

## The Survival of the Bible:

- **Survival through time.** The Bible's remarkable ability to survive over the centuries makes it unique from all other religious books or literature. For one thing there is far more manuscript evidence for the text of the New Testament than any other book in ancient history. In addition, Jewish scribes used remarkable methods to ensure accurate transmission of the Old Testament manuscripts (*The Reliability of the Bible*).
- **Survival through persecution.** In addition to survival through time, the Bible has survived through intense periods of persecution. Roman emperors sought to destroy it (most notably Diocletian, who by royal edict in 303 AD, demanded that every copy of the Bible be destroyed). The Catholic Church often tried to suppress it from the common man by discouraging laymen from owning it or reading it (note for instance the Council at Toulouse [Southern France] in 1229: laity were forbidden to possess complete copies of the Bible and vernacular translations were forbidden). In one interesting note from history the noted French infidel, Voltaire, who died in 1778, predicted that Christianity would be extinct within 100 years of his time. But instead, within 50 years of his death the Geneva Bible Society used his house and printing presses to print copies of the Bible! No other book in history has been so hated and so persecuted yet it still survives and thrives today.
- **Survival through criticism.** Finally, the Bible has also survived through vicious attacks from higher criticism. For years the schools of higher criticism have attempted to dissect, disprove, invalidate and otherwise destroy the Bible by attempting to bring it to the level of all other man-made religious books. In the face of this relentless attack the Bible has stood remarkably resilient. Science, archaeology and ancient history have proven the Bible correct time and time again. In this light, each of the theories of higher criticism about the human origins of the Bible are far harder to believe than the Biblical doctrine of inspiration. In essence, they are postulating a greater miracle than inspiration itself when they postulate that such a remarkable book with its fulfilled prophecies, unity, scientific and historic accuracy was composed solely by human effort.

-Selected & Borrowed

### SERMON: THANK GOD FOR THOSE OF LIKE PRECIOUS FAITH!

TEXT: Philippians 1:3-8

1. Give Thanks Always—Every Time You Pray (1:3).
  2. Give Thanks Joyfully (1:4).
  3. Give Thanks Because of God's Evident Work in Their Lives (1:5-6).
  4. Give Thanks Because You Love Them (1:7-8).
- Con: Thank God for His unspeakable gift of Christ!

*Pulpit Preview* is sent for the purpose of sharing sermon ideas & useful illustrations. It is sent via email on a bi-weekly bases. Editor: Mark N. Posey D.D., preaching minister for the Austinville Church of Christ (2833 Danville Rd. SW Decatur, AL 35603) since 1994. Please send all comments to—[pulpitpreview@austinvillecoc.org](mailto:pulpitpreview@austinvillecoc.org) or address above. **Thanks, MNP.**



# PULPIT PREVIEW

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## WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

The Bible is the Book of Books, for there is no other to match its greatness. Its very name “Bible” means, “The Book!” The following—anonymous in origin was found on the flyleaf of an old Bible.

- This Book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers.
- Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable.
- Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe and practice it to be holy.
- It contains light to direct you, food to support you & comfort to cheer you.
- It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword and the Christian's character.
- Here paradise is restored, heaven opened and the gates of hell disclosed.
- Christ is its grand object, our good is its design and the glory of God its end.
- It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.
- Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully.
- It is given you in life and will be opened in the judgment and will be remembered forever.
- It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labour, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.

**“The Wonderful Word”** based on *2 Timothy 3:14, 15, 16, 17.*

**Intro:** The Bible is an amazing book, a living book. It provides that which can be found in no other book.

1. **The Nature of the Bible** (*2Ti 3:16; Ps. 119:1, 2, 3, 4, 5ff; 1Pe 1:20, 21*). The attributes which make the Bible a unique book include its author, authority, accuracy, adequacy, appeal, and agenda.
2. **The Need for the Bible** (*1Pe 1:23,24,25; Jas 1:18; Jn 5:24*). The Bible addresses all the needs of the human being. It is essential for life, likeness, liberty, light & labor.
3. **The Nourishment from the Bible** (*1Pe 2:2*). The Bible reveals and regulates the development God planned, the diet God provided, the disposition God prescribed, and the diadem God promised.
4. **The Neglect of the Bible** (*1Cor 3:1, 2*). Neglect of the Bible leads to dullness, drifting, disobedience, despising, denouncing, and departing from the Lord.

**Con:** Christians need to peruse, ponder & pray over the Scriptures. This takes time, thought, toil, and tenacity. We need to pray—Father help me hear, heed, hold, honor, and herald the Word of God. 📖

Abraham Lincoln addressed a group of African-Americans who had given him a special presentation Bible in 1864: "In regard to this Great Book, I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good the Savior gave to the world was communicated through this book. But for it we could not know right from wrong. All things most desirable for man's welfare, here and hereafter, are to be found portrayed in it."

**SERMON:** Redeemed, how I love to Proclaim it!

**TEXT:** 1 Peter 1:18-21

1. The Redeemer was **PRICELESS** (v.18). Precious = His blood is precious because it has a value is which is beyond calculation or our finite human understanding.
2. The Redeemer was **PERFECT** (v.19). Lamb pictures a lamb as was used for sacrifice in the OT and in the NT refers to Jesus (*Yeshua*) the Messiah.
3. The Redeemer was **PLANNED** (v.20). The work of Jesus was not a plan developed late in the course of redemption. It was foreordained before the foundation of the world, though it was made evident in these last times.
4. The Redeemer is the **PATH** (v.21). Christ is the only way to God.

**SERMON:** You "MUST" Read This!

**TEXT:** John 3

1. The Sinner's must: you must be born again (John 3:7).
2. The Savior's must: so must the Son of Man be lifted up (John 3:14).
3. The Sovereign's must: He must increase (John 3:30).
4. The Servant's must: I must decrease (John 3:30).

**SERMON:** He is My Everything!

**TEXT:** Paul's Epistle to the Philippians

1. Christ is my **PURPOSE** (1:21-24).
2. Christ is my **PATTERN** (2:5-8).
3. Christ is my **PRIZE** (3:13-14).
4. Christ is my **POWER** (4:12-13).

**SERMON:** The *doulos* - Phil. 1:1—"bondservant."

**TEXT:** Philippians 1:1

1. Was owned by & totally possessed by his master.
2. Existed for his master and no other reason.
3. Had no personal rights.
4. Was at the master's disposal "24/7".
5. Had no will of his own but was completely subservient to the master.

**SERMON:** What will make America Beautiful?

**TEXT:** 2 Chronicles 7:14

1. Renew our trust in God and His Word (Isa. 40:31; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; Rom. 1:17).
2. Resolve to practicing the Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12; Eph. 4:32; Jam. 2:8).
3. Return to Christian Family values (Gen. 2:24-25; Matt. 19:6; Eph. 5:25).

**Con:** 1 Peter 2:9

**SERMON:** Scripture is God-Breathed!

**TEXT:** 2 Timothy 3:16

1. God's Breath makes Scripture Fragrant!
2. God's Breath makes Scripture Refreshing!
3. God's Breath makes Scripture Beautiful!

**SERMON:** The Profitability of Scripture!

**TEXT:** 2 Timothy 3:16

1. Doctrine—keeps us from Error!
2. Reproof—keeps us from Sin!
3. Correction—keeps us from Failure!
4. Instruction in Righteousness—keeps us from Foolishness!

**SERMON:** Power to Changes Lives!

**TEXT:** Psalm 19—God's Word is the source of...

1. Spiritual Renewal—vs.7.
2. Practical Wisdom—vs.7.
3. Confident Living—vs.9.
4. Daily Guidance—vs.11.

**SERMON:** Developing a Closer Walk with God!

**TEXT:** 1 Timothy 6:11-12

1. **FLEE**—a dramatic change of direction.
2. **PURSUE**—a daily challenge of dedication.
3. **FIGHT**—a discernable clash of decision.
4. **TAKE HOLD** of **ETERNAL LIFE**—a determinable choice of destination.

## **SERMON: Discernment**

### **TEXT: Hebrews 5:14**

Introduction: The Christians to which the Epistle of Hebrews was written were in danger of leaving the Lord and returning to their former life of practicing Judaism. Hebrews is basically a book that exhorts discouraged Christians to continue on strong with Jesus in light of the complete superiority of who He is and what He has done for us. They are encouraged to "go on unto perfection [maturity]" (6:1). This instruction was given to those that had become "dull of hearing" (5:11) and were in danger of drifting away from the Lord (2:1). The author exposes their dullness of hearing and failure to mature (5:11-12); he also diagnoses their spiritual condition: babes in Christ (i.e., according to the time they had been followers of Jesus, they should have been much more mature than they were). Their diet of "milk" should have been a diet of "meat." In the original language, the sense of "for he is a babe," is "for he has become a babe." There is nothing more delightful than a true babe in Jesus. But there is nothing more irritating and depressing than someone who should be mature but who has become a babe! These Christians demonstrated immaturity by both their lack of discernment between good and evil and in their contemplation of giving up with Jesus. Therefore, it can be said that all five human senses have their spiritual counterparts. Consider how discernment and exercise relate to our senses.

1. **We have a spiritual sense of taste:** If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious (1 Pet. 2:3). Taste and see that the Lord is good (Ps. 34:8).
2. **We have a spiritual sense of hearing:** Hear and your soul shall live (Isaiah 55:3). He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches (Revelation 2:7).
3. **We have a spiritual sense of sight:** Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law (Psalm 119:18). The eyes of your understanding (heart) being enlightened (Ephesians 1:18).
4. **We have a spiritual sense of smell:** He shall be of quick scent in the fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:3). I am full, having received from . . . you, a sweet-smelling aroma (Philippians 4:18). Cf. 2 Cor. 2:12-17.
5. **We have a spiritual sense of touch or feeling:** Because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the Lord (2 Kings 22:19). The hardening of their heart; who being past feeling, have given themselves over to licentiousness (Ephesians 4:18-19).

Conclusion: The mature Christian is marked by their discernment and by their unshakable commitment. The ability to discern is a critical measure of spiritual maturity. Babes are weak in discernment, and will accept any kind of spiritual food. However, through the exercise of our spiritual senses (trained by practice and habit) our discernment between good and evil will produce maturity.

**- Mark N. Posey**