

Subject: God's Best Gifts: The Bible

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:13-17

Christmas is a time to give and receive gifts. For the next few weeks, we are going to consider God's gifts because it would be a shame if we overlooked the most valuable gifts of all. In this first message we are going to think about the Bible, one of God's best gifts to us.

1. The Bible is a special gift from God

James 1:17 *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

Paul said, "all scripture is given by inspiration of God" (vs. 16). That means that God is the author. The Bible is a unique, one-of-a-kind book. It is the only book God ever wrote. Verse 16 says "all scripture is God-breathed." He has expressed Himself and revealed Himself in the Bible. The Bible is how God speaks to us.

2 Peter 1:20-21 ²⁰ *Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.* ²¹ *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

The phrase "of any private interpretation" means of any personal unfolding. It has to do with the creation of the Bible. Good men did not sit down and write their own ideas about God and His plan for this world. God moved upon their hearts and minds so that what they wrote were the very words of God. Scripture was not the product of man's will, but of God's will.

God inspired the scriptures by using 40 different men over a period of 1,500 years. He gave the first part of the Scriptures (Old Testament) as a special gift to the Jews.

Deuteronomy 4:1-2 ¹ *Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you.* ² *Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.*

Deuteronomy 4:6-8 ⁶ *Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.* ⁷ *For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for?* ⁸ *And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?*

Psalms 147:19-20 ¹⁹ *He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.* ²⁰ *He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD.*

Israel was blessed to have God's Word, and we are even more blessed because we have the complete Bible (Old and New Testaments).

2. The Bible is a perfect gift

Paul refers to the Bible as “the holy Scriptures.” The Bible is holy because God is holy and Scripture is a reflection of His character. This means the Bible is without error, mistake, or flaw. It is perfect in every way.

Psalms 19:7 *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul.*

Psalms 12:6 *The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.*

Psalms 119:140 *Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.*

We dare not add anything to it or take anything from it. The Reformers used the phrase “Sola Scriptura” to mean the Bible is sufficient. It is all we need for faith and practice.

Proverbs 30:5 *Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.*

Revelation 22:18-19¹⁸ *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.*

3. The Bible is a preserved gift

The Bible was made to last forever. The scriptures that blessed God’s people in the Old Testament and New Testament are the very same ones we have today. God preserved them and they have been passed on from generation to generation. He preserved them over many centuries and in spite of many enemies and attempts to destroy them and discredit them.

Voltaire was a French infidel who predicted that the Bible would not last a hundred years after his lifetime. But as God would have it, after he died his home was a distribution center for Bible in Europe. Like many skeptics and unbelievers, Voltaire died but the Word of God lives on.

Isaiah 40:8 *The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.*

Psalms 119:89 *For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.*

4. The Bible is a permanent gift

Notice verse 15, “from a child (infant)” and verse 16, “that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Paul was writing this to Timothy who needed the Bible when he was a young child and now he was a grown man serving the Lord as a pastor. Some gifts eventually wear out or become outdated. The Bible is the perfect gift for all ages. It’s the gift we never outgrow.

Have you not found that the Bible is a life-long treasure?

5. The Bible is a precious gift

The Scriptures may not tell us everything we want to know, but they contain everything we need to know. The Bible is exactly what we need. It is “able to make us wise unto salvation” (vs. 15).

Henry Thiessen: “Man is not only a sinner and under condemnation of eternal death, but he is also inclined away from God, ignorant of God’s purposes and methods of salvation, and incapable of returning to God in his own strength. He is, in other words, in a most desperate condition, of which he is only partially aware, and he does not know whether he can be saved from it, or if he can, how he can be saved. The unwritten general and special revelations of God furnish no real answers to this question. Very clearly, therefore, man needs infallible instruction concerning his most important problem in life, his eternal welfare.”

The Bible tells us about God, creation, sin, Christ, salvation, heaven and hell. It tells us of our need to repent of sin and believe in Christ. It tells us what to believe and how to live (vs. 17, “it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”).

The Bible is described like this: It is the seed of new life in our soul. It is the water that cleanses us from sin. It is the mirror that reveals our sin. It is milk and meat for the hungry soul. It is the lamp that guides our steps. It is the sword that arms us in the time of temptation. For all these reasons, the Bible is most precious to us.

Psalms 19:10 *More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*

Psalms 119:127 *Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.*

Proverbs 3:13-15 ¹³ *Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.* ¹⁴ *For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.* ¹⁵ *She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.*

6. The Bible is a personal gift

In one sense God has given the Bible to the whole world, but in another sense He has given it to you as a personal gift. He intended for you to have it (or you wouldn’t have it) and He intended for you to love it and use it for your good and His glory.

Spurgeon in *Morning and Evening* (November 28): “Truth must enter into the soul, penetrate and saturate it, or else it is of no value.” What should we do with this gift?

- A. Handle it reverently
- B. Read it consistently
- C. Study it carefully
- D. Follow it completely