

# The Bible

**A short tract about the Bible. You could ask if it's necessary. So much has already been written and philosophized about it. What new information could this tract contain?**

**It isn't our intention to bring you any sensational or new information. But there are a lot of people who talk about the Bible without really knowing what it is. It is therefore necessary to set a few things straight about the Bible. That's what we'll attempt here. You will then have a better overall view – a benefit to you.**

**The Bible is a big book consisting of many individual books, which though varying greatly, yet form a unity.**

**The Bible...the word alone evokes many questions!**

**The Bible...read on.**

## Author

**Books are written by people. But which person wrote the Bible? Or which people?**

**The Bible is God's Word, but He chose people to produce it, such as Moses, Jeremiah, and Isaiah in the Old Testament; and Matthew, Mark and John in the New Testament; among many others.**

**That evokes many questions, doesn't it? God is the Author, but there are at the same time, many human authors. How can this be possible? God is and remains THE Author. The others served Him. When we say, "Matthew wrote this gospel..." we must be aware of God's role in telling him what to write. We call this inspiration.**

## Inspiration

**God inspired the writers, by the Holy Spirit. He led them so that everything which was written was His infallible Word. It wasn't as if on a fine day Matthew thought, "I'm going to write the Gospel of Matthew". The Holy Spirit led him to write.**

**On the other hand God didn't use Matthew as a dictating machine. This is very clear when you look at each Bible writer's vocabulary and style. Each wrote in his own manner. But God made sure that they all used His own words.**

**That is inspiration. It is not very easy to understand or explain. You must simply believe it – as God says:**

*"Because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (2 Peter 1:21)*

**This what God Himself says. You must accept it. You must submit to the Authority of the Bible. Because the Word of God has Authority.**

## Authority

**The Bible has authority and this is a matter of faith. How does this affect you? In the first place, it means that you must submit to it. The Bible must always have the final say. Everything which it promises and demands must become the standard for your life. In the Bible God makes known what He is to us, and what He wants from us.**

**In the second place, that you believe the Bible on its own Authority. Nothing outside of the Bible indicates that it is God's Word. Only the Bible itself does so. As for example in 2 Peter 1:21.**

**Only the Bible can recommend itself. And you must believe that this recommendation is true.**

## Content 1

**If you have ever read the Bible, you will understand that we cannot write down everything which it contains on a few pages. But it is possible to briefly summarize its contents.**

**In the old Testament the Lord tells us about His Creation and Man's subsequent disobedience. Then immediately there is God's promise of a Saviour. Man continually sets himself against God, and eventually He sends the Great Flood. Despite mankind's continual rebellion God makes a covenant with Abraham. From Abraham stems the nation of Israel – God's people. God promises Abraham, and in him his descendants, that the Saviour of the world will come from his seed.**

**Then comes the history of Israel, by way of whose royal family – King David's line – the Lord would bring the Saviour; however, not through any merit of the royal family or of the people Israel.**

**By means of His prophets, like Isaiah and Jeremiah, the Lord time and again calls His people to return to Him. But they do not listen, and as a result the people are exiled from the land of Canaan and into captivity in Babylon. All because of their sins.**

**But God remembers His promise and brings the people back to Canaan. The break between God and His people is repaired. God's plan of salvation goes on.**

## Content 2

**In the Old testament there is a waiting for the coming of the Saviour.**

**In the New Testament God fulfills His promise: the Saviour is born – He who will save the people from their sins. God's Son becomes man and through His intercession all those who believe in Him are reconciled to God.**

**The four Gospels tell us how Christ came to earth, and of His life, death, resurrection and ascension.**

**Acts tells how Christ, from Heaven, continues His work on earth, through His apostles. His gospel (or: good news) spread throughout the whole world – as it did in Australia.**

**The epistles (or: letters) of the apostles give further insight about God's saving work in Christ and His will for the congregations addressed, like the Romans and the Philippians.**

**But it doesn't end there. In the New Testament there is also a waiting for the Saviour; for His Second Coming – on the clouds. Everyone will see Him. Then there will be a new heaven and a new earth, in which everything will be perfect. No sin anymore, no war, no other disasters. There will be perfect and eternal joy. God will take the believers, His children, to Himself. But woe to those who despise Him. (Revelations)**

### **Perfect**

**We believe that the Bible is perfect. That means that the Bible is complete. God has ordained that what is contained in the Bible is sufficient for man.**

**This doesn't mean that there aren't any questions. But it does mean that we have sufficient information to honour and serve God as we should.**

**Therefore we may not add anything to the Bible. But neither may we take anything away. God gave us the Bible in its present form. If God did that, how can we take it upon ourselves to exchange a bit here and a bit more there?**

**We should accept the Bible thankfully.**

**God is perfect, and so are His works. God is truth, and could truth bring forth lies?**

**Therefore we may and we must believe that the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the Word of God.**

### **Contradictions**

**Now you may say, "Okay, but what about the contradictions. I've heard that in some places the Bible even says the exact opposite of what it says somewhere else! How can this be?"**

**God is perfect and thus His work, including the Bible, is also perfect. God never, ever makes mistakes. Therefore there cannot be any contradiction, true contradictions, in the Bible. The Bible says of itself: "there are some things in them which are hard to understand..." (2 Peter 3:16). There may seem to be contradictions. But they are caused by the limitations of Man's understanding – as a result of sin, we don't see the unity anymore! Besides, God is not a man – how could we hope to understand Him?**

**If, after all our searching in the Bible, we still can't reach a conclusion, we should bow our head in prayer and ask God for His help.**

### **Criticism**

**Faith....again and again it is required. Not as an easy way out of problems. But as a gracious gift from God.**

**Now you will understand why many people criticize the contents of the Bible. They are people who do not believe. And then their criticism carries no weight – all they have is excuses.**

**But there is also another form of criticism: Bible criticism. It is important that you know of this. Bible criticism is something we have already touched on. It is leaving parts of the Bible out, replacing parts – on dubious grounds. Bible criticism is putting forward your own suggestions, on your own authority. In this way, men create their own Bible. They believe one part and leave it in, then reject another part and scrap it. What’s left isn’t the Bible at all!**

**As we have already stated, the Bible is perfect and doesn’t need to be added to or taken away from. Stronger still, God specifically forbids it!**

### **Writing and Translations**

**The Bible is divided into two parts, the Old and the new Testament. The former is largely written in Hebrew, the latter in Greek. Every English Bible is therefore a translation of the original text.**

**Bible translators must make use of the documents available. But the many manuscripts preserved differ from each other. Before the printing press was invented, men had to copy everything by hand, and through the ages, some mistakes crept in. Copyists weren’t inspired of course. Usually the meaning did not suffer, so the mistakes weren’t serious.**

**Translator must choose from the various manuscripts. While we can be sure that the translators worked very carefully, small differences would have to occur. This is why some translations are better than others.**

**There may be some reason to criticize a translation, but God has made sure that we can read His Word in our language today.**