

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 6



THE CHARACTER OF THE BIBLE

Scripture Texts: Matthew 24:35; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21; John 6:63; John 12:48

God has established methods by which He communicates with His creation, man, to tell him His will. Some of His methods are through nature, by direct speaking, by Christ, by the Holy Spirit, and through the Bible.

Nature speaks of God's power and majesty, but it cannot tell us who He is, whether He loves us, whether He will answer prayer, what the future holds, what our duty is, or anything of grace and atonement. We may see God in nature, but we cannot reach Him there. (Read **Psalm 19:1-3**.) God's most universal and plain communication with man is the Bible.

We have seen the important position occupied by the Church of God. If it is to fill its place in God's plan, we must know what God's will is. God has given us a Book which contains all we need to know to be saved and to do His will on earth. This Book is the Bible. What is it like?

MEMORY VERSE: *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.—Matthew 24:35*

DAILY READINGS:

- Mon.—**1 Kings 8:54-61** Solomon's benediction.
- Tue.—**2 Timothy 3:10-17** The defense of the faith.
- Wed.—**2 Peter 1:12-21** The basis of true knowledge.
- Thu. — **1 Corinthians 2:6-16** True wisdom the gift of God.
- Fri.—**John 12:44-50** A summary of Jesus' claims.

Devotional Reading: **Psalm 19:7-14** The works and Word of God.

It Is Eternal

Matthew 24:35 My words shall not pass away. It is God's Word. It is inspired by God. It is true. The world and all in it was brought into being by the power of His Word. **There hath not failed one word of all his good promise (1 Kings 8:56)**. God's Word was before this world came into being and will stand sure after it has gone. His Word can never be destroyed because it is true.

The Bible Is Equipment for Christian Work

2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God. Paul here refers to the Old Testament Scriptures, but this may be applied to the New as well. The Bible sets forth eternal principles which could have been conceived only by God. Its message fits any age of the world. If obeyed from the heart, it will produce a new and clean character inside and out.

It is profitable for doctrine—it contains the doctrine of God which is the rule and standard of our faith. Any doctrine which cannot be proved by the Bible is not required of man to accept. It is the last court of appeal for religious doctrine. **For reproof**—it will reprove and rebuke the sinful life. It holds a high standard of moral living. **For correction**—The Bible is profitable in restoring every person to his proper place in life. It will correct our attitude and conduct if they are out of order. **For instruction in righteousness**—we need no creed books or discipline books to guide us into the rules of faith and practice. The Word is sufficient. The Scriptures were written for our learning and instruction, that we might know the will of God for us (**Romans 15:4**).

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2 Timothy 3:17 That the man of God—saved people, saints—**may be perfect**—perfect in purity, clean, sinless—and **thoroughly furnished unto all good works**. Read **Ephesians 2:10**. God's Book is fitted to carry out His plan. We need the Book if we are to work the plan.

The Bible Is Inspired

2 Peter 1:21 Moved by the Holy Ghost—The Old Testament Prophets spoke as the Holy Ghost came upon them. **The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue (2 Samuel 23:2)**. This is inspiration. It is the method by which our Bible came to us.

The very Words of the Bible came from God. They were only written down by man. No other book is like the Bible. No other is inspired by God, or comes from God directly. Inspiration is the Holy Spirit putting into a man's mind and heart the Words to say or write. **Prophecy** (God's Word to man) **came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake . . . moved by the Holy Ghost**. This is God's way of giving our Bible to us. Over and over, the Bible claims to be God's Word. This fact puts the obligation upon us to accept and obey it.

Jesus put His stamp of approval on the whole Old Testament, all the Bible that was written at that time. The Jews included all of it in the three divisions Jesus mentioned. He said, **all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law . . . prophets . . . psalms (Luke 24:27, Luke 24:44)**. If Jesus says they are true, we can be sure of them. While Jesus was with His disciples, He had pointed in the Old Testament to predictions concerning Himself. Now that He has been crucified and resurrected, He assures them again that their faith in Him as the Messiah might be strengthened, that all things concerning Him must be fulfilled (**Luke 24:44**).

The Bible Is Life-Giving

John 6:63 The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. The message of Jesus (and the Gospel as a whole) has a spiritual application, and the fleshly mind cannot comprehend it without the spirit of understanding given by the Holy Spirit (**1 Corinthians 2:14**). It is the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus that brings salvation to us and not the letter of the Law. We may be strict adherents to the letter of the Word and not have the Spirit within our hearts, and it would profit us nothing. **Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Romans 8:9)**.

The Bible was given to us to use. In it, we find statements of truth, warning when we stray, a standard to measure us and bring us back to the right way, and a teacher of God's will. It is to furnish us thoroughly **unto all good works**. No one, however educated and trained otherwise, is capable of doing God's work unless the Bible is in his heart and mind and hand. This does not mean leaders only, but all of us who have been **created in Christ Jesus unto good works (Ephesians 2:10)**. All are to spread the Gospel. Shall the whole beautiful, eternal plan of God come to an end, fail, when it reaches us, just because we do not read, study, eat, and obey His Word, the Bible? It is tragic that just that is happening in many lives.

The Bible Will Judge Us

John 12:48 The word that I have spoken . . . shall judge . . . Christ and His Word (doctrine) are one and inseparable. If we reject the message of His Word, we have rejected Him. It is impossible to have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us and reject the Word. His Word and doctrine will be the standard of judgment on that final day.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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