

Essential  
**Doctrines**

*of the*

**BIBLE**



David K. Bernard

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By David K. Bernard

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## **The Existence of God**

The first verse of the Bible introduces God as the Creator of the universe. The Bible does not try to prove that God exists; it assumes His existence as fundamental. Creation itself bears witness that there is an intelligent, omnipotent, loving Creator (Romans 1:20).

There can be only one of three explanations for the existence of the universe: (1) it has always existed (eternal universe); (2) it came into existence by its own power (self-creating universe), or (3) God created it. Accepting any of these requires a faith that transcends scientific proof. It is more plausible to believe in an intelligent, eternal, omnipotent Creator than in the eternity or self-creative ability of non-rational matter.

The orderliness and design of the universe require the existence of a Designer. The incredible complexity of even the simplest forms of life shows that life did not begin by accident or blind chance. Man's moral nature reveals that he is more than an intelligent animal; he was created in the image of a rational, spiritual, moral Being. Every human child develops a conscience, and every human society has a sense of morality (Romans 2:15).

How could the finite human mind even conceive of an infinite, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, and perfect God unless God imparted that concept? Every society in history has expressed belief in a Supreme Being, and modern anthropological studies show that the earliest and most fundamental religious belief is not polytheism but monotheism.

The testimony of the Scriptures and the confirmation of personal experience assure us that God indeed lives and communicates with humanity. Ultimately, we accept the truth of His existence by faith (Hebrews 11:6).

## **The Bible**

Since God exists, the Word of God must also, for would not the Creator communicate with His creation? Since God created us as rational beings and since He loves us enough to provide for us, surely He wishes to communicate with us and thereby fulfill His purpose for creation. All intelligent beings seek to communicate, and the Supreme Intelligence is no exception.

We would expect God to record His message in writing, the historic medium best suited for precision, preservation, and propagation. And the following evidence convincingly demonstrates that the Bible is the unique written Word of God to man: (1) its unique claims, (2) self-vindicating authority, (3) testimony of the apostles and prophets, (4) integrity of Jesus Christ, who endorsed the Old Testament and commissioned the writers of the New, (5) nature and quality of its content, (6) moral superiority, (7) unity, despite more than forty writers over 1,600 years, (8) lack of a credible alternative, (9) agreement with history, archeology, and science, (10) indestructibility, (11) universality, (12) influence on society, (13) witness of the Spirit, (14) life-changing power, (15) fulfilled promises and miracles, (16) fulfilled prophecies, and (17) lack of an alternative explanation for its origin.

We would certainly expect God's Word to identify itself as such, and each book of the Bible claims, either directly or indirectly, to be the Word of God. Of all the books of the

world's great religions, only one other book boasts of equal authority—the Koran—and its fanciful, contradictory content does not support its claim. The world's most moral book, the Bible, would not proclaim the world's biggest lie. The world's noblest and wisest man, Jesus, would not perpetrate the world's greatest hoax. No one but God could have authored the Bible, for good beings would not falsely claim divine inspiration, and evil beings would not teach such high morality.

The Bible is inspired of God, literally “God-breathed.” “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (II Timothy 3:16). Holy men wrote as the Holy Spirit moved them (II Peter 1:21). Inspiration extends to all parts of the Bible and to every word. While the human writers chose words that reflected their language, culture, personality, circumstances, and style, God guided the process so that each word would accurately convey His message. As a result, the Bible is infallible, inerrant, and the sole authority for doctrine and Christian living. The Bible is truth.

The thirty-nine Old Testament books were recognized as Scripture by the ancient Hebrews, and Jesus and the apostles quoted from or alluded to almost all of them. The twenty-seven New Testament books were accepted by Christians from the earliest times, including contemporaries of the writers in most cases (II Peter 3:15-16), and are recognized as Scripture by all Christendom.

Errors can sometimes arise in copying, translating, or printing the Scriptures, but God has kept His hand upon the transmission process to preserve His Word for all time (Psalm 100:5). The accuracy of the Old Testament Hebrew text was safeguarded by the extremely high quality of the scribal transmission process and has received dramatic verification by the recent discovery of the ancient Dead Sea scrolls. The accuracy of the New Testament Greek text is assured by the extremely large number of manuscripts—over 5,000—which cancel out copyists' errors.

The King James Version is the most popular English Bible.