

Doctrine of Bible

Clarity of Revelation

Can We Trust Our Translations?

1. In order to be authoritative, the Bible has to be clear. This was the argument of the Reformation leader Ulrich Zwingli (1484 - 1531).
2. The clarity of Scripture comes through the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit.
 - *John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*
3. As the Holy Spirit superintended the writing of the Scriptures, so He will superintend the preserving and translation of the Scriptures.
 - The Word of God is superintended. *2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*
 - The Word of God is preserved. *Mark 13:31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.*
4. Nothing, and no one shall be able to suppress, or destroy God's Word. That is the promise of Jesus. Not pseudepigraph writings, not added revelation not even a bad translation can eradicate the Word of God from earth.
5. Those who deliberately alter God's Word, and those who try to destroy it, shall be severely judged.
 - *Revelation 22:18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*
6. Perhaps the clearest illustration of this is the Septuagint, which is a translation of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.
7. Jesus trusted this translation for He quoted from it, and called it Scripture. In fact, while the Septuagint is quoted 340 places in the New Testament, only 33 times does the New Testament cite the Masoretic Text.
8. Mark 7:6 presents one instance of Jesus quoting the Septuagint. The Lord quotes the LXX of Isaiah 29:13.

- *Mark 7:6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. 7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*
9. While various translations of the Bible should be challenged at critical points when concern arises, the general principle is established that God will faithfully preserve His Word among the languages of earth.
 10. If a major Bible doctrine is changed in a Bible translation, news of that distortion will be made known.
 11. It is true that many modern translations do challenge some memorable texts. These texts are either removed, or they are footnoted in The New American Standard Version (NASV), The New International Version (NIV), The Living Bible (LB), and The New King James Version (NKJV).
 - *1 John 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.*
 - *Acts 8:37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*
 - *1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*
 12. It is important to note that the absence of these particular verses does not negate the whole counsel of God. The doctrine of the trinity, the doctrine of salvation by grace, apart from baptism, and the doctrine of the incarnation are well established in other passages of the Bible which are beyond dispute.
 13. The Holy Spirit is the One who inspired the Bible. The Holy Spirit is the One who illuminates the meaning of the Bible in every language, and to all people. The Holy Spirit is the One who will insure God's Word is faithfully preserved.
 14. People, in ever nation can trust the translation they have of the Bible, in their own language, if they want to know the truth, because the Holy Spirit is responsible for guiding them into the truth.

Special Note.

Many Jehovah Witnesses are former cult members because the Holy Spirit has shown individuals that *The New World Translation* is not the true Word of God. It has been deliberately changed in every key passage to conform to the teaching of the cult leaders. The classic example is John 1:1. The NWT has John 1:1 saying that "*in the beginning was the Word and the Word was a god.*" The Greek text literally says, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and God was the Word."

15. Because of the present ministry of the Holy Spirit to lead believers into truth, Christians do not have to worry about God preserving His Word.

- *John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. 18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*
- *John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: 27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.*
- *John 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. 12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*

16. There is a direct fulfillment of the promise of Jesus by the inspiration of the Bible, and preserving it.

There is the Word of God

- *1 Corinthians 2: 1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*

There is the Illuminating Work of the Holy Spirit

- *1 Corinthians 2:8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 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. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

*14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.
15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.*

17. The practical problem is that, if the Holy Spirit is to guide Christians into all truth, why do so many Christians disagree? When will this unity of understanding come?
18. The Biblical answer may be indicated in Ephesians 4:3. It seems like there is a time element.
 - *Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:*
19. There are things, essential truths, that God has revealed to the church now.
 - *Jeremiah 15:16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts.*
 - *1 Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*
20. The church knows that Jesus is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. The church knows God raised Jesus from the dead. The church knows the Bible is the Word of God. The church knows the Holy Spirit has come. The church knows when a Christians dies they go to heaven.
21. The church knows there is still much study to be done.
 - *2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*
22. While Satan blinds the eyes of the natural man, the Holy Spirit illuminates those who are to be heirs of salvation.
 - The work of the devil. *2 Corinthians 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*
 - The work of the Holy Spirit. *1 Corinthians 2:12 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.*

23. It is the work of the Spirit to show individuals what is already in the Bible. The Spirit illuminates, and the Spirit also interprets the truth of Scripture.
- *2 Peter 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.*
24. Whatever a Christian believes must be in harmony with two thousand years of church history, and it must be in harmony with the plain teaching of Scripture.
- *Jude 3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*
25. Whatever translation is used, the context of the translation must conform to the two principles that guard the truth. Does the text confirm a historic faith? Is the text plain in meaning?
26. Keep in mind seven ways to read the Bible.
- Read the Bible reverently. It is the Word of God. Read it on your knees. Read it with a humble heart. Read to hear God's Word.
 - Read the Bible prayerfully. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide in all truth.
 - Read the Bible collectively. The Amish read the Bible in the family, and in the context of the church. Some avoid reading the Bible privately.
 - Read the Bible humbly. Man is to read to learn.
 - Read the Bible carefully. There is a method to interpreting the Bible. There is the contextual, historical, grammatically, cultural, rhetorical, theological method. Pay attention to each facet of the method.
 - Read the Bible Christologically. Look for Christ in every verse of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. Unless you see Christ in every Scripture, you have not read the Bible.
 - Read the Bible with a view to obedience. Be a doer of the Word, and not only a hearer.