

WHY BAPTISTS BELIEVE WHAT BAPTISTS BELIEVE, PART 16

THE BIBLE'S AMAZING COMPOSITION

This is what the Baptist Faith and Message has to say about the Word of God under the heading “The Scriptures”: “The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.”

I want to begin with two scriptures that are fundamental to what we Baptists believe about the Bible. This is what we fall back on.

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Bible is inspired, “breathed out by God.” It is useful to teach us, straighten us out and help us to do what is right. It instructs us as to what God wants us to do.

“Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:20-21). It was the Holy Spirit of God Himself who spoke to the prophets. He was the One who gave them the exact words to speak or to write down. They didn’t just sit down and make it all up on their own.

[Question 1] Based on those passages, Baptists believe that the Bible was inspired by **God** and that it is His **revelation** of Himself to mankind. We believe the Bible to be the divine, inerrant, and inspired word of the one true living God.

[Question 2] The Bible is made up of **66** different books written by **50** human authors (some of the authors are unknown) over a period of **16** centuries. By the way, the word “Bible” comes from the Greek word *biblia*, which means “the books.” They were originally written down in three languages (Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic) and they take place on three continents (Europe, Asia and Africa).

Each book was **independently** written with each human author knowing virtually **nothing** of the other authors’ parts.

Despite all of this, the Bible is unified as one book with one central focus. Amazing! Its unifying theme is the revelation of the one true God and His plan of redemption for fallen mankind.

[Question 3] I want you to notice the varied backgrounds of the different Bible authors in this exercise. Some were highly educated. Others had no formal education. Many were what we would today call “blue collar” workers. Some were business professionals. Several were royalty.

Moses was educated in the best schools in Egypt. Peter, the leader of the disciples, was a fisherman with no formal education (a contrast to Moses). Samuel was raised in the temple and became a prophet. Amos was a herdsman. Joshua was a general, a military leader. Nehemiah was one of the people who went back to the Promised Land after exile. He was a royal cupbearer. David grew up a shepherd and became a king, perhaps Israel’s greatest king. Paul was a Pharisee and a tentmaker by trade. Daniel was a statesman and a career politician. Luke was a doctor. Matthew was a tax collector. Solomon, David’s son, he started off good. He was raised in the palace and became a wise king. He was the

richest man who ever lived. Ezra was a Jewish scribe. We tend to view the scribes negatively, but Ezra was a scribe!

[Question 4] The Bible shows us three important things about God... It shows us His **Power**, His **Holiness** and His **Love**. Of course, the Bible reveals many more aspects of God.

[Question 5] The unifying theme of the Bible is what? It is **the revelation of the one true God and His plan of redemption** for fallen sinful humanity.

THE BIBLE'S CENTRAL CHARACTER

While the Bible is the story about God, there is one main character that we actually get to lay our eyes on. This character takes on human form. *[Question 6]* We see this Person fulfill prophecy after prophecy. We watch as He heals people and performs many signs and wonders. We hear His words - His various claims and His teachings. We witness Him carrying out God's plan for our salvation as He lays down His life for us, His sheep. Who are we talking about? **Jesus**. Jesus Christ, Jesus the Messiah, God the Son, Jesus of Nazareth.

Have you ever noticed how many songs we sing about Jesus? There is a reason for that!

With the idea planted in our minds about Jesus being the central character of the Bible, I want to begin by looking at John Chapter 1...

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:1, 14).

[Question 7] So then, what or who is it that is four times identified as “the Word?” in this passage? **Jesus Christ**. He is God’s incarnate revelation of Himself to the world. Colossians 2:9 says that in Jesus Christ “the whole fullness of the deity dwells bodily.” This is referring to Jesus being in a physical form, in human flesh, quite literally, “God with us.”

[Question 8] In the Old Testament Jesus is **Predicted**. Hundreds of Old Testament prophecies are later fulfilled By Jesus in the New Testament.

In the Gospels He is **Present**. He is living among us in human flesh. We can see Him. We can hear Him. People can interact with Him and talk to Him.

Then in the Book of Acts He is **Proclaimed** by believers. He is the subject of the gospel message summarized in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son [speaking of Jesus] that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life.

In the Epistles He is **Possessed** by those who believe in and follow Him. We believers in Jesus abide in Him and the Bible says that “He is in us.” So, we are possessed BY Him.

Finally, in Revelation He is **Predominant**. He is the One who dictates the message about the end times to the Apostle John. He delivers His personal messages to the seven churches of Asia Minor. He is the object of worship in Revelation Chapter 4. He is the One who is worthy to break the seals in Chapter 5. We read on and in Revelation Chapter 19 we see Jesus returning to earth. He is on a white horse with the saints. He single-handedly conquers Satan, all his demons and all those who believed Satan’s lies and who reject God’s Messiah. So, Jesus is predominant in Revelation.