

# THE HOLY BIBLE - Is It Reliable?

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**Robert C Boraker** The Bible's accuracy is the center of a new controversial battle.

A BATTLE is now raging among religious circles, especially in the United States. It is a battle about the Bible. To the evangelical or fundamentalist, it is The Battle for the Bible. That is the title of the book by Harold Lindsell, former editor of Christianity Today.

The battle centers around the question of whether or not all the Bible is inspired of God and infallible in all parts. Is the Bible errant or inerrant? In other words, does it contain errors or is it infallibly free from errors and mistakes — even in areas concerning science and history?

Harold Lindsell wrote in his book, "Biblical inerrancy is the most important theological topic of this age." The Bible, of course, purports to be the source of true spiritual or divine knowledge. Its critics say it is untrustworthy.

Could you explain which view is right — and why?

### Recent Events

Between 1900 and 1930, a trend toward doctrinal liberalism gained the day. Now there are not only individual theologians, but seminaries and entire denominations that claim the Bible contains some spiritual truth along with some error. They no longer consider the Bible to be completely trustworthy, especially in the fields of science and history. Evangelicals challenge this modern claim. They say that once anyone assumes error in some part of the Bible, they soon reject basic doctrine. Such people, they claim, begin to question certain areas of the Bible they don't like. For example, Paul's teaching about women submitting to their husbands ([1 Corinthians 11:3](#) and [Ephesians 5:22-33](#)). It is considered to be Paul's opinion about the matter and thus open for question and rejection.

Or clergymen who accept homosexuality or think women can be ordained when Paul plainly taught that such practices were wrong ([1 Corinthians 6:10](#) and [14:34-35](#)). This trend, say evangelicals, arises from the assumption that the writings of the apostle are the opinions of a man rather than the inspired Word of God.

Is all of the Bible the inspired Word of God? Is it a reliable foundation for a way of life? Are evangelicals who claim the Bible is infallible any more sound doctrinally than liberals who claim the Bible is fallible? These are the basic questions we need to examine.

### Jesus Trusted the Scriptures?

First of all, what did the Founder of Christianity — Jesus Christ — believe and say about the Scriptures? Would modern liberals agree with Jesus? Talking about the twofold division of the Old Testament Scriptures, He said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear; not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished" ([Matthew 5:17, 18](#), New International Version).

Jesus taught the will and word and law of God as expressed in the Old Testament as being in force and relevant to His followers. He said the Old Testament Scriptures were eternal. "It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law" ([Luke 16:17, NIV](#)). Yet right here we have the astounding paradox. Evangelicals who claim the Bible is infallible and modern liberal theologians who insist it is not, both disagree with Jesus. Neither group keeps the law of God!

Some altogether reject the Old Testament as a rule of faith and practice. Others accept only the epistles Paul wrote while he was, in prison. But Jesus Christ trusted and obeyed the Old Testament Scriptures. He constantly referred to them. He treated the Old

Testament historical accounts as being factual and truthful. In the mind of Christ there was no room for doubt or the labels of myth and legend.

Christ reminded His audiences that the Scriptures which they searched to find eternal life testified of the coming of the Messiah ([John 5:39](#)). Like many people today, Jesus' hearers trusted the words of Moses, but didn't really believe all he wrote. "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" Christ warned ([John 5:46-47](#), New King James Bible). Christ and the Old Testament stand or fall together. Christ often referred to His fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures ([Luke 22:37](#), [John 7:42](#); [17:12](#); [19:24](#), [36](#), [37](#)). They all had to be fulfilled because they were all infallible and without errors.

After His resurrection, He admonished the disciples for being slow to believe all that the prophets had spoken about Himself. "And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Then He opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures" ([Luke 24:27, 45](#), NKJB).

Christ once rebuked the Sadducees by saying, "You do err not knowing the Scriptures" ([Matthew 22:29](#)). Jesus knew the Old Testament Scriptures. He believed them to be the truth. He used them as His source of authority.

When Christ had His confrontation with Satan, He defended Himself by quoting from the Old Testament three times ([Matthew 4:4](#), [7](#), [10](#)). When Satan tempted Christ by saying, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread," Christ answered, "It is written [[Deuteronomy 8:3](#)], 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God' ([Matthew 4:3, 4](#))." Christ said that man is to live by every word of God, and He meant what is recorded in the Old Testament. How many Christians-liberals or evangelicals — today really believe that?

The apostle Paul also supported the Old Testament as being a guide to our way of life. He was talking about the Old Testament when He said, "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" ([Romans 15:4](#), NKJB). He further admonished that the examples recorded in the Old Testament "were written for our admonition" ([I Corinthians 10:11](#)). According to both Jesus and Paul it is not enough to know that the Bible is infallible, you have to believe and do what it says.

## **All Scripture Is Inspired?**

Paul emphatically claimed that ALL of the Old Testament is inspired of God when he wrote to Timothy, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" ([II Timothy 3:16](#)). The only Holy Scriptures which Timothy could have known from childhood (verse 15) were those found in the Old Testament.

But what about the New Testament? Can one know that all of it is inspired of God? When Paul said "all Scripture" he meant by inference the Old Testament Scriptures that had already been written and the New Testament Scriptures that had been written thus far — and the others yet to be written in the future.

Paul believed the Gospel accounts were inspired Scripture. He wrote to Timothy earlier and said, "For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,' and, 'The laborer is worthy of his wages'" ([I Timothy 5:18](#)). The first part is from [Deuteronomy 25:4](#). The second quotation gives the words of Christ found in [Luke 10:7](#). Paul classified both as being "Scripture."

The letters of Paul are considered to be a man's opinions by some today, but not by the apostle Peter. He said Paul's epistles contained "some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures" ([II Peter 3:16](#)). Peter placed Paul's epistles in the same category as "the rest of the Scriptures."

The book of Revelation was the last book of the New Testament to be written. The

importance of the book is made clear by the apostle John's warning near the end, "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22: 18, 19).

Every Scripture in both the Old and New Testaments has stamped in it the inspiration of God. The Bible is "God-breathed." It is that which comes out of God's mouth and therefore is His Word — a product of His creative power working through human instruments. God conveyed to the Bible writers exactly what He wanted us to know. The prophecy of Scripture, for example, did not come about through a man's own thinking and effort, "but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1:21).

### **Holy Spirit Guided Bible Writers**

The writers of the Bible were motivated by the Holy Spirit. They were guided and carried along by God's Spirit just like a sailing ship is moved by the wind. God directed and influenced the writers to write down the words He wanted recorded.

David described how God inspired him by saying, "The spirit of the Lord spoke by me and His Word was in my tongue" (II Samuel 23:2). Many times God told the Old Testament writers, especially the prophets, exactly what words to say or write. God often spoke to them and said, "Tell the people, 'Thus saith the Lord...'" At other times it is evident that the writers had freedom to use their own style and personality to write under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Each book of the Bible is different. Each reflects the style, experiences and personality of the writer. But the Holy Spirit still guided the writer in doing his research, in the arrangement of his ideas and even in the choice of words. More was involved than just "thought inspiration." Thoughts are expressed by words and God revealed His thoughts in words. Inspiration must therefore extend to the very words the writer recorded.

God said He would put words into the mouths of the prophets (Deuteronomy 18:18). Jeremiah said that is exactly what happened to him: "Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth, and said to me, 'Now, I have put my words in your mouth'" (Jeremiah 1:9, NIV).

Every word in the original writings of the Bible is inspired. Every word is important. When Paul wrote to the Galatians, he built up an entire argument around whether one word in the Old Testament was singular or plural (Galatians 3:16).

The words of the Old Testament may have been said by David, Moses or the prophets. But when the New Testament writers quoted them, they considered them to be what Scripture said, what the Holy Spirit said or what God said. It was all the Word of God to them.

### **Paul Spoke the Word of God**

The Church members at Thessalonica didn't think the words of Paul were the mere opinions of a man. He expressed his gratitude for their converted attitude by saying, "We also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God which also effectively works in you who believe" (I Thessalonians 2:13). And Paul's instructions to the Corinthians were to be accepted as "the commandments of the Lord" (I Corinthians 14:37).

The Bible in all its parts is the written Word of God to mankind though modern human translators and typesetters are not inspired and made minor mistakes.

In spite of what Bible Critics or liberal theologians may claim, the Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God". We accept it as being completely trustworthy and reliable. It is a

sure foundation for our faith. But why, the critic and liberal theologian might justly ask, do so many who know the Bible is infallible, not do what the Bible plainly commands them?

That is a very good question!

There is a good reason why some people don't want to accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God and why those who do accept it hide their eyes from its revealed truth. They don't want to obey God and live according to what the Bible says, "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 discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

Are you willing not only to believe in, but to live by every inspired and infallible word of God?