

The Baptist Faith & Message, 2000

I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. 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. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

Key Text:

- **Psalm 19:7-10:** “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.”
- **Matt 5:17-18:** “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.” John 17:17: “Sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth.”
- **2 Timothy 3:15-17:** “and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 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 Peter 1:19-21:** “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, than no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

****Major Doctrinal Observations: The Baptist Faith and Message highlights the source, nature, purpose, and sufficiency of Scripture.**

- 1) **The Bible is a divine-human book.** The BF&M states, “the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God’s revelation of Himself to man.” The Bible is the inspired revelation of God. Inspiration is a biblical concept; the term occurs once in the Bible: “All Scripture is inspired by God” (2 Tim 3:16). The term “Scripture” comes from the Greek term *graphe* and means “writing.” The Greek term translated as “inspired” in our English Bibles is *theopneustos*, a compound term comprised of “God” (*theos*) and “breath” (*pneo*). The term describes the Scriptures as “breathed out by God.” The BF&M also affirms the human nature of Scripture. According to 2 Peter 1:19-21, the Holy Spirit operated on men to direct them towards a goal. Peter focused on three ideas in relation to the Bible. First, Scripture did not originate in the will of the human author. Second, the human authors spoke for God. Third, the Spirit “moved” upon the human agents. The word “moved” indicates that the power of the mover (the Spirit) carried the human agent to a goal. This process is known as ***verbal plenary inspiration***.
- 2) **The Bible is a purposive book.** According to the BF&M, the Bible has “salvation for its end.” Because the Bible purposes to bring humans into a salvation relationship with God, the Bible testifies to Jesus Christ, the agent of salvation. Al Mohler, one of the committee members of the BF&M 2000 noted, “We stated clearly that “all Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is himself the focus of divine revelation.” Years of abuses and attacks upon the integrity of the Bible made clear that some were denying the truthfulness and authority of the Word of God. Some who have taught in seminaries denied the truthfulness of whatever biblical passages did not rise to their standard of Jesus’ intention. Professors and pastors have denied that God ordered the conquest of Canaan, tested Abraham in the sacrifice of Isaac or inspired the Apostle Paul when he wrote about the family or roles in the church.”
- 3) **The Bible is a truthful book.** The BF&M affirms, “All Scripture is totally true and trustworthy.” This is equivalent to affirming the Bible’s inerrancy and infallibility. Every direct affirmation of the Bible is truthful. The truth of the Bible is not limited to the religious sphere. While neither a textbook of science nor history, all biblical affirmations related to science, history or any other area of reality are true. Two major arguments support the truthfulness of Scripture: the nature of God and Jesus’ understanding of Scripture. First, God is not a god of error. Second, Jesus treated the Scripture as trustworthy. A follower of Christ should adopt the same attitude toward Scripture as Jesus. Jesus affirmed as true portions of Scripture liberal scholars accept as mythological; for example, a literal Adam, the Noahic flood, the destruction of a city called Sodom, and Jonah.
- 4) **The Bible is an authoritative book.** The BF&M affirms, “It [The Bible] 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 human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried.” Some who claim to be Christians deny the authority and sufficiency of Scripture by elevating other religious authorities above the Bible. Liberal “Christians” elevate human reason to a place of authority and judgment over the Bible. Catholics deny the sufficiency of Scripture by

placing ecclesiastical authority over Scripture. According to Catholic teachings, the church gave birth to the Scripture and correctly interprets the Word of God. Some Quakers, Pentecostals, charismatics, and even Baptists exalt subjective experience to a position of supreme authority over the Bible. For the faithful follower of Jesus, the Word of God is the final arbitrator and authority in all matters.

Baptists historically described the Bible in strong language that affirmed the inspiration and total trustworthiness of the Bible. James Frost, the first president of the Baptist Sunday School Board (now LifeWay), wrote in 1900, "We accept the Scriptures as an all-sufficient and infallible rule of faith and practice, and insist upon the absolute inerrancy and sole authority of the Word of God. We recognize at this point no room for division either, of practice or belief, or sentiment."

*Portions of this study were taken from "BF&M Commentary 1: The Scriptures," by Dr. Mark Rathel (Florida Baptist Witness, 1-17-08).

****Important Terminology for the Doctrine of Scripture**

The doctrine of Scripture is foundational to the Christian faith. But there is more to say about Scripture than simply, "The Bible says it. I believe it. That settles it." If we do not grasp what the Bible is and how it came to be, then we'll never fully grasp its meaning. The meaning of the Bible is vitally important to our faith and life. Here we briefly define a few key terms that relate to the doctrine of Scripture as the study of God's Word written.

Authority: The power the Bible possesses, having been issued from God, for which it "ought to be believed and obeyed" (Westminster Confession 1:4). Because of its divine author, the Bible is "the source and norm for such elements as belief, conduct, and the experience of God" (Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms).

Autographs: The original texts of the biblical books as they issued from the hands of the human authors.

Canon: The authoritative list of inspired biblical books. Within a short time after Jesus' death, the New Testament canon was affirmed by evaluating the Apostolicity, reception, and teachings of books, but ultimately, the canon is self-authenticating, as the voice of Christ is heard in it (John 10:27; WCF 1:5).

Inerrancy: The position that the Bible affirms no falsehood of any sort; that is, "it is without fault or error in all that it teaches," in matters of history and science as well as faith (Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy). Inerrancy allows for literary devices, such as metaphors, hyperbole, round numbers, and colloquial expressions.

Infallibility: The position that the Bible cannot err or make mistakes, and that it "is completely trustworthy as a guide to salvation and the life of faith and will not fail to accomplish its purpose" (Westminster Dictionary). As the Christian church has traditionally taught, this doctrine is based on the perfection of the divine author, who cannot speak error.

Inspiration: The process by which God worked through the human authors of the Bible to communicate His revelation. The term derives from the Greek *theopneustos*, meaning "God-breathed" (2 Tim. 3:16), and refers to God as the ultimate source of the Scriptures.

Organic inspiration: The process by which God guided the human authors of Scripture, working in and through their particular styles and life experiences, so that what they produced was exactly what He wanted them to produce. The text is truly the work of the human authors—God did not typically dictate to them as to a stenographer—and yet the Lord stands behind it as the ultimate source.

Necessity: Refers to mankind's need for God's special revelation in the Scriptures in order to obtain knowledge of the gospel and the plan of salvation, which cannot be learned through the general revelation of nature and conscience.

Perspicuity: The **clarity** of the Bible; that is, that which is necessary to know and believe regarding life and salvation is "so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or the other," that anyone may understand them (WCF 1:7).

Scripture: From the Latin *scriptura*, meaning "writings"; refers to sacred texts, but more specifically, the Bible as the Word of God written.

Special revelation: The things that God makes known about Himself apart from nature and conscience (general revelation; cf. Rom. 1:19–21). These things, having to do with Christ and the plan of salvation, are found only in the Bible.

Sufficiency: All that is needed to know and believe regarding salvation and what pleases God is found in the Bible.

Verbal, plenary inspiration: The extending of God's superintendence of the writing of Scripture down to the very choice of words, not merely to overarching themes or concepts; that is, "the whole of Scripture and all of its parts, down to the very words of the original," were inspired (Chicago Statement).

****How did we get the Bible today?**

- The church did not determine the books of the Bible.
- The church discovered which books were inspired by God.

What was the criteria?

→ The church gathered in 397 AD Council at Carthage and officially stated that the 66 books we know today were the Biblical Books (this had been since the last book had been written). The following was their criteria:

- What did Jesus say about the Bible (the OT was Jesus' Bible)?
 - In 250 BC the Jewish community and elders had agreed the 39 Old Testament Books were the Word of God. Jesus would have been aware of this.
 - Jesus referenced from the OT (Matt. 19:4-5; Luke 11:51)
 - Jesus affirmed the OT as God's Word (Matt. 13:14-15; 15:3-4, 7-9)
 - Jesus quoted from the OT (Matt. 15:3-9)
 - Jesus taught from the OT (John 3:14; 6:31-51; Luke 17:28-32)
- Was this book written by an apostle or prophet?
 - Apostles & prophets often demonstrated the power of God through miracles.
 - If they were able to perform the miracles of God, then their message was inspired.
 - Jesus affirmed this in John 17:20
 - 2 Peter 1:16
- Is this book consistent with the message of the other books that are known to be inspired by God?
 - Other gospels and letters were not consistent with Jesus' message
- Was this book accepted by the early church as "authoritative"?
 - Did the early church leaders preach from this book? Did they use this book?
 - Did they sense the power of God in this book?
 - Was there life change after reading and teaching this book

→ It takes faith to believe that God uses fallible men to write His Word, God is strong enough to preserve it, and to arrange it for us to understand.

There are no "lost books" of the Bible.

The greatest attestation for the authority of the New Testament is the masses of quotations taken from its early pages by the Church Fathers:

- There are 86,000 quotes from the early Church Fathers.
- There are 36,000 quotations from the New Testament books found in writing before the council of Nicaea in A.D. 325.
- Even the deniers of the faith quoted from the New Testament books never realizing they were helping to verify authenticity in the future!
- Overall there are estimated to be over one million quotes from early Christians directly from the New Testament. The same books we read today!

****What was the process of how the Bible went from scrolls in Synagogues to the Bible**

App on my phone?

Phase 1 - Copyists made copies in Synagogues and the Early church

- Early Jewish scribes copied

Phase 2 - The Collection of Ancient Copies

- The Bible, and the New Testament in particular, has only primary source authors who were eyewitnesses or who were alive at the time of the events.
- 25,000 copies of the New Testament
- We have copies of the entire New Testament written within 350 years. We have 5,795 copies of Greek Manuscripts dated 30-150 years from the events recorded. We have a fragment of John's gospel within 30 years of the events.
- The New Testament autographs were complete and in use by the end of the first century A.D. and we have surviving manuscripts and fragments dated within 25 to 150 years of the events.¹
- 1947 - young goat herder found the Dead Sea Scroll - found entire copies of the Old Testament dates 250BC - AD 50 (at the time they were 1000 years older than any of the copies of the OT we had and there were 99.99% accurate to the copies we had)

Phase 3 - Textual Scholars use textual criticism to decide between the minor variants within the copies

- They compare copies of the ancient manuscripts
- Most scholars agree that the textual criticism affirms that the validity of the Scriptures writing

Phase 4 - Translators introduce new versions of the Bible

- English - there are 450+ translations

Why? Because of language differences between original language and current vernacular types:

- Word for Word - order, grammar, etc.
- Thought for thought - how someone would have understood what they read
- NIV - is a mixture of the two
- Paraphrased version - like "the Message"

Which translation should you use?

- Use a highly credible source over a period of year to memorize.

For study?

- Multiple translations

We should thank God for the millennia of copyists, collectors, textual critics and translators whom God has made it possible for us to have our Bible.

¹<https://truthfaithandreason.com/case-making-101-how-does-the-bible-compare-to-other-ancient-documents/>

The Bible is ONE book.

The overall theme of the Bible is God redeeming man.

The story of redemption in the Bible is:

- **Creation** - God created and sustains the world.
- **Fall** - The pinnacle of creation, man, sinned and negatively impacted all of creation.
- **Redemption** - God sent a way of rescue for man in the person of Jesus Christ.
- **Restoration** - God will one day make all things (heaven and earth) new.

The Overall Structure of the Bible

1. **Preparation for the Gospel/Jesus** (Genesis – Malachi)

Gen. 1:26–28

Gen. 3:15, 21/Lev. 17:11 - God gives the sacrificial system - Blood sacrifice

Gen. 45:5–8

Ex. 14:10–25, 15:2–3

Deut. 7:6–9

Deut. 18:18

Josh. 1:5–8

After David becomes King: 2 Sam. 7:11–16

2. **Manifestation of the Gospel/Jesus** (Matthew – John)

Each Gospel writer is stating the preparation for the Gospel has come - they just say it in their own way/message.

- Luke's goal is history and chronology. **Luke 1:1 - he was not an eyewitness.**
- John's goal is evangelism. - he orders his gospel around 7 major signs
- Mark's goal is brevity and clarity. (just the facts ma'am)
- Matthew's goal is proving that Jesus is the prophesied Messiah.

Matt. 27 & Psalm 22 - Jesus was quoting Psalm 22 (and all would have known the rest - it had been written 1,000 years before. People had been singing this Psalm for 1,000 years). Jesus was not complaining. He was saying... LOOK IT'S HAPPENING. THE CURSE THAT WAS PROMISED TO GOD IS FALLING ON CHRIST. The heel of Jesus is being struck, but the HEAD of the enemy will be crushed. REDEMPTION IS SEALED and RESTORATION IS TAKING PLACE. IT IS FINISHED. IT IS PAID IN FULL.

1,000 years before Jesus hung on a cross, David outlined the events of Jesus the Christ's crucifixion so that all who would look on the cross that day would know that Jesus is the Messiah/King and put their trust in HIM.

3. **Continuation of the Gospel/Jesus** (Acts)

Acts 2:4–9; 2:1–17; 42–47

2:41 - 3,000

4:4 - 5,000

5:14 - MULTITUDES

9:31 - Church multiplied

Acts 13:32–37 (Preparation, Manifestation, and Continuation)

Acts 28:28–31

The early church was no different than the church today. You have a church full of sinners (saved by grace) but still sinners. People can sometimes try to add to the gospel or take something away from it. Some churches were requiring Gentiles to become Jews in order to become a Christian. Some were saying you had to be baptized and speak in tongues or have another sign of the Spirit. God raised up a man named Paul to write to the churches to help them understand the gospel. He wrote to them to explain the gospel - and to not prevent anyone from receiving the gospel.

4. **Explanation of the Gospel/Jesus** (Romans – Jude)

Gal. 3:23–29; 4:4–7

5. **Consummation of the Gospel/Jesus** (Revelation)

Rev. 4 & 5

Rev. 21:3–7

“But now the righteousness of God has been **manifested** apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ** for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are **justified by his grace as a gift**, through the **redemption** that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

Romans 3:21-26

How many Bibles do you have in your house? For most of us, Bibles are easily accessible, and many of us have several. That we have the Bible in English owes much to William Tyndale, sometimes called the Father of the English Bible. 90% of the King James Version of the Bible and 75% of the Revised Standard Version are from the translation of the Bible into English made by William Tyndale, yet **Tyndale himself was burned at the stake for his work on this day, October 6, 1536.**

** The following was taken from: <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/scholarsandscientists/william-tyndale.html> & <https://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/timeline/1501-1600/translator-william-tyndale-strangled-and-burned-11629961.html>

William Tyndale could speak seven languages and was proficient in ancient Hebrew and Greek. He was a priest whose intellectual gifts and disciplined life could have taken him a long way in the church—had he not had one compulsion: to teach English men and women the good news of justification by faith.

Tyndale had discovered this doctrine when he read Erasmus's Greek edition of the New Testament. What better way to share this message with his countrymen than to put an English version of the New Testament into their hands? This, in fact, became Tyndale's life passion, aptly summed up in the words of his mentor, Erasmus: "Christ desires his mysteries to be published abroad as widely as possible. I would that [the Gospels and the epistles of Paul] were translated into all languages, of all Christian people, and that they might be read and known."

It would be a passion, though, for which Tyndale would pay dearly.

He was a native of Gloucester and began his studies at Oxford in 1510, later moving on to Cambridge. By 1523 his passion had been ignited; in that year he sought permission and funds from the bishop of London to translate the New Testament. The bishop denied his request, and further queries convinced Tyndale the project would not be welcomed anywhere in England.

To find a hospitable environment, he traveled to the free cities of Europe—Hamburg, Wittenberg, Cologne, and finally to the Lutheran city of Worms. There, in **1525, his New Testament emerged: the first translation from Greek into the English language. It was quickly smuggled into England, where it received a less-than-enthusiastic response from the authorities.** King Henry VIII, Cardinal Wolsey, and Sir Thomas More, among others, were furious. It was, said More, "not worthy to be called Christ's testament, but either Tyndale's own testament or the testament of his master Antichrist."

Authorities bought up copies of the translation (which, ironically, only financed Tyndale's further work) and hatched plans to silence Tyndale.

Meanwhile Tyndale had moved to Antwerp, a city in which he was relatively free from both English agents and those of the Holy Roman (and Catholic) Empire. For nine years he managed with the help of friends to evade authorities, revise his New Testament, and begin translating the Old.

His translations, it would turn out, became decisive in the history of the English Bible, and of the English language. Nearly a century later, when translators of the Authorized, or King James Version, debated how to translate the original languages, eight of ten times, they agreed that Tyndale had it best to begin with.

William Tyndale was born near the Welsh border of England in 1494. Forty years earlier, **two important events occurred in Europe which would have a great impact on Tyndale's life and work.**

- In May, 1453, the Turks had stormed Constantinople, and the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire fell to the Moslem invaders. Greek scholars fled westward and brought with them a scholarship which had been almost forgotten in the West. **Greek language studies of the classics increased, and the Scriptures began to be studied in the original Greek, rather than the Latin Vulgate.**
- **The invention of the printing press in 1454 was a second important development.** The printing press would eliminate copyist errors and make the Scriptures more easily available in quantity editions. But to have the Bible in English was illegal.

In an attempt to restrain the influence of Wycliffe's followers, in 1408 Parliament had passed the "Constitutions of Oxford" which forbade anyone translating or reading a part of the Bible in the language of the people without permission of the ecclesiastical authorities. Men and women were even burned for teaching their children the [Apostles'](#) Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in English. William Tyndale, however, had an unquenchable passion to make the Bible available to every Englishman.

Back in the fourteenth century, John Wycliffe was the first to make (or at least oversee) an English translation of the Bible, but that was before the invention of the printing press and all copies had to be handwritten. Besides, the church had banned the unauthorized translation of the Bible into English in 1408.

Over one hundred years later, however, William Tyndale had a burning desire to make the Bible available to even the common people in England. After studying at Oxford and Cambridge, he joined the household of Sir John Walsh at little Sudbury Manor as tutor to the Walsh children. Walsh was a generous lord of the manor and often entertained the local clergy at his table. Tyndale often added spice to the table conversation as he was confronted with the Biblical ignorance of the priests. At one point Tyndale told a priest, "If God spares my life, ere many years pass, I will cause a boy that driveth the plow shall know more of the Scriptures than thou dost."

It was a nice dream, but how was Tyndale to accomplish this when translating the Bible into English was illegal? He went to London to ask Bishop Tunstall if he could be authorized to make an English translation of the Bible, but the bishop would not grant his approval. However, Tyndale would not let the disapproval of men stop him from carrying out what seemed so obviously God's will. With encouragement and support of some British merchants, he decided to go to Europe to complete his translation, then have it printed and smuggled back into England.

William Tyndale Follows God's Will to Germany

Tyndale went to the Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall, to seek permission to translate the Bible into English. Tunstall refused. But while in London Tyndale came into contact with several merchants who were smuggling into England some of Martin Luther's writings from Germany. They encouraged Tyndale to go to Europe to translate. They would help smuggle the Bibles back into England.

In 1524 Tyndale sailed for Germany. In Hamburg, he worked on the New Testament, and in Cologne, he found a printer who would print the work. However, news of Tyndale's activity came to an opponent of the Reformation who had the press raided. Tyndale himself managed to escape with the pages already printed and made his way to the German city Worms where the New Testament was soon published. Six thousand copies were printed and smuggled into England. The bishops did everything they could to eradicate the Bibles -- Bishop Tunstall had copies ceremoniously burned at St. Paul's; the archbishop of Canterbury bought up copies to destroy them. Tyndale used the money to print improved editions!

King Henry VIII, then in the throes of his divorce with Queen Katherine, offered Tyndale a safe passage to England to serve as his writer and scholar. Tyndale refused, saying he would not return until the Bible could be legally translated into English. Tyndale continued hiding among the merchants in Antwerp and began translating the Old Testament while the King's agents searched all over England and Europe for him.

Tyndale's Betrayal and Martyrdom

In 1534 Tyndale was betrayed by a false friend near Brussels, arrested by imperial forces, and thrown into prison. Tyndale was finally found by an Englishman who pretended to be his friend but then turned him over to the authorities. After a year and a half in prison, he was brought to trial for heresy -- for believing, among other things, in the [forgiveness](#) of sins and that the mercy offered in the gospel was enough for salvation. He was accused of maintaining that faith alone justifies.

In August 1536, he was condemned; on this day October 6, 1536, he was strangled and his body burned at the stake. His last prayer was "Lord, open the King of England's eyes." The prayer was answered in part when three years later, in 1539, Henry VIII required every parish church in England to make a copy of the English Bible available to its parishioners.

This was possible through a man named John Rogers.

John Rogers, a London Minister. He was educated at Cambridge, and became a Catholic priest. Quickly became disillusioned by the teachings of the Catholic church. By God's sovereignty, Rogers found himself in Holland where he met William Tyndale who taught him the Bible and the gospel. Rogers would never be the same.

Tyndale was arrested just months after they met. Tyndale left the Old Testament manuscripts with Rogers who in the days to come would compile them into a complete English Bible. He published this Bible under the name Thomas Matthews. The Matthew's Bible was the first authorized published version of the English Bible.