

## INTRODUCTION TO BIBLE STUDY

### Searching the Scriptures – February 7, 2012

Are you familiar with the way the Bible talks about itself? When people begin talking they usually cannot talk very long without revealing something about themselves. When God talks about his book he reveals something about himself and the book that He has produced.

Hello I'm Larry Murdock. I preach for the Gandy church of Christ. Welcome to this program.

What are some of the scriptural names given to the Bible? In the Bible itself it is never called "the Bible." That's right! The word "Bible" means "Book." In the book, however, this production is described by several names.

For instance, these writings are called "holy Scriptures." This phrase means "sacred writings." In 2 Timothy 3:15, Paul wrote to Timothy, "from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." And so, the Bible is called Scripture, in fact, it is Holy Scripture.

In 1 Peter 4:10 and 11, we find another way in which the scripture is described. Peter wrote, "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: (11) whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies--in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." In this passage Peter calls the Bible the "oracles of God." The "oracle" means that which has been spoken and heard. God has spoken and there are those who heard what He said. Even after writing them down, you see, they are still the words that God spoke and the prophets heard. The Bible is the collected "oracles of God."

The Bible is also called the "word of God." The writer of the book of Hebrews wrote, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged

sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (13) And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” (Hebrews 4:12-13 ESV.) Notice that this writer describes the power of God’s Word. It is living and active. The Bible is not a dead letter. It is alive and it is active. Whenever you hear God’s word, do you realize that the Word is stirring you up? It may be cutting you, pricking you. It may be stirring you up to action so that you will desire to do all the will of God. In this role the Word of God is likened to a two-edged sword, a sword that is sharpened on both sides. This sharpened Word of God pierces! It discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart. In other words, the Word of God anticipates what you are think and intending. God is attempting to get your attention and keep you away from sin by anticipating your heart, your thinking, and your intentions. Then the Hebrew writer warns us that “no creature is hidden from [God’s] sight.” God sees right through us! He knows and the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. You can read about yours in His Word!

But the writer of the book of Hebrews also tells us that God’s Word is a Testament. A “Testament” is a will, or a document that is left behind when a person dies. It is written so that the wishes of the deceased can be put into effect after the testator dies. It is the instrument or document through which an inheritance is dispensed to those who outlive the testator. After discussion the death of Christ and the blood of Christ, the inspired man wrote, “And for this cause he [Christ] is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. (16) For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. (17) For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator lives. (18) Whereupon neither *was* the first *testament* dedicated without blood.”

There are two “testaments” discussed in this passage. Both testaments were dedicated with blood. There is the “new testament” which became effective when Christ shed his blood. When Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper before his crucifixion, he called the fruit of the vine, “**my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.**” (Matthew 26:28.) And then, there is the “first testament” which was dedicated with the blood of animals. The “first

testament” is that which we know as the Old Testament. The Old Testament has been fulfilled in the coming of Christ and the inauguration of the New Testament. Hebrews 10:9 says that Jesus “took away the first that he may establish the second.” Jesus dedicated the New Testament by the blood, the sacrifice, the death of Jesus Christ. Jesus died for the sins of the world so that according to His New Testament, the world can receive the inheritance prepared for the children of God. Jesus took our penalty of separation from God so that we could be reunited with God in time and eternity.

Yes, the Bible is called by different names in the Bible: Scripture, Oracles, simply the Word, and it is described as a Testament, both Old and New. In the OT book of Psalms, chapter 119, the Word of God is described in several more ways: “the law of the Lord,” “His testimonies,” “His precepts,” “His ways,” “His commandments,” “His judgments” and “His statutes.”

And all of this Word claims to be from the Creator of the universe. In the days of Moses, Exodus 20:1 says, “And God spake all these words...” Then follow those commandments that we call the “Ten Commandments.” More than 2,000 times the writers of the Bible claimed to be speaking by divine inspiration. Peter says those holy men of God were “moved by the Holy Spirit.” God told these prophets over and over again, “I have put my words in your mouth.” In a prophecy about Jesus Christ, God told Moses, “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.”

(Deuteronomy 18:18-20 ESV.) Some of those who heard this saying said to themselves, “How may we know the word that the Lord has not spoken?” God replied, “when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord and the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.”

(Deuteronomy 18:22.) Friends, the word of God carries its own guarantee. There are over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament that were completely fulfilled in the days of Jesus and His Apostles.

Before Jesus left the earth to sit down at God's right hand, He promised His apostles that they would receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would empower the apostles and prophets of Christ to teach and preach the truth. The night before His crucifixion Jesus told his disciples, "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. (13) When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. (14) He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (15) All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you." (John 16:12-15 ESV.)

Friends, the New Testament apostles and prophets were just as inspired as were the Old Testament prophets. Therefore, the whole book is inspired by God and is profitable for our learning. Are you studying your Bible regularly?

Please continue to listen to the Searching the Scriptures program. But in order to get deeper into the study of the Bible you need to attend Bible School and also study diligently at home. Do you read much in God's book? Friends, don't leave Bible study to the preacher...study for yourself. You will be glad you did.