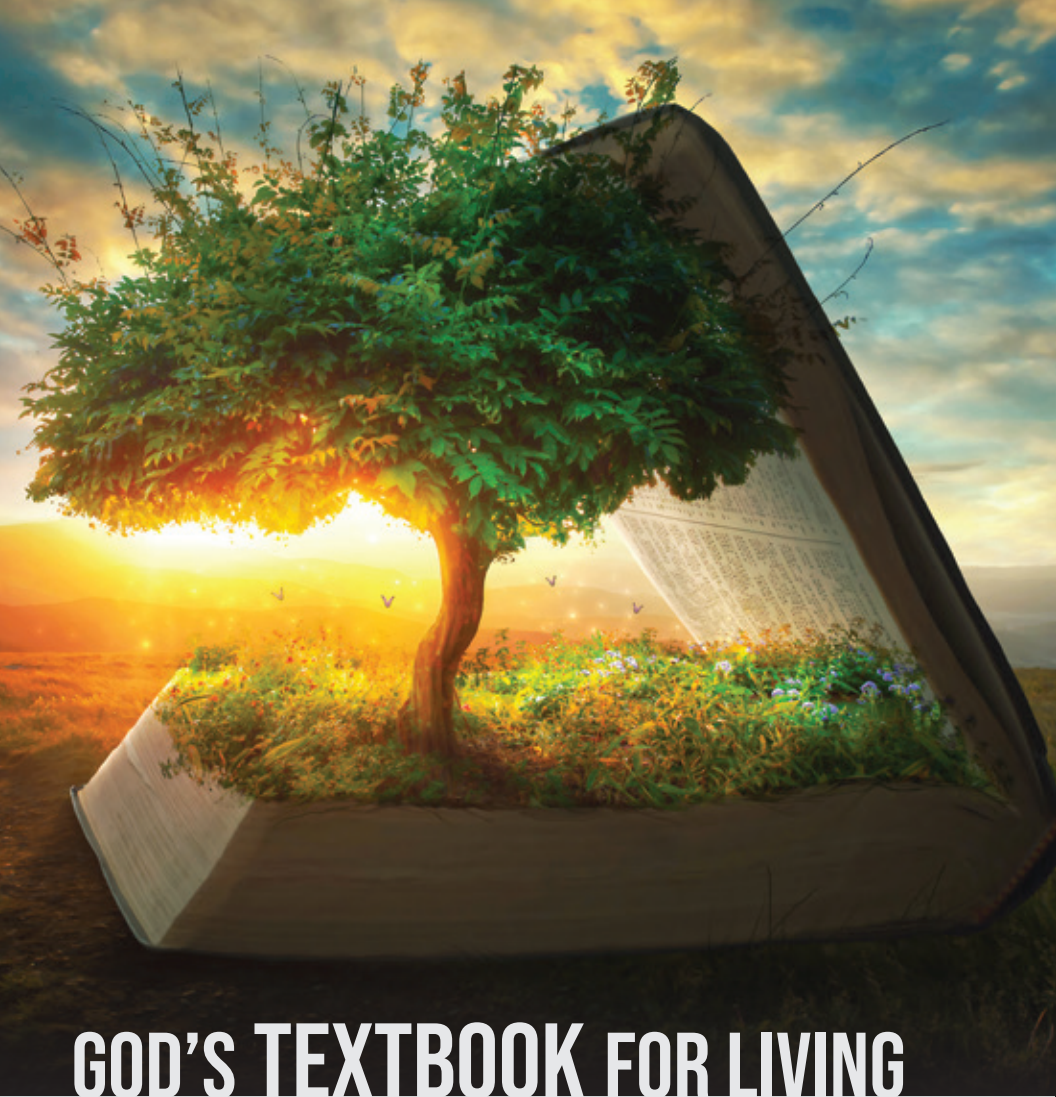




 **3ABN** BIBLE STUDY GUIDES  
*Looking Higher*

**GOD'S TEXTBOOK FOR LIVING**



# GOD'S TEXTBOOK FOR LIVING

**T**he weather forecaster predicts the rain and snow, then adjusts the outlook when the weather changes. The investor anticipates the market, makes a “best guess,” and hopes for a return. The thinkers of the world publish their acquired wisdom, then update it with a second edition of their book. Your GPS map glitches and sends you down the wrong road. We need a source of truth that does not make educated guesses, but teaches “as one having authority” (Mark 1:22). When looking for answers to life’s biggest questions, we can know we have instructions that have never taken a wrong turn.

## 1 How can I find the truth I need to know about God?

**Job 11:7** “Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?”

**Deuteronomy 29:29** “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us ...”

**Proverbs 2:6** “For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.”

“No one has seen God at any time ...” (John 1:18). If we are to know anything about God, it must be because He reveals it to us. God revealed His wisdom to His prophets and said, “Write in a book for yourself all the words that I have spoken to you” (Jeremiah 30:2). The Holy Bible is the written “word of God” (Luke 4:4) and contains “the knowledge of the mystery of God” and “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:2–3).

## 2 How did God share His Word with us?

**2 Timothy 3:16** “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God ...”

**2 Peter 1:21** “For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

God chose holy people who were completely connected with Him and understood His will to share His message, using their voices and their own abilities. This is called “inspiration,” the Holy Spirit communicating truth “through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures” (Romans 1:2). God is speaking to you through every word in the Bible to bring your thinking and living up to a higher level.

## 3 God has all knowledge, and I am just a human. How can I understand something so far above me?

**John 16:13** “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth ...”

**1 Corinthians 2:12–14** “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

When we desire and ask for God’s wisdom, the Holy Spirit, who inspired the writing of the Word of God, helps us to accurately understand what it means. “... No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation”

(2 Peter 1:20). Because the Bible is God’s message, not ours, it can only mean what God intended for it to mean.

## 4 Why did God give us the Bible? What is its purpose?

**John 5:39–40** “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.”

**1 Corinthians 15:3–4** “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

God’s Word introduces you to Jesus, “to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15). There is much more than just information in God’s Word; there is Jesus who has “the words of eternal life” (John 6:68). He is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6), and the Bible brings you to Him.

## 5 Is the Bible just words about Jesus, or does it actually have power to help me?

**Ephesians 6:17** “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

**Psalms 119:11** “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.”

There is power in the Word of God. God created all the heavens “by the word of the Lord” (Psalm 33:6), and He says that His Word “shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please” (Isaiah 55:11). God’s powerful Word is your weapon to keep you from sinning. Jesus withstood Satan’s temptations by quoting the Word of God that He had memorized saying, “It is written” (Matthew 4:4).



“God’s Word teaches what is true, without error.”

## 6 How does God’s Word keep me from being led astray by false teachings?

**Isaiah 8:20** “To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

**2 Timothy 4:3–4** “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”

“Doctrine” means teaching. God’s Word teaches what is true, without error. To recognize and reject counterfeit human teachings that are too numerous to count, we must carefully study the truth in God’s Word. We are not to “follow cunningly devised fables” (2 Peter 1:16) from human minds, even if a teacher works great miracles. “For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect” (Matthew 24:24). Jesus taught using God’s Word (Luke 10:26), as did Paul (Romans 4:3), and others (Daniel 9:2; Matthew 1:22). Over 400 times, God’s holy prophets said, “Thus says the Lord,” so you may base your belief on the words of truth God has spoken.

## 7 Is the Bible a long list of teachings to memorize?

**John 17:17** “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”

**Jeremiah 23:29** “Is not My word like a fire?” says the Lord, ‘And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?’”

**Hebrews 4:12** “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

The Bible does more than teach correct doctrine. Like a hammer pulverizing what needs to be destroyed, God’s Word confronts sin in our lives, revealing sinful actions and thoughts; for “by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20). God wants to do more than forgive sins: He wants to sanctify us, completely changing our character so we may enjoy the blessing of being like Him.

## 8 What should I do with the truths God shows me in the Bible?

**2 Peter 1:19** “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place ...”

**James 1:22** “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”



**“Bible doctrine comes from everything God’s Word teaches...”**

**James 4:17** “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”

As we “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord” (2 Peter 3:18), the Holy Spirit urges us to put into practice what God teaches us. Eagerly obeying God’s Word is not a burden, but a blessing. “Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart ...” (Jeremiah 15:16).

## 9 Can anyone understand the Bible, or do I need someone to tell me what it means?

**Psalms 119:130** “The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.”

**Deuteronomy 30:11–14** “For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, “Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?” Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, “Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?” But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.”

God calls to anyone who will listen, “he who has an ear, let him hear” (Revelation 3:22). With the divine Author as our Teacher, you can understand and obey God’s Word. It doesn’t take the world’s education to “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom” (Colossians 3:16). It takes a willingness to listen intently and obey God’s Word.

## 10 What is the Bible’s method for studying the Word of God?

**Revelation 1:3** “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.”

**Read it Yourself** - Go to the source, personally. Don’t rely only on

someone else’s experience with God’s Word. “... desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2).

**Joshua 1:8** “... you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it...”

**Study Daily** - The deep things of God’s Word are not understood in a moment, or by reading it once a long time ago. Follow the example of the Bereans who eagerly “searched the Scriptures daily” (Acts 17:11), because His mercies are “new every morning” (Lamentations 3:23).

**2 Timothy 2:15** “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

**Think Carefully** - The Bible is a mine of treasures that are continually found when we search with determined effort. God’s invitation is, “Come now, and let us reason together” (Isaiah 1:18). He desires us to think about what we read, according to “the wisdom that is from above” (James 3:17).

**Deuteronomy 8:3** “... man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.”

**Search All of God’s Word** - Bible doctrine comes from everything God’s Word teaches, “precept upon precept, line upon line, ... here a little, there a little” (Isaiah 28:10). When Jesus explained God’s Word, He spoke from “all the Scriptures” (Luke 24:27). When something we study in the Bible is difficult to understand, we look for the many easy-to-understand statements that explain what is hard to grasp.

**Luke 11:13** “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

**Ask for the Holy Spirit** - In God’s Word are “some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own

**“The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.”**  
**Psalms 119:130**



destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures” (2 Peter 3:16). Every time we study the Bible, we should pray for wisdom from the Holy Spirit to help us understand God’s Word correctly, not with human bias and preconceptions. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5).

## 11 There are two parts of the Bible, the Old Testament and the New Testament. Is one more important than the other?

**Malachi 3:6** “For I am the Lord, I do not change ...”

**Hebrews 13:8** “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

**2 Timothy 3:16–17** “All Scripture ... is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

What we call the Old Testament is God’s Word written before Jesus was born on the Earth. The New Testament is God’s Word written after Jesus returned to Heaven. Together, they give the full and consistent truth from God that is necessary for each Christian. Jesus referred to the Old Testament as Scriptures (Luke 24:44–45) and gave no indication that God’s Word would be abolished, even slightly. “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill” (Matthew 5:17). Peter quoted from Isaiah 40:8 when he wrote, “The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever” (1 Peter 1:24–25). The inspired writers of the New Testament quoted the Old Testament hundreds of times, not to show which parts were still valid, but to give evidence that everything written was in perfect agreement with what God had already revealed through the Holy Spirit.

## 12 Do the stories of the Bible have any application to my life?

**1 Corinthians 10:11** “Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”



“Jesus referred to the stories of the Bible as literal, historical events that are relevant for us today.”

“... The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever.”

1 Peter 1:24-25



Jesus referred to the stories of the Bible as literal, historical events that are relevant for us today. He directed Christians to continue reading what was written when He said, “... whoever reads, let him understand” (Matthew 24:15). In the same chapter, Jesus taught about the world today, right before “the coming of the Son of Man,” by inviting us to read about “the days of Noah” (Matthew 24:37). In these stories, the Holy Spirit guides us to discover God’s principles for living a holy life. For example:

The stories of Abraham teach about obedience by faith in God’s promises (Genesis 12–25).

The stories of Joseph teach about living rightly when we are surrounded by evil influences (Genesis 39–50).

The stories of Moses teach about using all our training and resources to serve God (Exodus 1–20).

The story of Ruth teaches about how God welcomes each person into His family (Ruth 1–4).

The stories of Daniel teach about sharing God’s words before powerful people (Daniel 1–6).

And much, much more!

## 13 Does the Word of God have practical instruction I can use in the daily situations of my life?

**Proverbs 3:1–2** “My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands; for length of days and long life and peace they will add to you.”

The Bible abounds with God’s practical wisdom to benefit us today. Here are examples of God’s principles for:

**Relationships** – “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1).

**Marriage** – “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the



**“A merry heart does good, like medicine ...”**  
**Proverbs 17:22**

church and gave Himself for her” (Ephesians 5:25).

**Families** - “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another” (Romans 12:10).

**Happiness** - “A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones” (Proverbs 17:22).

**Perseverance** - “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart” (Galatians 6:9).

**Finances** - “... where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21). If Jesus is our treasure, our heart will already be in Heaven!

## 14 Is there more in the Bible beyond the instructions about how to live?

**2 Peter 1:3–4** “... His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises ....”

The Word of God overflows with thousands of promises we can claim as we live a holy life with Jesus as our Friend:

“For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, ‘Fear not, I will help you’” (Isaiah 41:13).

“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 1:24).

“The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry” (Psalm 34:15).

“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4).

## 15 How can I be certain I can trust the promises in God’s Word?

**Amos 3:7** “Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.”

**John 14:29** “And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.”

**Isaiah 46:9–10** “Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.’”

God confirms His Word through telling in advance what His actions will be in history. For example, Daniel chapters 2 and 7 predict with detail the rise and fall of three major world empires that would follow Babylon. History records the perfect fulfillment of those prophecies. Isaiah 45:1–3 predicts Cyrus by name about 150 years before he was born, and that he would conquer Babylon and lead to the release of captives. Isaiah 23:10–11 and Ezekiel 26 predict a two-part destruction of Tyre: inland Tyre was conquered by Babylon, and the island of Tyre was conquered by Greece, over 200 years later. These are just a few of many predictions, but what is the best prophecy of all? “... the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ ...” (Romans 1:1–3).

The Bible’s prophecies are not there just to show God’s intelligence; they give God’s loving warning of the consequences of sin, so that none should perish (Ezekiel 33:7–11). God’s accurate predictions in the past are evidence that He will fulfill His promise for the future: “... behold I am coming quickly, and my reward is with Me ...” (Revelation 22:12).

**“God confirms His Word through telling in advance what His actions will be in history.”**





# WHAT IS THE GOOD NEWS FOR ME IN THE BIBLE, GOD'S WORD?

TRUE



**1. God's Word is the Good News about faith in Jesus:** "... faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

**2. There is a firm foundation of trustworthy evidence that affirms the Word of God.**

Here is a brief glimpse of the many reasonable reasons to put confidence in the Bible:

**Predictive Prophecy:** Complex and improbable Bible predictions have been fulfilled beyond the possibility of coincidence.

**Archaeology:** Archaeologists have repeatedly confirmed the accuracy of locations and cultural descriptions in God's Word.

**Discovered History:** Time and again, historical records confirm the accuracy of the Bible's account of history. (Read Luke 3:1 as just one example that the narrative stories of the Bible were written as literal history.)

**Geology:** Geologists throughout the world have discovered evidence of a single, large-scale, catastrophic flood as recorded in Genesis 7–10.

**Unity of Message:** Although it was written over a period of 1,500 years, across many generations, by at least 40 authors from different walks of life, on three continents, in many types of locations, during war and peace, in three different languages, from different genres, and covering controversial subjects, the Bible presents a cohesive and unified message.

**Martyrs:** The writers of the New Testament were willing to die for the truth they saw—the resurrected Jesus.

**Eyewitnesses:** The Bible's numerous eyewitness statements and appeals to the first-hand knowledge of bystanders say not only "we saw it," but "you saw it, too" (Read 1 John 1:1–3, Acts 2:22 and Acts 26:26, as examples).

**Honesty:** The sins and doubts of kings, prophets, apostles, and the church are not covered up. Instead, they are detailed and denounced, because God's Word tells the truth.

**A Credible, All-encompassing Worldview:** The Bible begins before human history, reveals the origin of life, exposes the source of evil, establishes morality, traces world history, predicts the future, gives the purpose for life, and explains what happens at

death. It accurately refers to specific people and places, yet encompasses all humanity with our universal problem and our personal Savior.

**Consistency of Experience:** Without conspiring to unify their stories, people of different eras, continents, and cultures exhibit a similar experience from trusting God's Word.

**Endurance:** Despite being written on fragile material, being gathered repeatedly for destruction, scrutinized, dissected, and opposed by critics, God's Word has by no means passed away, just as Jesus promised (Matthew 24:35).

## LESSON SUMMARY

**1. The truth about God** is contained in every part of the Bible, the Word of God.

**2. The Word of God** was written by holy people who were filled with the Holy Spirit.

**3. The Holy Spirit will help you** understand and correctly interpret God's Word.

**4. God's Word points to salvation through Jesus** and will teach you to obey God in faith.

**5. The principles, instructions, and promises** in God's Word are useful in your life today.

**6. Bible prophecies confirm** that we can trust God's promises.

**7. God invites you to choose** to read, study, pray about, and obey His Word every day.

Additional Notes:

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