

THE PRIMACY OF GOD'S WORD

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Joshua 1:1-9

1. Moses had died, and the responsibility of leadership was now on Joshua's shoulders.
2. Here we have a record of God speaking to Joshua and promising:
 - a. To be present. 2
 - b. To give what had been promised. 3-4
 - c. To grant victory. 5
3. Based on what God told him Joshua was to:
 - a. Be strong and courageous. 6, 7, 9
 - b. Be careful to obey all the law Moses had given him. 7
 - c. Be preoccupied related to the Word of God. 8

4. God made it clear that Joshua's success as a man and a leader were dependent upon his knowledge of and obedience to the Word of God.

NOTE: The phrase, "have success," can also be interpreted, "act wisely."

5. Over time the term, "The Word of God," took on an expanded meaning as God added to it.

- a. At this point the Word of God was comprised of the first five books of the Bible.
- b. When Jesus Christ walked the earth the Word of God had grown to the thirty-nine books we know as the Old Testament.

NOTE: One of Jesus' last acts prior to His ascension back to Heaven was to authenticate the Old Testament. Luke 24:44-49

Now He said to them, "**These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.**" 45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 "You are witnesses of these things. 49 "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

c. By the end of the first Christian century the twenty-seven books that make up our New Testament were written.

NOTE: The Apostle Paul put his, and the writings of the other Apostles, on equal footing with the Old Testament. Eph 2:19-22

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, 20 **having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets**, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

I. The Bible at every point in its development constituted God's Word.

A. It is important to understand that the Bible was authored by men who wrote under Divine Inspiration.

a. The writers did not always fully comprehend the message they were recording.

1 Peter 1:10-12

As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, 11 seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things into which angels long to look.

NOTE: Years ago, as a stay-at-home mom, Sandra did typing for professors from Colby College. They gave her hand written manuscripts and she typed them. It was not necessary for her to understand what she was typing.

b. That said, Paul authenticated all Scripture when he wrote, "All Scripture is inspired by God (God breathed) and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17

II. The Bible cannot be understood apart from God.

A. Peter made this clear in 2 Peter 1:19-21.

So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. 20 **But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.**

NOTE: Peter stated an important principle related to understanding the Bible when he stated, "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation."

B. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, is the author of Scripture, and apart from Him the Bible cannot be fully comprehended and applied. That is why we have passages like:

1. Psalm 119:28

"Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law."

2. Jeremiah 33:3

"Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know (and cannot know apart from Me). Jeremiah 33:3

3. John 14:25-26

"These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. 26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."

III. The Bible can be, and often is, misunderstood, misapplied, and misused.

A. The Bible is misunderstood, misapplied, and misused because of:

1. Ignorance. (Not because a person is ignorant, but because the person does not have a knowledge of what the Bible actually says and means.)
2. Unbelief.
3. Wrong motivations. (A desire to justify a point of view or behavior that is contrary to the intent of Scripture. This is evident in our day related to those who want to justify various forms of sexual sin.) 2 Peter 3:14-18

Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, 15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, 16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, **which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.** 17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, **be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men** and fall from your own steadfastness, 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

4. A desire to manipulate people. 2 Cor 2:17

For we are not like many, **peddling the word of God**, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.

NOTE: The profit motive is behind much of what is done in Jesus' name.

B. Behind all misunderstanding and misapplication of God's Word is the spirit of error that is at work in this world. 2 Cor 4:1-5

Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, 2 but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

C. Those who belong to God can discern the truth of God as opposed to error.

1 John 4:1-6

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. 4 **You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.** 5 They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. 6 **We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.**

APPLICATION

1. We live in a day when the veracity and the applicability of the Word of God is under constant attack.
2. For the record I believe that the Bible as we have it is the written Word of God.
3. I intend to preach, teach, and defend the Word of God with all the insight, strength, and ability God gives me.
4. In closing I ask you to join me in living out the words of Jude 3-4.

Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for **the faith** (the body of truth that we call the Bible) which was once for all handed down to the saints. 4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into **licentiousness** and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

5. To be effective we must personify Joshua 1:8-9.

"This book of the law shall not depart (be removed) from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. 9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."