



# CAPITOL COMMISSION

## Why Study The Bible?

MARCH 12, 2013

Bob Lewis / 267-278-1992 / Bob.Lewis@capitolcom.org

Why Study The Bible Study?

Time and again the question is posed: Why study the Bible?

Why not Plato or Aristotle since each of them distinctly focused on politics and ethics?

This is a good question.

The unstated assumption of both Plato and Aristotle is:

Human reason is the final arbiter.

In terms of the Bible, we read, "...trust in the lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and he shall direct thy paths..." Proverbs 3:5, 6.

We also read: "...through faith (belief) we understand..." (Hebrews 11:3), and Jesus' statement: if any man is willing to do, he shall know..." (John 7:17) implying commitment precedes knowledge.

All of which to suggest, reason is to be guided by Revelation and, as the Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, "...we take every thought captive to Christ..."

Therefore, the Bible sets itself as a final arbiter.

Human reason is not to be ignored and/or neglected but its conclusions are to be brought to the bar of Revelation for final adjudication.

Two differing authority foundations upon which one builds.

The one exalts human reason. The other subsumes human reason under divine authority.

The one, suggesting human reason, unaided and being initially tabula rasa, can deduce anything; whereas the other suggesting reason has been somehow previously equipped, yet bound to submit such reasoning to a higher authority.

This, in itself, is a mystery, though one suggesting serious attention and/or consideration

Hence, the question: what higher authority? Again: **Why Study the Bible?**

We suggest: ***The Bible Is The Word of God, Written*** as the authority to objectively consider.

The Bible argues that it is "inspired" by God, the Creator.

By "inspired", the Bible means "God-breathed" since that is the sense of the Greek term.

That is, God, the Creator supernaturally superintended the development of the Bible, down to the very word choice of words.

Not in the sense of Stenography, that is "dictation", but that God so crafted things in all respects such that the writers of the biblical text were supernaturally guided as to their final product.

As Legislators, each of you is undoubtedly challenged with the query, "...according to who or what ..." relative to your decisions on issues and, in many cases; you may resort to one objective, empirical study or another.

But, when it comes to the moral underpinnings of various positions to what objective source can you turn?

***You intuitively recognize all legislation is moral, by implication.***

So, when your constituents ask you, "...upon what moral basis are you proposing or supporting a piece of legislation?" what is your response?

"The common good"? Then...according to whose definition?

### BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS, STAFF, LOBBYISTS: TUES..AT 1215-1300 HOURS-LOCATION 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR SENATE CONF. ROOM

# Delaware

## Why Study The Bible?

---

### What is Morality?

Webster says morality is conformity to right rules of conduct.

But the question immediately presents itself: "According to who/whom?"

Morality determines Ethics, ethics being the conduct flowing from a moral base, whatever that base may be.

Let me suggest a definition of Ethics I found in another author, years ago and, which, at the time seemed to make good sense:

*"...Ethics deals with the voluntary conduct of individual man insofar as he is judged to be good or bad in reference to a single, inclusive, and determinative principle of moral value grounded in and validated by ultimate morality..."*<sup>1</sup>

### Hence: Why consider a study of the Hebrew-Christian Bible?

Today, there are three religions which consider themselves "religions of a book"; **Islam**; **Judaism**, and **Christianity**. All three agree on foundational aspects while two (Islam and Christianity) anchor themselves in a continuing "revelation" beyond that of Judaism.

All three argue for implications relative to politics, i.e. the conduct of members within a "polis", city, or community of individuals.

### Regarding their respective books:

Judaism would argue revelation ceased following the return from captivity.<sup>2</sup>

Christianity argues revelation ceased with the Apostles prior to AD 70, while Islam suggests it continued up until the period AD ending in approximately AD 650.

Christianity seeks to build upon and develop/advance what had been demonstrated and revealed in Old Testament Israel; while Islam seeks to depart significantly.

So: where to begin?

How about the book of Genesis since all three religions of The Book seem to agree on this aspect?

We will focus on these aspects:

- 1) Who Started Everything?
- 2) How did it start?
- 3) What Happened?
- 4) Is there a resolution to the apparent Problem? And finally,
- 5) What is that resolution?

Undeniably, next to Pilgrim's Progress no other piece of literature has had the global impact as that of the Bible, that is, til our generation. Today, the Koran or Quran is vying for just such an impact and has, candidly, been quite successful regarding a significant portion of the Globe's Populace

### Three competing Ultimate Bars of Authority:

The **Koran**

The **Hebrew Bible (Tanach)**

The **Christian Bible**

Where do you stand, and why?

---

<sup>1</sup> Stobb, Ethics...but I am at a loss for the page since my Library at the moment, is locked in storage. Sigh. ☹

<sup>2</sup> Psalm 74:9