

## THE BIBLE

**We believe the Bible is the inspired, infallible authority, the Word of God, our only rule of faith and practice.**

Paul states, "All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NIV). Peter adds, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21 KJV).

Inspired of God or "God-breathed" means the Holy Spirit lifted the understanding of the speakers and writers above human limitations to give the Scriptures divine authority. Thus Paul could write, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Corinthians 2:12 -13 KJV).

**We believe God spoke, using the words of men to convey divine truth.**

Therefore, the Bible reflects the culture and environment of the writers as they studied and wrote. God was guiding in such a way that the written truth was his word. It is thus the infallible authority in everything Christians believe and do.

The Bible is made up of 66 separate books written across many centuries. It was written by various individuals who spoke different languages. The Bible is comprised of the 39 books of the Old Testament and 27 books of the New Testament. Each was inspired by God and all were brought together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to form what is called the canon of Holy Scripture. The Council of Jamnia in 90 A.D. affirmed those 39 books recognized as the sacred Word given first to the Israelites. The Council of Carthage in 419 A.D. affirmed the 27 books of the New Testament recognized by the early Church, as genuine and authentic writings with apostolic authority, God's inspired Word. Thus, we believe that these 66 books together are the Word of God.

**We believe the central message of the Scriptures is the Good News that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.**

Jesus is the Son of God who transforms life when individuals respond to his love, accepting him as Savior and Lord. John says, "If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God" (1 John 4:15 NIV).

**We believe proper interpretation of the Scriptures comes from the Holy Spirit.**

"First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation" (2 Peter 1:20 RSV). We believe the Scriptures are entrusted to the Church to be proclaimed throughout the world. The Church is the body of Christ under his headship and guided by the Holy Spirit. The unity of that body is vital to the effective proclamation of God's

Word. Therefore, we understand that the interpretation of Scripture under the guidance of the Holy Spirit is subject to the collective understanding of the body (Ephesians 4:1-19).

**We believe original infallible manuscripts were written in Hebrew and Greek and other ancient languages.**

Translations into numerous languages have given many people the opportunity to read God's Word in their dialects. Changes in language and new archeological discoveries of manuscripts closer to the originals make the translation of Scriptures a constant, continuing process. Each translation should be evaluated on accuracy and clarity in communicating the gospel. Translations from the best available manuscripts of the Hebrew and Greek preserve the infallible authority of the Scriptures as God's Word. Translations prepared by a committee offer a system of checks and balances which may not be true in those prepared by an individual.