2: 38, 22: 16.

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# The Old And The New Testament

by Dapo Olawale



When one flips through the pages of the bible, he will notice that this great book is divided into two major parts: Old and New Testaments or Covenants. The Old Testament consists of 39 books and the New Testament consists of 27 books. Why do we have these titles – Old and New Testament/Covenant?

In our day-to-day language, a "testament" usually refers to a "will" that someone makes before he dies, stating how he wants his property to be divided after his death. The word testament is not used in this regular sense in the bible rather it is used mainly in the sense of a covenant. Covenant on the other hand simply means contract or agreement. In the bible we read of a covenant made between countries (1 Samuel 11:1) and between people (Genesis 31:44ff.). Significantly, a "covenant" was made by God with the nation of Israel when they were led out of Egypt and camped at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:1-8; 24:1-8). Most of the Old Testament is about this covenant.

In the scriptures, the word "testament," "covenant," or "will" are used to refer to a binding system of faith revealed by God in a particular dispensation. For instance, in Hebrews 9:15-17 and 10:10 "testament," "covenant," or "will" are used to describe the system of faith given by Christ which came into effect upon His death.

## The Distinction between Old and New

By the language of the bible itself the distinction of old and new is clearly intended. When Jesus instituted the Lord's supper, he spoke of the *blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins* (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25). Also, whilst discussing the change of covenants, the Apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 3:14 uses both "Old Testament" and "New Testament".

Prophet Jeremiah spoke of a "new covenant" that God would make with Israel different from the Covenant on Mount Sinai

when they were led out of the land of Egypt. See Jeremiah 31: 31-32; Hebs 8: 8 –12; 10: 16 – 17. The Old Testament itself predicted that there would eventually be a change of covenants.

*Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, [h]though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their [i]hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jer. 31:31-34).*

The writer of Hebrews quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34 and applies it to the New Covenant that Christ established with his disciples (Heb. 8:7-13). He concludes by stating that the Old Covenant has passed away: *For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second . . . In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away* (Heb. 8:7, 13). To state that the Old Testament is abrogated is to teach what the Old Testament itself foretold would occur.

Thus, the division of the Bible into two testaments emanated from the teaching of Scripture itself. Indeed, the Old testament was never planned to be permanent. God always intended that it would be temporary in the way it worked and for the age and dispensation it was to serve.

Based on these two testaments the bible may also be correctly divided into three dispensations of history, namely – the Patriarchal, Mosaic and Christian dispensations (Hebs 1: 1- 2). The patriarchal age (literally age of the fathers) runs through patriarchs such as: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Mosaic age runs from Moses and the prophets till the coming of Christ. We are now in the Christian age. The Patriarchal and Mosaic period are revealed to us in the Old Testament whilst the account of the beginning of the Christian Age are contained in the New Testament.

## The Purpose of the Old and New Testament

The primary purpose of the Old Testament was to reveal and condemn sin (Romans 3:20; 7:7 – 13) as well as to tutor us to Christ (Galatians 3:24 – 25). According to Galatians 3: 24 – 25, the Old Testament served the purpose of tutoring us into Christ. A tutor is a guide, guardian, trainer, or a child leader. The role of a tutor in Greek times is to help a child to maturity and point of independence. When a tutor has done this work well, he is no longer needed by the child, as he becomes obsolete. The law of Moses served this similar purpose; it was designed to train the Hebrew people for the reception of Christ. The Old Testament contained prophecies concerning the Messiah and a rigorous demand of the Law both moral and religious perfection which no



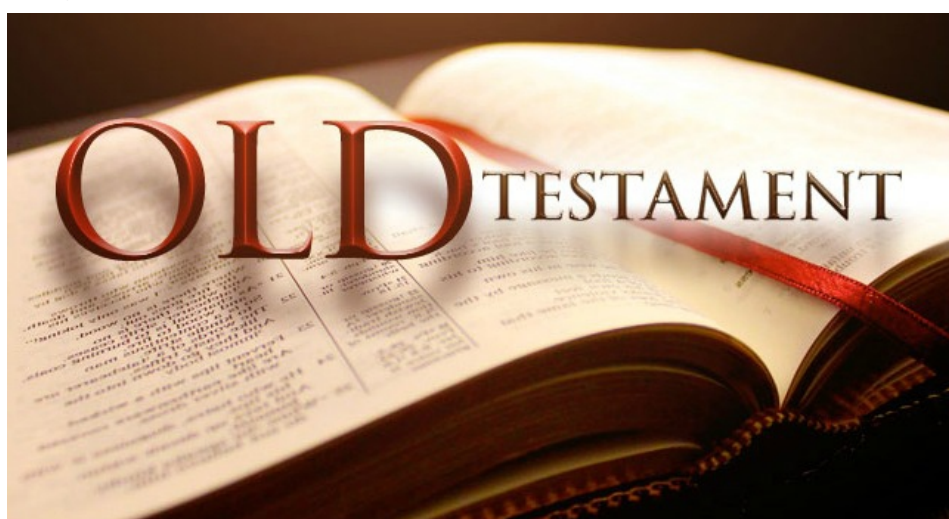


human, but Christ could accomplish. Now that Christ has come and “the faith” established, we are no longer in need of or under the Old Covenant.

Furthermore, when one reads the regulations for worship in the Old Testament Tabernacle, he would observe that this worship foreshadowed the coming of Him who is the true sacrifice for sin, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 8:5). The Old Testament system is thus not the real substance intended but a copy or shadow system (Hebrews chapters 9 and 10). For instance, John the Baptist describes Jesus as *the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world* (John 1:29). His audience could easily understand how a one-year-old lamb without blemish was slain and its blood sprinkled on the altar as an atonement for sin. By this comparison of Jesus to the “lamb of God,” the common man would understand that Jesus is man's offering for sin. Paul describes Jesus as “our Passover” (1 Cor. 5:7) in reference to the institution of the Passover at the time of the tenth plague in Egypt when the firstborn were slain. Every house in Israel was told to slay a lamb and sprinkle its blood on the doorposts and lintels. When the Lord saw the blood, he would pass over that house so that its firstborn would not be killed. Christ is our Passover. His blood saves us from the judgment of death.

The New Testament, therefore, is the substance which serves the primary purpose of providing salvation based upon Christ. Acts 13:38 & 39 and John 1:17. In other words it is the fulfilment of the Old Testament. The types and shadows of the Old Testament are prophetic of the great atonement that was made in the New Testament. Consequently, Jesus could say about his work in fulfillment of the Old Testament, “*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill*” (Matt. 5:17). His coming was not to destroy the law and prophets but to fulfill them. To fulfil in this sense is to make something full, expand or bring something to completion. In other words, Jesus' death on the cross did not destroy the Old Testament, although it brought this period of Bible history to an end. Rather, his work was the fulfilment/completion of God's divine purpose and plan to save mankind through his Son.

Having received therefore the substance in Christ Jesus, there is no need to continue to look up to a copy or shadow of the substance. Upon fulfilment/completion, therefore, the law as a legal code has been abolished and cancelled by the sacrificial death of Christ (Col. 2:14ff). Christ has discharged men from the obligation of the Mosaic Law! (Romans 7: 1 – 6)



## The Old Testament Is Not Binding Today

Several Scriptures teach that we are no longer living under the Old Testament, some of which are highlighted below:

- a) Ephesians 2:14-17. Paul wrote, *For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.* Notice that the “law of commandments” was “abolished in his flesh.”
- b) Colossians 2:14-17. Apostle Paul stated that the “handwriting of ordinances” was nailed to the cross. Therefore, men are no longer obligated to observe the Jewish feast days (such as Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles), the new moon feast, or the sabbath day.
- c) In Galatians 5:1-4 Paul posited that not only is one not bound by the Law of Moses, but those who impose the keeping of the Law of Moses on man are (i) obligated to keep all of the Law of Moses, not just a part of it, (ii) Christ has become of no effect to such a person, and (iii) he is fallen from grace.
- d) Hebrews 7:12. The entire book of Hebrews develops the theme of the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant. In Hebrews 7:12, the writer argues that the Law must have changed for Christ to be priest. *For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.* (Heb. 7:12). This reasoning is quite clear. The Old Testament mandates that the descendants of Levi be priests (Heb. 7:11). Since Christ is from the tribe of Judah, he could not be a priest unless the Law changed. The change in Law came when Christ died on the cross.

*And for this reason, He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.* (Heb. 9:15-17).

The necessity for a new covenant is also shown by the need for a better sacrifice than was offered under the Old Testament. The blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin (Heb. 10:4); consequently, a superior sacrifice for sin was needed which need was filled in the sacrifice of the atoning blood of Christ.

Many other Scriptures emphasize the same truth that the Law has changed. We are no longer living under the Old Testament but under the New Testament (2 Cor. 3).



## Application and Use of the Old and New Testament

The change of Laws has far reaching implications today. Here are some of them:

1. One can only know what to do to be saved from studying the New Testament. The conditions for salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ are found in the New Testament, not in the Old Testament (Acts 4:12, 13:38 & 39 and John 1:17). Today, one must search the pages of the New Testament to find the conditions for pardon from sins.
2. The laws regulating life in the Old Testament are not binding today. This applies to all the Old Testament. Men are justified by the blood of Christ. Consequently, there is no need for animal sacrifices. All Christians are priests (1 Pet. 2:5), so there is no need for a separate priesthood descended from the tribe of Levi. One does not have to go to Jerusalem to worship at the Jewish Temple on three annual feast days (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacle), because where one worships is unimportant (John 4:20-24).

On issues of morality, polygamy is no longer permissible as once was acceptable during the Old Testament (see Exod. 21:10-11); rather, it is one man to one woman (1 Cor. 7:1-5). The Law regulating divorce and remarriage has also changed. Whilst the Law of Moses allowed divorce and remarriage for both parties in a situation of uncleanness (adultery was punishable by death). Christ allows only the innocent party, who divorces his mate for fornication, to remarry (Deut. 24:1-4; Matt. 19:9). There is no binding law for a civil state that punishes fornication and adultery by death (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:21-24; John 8:4). These are some differences in moral law between the Old Testament and New Testament.

3. The New Testament regulates public worship for the church today. Were the Old Testament binding on mankind today, men would assemble for public worship on Saturday, the Sabbath. In the Temple animal sacrifices would be offered and other rudiments of the Jewish worship service would be observed. Since the Law has changed, men are not regulated by the Old Testament, but the New. What is done in worship must be found in the New Testament. New Testament saints assemble for worship on the first day of the week, not on the Sabbath (see Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Rev. 1:10). The New Testament provides no authority for Sabbath observance, a separate priesthood, instrumental music in worship, a separate choir, burning incense and lighting candles (as acts of worship), tithing, and a host of other practices common in many churches.

From the foregoing, it would therefore be logically inconsistent and biblically wrong to pick and choose which parts of the Old Testament one wants to comply with as many are doing in the religious world today. Since the Law has changed, we are no longer bound by the ordinances and statutes of the Old Testament.



### Conclusion

The message of the Old Testament is simply to foretell the coming of the Saviour of the world. This message hitherto concealed has now been revealed in the New Testament. The record of the Old Testament is true (Ps. 19:7) providing valuable lessons for us today as Paul noted "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the [a]patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). Christians, however, are not bound by its teachings as a Law for the church. Christians now live under the New Testament, under the authority of Christ.

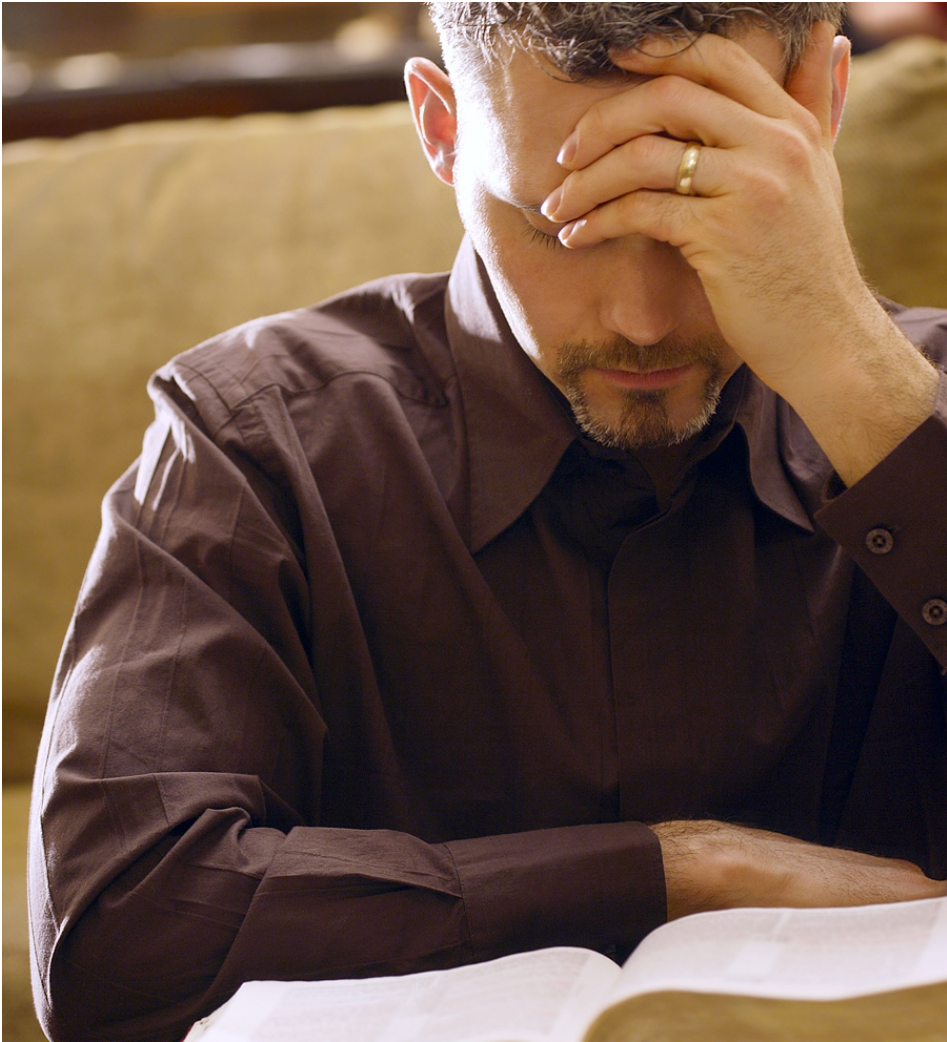
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# The Right Attitude Towards The Bible

by Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba



**T**he Bible is a collection of 66 books written by about 40 men under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit over a period of 1600 years (II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:21). It is the book by which all men will be judged and thus, having the right attitude towards the Bible is a major key to attaining eternal life (John 12:48; Matthew 7:24-27; 19:17; II John 9). Attitude is defined by Merriam Webster's dictionary as “the way you think and feel about someone or something.” It is “a position assumed for a specific purpose” (ibid). The English dictionary defines attitude as “a disposition or state of mind.” When the Scripture says, “Let **this mind** be in you which was also in Christ...” (Philippians 2:5). It means that we are expected to have the same kind of mind, attitude or disposition that was in Christ, which is the right attitude.

Meanwhile, the study of the Bible has attracted various kinds of attitudes from individuals. There are attitudes people either have or with which they approach the Scriptures. Some of these attitudes had created and still creating pother in the religious world. While some view the Bible as the inspired word of God and as the real and absolute authority in matters of faith, some see it as just another good book with wise sayings. Some do not even believe it at all as God's Word and others see it as a complement to

other books. Many who believe in God do not realize that the power of the Almighty God is in His Word (Hebrews 4:12; Romans 1:16). These are the cause of most disagreement between and among the people of God. The word of God, the Bible, will remain forever and ever even while heaven and earth pass away (Matthew 24:35).

Our Lord Jesus Christ had the right attitude as He came to do the Will of His Father in heaven. He also set the pattern for us and we are instructed to have this same attitude or “mind” (Philippians 2:5). In this piece, attempt will be made to examine the various attitudes people have and with which they approach the Scriptures; identifying their pitfalls and point out the right attitude that everyone should have towards the Bible in order to be pleasing to God.

## Kinds of Attitudes Towards the Bible

Some attitudes towards the Bible have been identified and observed over the years by scholars. These attitudes and approaches can be inextricably linked to certain individuals or religious groups based on what they teach and practice. Let us take a look at some of them under the following heading: (1) Rationalism (2) Mysticism (3) Romanism (4) Neo-orthodoxy (5) Liberalism and (6) Conservatism.



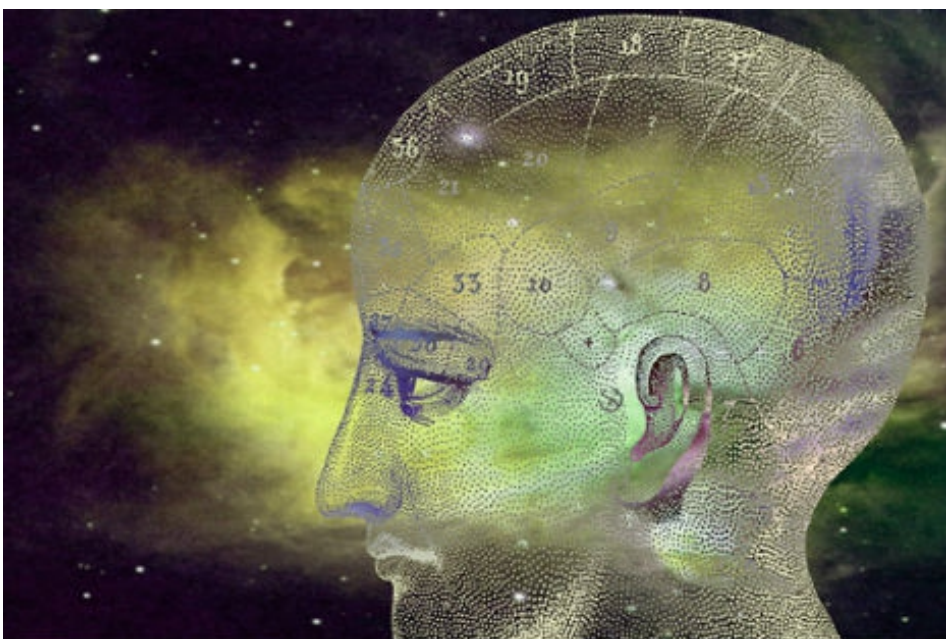
**Rationalism:** There are those who believe in reason and their common sense to determine what is authoritative in religion. This kind of attitude is called “Rationalism.”

Rationalism is the practice of only believing what is based on reason. This view regards reason as the chief source and test of knowledge and of spiritual truth or justification. Those who have this kind of attitude do not believe in the supernatural. In this category falls the atheists who do not believe in the existence of God because they think common reason cannot prove it. Under this approach the Bible is not viewed as authoritative, but reason is the prime source of knowledge and of spiritual truth. However, the Bible reveals that there is a way that seems right to a man but the end is the way of death (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25). In II





Corinthians 10:5, we read, “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ...” Indeed, God's way is not our ways (Isaiah 55:8) and the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are heading to destruction (I Corinthians 1:18). Those who do not subject to the law of God are carnally minded (Romans 8:7). These biblical truths make the rational attitude towards the Bible a deficient and dangerous one. The conscience must be trained in the truth before it can safely lead us; and God's Word is that truth (John 17:17).



**Mysticism:** This is the belief that direct knowledge of God, spiritual truth or ultimate reality can be attained through subjective experience (such as intuition and insight). Those who hold this kind of attitude allow experience to either take priority over the Bible or judge the Bible and what is biblical by their personal experiences. Since they believe that God is still speaking through present day prophets, they accept the revelation coming to and from these prophets as equal in authority with the Bible. Many denominational Church founders today, who claim to have been “called” by God into such a ministry by hearing a voice or seeing a vision, lay their claim to one of such experiences or the other. They do not care whether such experience contradicts the scripture or not. Hence, the basic premise in mysticism is that divine revelation is not limited to the Bible, but that God continues to reveal new truth apart from the Bible up until this present time. This attitude invariably makes human experience absolute as one's personal experiences become the final authority rather than the Bible. If it is in line with one's experience, then it is accepted as valid; but if it does not fit one's experience, it is precluded as invalid. This type of attitude is very common among various denominational Churches, especially the Pentecostals who believe so much in the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in the last days. In contrast to this attitude, the Bible clearly teaches through inspiration that God spoke in time past to the fathers through the prophets but has in these last days spoken to us through His son, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2). Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to guide the men in communicating His words to us in written form. His Word as contained in the Bible is His final revelation to man which was once and for all delivered and which no one must add nor subtract (Jude 3; Revelation 22:18-19).

Those who think themselves to be prophets or spiritual are encouraged to acknowledge the fact that the Biblical writing are God's commandments (I Corinthians 14:37). Some other religious groups and individuals also, either affirm another writing as having equal authority or raise the other writing as more important or authoritative than the Bible itself. A good example of this is Mormonism and the *Book of Mormon* that Mormonism views as inspired. Ellen G White's writings are seen as inspired by the Seventh Day Adventist. The Christian Science sees Mary Baker Eddy's book, *The Key to the Scriptures*, as equally inspired and they venerate these writings as much as they do to the Bible. Sometimes, the Bible is relegated to a lower position of importance.



**Romanism:** In Roman Catholicism, it is argued that the Church, with its pope and cardinals, has the authority to interpret the Bible and to legislate. The Roman Catholic Church is both the channel of divine revelation and the final authority for how the Bible is to be interpreted in faith and practice. On this, Charles C. Ryrie, in his book, *Basic Theology*, states that “...the traditions of the church are, along with the Bible, a source of divine revelation. Ecumenical councils and popes have from time to time made pronouncements that are considered infallible and therefore binding on church members.” This is the basic tenet of Romanism approach or attitude to scripture. However, the decision of the church is not and should not be a binding authority. Christ is the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22) and He alone has the absolute authority. A church could be mistaken in her decision (Revelation 2&3). The church must be subject to Christ and His Word. Christ also made it clear in Matthew 15:8-9 that the traditions of men make worship in vain.

**Neo-orthodoxy:** Neo-orthodoxy is another theological attitude or approach popularized by two major European theologians, Karl Barth and Emil Brunner in the early twentieth century. This approach emphasizes the revelation of God Himself as the source and foundation of Christian belief rather than reason or scripture. In other words, they believed that the basis of authority is the Word, but for them, the Word is mainly Christ. It denies that the Bible is the word of God; rather, the Bible is a witness or a mediator to the word of God which is Jesus Christ and the Bible





only becomes authoritative when it speaks to the individual. They teach that the words in the Bible are not God's words but they are fallible words written by fallible men. The Bible is only inspired in that God can sometimes use the words to speak to individuals. The individual must determine what the word of God within the Bible is and what is not. To clearly grasp what is and what is not, there is the need for some type of divine encounter. In a nutshell, neo-orthodoxy denies that the Bible is the word of God, but that it contains the word of God. This means the individual becomes the final judge as to what in the Bible is the word of God and what is not. Since in neo-orthodoxy the encounter is primary, the encounter actually becomes the authority and anyone can have his or her own encounter and come up with very different conclusions. However, this is another wrong approach or mindset to scripture as the Bible teaches that “All scripture is God-breathed” (II Timothy 3:16).

**Liberalism:** In the context of theology, the word “liberal” does not refer to political liberalism and both should not be conflated. A liberal attitude or approach to scripture states that when a thing is not expressly forbidden, then it is allowed. Here, the end justifies the means and whatever method adopted to carry out God's command is permissible even if there are no scriptural precedent for such. To the liberal man, anything goes provided the aim is achieved. One of the problems



with a liberal approach to the Scriptures is that it is hard to establish boundaries of how far one can go and not exceed the authority of Christ. More liberals deny the fact that the Bible was intended to be a pattern to be followed for all time. Some deny approved examples as binding even when we are commanded to follow the apostolic examples (Philippians 3:17; 4:9). The liberal approach is contrary to the scripture as we are encouraged to “speak as the oracle of God” (I Peter 4:11) and to do all things according to the pattern (Hebrews 8:5; Philippians 3:17).

**Conservatism:** “Conservative” eliminates liberalism's humanistic and subjective bases of authority. The conservative position is that the Bible alone is the final authority for faith and practice. For the conservative believer, the Bible is the infallible word of God. It is inspired and is without error. The conservative believes that something that is not expressly allowed, directly or implied, is forbidden. It rejects all the aforementioned erstwhile



attitudes. Concerning rationalism, the conservative believes that the mind, commonsense or reason, must be submissive to the word of God. If the mind is thinking in terms that are contrary to the Scriptures, it must be rejected since it is not the mind that judges the Scriptures, but the Scriptures is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). About the experience of Mysticism, the Bible is the final judge of experience, and experience cannot determine the truth of Scripture. Regarding Romanism, it is not the church that determines the meaning of the Bible, rather the Bible determines the proper place of the church. More so, a man does not need a unique encounter before he can understand the Bible. The conservative believes that the Bible, and the Bible alone, is supreme and has been inspired by God in written form. There is no other writing that can be placed side by side with the Bible. In addition, nothing serves as an authority in religious matters apart from the scripture. Any other writing is the writing of a false prophet. The conservative holds to the supremacy of the Bible and believes that knowledge is subject to the Bible, and there is no inner light that adds revelation beyond the Bible.

### What Should Be The Right Attitude?

Having examined the various kinds of attitude with which people approach the Scripture, it is necessary to emphasize the right attitude that we should have towards it. The Bible makes it clear in I Peter 4:11; “If any man speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God...” God wants us to see and respect His word as authoritative, speaking in accordance with His divine precept revealed and as contained in His word without adding to or subtracting from it. The Bible (New Testament) is God's complete and final revelation to man. In it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith (Romans 1:17). In Hebrews 11:6, we read, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God **must believe that He is**, and that he is a rewarder





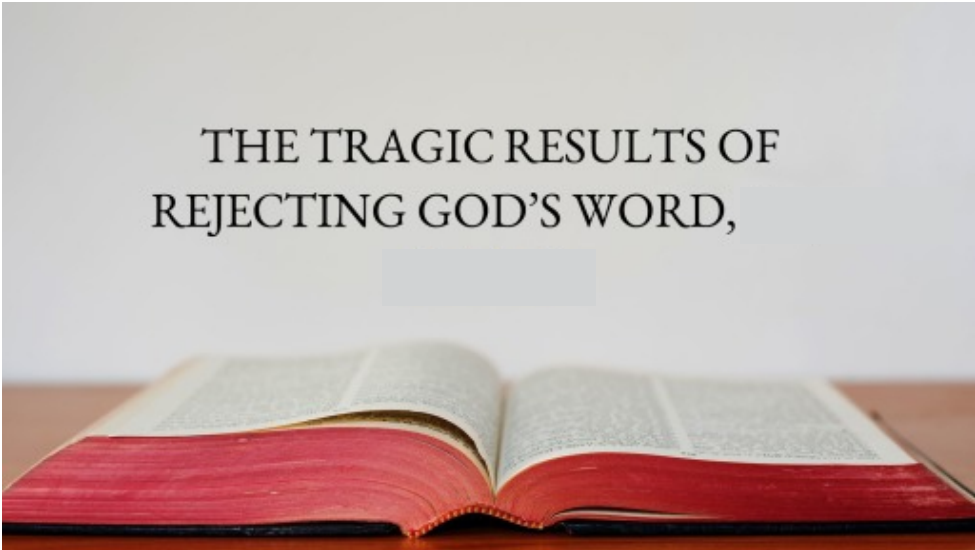
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of them that diligently seek him.” A man cannot please God with unbelief. What should He believe in? His word! Hence, it is dangerous for people to neglect God's word for any reason or supplement it with other writings.

**The Danger of Rejecting God's Word**

Jesus likened such to a foolish man who built his house upon the



sand (In Matthew 7:26). The unbelieving will have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone which is the second death (Revelation 21:8). Rejecting God's word or adding to it is synonymous to witchcraft (I Samuel 15:23). Invalidating the word of God by men's tradition makes worship in vain (Matthew 15:8-9; Mark 7:13).

**Conclusion**

Understanding the right attitude towards the Bible is paramount and of tremendous importance. This is relevant since we have to take a position when it comes to the word of God. As can be seen, we must respect God's word, the Bible and see it as the absolute standard in all religious matters. Thus, the Bible principle portrays “conservatism” as the right attitude people should have towards the Bible.



