

## WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE BIBLE



The Bible is the inspired word of God. It is the Word as written by a large number of people who were filled with the power of God. It was through those people and with that power that God chose to be made known to others. God has spoken through the prophets as they saw the problems of their own day and were filled with the Spirit who would not let them keep silent. They did not claim ownership of the words they spoke, but they knew what needed to be spoken because of their sense of being God's messengers. It is that same Spirit who, today, enters into the lives of the members of the Christian Community to make it possible for them to understand the faith that is being proclaimed.

### The Old Testament

The Old Testament is a collection of poetry, prophecy, history, laws, and wise sayings used by a people of faith to give witness to a God who Saves. The amazing element is that these writers, using a variety of forms over a span of many centuries should have developed such similarities in their witness. Their witness concerning God who Saves rises above the distortions caused by the humanness of those who spoke and recorded those long-ago words. It uses the images of one culture in a way that those images can be understood in another culture. In giving witness to God's saving acts, the Old Testament points to something beyond itself. It contains God's promise of a Deliverer. There was to be One who would be the Incarnate Word.

### The New Testament

The New Testament finds the Spirit of God present in the apostolic witness. This witness proclaims Jesus Christ to be the fulfillment of the promise given in the Old Testament. He is Emmanuel, God with us, and as such is the primary focus of the whole New Testament. The writers of this collection wrote of their personal faith, which was impacted by their historical relationship with Jesus and his followers. They were fired up by a resurrection faith that was so new and so filled with the Holy Spirit that they, too, had to tell the story, which could be shared with what was becoming a strong Christian Community. Their writing proclaims that God has done something of decisive importance that needed to be shared through letters to many of those early

church communities. It was these letters which gave form and guidance to the early church, and Paul, having had his own dramatic faith experience, was the chief spokes- person. Paul recognized that he was only an interpreter of God's Word. In this way he served to point people of all ages in the direction of a personal relationship with God.

### The Inspired Word

We believe, then, that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Beginning with the messengers who told of a God who Saves, it promises a Deliverer. It is this Deliverer who then becomes the focus as we see God Incarnate. Then, there is the Holy Spirit who continues to inspire the church to know that Jesus Christ is the One who is the focus of our faith. This witness, written long ago, is the authoritative source of our knowledge of God's continuing self-disclosure. The Word of God is our rule of faith and practice.

Martin L. Bupp, II

Scripture References:

1. The Old Testament: Amos 3:7; Isaiah 61:1-2; Matthew 22:43
2. The New Testament: Luke 4:16-21; Hebrews 1:1-2;  
2 Corinthians 5:19-20
3. The Inspired Word: 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16

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