

Our Foundation: the very Word of the Living God

Psalm 11:1-3

1 To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. In the Lord I put my trust; How can you say to my soul, "Flee as a bird to your mountain"? 2 For look! The wicked bend their bow, They make ready their arrow on the string, That they may shoot secretly at the upright in heart. 3 If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?

David is reacting to the fact that in his Israel, everything is upside down. The king that should be for God's people is threatening him with death. He hides his parents with Moab, and himself with the Philistines, two of Israel's fiercest enemies. The foundations of his society are being destroyed before his eyes. The reason: the word of God to Saul is being ignored, and Saul is sinking into greater and greater rebellion. Today the foundation of the church continues to be assaulted by disobedient men. This study is meant to reaffirm the ancient truth that *every word of God is pure*(Proverbs 30:5). If pure, then men must obey it . The foundation of the church has not changed. Jesus and His Word hold us up. Let us hold on to Jesus and His Word.

Introduction: Desiring God's Words

It is the Holy Spirit Who brings the Word of salvation to our hearts. Someone will be preaching or teaching or testifying of personally speaking that word to you, and you will hear it. It is the living Word of God that does the Work, empowered by the Holy Spirit. These two entities cannot be separated, though men try to do it.

As a baby in Jesus you are spoon fed more of the Word, and it feels good to you. You like it, you believe it, you want more. But there comes a time in our natural life when a child or teenager starts examining his food. He wants to know why he must eat this and not that, and more of this but not more of that. If he is wise he wants to know more about this food he is constantly eating. Eventually he will be buying the food himself and he will be taught the wise choices. He will even find that there are certain things he can put into his mouth that are not food at all, and that can actually harm him.

So it is in our walk with the Lord. There comes a time when we all need to examine what we have been eating, and decide whether we will eat this food that we have been told is so good for us. We will see which foods are the best for our growth. And even find that there are foods out there in the "Christian Kitchen" that are not food at all.

I Peter 2:2,3. *As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

That verse is like the mom saying to the baby, "Here's your bottle. Drink it up." And we take the bottle, because we have tasted the bottle before, and we like it. So why not? And we just drink happily. These are newborn Christians. They have had an experience with God. They are so delighted! So when someone puts a bottle in front of them and says, this is more of that same stuff you had when you got saved, we go for it.

Paul has a little stronger word about this. **I Corinthians 3:1-3**. Paul visited the Corinthians and had to feed them milk. Trouble is, they were way past the age of being weaned away from liquids. They should have been grown by now, but were still babies.

And I brethren could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babies in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food. For until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are not able. For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you... you are behaving like [natural] men.

This passage tells us several things. As with Peter, Paul agrees that we start out with simple food as a newborn. The basics. Those basics are outlined in **Hebrews 6:1, 2**, by the way.

...let us go on unto perfection [same idea of progress here, from milk to solid food], not laying again the foundation [what I am calling the basics]... 1. repentance from dead works, 2. faith toward God, 3. the doctrine of baptisms 4. laying on of hands, 5. resurrection of the dead, 6. eternal judgment.

Secondly we learn from Paul that solid food is what negates carnality. He had to feed them with milk, the basic teachings, because their carnality would not allow the meat to be digested. The meat then must have something to do with other words from God about bearing fruit. None of the basics talk about character, the real thing that God wants to do in the human life, build you into a holy son or daughter, perfect in every way.

That's what the food is for. It is God's diet for you, your very life-line to eternity. No Word means no growth. You will stay a baby all your lives if you are not able to take into your system the words from Heaven that came through the apostles.

So we examine this Word. This Food. The Word has been speaking to us. Now we respond. We look closely at these meals that have been going into our system. Where did these words come from? If they are merely wise words from wise men, well, there are other wise men who have written wise books. If they are from an enemy, we put them down, we run from them. We'd rather starve than take poison into our souls.

We believe they are from God. Now let us look closely at why we believe that. Can we build our lives on these words? Are they enough? Are they the original words God spoke? Do we need

supplements, like a Book of Mormon, or a Jehovah's Witness New World translation of the Bible? Do we need an update and a revision of the revelation, as in the Koran? Do we need commentaries written by men who disagree among themselves? Do we need the Roman Church to tell us what is true in the Book, and what the Book really means? Do we need traditions invented by Rome and passed on down, next to the Bible? How did they ever figure out which books are the Bible and which are not? Other holy books and letters were written throughout Jewish and Christian history? How do we know that the text wasn't somehow corrupted, as the Muslims tell us?

The quick, but very true and real answer to all of this is, the Holy Spirit. Walk with Him and every word of Scripture will be revealed to you in its time.

But eventually I believe the Holy Spirit will lead you to do what we are going to do, and that is examine carefully each of these questions, that we might have a good answer to give to those who question us. We are not afraid to ask questions when they are motivated by faith and not by fear and doubt. We know God has come into our lives. Now Lord teach us more about what has happened, and how you did it, and how wonderful is the Word that you sent us.

1. The God Who has revealed Himself.

In Nature.

Psalm 19.

"The heavens declare the glory of God. The firmament shows his handiwork. Day unto day utters speech. Night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language. Their voice is not heard. [Yet] Their sound has gone out through all the earth. And their words to the end of the world" (emphases added).

Nature doesn't say a word but it talks, and its language is powerful. It speaks of a Creator who is all powerful, beautiful, orderly, and limitless, to suggest only a little. All men are confronted with this language from their earliest years. God is speaking to them every day of His glory and artistry. Every day. The message is so powerful, says Paul, that men are without excuse! No one can say, God didn't speak to me. Sure he did. Every day of your life you could see that there must be a great God somewhere. There must be Someone in charge. Someone greater than myself. Someone to whom I must be accountable.

Unless, as David said, you are a complete fool, saying in your heart, there is no God. No, you knew there was a God but you chose to ignore His call on your life.

Here are Paul's words in Romans 1:18-25: *18For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

In Writing.

We call this latter kind of revelation "general" revelation. But God in His mercy has also put into the world a very specific, or what we call "special" revelation. If nature were enough, we would not have to send missionaries to the unreached. They would look at a tree, or a mountain, lift

their hands to God and somehow be saved. But the fact is, without special knowledge of who Jesus is ["the way, the truth, and the life] even the majestic mountains and the beautiful flowers cannot get people into Heaven. They can only serve as invitations to seek God more. Acts 4:12 tells us there is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved, than the name Jesus. This written form of Revelation is also mentioned in **Psalm 19:**

7 The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; 8 The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; 9 The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward.

So here is a God who speaks. He is not distant and aloof from His creation, but makes every effort to communicate to them. We start with the idea that God not only wants to speak, but has spoken.

He has spoken through nature, and through men. Look now at

Hebrews 1:1-2:

1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son...

Nearly all of the Old Testament was written by prophets. Moses the prophet wrote the first five books. Other prophets wrote much of the other historical portions. David is called a prophet, he who wrote half of the Psalms. And from Isaiah to the end of the Old Covenant, book after book is given to us by a prophet.

There were many forms of this special communicating. Dreams and visions. Direct voices. Miracles. Sometimes God took on human form as with the visit to Abraham.

Then, all of these messages were written for us.

The Old Testament then is the written word of God, without doubt. God spoke, men wrote. Other times, the Spirit of God was quietly stirring the heart and men wrote as they were moved by that Spirit. We'll see this later. And also later we will speak of the New Testament writings.

Through Jesus.

Our Hebrews text indicates that something different has happened in our own day, the day of the Lord, we might call it, since it began with Jesus' first coming and will end with His second coming. The very Word of God Himself has entered the world. The Communication of all

Communications! This is the greatest Message God has ever given to the world. God truly knows how to talk!

See John 1: *1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

And 1 John 1: *1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life- and 5:7 For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.-*

And John's other book, Revelation, in chapter 13: *11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.*

2. Inspiration

Jesus is the Fullness of the Word of God, God's communication to us. But the written Word, which is all about Jesus, is also living and authoritative. We often use the Bible to settle theological disputes. It is important to remember that the Bible speaks not only of theology, but of Itself. The Scriptures prove the Scriptures. Let us examine the passages which do this.

2 Timothy 3:16.

The most famous of these passages is 2 Timothy 3:16. I quote it in its context here, from the NKJV: *15. ...from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Though the verse in question will stand as translated by the NKJV, Boice brings out that this translation, "given by inspiration of God," is not the best, though it is better than the standard, "is inspired by God." This latter idea could lead one to believe that God started the process of inspiration, but man picked it up from there and went his own way with it. I might be inspired by an athlete, say a soccer player, and use the principles he uses in my game of basketball. This is clearly not the idea given us by the Greek *theopneustos*.

That word means "God-breathed." The entire content of all Scripture is the very breath of God, according to an apostle in whom that breath worked mightily. This was the belief of the Jews who received that word, as well as those who read it. The Book is Holy. It is the very voice of the very God.

Note that there is no verb in the first part of that verse. The text simply reads, "*All Scripture, God-breathed, is profitable* " etc.

The notion of every word of Scripture being breathed of God matches the words of Jesus who reminded us that man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God*.

Clear enough. But the concept of a God-breathed word has been fought from the beginning.

Genesis 2:16, 17 ; 3:1

16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." [before creation of Eve]

1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

The command was easy enough to understand. Note that it was given to Adam before Eve came along. We are led to believe that it was Adam that communicated the message to his new wife. Did she not trust her husband? Was there not enough respect for a word that came out of another human being? Is this why Satan went right to her, knowing that Adam's revelation was from Heaven, and valued more?

There are parallels today. God has not spoken with His own Voice to mankind. We are dependent on human beings who have received revelations from Him. Through the Holy Spirit we are led to believe the apostolic words and to refuse all others. For those not tuned in to the Spirit of God, most any man's words will ring true. Herein is the entrance of false teachings. We must beware and walk closely and humbly with our God.

What inspiration is not.

The word we used to describe the breath of God's Spirit infusing the heart and mind of a messenger, is used in a number of ways which have no connection to the real meaning.

- Inspiration is *not* genius, the property of "smart" men. Smart men would not condemn themselves, as the Bible most surely condemns the human race. They would not come up with a salvation that is outside of themselves. They would not come up with such a judgmental God who demands that sin be atoned or all sent to perish in Hell.
- Inspiration is *not* simply the thoughts of the writers, good men who imagined good things. Almost 4,000 times the Bible says, "Thus says the Lord." One cannot have a thought without words. The words that came forth through the messengers of God were God's very words.
- Inspiration is *not* always inspiring, that is, it does not always "zap" the reader. Chronologies recorded in Genesis and Chronicles and Luke are inspired of God. They are not the easiest and most refreshing of readings.
- Inspiration does *not* imply a partial breathing of God. God does not speak spiritual truths while at the same time speaking historical or scientific lies. "Your Word is Truth," said Jesus.

3. Testimony to Old Testament Inspiration

God equated with His Word.

Galatians 3:8

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." See with what holy reverence the apostle speaks of the words of God. He gives to the Scriptures the quality of a person. Books don't "see." Books don't "preach the Gospel." But this one does. This Book is the breath of God, and the breath of God cannot be separated from the one Who breathes that breath. It was God who saw that He would be saving Gentiles. It was God who spoke to Abraham a Gospel message, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." We find the record of that statement in Genesis 12 and elsewhere. But as you read those words, you are experiencing the very inner life of the Spirit of God!

See also,

Romans 9: 16

So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." This passage that Paul quotes from Exodus is the record of God's words to Pharaoh. But Paul says that "The Scripture" said those words. We often like to say, when quoting God or one of God's men in the Bible, the "Bible" says. We don't really mean that the Book has a mouth and talks, but the Bible does seem to be exuding God's own breath as we speak.

God equated with writers of Scripture.

Hebrews 3:7,8

quoting a portion of Psalm 95: *7 For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture, And the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice: 8 "Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, As in the day of trial in the wilderness..." [Hebrews 3:7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice,8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness,]* Who was the human author of Psalm 95? Most likely David, per Hebrews 4:7. But Paul, quoting the psalm, tells us that the Holy Ghost was the true author! This is, in a nutshell, what we mean by Biblical inspiration. David's pen, God's breath.

Acts 4: 24

So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, 25 who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? Here the apostles and people of God are reacting to persecution in the first days of the church. Notice that God is quoted as the source of the words of the psalm (2:1). But those words are placed in the mouth of David. The pattern continues. God is speaking, though we hear a man's voice.

Hebrews 1:7

And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire." Here the writer of Hebrews is making a case for the exalted Nature of Jesus, the Son of God. He quotes "He" or God, from Psalm 104:4. But the Psalms were written by men. Or were they?

God has indeed revealed Himself in the Scriptures. With man, He wrote the Scriptures.

Men Moved by the Spirit.

2 Peter 1:16-21

16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." 18 And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. 19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

The "we" of this passage is Peter, James, and John. He speaks of their experiences at the transfiguration of Jesus. Eyewitnesses. Audible voice. In this passage Peter asserts that what happened on that mountain was a confirmation of "the prophetic word" , a phrase he uses in a different form later in the text, "prophecy of Scripture."

Peter is saying that what the prophets wrote was true and was confirmed at the mount of transfiguration. He then directs his readers to keep looking at that Light of Scripture, until God in His mercy shines that light in their hearts, and the word becomes flesh in them. He concludes his thought by making a general statement about how that prophecy and all Scriptures have come down to us. First he tells us how Scriptures did *not* come, namely from some private, personal, human source. He clarifies further by calling that source "the will of man."

The word "interpretation" in verse 20 is a little misleading. He is not talking about what people do with the text after it comes to them. He is speaking of the originator of the words. He is telling us that the words of Scripture were not first decided upon, or determined, or released, due to the ideas of some man.

No, in fact, men were only the pipeline, the conduit. That which filled the vessel was purely God. Men could have used their own styles, even research, even collusion with other writers, as Peter and Jude for example. Or in some cases the word could have been purely dictation. But when all is said and done, it is God saying and man simply opening his mouth and taking pen, and being moved by and filled by the Holy Ghost. This is God's Word. Written by men. The mystery here approaches that of the living Word, the Son, Himself. All God. All man. Who can explain it?

Boice brings out that the word for "moved" is the same word used by Luke in Acts 27:15, to describe what happened to the doomed ship when all controls of men were taken away and it was left simply to be "driven." It was still a real ship, and it was really moving, but it was moving because the wind was now in control.

4. Testimony to New Testament Inspiration

God used forty different men over a period of 1,600 years to complete His written work. He used a butler, a scribe, kings, a doctor, a theologian, fishermen, a statesman, a farmer, a tax collector, a Pharisee.

Someone has calculated that there are 320 quotes in the New Testament from the Old. But what of the New itself? So far, most of what has been said above refers to the Old Testament Scriptures. Obviously the Old Covenant, as we know it, was the full Bible in apostolic days. But things were changing. God was adding a new section to His Book, a record of a new covenant, prophesied by Jeremiah and others (Jeremiah 31:31), enacted by Jesus, and spelled out for us by apostles, historians, theologians and prophets, in a book we now call the New Testament. How does the New Testament "prove" itself to be true? Here are some evidences:

1 Thessalonians 2:13

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

An apostolic word is spoken, and now written, to the Thessalonian Church. The Thessalonians receive it as from God. And so do we. By implication, we receive all the epistles of Paul in that same vein. By even broader application, we allow all genuine apostolic letters and histories and prophecies, the authority they are due.

1 Timothy 5:18

For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

Here Paul, in describing what ought to be our attitude in supporting those who teach us, quotes two "Scriptures." The first is from Deuteronomy 25:4, the second from the Gospel of Luke, 10:7. Paul seems to be equating what was given by Moses with what was said by Jesus and given us by Luke, a traveling companion of the apostle.

1 Thessalonians 4:15

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

This is one of many such texts. Paul is not hesitant to declare that when he speaks, he speaks by "the word of the Lord." See also, for example,

1 Timothy 4:1

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

Again, no question as to Paul's source of authority and verbage. He listened long to the Holy Spirit, and wrote what he heard.

1 Corinthians 14:37

If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.

Doesn't get any plainer than that. The Lord spoke to apostles as He did to prophets, and their words are to be obeyed. Period.

2 Peter 3:14-16

14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; 15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

Peter's understanding is as Paul's. The things that apostles commit to writing are on a par with the prophets of old, and together they constitute the very word of the living God.

John 20:30-31, 21:24

30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

24: This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true.

A word from John, and I believe the point is proved. Note that the idea of committing things to writing is still in vogue after the resurrection. It is through believing preached and written messages that we are to be saved and grow in Him. These messages were all from apostles. John is referring to himself in the second passage, as the context will bear out. He refers to the fact that there was a consensus among the early believers that the apostles spoke truth, ultimate truth. I believe that consensus came from the Holy Spirit. Their words are trustworthy. So much so that the Spirit saw fit for John to end the revelations of Scripture by the strong statement following:

Revelation 22:18, 19

18 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; 19 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.

Could John have any doubt, and should we, that he was being moved along by the Holy Spirit, and guarded from error? I think not.

5. The testimony of Jesus.

There is no competition between Jesus and His Word for highest authority. The living Word and the written Word are one. It was Jesus the Son as a member of the Godhead from eternity, Who spoke all the Words of Scripture to the writers of it. To hear from the Bible is to hear from the Son. Perhaps ten percent of Jesus' words are quotes from or references to the Jewish Bible. Look at these words that come out of His mouth verifying His agreement with the Sacred writings.

Matthew 4:3-10

3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." 4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' " | [4:4](#) - Deuteronomy 8:3 5 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.' " - [Psalm 91:11, 12] 7 Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.' " - [Deuteronomy 6:16] 8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.' " [Deuteronomy 6:13]

Where did Jesus get His education, the Pharisees always wanted to know. He got it from Heaven. He got it from God, from within Himself. And God the Father released messages from the words He had originated centuries before, to use in Jesus' time of trouble.

Luke 20:27-39

27 Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, 28 saying: "Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. 29 Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. 30 And the second took her as wife, and he died childless. 31 Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died. 32 Last of all the woman died also. 33 Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife." 34 And Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage.

35 But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; 36 nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. 37 But even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' [Exodus 3:6, 15] 38 For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him.

Jesus, our example as well as our God, teaches us not only to fight the Devil, but the Devil's men, with Scripture. Only this powerful Word can defeat the liar, who has no defense against it.

Then there were the times when Jesus used Scripture to defend His actions. Such as,

Mark 11:15-17

15 So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. 16 And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. 17 Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.' "

Here then is another use for us. Let the Word burn within us as we read it daily, and let the Holy Spirit use that burning Word to direct us into appropriate actions as the day progresses.

Matthew 26:51-54

51 And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. 52 But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? 54 How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"

Jesus knew He must die at the hands of sinful men. As the end approached, more and more "word" was being processed by the Father into His memory. He could see the whole picture now, and He knew exactly when someone was trying to take Him off course.

This same Word is our guide today. Word-filled people know when the Enemy is trying to divert or distract. They rebuke him and move on to their intended destiny.

We speak not of only these isolated passages. They are not exceptional, but rather indicative of Jesus' entire way of operating. What we call the walk of the Spirit is closely identified with the walk of the Word. The Word is the instrument that the Spirit uses to guide and direct. Those who insist they shall run by their feelings shall run amuck. They will eventually fall into the ditch

without clear guidance from the Word that gives us light. See Jesus' insistence on this matter in the following passages:

John 10:33-36

*33 The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God." 34 Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods" '? [Psalm 82:6]35 If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (**and the Scripture cannot be broken**), 36 do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"*

He mentions this concept only in reference, but what an insight! In the Mind of our Saviour the Scripture must all be fulfilled. His audience already believed this, by the way. The prevailing leadership of the day truly believed that the Scriptures were from God. But they were blind as to the fulfillment of those Scriptures. May God guard our own hearts from a pride that will cause us not to see before us the spiritual realities of Scripture. When we divorce Scripture from worship, it will be said of us, "In vain do they worship me. Their heart is far from me." Without the Holy Spirit, someone said, we may as well burn the Bible.

Note in passing that Jesus equates "the word of God" with "Scripture." This one who died with Scripture on His mouth, who submitted to the Word of God all His life, lets us know here that there is not one corrupt unnecessary word given by God to His people. *Plenary inspiration, it is called.* Every word of God unbreakable!

One more note, and then we move on: the word "Scripture" is in the singular. Everything that God has given to his men to write is considered one unit of revelation. We still refer to the revelation in the singular when we say "the Bible", the Book.

Confirmation of this is given in the early part of the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 5:17-18

17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot [iota, smallest letter] or one tittle [dot, serif] will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

How could any law, any word, be so powerful as to be indestructible? How could any man know the future of that law? Impossible, unless the written words of men are also the written Word of God, and the man is not merely a man, but the Son of the Father in Heaven.

The closeness of identification of Jesus with His Word is perhaps no better exemplified than in **Luke 4:18, 19**, a quotation directly from **Isaiah 61:1-2**:

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; 19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

He knew the Scripture applied to Him, for the Father reminded Him that He was the One Who had spoken these very words to Isaiah 700 years before, through the Holy Spirit. There is a sense in which that same Spirit comes upon us and lets us know that the Jesus in us is still preaching to the poor, healing brokenhearted, setting captives free, preaching the salvation that is in Jesus. The Word is eternal and centers in Christ.

Later, Jesus told people to evaluate His ministry in the light of this same Scripture. See, He implied, what Isaiah and others said about Messiah, and see if I do not match perfectly what they said:

Jesus appeals to the authority of Scripture in **John 5**, saying that it is they which testified of Him.

39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me 45 Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you--Moses, in whom you trust. 46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.

At His death, He quotes and lives out the Scripture found in **Psalm 22:1**,

My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?

After He is raised from the dead, He rebukes two disciples because of their unbelief. Unbelief in Him? Yes, but only indirectly. They are rebuked because of their unbelief of the words of the prophets in the Scriptures! Then Jesus gave them the Bible lesson of their lives:

Luke 24:25-27

25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

One might say, of course Jesus endorsed the Jewish law. He was a Jew speaking to Jews. They all believed that the Word of God was perfect, unable to be broken, sufficient, in fact all the things we believe about the Bible today. But how could Jesus have endorsed and authorized the writing of the New Testament, when it was still in the future?

In order for there to be a “New Testament” in book form, there would have to be new revelations. Would these messages come from a new set of prophets? Nearly so. But in this case, the “prophets” were called “apostles.” They would be the ones, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, to receive a series of messages that would be passed on to the end of time. Jesus’ provision for this task is outlined so very clearly in the final address of Jesus to the 12, now the 11, in John 14-16, and the great “Lord’s Prayer” of John 17. Look carefully at the following promises and instructions:

John 14

25 "These things I have spoken to you while being present 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 things that I said to you.

John 15

15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you 26 "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. 27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

John 16

12 I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.

John 17

8 For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. 14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

What do we learn about Jesus and His commitment to a written testimony from the above?

- The Spirit of God is going to remind the disciples of everything Jesus ever said to them, “all truth”, that is important for our salvation.
- The Spirit will talk of, and glorify, Jesus, the living Word, not Himself.

- The Spirit of God will tell the apostles of things to come, as in the prophetic portions of the New Testament.
- The Father gives the Word to the Son, the Son gives the Word to the Spirit, the Spirit gives the Word to the apostles, the apostles by preaching and writing, give the Word to us.
- This Word, though holy, will be hated by all, and be the reason we are set apart to God.

The apostles carried out this mission to the point where the early church, imbued with power from on high, would accept no book in its formal teaching authority that could not be traced in some way to one of the original apostles, by actual writing or by endorsement. That is, we believe that Luke's works were endorsed by his famous traveling companion Paul, and that Mark was similarly authorized by Peter, and so on.

Just a note here about the official list of Scriptures: It was not given to us by the church but by the word of the Lord who commissioned apostles to send out His Word. Scripture never submits to the church, but rather the church submits to the Scripture and its Lord. Which leads us to discuss another aspect of this wonderful Book: Its authority.

6. The question of authority.

Who rules the church? We know that Jesus is the Head, and He gives leadership responsibilities to pastors and such. But how do they rule, by what authority? The breathed-out Word of God.

The early church continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42). When apostles died, their replacements continued teaching what the apostles taught. It was just "known" that these men had spoken authoritatively from God, and combined with the teachings of the prophets of the Old Testament, the church to a greater or lesser degree in the centuries that followed placed the Bible at the forefront.

Slowly the Papal power, and the power of church Councils, added to extra-Biblical writings, challenged the authority of Scripture to the point eventually of hiding it altogether. It was this darkness that was addressed by the Reformers Luther, Calvin, and the rest.

To this day the Bible, again more or less, serves as the foundation of the Christian Church. But there is another piece of this puzzle that must be considered. The Bible is a spiritual book. It was given by the Spirit. It can therefore only be received by a spiritual people, filled with that same Spirit. To the extent that a person has received the Spirit of God, by that same measure he will receive the Word of God.

The Roman Catholic Church had believed through the worst of its days that the Bible is the Word of God. The Roman system held the Bible in high esteem. But the Reformers, restoring the actual words of Scripture to the hearts and minds of believers, suggested further that the Scripture must be communicated to a man's heart, must change him from within.

By suggesting that the Bible had personal power in a man's life, the Reformers were saying that the Bible had the ultimate say in the church. No Pope or Council or Tradition of men could ever be lifted above the pure words of Scripture communicated by the Spirit to the heart of man.

The basis for this thinking was in the Scripture itself, for example in **1 John 2:20, 24, 26-27**.

20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. 24 Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. 26 These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. 27 But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

See also Paul's understanding of this same concept:

1 Corinthians 2:12-14

12 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. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 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.

Ephesians 1:16-19

16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.

It is the Spirit of God working all these changes in us. And He is using the Word of God to do His work. Therefore the Spirit-inspired Word is the authority in the church!

We recall the story of the two disciples on their way to Emmaus that first resurrection morning. We remember their encounter with Jesus, and the conversation that followed, followed in turn by a long lesson from Jesus from the Old Testament Scriptures.

It would have been great to be there. How could Jesus find so much about Himself in the Bible of the day? Easy. He wrote that book through many men. And to those whose eyes have been opened, that book is all about Him! Consider:

- The entrance of sin into the world, followed immediately by the remedy for that sin, the bruising of Satan. Genesis 3:15.
- The seed of Abraham, alluded to in 3:15, is spelled out clearly in chapter 12 of the same book. This promise of a seed is repeated to Isaac and Jacob. All of this is borne out by Paul in Galatians 3:13-16.
- Jacob while dying predicts that a king will come from the tribe of Judah.
- As the nation Israel is born and begins its rise, God promises Moses that a prophet like himself will one day come into the world and be heard by it, Deuteronomy 18:15.
- Ruth is the story of how God preserved miraculously the seed that would lead to David and the "son of David", Messiah Jesus.

- In Job 19, Job sees his redeemer and believes one day he will see him on the earth, in his flesh.
- Psalm 2 tells of the reign of Messiah, set on His holy hill by God Himself. The King is to be the son of God!
- Psalm 16 tells of the resurrection of Jesus.
- Psalm 22 tells of Jesus' suffering, rejection, and death.
- Psalm 31 speaks of the last words of Jesus.
- Psalm 38 tells of how people stood afar off from the cross at his death.
- Psalm 41 speaks of Jesus' betrayer.
- Psalm 69 gives more details of those last moments on the cross.
- Psalm 110 is about the reign of the coming Messiah.
- Isaiah tells of a Son to be born of a virgin, and Who will be the Prince of Peace, and at the same time the Everlasting Father. He accurately predicts the subjects, location, and methods of Jesus' ministry. And tells of a lamb led to the slaughter. Rejected of men. Struck by evil ones. Given stripes on his back. Buried with the rich. Bearing our sins. But eventually reigning over a land conquered by peace.
- Jeremiah speaks of the coming Branch of Righteousness. How children will be killed in his own childhood.
- Daniel tells the time of His first coming and prophesies His death.
- Hosea tells of His being carried to and from Egypt.
- Jonah prefigured his 3 days and 3 nights of burial by his visit to a fish's belly.
- Micah tells where Messiah will be born.
- Zechariah sees the King coming into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. And tells of his subsequent betrayal by Judas. But then He sees Jesus returning in victory to the Mount of Olives.

Oh yes, a lot to talk about in the Old Testament, if you are looking for Jesus. These are many of the obvious passages. Imagine what other treasures were found by Jesus Himself, Who could see His story on every page!

After that incredible lesson on the salvation of the coming Messiah, see what Luke has the men saying in response:

Luke 24:32

32 And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"

The burning heart is set on fire by the Spirit of God and its igniter, the Word of God. Let not the two be separated. God will speak to you in His Book.

Martin Luther was converted by reading **Romans 1:17**.

17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

That verse may not burn in you right now. God may use another verse. But He will find a way to get His heart into your heart if you will listen to His Word and feed on it.

So the Spirit *and* the Word. The Word *and* the Spirit. To emphasize one over the other is to fall into serious trouble.

Those who want, as they say, only the Spirit, will often allow their inner feelings to be the judge of what God has said. Such were the so-called "enthusiasts" of Calvin's day. They were almost Gnostic in their claim to private revelations directly from Heaven. To them, the Word had to be subservient to their own feelings and visions.

On the other hand, a purely intellectual slavish addiction to a book can produce the Pharisee, the legalist, the bigot. The Book after all points outside of Itself and calls men to Jesus through the Spirit released by the Father. Every word of it is pure but the end is not knowing its letters. The end is knowing its Author.

And if one can know It's Author and still walk in the Spirit, that man is on His way to perfection.

7. External proof of the truth of Scripture.

We have alluded to the internal testimony, the authority of the Holy Spirit showing us Jesus through the written Word working on the inner man. But there is an external set of “proofs” for the Bible also. Never did one speak like Jesus, said the Temple guards sent to arrest Him. And never has there been a Book like the set of 66 portions of Holy Scripture that we call the Holy Bible.

I follow Boice’s *Foundations of the Christian Faith* for an outlining of these facts. He lists ten such evidences, some of which we have covered already:

1. The Bible claims to be the Word of God.
2. Jesus believed the Bible of His day, and the writings to come, were of Godly origin.
3. The Bible is doctrinally and morally/ethically superior to all other books. Some might say this is a subjective statement, but few who have read its pages in depth could deny that the message of the Bible is so very much better. Unbelievers have used its maxims and quotes for all these centuries. Some have even tried to model their lives after the righteous patterns set forth in the Book, although denying the Way to do that, through a born-again experience triggered by faith in Jesus Christ. There is certainly not a more well-known and hugely-published book anywhere. Hands down best-seller of all the ages is still the Bible.
4. The Bible could only have come from God. Unholy men feel threatened. By this we know unholy men could not have produced it. The Book is against sin, and no sinner would have created such a book. The book says 3800 times, “Thus says the Lord.” Could any man have lied so many times in one book?
5. The writers of the Bible. Could they have said over and over that the Book is from God, knowing it was really only from themselves?
6. The Bible was written by over 40 men in a period of about 1500 years. The men were all different, from differing locations and social status. Many did not know any of the other writers. None knew all of them. Without modern communications, these men wrote a book that, though very diverse, is perfectly unified in theme and content. The Book is about Jesus, Whom many of the writers did not have the privilege of meeting. It is about sin and its consequences and its atonement, and every part of the Scripture lends its hand to paint a portion of that picture.
7. Though some like to focus on the “mistakes” in the Bible, attributable to copyist errors, translation difficulties, as-yet undiscovered archaeological artifacts, what should grasp our fancy is that this Book is so totally accurate. Over and over those who uncover history and the hidden secrets of the Earth bring forth the evidence that God’s Word is true. Consider, should you desire to pursue such a study, the titles of government

officials and territories in the time of the Bible writers. And the names of Bible characters, that correspond with similar names in concurrent historical times. All accurate. Consider the varying accounts of the resurrection. At first cited as evidence of contradiction, it is now widely affirmed that the accounts complement and supplement one another and add yet another proof of Divine Inspiration. These men did not copy off of one another. They each told what they saw and their four accounts mesh perfectly.

8. Then there is Biblical prophecy, fulfilled marvelously. The future of Gentile nations and Kingdoms is given in explicit detail. Nations that were supposed to crumble did. Those that were to continue, have. The coming of Christ is told in detail, as we have mentioned above. Bible scholar E. English states that no less than twenty Old Testament prophecies regarding Christ were fulfilled within 24 hours when Christ died! And Israel. Her coming destruction fulfilled by the crushing blows of Assyria and Babylonia is without parallel for accuracy. Truly the person who wishes to bolster faith in the Word of God can hardly do it better than investigating the multitude of prophecies of Scripture and their fulfillment. It is clear to true Bible believers that such a record of accuracy can only mean that the prophecies about our own future and the coming again of Jesus Christ are safe and secure, and one's life can be built safely around them.
9. The very fact that the Bible is here is proof of Its Divine character. The Bible has universal presence. No book has even come close to matching its circulation. But this should not be, naturally speaking. No book has ever been fought against so severely, either. At first, Bibles were copied one at a time by monks and priests, a laborious task guarded by strict rules. We shall talk more of this later. During this early period, the enemies of the faith attempted to talk the Bible into oblivion, ridiculing it, arguing against its truths. The Bibles that were produced were not available to the public, and not that much to the Catholic priesthood. Only a privileged few ever saw a Bible. The Reformers actually committed a crime by publishing the Bible in the language of the peoples of different countries. Little by little, nation after nation has received the entire text and to this day new languages are being codified so that the Bible can be translated to every people group on earth. Communism and Islam and other enemies of Christ have suppressed the Book, tortured and killed the owners and obey-ers of that Book. Yet it persists. It grows. It cannot be stopped. An ongoing miracle, is this miracle of preservation.
10. Finally, changed lives are offered as a proof that the Bible is true. Readers of the Gospel message, the Psalms, the Hebrew narratives of God's dealings with His people, are forever changed by the texts of Scripture. Prostitutes, drunkards, murderers, the proud, the poor, all have been transformed by this Miracle Book.

NOTE: For the following 3 sections, refer to Bible.org and look for “transmission, canon, and translations. The readings I am doing on Sermonaudio are directly from this site.

8. A look at the transmission of the Scriptures.

9. The Canon

10. Translations

Conclusions/Summary

My conclusions are obvious, and are borne out by the very Scripture we exonerate:

- The Word of God is pure. Psalm 12:6, Psalm 119:40, Proverbs 30:5
- The Word of God is true. John 17:17, Hebrews 6:18, Titus 1:2
- The Word of God is perfect. James 1:22, Hebrews 4:12
- The Word of God is our sword. Hebrews 4:12-13
- The Word of God is our mirror. James 1:23
- The Word of God is our seed. 1 Peter 1:23
- The Word of God is our lamp. Psalm 119:10
- The Word of God is our fire. Jeremiah 23:29
- The Word of God is our hammer. Jeremiah 23:29

These sentiments are not shared with a great number of Bible preachers in our day. Paralleling the deteriorating interpretation of our U.S. Constitution, men have opted for what they might call a “living Bible”, that is, one whose meanings change when culture changes. This, in opposition to the obvious way one interprets any document, of whatever age: By simply reading the sentences and words, and attempting if necessary to discover the intent of the author.

Thus is produced in our generation a Bible, frankly, with errors. But a bible with even one error might as well be a Bible with 10,000 errors. For who among us is qualified to determine what is true and what is false in the written Word? Since none are, we choose an inerrant Word from a God Who cannot lie.

We must part company with those who, beginning in the 17th century, shortly after the Reformation was in full flower, began their insipid attacks on the Bible. First they came from the world, then from the world of science, then from within the church. Those who still wanted to hold on to a Biblical revelation but were beginning to buy the attacks against it decided on a middle path, a “new apologetic” which brashly stated that the “essence” of Scripture was correct but the “details” could safely be abandoned. But who was to tell one from the other?

There came a movement to discover Who this Jesus was, and what He really said. When all the votes were in, it turns out He said precious little. And who was it who decided what He did and what He did not say? Evidently the same group as in the preceding paragraph. The path leads nowhere, this human-based attempt at guessing the Word of God.

We believe all of it. Jesus believed all of it. He quoted from the Old Testament and prophesied the New. We have been given no substantial reason to disbelieve Jesus’ words. So why not just continue believing?

For the preceding study I have used not only the Scriptures and my own history of study and experience, but specifically I have referred to the work of [the late] James Montgomery Boice in his Foundations of the Christian Faith, revised in 1986 and published by Intervarsity Press. Part 2 of that book, "The Word of God", presents a clear picture of the foundational place our Bible has in the Christian faith. I have used Boice's work as somewhat of an outline and a thought-starter for my own, although I have not quoted any passages directly. I use Boice as a guide because of his reputation as a serious Bible scholar and man of God. I am also deeply indebted to Dr. John MacArthur of "Grace to You" for his scholarly work and his consistent defense of the faith for several decades. His Shepherd's Conference of 2015 convened a host of Bible scholars from around the planet, and some of their thought processes appear in this study also. Some of these men are:

Alistair Begg, James White, Ligon Duncan, Stephen Nichols, R C Sproul, John MacArthur, Ian Hamilton, Miguel Nunez, Mark Dever, Steven Lawson, Greg Beale, Albert Mohler, Kevin DeYoung, Ian Murray, Sinclair Ferguson

And those who wish to investigate further will be well served by reading B B Warfield's *Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* , along with F F Bruce's *New Testament Documents, Are They Reliable?*