

Lesson 3: Bibliology, "What is the Bible?"

by: David Roseland, Pastor of Preston City Bible Church

I. Key Scripture passages for Bibliology

- Rom 1:16-17, 18-23
- Luke 10:22: Special Revelation from Jesus Christ
- Galatians 1:16: Special Revelation from the Apostles
- **2 Timothy 3:16**: OT cf. Ex 4:10-17, 17:14, 20:1, 31:18, 34:27, Num 33:2, Dt 18:18
- Mt 5:17-18
- **2 Peter 1:20-21**: OT
- **2 Peter 3:16**: NT

II. Lesson Notes

A. Categories of Revelation

Revelation means that something otherwise hidden is _____.

Two categories of Revelation:

1. Natural or **General** Revelation: What man learns about God and reality through _____. "Because that which is known about God is evident within them, for God made it evident to them...(Rom 1:19).

Everyone knows that God exists, but they suppress the truth in _____.
An example of the use of general revelation is the "intelligent design" movement.

2. **Special** Revelation: When God breaks through into His creation and **speaks directly** to give us something we would not otherwise know. The Bible is direct, special revelation from God.

There are two categories of Special Revelation called the Word of God:

1) The Word Who became flesh (John 1:1, 14), and

2) The Word of God which is the collection of His propositional statements which He has inspired (2 Tim 3:16).

B. Verbal, Plenary Inspiration

2 Tim 3:16:

NAS: All Scripture *is* inspired by God...

Greek: πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος
PAS GRAPHE THEO*PNEUSTOS

Literal: Every written *thing is* God-breathed

Theopneustos = "God-breathed." Paul is saying that God breathed-out every word of Scripture.

Verbal, plenary inspiration means that God has breathed-out **each word** of Scripture, not just the ideas they combine to make, such that the writers of the Bible were guided in their thinking by God the Spirit to write exactly what He wanted them to write. The statements in Scripture are the words of the Biblical authors, but they are more importantly the Word of God.

C. The Scripture's Self-Attestation (What the Scriptures Say about _____)

1. Moses:

Ex 4:10-17: The Reluctant Prophet. "I will be with your mouth, and I will teach you what you are to say."

What based on this passage is the secret of Moses' success? God tells him what to do and _____.

Ex 17:14, 34:27, Num 33:2: Command for Moses to take dictation.

Ex 20:1ff: Ten Commandments: "Then God spoke all these words, saying...."

Ex 31:18: "...written by the finger of God."

Dt 18:18: A Prophet like Moses: "...I will put My words in his mouth..."

2. Balaam: A false-hearted prophet with God's word in his mouth.

Num 22:38, 23:5: The Lord puts His word into the prophet's mouth.

Num 24:12-13

3. Prophets:

Isaiah 8:1

Ezekiel 24:1

Jeremiah 1:9, 5:14

Habakkuk 2:2

4. Jesus:

Dt 18:18: Jesus' inspiration prophesied

Jesus' View of OT:

- **Value:** Mt 4:4 "Man shall not live on bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

- **Fulfilled in Entirety:** Mt 5:17-18: The extent of the inspiration of Scripture: "...not one jot or tittle..." = "letter or stroke"
- **Literalness:** Flood of Noah and the story of Jonah are treated as literal by Jesus.
 - Flood: Mt 24:37-38 (literal Second Advent compared to literal Flood)
 - Jonah: Mt 12:39-41
- **From God the Spirit:** Mt 22:41-44, cf Ps 110. Focus: v43: David wrote "in the Spirit."
- **What the OT is for:** Luke 24:25
- **Prophecy of the Holy Spirit given to Disciples:** John 14:26, etc.

5. Summary verses:

1. 2 Tim 3:16
2. 2 Peter 1:20-21
3. 2 Peter 3:16

D. The Consequence of Inspiration: Inerrancy

F. The Effectiveness of the Scriptures for our Sanctification

Acts 20:32

III. Questions for Reflection and Interaction:

1. Discuss whether you should argue about the existence of God in light of Rom 1:18-21.
2. In view of the doctrine of Special Revelation, interact with the statement, "God told me to do _____." Is this claim meant to establish the speaker as a modern-day prophet? What distinguishes this statement in its authority from the authority of Scripture?

3. Why is Paul always right?

4. Can you make some absolute statements about the importance and priority of the Scriptures for every human being based on the doctrine of Verbal, Plenary Inspiration? (This is the “so what” of every day life in light of this doctrine.)

5. Interact with the claim that a person can love Jesus and hold to His values and priorities while not taking the Scriptures seriously.

IV. Looking to the Future

In 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 Paul makes eschatology (last things) a major aspect of the Christian way of life. **“...And to wait for His Son from Heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus Christ, Who saves us from the wrath to come.”** At the conclusion of each lesson we will make some connections with the future promises of God for us.

General Revelation, or that which we can observe without special insight from God, is longing for a correction. All of nature is straining against the curse we read of in **Romans 8:18-22**, and so we see death, natural disasters, and suffering. Anyone can see the world as it is and say “this is not how it should be.” Many have made that observation and, in disregard of special revelation (God’s Word), they have tried to apply a human solution to the problems of the cursed world. They look at poverty and try to fix the broken features of human economy by state control. They see a dying creation and try to save the earth through various theories of ecological revolution. The lessons we learn from observing the creation around us drive us into the Text of

God's Special Revelation to see what His solution involves. We find there that God has a perfect plan for this cursed world, and that plan involves glory and deliverance through a government program that only God can manage. Paul describes that government in Romans 8:19, 21 by mentioning us, the sons of God. That future cannot be known apart from **Special Revelation**.

Special Revelation gives us the answers to all the pertinent questions man can ask when he looks to the brokenness of the creation. Yes things are bad, and the Bible tells us why. No, evil is not eternal, and the Bible tells us its beginning and end. God's Word reveals God's eternal plan of righteousness and love, that as such it is designed for the maximum expression of His awesome character. In fact, without special revelation, we cannot know anything about the future or the end. Also, there are things about our destiny as believers in Christ that depend on our access now of God's special revelation in the Bible. The training we receive in time by taking in God's Word (special revelation) is the means by which God transmits the fullness of a believer's rewards, called "the reward of the inheritance (Col 3:24)."

The Scriptures' Self-Attestation that they are inspired or given by God directly to man and through man becomes the basis upon which all of the rest of the Christian Faith is erected. Within the Texts of Scripture we find a great deal of prophecy that made predictions about the future from the time of their writing. For example, as we have seen, Moses prophesied a future prophet in Dt 18:18, and nearly 1500 years later, Jesus came to Israel in fulfillment of that promise. Many of the prophecies have been fulfilled. But a great many prophecies of the future are still waiting for God's perfect, yet-future timing. If we take the self-attestation of the Text seriously, then we are forced to conclude that God will in fact do what He has said to us He would do. This includes such things as the future resurrection of every believer (1 Cor 15), the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10), and all the eternal promises to Israel concerning the Land of Canaan (Gen 15). Much of our hope is future-focused, and that expectation rests only on the basis of what God has said in His Word concerning the future.

Jesus' views of the Scriptures are especially significant when it comes to the future of God's prophetic program. In Matthew 24-25, Jesus' "Olivet Discourse" is considered by most Dispensational theologians to be the most important passage on prophecy in the New Testament. It is in this passage that Jesus identified the Flood of Noah in Genesis 6-9 as an historic event, as noted earlier. By this treatment of Genesis material our Lord shows us how the entirety of Scripture hangs together to paint one beautiful mosaic, to include all that God has promised regarding our future.

V. For Further Reading (works suggested/cited)

You might enjoy the following lessons, books or articles on Bibliology:

Clough, Charles. *A Framework for Basic Christian Doctrine*. Available in 224 lessons with notes, downloadable here: <http://bibleframework.com/course/study-online/>

Camp Arête Counselor Training Program, 2013

Noebel, David A. *Understanding the Times: The Collision of Today's Competing Worldviews*. Summit Press: Manitou Springs, CO. 2006

Chafer, Lewis Sperry. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993. Check out Volume 1 on Theology Proper for some extended and very helpful discussion.

Geisler, Norman L. *Systematic Theology, Volume Two: God, Creation*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2003. Geisler is very helpful with his organization and references to early church fathers.

Ryrie, Charles Caldwell. *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999. A helpful summary in most points.

-- *Ryrie Study Bible: New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update*. Expanded ed. Chicago: Moody Press, 1995. See the summaries in the back of the Bible for a good presentation.