

# \*The Heights Baptist Church \* Sermon Series: Doctrine\*

## \* Topic: What is the Bible? \* Various Verses \* 1/18/26 \*

### MAIN POINT

“The Bible is God’s Word to all people. It was written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It has God as its author, salvation as its focus, and truth, without any mixture of error, as its matter. Because it was inspired by God, the Bible is entirely true and is completely relevant to our daily lives.”

(This quote is from The Heights website, under “Beliefs”)

### INTRODUCTION

#### **What are some places that inform the beliefs of people today?**

1. Family
2. Traditions
3. News outlets
4. Social media

#### **What are some of the pros and cons of these different sources of information?**

*Note to study leader:* Today we continue our sermon series on doctrine at The Heights by looking at the Bible. This lesson will cover the following four main points.

1. The Nature of the Bible
2. The Benefits of the Bible
3. The Authenticity of the Bible
4. The Reliability of the Bible

### UNDERSTANDING

#### THE NATURE OF THE BIBLE

#### ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ THE FOLLOWING VERSES

#### **Ask what these verses reveal about the nature of the Bible.**

- **2 Timothy 3:16:** God breathed
- **Psalms 19:7 and John 17:17:** Truth without error
- **Psalms 119:89 and Matthew 24:35:** Eternal
- **Hebrews 4:12:** Living, active, and penetrating
- **Proverbs 30:5-6 and Galatians 1:8-9:** Complete
- **Colossians 2:2-4 and 8:** Sufficient

#### **How would you summarize these thoughts on the nature of the Bible?**

*Note to study leader:* This would be a good place to review the quote from the Heights website that covers the beliefs of the Heights about the scriptures, covered at the top of this lesson plan under the “Main Point” of this lesson.

## THE BENEFITS OF THE BIBLE

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ THE FOLLOWING VERSES

**Ask what these verses reveal about the benefits of the Bible.**

- **Proverbs 4:20-22, Matthew 4:4, and John 6:63:** Lifegiving
- **Psalm 19:7:** Refreshing
- **John 17:17:** Sanctifying
- **Psalm 119:1-2:** Blessing
- **Psalm 119:165:** Illuminating
- **2 Timothy 3:16:** Teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness

## THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE BIBLE

### THE ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 PETER 1:20-21

**What do these verses reveal about the origin of the Bible?**

The Bible is God's word

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ THE FOLLOWING VERSES

**What do these verses reveal about how God transmitted the Bible to us?**

- **Exodus 31:18:** God gave His word directly to His prophets
- **Daniel 9:21-22 and Revelation 1:1-2:** God gave His word to His prophets via angels
- **Luke 1:1-3:** God inspired humans to carry out research or write letters (The apostle Paul quotes the book of Luke, calling it scripture in 1 Timothy 5:18)

**Note to study leader:** *The New Testament was written between about 45 and 95 AD.*

- *8 books were written by the Apostles Peter, Matthew, and John, who were eyewitness of Jesus, life on earth (Matthew (1), John (5), and Peter (2)).*
- *2 books were written by Jesus' half-brothers James and Jude.*
- *13 books were written by the Apostle Paul, who was miraculously saved and disciplined by Jesus.*
- *The Gospel of Mark was written by Mark, who was disciplined by the Apostle Peter.*
- *The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts were written by Luke, who was disciplined by Paul.*
- *The book of Hebrews is an anonymous book, perhaps written by Paul or it is a sermon Paul gave and it was transcribed later by Luke, a person who would have had the command of the Greek language that the writer shows. Barnabas is another likely prospect, since he was a Levite and would have been speaking on a subject that he knew much about. Martin Luther suggested Apollos, since he would have had the education the writer of this letter must have had. Any of these options are men who are closely connected to the Apostle Paul.*

## THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT BY JESUS

**What do these verses reveal about how Jesus viewed the Old Testament?**

- **Matt. 19:4, Matt. 21:42, John 7:38, and John 10:35:** Jesus viewed the Old Testament as scripture
- Jesus often responded with, "It is written", or "Have you not read", prior to quoting an Old Testament passage, showing He viewed the scriptures as authoritative.

- Jesus mentioned many people, places, and event from the Old Testament, viewing them as historically accurate (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Sodom, Moses, David, Elijah, Jonah, Daniel, etc.
- Jesus routinely quoted the Old Testament, including Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Hosea, Jonah, Micah, Zechariah, etc.

## ACCEPTANCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT BY THE NATION OF ISRAEL

The nation of Israel has always held that scripture is scripture. Note that they do not consider the apocryphal books as scripture.

## ACCEPTANCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BY THE APOSTLES

### ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ THE FOLLOWING VERSES

- **2 Peter 3:15-1:** Peter called Paul’s letters “scripture”.
- **1 Timothy 5:18:** Paul quoted the book of Luke, calling it “scripture”.

*Note to study leader:* 26 of the 27 books of the New Testament warn the church against false doctrine. Yet none of the New Testament books warns about any of the other New Testament authors.

## ACCEPTANCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BY THE EARLY CHURCH

The church grew from a roomful of disciples around 30 AD to thousands of Christians in a very short time period, with churches being planted throughout the Roman Empire just 30 years later.

This phenomenal growth occurred while many eyewitnesses were still alive. The Gospel accounts are not based solely on the teachings of Jesus, but also on the miracles he performed, including his resurrection from the dead. In 1 Corinthians 15:6, Paul mentions that the risen Christ appeared to over 500 believers, “most of whom were still living”. The events in the gospels and the book of Acts could be checked out, yet the early church accepted these books and the other New Testament letters as scripture.

## THE RELIABILITY OF THE BIBLE

*Note to study leader:* Another way to title this section of the lesson plan would be to say, “How do we know the Bible hasn’t changed over the years?”

It’s easy to verify the text of the Bible hasn’t changed since the printing press was invented in 1450 AD.

It can also be verified that the text of the Bible hasn’t changed from the time before the printing press.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT

There are thousands of manuscripts containing New Testament texts prior to the printing press

- **Minuscules:** Copies of portions of the New Testament written by people copying scriptures in the early church. Written in cursive Greek. About 2,800 copies exist, dating back to around 800 AD.
- **Lectionaries:** New Testament Bible readings used in early church services. About 2,000 copies exist, dating back to around 500 AD.
- **Uncials:** Portions of the New Testament written by people copying scriptures in the early church. Written using Greek capital letters. About 300 copies exist, dating back to about 400 AD.

## THE OLD TESTAMENT

The dead sea scrolls, which were written before the time of Christ, confirm that the text of the Old Testament hasn’t changed over the years.

- Jewish Scribal Tradition: Rigid copying rules, with second-checker and independent verifier. (Includes the Masoretes from 400-1000 AD).
- Midrash: Jewish commentaries on the Old Testament, contain many Old Testament verses.
- Talmud: Jewish Traditions of the Elders, routinely quotes the Old Testament.

## CONCLUSION

### THE EXAMPLE OF NABEEL QURESHI

Nabeel Qureshi was a Muslim who converted to Christianity. The decisive that prompted him to make this radical change came from scripture itself. He described it this way:

I continued resisting the gospel. I traveled to more mosques and spoke with more imams, searching for answers but finding none.... The impending pain was daunting.... Would Ammi and Abba (mom and dad) hate me? Would they kick me out of the family? I began pleading... Oh God! Give me time to... mourn the upcoming loss of my family.... I went to the bookcase and retrieved my old Quran and my study Bible. I... opened the Quran first... hoping for anything that would comfort me. There was nothing there for me.... I picked up the Bible.... I opened to Matthew. Within minutes, I found these words: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." The words were like a current sent through my dead heart... This is what I was longing for. It was as if God had written these words in the Bible two thousand years prior specifically with me in mind. Tears flowed from my eyes once more, but now they were tears of joy. I knew that what I held in my hands was life itself.

*Nabeel Qureshi, "Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus" Chapter 51*

## APPLICATION

**Which of these attributes of God's word do I need to meditate on this week?**

**What habit in my life do I need to change to better take God's word into my life?**

*Note to study leader: Since this lesson is comprised of many individual passages from scripture rather than one larger chunk of scripture, the usual Commentary section is not included in this lesson.*