



HILL COUNTRY
BIBLE CHURCH | AUSTIN

THE BIG PICTURE



CURRENT SERIES

The Bible

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April 7, 2013



The Bible has been the focus of a lot of attention in the last month in the U.S. with the advent of this series on the History Channel called *The Bible*. It literally started out the first week in March with the most viewers that had watched a cable program this year, and it continued with about 10 million viewers each week as people were just captivated by the story of the Bible. And should we be surprised. The Bible is the most significant literary work in the history of the human race. That's not even something that is an arguable statement. It's been translated more, distributed more, it's stood a longer period of time than any other book in history. Think about the Bible. The Bible was written by over 40 authors over a period of 1500 years. Contained within the Bible we have the history of the ancient Near East, particularly as seen through the eyes of the Jewish people. We have history, we have customs, we have an understanding of how people lived, how civilization developed. All of that contained within the Bible.

In addition to that, the Bible has adherence of the two major religions in the world claiming a total of about 2 billion people out of the 7 billion on the planet. And that's 2,000 years after the Bible was completed. Now that's a pretty significant thing that a book would inspire people 2,000 years later to pay attention to it. It's the foundation for all of western society. Most of the thoughts that you think in your head about humanity, about human rights, about the value of the individual, about rational thought, about the actual internal workings of humanity, about how government ought to work and how law ought to work, and how commerce ought to work. All of those had their origins, their source, in the Bible. In fact, to be Biblically illiterate today in some realms would kind of mean we are just kind of illiterate. Illiterate of history, literature, the sociology of our background, our legal system, how we think as people. The Bible is a significant, significant book, so how does it get treated?

Well the American Bible Society commissioned a study last year to find out about people and the Bible in the U.S., and in this study 85% of households in the U.S. own a Bible with a household average of 4.3 Bibles per house. Okay, you may say we have 10 at our house, we're pushing the average. Or maybe you don't have any at your house, but 69% -- I found this fascinating -- 69% of Americans believe the Bible provides answers on how to live a meaningful life. That would mean 7 out of 10 people that you pass when you're walking down the street would say that they believe the Bible has answers in how to have a meaningful life. That's the good news -- here's the bad news. Thirty-six percent of Americans read the Bible less than once a year. I was kind of trying to do the math on how many times you read it if you read it less than once a year. I guess they're referring to maybe people who read it every other year or every third year for a little bit of time. Seventy-nine percent of those surveyed believe that they are knowledgeable about the Bible, 79%. But 54% were unable to

identify the first books. And I know what you're thinking – okay, okay, okay, let's think -- Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, (congregation says Deuteronomy) Deuteronomy. Okay. Forty-six percent believe the Bible, the Koran, and the Book of Mormon are different expressions of the same spiritual truths. So it's interesting that people look to the Bible, but they don't see a big difference between the Book of Islam and the Book of Judaism and Christianity. They see them basically as kind of the same and the Book of Mormon. The biggest complaint people have about the Bible? Not enough time to read it. Not enough time to read it, and should we be surprised. In a text message, Twitter culture where 144 characters is all you really get, picking up this book and reading it is a daunting task. It's a daunting task, right?

A little bit more information – Americans who think the Bible is just another book of teaching written by men containing stories and advice – 11%. So 11% of the people just think it's a book of advice written by men. Americans who think the Bible has no errors – this is interesting – 56%. Fifty-six percent. So when you're thinking people who believe that the Bible contains no errors are just idiots, keep in mind that's almost 60% of the people in the U.S. And then, Americans who strongly agree that the Bible is totally accurate in all it teaches is skewed by age. So the 18-25 only 30% believe that, and increasing up to people 64 and over, 58% believe that. So there's a huge fall off as people get younger, the younger generation as to how often then read the Bible, their Biblical knowledge, and whether they believe it. Which leads to a question of chicken and egg. Do people not believe it and so therefore they don't know it and they don't read it? Or do people not know it and they don't read it and therefore they don't believe it? I don't know which is the case, but the younger you are the higher probability is that you will have a lower view of the Bible.

And Jay Leno picked up on this. For anybody who watches his show he loves those “Man on the Street” interviews where he sends somebody out to like interview somebody to find out what they might say. So he was out, they were out working on questions about the Bible. So they approached two college-aged women with this question: Can you name one of the Ten Commandments? One of the women responded to that, “freedom of speech?” (congregation laughs). And so Mr. Leno turned to the other one and said, “Complete this sentence: Let he who is without sin,” and the woman completed it by saying, “have a good time?” (congregation laughs) So he turns to a young man there and he says, “Who according to the Bible was eaten by a whale?” The young man confidently answered back because he knew he had the answer to this one: “Pinocchio.” (congregation laughs)

So I think most of us have maybe a better understanding of Disney than we do of the Bible. So let me just say that we get that, okay. Here at Hill Country

Bible Church we get that. We know that the Bible was written a long time ago in a different culture. The customs are different, the words are different, the ideas are different. It is like reading something from the distant past, and for many people who look at this book and kind of start into it, start trying to read it, you think to yourself, "I don't know if I'm going to get this. I don't know how to make sense out of this or how to approach it." And so for the 13 weeks from now - for the next 13 weeks we're going to be spending time doing a Bible overview so that you will get a chance to really basically understand the Bible. And we're going to do it in a big picture type of format. So let me just give you some help just to begin this first week.

So when you look at the Bible, the Bible is divided up into two segments. The Old Testament and the New Testament. Now the Old Testament predominantly

THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE IN CANONICAL ORDER	
OLD TESTAMENT	Genesis
	Exodus
	Leviticus
	Numbers
	Deuteronomy
	Joshua
	Judges
	Ruth
	1 Samuel
	2 Samuel
	1 Kings
	2 Kings
	1 Chronicles
	2 Chronicles
	Ezra
	Nehemiah
	Esther
	Job
	Psalms
	Proverbs
	Ecclesiastes
	Song of Solomon
	Isaiah
	Jeremiah
	Lamentations
	Ezekiel
	Daniel
Hosea	
Joel	
Amos	
Obadiah	
Jonah	
Micah	
Nahum	
Habakkuk	
Zephaniah	
Haggai	
Zechariah	
Malachi	
NEW TESTAMENT	Matthew
	Mark
	Luke
	John
	Acts
	Romans
	1 Corinthians
	2 Corinthians
	Galatians
	Ephesians
	Philippians
	Colossians
	1 Thessalonians
	2 Thessalonians
	1 Timothy
	2 Timothy
	Titus
	Philemon
	Hebrews
	James
	1 Peter
2 Peter	
1 John	
2 John	
3 John	
Jude	
Revelation	

talks about the nation of Israel and the history of God working in Israel. The New Testament really picks up with Jesus and goes forward into the time of the church. And so the difference between books you would read in the Old Testament and the New Testament is pretty significant. And then among the books there's different types of books. And so if you look at the way the books are laid out among the books, you'll find within the Old Testament there's law, books are written about the law. There's the history, there's the wisdom and poetry, we've got the big prophets which we call the major prophets. We've got the little prophets which we call the minor prophets, not because they're small but because their books are short.



In addition to that in the New Testament we have the gospels, which primarily talk about the life of Jesus Christ. And then the history book, the book of Acts talks about how the early church expanded. And then we have the letters. The general letters were written by various apostles and people, and then we have Paul's letters which make up the majority of letters. And then the last book of the Bible, the Revelation actually talks about the future.

Now if you know where the book is located and what the basic genre of the book is you'll have a lot better understanding of it. In addition to that there is a story that starts in Genesis and goes all the way to Revelation, and we're going to be looking at this arc of Biblical history walking through the 12 different segments and looking at the unified storyline that runs all the way through it. That is one of the unique miracles of the Bible. That 40 different authors over 1500 years in three different languages are writing a book that has consistency of theme that weaves its way all the way through from beginning to end. That's why this is a literary work, a historical work, a theological work unparalleled in the history of mankind. In order to guide you along the way, next week you're going to be able to pick up a booklet called **The Big Picture** in which if you look at on the inside you'll see that we'll have a section for each of these periods of

history, laying it out and explaining it and walking you through those Biblical passages. Then in the back, we've loaded it up with all kinds of charts and graphs and maps and explanations that will walk you through all kinds of things related to the Bible. So we're going to help you. I'm not going to



guarantee that at the end of 13 weeks you'll be a Bible expert, but you'll be able to read the Bible and really get a lot out of it. That's what our goal is, that's what we're going to do together.

So when it comes to the Bible there's generally three types of attitudes that we see. The first attitude is the impassioned observer. The person who doesn't believe or disbelieve, has no axe to grind, and typically their attitude is that the Bible is literature like other literature, its history like other history, therefore, we need to give it a good reading to understand it. You may be surprised that outspoken atheist Richard Dawkins has actually argued that schools in Europe should teach the Bible to the students in public education. And he argues that this book is such an influence, even though he hates it, disagrees with it, thinks it's not helpful, it's been such an influence on the whole history of western civilization that we will be an uneducated people if we don't read the Bible. That's very interesting coming from an atheist. In fact, he points out that there's 129 specific concepts or phrases that are used in Great Britain that came

from the King James translation of the Bible that are used commonly. And so if you don't know the Bible you won't even understand normal literary illusions when people make these comments. For example, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." That's liable to come up in a board meeting when somebody's beating up on someone else and you want to kind of bring them back to, "Hey let him who is without sin cast the first stone." It's commonly used in our world today. That comes from the words of Jesus in the Bible. So those are the people who really - they don't have any axe to grind one way or the other.

The second kind of attitude that I see toward the Bible, are the people that are really antagonistic. They're the people who believe that the Bible has been used over the centuries by people to oppress and abuse others. They would say the Bible is bad. It's a religious text that people have used for all kinds of ugly things and therefore we need to ban it, we need to keep it away from people because it's harmful.

The third attitude that we see with people when it comes to the Bible is "the faithful followers." Those who believe the Bible contains the words of life, the words of truth, the way to God, and they love it and they study it personally for themselves. Now I don't know which one of those categories you guys fall into today. You could be coming from any one of those, and we're glad you're here. We're glad you're participating in this conversation about the Bible. Now I do have to warn you that I'm in that third category. I really believe it. Now hopefully that doesn't cloud my ability to be intellectually honest when it comes to a study of the Bible and the reality of it, and you be the judge of that as you listen through this series.

Today there are two major presuppositions that I want to give you from the Bible, that if you don't get these two major presuppositions, if you don't understand them, you will be confused if you read it. Now even if you disagree with these presuppositions you need to understand that they are actually embedded in the Bible itself, so I'm not telling you my presuppositions though I have many and though you have many. I'm not telling you my biases. I'm telling you what does the Bible say internally about itself, okay?

The first presupposition, major presupposition that the Bible says about itself is that "**The Bible is God's communication to humanity.**" That's what the Bible says about itself. In other words when you read the Bible it doesn't say, "Here's a story or a fable that will be good for you for living." Or here's an idea or here's a history chapter or here's a lesson. Or these are the views of the Apostle Paul. Or these are the views of Saint Matthew. Or these are the views of prophet Moses. It doesn't say that. What it actually says in this Bible is this

book is from God; God's communication to humanity. So let me explain. The word Bible itself comes from the Greek word "*Biblia*", which literally means "the books." And it makes sense because there's 66 of them as part of the Bible. So it's the books, but inside the Bible in the pages of the Bible in the actual words of the Bible, the Bible doesn't call itself the Bible. It calls itself scripture. So when the writers are referring to the Bible internally, they use the word scripture, which comes from the Greek word "*graphe*". The word *graphe* means to graph or to write or to draw it out. In other words to actually put it down in clear meaning. Jesus himself called the scripture the *graphe* in Luke Chapter 24 verse 27. And he referred to the prophets and Moses as the scripture or the "writing the *graphe*". Now let me explain why this is so significant. God didn't simply tell individuals who he was and what he was thinking. If he would have done that everything we know about God would have been subjective. You have a view of God based on how God revealed himself to you and told you. (Tim points to different people in the congregation) You have a different view of God, you have a different view of God, you have a different view of God based on what you perceive God communicated to you. But by actually taking his words and putting them down in a written form, we move from the subjective understanding of God to the objective understanding that has the ability to transition - to transcend every culture, every era of history, every human on the planet. In other words you can read the same thing today in the United States in English that somebody in North Korea could read in Korean on the same time or jump back to the 1600's to Japan and a person reading Japanese from the Bible would get the same meaning that someone that was living in Switzerland in the middle ages was getting. In other words, God wanted, according to the Bible, God wanted his word recorded so that there was not going to be a subjective point of view about who God is. "Well, you know my God is a loving God. He would always do - Well my God, you know, he gets those people that do bad. Well my God is in the trees. My God, my God's in the flowers." Well God has prevented that, if you believe the Bible, God's prevented that because it's recorded who he is, so we know who he is. Does that make sense? And we get that, right? When you're buying a house, you want a deed to that house, right? You don't want the former owner just to simply say, "Hey you know what. In my heart it's your house." (congregation laughs) Because you think, "Well what happens if you change your mind tomorrow? What if your heart changes? You'll come back and want it back." So let's write it out. You don't say to the bank, "Hey listen. I know I've got a bank statement in writing here, spreadsheet, that tells what I have. But you know I really, I personally kind of feel like I have more money than that, and so therefore I spent more than I should have. But that's really kind of my view of my money. You see, you bankers, you have a limited view of my money. I have an expansive view (Tim spreads his arms out wide) of my money. (congregation laughs) Because in my heart I'm a big kind of person."

No we write things down, right? That's why the teachers in school give you a written test, because they want to find out if you really know what they think they taught you. In writing. The Bible is written down so we'll get it.

I want you to see a passage, 1 Thessalonians Chapter 2. If you'll turn there, we're looking at a couple of passages this morning and this is one of them. 1 Thessalonians Chapter 2 starting in verse 13. Paul is writing to the church at Thessalonica, and he says these words:

“And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.”

Now Paul is saying, “When we came to speak to you” – and you can find that recorded on Acts Chapter 17. “When we came to speak to you, we came into your synagogue, we opened up the Old Testament scrolls, we read the Law of Moses, we read the prophets, and I was telling you, remember, see this is the word of God, this word that's written down here. Get it, right? This isn't my word, this is the word of God. And see how Jesus the Messiah fulfilled all of these things? Like everything that's said in the Old Testament that refers to Jesus.” And Paul said, “When you guys looked at that, you took it for what it was, the word of God. And when you listened to us you didn't take our word for it, “Oh this is what Paul thinks and it sounds like a cool idea, so let's do this to make Paul happy. Or it's a new narrative that sounds like it fits our new culture. But you listened to it and you compared it with scripture and you came away saying, ‘This is the Word of God,’ scripture, the *graphe* is the writing of the word of God.” That's the first major presupposition, and that is **The Bible is God's communication to humanity.**

The second major presupposition is harder than the first one, okay? So again, I'm not saying that this is my view. I'm saying that this is what the scripture says within itself, and if you want to understand it you need to understand that The second one is this: **The Bible is without error in its original writings.** The Bible is without error in its original writings. That's a big statement. That what Paul actually wrote when his pen hit the vellum, that what Moses actually wrote when his stylist hit the papyrus pads. That what they actually wrote down was the word of God without error. Here's my source on that – Jesus Christ. Jesus said:

“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”

John 17:17.

Sanctify them by the truth. Not by my truth or your truth or their truth or the popular truth of the day. By THE truth. *Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.* Not your word is true, but your word is actually truth. So Jesus, talking about the Bible says this is true. Now Jesus wasn't alone in that. I want you to see what Peter said. So if you'll turn to 2 Peter Chapter 1, we'll spend the rest of our time in 2 Peter Chapter 1. In 2 Peter Chapter 1, starting in verse 12 -- now keep in mind Peter, the apostle that Jesus picked, he traveled with Jesus for 3-1/2 years. He was the one who was standing there in the garden of the judgment hall. He was the one that denied Jesus three times and was looking at Jesus. He was the one that appeared and looked in the empty tomb. He was the one that Jesus appeared to after the resurrection. He was one of the founders of the early church as he was part of that group that founded the early church. Now he's old and now he's writing to people who have become believers. This is one of Peter's letters, and watch what he says:

"So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me."

So I've reminded you and I'm going to keep reminding you as long as I live in this tent of a body, as long as I'm in the skin, in the flesh, as long as I'm here I'll keep reminding you, but I know I'm not going to live that much longer. And then he says this:

"And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things."

Now how would that be possible? The only way that would be possible is for Peter to write it down. For the early church to copy it and pass it on to other people. And that's how we got our Bible. Okay? In addition to that, many people, many scholars believe that Peter had a major hand in helping Mark, who was a disciple of Peter's write the gospel of Mark, which would make a lot of sense that he would be involved in saying, "I want to make sure that after I'm gone, the things about Jesus are remembered going forward." And then he gives his evidence. He says, verse 16:

"We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty."

So he says, "We're not making all this stuff up. We actually saw it." Peter was an eyewitness of it. In fact, not only was Peter an eyewitness of it, Peter was martyred because he wouldn't recant the story along with the other eyewitnesses of it, which makes for a pretty credible witness, right? If you will go to your grave, go to your execution claiming this to be true and you know it's a lie - people don't do that, do they? Pretty credible eyewitness, but that's just one. The second witness, he says:

"For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'"

That's his baptism.

"We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain."

The Mount of Transfiguration. So he said "Even heaven itself testified that this Jesus was the Son of God. At his baptism the voice came from heaven. We heard it. At the transfiguration when he was on the holy mountain, the voice came from heaven, we heard it. So we've got eyewitness testimony we've got miraculous signs of divine revelation and one more. He says in verse 19:

"And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in the dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."

What he's saying is "We've got the prophets. We have the prophets." The prophets prophesied about these things and we have more certainty now because we've actually seen it. We've seen what happened, right? And so when Micah prophesies the town in which the Messiah would be born, and Jesus Christ is born in Bethlehem. When Daniel the prophet prophesies when the Messiah will be cut off, when he will be executed, to the very day some 500 years before and Jesus is crucified on that day - that kind of makes prophesy pretty certain, right? I mean you go, "Oh, strange coincidence. In the 500 years and all those days, and Jesus Christ was crucified on the day he prophesied. Whoa." When Isaiah says that he will be buried in a rich man's tomb, 600 years before Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, takes him down off the cross and puts him in the tomb. That's pretty strong. Peter's saying, "Not only do we have eyewitness accounts, not only do we have revelation from heaven, but we also actually have the prophesies of the Old Testament, hundreds of them, which were fulfilled in Jesus." That's really strong.

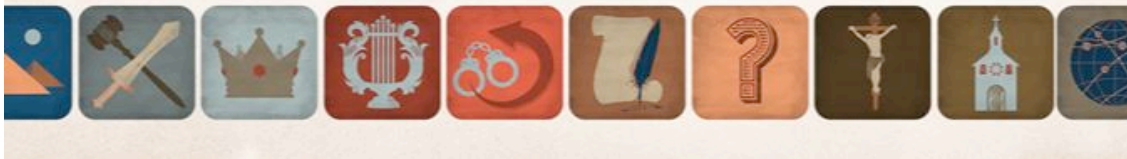
Now some of you are saying, “Well like that all could be true, but people had to write it down. How do I know that what they wrote down is actually accurate? Maybe they recorded it wrong. How do we know that it’s true, without error?” Well I think Peter anticipated that you would be asking this question 2,000 years later. And so he continues. Look at what he says in verse 20. He says:

“Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

He’s saying, the scripture, the words of scripture were not written because some guy thought “I’ll write a new book and add it to the Bible. Give my two cents worth.” He’s saying it wasn’t of the will of man, it was actually from God. And then he uses a very interesting word. He says, men wrote as they were carried along by the Spirit. The Greek word there “carried along” is a nautical term to refer to what the wind does in the sails of a boat. For the boat would stand still in the midst of the sea if it weren’t for the wind that comes along and blows it. What Peter’s talking about here is what we would call dual-authorship. The actual writers and God himself working in that to produce the scripture or the text of the Bible. In fact, in 1 Timothy Chapter 3, Verse 16, Paul says it this way - he says “All scripture is God breathed.” That’s what the Bible is saying about itself. It’s God breathed. In other words, back in Genesis when it says the Lord formed man out of the dust of the ground, in other words he took the elements and formed humanity, and then it says that he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being. God’s breath creates life. He’s saying that same breath created the ability to write the scriptures, and they wrote the scriptures.

Let’s just approach it logically for a second. Take human authors. Now human authors are capable of writing truth. If I wrote “Tim Hawks is 53 years old,” that would be a true statement. We’re also capable of writing error, right? If I said, “Tim Hawks is 29 years old.” (congregation laughs) See, yeah it’s pretty obvious, right? Then I would be writing error. So human authors are capable of writing truth or error, but divine, God himself? He’s only capable of producing what’s true. So when you put them together the human and the divine come together, what they’re going to write together is going to be true. Let me say it this way - I’ll throw in a couple of theological words just for your vocabulary. We’ll say it this way. Here’s what we’re saying. God gives his message to people - that’s revelation - he’s revealing it. God gives his message to people who record it using their own personalities and styles. So it’s not dictation, it’s inspiration.

**GOD GIVES HIS MESSAGE TO PEOPLE
(REVELATION)
WHO RECORD IT USING THEIR OWN
PERSONALITIES & STYLES (INSPIRATION)
SO THAT THE FINAL PRODUCT IS WITHOUT
ERROR (INERRANCY)**



So Paul's style and Peter's style are very different, and Moses wrote in Hebrew, Daniel wrote in Aramaic. But the New Testament writers wrote in Greek. It's different, but it's God's revelation working through their own personalities and styles so that the final product is without error. That's inerrancy, the concept of inerrancy. So again, whether you believe this or whether you don't believe it you just need to understand when you read the Bible, that's what the Bible is saying about itself. The Bible is God's communication to humanity, and the Bible is truth. It's without error.

Now just to be completely intellectually honest with you, let me throw out three more big words for you. Okay? It's just something to chew on. The first one is textual criticism. How do I know the text of the Bible that I hold in my hand or I'm looking at on my iPad, how do I know that that is actually the same text that Paul wrote when he wrote the originals? How do I know that that's the same text that Moses wrote when they wrote the originals? That's a great question. What you need to understand is we have 2,000 years of scholarship using the science of textual criticism that have taken thousands and thousands of manuscripts, some complete, some pieces, and laid them down side by side and checked every stroke of the pen to try to understand clearly what the original text was. And I can tell you the text that you hold in your hand is about 99.9%

sure that it reflects the meaning of the original text. And the places where we have a little bit of confusion as to does the word mean this or does the word mean that, none of them have to do with anything related to theology or God. It's minor details. And so there's been an exhaustive search. If we had time today we could spend hours talking about the different papyri, the different manuscripts, the Dead Sea Scrolls. There's so much research on this to get us to the place where we understand that the Bible we hold in our hand actually represents the original text of scripture.

Second big word is interpretation. Interpretation is the art and science of trying to understand the meaning from what's actually written there, and I can tell you that the church has done a really bad job of this over the years. All kinds of people have used the Bible and misinterpreted it to come up with all kinds of different meanings, and most of the people that are negative about the Bible are negative because somewhere along the way somebody told them that the Bible teaches "X" and that was their interpretation and it was not accurate. That's why we study, and we study collectively. So it's not my opinion, your opinion, it's not one scholar's opinion, one theologian. We as a church work on this together so that we can understand what the meaning is of the Bible.

The third word is the word illumination. That's the role of the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit works in the reader of the Bible to not only help them understand it, but also to help them to apply it personally to their lives. Now all of that is in play when you're reading the Bible. And I would say even if you're a skeptic, understanding interpretation, understanding that the Holy Spirit is working, that's what the Bible presupposes for you.

So let me wrap up with just a couple of statements asking the question "Why should I read the Bible?" Why should I read the Bible. I'll give you three quick benefits of reading the Bible. The first one is, "**The Bible will help you learn how the world works.**" If you believe that God is the author of life and also the author of the book about life, then if you read the book about life you're going to understand a lot about life. And so when you read the Bible you understand all kinds of things. You learn about human relationships, you learn about what love is, you learn about how people think and feel and operate. You learn about how the world works. You learn about the mysteries of the world. In fact you learn about how to balance your checkbook, like finance, and you learn about health, and you learn about human government, and you learn about all kinds of things. It's just incredible all that's contained in the pages of the Bible. And so if you want to learn how life works, read the Bible.

HOW THE BIBLE BENEFITS YOU:

- LEARN HOW THE WORLD WORKS
- LEARN HOW TO LIVE WELL IN IT
- LEARN WHO GOD IS AND HOW TO HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM



Second benefit is you actually learn how to live well in this world. **“The Bible teaches you how to live well in this world.”** Think about it. The Bible explains where you came from. The Bible explains why you’re here, and the Bible explains where you’re going. How do you live and make decisions in this world if you don’t know those things? If you don’t understand where you came from, who you are, your identity, then you won’t understand how to relate to the created world you live in. How to relate to other people, how to relate to social structures in the world, how to relate to God. You gotta know who you are. And you’ve got to know what you’re her for, your purpose in life and where you’re going. If you know the answer to those three questions, now you can construct a well-lived life.

The final benefit of reading the Bible is you can learn about God. **“The Bible teaches you who God is.”** You can learn about who God is, you can learn about God’s love for you, you can learn about God’s plan for you, you can learn about how God works in you. In other words, the Bible claims to be communication from God to you. To you, it’s personal. And if you read it I believe you’re going to hear God begin to speak to you.

Now that’s what the Bible says about itself. I would just challenge you today to test it. Test it. Get into it. Read the book. We’re going to be studying it together over the next several weeks, but I want you to understand what the

The Bible
Tim Hawks, HCBC Lead Pastor
April 7, 2013

Bible says about itself. It doesn't simply say it's history and literature. The Bible says it's transformational. I dare you to try it.

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