

Bibliology

Study of the Bible



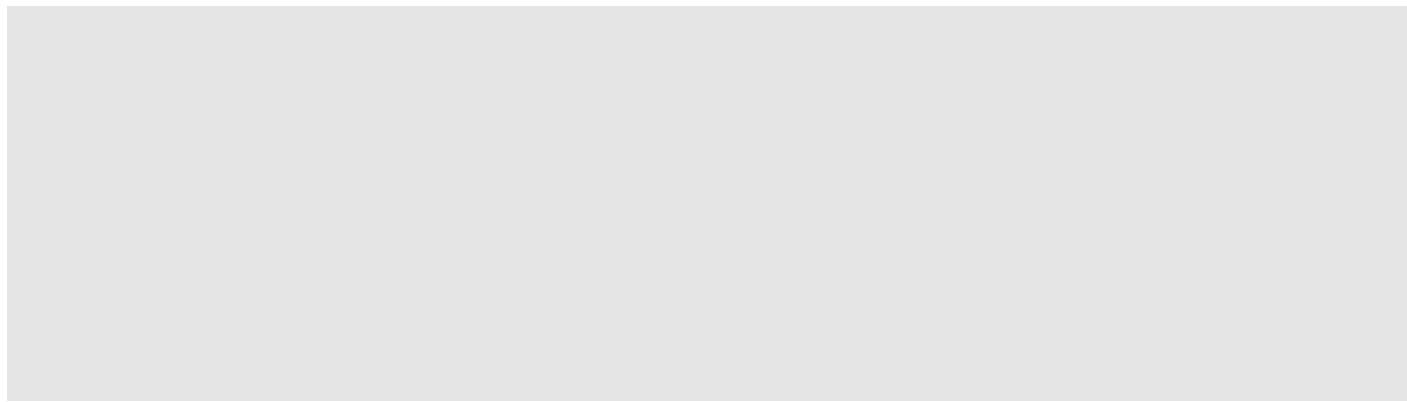
What is Bibliology?

Bibliology is the study of the Bible.

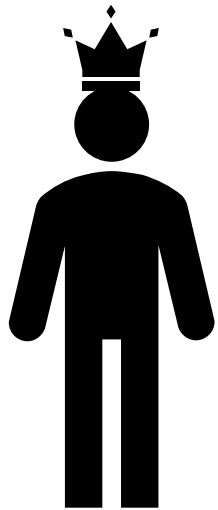
It is the topic in **systematic theology** that deals with issues of the nature and character of the Bible. Bibliology attempts to understand what kind of book the Bible is, how it is authoritative for Christian faith and practice, and to what extent and in what manner the Bible is to be understood as divine revelation.

Grenz, S., Guretzki, D., & Nordling, C. F. (1999). In Pocket dictionary of theological terms (p. 20). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

The Word of God



The Word of God as a Person: Jesus Christ



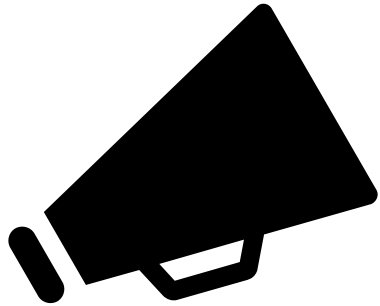
The Bible refers to the Son of God as “the Word of God” in a few places:

1. [Revelation 19:13](#) - “He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God”
2. [John 1:1](#) - “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”
3. [John 1:14](#) - “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.”

In addition to these references, [1 John 1:1](#) comes close. Although the usage of this term is not common, it indicates that among the members of the Trinity ***it is Jesus, the Son of God, who in his person as well as in his words, has the role of communicating the character of God to us and of expressing the will of God for us.***

The Word of God as Speech by God

God's Word as Speech takes 1 of 3 forms:



1. God's **Decrees**
2. God's Words of **Personal Address**
3. God's Words as **Speech through Humans**

The Word of God as Speech by God

1. God's Decrees

Powerful, creative words from God are often called God's decrees. A **decree** of God is a word of God that causes something to happen. These decrees did not only occur at creation, but also facilitate the continuing existence of all things since [Hebrews 1:3](#) tells us that Christ continually *"upholds the universe by the word of his power."*



Examples of God's decrees:

- [Gen. 1:3](#) - And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.
- [Gen. 1:24](#) - And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so.

God's decrees are also reported in [Psalm 33:6](#) "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host."

The Word of God as Speech by God

2. God's Words of Personal Address

God sometimes communicates with His people by speaking directly to them. These can be called instances of God's Word of *personal address*. Examples are found throughout Scripture:

1. [Gen. 2:16-17](#) - And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."
2. In [Exodus 20](#) God gave the Ten Commandments starting with "God spoke all these words, saying, 'I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me' "
3. [Matt 3:17](#) - and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

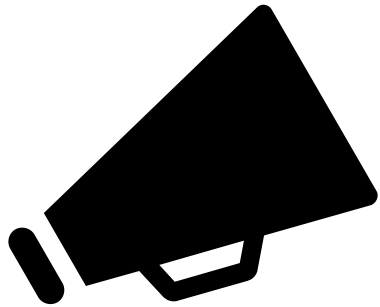
In cases where God spoke words directly to individuals it was clear to the hearers that these were God's words since they were hearing God's very voice - His words had absolute divine authority and were trustworthy.



The Word of God as Speech by God

3. God's Words as Speech through Humans

Scripture shows that God often spoke through prophets. Although they were ordinary human beings using ordinary human language, the authority and truthfulness of these words were not diminished - they were still completely God's words as well.



- [Deut. 18:18-20](#) - 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.
- [Jeremiah 1:9](#) - "Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, '**Behold, I have put my words in your mouth**'"
- Other examples: [Ex. 4:12](#); [Num. 22:38](#); [1 Sam. 15:3, 18, 23](#); [1 Kings 20:36](#); [2 Chron. 20:20](#); [25:15-16](#); [Isa. 30:12-14](#); [Jer. 6:10-12](#); [36:29-31](#),...
- N.B. Anyone who claimed to be speaking for the Lord but who had not received a message from Him was severely punished - see [Ezek. 13:1-7](#) & [Deut. 18:20-22](#)

The Word of God in Written Form

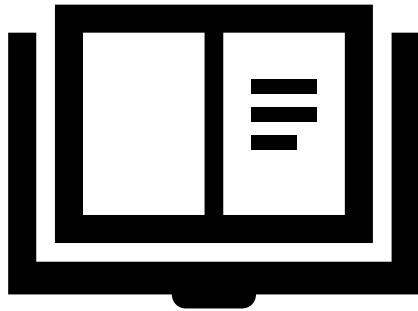
There are several instances in Scripture where God's words were put in *written form*.

- [Ex. 31:18](#) - And he gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.
- [Ex. 32:16](#) - The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.
 - See also: [Ex. 34:1](#)

Later, both Moses and Joshua added additional writing to the Book of the Law of God: See [Deut. 31:9-13](#); [Josh. 24:26](#)

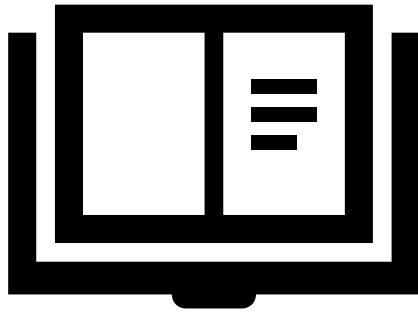
Prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah were both also commanded to write down God's words: See [Isa. 30:8](#); [Jer. 30:2](#); [Jer. 36:2-4](#); [27-31](#); [51:60](#)

Paul recognized that the words he wrote to the Corinthians were "a *command of the Lord*" - [1 Cor. 14:37](#)



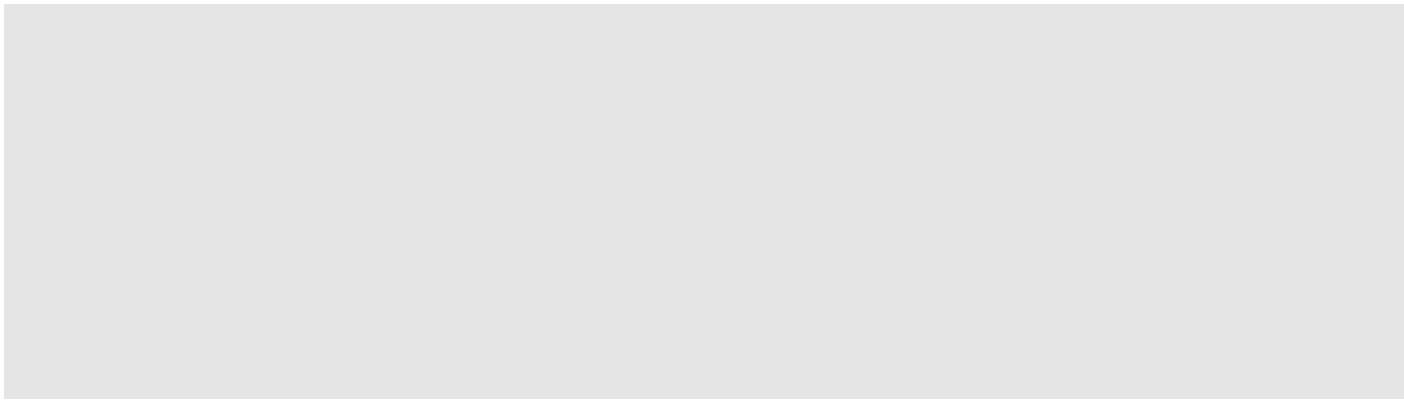
The Word of God in Written Form

The benefits of God's words being written down include:

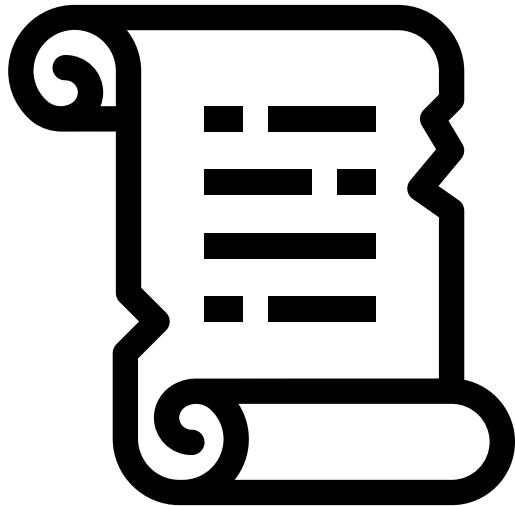


1. **Reliability**: *More accurate preservation* of God's words for subsequent generations.
2. **Accessibility**: *Improved access by more people* than when God's words are preserved merely through memory and oral repetition.
3. **Permanence**: *Repeated inspection* of the written Word permits careful study and discussion, which contributes to better understanding and more complete obedience.

The Canon



The Canon of Scriptures



Canon refers to the authoritative list of the books of the Bible. The word comes from the Greek word *kanon*, which refers to a measuring instrument. It therefore came to mean a rule of action (Gal. 6:16; Phil. 3:16)¹.

¹ Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 118-119.

Canon of Scriptures - Old Testament

Pentateuch / Law (5)	History (12)	Wisdom (5)	Major Prophets (5)	Minor Prophets (12)
Genesis	Joshua	Job	Isaiah	Hosea
Exodus	Judges	Psalms	Jeremiah	Joel
Leviticus	Ruth	Proverbs	Lamentations	Amos
Numbers	1 Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel	Obadiah
Deuteronomy	2 Samuel	Song of Solomon	Daniel	Jonah
	1 Kings			Micah
	2 Kings			Nahum
	1 Chronicles			Habakkuk
	2 Chronicles			Zephaniah
	Ezra			Haggai
	Nehemiah			Zechariah
	Esther			Malachi

Canon of Scriptures - New Testament

Gospel (4)	History (1)	Pauline Epistles (13)	General Epistles (8)	Prophetic / Apocalyptic (1)
Matthew	Acts	Romans	Hebrews	Revelation
Mark		1 Corinthians	James	
Luke		2 Corinthians	1 Peter	
John		Galatians	2 Peter	
		Ephesians	1 John	
		Philippians	2 John	
		Colossians	3 John	
		1 Thessalonians	Jude	
		2 Thessalonians		
		1 Timothy		
		2 Timothy		
		Titus		
		Philemon		

Characteristics of Scripture

SCAN the Scriptures

Sufficiency of Scripture

1/2

The **sufficiency** of Scripture means that Scripture contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting Him perfectly, and for obeying Him perfectly.

This implies that:

- In Scripture alone should we search for God's words to us
- God considers what he has told us in the Bible to be enough for us.
- We should rejoice in the great revelation He has given us and be content with it.

Support and explanation of this doctrine can be found in:

- [2 Tim. 3:15](#) (here, "sacred writings" mean the written words of Scripture)
- [James 1:18](#) (the "word of truth" brought us forth, by God's will)
- [1 Peter 1:23](#) (we are born again through the living and abiding word of God)
- [2 Tim. 3:16-17](#) (God's word is meant to train us to do any "good work" that He wants us to do)

Sufficiency of Scripture

2/2

Questions for Personal Practical Application:

1. In seeking to know God's will for your daily life, how much emphasis have you put on reading Scripture itself vs reading other Christian books?
2. What are some of the doctrinal or moral questions you are wondering about? Do you now have more confidence in the ability of Scripture to provide a clear answer for some of those questions?
3. If the Bible contains everything we need to hear from God for obeying him perfectly, what roles do the following sources have in helping us find God's will: advice from others; sermons or Bible classes; our consciences; our feelings; the leading of the Holy Spirit as we sense him prompting our inward desires and subjective impressions; changes in circumstances; the gift of prophecy (if you think it can function today)?

Clarity of Scripture

1/2

The **clarity** of Scripture means that the Bible is written in such a way that it can be understood, but right understanding requires time, effort, the use of ordinary means, a willingness to obey, and the help of the Holy Spirit; and our understanding will remain imperfect in this lifetime.

This implies that:

- The meaning of Scripture can be known
- Bible study should be encouraged
- When Christians disagree, the fault is not with the Bible

Support and explanation of this doctrine can be found in:

- [2 Peter 3:15-16](#) - Peter reminded his readers in the early church that some parts of Paul's epistles were difficult to understand
- [Deut. 6:6-7](#) - To teach children about the Bible one must be repetitive, use simple forms, and be conclusive
- [Matt. 12:3](#); [Matt. 12:5](#); [Matt. 19:4](#); [Matt. 21:42](#); [Matt. 22:31](#); [Matt. 9:13](#) - All of these references point to a need to understand and accept Scripture
- [1 Tim. 4:13](#); [John 20:30-31](#); [2 Cor. 1:13](#); [Eph. 3:4](#); [James 1:22-25](#); [1 Peter 2:2](#); [2 Peter 1:19](#); [1 John 5:13](#) - These exhortations to read Scripture mean that ordinary believers can understand the Scriptures

Clarity of Scripture

2/2

Questions for Personal Practical Application:

1. What would happen to the church if most believers gave up reading the Bible for themselves and only listened to Bible teachers or read books about the Bible? If you thought that only expert scholars could understand the Bible rightly, what would happen to your personal reading of Scripture? Has this already happened to some extent in your life or in the lives of those you know?
2. Will a conviction about the clarity of Scripture make you more careful when studying a text of Scripture to gain a biblical answer to some difficult doctrinal or moral problem?
3. Given the many interpretations of Scripture, some conclude, "*People can make the Bible say anything they want.*" How do you think Jesus would respond to this statement? How do you respond?

Authority of Scripture

1/2

The **authority** of Scripture means that all the words in Scripture are God's words and that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.

This implies that:

- As we read Scripture we become convinced that it is made up of God's words, in line with the claims made within Scripture itself
- The Bible cannot be "proven" by appeal to any higher authority
- Although the entire Bible is made up of God's words and He inspired the entirety of Scripture, He did not dictate every single word to each author

Support and explanation of this doctrine can be found in:

- [Num. 22:38](#); [Deut. 18:18-20](#); [Jer. 1:9](#); [14:14](#); [23:16-22](#); [29:31-32](#); [Ezek. 2:7](#); [13:1-16](#) - In these references the prophets who spoke on behalf of God were relaying His own words, and any that did not speak as instructed were false prophets
- [2 Tim. 3:16](#); [2 Pet. 1:19-21](#); [Matt. 1:22](#); [Matt. 4:4](#); [Matt. 19:4-5](#); [Mark 7:9-13](#); [Luke 24:25-27](#) - In these NT references the author/speaker affirms that the OT scriptures are God's words
- [1 Cor. 2:13-14](#); [John 10:27](#) - These references affirm that as people read Scripture, they hear God's voice speaking to them through the words
- [Luke 1:1-3](#) - Luke used ordinary processes of speaking to eyewitnesses and gathering historical data in order that he might write an accurate account of the life and teachings of Jesus.

Authority of Scripture

2/2

Questions for Personal Practical Application:

1. Is there anything in the Bible that you do not want to believe or to obey? If you said 'yes', what is the best way to approach and to deal with the desires you have in this area?
2. Do you think that trusting and obeying everything that Scripture affirms will ever lead you into sin or away from God's blessing in your life?
3. Have you interacted with someone with a theologically liberal view of the Bible? How would you discuss the authority of Scripture differently with him or her?

Necessity of Scripture

1/2

The **necessity** of Scripture means that the Bible is necessary for knowing the gospel, for maintaining spiritual life, and for knowing God's will, but it is not necessary for knowing that God exists or for knowing something about God's character and moral laws.

This implies that:

- Only those who have heard of Christ and trusted in Him will be saved
- People hear about Christ through the proclamation of the Word by Christians
- Even people who have never read or heard the Bible can know that God is real

Support and explanation of this doctrine can be found in:

- [Rom. 10:13-17](#); [John 3:18](#); [John 14:6](#); [Acts 4:12](#); [1 Tim. 2:5-6](#); [Heb. 11:13](#); [Heb. 11:26](#); [John 8:56](#) - These verses affirm that Jesus is the only way to salvation
- [Matt. 4:4](#) (quoting [Deut. 8:3](#)); [Deut. 32:47](#); [1 Peter 2:2](#) - These verses affirm that our spiritual life is maintained by daily nourishment with the Word of God
- [Deut. 29:29](#); [Ps. 119:1](#); [Ps. 1:2](#); [1 John 5:3](#) - These verses affirm that if we are to know God's will with certainty, then we must achieve that certainty through studying the Bible
- [Ps. 19:1](#); [Acts 14:16-17](#); [Rom. 1:19-21](#); [Rom. 2:14-15](#) - Here we see that even without the Bible, everyone has evidence in creation that God exists, and they can know something about His character

Necessity of Scripture

2/2

Questions for Personal Practical Application:

1. When you are witnessing to an unbeliever, what is the one thing above all others that you should want him or her to read?
2. Do you nourish your soul on the spiritual food of the Word as carefully and diligently as you nourish your body on physical food? If not, what is the remedy?
3. Do God's principles in Scripture and the apparent guidance we receive from feelings, conscience, advice, circumstances, human reasoning, or society ever seem to conflict? How should we seek to resolve the conflict?

References

- Grudem, W. (2020). Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine (Second Edition, p. 32). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic.
- Charles Caldwell Ryrie, Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 118-119.

