



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

How Should We Respond to the Bible?

CALIFORNIA

JANUARY 27, 2015

Pastor Frank Erb / 916-412-7625 / Frank.Erb@CapitolCom.org / CapitolCom.org



There is no book in the world like the Bible. This ancient collection of writings has shaped human civilization more than any other document. This is nowhere more true than here in the United States of America. Many of the founders of our nation had tremendous respect

for the Scriptures. Early European explorers, Puritans, Pilgrims, and colonists were well versed in the Good Book, and most of our “Founding Fathers” revered it as the Word of God. It should come as no surprise then that our Constitution, governmental structure, legal framework, educational model, literary history, artistic heritage, cultural values, and ethical standards, all reflect Biblical principles. With this in mind, how should we today respond to this book of books?

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO THE BIBLE?

1. Acknowledge the Authority of the Word

I grew up in a devout Catholic family. We attended church faithfully every Sunday and also on the occasional “holy days of obligation.” At a certain point in every Mass, our local parish priest would stand in a large wooden pulpit and read a few paragraphs from an enormous old hard-backed Bible, after which he would say, “This is the Word of the Lord.” The congregation of hundreds and I always replied with the prescribed, “Thanks be to God.” As a child, I was well acquainted with this tradition.

Then, one Sunday, when I was fifteen years old, a new thought entered my mind. It was an observation that would ultimately change everything for me. That morning, as the priest read from the Bible and we all dutifully responded in unison, my attention was

drawn to the irony of the moment. The priest gave every appearance of being bored, maybe even on the verge of drifting off to sleep. As I glanced around at the congregation, they appeared the same – low energy, deadpan faces, mumbling their responses without any apparent conviction. As for me, I knew I was uninterested, just wishing the church service would end sooner than usual so that I could return home and watch T.V.. And it suddenly dawned on me: “We’re idiots!”

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There were no other options. The priest standing before us said he was reading the “Word of the Lord.” I had only attended four years of Catholic school, but I knew enough about church doctrine to generally understand what he meant. He was not claiming that the Bible was merely a book lightly influenced by some nebulous higher power. Rather, the point was that the personal Creator of the Universe had uniquely directed the human authors of the Bible to write without error so that we could know and serve Him. I realized that if this were true, we must be idiots, because only a fool would care so little about what must be nothing less than the most remarkable treasure on earth. On the other hand, if it were not true, we were equally stupid because we were wasting our short lives listening to the ramblings of archaic religious texts worth no more than fanciful fairy tales.

It was an unsettling revelation, for sure, but thirty-five years later I’m still glad I had it. It set me on a course of discovery that radically improved my life as I came to believe that the Bible really *is* the inspired Word of God. I didn’t believe it because someone said it was true or because I wished it to be a true, but because

CAPITOL BIBLE DISCUSSIONS

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California

How Should We Respond to the Bible? continued ...

all the evidence available to me confirmed it to be historically, objectively, and factually, exactly what it claimed to be, including:

- A. *Inspired by God* 2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Pet. 1:21
- B. *Standard of Truth* John 17:17, Acts 17:11
- C. *Endures Forever* Ps 119:89, 1 Pet 1:24-25
- D. *Verified by Jesus* Luke 24:44, John 5:46-47

Of course, many people today doubt the reliability and accuracy of the Bible, but after nearly thirty-five years of study I am convinced that it will stand up to any sincere scrutiny. I invite you to meet with me to discuss any questions you may have about the Bible, and together we will see if we can find logical, reasonable answers to them.

2. Appreciate the Value of the Word

Not only should we acknowledge the authority of the word, we should appreciate its value.

When Anne Gust Brown, wife of California Governor Jerry Brown, introduced her husband at his recent fourth Oath of Office ceremony, she said, *"He's going to take the oath on a Bible ... This is a Bible that was given to my parents from my grandfather on Christmas of 1951. And in it, he said, '... I am very happy to present to you for your home, the Word of God. The eternal foundations are not found in property nor in power. Man looks to the hills for strength. The King James Version not only is a source of strength and comfort, it is English literature at its best. I hope it becomes worn with use. It will then exist in your hearts.'"*

"I am very happy to present to you for your home, the Word of God" – Inscription in Anne Gust Brown's family Bible.

Anne's grandfather was right. The Bible really is the Word of God, and as such there are many reasons why we should study it and aim to understand it:

- A. *For Knowing Christ* Luke 24:27, John 5:39
- B. *For Growth* Acts 20:32, Matt. 4:4
- C. *For Victory* Ps. 37:31, 1 John 2:14
- D. *For Guidance* Ps 119:11, Prov 6:22-23

3. Realize Our Responsibility to the Word

Of course, it's not enough to simply believe and appreciate the Bible. Its teachings are meant to be applied to our daily lives. It calls us:

- A. *To Know It* Ezra 7:10, Matt. 22:29
- B. *To Think on It* Jer. 15:16, Col 3:16
- C. *To Obey It* Ps. 119:59-60, Jam 1:22
- D. *To Share it* Deut. 6:6, 2 Tim. 4:2

"Here is a Book worth more than all the other books which were ever printed; yet it is my misfortune never to have, till lately, found time to read it with proper intention or feeling." – Patrick Henry, Founding Father

CONCLUSION:

I wonder, have you read the Bible? Do you continue to study it regularly? Do you aim to follow it?

Contact me anytime if you would like a free copy of the Bible or would like to discuss it.

I also invite you to join us at our weekly Capitol Bible Discussion. No speaking is required, so feel free to just come and listen.

- Frank