

## God's Book

Many Australian homes have a Bible. Sometimes it is on the coffee table. Sometimes it is on the shelf. Sometimes people do not know where their Bible is. As a pastor visiting in a home, I would rather see a well-worn Bible than a well-kept Bible. The Bible is to be read regularly, not just dusted occasionally.

Do you read your Bible? Do you know what it is? If you know what it is and whose book it is, you have a real reason to read it. Not reading it is leaving a treasure unopened and unused.

The Bible is not just another book. It is "the Book." "Bible" means literally "Book." The Bible is the Book, the best and greatest Book. It is God's Book.

God inspired the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16). He called men to be prophets (Old Testament) and apostles (New Testament). He taught them what to say and what words to use (1 Corinthians 2:13). That is why the Bible is God's Word, God's Book.

It was men who put pen to paper, but God is the Author of the Bible. He has authored no other book. The Word of God through the prophets and apostles is the foundation on which the faith and life of the Christian is to be built (Ephesians 2:20). It is through the Word of God that people are brought to faith in Christ (Romans 10:17).

The principle is "Scripture alone," *sola Scriptura*. Only the Bible has authority for Christian faith and life: not reason, not emotion, not tradition, not organisation, not supposed new revelation. History is full of attempts to set up some authority besides the Bible. That always becomes an authority over the Bible. But Christ's disciples are to stay with Christ's Word (John 8:32). The sheep hear the Shepherd's voice (John 10:2-5).

Because God is the Author of the Bible, everything it says is true. True means not false. Not false means not in error, not erring. That is what Christians mean when they say that the Bible is inerrant. We are simply saying that it is completely and totally true. The Bible is inerrant because its Author is infallible. His Word is truth (John 17:17). That is why Jesus said, "*The Scripture cannot be broken*" (John 10:35).

Everything the Bible says is true. God knows all about history, science, geography, and everything else. He created the world and everything in it. What He says about anything is certainly right and correct. So what His Book says on any topic is certainly right and correct. This is the Christian attitude toward the Bible. This is the attitude of Christ and the apostles in the New Testament toward the Old Testament.

It is important to know that what the Bible says on any topic is true. But our purpose is not merely knowledge. We are not talking about some philosophical opinion. The Bible is a practical book, with practical truth and practical wisdom.

Knowing that the Bible is true is important because it is essential to trust the truth, value, and wisdom of what it teaches. When someone casts doubt on anything the Bible says, he casts doubt on everything the Bible says. What it says is important for the right relationship to God. We can hardly claim a good relationship with a person if we doubt, distrust, and deny his words. We can hardly have a good relationship to God without listening to what He says.

God's Word of Law constantly shows us our sin. That is not pleasant, but it is necessary. We have to know about the problem to care about the solution. God's Word of Gospel constantly reassures the one who admits his sin that all his sins are forgiven because Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, died in place of all, for the sins of all. That is the central message of the Bible. That is the central truth and trust of the Christian faith. That is worth regularly hearing in a church where the Word is purely preached. That is worth reading in God's Book.

The Bible is God's Book. God means to bless and save us through His Word, by which He brings people to faith in Christ (2 Timothy 3:15). That should move us to read it. The Christian's flesh is still weak, making reading the Bible seem a chore. But the Christian's spirit wants to read, learn, and be drawn closer to Jesus in true faith.