

St. Joseph's
Episcopal Church

The Rev. Canon Dr. Winfred B. Vergara

TEN BIBLE DOCTRINES

Session 1 | Bibliology: Study of Theological Doctrine of the Bible



Prayer Before Bible Study

Blessed Lord, who has caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which You have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

—Collect for Proper 28: Book of Common Prayer, page 236)

Introduction

Welcome to Ten Bible Doctrines!

Throughout this 10 week discussion series, we will investigate and discuss ten doctrines of the Holy Bible. These are by no means the only doctrines of the Bible and as you continue with your study of the Bible, you will learn more.

What we will discuss are ten doctrines that shape our understanding of the Bible, its authenticity as the Word of God, and of our faith.

The Doctrine of Scripture | Bibliology

In this session we will deal with the origin and the nature of the Scriptures. How did we get them? Are they reliable? Are they the Word of God?

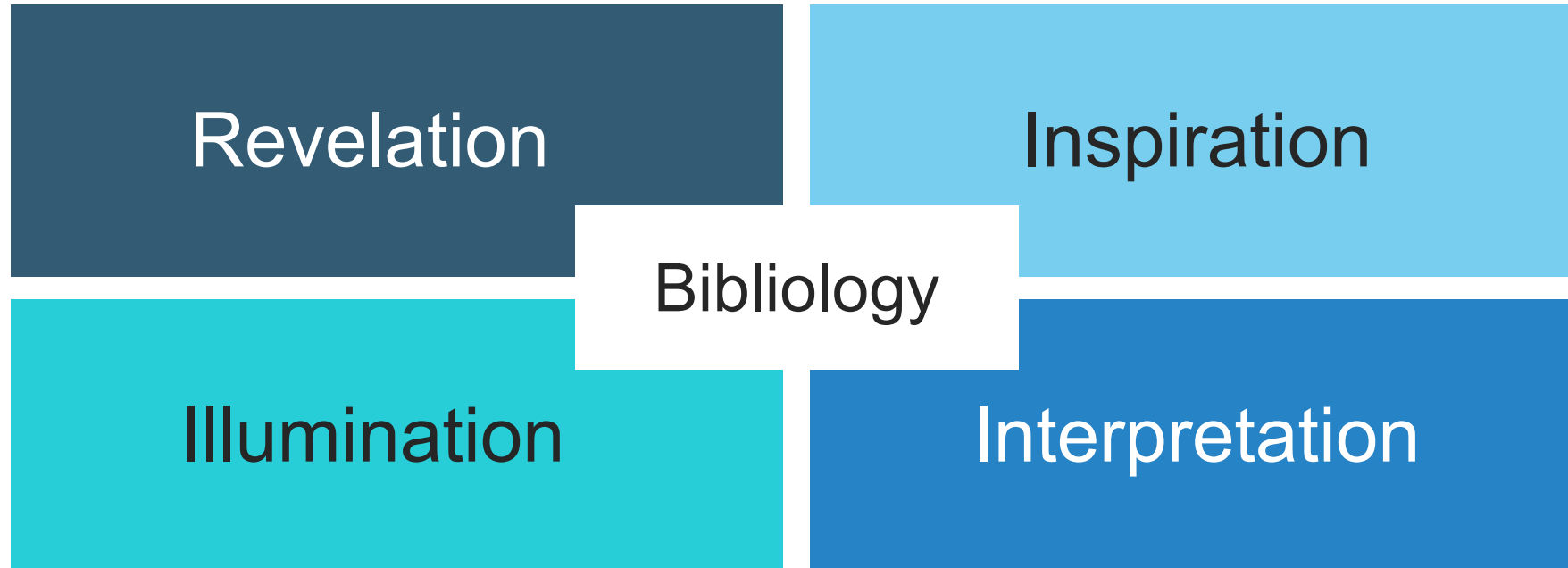
Bibliology is the study of the theological doctrine of the Bible (according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Also known as the Doctrine of Scripture, it is the scientific study of the Bible as an historical object and deals with the nature, character, and authority of the Bible as a document.

Why is this important? Bibliology affirms our belief in the validity of Scripture, and that our faith is not misplaced.

The Doctrine of Scripture | Bibliology

Let us return to the origin and the nature of the Scriptures. How did we get them? Are they reliable? Are they the Word of God?

There are four sectors of Bibliology that will help us:



I. Revelation

Scripture was revealed to man by God. Through it, God made known to man what God wanted man to know.

We also learn about God's special revelations:

- God revealed Himself to certain people;
- God revealed Himself in and through Christ (i.e., The Living Word);
- God revealed Himself in Scripture.

I. Revelation

However, Scripture also reveals God to man.

- Reveals God's operative work;
- Reveals God's glory;
- Reveals God's creative work;
- Reveals God's invisible attributes;
- Reveals God's omnipotence;
- Reveals God's divine nature;
- Reveals God's benevolence to all people by preservation;
- Reveals God's existence by providence;
- Reveals God's existence by internal evidence (i.e., within man);
- Reveals God's righteous decree (morality) is known by man;

I. Revelation

Through Scripture, God revealed morality: how to rightly live and relate to God and neighbor. Acts 17:28-29 says: “For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’ Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals.”

Leviticus 19:17-18 says, “You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.”

I. Revelation

In the Letter to the Hebrews 3:7, the writer quotes a passage from Psalms—which was written by King David—indicating that human writings were revealed by God.

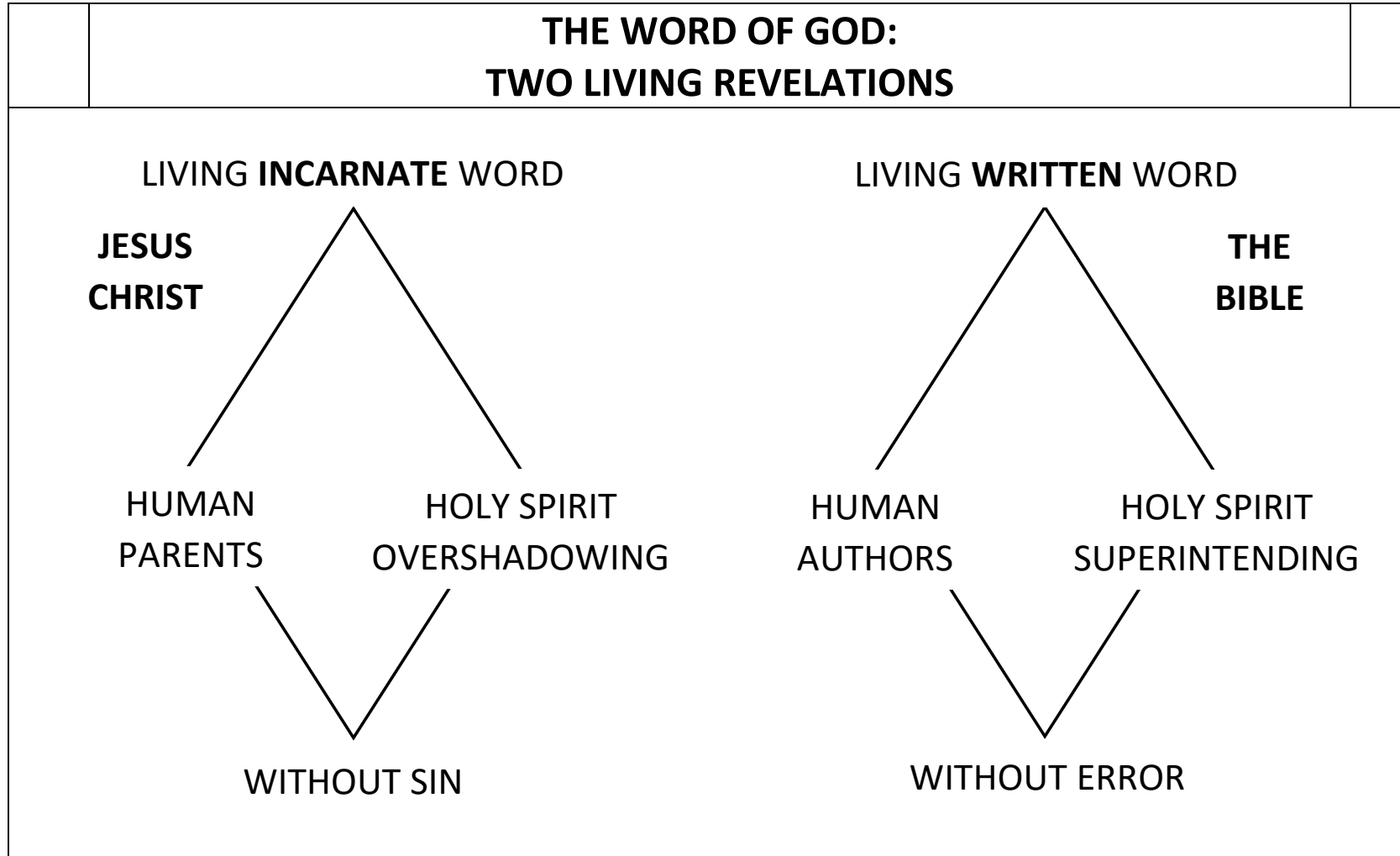
“So, as the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness, where your ancestors tested and tried me, though for forty years they saw what I did’” (Hebrews 3:7). It continues in verse 12 through 14, “See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called ‘Today,’ so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.”

II. Inspiration

In Revelation, we learned that God revealed Himself to certain people.

Not all of God's revelation to man was recorded in the Bible. Some of them are very personal, between God and one individual. But for the part of God's revelation to man that was written down, God became involved in the recording process to such a degree that, while God did not physically dictate or override each individual author's personality, God saw to it that what the writer did record was what God wanted recorded and that it was *without error*.

II. Inspiration



Source: The Moody Handbook of Theology.¹⁰

II. Inspiration

God saw to it that when men wrote down God's revelations, they did so without error.

“First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” —2 Peter 1:20-21

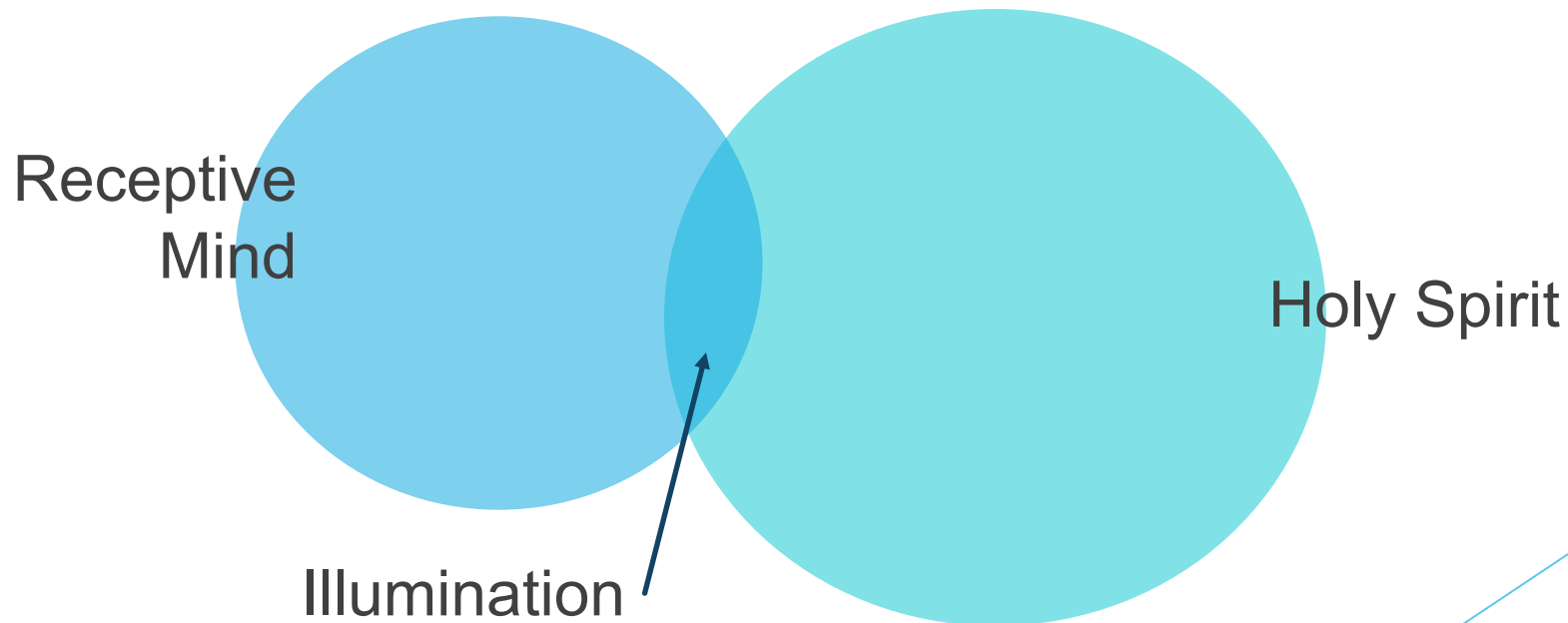
III. Illumination

The Holy Spirit must enable people to *understand and embrace* the truth of Scripture.

These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. —1 Corinthians 2:10-13 (ESV)

III. Illumination

Man's natural ability to grasp and embrace the information in the Bible is limited. Much of it is spiritual information that man does not understand or accept. To overcome this fact, the Holy Spirit gradually illuminates the receptive mind to *understand and embrace* more and more of the bible, as the Christian matures in his/her spiritual walk.



IV. Interpretation

We must be diligent students of Scripture to understand its deeper teachings.

Remind them of this, and warn them before the Lord that they are to avoid wrangling over words, which does no good but only ruins those who are listening. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth. —2 Timothy 2:14-15

IV. Interpretation

Gaining a deeper grasp of the Bible is a two-way street. A better understanding of the Scripture will not happen unless the Holy Spirit illumines the mind of the reader, but that also means it will not happen unless one reads and studies the Bible. The more this is done, the more the Holy Spirit will illumine his or her mind, which encourages the student to read and study further.

