



# **Peninsula City Church**

**We Believe...**

**The Word of God**

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# We Believe... The Word of God

**Q.** How biblically literate and fluent are you in reading and studying God's Word as His supernatural book for your life?

## An Introduction

To answer the above question, let us begin by thinking about the following "How can you be sure that you have the Word of God?" We know that the phrase the Word of God is interchangeable with the Holy Bible or Scripture as His words to humanity. In fact, the Bible as we have it is the result of a huge amount of effort by the author God Himself, in partnership with chosen writers. In reality, it is His revealed, inspired Word about God Himself and His ways. He is the main character of the Bible, He was the One who intended it to be written, and He is the One who has ensured that we still have it to this day.

It is important for us to understand that we have the Bible in the form that we have it today, because of God. There may be much speculation as to when the books were written and by whom, but what we know for sure that God is the author. So, at the centre of our conviction as Christ-followers, is the truth that the Bible is God's Word and therefore it is reliable. The reliability of the Bible as an authoritative, historical and theological canon, our confidence is that it is a divinely inspired and transmitted text. On this truth, it has been said,

"The Bible carries absolute authority as to the factualness of the narratives, and whenever God speaks either directly or through one of His prophets, there is not only perfect accuracy but absolute authority as well."<sup>1</sup>

## 1. What do you believe about the Bible?

**Q.** Do you know what you believe about the Bible?

To begin with, it needs to be said that, Peninsula City Church in the constitution states that we believe the following regarding the Word of God,

"4.1. We believe in the plenary verbal inspiration of the accepted canon of Scriptures as originally given. The Scriptures are infallible, inerrant, and the sole and final authority for all matters of faith & conduct."<sup>2</sup>

Two Texts that have been used with this constitution are,

<sup>16</sup> "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realise what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. <sup>17</sup> God uses it to prepare and equip His people to do every good work" (2 Tim 3:16-17 NLT).

"When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths" (1 Cor 2:13 NLT).

This message aims to briefly discuss the biblical supernatural features of plenary verbal inspiration, revelation, inspiration, inerrancy, infallible, authority and illumination. The rationale for this is that the Bible is a supernatural and divine record given by God regarding Himself and His sovereign work. That is,

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<sup>1</sup> Boice, J M. *Foundations of the Christian Faith*. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981), 39.

<sup>2</sup> "Statements of Faith." In *The Constitution of Peninsula City Church Inc.* (Frankston, Vic: Peninsula City Church, March 2016), 4.

“The Bible claims to be a book from God, a message with divine authority. Indeed, the biblical writers say they were moved by the Holy Spirit to utter His very words – that their message came by revelation so that what they wrote was breathed out (inspired) by God Himself.”<sup>3</sup>

The Bible is more than merely literature it is the supernatural Word of God. Consequently, regarding the Bible as supernatural can shed light on the divine thread of God’s supernatural plan of redemption in the Bible. This redemptive thread running through the Bible highlights God’s plan for people to come into a relationship with Him as the supernatural and sovereign God. The Bible as a supernatural book plays an important role in helping a Christ-follower to be ‘Discover, Develop and be Deployed’ for a supernatural life. It has been stated that,

“The religion of the Bible is a frankly supernatural religion. By this is not meant merely that, according to it, all people, as creatures, live, move and have their being in God. It is meant that, according to it, God has intervened extraordinarily, in the course of the sinful world’s development, for the salvation of people otherwise lost... The religion of the Bible thus announces itself, not as the product of people’s search after God, if haply they may feel after Him and find Him, but as the creation in people of the gracious God, forming a people for Himself, that they may show forth His praise. In other words, the religion of the Bible presents itself as distinctively a revealed religion.”<sup>4</sup>

The Bible has miraculously revealed kingdom truth. It is God’s story, by which someone may know Him and His ways.<sup>5</sup> Sadly, biblical illiteracy is growing around the world at an alarming rate among those claiming to be Christ-followers.<sup>6</sup> As Christ-followers, if we are to read the study and teach the Bible effectively, it is essential to have a sound understanding of the Bible, its doctrine, history and context. Oddly, though, there appears to be a shortage of material concerning the supernatural nature of the Bible.<sup>7</sup> Then again, we need to wonder how some arrive at their strange conclusions on the matter of the supernatural nature of the Bible. Therefore, it is important to deal with the matter of the supernatural nature of the Bible.

This message aims to demystify while at the same time draw attention to the supernatural role the Holy Spirit plays in the reading, studying and teaching of the Bible. The Spirit plays a key role in the life of the Christ-follower becoming biblically literate and fluent in reading and studying the Bible as a supernatural book. He does this by helping to grow in fluency of biblical knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour resulting in changes affecting their daily faith and life.

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<sup>3</sup> Geisler, Norman. *Systematic Theology: Volume One: Introduction and Bible*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Bethany House, 2002), 229.

<sup>4</sup> Warfield, B.B. “The Biblical Idea of Revelation.” <http://www.theologynetwork.org/christian-beliefs/the-bible/the-biblical-idea-of-revelation.htm> (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017)

<sup>5</sup> Rydberg, Denny. *The Book: What the Bible is and How to Understand it*. (Weston, ONT: David C. Cook Publishing, 1976), 5, 8.

<sup>6</sup> Mohler, Albert. “The Scandal of Biblical Illiteracy: It’s Our Problem.” <http://www.christianheadlines.com/columnists/al-mohler/the-scandal-of-biblical-illiteracy-its-our-problem-1270946.html> (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017). Kwon, Lillian. “Texas Pastor: Biblical Illiteracy is Church’s Dirty Little Secret.” <http://www.christianpost.com/news/texas-pastor-biblical-illiteracy-is-churchs-dirty-little-secret-47022/> (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017). Kwon, Lillian. “Biblical illiteracy is the 'dirty little secret' of the church, says Texas Pastor.”

<http://www.christiantoday.com.au/article/biblical.illiteracy.is.the.dirty.little.secret.of.the.church.says.texas.pastor/9272.htm> (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017). Swindoll, Charles R. “Biblical Illiteracy.” <http://www.insight.org/resources/articles/bible/biblical-illiteracy.html?l=bible> (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017). Berding, Kenneth. “The Crisis of Biblical Illiteracy: What Can We Do About It?” <http://magazine.biola.edu/article/14-spring/the-crisis-of-biblical-illiteracy/> (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017).

<sup>7</sup> Tsakiris, Alex. “169. Dr. Michael Heiser On Why Christians Are Skeptical of The Supernatural.” <http://www.skeptiko.com/169-michael-heiser-why-christians-are-skeptical-of-supernatural/> (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017).

Biblical fluency is the ability to flow between the biblical supernatural features of revelation, inspiration, inerrancy, infallibility, authority and illumination connecting them more smoothly. It has been said, "The Bible is a supernatural book and can be understood only by supernatural aid."<sup>8</sup> This aid is the Holy Spirit, who will skilfully lead the reader to interact effectively with the Bible.

It is important to understand what you believe and know about the Bible since there are those who can fall into the trap of second-guessing the Bible. It was stated, "The Bible has come down to us from the mouth of God."<sup>9</sup> One of the most important ways to understand God is through the Bible. One aspect of this study is known as Bibliology, which is the study of the Bible. The word Bible comes from the Greek word *biblia* meaning 'scroll,' or 'book,' and *logos* meaning 'word or study.'

## 2. Supernatural features of the Bible

**Q.** How would you explain the supernatural features of revelation, inspiration, inerrancy, infallibility, authority and illumination regarding the Bible?

So, having introduced the matter of the Word of God, we will briefly review some of the features of the Bible. We have said that the Holy Spirit can help our reading, studying and teaching the Bible as the supernatural record revealing God and His sovereign work. The Holy Spirit does lead us in discovering the divine treasures found within the Bible and then enable me to assist others in their journey of discovery.

We have proposed that the origin and makeup of the Bible is supernatural. The reason for this is that God is the divine author and guide to the human writers. It needs to be remembered that the supernatural features of revelation, inspiration, inerrancy, infallibility, authority and illumination are important within this framework.<sup>10</sup> What follows is a brief description of these six features.

### 1. Revelation

This process was used by God to make Himself and His ways known to humanity. It is the "act whereby God first taught people the truths He wanted them to know."<sup>11</sup> God desired to reveal knowledge to humanity regarding Himself and some of His ways and plans. This process falls into two categories,

- General Revelation: This came and still comes through agents like creation - see (Ps 8:1-9; 19:1-6; 102:25; Gen 1:1-31; Acts 14:11-15,17 verse 15 esp.; 17:24-31; Rom 1:18-21; 2:14-15); Providence and history - see (Deut 30:1-10; Dan 2:21,31-45; 7:1-28; 9:24-27; Matt 5:44-45; Acts 17:26-27 etc.; and also the human conscience - see (Rom 2:14-15; Acts 24:22-27 (esp. verse 26).
- Special Revelation: This came and still comes through Jesus Christ. He is the ultimate revelation, and then through the Bible: see Heb 1:1,2; 2 Pet 3:1-2; Jn 1:1,14,18; 14:9-10; Matt 5:17-20; Lev 2:25-33.

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<sup>8</sup> Tozer, A.W. *Man - The Dwelling Place of God: What it means to have Christ Living in You.* <http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/tozer/5j00.0010/5j00.0010.06.htm> (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017)

<sup>9</sup> Geisler, Norman (2013-11-03). *Biblical Inerrancy: The Historical Evidence.* (Kindle Locations 688-689). Bastion Books. Kindle Edition.

<sup>10</sup> Hernando, James D. *Dictionary of Hermeneutics: A Concise Guide to Terms, Names, Methods, and Expressions.* (Springfield, MO: GPH, 2005), 88.

<sup>11</sup> God Speaks: *A Workbook of The Bible.* (Highbury, London: Grace Publication Trust, 1980), 10/7.

God was willing and desirous to reveal Himself, e.g. (Acts 17:24-31). He made Himself known to humanity, speaking through the various means (Heb 1:1-2). It is important to realise that this process of revelation has already taken place. It needs to be firmly stated that, there is no more and never will be any new revelation. God has already revealed who He is through both general and special revelation. Remember that the application of this revelation of God is through the work of the Holy Spirit as He uses the means mentioned previously.

## 2. Inspiration

This next feature involves the Bible being given or spoken through the unique supernatural activity of the Holy Spirit, through chosen people correctly writing God's precise words.<sup>12</sup> In other words, God spoke and breathed Words, which were carried by the Holy Spirit.

“The Holy Spirit through human authors produced an accurate record and revelation of God's redemptive will, purpose and activity.”<sup>13</sup>

We believe in the plenary verbal inspiration of the accepted canon of Scriptures as originally given. To best understand the proposition regarding verbal plenary inspiration, it is important to define what the term means.

- Verbal: indicates that every single written word is inspired
- Plenary: means that every part is from God
- Inspiration: from 2 Tim 3:16-17, the word used here means that it is God-breathed or divinely breathed into something. It is a magnificent reality that God's divine breath brings life to the Word of God. Consequently, the inspiration from God brings not just the words themselves, but life through the words. It is important to recognise this point when considering the application to contemporary Christian ministry.

More fully then, plenary inspiration is the accuracy with, which verbal inspiration, is extended to every part of the Bible. In other words, it is both infallible as to its truth and final as to its divine authority. This is the time-honoured teaching, which is held by the Protestant Church as laid out by Christ and the Apostles. It safeguards the teaching of the dual authorship of the Bible by God and humankind. It has been said that,

“The doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture means that Scripture is verbally inspired. In brief, this means that the words of Scripture are precisely the words which the Spirit wanted to be included in Scripture and by which He chose to record the revelation of God. Every word is the Spirit's Word. Not one word is of man's choice.”<sup>14</sup>

This divine inspiration of the Bible has already taken place. As with revelation, it needs to be strongly stated that, there is no more and never will be any newly inspired writings on the same divine level as the Bible. Take note of the fact that, Jesus considered the Bible as His Father's supernatural Words - see, (Matt 4:4,7,10; Jn 10:35-38). On this matter, Paul said regarding the Old Testament (that later came to relate to the whole Bible), which “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...” (2 Tim 3:16). In light of this, it has been said that,

“The first key to interpreting and understanding the Bible is the supernatural key. You use this key when you approach the Bible by sincerely believing that it was supernaturally produced and preserved. It was inspired or breathed out by God who used holy men of old to record his words. While these men used their own languages and were influenced by their own cultures,

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<sup>12</sup> Geisler, *Systematic Theology: Volume One*, 241.

<sup>13</sup> Hernando, *Dictionary of Hermeneutics*, 26.

<sup>14</sup> Hanks, Herman C. (1991) “*Issues in Hermeneutics*.” [http://www.prca.org/articles/issues\\_in\\_hermeneutics.html](http://www.prca.org/articles/issues_in_hermeneutics.html) (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017).

the end product was the eternal, infallible, inerrant, and authoritative Word of the Almighty and All-wise God who created the universe in which we live. Without this recognition of the Bible as a supernatural book, one could never learn to interpret rightly what God has said in it.”<sup>15</sup>

Peter also confirmed this truth of the Bible being completely inspired in (2 Pet 1:19-21). The Psalmist in (Ps 33:6) had brought this out also when he said,

“The LORD merely spoke, and the heavens were created. He breathed the word, and all the stars were born” (Ps 33:6 NLT).

So inspiration, in fact, relates to the origin of the Bible’s authority, as it carries its own divine authority being God’s Word.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, it has correctly been pointed out that,

“Inspiration is a divine and supernatural action whereby God raises the human writer above his natural capacity to make him an instrument in the composition of the sacred books.”<sup>17</sup>

### 3. Inerrancy

Inerrancy is based on inspiration. The reason for this is that God’s Word, spoken by Him, does not have any mistakes as it is complete.<sup>18</sup> That is to say, it,

“...signifies the quality of being free from all falsehood or mistake and so safeguards the truth that Holy Scripture is entirely true and trustworthy in all its assertions.”<sup>19</sup>

Accordingly, it is this inerrant Word of God that had as its foundation the “act of God, whereby the first writing of revealed truth was done without fault.”<sup>20</sup> This does not mean that the translations of the Bible since the first manuscripts are entirely without copyist points of disagreement.

Any issues of inerrancy have to do with the original manuscripts of the Bible. They were written accurately, perfectly and reliably by the chosen writers. In other words, under the Holy Spirit’s guidance, they were unable to get anything wrong in the process of recording His Word. Although inerrancy can be claimed for the original writings, it does not negate the Holy Spirit using people to write the Bible under His guidance.<sup>21</sup> For example, this is seen in (Jer 36:2; Amos 3:8; Ex 4:12,15; Prov 30:5-6; 1 Cor 2:12; Eph 1:17,18; 2 Pet 1:21; Rev 22:18-19).

It is necessary to stress the fact that, the modern translations are trustworthy. However, each serves a particular purpose that needs to be taken into consideration when answering the question of its purpose. Consequently then, inerrancy describes the Bible’s nature,<sup>22</sup> and concerns the Bible proposes “that the Bible makes good on its claims.”<sup>23</sup> It needs to be remembered that,

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<sup>15</sup> Bowman, George M. “The Supernatural Key to Understanding the Bible.” [http://www.graceway.com/articles/article\\_015.html](http://www.graceway.com/articles/article_015.html) (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017)

<sup>16</sup> Vanhoozer, Kevin J. “The Inerrancy of Scripture.” <http://www.theologynetwork.org/biblical-studies/getting-stuck-in/the-inerrancy-of-scripture.htm> (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017)

<sup>17</sup> “Supernatural Character of the Bible.” <http://fsubelmonte.weebly.com/17-supernatural-character-of-the-bible.html> (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017).

<sup>18</sup> *God Speaks*, 1/4.

<sup>19</sup> Geisler, Norman. L. (ed.) *Inerrancy*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Acadmie Books, 1980), 500.

<sup>20</sup> *God Speaks*, 10/7.

<sup>21</sup> Horton, Michael. *Pilgrim Theology: Core Doctrines for Christian Disciples*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 57, 58.

<sup>22</sup> Vanhoozer, Kevin J. “The Inerrancy of Scripture.” <http://www.theologynetwork.org/biblical-studies/getting-stuck-in/the-inerrancy-of-scripture.htm> (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017)

<sup>23</sup> Taylor, Justin. “Inerrancy and Infallibility: Truth Claims and Precision.” <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2011/09/16/inerrancy-and-infallibility-truth-claims-and-precision/> (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017).

“The term inerrancy may be modern, but the concept is as old as the people of Bible days, including Jesus Himself: The Scriptures are *the* authority, and you can trust what they teach!”<sup>24</sup>

#### 4. Infallibility

Infallibility is based on inerrancy. The Word of God is never at fault - (Matt 5:17-18; Jn 10:35; Acts 1:1-3; 1 Pet 1:5).<sup>25</sup> Although this word is not used in the Bible, it is, crucial to an understanding of its trustworthiness as the only infallible principle of faith.<sup>26</sup> It deals with the reality that the Bible is “free from or incapable of error.”<sup>27</sup> It proposes that the Bible is the only divine dependably true source of faith and doctrine (teaching). This truth is clear from passages like, (2 Sam 7:28; Ps 119:43,160; Is 1:20; Jn 17:17,19; Col 1:5). It is the only reliable, trustworthy and absolute basis of the believer’s faith and teaching. Namely, the Word of God is “...not liable to mislead, deceive or disappoint.”<sup>28</sup>

Jesus accepted the genuineness and trustworthiness of the Old Testament as the Word of God - (Matt 5:17,18). In light of the infallibility of the Old Testament, He used it to reprimand Satan’s temptations - (Matt 22:23-33; Lk 4:1-13; 24:25-27). Paul declared the Scripture to be from God, only reinforcing its infallibility as God inspired all Scripture - (2 Tim 3:16,17). Remarkably, in (1 Tim 5:18), Paul quoted from what he called “the Scripture,” that is, “the writing.” One of the two passages that made up (1 Tim 5:18), came from the Old Testament (Deut 25:4), and the other from the gospel of (Lk 10:7).

On this matter, Peter said that the Old Testament prophets spoke from the Holy Spirit and specifically adds that they did not speak for themselves, (2 Pet 1:21). Remarkably in (2 Pet 3:16) Peter used the phrase “the rest of the Scriptures.” He is probably referring to the Old Testament, but at this date of his writing may include some of the New Testament. So, there is a mutual acceptance of the writings of the Old Testament and the writings of the apostles as both coming from the breath of God through the hands of people. So in the end,

“...the inward work of the Holy Spirit’ produces ‘our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority’ of Scripture.”<sup>29</sup>

#### 5. Authority:

The Bible’s own authority is based on this infallibility; the whole Bible is God’s Word, which is authoritative for humanity at all times.<sup>30</sup> It is the final authority of truth, for life, and also for the faith of the Christ-follower. It endures as the Word of God to the nation of Israel and the Christ-followers at all times and up until this day. It is important to grasp that the Bible is the authoritative Word of God. Observe that Peter in (2 Pet 3:16), understood Paul’s writings to be God’s Word, calling it “Scripture” - (2 Pet 3:14-18).

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<sup>24</sup> Hart, Larry D. *Truth Aflame: Theology for the Church in Renewal*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 59. The italics are Hart’s.

<sup>25</sup> *God Speaks*, 2/4.

<sup>26</sup> Geisler, Norman. *Systematic Theology: Introduction and Bible*. Vol. One. (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002), 246.

<sup>27</sup> Hernando, *Dictionary of Hermeneutics*, 161.

<sup>28</sup> Rydberg, *The Book*, 11.

<sup>29</sup> Horton, *Pilgrim Theology*, 53.

<sup>30</sup> *God Speaks*, 2/4.



It is relevance may be questioned, proposing that it is irrelevant and outdated, but this is not the case. However, as Herman Hanko correctly pointed out,

“How do we know that Scripture is the Word of God? How do we know this with that total conviction that brings the child of God into humble submission to the Word? How do we know this truth so that we are willing to lay down our lives for it? Because some skilled and knowledgeable redaction critic has proved it with an involved argument from literary and historical sources? God forbid. We know this by faith. Faith believes the Scriptures and the testimony of the Scriptures. Faith alone bows in humble submission to God’s Word.”<sup>31</sup>

The Bible does not need anyone to give it their authoritative backing - (2 Tim 3:14-17; 1 Cor 14:36-38; Jn 5:46-47; 2 Pet 3:14-16; 1 Jn 4:1-6). On the Bible conveying its own authority as the Word of God, it has been stated,

“...the normative authority of Holy Scripture is the authority of God Himself and is attested by Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church.”<sup>32</sup>

## 6. Illumination:

The work of God the Holy Spirit here is enlightening the Bible. His purpose is so that the reader can understand the Bible - (Ps 119:18,105; Dan 5:14; Lk 24:32; Jn 14:26; 16:13-16; 1 Cor 2:10-13; 4:5; Eph 1:17-18; Col 1:9-12; Heb 4:12). This work of the Holy Spirit is based on revelation, inspiration, inerrancy, infallibility and the authority of the Bible. Illumination has rightly been called “a witness of the Spirit in the human spirit.”<sup>33</sup> It is the “act whereby believers are convinced of the meaning of the Bible record of God’s truths.”<sup>34</sup> It is important to realise that the Holy Spirit does not give any new revelation, but instead inwardly illuminates the given Word of God to the reader.<sup>35</sup> However, one needs to be careful not to confuse the likes of revelation and illumination and also inspiration and illumination. Receiving illumination is not receiving a new revelation.

“...the giving of the original canon (Bible text) deposit belongs to *revelation*; the subsequent work of the Spirit in the church belongs to *illumination*...*inspiration* is a characteristic of the biblical text, while *illumination* is the Spirit’s subsequent work of bringing us to an understanding and acceptance of its meaning.”<sup>36</sup>

Those who desire to read, study and interpret the Bible should not ignore useful Bible study books, material, and other people who can help them better to know and understand God and His Word. They should, by all means, use these tools at the correct place and time, as together with these secondary tools the Holy Spirit can illuminate the Bible, the primary source. However, without the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit to aid the reader and studier, they might not correctly understand, apply, grasp and recall the Word of God.<sup>37</sup> All Christ followers need illumination to understand, embrace, interpret and obey the Bible correctly.<sup>38</sup> In the end,

“Only the Holy Spirit, who caused the Bible to be written, can make the truth of it clear to us. He does this by regeneration and illumination.”<sup>39</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Hanko, Herman C. “Issues in Hermeneutics.” [http://www.prca.org/articles/issues\\_in\\_hermeneutics.html](http://www.prca.org/articles/issues_in_hermeneutics.html) (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017).

<sup>32</sup> “Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics: Article 1.” <http://www.bible-researcher.com/chicago2.html> (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017).

Cf. also “The Supernatural Origin of Biblical Texts.” <http://www.bereanpublishers.com/the-supernatural-origin-of-biblical-texts/> (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017).

<sup>33</sup> Rydberg, *The Book*, 9.

<sup>34</sup> *God Speaks*, 10/7.

<sup>35</sup> Horton, *Pilgrim Theology*, 64.

<sup>36</sup> Horton, Michael. *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 167.

<sup>37</sup> Hernando, *Dictionary of Hermeneutics*, 25.

<sup>38</sup> Horton, *Pilgrim Theology*, 63.

<sup>39</sup> *God Speaks*, 1/7.

There is a difference between illumination and interpretation and illumination and application. Although these three can often work very closely together, it is important to notice the difference. For example, it has been said that,

- a. Interpretation: Is the process of a reader seeking to understand the meaning of a Scripture passage.
- b. Illumination: As we have already seen this is the process of the Holy Spirit helping the reader to understand and apply biblical truth.
- c. Application: This is the process of a reader putting into practice the truths and principles he/she has learned in the Bible.<sup>40</sup>

Finally, it is important to have an understanding of the areas of the outworking of the supernatural work of illumination through the person of the Holy Spirit. So, regarding this work of the Spirit, the following explanation gives some insight on this matter.<sup>41</sup>

1. Illumination is the work of the Holy Spirit: Jn 16:12-15; 1 Cor 2:10; 1 Jn 2:27.
2. Illumination is the Holy Spirit's work within Christ-followers and not in some mystical power of the words of Scripture: 1 Cor 2:10-15; Eph 1:18.
3. In illumination, the Holy Spirit will use our study and meditation, not only to help us understand the Word of God but also to apply it to our lives.
4. The Bible reader's accuracy, honesty and spiritual life can all affect the Spirit's ministry of illumination: 1 Cor 3:1-3.
5. The Spirit uses those with the gift of teaching/exhortation to help in the process of illumination: Eph 4:11-13; Rom 12:7

Numerous people throughout history have been asked questions concerning the accuracy and relevance of the Bible. Regrettably, many Christ-followers have not known how to answer these frequently asked questions. So in light of what briefly outlined here, hopefully, you have more confidence to answer these questions. Furthermore, it should give you more confidence to examine how God empowers and confirms His Word. Therefore, while reading and studying the Bible, you now should be able to see the marks of a supernatural God through His Holy Spirit.

## Some concluding thoughts

So, coming back to the opening question,

**Q.** How biblically literate and fluent are you in reading and studying God's Word as His supernatural book for your life?

Honestly, in the presence of Almighty God we need to ask ourselves, "Am I fluent in my reading, studying and teaching of the Bible from a supernatural perspective? Am I able to notice the work of the Holy Spirit when I am led to discoveries and divine treasures found in the Bible? Am I able to notice the work of the Holy Spirit leading me to assist others in their journey of discovery for precious, divine treasures found in the Bible?"

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<sup>40</sup> Litke, Sid. "8. Interpretation, Illumination and Application." <https://bible.org/seriespage/interpretation-illumination-and-application> (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017)

<sup>41</sup> Litke, "8. Interpretation, Illumination and Application." <https://bible.org/seriespage/interpretation-illumination-and-application> (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017)

In closing, it is important to reaffirm that the Bible plays a vital part in helping a Christ-follower to 'Discover, Develop and be Deployed' into a supernatural life. It is important to see the Bible from a deeper spiritual level, than merely from a historical, moral or theological one. The Bible is more than merely literature it is the supernatural Word of God. Although it is important to see the Bible this way, remember, also, it is God's supernatural and the divine record regarding His sovereign work. In the light of this, it needs to be stated that the Holy Spirit plays a vitally important role in the life of the reader and studier of the Bible. The Holy Spirit, who has recorded the revelation of God, inspired it, making sure of its inerrancy, infallibility, and giving it authority is the One who will also illuminate it to the reader.

"The Bible is a supernatural book and can be understood only by supernatural aid."<sup>42</sup>

The Spirit desires to help the reader and studier to grow in fluency of biblical knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour resulting in changes affecting one's faith and life. The growth in biblical fluency is to aid the ability to flow in the biblical aspects, bridging between revelation, inspiration, inerrancy, infallibility, authority and illumination smoothly. This is an essential skill if you are to be Holy Spirit led, and interacting effectively with the Bible.

A powerful truth here is that if we want to find the power in God's Word and apply it to our life, it is helpful to find someone to hold us accountable. It is vital to pass the truth of the Word of God on to our family, work colleagues and the next generation. However, are we willing to do this; have we been doing this? The supernatural transforming power of the Word of God is powerfully able to:

- Guide to salvation those who are unsaved
- Sanctify and transform Christ-followers

In closing, I would like to remind you of the following truth,

"One of the greatest miracles God performs on a regular basis is that of a changed life. Every year, around the world, untold millions of lives are delivered from afflictions such as substance abuse, destructive/self-destructive habits, emotional wounds, etc. This is in addition to the multitudes set free from the bondage many face in lying, stealing, cheating, lashing out in anger and other similar types of 'common sins.' Those of us who have been changed experience a real power of God that accompanies new life in Christ. One of God's primary tools for affecting change is the Bible... Today's big idea: the Bible has the power to change your life forever, so fill your heart and mind with it every day! What to Pray, Ask God to use His Word to change your life forever for His glory."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Tozer, A.W. *Man The Dwelling Place Of God*. (Camp Hill, PA: Wingspread, 2008), 15.

<sup>43</sup> Russell, Chris. "How Does the Bible Have the Power to Change Lives? Biblical Authority Devotional: Inspiration, Part 10" <https://answersingenesis.org/answers/biblical-authority-devotional/how-does-the-bible-have-the-power-to-change-lives/> (26<sup>th</sup> October 2017).