

# Why The Bible is Important

by Hendrik Joubert

The Bible is generally accepted and referred to as the Word of God; however it seems that few consider the implications of accepting this fact. If it is the Word of God it must be the single most important book we may lay our eyes upon, and examining its contents should be a priority.

When reading the Bible one quickly realizes that it is not merely an interesting collection of books revealed for man's pleasure; it is a detailed instruction manual containing specific directions from the One who created us for His pleasure. *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. (2Timothy 3:16-17)*

One may identify two purpose statements in this passage. The first is introduced by the phrase *and is profitable for* and is followed by a list of four things the Bible may be used for. Two of these may be considered *positive* and two *negative*. *Doctrine* and *instruction in righteousness* are positive ways to communicate the way in which a sinner may become righteous, as revealed in the gospel – *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. " For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. (Romans 1:16-17)*

Although they had *a zeal for God*, the Jews did not submit themselves to His righteousness because they remained ignorant of it. **(Romans 10:1-3)** While it may be easy to condemn them for this, we may follow in their footsteps by remaining equally ignorant of *God's righteousness* if we fail to study His word. Instead we may substitute rules made by men, resulting in us not submitting to His righteousness, causing our worship to also be rejected: *But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (Matthew 15:9)*

*Reproof* and *correction* are both negatives which require a level of *judgment* on the part of the one obeying these instructions. Judgment should not be made based upon our own frivolous standards. **(Matthew 7:1)** *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. (John 7:24)* We can only judge righteously if we use God's word as our standard, and notice that it was given for this very purpose.

The second purpose statement is found in **verse 17: *That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*** This statement was made while the New Testament was being revealed in parts by means of the gifts of the Spirit. **(1Corinthians 13:8-10; Hebrews 2:1-4)** In **Ephesians 3:1-7** Paul explains that the gospel was being *revealed by the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets*, and that *when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.*

The inspired statement Paul made to Timothy concerns every Scripture given by inspiration of God. When Peter writes by inspiration he declares the writings of Paul to be equal to *the rest of the Scriptures. (2Peter 3:15-16)*

When **Jude** wrote his letter he expresses a desire to talk about the positive aspects of *salvation*, however it had become necessary to warn against those who were sneaking into the church secretly to *turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness*. His remedy is to earnestly contend for *the faith which was once delivered unto the saints* – the gospel revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets. **(Jude 3-4)**

This makes a study of the Bible, the only objective source for determining the will (or righteousness) of God all the more important. Many teach different from the Bible, claiming to do so under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God. In this regard the apostle Paul writes: *If any man thinks himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. (1Corinthians 14:37)*

Consider this; if the Holy Spirit was to reveal God's will to me but also to you, would we not receive the same message so as to agree? It is through the apostle Paul that we receive the warning that not even *an angel from heaven*, let alone any man, may preach a *gospel* different from that which was revealed to the holy apostles and prophets. (*Galatians 1:6-9; Ephesians 3:1-7*)

Notice that the gospel consists of the details of the Sacrifice for our sin, but also the instructions by which we may be cleansed by His blood. These instructions are often referred to as *doctrine*, and those who *obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ* will be condemned. (*2Thessalonians 1:8; 1Peter 4:17*)

Judgment is a negative concept and may be manipulated to make us feel badly about disagreeing with others; however we must recognize that we will either judge the words of men, or the words of God. We must make sure that what we are doing is the will of God, and not our own, or that of any man. The only way we may become perfect (saved) is to follow the source given exactly for this purpose: *That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* (*2Timothy 3:17*)