

BIBLE DOCTRINES

— Part 1 —

R. E.
HARLOW



Developed as a study course by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

Many Bible study courses may also be taken via smart phones, tablets, and computers. For more information, visit the ECS website www.ecsministries.org.

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

“All Scripture . . . is profitable for doctrine . . .” (2 Timothy 3:16). This 2-part course will guide you through a topical study of the major teachings (doctrines) of Scripture, referencing many relevant verses and passages relating to each doctrine. With an open Bible and an open heart, you will indeed profit from learning what the Scripture teaches about itself, God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit in Part 1, and angels, man, sin, salvation, the church, and future events in Part 2.

Bible Doctrines — Part 1

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Note: *Bible Doctrines – Part 2* covers Angelology, Anthropology, Hamartiology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology.

Course Components

This course has two parts: this study course and the exam booklet.

How To Study

This study has eight chapters, and each chapter has its own exam. Begin by asking God to help you understand the material. Read the chapter through at least twice, once to get a general idea of its contents and then again, slowly, looking up any Bible references given.

Begin studying immediately, or if you are in a group, as soon as the group begins. We suggest that you keep a regular schedule by trying to complete at least one chapter per week.

Exams

In the exam booklet there is one exam for each chapter (exam 1 covers chapter 1 of the course). Do not answer the questions by what you think or have always believed. The questions are designed to find out if you understand the material given in the course.

After you have completed each chapter, review the related exam and see how well you know the answers. If you find that you are having difficulty answering the questions, review the material until you think you can answer the questions. It is important that you read the Bible passages referenced as some questions may be based on the Bible text.

How Your Exams Are Graded

Your instructor will mark any incorrectly answered questions. You will be referred back to the place in the course where the correct answer is to be found. After finishing this course with a passing average, you will be awarded a certificate.

If you enrolled in a class, submit your exam papers to the leader or secretary of the class who will send them for the entire group to the Correspondence School.

See the back of the exam booklet for more information on returning the exams for grading.

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BIBLIOLOGY: THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE – PART 1 –

The Bible claims to be a revelation from God about Himself. The study of what the Bible teaches about itself is called *Bibliology*.

The Concept of Revelation

Human philosophy is an attempt to understand the nature of the universe. While this in itself is a noble desire, it usually starts with the avowed purpose of eliminating the need for a revelation from a Creator, a Supreme Being to whom we human beings are responsible. Thus it turns out to be a series of self-canceling theories.

Any definition of God which denies His supernatural power is a contradiction in terms.

We will begin with the premise that man *is* a created being, and that our Creator has the *ability* to reveal Himself. Any definition of God which denies His supernatural power is a contradiction in terms; He would not be God if He did not have such power. Building on from that thought, it is logical to assume that as we humans can reveal our minds to other humans (and to a lesser degree, even to animals), our Creator could reveal Himself to man if He wanted to. The question then is: *Why* would He want to?

In answer, it is reasonable to conclude that if God expects His creatures to know what He expects of them, He would have to reveal His will to them. Otherwise, how could He hold them responsible for disobeying Him? Another reason relates to His personal nature: Why would He create a race of intelligent beings unless it was His desire and plan to reveal Himself to them and relate to them in a mutually beneficial and enjoyable way?

The next logical question is, is *the Bible* God's revelation of Himself? Some books that are held sacred by their followers (such as the *Koran* and the *Book of Mormon*) claim to be revelations from the one true God. The Bible claims to be the one and only revelation from God and, on the basis of evidence alone, is incomparably more likely to be so than any other religious book in existence. (The ECS course *God's Word Is Truth* is a good resource on this topic.) Consider a few lines of evidence now.

The Unity of the Bible

To begin with, there is *the unity of the Bible*. Imagine a single book today in which some parts were written in the year AD 500, others around 1000, many about 1200 to 1500, then after a gap of 400 years, another whole set of very important volumes being written and added to the collection around the year 1900. Reason dictates that they would all be different and contradictory. The 66 books in the Bible were penned by about 40 different men from different walks of life (kings, shepherds, preachers, farmers, priests, a doctor, and others) over a similar period of time (about 1500 years, from about 1400 BC to AD 100). Yet although they differ greatly in nature, style, and content, they unify around one broad theme: the person of God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the history of His redeeming man from sin.

Ancient History

Another facet that supports the Bible's claim to be a divine revelation is *ancient history*. Reliable secular history of the ancient world invariably supports what is recorded in the Bible. Archaeologists dig around the ruins of ancient cities and find records that help them understand ancient history. At first, some of these records seem to disagree with the Bible, and too often it is assumed that the Bible must be wrong and the ancient historian correct. The trend in recent years, however, even among secular historians, has been to substantiate the Bible as historically accurate after all.

Miracles

Many objections to the historical accuracy of the Bible are based on the preconceived idea that *miracles* are impossible. Every thoughtful person, however, would have to concede that if there truly is a God, He not only *could* be expected to act in a supernatural manner, but *would*.

Fulfilled Prophecy

Another proof that God has revealed Himself in the book we call the Bible is found in *fulfilled biblical prophecy*. Centuries before Jesus Christ came, the prophets of God foretold when, where, and how He would be born, and that He would die and rise again. Many details prophesied in the Old Testament are seen to be fulfilled in the New Testament. Only God could have supplied this kind of specific knowledge centuries ahead of time. Unbelievers try to get around this remarkable proof by saying that the prophecies were written after the events had taken place. But a careful study will show that such a charge is inadequate and false.

The Bible's Power to Convict

Another remarkable fact about the Bible is its *convicting power*—its ability to make people feel guilty of sin. The Old Testament gives God's holy Law, which no mere man has ever kept perfectly. The New Testament records the life of the perfect God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ. If anyone thinks he can keep God's Law, Jesus must be his standard. Millions reading the Bible realize their own failure and feel condemned before God.

The Bible's Life-Transforming Power

The *life-transforming power* of the Bible is another proof of its divine origin. We could have no peace or joy if the Bible merely left us feeling condemned. This, however, is only the preparation for the message of salvation. The Bible tells us of a Savior so wonderful that no one in any other book in the world can compare with Him. Basically, every religious book tells what man has to do to live forever or to please the deity he or she fears and worships. Only Christianity proclaims that eternal life is the gracious gift of God for the one who believes in Christ. Christ has

paid the penalty of sin, and there is nothing left to do on man's part but to believe it and embrace it. God's plan of salvation is much too wonderful, too simple, and too beautiful to be the work of mere man. Many lives have been completely changed through the message of Christ. Untold millions—rich and poor, religious and worldly, heathen and agnostic—have found peace through the Bible's most important message.

————— ❧ —————
**The Bible tells
 us of a Savior so
 wonderful that
 no one in any
 other book in the
 world can compare
 with Him.**
 ————— ❧ —————

Endurance and Preservation of the Bible

The *enduring value and preservation* of the Bible is one more proof of its divine character. Some people reject the Bible because it is old. Yet the very fact that the Bible *is* so ancient is important. God has preserved it through the centuries. Of course, other ancient books have survived the centuries as well. However, none of them has been required to miraculously

survive numerous bitter attempts to destroy it as has the Bible. God has kept it for us until now because it is His recorded message to mankind.

————— ❧ —————
**Any open-minded
 person can turn to
 the Bible and expect
 to hear the voice of
 God speaking to him
 or her through it.**
 ————— ❧ —————

And what about today? If, as some people say, the Bible is so out-of-date, and if, as some scientists have stated, the Bible is full of error, we might assume that it is no longer wanted. Yet the Bible continues to be the Number One best-selling book in the world. At least a part

of the Bible has been translated into over 2,000 languages or dialects, and the majority of the world's population can understand one or more of these languages. Many millions of Bibles have been printed.

For these reasons and others, any open-minded person can turn to the Bible and expect to hear the voice of God speaking to him or her through it.

The Doctrine of Inspiration

In 2 Timothy 3:16 we read, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God . . .” (literally, “is God-breathed”). It has been said that nothing is closer to a living person than his breath. The Greek word translated “inspiration” conveys the idea of a sailboat being purposefully carried by the wind to its destination. The very words of Scripture have purpose—destination—and they come from God Himself. The doctrine of inspiration is supported by Christ's own teaching on the preservation of Scripture (Matt. 5:18).

People sometimes use the terms *inspiration* and *revelation* interchangeably, but they are not really the same. “Revelation” should be used only for those parts of Scripture which the writer could not know unless God communicated them to him. For instance, Moses (the writer of Genesis) could not have known how God created the universe if God had not “revealed” it to him. On the other hand, many parts of the Bible are records of what the writer saw or did or learned from others. These writers were “inspired” by God to write certain incidents of history and to omit many others. Why this selection? The Holy Spirit has given us in the Bible just what we need, and no more. “All Scripture . . . is profitable.” Thus we can say that the Bible contains many revelations from God, but the entire Scripture is inspired by Him. *Plenary inspiration* means that all parts of Scripture and all subjects dealt with in Scripture are fully inspired. *Verbal inspiration* means that the very words of Scripture are inspired. These statements will be seen to be true when we consider what the Bible says about itself.

The Old Testament Is Inspired

The Old Testament claims to be inspired. A good deal of it constitutes the very words of God Himself. Often in the Old Testament we read, “Thus says the LORD” or “God spoke to . . .” etc. These phrases and similar ones are found thousands of times in the Old Testament. All sixteen of the writing prophets from Isaiah to Malachi were God's messengers, delivering God's word to His people (and even sometimes to their enemies). What is more, Christ taught that the Old Testament—that is, the Law (Matt. 5:18; Mark 7:8), the Prophets (John 6:45), and the other Writings (Luke 16:29-31; John 17:17)—were God's word. The apostles, too, believed that the Old Testament was inspired. For instance, Peter said, “The Holy Spirit spoke by the mouth

of David . . .” (Acts 1:16) and wrote, “Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit . . .” (2 Pet. 1:21). And Paul proclaimed, “The Holy Spirit spoke by Isaiah the prophet to our fathers . . .” (Acts 28:25).

The New Testament Is Inspired

When Christ was on earth He made a remarkable promise to His disciples recorded in John 14:26: He said, “The Holy Spirit . . . will bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” (John 14:26). This “inspiration” from the Holy Spirit would help them write the Gospels. Christ also promised, “When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). This would help them to write the Letters (Epistles), which give us the wonderful instruction for the church. Christ also said of the Holy Spirit, “He will tell you things to come” (John 16:13). This promise was fulfilled partly when John wrote the book of Revelation and partly when other apostles wrote prophetic passages. Thus we can say with confidence that the New Testament is inspired by God.

New Testament writers realized that they were controlled by the Spirit (carried along, as in the picture of the sailboat given above). Paul wrote, “God has revealed them to us by His Spirit” (1 Cor. 2:10). “The things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37). “By revelation [God] made known to me the mystery” (Eph. 3:3, 5). “The Spirit expressly says . . .” (1 Tim. 4:1). John knew he was inspired to pen what he did (see Revelation 1:1; 14:13; 19:9).

Both Peter (1 Pet. 1:12) and Paul (Gal. 1:12) knew that the gospel was from God. These men had known from youth that the Old Testament was inspired of God. The Holy Spirit showed them that the New Testament was equally inspired. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 the Gospels are linked with the Old Testament Scriptures and put on the same plane with them. The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ are recorded as being “according to the Scriptures.” In 1 Timothy 5:18, Paul quotes from both Deuteronomy and the gospel of Luke and calls them “the Scriptures.” In 1 Peter 1:25, the gospel message is put on a level with the word of the Lord in Isaiah; both are inspired and eternal. In 2 Peter 3:2, the apostles are linked with the prophets, and in verse 16 Peter links Paul’s epistles with “the other Scriptures.” Consider Proverbs 30:5-6, which amounts to a summary and a practical warning at this point:

Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.

Limits to Inspiration

We have seen that the Bible teaches it is both fully and verbally inspired by God. To help us understand what this means, we will also consider what it does *not* mean.

First, the original writers retained their *individuality*. Although each was being guided by the Holy Spirit in what they penned, the personality of the writer was not destroyed. Each author expressed his own individuality in noticeable ways. For example, the style and ministry of Jeremiah are quite different from those of Isaiah or Ezekiel. Matthew, a Jew, wrote his gospel especially for the Jews, but Luke, a Gentile, seems to have had the Greeks especially in mind. It is worth noting that the personalities of Paul, Peter, James, and John shine out through their respective inspired writings.

Second is the *absence of all the original manuscripts* (termed *autographs*) of all the divinely chosen authors. They were ‘lost’ long ago. God, in His wisdom, allowed this to happen, no doubt to avoid their becoming objects of worship (compare 2 Kings 18:4). However, God has sovereignly ensured that very excellent copies have been preserved, and they are essentially the same as the original documents.

Third is the issue of *translations*. Due to differences between languages, it is impossible to have a perfect translation. However, the translations we have are fully reliable for study and devotional reading. Bible translations that ECS Ministries recommends are *The New King James Version* (on which this ECS course is based), *The New American Standard Bible*, *The English Standard Version*, *The NET Bible*, and *The Authorized (King James) Version*. Some Bible versions are really more of a paraphrase than a translation. The student should keep in mind that the easy-to-read versions generally sacrifice some exactness of thought in order to make the English wording as fluent as possible.

Fourth is the evidence of *restraint*. Sometimes the authors would have liked to write more, but the Holy Spirit restrained them. For instance, in the book of Revelation, John was about to record the message of the seven

thunders, but was told not to do so (10:4). The writer of Hebrews wanted to write about Melchizedek (5:11), but was prevented. Jude planned to write about salvation, but instead found it necessary to exhort the saints earnestly to contend for the faith (v. 3). Whether or not they realized it, in all they wrote or did *not* write, the Bible authors were being directed by the Spirit of God.

BIBLIOLOGY: THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE – PART 2 –

The Canon of Scripture

The word *canon* is used to describe the sixty-six books of the Bible. The term means a “reed,” a “measure,” or “rule,” and suggests the testing of books to see if they meet the divine standard. There are many ancient religious books; how do we know that only these sixty-six books in our Bible today are inspired, and no others? After all, the Roman Catholic Church puts fourteen ancient books (called the *Apocrypha*) on the same level as the Bible, including certain additions to canonical books, like Daniel.

How the Bible Came to Be Written

It is important to take into account the history of how the Old and New Testament canons came about.

The Hebrew patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) highly valued the precious promises from God concerning a land that would be theirs and a nation of people that couldn’t be numbered. Important events from their lives were written down, usually on clay or stone tablets, and passed on from father to son as a valuable heritage. In writing the *Pentateuch* (the first five books in the Bible) Moses may have incorporated this written material as a revelation from God and added his own records up until the time of his death. As the people of Israel traveled through the wilderness and entered the land of Canaan, these records were zealously guarded. Other books

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— Part 1 —

EXAM BOOKLET
AK '16 (2 UNITS) BD1

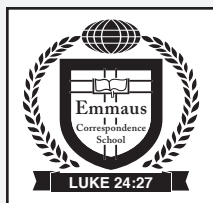
STUDENT NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

COURSE GRADE: _____

INSTRUCTOR



Exam developed by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

A NOTE ON THE EXAMS

The exams are designed to check your knowledge of the course material and the Scriptures. After you have studied a chapter, review the exam questions for that lesson. If you have difficulty in answering the questions, re-read the material. If questions contain a Scripture reference, you may use your Bible to help you answer them. If your instructor has provided a Single Page Answer Sheet, record your answer on that sheet. This exam contains the following types of questions:

MULTIPLE CHOICE

You will be asked to write in the letter of the correct answer at the space on the right. Here is an example:

The color of grass is

- A. blue C. yellow
B. green D. orange

 B

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Under this heading we invite you to put into words something you have learned from that chapter, and to share that with us.

RETURNING THE EXAM

See the back of this exam booklet for instructions on returning your exam for grading.

DO NOT PHOTOCOPY THESE EXAM PAGES

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CHAPTER 1 EXAM

BIBLIOLOGY – PART 1

EXAM GRADE

Before starting this exam, write your name and address on the front of this Exam Booklet. Read each question carefully and write the letter of the correct answer in the blank space on the right. Use the separate answer sheet if provided.

- The study of what the Bible says about itself must
 - involve a study of human philosophy.
 - begin with an understanding of other religious books.
 - presuppose that God has both the ability and desire to reveal Himself.
 - be a formalized study guided by an expert.
- One of the reasons covered in the lesson for God revealing Himself in written form to man was to
 - demonstrate how very great He is.
 - communicate His will so we would know what He expects of us
 - show how “human” He is.
 - convey how impossible it is for man to actually know God personally.
- The Bible was written over a period of about
 - 500 years.
 - 1000 years.
 - 1500 years.
 - 2000 years.
- Support for believing in the Bible’s supernatural origin include
 - its unified theme, archaeological evidence, and fulfilled prophecy.
 - its language, which is “other-worldly.”
 - that it was written by Jesus Christ, God’s Son.
 - the fact that the original documents are still intact after all this time.

5. One way in which the Bible is different from other religious books is that
 - A. it reveals God’s plan of salvation from sin.
 - B. it is by far the longest one.
 - C. it is the only one written by more than one person.
 - D. It’s the hardest to understand. _____

6. When we say the Scriptures are “inspired by God” we mean that
 - A. only the ideas of Scripture were communicated to the authors.
 - B. men came up with thoughts about God and wrote them down.
 - C. scholars used available sources for their writings.
 - D. the very words are from God and have a definite purpose. _____

7. Complete this sentence taken from the lesson: “The Bible contains many _____ from God, but the entire Scripture is _____.”
 - A. promises / meant to convict us of sin
 - B. commands / a guide to how to have eternal life through Christ
 - C. revelations / inspired by Him
 - D. communications / written by humans _____

8. Christ promised His disciples that _____ would bring His words to them back to their remembrance (so they could write them down as part of the New Testament).

A. He	C. the Holy Spirit
B. the rabbis	D. His mother Mary

9. The doctrine of inspiration means that
 - A. every writer wrote in the same style.
 - B. all the books were written in the same language.
 - C. the Bible teaches everything there is to know about God.
 - D. the writers were controlled by the divine Author as they wrote. _____

10. Due to the differences in languages, it is impossible
 - A. to have a perfect translation of the Bible.
 - B. to be sure we really have God’s word in the Bible.
 - C. to understand what God has said in the Bible.
 - D. to know which Bible translation to use. _____

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

How has God’s revelation of Himself in the Bible impacted you personally?
