

FOUNDATION OF FAITH!
THE BIBLE
DOES IT REALLY MATTER?
PART 2

This morning, as we continue our series Foundation of Faith, we are looking at the Bible and specifically, Does it Really Matter? As we said last time, it does matter what we believe about the Bible. You see, it will affect the way we live out our lives. Either you will deny what the Bible has to say or believe that only certain things are from God and the rest are from man and that will cause you to live a selfish worldly life. If you believe that the Word of God, the Bible is actually breathed out of the mouth of God, that it is God's Word to us and you apply that to your life, it will cause you to live a life that will please God because you have a biblical worldview, you are living as God desires you to live.

Now you may not agree with that, but the evidence proves the point. We talked about this last time, but let me give you this illustration to show you what I mean. This is a true story and many of you have heard about it before, but maybe you have not heard the rest of the story and once you do, you will see what I mean. We are told,

One of the most dramatic examples of the Bible's divine ability to transform men and women involved the famous mutiny on the "Bounty." Following their rebellion against the notorious Captain Bligh, nine mutineers, along with the Tahitian men and women who accompanied them, found their way to Pitcairn Island, a tiny dot in the South Pacific only two miles long and a mile wide.

Ten years later, drink and fighting had left only one man alive - John Adams. Eleven women and 23 children made up the rest of the Island's population. So far this is the familiar story made famous in the book and motion picture. But the rest of the story is even more remarkable.

About this time, Adams came across the "Bounty's" Bible in the bottom of an old chest. He began to read it, and the divine power of God's Word reached into the heart of that hardened murderer on a tiny volcanic speck in the vast Pacific Ocean - and changed his life forever. The peace and love that Adams found in the Bible entirely replaced the old life of quarreling, brawling, and liquor. He began to teach the children from the Bible until every person on the island had experienced the same amazing change that he had found. Today, with a population of slightly less than 100, nearly every person on Pitcairn Island is a Christian.

- Signs of the Times, August, 1988, p. 5

Did you see what happens when man, left alone apart from God does? He destroys himself and those around him; they almost wiped each other out. But then, as God's Word was read and applied to their lives there was a transformation that took place. They no longer had fighting, drinking, killing, and the rest, but a love that was from God that filled their lives, overflowed their lives. Does the Bible have the power to change people's lives? You bet it does as long as the person surrenders their life to God, submits to His authority. And the amazing thing is, that those that don't even believe in God, as we have seen in this countries history year's ago, if they live by the Bible standards it will affect their lives!

Maybe you heard of the story of the lady who lived out in the country. And one day a vacuum cleaner salesman come to her door and began to give the woman this high-pressure sales talk. You know how they go!

He told her, “Madam, I have the greatest product you have ever seen. This vacuum cleaner will eat up anything. In fact, if I don’t control it, it will suck up your carpet.” Maybe exaggerating just a little, but making his sales pitch!

Now, before the woman could reply back to this man, he went on to say, “Lady, I want to give you a demonstration.” You know how they do that!

Well, the salesman saw that this woman had a fireplace, went over to it and scooped up some ashes and then threw them in the middle of the carpet. Then, he was not done yet; he reached down into a bag in his own pocket and poured even more dirt and junk right on the carpet! After making this huge mess on her carpet, he said, “Madam, I want you to watch this product at work. I guarantee it will suck up every bit of everything I’ve thrown on your rug.” Sounds impressive!

The woman stood there aghast – speechless-and the salesman picked up on this and he went on to say to her “Lady, if it doesn’t suck up every bit of this, I’ll eat it all with a spoon.” Not a bad deal I guess!

After he was done speaking the woman looked into the eyes of this salesman and was finally able to get some words in and said, “Well, sir, start eating. We ain’t got no electricity.”

Let me say this. You will never have to worry about this happening with the Bible because it is living, it is powerful and it is able to transform our lives if we allow it to! It will clean up our lives by the power of God's Spirit! It is as Paul said in I Thessalonians 1:5, "**For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.**" The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, "**For our [preaching of the] glad tidings (the Gospel) came to you not only in word, but also in [its own inherent] power and in the Holy Spirit and with great conviction and absolute certainty [on our part]. You know what kind of men we proved [ourselves] to be among you for your good.**"

There is no doubt about it, we have seen evidence to prove this, that when the Word of God goes forth it goes forth in power. You see, it is the Word of God empowered by the Spirit of God and we can have that full assurance that God's Word will do what it says!

Now, as we began this study of the Bible last time we looked at some words that are used of the Bible so that we can understand them. It is important to know what they mean because people will use them and we need to know the Biblical definition of these words because many will come up with their own definition. Case in point and this is just an example to show you that we need to defend the Biblical definition of these words because there are those that use them to twist what we believe.

You would think that the word, “creation” is an easy one, that there is no room to move away from what it means. And yet, there is a hardened evolutionist, a person who goes to church and calls himself a creationist that does not believe in six literal days of creation! And thus, when we use that word now, we need to make sure people understand what we are talking about.

Another word that we need to be careful about is when people talk about Jesus. You see, people today have their own idea about Jesus and who He is and many times they go contrary to the Scriptures. And thus, when we speak of Jesus we need to explain who He is and what He has done so they have a Biblical picture of Jesus and not one that comes from the imaginations of men’s hearts!

Last time we looked at the word “*revelation*” and we said that this word speaks of God making Himself known to us. And He does this through general revelation or through nature. As we look out into this world, even though it has been tainted by sin, we still see the hands of God, the creator of the Heavens and Earth, in it! But general revelation only shows us that there is a God, there is a Creator, there is a Designer, it does not show us who He is!

And that is where special revelation comes in and here it is God speaking to us through His Word, the Bible. And you can read from Genesis through Revelation God’s love for man, His creation and what He did to redeem man from the sin He was in. This special revelation shows us who God is and who we are and thus, why we need God in our lives. It is as Paul said in Romans 10:17, “**So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**”

From there we moved to the second word, “*inspiration*” and Dr. Norman Geisler has given to us a very good definition of what this is about. He wrote,

Inspiration is the supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit, who through the different personalities and literary styles of the chosen human authors invested the very words of the original books of the Holy Scripture, alone and in their entirety, as the very Word of God without error in all that they teach or imply (including history and science), and the Bible is thereby the infallible rule and final authority for faith and practice of all believers.

- Dr. Norman Geisler, Systematic Theology
Volume One, Introduction/Bible, p. 241

You may have heard the Scriptures referred to as being verbal and plenary in regards to inspiration. And what that means is this. When it speaks of verbal it is speaking that the words themselves are inspired by God and plenary takes it even farther and speaks of every part of the words and all they teach or imply are inspired by God! And as we saw last time in II Timothy 3:16, the Bible has been breathed out of the mouth of God to us. In other words, just as God created the Heavens and the Earth by the very words He spoke, so too do we see the Bible come into existence by God breathing these words out to man! And this inspiration extends to every part of the Scriptures, from Genesis through Revelation!

3. INERRANCY

The next word that we will be looking at this morning is “*inerrancy*” and this is one that many struggle with and thus, it is important for us to understand what this word means. In other words, is the Bible without error in the original manuscripts? I believe it is or we have a huge problem. You see, if you can’t trust the Bible in one area then how can you trust it at all? You can’t! I like the way that Harold Lindsell put it. He wrote,

. . . “Is the Bible trustworthy?” There are only three possible answers to this question. The first is that the Bible is not at all trustworthy. If this answer is correct, then Christianity stands upon a false foundation. Anyone who professes a faith founded on a source that cannot be trusted is a fool, is naïve, or is deluded. Certainly no thinking or honest person would embrace, recommend, or propagate a religion based on what he knows to be untrue.

The second possible view of the reliability of the Bible is that it can be trusted as truthful in all its parts. By this I mean that the Bible is infallible or inerrant. It communicates religious truth, not religious error. But there is more. Whatever it communicates is to be trusted and can be relied upon as being true. The Bible is not a textbook on chemistry, astronomy, philosophy, or medicine. But when it speaks on matters having to do with these or any other subjects, the Bible does not lie to us. It does not contain error of any kind.

Thus, the Bible, if true in all parts, cannot possibly teach that the earth is flat, that two and two make five, or that events happened at times other than we know they did. The Bible could not, if it is trustworthy, say that Julius Caesar was emperor when Jesus was crucified, or that Caesar Augustus perpetrated the sack of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. If it did these things, it then would be conveying information to us that is palpably [deliberately] false.

The third and last possibility is that the Bible contains some truth and some error. Part of what it says can be relied upon, and some of it must be regarded as false. In other words, the Bible is neither completely trustworthy, nor completely false. The proportion of the material that is truthful may be greater in volume than that which is untrue. But wholly apart from the proportion of that which is truthful and of that which is in error, the Bible is a mixture of both. It makes no difference whatever that the false information may have come about due to ignorance, carelessness, or any other reason. Indeed, no one need presume that any part containing error was introduced deliberately. For the purposes of this book it can be assumed that whatever errors there are (if there are any) came into the canon of the Bible incidentally and accidentally, not intentionally.

- Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible*, pp. 18-19

As I have said, I believe that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God in the original documents. Yes, in the documents we have today there are some minor variations but they do not change the context of what is being said, there is no new doctrine that has come forth out of this, but these are spelling errors, and sometimes errors in numbers, but again, we never lose any doctrine or gain any new doctrine from these errors. We will look at these more closely down the road as we look at the Old Testament Text and the New Testament Text and you will see what we have in our hands is very accurate, we don't have to negate it.

Now if you don't believe that the Bible is from God and inerrant, then why read it? If it is just a story book, fables, then you read it once and put it away. So that would be a big problem because if that is true, then there is no real power from these words of men. If there is only some words that are true in the Bible then which ones? Well, as we have seen in what people say, they take all those verses that deal with love and forgiveness and negate all the ones that deal with sin and judgment. But how do you know that those are the words that are true? Maybe those are the false ones and the only ones that are true are the ones of judgment? You see, you don't really know!

I believe that from Genesis through Revelation is the inerrant Word of God and if you deny that, you have some big problems. Think about this for a minute. If you believe that the Scriptures are inerrant, then the Scriptures become to you the final authority in matters of faith and practice. They tell you how to live out our faith. But if you reject the inerrancy of God's Word then you do not have something that is your final authority in matters of faith and practice! Then what do they have? What they have is doctrines based on the traditions of man, based upon what they want to believe and we see that played out for us today in the church!

We have so-called Christian churches that believe that homosexuality is not a sin. They believe that God has ordained homosexuality as another way for people to love each other. How can they believe that? Because they don't have the Scriptures as their final authority in matters of faith and practice!

What about so-called Christian churches that allow New Age, Eastern Mysticism and other cults to be part of their teachings? How can they do that? How can they allow that into their church? Again, it is very simple; they don't have the Scriptures as their final authority on matters of faith and practice!

And we can go on but as you can see, in the church, in people's lives, if the final authority on matters of faith and practice is not the Word of God, then people will move towards immorality because they are doing what they feel is right in their own eyes and since their heart is not with God, they deny God's Word, then God will give them over to these things to either draw them back to Him or to draw them to Him in the first place. God's Word is the final authority on matters of faith and practice and there is no discussion about it. That is just the way it is and yet, there are those that try to discredit the Word of God, they try to get people not to trust the Word of God. Let me give you a few examples and then I will share with you what the church believes, the true church regarding the inerrancy of the Word of God.

Listen to this tract by Catholic Answers. They tell us, "The Bible nowhere teaches that it is the sole authority in matters of belief. In fact, the Bible teaches that Tradition – the oral teachings given by Jesus to the apostles and their successors, the bishops – is a parallel source of authentic belief." [Quotations from 2 Thess. 2:15 and I Cor. 11:2 follow].

Now is that true? Does the Bible tell us it is not the sole authority in matters of belief and that it is Tradition that we must go to instead to see how we are to live out our Christian faith? I believe they are wrong and the Bible does show us it is the final authority for our faith and practice! First of all, in II Timothy 3:16-17 we are told, "**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and 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.**"

Let's look at these verses because they refute what that Catholic tract is saying. First of all we see that "**all Scripture**" is given to us and it is profitable for us. All of it, not just this part or that part is profitable for us. It is not just the red letters that are profitable, but even the book of Leviticus is profitable because these words have been breathed from the mouth of God to us.

Not only that but we see why it is profitable for us. Paul tells us that the Scriptures show us what is right, it shows us what is wrong, it shows us how to get right when we have gone astray and it shows us how to stay right. In other words, it is profitable and it is the sole authority in matters of faith and practice!

Also, in II Peter 1:3-4 we are told, "**as 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, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.**"

It is God's Spirit that empowers God's Word to give to us all we need to live out a life that is pleasing to God. Not tradition, but God's Word that has been given to us, His precious promises, which are found in God's Word and not in tradition that help us to be partakers of that divine nature. You see, we have the Scriptures as our final authority in matters of faith and practice! That is what Peter is saying here!

Now let's deal with this idea of "**tradition**" and see what the Scriptures are saying. Those that support tradition over the Scriptures will quote II Thessalonians 2:15 as one of the reasons they believe in tradition, that tradition that has been handed down and tradition which has been formulated by the Church leaders. This verse tells us, "**Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.**"

So there it is, we are to follow tradition, right? First of all we need to understand what Paul is saying here, what he means by tradition. What Paul is saying here is that because of the persecutions, the false doctrines that were being taught, Paul is telling them that they needed to hold fast, to stand strong in the faith, now is not the time to lay back and take it easy and I believe these words are just as important for us today. You see, we are in danger of being swept down stream by the currents of ungodly culture. Thus, we are to stand firm, not give in, not even to the traditions of men that have religious overtones to them!

And when Paul speaks of "**traditions**" he is not speaking of false religious traditions as Jesus spoke of in Matthew 15:1-3, "**Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, 'Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.' He answered and said to them, 'Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?'**"

Paul is not speaking of the empty traditions of men, which he did speak of in Colossians 2:8, **“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.”**

Paul is speaking of the apostolic traditions that were spoken by the apostles and written in letters that later became the Word of God. You see, it is only God’s Word that is an anchor to hold us stable during these storms against our faith. He can help us to stand strong against the deceit that is out there. That is why the enemy attacks the Word of God so much, because he knows it is powerful in our lives and if he is going to keep us from the truth, he has to keep us out of the Word of God or distort the Word of God!

And don’t forget this. In Revelation 22:18-19 we are told, **“For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”**

Folk’s, the canon of Scripture was closed at the end of the first century when the book of Revelation was completed. Thus, we are not to add to or take away from God’s Word because it is complete. There are no new revelations regarding Scripture no matter what Joseph Smith said, or Mary Baker Eddy and the many other false prophets that have come down the pike. And I believe the Emergent Church fits into this category of adding and taking away from the Word of God when you listen to what they are teaching and that is very dangerous to do.

Now I am not talking about minor interpretational differences but for those who deny the inspiration of the Scriptures and challenge what the Scriptures are saying, denying the Word of God! Let me give you a few examples of what is going on today in the church. We are told,

The church has been preoccupied with the question, “What happens to your soul after you die?” As if the reason for Jesus coming can be summed up in, “Jesus is trying to help get more souls into heaven, as opposed to hell, after they die.” I just think a fair reading of the Gospels blows that out of the water. I don’t think that the entire message and life of Jesus can be boiled down to that bottom line.

- Brian McLaren, from the PBS special on the Emerging Church

Emergent doesn’t have a position on absolute truth, or on anything for that matter. Do you show up at a dinner party with your neighbors and ask, “What’s this dinner party’s position on absolute truth?” No, you don’t, because it’s a non-sensical question.

- Tony Jones at the 2005 National Youth Workers Convention

“My goal is to destroy Christianity as a world religion and be a recatalyst for the movement of Jesus Christ,” McManus, author of a new book called *The Barbarian Way*, said in a telephone interview. “Some people are upset with me because it sounds like I’m anti-Christian. I think they may be right.”

- Erwin McManus, from *The Barbarian Way*

Many Christians use “Breath Prayers” throughout their day. You choose a brief sentence, or a simple phrase that can be repeated to Jesus in one breath.”

- Rick Warren

The fact is that contemplative spirituality will play a huge part in the Church of the future, and candles are just the beginning.

- Duane Cottrell

Some of the values of the emerging church are an emphasis on emotions, global outlook, a rise in the use of arts, and a rise in mysticism and spirituality.

And,

Church should be like a dance club.

- Josh Reich, Creating Worship Gatherings for the Emerging Church

These are some quotes from Nicky Gumbel, the creator of the Alpha Course, which is very popular.

Jesus said “I am the Way” . . . but it doesn’t mean to say you write off other religions . . . There is validity in pretty well all religions.

[We] find true happiness – [through] high self-esteem.

[T]he age to come has begun . . . [T]he age to come has broken into history . . .

[T]he powers of the new age have erupted into this age.

- Nicky Gumbel, the creator of the Alpha Course

Now this is just a very small sampling of the garbage that is out there, these words of doctrine that are blowing through the church and people are following after them. The problem we are seeing is that people are denying the inspiration of the Scriptures, they deny the authority of God's Word, they deny that God's Word is complete, and thus, they are going outside the Word of God and bringing in these destructive heresy's that are nothing more than doctrines of demons!

And thus, why is God so hard on this issue, so much so that those that practice these things will have their names removed from the book of Life? Because by altering the Scriptures you are not only usurping God's authority but you are leading people astray, leading people to a different Jesus. And I believe that Jesus is not only speaking of the book of Revelation, but from Genesis 1:1 through Revelation 22:21, the whole counsel of God! Don't mess with it, God is not joking!

Walvoord put it like this, "What a solemn warning this is to critics who have tampered with this book and other portions of Scripture in arrogant self-confidence that they are equipped intellectually and spiritually to determine what is true and what is not true in the Word of God." May we take heed! It is not that traditions are wrong, but when they go against the Word of God they are. When there are traditions that go contrary to the Word of God, then they are wrong and we need to avoid them. God has given to us His Word, may we apply it to our lives so that we can live out our faith in a way that is pleasing to God!

It is as Proverbs 30:5-6 tell us, **“Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.”** Don’t mess with His Word, but apply it to your life. You see, the Bible is the sole authority in matters of belief and practice!

Let me share with you what I believe to be true, what I believe the Scriptures are teaching us and what the church is moving away from today, the inerrancy of the Scriptures. This is from the Westminster Confession of Faith from 1645. We are told of the authority of the Scriptures, that it is,

“The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.”

That was long ago, but a more recent statement is from the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy and in its “Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy” from 1978, in Article 1, it reads,

“We affirm that the Holy Scriptures are to be received as the authoritative word of God.”

That same council, latter on, in 1982 added this, “We affirm that the normative authority of Holy Scripture is the authority of God himself, and is attested by Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church. We deny the legitimacy of separating the authority of Christ from the authority of Scripture, or of opposing the one to the other.”

Now here's the thing. We need to understand that this dogma of biblical inerrancy was never really a big deal in the church, it was not brought to the forefront and attacked until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and now into the twenty-first century! Yes, there were other controversies that the church had to deal with but this was not one of them. They believed in the inerrancy of the Scriptures.

What I find interesting is what liberal scholars have to say regarding biblical infallibility or inerrancy. They will deny it and yet they cannot deny that Jesus held to this truth, that the Scriptures were inerrant. Kenneth Kantzer, who was the dean of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, wrote the following regarding what liberal scholars say regarding biblical infallibility, which they do deny. We wrote,

H. J. Cadbury, Harvard professor and one of the more extreme New Testament critics of the last generation, once declared that he was far more sure as a mere historical fact that Jesus held to the common Jewish view of an infallible Bible than that Jesus believed in His own messiahship. Adolph Harnack, greatest church historian of modern times, insists that Christ was one with His apostles, the Jews, and the entire early Church, in complete commitment to the infallible authority of the Bible. John Knox, author of what is perhaps the most highly regarded recent life of Christ, states that there can be no question that this view of the Bible was taught by our Lord himself.

- Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible*, p. 43

Isn't that interesting? These so-called scholars deny the inerrancy of the Scriptures and yet they say very clearly that Jesus believed in them so much that it was on the scale of Him believing that He was the Messiah and He is!

Also, F. C. Grant, Union Seminary professor and also a liberal biblical critic, feels that same way, that Jesus as well as the writers of the Scriptures believed in biblical infallibility or inerrancy. He wrote,

The passage quoted from Second Timothy is the most explicit statement of the doctrine of biblical inspiration to be found in the New Testament. But its view of inspiration is not more advanced than that of any other part of the volume, as an examination of the passages cited in a concordance (s.v. "Scripture" and "written") will show. Everywhere it is taken for granted that what is written in the Scripture is the work of divine inspiration, and therefore trustworthy, infallible, and inerrant. The Scripture must be "fulfilled" (Luke 22:37). What was written there was "written for our instruction" (Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:11). What is described or related in the Old Testament is unquestionably true. No New Testament writer would dream of questioning a statement contained in the Old Testament, though the exact manner or mode of its inspiration is nowhere explicitly stated.

- Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible*, p. 44

These are some amazing statements we have read because they are saying that Jesus, the New Testament writers all agreed that the Old Testament was the inerrant and infallible Word of God and yet they themselves deny it. How sad a statement that is, "I see it, I can read it but I deny it because I don't want to believe it!" And this idea of denying the inerrancy of the Scriptures has lead to a departure from the faith!

This is from Affirm back in 1971 as they reported on, “The Teacher’s Manual The Layman’s Bible Commentary series on the Gospel According to St. Mark, Volume 17 (Blue 5-1 Teacher’s Kit, ‘Countdown to Jerusalem’) the writer said:

“Pages 40-41: The triumphant entry into Jerusalem is ‘symbolical narrative,’ for Mark was not inclined to ‘force episode into arbitrary harmony with his editorial plan.’

“Introducing the Bible, Bible I says ‘It is not essential that everyone reads the Bible. . . . Do not expect particular blessing from God because you read the Bible. . . . Do not seek answers to the questions in your life. . . . Throwing people into the Bible and telling them to read it is no more sensible than throwing a child into deep water hoping he will swim. . . . You do not need opening and closing prayer. . . . The laws which God’s self-disclosure gave to Israel are not unchangeable and forever valid. . . . God’s self-disclosure – particularly in Jesus Christ – is new to every social situation. . . . The writer did not think about himself as writing “Scripture” or Bible. . . .”

- Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible*, pp. 83-84

Now what is interesting and sad is that what he claims that the Bible does not do in our lives is exactly what the Bible says it will do in our lives! We are to read God's Word. In Joshua 1:8 we are told, "**This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.**" In other words, the Lord is telling Joshua and us that we are to be in God's Word day and night, we are to meditate upon it and extract all the nutrients we can from it. That is far different than what was said before, that it is not essential that everyone reads the Bible and yet the Bible says that we are. Who are you going to trust, the wisdom of man or Almighty God?

They also tell us that we don't receive any blessing for reading God's Word and yet the Word of God tells us that there are blessings for reading it. In fact, just in the book of Revelation John tells us, "**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.**" So there is this blessing for not only reading God's Word but then applying it to your life! And in Revelation 22:7, at the close of the Bible, listen to what we are told, "**Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.**" Again, who are you going to believe, man or God? The choice is yours but why trust man who keeps changing his mind about things, who doesn't know all things instead of trusting in Almighty God who knows all things and speaks the truth to us!

Let me deal with just one more of these and that is having people read the word of God is like throwing a child into the deep water and telling them to swim, good luck and I hope you make it out alive is the idea. That is just foolish. Our earthly fathers were far smarter than we were when we were 5 years old and yet, did they not instruct us in such a way that we could learn from them? Of course they did and thus, our heavenly Father is no different!

Paul, in I Corinthians 2:9-16 tells us, **“But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things 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 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. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For ‘who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?’ But we have the mind of Christ.”**

Do you understand that? It is the Spirit of God that speaks to us and opens up to us the Word of God so that we might understand it, that we might understand what God desires of us. In fact, we have the mind of Christ in that the Holy Spirit reveals to us the things of God! So again, are you going to listen to a man who says that you can't read and understand the Word of God or are you going to listen to the Lord who tells you that He will teach you these things, He will open up the Word of God to you? You see, as you read God's Word you see where you stand, in the mire of sin and as you read God's Word, as you hear God's Word spoken to you, you see that it is only God who can pull you out as you come to know Him through His Word!

And you can take all those statements that this article has made regarding the Word of God and as you compare them to what God's Word has to say, they contradict it! I truly believe that it is the denying of the inerrancy of God's Word that has moved denominations and non-denominational Christian churches away from God's Word and they quickly slide into apostasy.

Spurgeon, one of the best known and most popular preachers of his day, held to the traditional view of the Bible. In a sermon he delivered back in 1855 he said this in regards to infallibility or inerrancy of the Scriptures. He wrote,

Then, since God wrote it, mark its truthfulness. If I had written it, there would be worms of critics who would at once swarm on it, and would cover it with their evil spawn; had I written it, there would be men who would pull it to pieces at once, and perhaps quite right too.

But this is the Word of God. Come, search, ye critics, and find a flaw; examine it from its Genesis to its Revelation and find an error. This is a vein of pure gold, unalloyed by quartz or any earthly substance. This is a star without a speck; a sun without a blot; a light without darkness; a moon without paleness; a glory without a dimness. O Bible! It cannot be said of any other book, that it is perfect and pure; but of thee we can declare all wisdom is gathered up in thee, without a particle of folly. This is the judge that ends the strife where wit and reason fail. This is the book unstained by any error, but is pure, unalloyed, perfect truth. Why? Because God wrote it. Ah? Charge God with error if you please; tell Him that His book is not what it ought to be . . . Blessed Bible, thou art all truth.

- Russell H. Conwell, *The Life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, pp. 574-576

This is one of my deep concerns in the church today, that evangelical Christianity has moved away from the inerrancy of the Scriptures, we have been infiltrated with those who deny this truth. Because of that we see Christian schools that teach that the Bible is not the authoritative, inspired, inerrant Word of God. It is then that those students take what they have learned, and they even go farther into apostasy and they bring this to the churches they are ministering in. And you can see where this is going. If the leaders of the churches are teaching this, then the sheep that are being fed this false teaching will absorb it into their lives and you have a generation of people who are departing from the faith!

And what the church brings to the community is a world view that does not change lives for the good, but leads them farther away from God, farther into immorality and lawlessness. You doubt that, then read the book of Judges and see what happens when a group of people live after the desires of their heart instead of the heart of God!

Let me close this morning with this. Back in 1928, when the depression first began, a brief editorial appeared in the staid [serious] Wall Street Journal, which went something like this:

What America needs today is not Government controls, industrial expansion, or a bumper corn crop; American needs to return to the day when grandpa took the team out of the field in the early afternoon on Wednesday in order to hitch them to the old spring wagon into which grandma put all of the children after she washed their faces shining clean; and they drove off to prayer meeting in the little white church at the crossroads underneath the oak trees, where everyone believed the Bible, trusted in Christ, and loved one another.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru The Bible, Vol. II, p. 86

If we want to fix the trouble in our own lives, in this nation, in this world, the only lasting way is by coming to Christ. He needs to be the center of our lives. And the way we come to know God is through His Word, faith comes by hearing and so does our spiritual growth. Thus, we must understand that God's Word is inerrant, that from Genesis through Revelation is God's Word and we can trust it because it is truth. God does not lie and thus, His Word is truth! May we learn the lessons God has given to us!

God's Word is a **REVELATION** to us in who God is! God's Word is **INSPIRED** or given to us from the very breath of God! And as we have seen this morning, God's Word is **INERRANT** in the original manuscripts and the copies we have today can be trusted. Next time we will finish up this section on these words related to the Scriptures as we look at **ILLUMINATION** and **INTERPRETATION!**