



“Is the Bible ‘the Word of God?’”

Q Some people call the Bible “the Word of God.” Is it? What is the Bible exactly? Some say it is inspired, and then some even say it is infallible and inerrant.

A It is common to hear the Bible referred to as “the Word of God.” The Bible is also believed to be inspired—but definitions of “inspired” vary. Others believe the Bible is also “infallible” and “inerrant.”

John 1:1 tells us that in the beginning the Word was both with God and was God from all eternity (the book we call the Bible certainly was not). The Greek word translated “word” is *logos*, defined as the dynamic reality that upholds all things.

John chapter one leaves no doubt that the Word of God (*logos*) is the second person of the triune Godhead—Jesus, the unique, one and only Eternal Son of God. Jesus Christ is the Word of God who was with God and who is God.

The Bible is a collection of 66 books, composed by many different authors and editors over many centuries. Most Christ-followers agree that the authors of the Bible were inspired—some in unique and miraculously ways—but the human authors also expressed their own worldviews, personalities and even prejudices and wrote in the culture and milieu in which they lived.

We might think of the Bible as a window. It enables us to more

clearly see and comprehend God. Were it not for a window, we would not see beyond the wall of our own narrow perceptions and realities.

However, the window is not the object of our worship. The biblical window is of human and divine origins. We can say that God inspired the window but not without human involvement. By using humans in the recording, writing, preservation, translation and publication of the Bible, God sent a clear signal. The window would not be perfect as God is perfect and holy. The window of the Bible has cracks, dust, smears

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and bears the indelible imprint of human fingerprints. God never designed the Bible to be the object of our worship. We must not worship the *Bible—bibliolatry*—we use the Bible for what it is, a tool, as God clearly designed and intended, to know him and see him more clearly.

As a window the Bible is not the Word of God—the Bible, as a window helps us see and perceive Jesus, the Word of God (and the fullness of God, for that matter). We should read the Bible from a Christ-centered perspective, remembering its purpose is to reveal the Word of God. We should also remember that the books of the Bible are not all written in the same linguistic style (genre) so we

must read each book in the style in which it was written, not to mention the culture in which the author lived.

The Bible should be understood from a Christ-centered perspective, and some parts of the Bible are more important than others. Christians read the Old Testament in the light (and Light) of the New Testament and the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Anything in the Bible that does not make sense within the focus and filter of Jesus is not as important or essential as Jesus. For example, many

instructions were given to Israel, who lived under the old covenant. They were required to observe the seventh day Sabbath and not eat pork or shellfish.

How does a focus on Jesus help us to understand what the Bible says about those topics? The Bible says that the annual holy days of the old covenant were to be observed “forever.” But in the light of Jesus, his incarnation and his death on the cross, how do we understand “forever”?

Jesus is the one and only Word of God. Only he is infallible and without error. The Bible is a tool—a window—but it is not infallible nor is it without error. □

Note: For more discussion about the Bible, we invite you to read and download “Battle About the Bible” and “The Bible: What It Is and What It Isn’t”—click “resources” at www.ptm.org.