

## THE PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE:

The purpose of the Bible is to reveal the whole counsel of God to man, both what we are to believe concerning God and what God requires of us. It is the revelation of God in its abiding covenantal form. In it we find God and His will and glory; our relationship to Him laid out and established in terms of creation, fall and redemption, faith and life. It all centers on the Lord Jesus Christ, and the scarlet thread of redemption runs through it from beginning to end. Its purpose is to bring Salvation to men, to re-establish their relationship to God, and to accomplish this purpose it has to reveal God to man, reveal man's heart and need, establish the covenant of redemption in Jesus Christ, and nurture the soul as the Holy Spirit makes it the Word of life.

**"FOR YOU HAVE BEEN BORN AGAIN, NOT OF PERISHABLE SEED, BUT OF IMPERISHABLE, THROUGH THE LIVING AND ENDURING WORD OF GOD."**

I Peter 1:23

Dr. Wilbur Smith, in commenting on the Bible as the "living word" in the Biblical Expositor gives a number of reasons that are helpful in describing the purpose of the Bible.

- 1) The Bible is "living" because: It is the word of God Who is living and abides forever.
- 2) It speaks of and shows the way of life from its beginning to its end. (see especially Deut 5:33, Deut 8:1-3)
- 3) In its pages the deepest problems of life are frankly faced and the solutions to them clearly presented. Not only providing answers to the deep questions of meaning and philosophy: the problems of knowing, origins, existence of God, problem of evil, basis for ethics, identity and meaning; but also the Scriptures reveal the commandments of God for man's daily experiences, external and internal: guidance for our relationships with one another in the family, in the world of business, in the state, in the church, in all social fellowship.'
- 4) It communicates life. The written word of God and the incarnate Word of God are intimately related: the written word reveals the incarnate Word. Through embracing by faith the incarnate Word of God, Christ our Savior, we are born again, we receive eternal life, and this life is freely offered to us in the written and preached Word of God."
- 5) It has the capacity for nourishing the souls of men. (Jere 15:16)
- 6) It is inexhaustible. The depths and treasures and truths within it can never be explored fully in an entire lifetime yet the truth within is simple and plainly evident.

Two New Testament passages are especially significant for us in considering the purpose of the Bible:

**All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.**

II Timothy 3:16,17

**But these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.**

John 20:31

Some other verses related to the purpose of the Bible include **Psalm 19: 7-14** and **Psalm 119** (See the following commentary), **1 John 1:3**, **Micah 6:8**, **Jn 3:16**, **1 Tim 1:5**, **1 Jn 5:3**, and **2 Tim 1:13**.

Keeping in mind the purpose of the Bible as stated above, here are some additional thoughts relating to our understanding of the the Bible's purpose for us.

- We need to keep in mind both its original and universal intentions, and its purposes and applications for us personally. These should not be set against each other or confused. Care should be taken to understand the original meaning and purpose before applying it to our situation.
- We need to recognize that the Bible: is concerned with both what we believe and how we live. Both sound doctrine and sound living, not just what we are to believe, regardless of how we live, nor that sincerity, and a decent life are acceptable regardless of what is believed, but that faith and practice are equally important and inter-related. The doctrines of the Bible have implications for our lives.
- The Bible is concerned with revealing the whole counsel of God, not simply the Gospel, yet the Covenant of redemption in Jesus Christ is the heart and core of that counsel. We must take care not to be too narrow and limit Scripture to presenting Gospel truths alone -- when Scripture speaks to every area of life, and to every institution of society, every area of truth and morality. We must not lose sight of the basic core of the covenant - creation, fall, and redemption when dealing with these areas. God's sovereignty over us, our fallen state and God's restoration through His grace in the gift of His Son are ever pre-imminent in Scripture.
- The focus of the Bible is in the person and work of the covenant mediator, the God-man, the incarnate Word of God- Jesus Christ. We may value and cherish the Scriptures for their beauty and truth, study their history and literature, etc. - but we must seek to see in them the Lord and Savior of whom they speak. (Luke 24:27, John 5:36-47)
- The Scriptures are the revelation of the covenant between God and man in its abiding form - this covenant is the foundation of a relationship. In them we find not only the revelation of who God is and what He has done, but also what He requires of us - His will and commandments, His law. In them we discern what are the characteristics of the people of God.