

Bible Text: 2 Peter 1:12-21
Preached on: Wednesday, August 6, 1975

Calvary Memorial Church
400 S Bennett St
Southern Pines NC 28387

Website: www.calvarymemorialsp.com
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/calvarymemorial

Returning tonight, if you have your Bibles, to 2 Peter chapter one and we want to begin reading at the 12th verse.

Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.¹

Let's ask the Lord's blessing on his Word.

Our Father, we come to these pages tonight realizing afresh our need for thee if we are to have understanding. We ask that by thy grace that you will fill us with thy Spirit that we might preach and hear aright the Word of God. And we ask thee that should there be those here who are outside the Savior that they might understand tonight the great

¹ 2 Peter 1:12-21.

significance of this Word that you have given us. We pray that as thy people that we might grow more to appreciate the blessedness of the revelation that we hold in our hand. We pray these things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and for his sake. Amen.

I told you last week that we would be beginning tonight a series of messages on the fundamentals of the faith. And we are going to take the next few Wednesday nights to consider these things together, to try to learn a little something more about the basic doctrines of the Word of God and the things upon which the Christian faith are founded.

These are not going to be studies that will be as simple as those that we generally carry out. There will be a great deal to think about. There will be some things, probably, that you have never heard of before. But I am certain that you will be aware, when you have heard these messages, of something of the great battle that is taking place today in the spiritual world.

The devil is out to destroy your family. He is out to destroy this nation. He is out to conquer the world. And he is seeking to do it by the undermining of the truth of God. And it is only when we understand what these fundamentals of the faith are and learn something about them and are willing to stand for them that the truth of God is going to be preserved in this day in which we are living.

Several months ago when I first contemplated a series on the fundamentals of the faith I had the very same reservations that I have tonight because it takes a book instead of a sermon to do justice to the infinitely important subjects that we are going to be considering in the next few weeks.

Well, the best that I can do is to touch very lightly on the slopes of a great mountain of truth and encourage you to go up higher. I am going to be speaking on what I consider to be the fundamentals of the faith. There are some people who won't agree with some of the conclusions. For example, I believe that the eternal security of the believer is a fundamental and even though there are many who don't agree with that, I think we can prove from the Word of God that this is, indeed, the case.

So we are going to be talking about, tonight, our inspired Bible. And when it comes to the fundamentals of the faith, this is the only place to begin because we have set down here in the pages of the Word of God, God's message to man. And it is here that we find the fundamentals of the faith.

We were talking last week about the exhortation to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."² And the faith which was once delivered is that which we have right here in the pages of the Word of God.

Now, to give you a statement of the fundamental, it goes like this. I believe that the Scriptures of the Old Testament and the New Testament are the very Word of God,

² Jude 3.

verbally and plenary inspired, infallible in the original writings and preserved in their integrity to the world today.

Let me give you that again. I believe that the Scriptures of the Old Testament and the New Testament are the very Word of God, verbally and plenary inspired, infallible in the original writings and preserved in their integrity to the world today. That's the fundamental. And I am going to spend the rest of this message telling you why this is important and why it is true.

First of all, let me say this. It cannot be proven by human means that the Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God. This is a fundamental of the faith. Either accept it by faith or you don't. We don't have the original manuscripts and it is unproven and unprovable on the basis of human scholarship that this is the Word of God.

Now it is like that because God said, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise..[I] will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."³ God has so ordained that man cannot come to a set of manuscripts and come to know him. Truth comes by revelation and even though we have the pages of God's infallible Word before us, we must have the light of God coming from the Spirit of God in order to understand the things that are written here.

The Bible tells us quite clearly that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."⁴ It is not just simply the fact that these are the words of God written down in a book that brings man to a knowledge of the truth. "There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God."⁵ And except the Spirit of God himself draw man with the cords of love, there would be no understanding of what we have here in the Bible.

If we had the original manuscripts today, no doubt, there would be a great company of people gathered together to bow down and worship on regular occasions to the original manuscripts. But God has ordained that this thing should be by faith. This is a fundamental of the faith. It is by faith that we understand that the worlds word framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.⁶

No one was there when the worlds were framed. They were framed by the Word of God. God spoke and it was done. And so the Genesis account of creation is unprovable because nobody was there to see it happen except God himself. You either accept by faith that God has chosen to reveal what happened there or you don't.

Now this is what makes it so utterly simple for us when it comes to whether we are or are not going to believe the message of the Word of God.

³ 1 Corinthians 1:19.

⁴ 2 Corinthians 3:6.

⁵ Romans 3:10-11.

⁶ See Hebrews 11:3.

Now let's suppose that you have a headache and I reach into my pocket and I pull out a bottle with three pills in it. And I say, "Now you take these one of them every 30 minutes and you will be well." And suppose there is somebody else standing there and they say to you, they say, "Now, watch out, because one of those pills is poison."

Now if you have a grain of common sense one of two things is going to happen. Either you are going to believe my word and ignore that other person and take all of those pills or you are going to take that bottle and walk over the wastebasket and drop it in. You are not going to say, "Oh, there is some good in the bottle. There might be some good headache tablets." You are not going to say, "Oh, he does nice things for me so one little poison pill won't hurt." You are going to recognize that it is either poisoned or it is medicine.

It is either the remedy or it is a part of the destruction. And the only question that exists is my integrity. There is no other question. And this is the utter simplicity when it comes to this subject of Bible inspiration, this thing that the devil has complicated in such a great way in these days in which we are living. The Bible is either God's infallible Word or it is the biggest pack of lies that has ever been perpetrated on humanity. It is either the truth of God sent down from heaven or 350,000 churches throughout America have been built in vain. And the only issue is God's integrity.

Here in this book you find either the cure for your sin and your eternal condemnation or you find poison and it belongs in the trash. And the choice is that simple and it is a choice with which we must confront people when it comes to this matter of the Word of God. Has God revealed himself or has he not? Is the Bible God's Word that he has preserved and that he stands behind or is it not? The only other alternative is that it is no more valid than Plato or *The Origin of Species* or anything that man has ever written. And we need to make people face these issues.

Is it God's book or is it man's book? Because it cannot be both. And if it is God's book, it ought to be the most important thing in our life. And if it is man's book it ought to be in the garbage.

The most dishonest creature on the face of God's earth is a liberal preacher or professor or theologian. They are either deceivers or hypocrites or liars or they are fools because they are preaching a Bible that they don't believe to be infallible. They are handing out medicine that they believe to be laced with poison. And only a murderer or a fool would do that and they need to be exposed for just exactly what they are.

Now I believe the Bible from cover to cover and I believe in the covers, too, because they keep the dust off. By faith I believe there is a God and my God has the power to write through human authors one small book containing his message to man. He also has the power to preserve that book in all its integrity and protect it from the onslaughts of man or the devil or anybody else.

And this is the reason that we know the Bible to be the Word of God, simply because God says it is. It is the character and the integrity of God that is at state in this matter. Over 200 times this book claims to be the Word of God.

2 Timothy 3:16 we read, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”⁷ It is all Scripture that is given by inspiration of God.

John 10:35 says, “The scripture cannot be broken.”⁸ Those were the words of the Lord Jesus.

Proverbs 30 and verse five says, “Every word of God is pure.”⁹ That’s verbal inspiration.

1 Kings chapter eight and verse 56 says, “There hath not failed one word of all his good promise.”¹⁰ That’s verbal inspiration.

Mark 13:31 says, “Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.”¹¹ That’s verbal inspiration.

Verbal inspiration means that every word is inspired of God. And this is a fundamental of the faith that must not be forsaken. It is not enough to say that the Bible is an inspired book or to say that it is the Word of God. The devil’s preachers will agree with that. Every single preacher in this town will agree with you that the Bible is an inspired book. And yet 90% of the preachers in this town—if you can believe their theology—don’t know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior.

One of the most difficult things that we can ever recognize is the subtlety of the attacks of Satan, to realize just how complicated all this gets when it comes down to an understanding of what is taking place in the Word of God.

Now, you and I need to realize that this book is the most critically important thing on the face of the earth today, because if we had not the Word of God, if we had not the message of God we would have no understanding of the great eternal issues that are taking place in the world.

Now when a man goes to the store and he picks up a version of the Bible he might pick up *Good News for Modern Man*. He might pick up *The Jerusalem Bible* or *The Living Bible* or the New International Version or the *New English Bible* or the Berkeley Version or the Philips translation or the *New American Standard Bible* or *The Amplified Bible* or the Revised Standard Version or the Douay Version or the King James Version, anything you want to name. There are men in back of those versions. And there is something far

⁷ 2 Timothy 3:16.

⁸ John 10:35.

⁹ Proverbs 30:5.

¹⁰ 1 Kings 8:56.

¹¹ Mark 13:31.

more to it than walking into a place and picking up a Bible and sitting down to read and saying, "This is the Word of God."

This is not the Word of God. This is a translation of the Word of God. And every single man behind every single one of those versions would say, "I believe that the Bible is an inspired book," every one of them. They would all say, "I believe that the Bible is the Word of God." And yet the vast majority of the men behind most of those versions are just as lost as they can be. Now that is how complicated it gets.

Language today among theologians has done a great deal of changing in just the last few years. Every man behind all of these versions has a theological point of view that is based on his education and on his beliefs. And when he comes down to the pages of the Word of God and begins to revise or to translate, he is putting into those versions the theology that he believes. The education that he has had, his approach and his attitude to the truth or the untruth of the Word of God is being written and read right into those Scriptures. Every single one of those men find all the versions that you see flooding the world today as an intellectual. And yet he is a man with attitudes toward the Word of God that have been shaped over the course of many years. And these attitudes become evident in the treatment that they give to these various versions of the Word of God.

Now the point is this. I believe that the Scriptures of the Old Testament and the New Testament are the very Word of God, verbally and plenary inspired, infallible in the original writings and preserved in their integrity to the world today.

But we don't have the original writings. We have over 4500 manuscripts dating back to 125 AD. We have these promises of God to preserve his Word. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."¹² And if we are unable to read the Hebrew and the Greek ourselves we must take somebody's translation.

I don't want to get too complicated in talking about some of these things, but for those of you who are a little deeper into the thinking on the subject tonight let me give you a few thoughts. Just as we depend on our translators to give us the English Bible, these men had to depend on translators as well since the original autographs were not available. And this being the case, if we are to have a reliable Bible today it must have come through men who believe in the verbal plenary inspiration of the Bible. It must come through men like that. And that being the case we must look beyond men like Karl Barth. And Paul Tillich, Kierkegaard, the German theologians of the turn of the century. And we have to go on back to the foundations of the English Bible. We have to talk about things that go back to the time when the Bible came into the English language.

We think about Wycliffe and Tyndale, men of that character, who loved the Word of God. They believed in the verbal, plenary inspiration just the same as we do, or at least we should. But when we come down to the later years, when we begin to talk about men such as R.A. Torrey and D.L. Moody, when we begin to talk about Charles Finney and William Newell, when we begin to talk about good solid men of that nature we are also

¹² Matthew 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33.

talking about men who were led astray. And the result of that is that places that we generally think of as being sound or having been sound in times past, places like Dallas Seminary, places like Moody Bible College, Bob Jones University and many others, we find these places accepting versions such as the New American Standard Version or the Philips translation, some of these. And these are versions that are based on what is known as the Westcott and Hort theory of textual criticism.

Now these are men who accepted textual criticism as a necessity. And the result is—and has been for almost 100 years now—a constant turning away from the *Textus Receptus*, the basis for the King James Version of the Bible.

Now what I believe is this. I believe that we have to go back to the Received Text, back to the *Textus Receptus* in order to find holy men of God who held to the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible. You won't find it in Westcott and Hort. You won't find it in the foundation of the theology of the vast majority of fundamental schools today because they hold to the theories of these men. We find here that these men are accepting the Vatican and the Alexandrian and the Sinai codices. They are accepting these things that are heralded by these two men, Westcott and Hort. They are saying, "This is the truth. This is the line of truth that God has given." And I don't believe it.

I don't believe that God gave his truth through men who didn't believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible. And I don't believe that translations today—whatever they might be—no matter how many fundamental schools might stand behind them, I don't believe that any translation of the Word of God that has come through these men is what we as fundamental believers ought to be following.

And we have to go back to the Received Text because it is there that we find men who believed in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible. Now either the preserved truth of God was lost to man for 1500 years and now it is locked up in the Vatican library, or the *Textus Receptus* of the King James Version is God's preservation of his truth. It is one or the other and it cannot be both.

And no matter who of what name or what reputation stands behind it, it cannot be both.

For 350 years God's stamp of approval has been on the King James Version. There have been more souls won to the Lord Jesus Christ through this version than all the others put together. And we must not bend to the cry of an unbelieving world and Christians too lazy to search out the truth of the Word of God to accept anything less than a Bible with translators who held to the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible.

Again, I say, "I am no scholar." But this is a matter of common sense. It has absolutely nothing to do with scholarship. There is only one truth. God gave only one manuscript, only one Bible that he promised to preserve. It cannot be both the *Textus Receptus* and the codices that Westcott and Hort accept. It cannot be both. It must be one or the other. And I believe that fundamentalists ought to find themselves today standing upon the truth as it is to be found right here in the King James Version of the Bible.

Now the integrity of God's Word is what is in question. We must stay with holy men of God who believe this fundamental doctrine of the verbal, plenary inspiration no matter how many others turn away from it.

All right. Now I have given you some Scriptures about verbal inspiration.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God.”¹³

“The scripture cannot be broken.”¹⁴

“Every word of God is pure.”¹⁵

“There hath not failed one word of all his good promise.”¹⁶

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”¹⁷

That's verbal inspiration. It means that every word of God is inspired.

All right. Let's turn for a moment, if you will, to Galatians chapter three. Now this is something we have seen in times past. But we need to see it again. We need to see it over and over again until we remember because it is critically important.

Galatians chapter three and verse 16. “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.”¹⁸

Now that is why the verbal inspiration of the Bible is critically important. Because what the apostle is saying there is that the incarnation of the Messiah, the preservation of the seed promised to Abraham hinges on one letter of one word. “He saith not, And to seeds [plural], as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.”¹⁹

You see, that which is in the mind of God is not, ultimately, the blessing of the nation of Israel even though that is included. It is not ultimately the propagation of the race, even though that is included. But we are talking here about the seed of God, the one seed in the mind of God, the Lord Jesus Christ who was to be born of a virgin in Bethlehem's manger and who was to be the promised seed that God was talking about when he spoke to Abraham.

¹³ 2 Timothy 3:16.

¹⁴ John 10:35.

¹⁵ Proverbs 30:5.

¹⁶ 1 Kings 8:56.

¹⁷ Matthew 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33.

¹⁸ Galatians 3:16.

¹⁹ Ibid.

And, beloved, if you want to lose that truth you start getting hold of some of these revised versions, some of these modern language Bibles, some of this paraphrase garbage that you find floating around today. The purity of this truth is not maintained. It cannot be found in these many versions that we see floating around today. `

Now this is the verbal inspiration exemplified right here.

But what about plenary inspiration? What does that mean? P-L-E-N-A-R-Y. Verbal means every word, plenary means every part of the Scriptures.

Now the Lord Jesus spoke about that when he wrote in Matthew chapter five and verse 18. He said, “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”²⁰ Not a jot is the smallest letter. A tittle is the smallest part of a letter. And the Lord Jesus said, “Not one part of any of these,” that’s his promise. Not one part of any of these is going to pass until all is fulfilled.

I will show you how important that is if you will turn to Isaiah chapter 64. Notice what we read at the sixth verse. “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.”²¹

Now this is a statement that is revealing to us the condition of man in the sight of God. “We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.”²² All the good things that we do, all the good life that we are trying to live in the sight of God before we get saved are just like filthy rags, filthy garments in God’s sight.

But the amazing thing about that is to find out liberal theologians translate this passage. Now, filthy rags, there, of course is the correct translation. But there is one little tittle, one little part of a letter there that makes a difference. And if that little tittle is removed, as the liberal theologians say it is, then instead of filthy rags we have ornamental garments. Now there is quite a difference there. There is a great deal of difference between filthy rags and ornamental garments.

Now wouldn’t it be nice if you are trying to work your way to heaven and you could pick up the Bible and read, “All our righteousnesses are as ornamental garments.” It would fit right in with your theology, wouldn’t it? And that is why it is so critically important that we need men who believe not only in the verbal inspiration of the Word of God to preserve this truth, but men who believe in the plenary inspiration, that every part of every word is inspired of God.

And this is an example of the great contrast between truth and error, righteousness and unrighteousness, filthy rags and ornamental garments. Now this is a good example of the reason for Satan’s attack on the Word of God. He knows just as well as you and I do that

²⁰ Matthew 5:18.

²¹ Isaiah 64:6.

²² Ibid.

there are only two logical conclusions. Either this is God's book and we have the truth or it is full of errors and contradictions and the ideas of men and there is no truth. And if we can't know what God says about life and about death and about eternity, then we are perfectly free to live just as we please. And, of course, that is what they have got in mind, to live just as they please. If we don't have the standard of the Word of God we have no standard for truth. We have no basis for morals. Every man does that which is right in his own eyes.

All right. Turn for a moment to 1 Corinthians chapter seven. Here you will see one of the little goodies I learned in college. Praise the Lord I have gotten over that. But I did learn it at the time.

1 Corinthians chapter seven and the 10th verse. The apostle Paul is speaking and he says:

And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband. But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.²³

Now you notice the contrast there. In the 10th verse he says, "Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord."²⁴

Verse 12. "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord."²⁵

And the professors get you in school and they say, "There it is right there. The apostle Paul says that there is a difference in what he says and what God says, what the Lord says. Here we have the writings of just a man, the apostle Paul contrasted with this great truth that is to be found in the writings of the law."

Now this is the type of passage that men use to say that our Bible, the vast majority of it is just the writing of men. They put a difference between what Paul said and what the Lord Jesus said. And this is nothing but another attack of Satan because every word written by Paul or any other writer is just as valid as the word spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ himself. There is no difference. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God."²⁶

Now he is saying here in verse 10, "This is what the Lord Jesus said when he was actually here on the earth. The Lord said, 'Let not the wife depart from her husband.'"

When he was actually here on the earth that is what he taught. But when he comes down to the 12th verse he is saying that the Lord Jesus in his earthly ministry never spoke to this

²³ 1 Corinthians 7:10-12.

²⁴ 1 Corinthians 7:10.

²⁵ 1 Corinthians 7:12.

²⁶ 2 Timothy 3:16.

subject. He never happened to mention that thing that the apostle himself is bringing it out. It is not that there is any difference in the inspiration, but there is a difference in the fact of what the Lord actually spoke when he was here and what he didn't.

Now turn to chapter 14 of this same book, 1 Corinthians chapter 14 and verse 37. Now these are the kind of verses that you need to use on these people who claim that the Bible is written by men and therefore a work of men and that is all there is to it.

1 Corinthians chapter 14 and verse 37.

If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.²⁷

Now Paul says if you want to find somebody who is spiritual, somebody who is prophet of the Lord, he has got to be somebody that acknowledges that the things that I write are the commandments of the Lord. Now that makes it important.

All right. Let's go to 2 Peter chapter three. Notice what we read in the 15th verse. "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you."²⁸

Now notice this. "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."²⁹

Now Peter is making an equation there. He is equating all the epistles of Paul in the first part of that 16th verse with the other Scriptures in the last part of the verse. That's important.

The apostle Peter was obviously a prophet and spiritual because he was acknowledging that the things that the apostle Paul wrote were the commandments of the Lord. He says, "If any man would be ignorant let him be ignorant."

Now look at 2 Peter chapter one, the Scripture that we read tonight. Notice what we read in verse 16. Peter says, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty."³⁰ No fables. No myths and fairy tales and modern day theologians would have us believe. He says, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but,"³¹ he says, "[we] were eyewitnesses of his majesty."³²

²⁷ 1 Corinthians 14:37-38.

²⁸ 2 Peter 3:15.

²⁹ 2 Peter 3:16.

³⁰ 2 Peter 1:16.

³¹ Ibid.

Verse 17.

For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.³³

Now you remember hearing about that. They were up on the mount of transfiguration, Peter, James and John and the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter says, “We were up there on the mountain when the Lord Jesus received from God the Father honor and glory,” because there came a voice as they stood there and God the Father said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”³⁴

Peter says, “I was there. I was an eyewitness. I saw it happen.”

But notice what he says in the 19th verse. “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed.”³⁵

Peter says, “I was up on the mountain. I saw the Lord Jesus. I heard the voice, but we have a word of prophecy that is even more sure than that.” It is even more sure than human experience because human experience can be wrong. You can have an experience that is totally and completely of the devil. Peter wasn’t trusting in his experience. Even though he was on a mountain with the Lord Jesus, even though he heard a voice from heaven he said, “We have a more sure word of prophecy [than that] whereunto ye do well that ye take heed.”³⁶

And he talks about it there in verse 20.

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.³⁷

That is how it was written. That is why it is a more sure word of prophecy, even more sure than anything you can experience, the Spirit of God moving upon the minds and the personalities of the human authors to produce in human language God’s own infallible Word. That was his means of revelation.

1 Thessalonians chapter two and verse 13. “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it

³² Ibid.

³³ 2 Peter 1:17-18.

³⁴ Mark 9:7, Luke 9:35, 2 Peter 1:17.

³⁵ 2 Peter 1:19.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ 2 Peter 1:20-21.

not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”³⁸

1 Peter 1:25, “But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”³⁹

Now you will hear many times that the fundamentalist position in believing in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible is because of our ignorance. I realize that that is very true because the Word of God says that what we need is to become fools for Christ’s sake. It says, “If any would be wise among you, let him become a fool that he may be wise.”⁴⁰

But I submit to you that even though the fact of inspiration can only be accepted by faith, that I can prove the ignorance of any man who rejects the Bible as the Word of God. It is not very difficult. In fact, an ignorant fundamentalist can do it.

For example, any man who considers himself an intellectual is interested in ancient writings. There is something mysterious about those ancient writings. It might be Plato or Aristotle or Homer, all that gang that hung around Mars’ Hill. There is something intriguing about those fellows. And yet the very same intellectuals who accept the writings of these men will ignore the Word of God. Even though it is, by far, better authenticated than any ancient writings. Now, that’s ignorance.

Caesar’s *Gaelic Wars* comes to us from nine or 10 good manuscripts written 900 years after Caesar died. They say, “Oh, what a great treasure. Look at this great fountain of wisdom come back from the ancients of the past.” Nine or 10 good manuscripts written 900 years after Caesar died. And yet the Bible comes from thousands of manuscripts dating to within 40 years of the apostles. Now that is ignorance to turn your back on that kind of evidence.

The only explanation is God’s own explanation. “This they willingly are ignorant of.”⁴¹

There is a built in rejection in the human heart. Man does not believe because he will not believe in spite of the great mountain of evidence that God has laid out right in front of us.

Another attack of the intellectuals is the errors of the Bible. And all the while they are spending millions and millions of dollars so that their text books can be revised and updated every five years. And yet the Word of God was written by 40 authors over a period of 1600 years and it has never been proven to have one mistake in science or geography or history or physics or medicine or any field you can name.

³⁸ 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

³⁹ 1 Peter 1:25.

⁴⁰ See 1 Corinthians 3:18.

⁴¹ 2 Peter 3:5.

Two hundred years ago blood letting was common practice. God said several thousand years ago that the life of the flesh is in the blood.

Just over 100 years ago antiseptic surgery was introduced. Four thousand years ago sterilization and quarantine were taught in the Word of God.

In 1492 when Columbus sailed the ocean blue the whole known world believed that the earth was flat. Two thousand years before that time Isaiah said in chapter 40 and verse 22 that it was round.

Three hundred years ago science said that there were no more than 3000 stars in the heavens. That was the great conclusion of all the most wonderful scientists in the world 300 years ago, 3000 stars in the heavens. But David and Jeremiah and others said many centuries before that the stars cannot be numbered. They cannot be numbered.

Not too many weeks ago I was reading in *National Geographic* magazine the latest scientific estimates. They said that galaxies... now galaxies contain millions of stars. They said galaxies are more numerous than blades of grass in a meadow. Now, beloved, if you don't believe that is innumerable you go out and try counting the blades of grass in a meadow and multiply that by millions and see what you come up with.

It takes a lot of faith to deny evidence like that. It takes a willing ignorance in the light of a great mountain of truth.

Another proof of the ignorance of those who reject the Word of God is fulfilled prophecy. There are 333 specific prophecies in the Old Testament regarding the first coming of Christ to the earth, 333 of them. We are told before it ever happened, hundreds of years in advance many times where he would be born, what he would say, how he would die and 300 others, 330 others.

Now in these days of enlightenment a computer can tell us the probability of things like that happening by chance. Now we better not talk about 333 because that messes up my mind to think about it. But let's talk about 100 of them since I am so ignorant. Let's take the chance fulfillment of 100 prophecies being fulfilled simultaneously in one man as they were in the Lord Jesus Christ. You run all that into a computer and you come out with an analogy something like this.

Let's say that we had a bucket of beans and they were all black except one and it was red. And we are going to blindfold a man and we are going to take that red bean and we are going to drop it in the bucket and we are going to stir it around and we are going to see if that man can pick out the one red bean out of the whole bucket full of black ones. But in order to fit our model here of 100 prophecies, the probably of that being fulfilled, we would have to take a bucket 256 times the size of the earth with one red bean in it. And the chance that a blind folded man could pick that one red bean out of a bucket 256 times the size of the earth is the possibility that those things could be fulfilled by chance.

Now, beloved, don't tell me that the fundamentalist position is ignorant. You might call it intelligent to bet your eternal soul on the fact that blindfolded you could pick one red bean out of a bucket 256 times the size of the earth. But I will just rejoice in my ignorance and believe that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."⁴²

But in closing I want to take you back to the beginning because that is where it stands or falls.

I was reading not long ago about a judge who was very upset because a man didn't appear in court. And finally after a couple of weeks the man's son came around and he said, "Young man, why isn't your father in court? What is the reason for this?"

He said, "Your honor, there are 17 reasons why my father is not in court."

The judge said, "Well, what are they?"

The boy said, "Well, the first reason is that my father died two weeks ago."

The judge said, "Well, in that case we don't need to hear the other 16."

And that's the way it is. Our one reason that is sufficient for believing that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God verbally and plerarily inspired and infallible in the original writings and preserved in their integrity to the world today is because God himself makes this claim for the Bible. It is his integrity that is in view. It is his character that is in question. And we must not let people escape that utter simplicity.

The Lord Jesus believed and said that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. It matters not what they believed at Wake Forest or at Duke or any place else. The Lord Jesus said Moses wrote the Pentateuch. The Lord Jesus believed in creation and not in evolution. The Lord Jesus believed that Jonah was swallowed by a great fish. The Lord Jesus believed that fire and brimstone fell on Sodom and Gomorrah. He believed that there was a flood in the days of Noah. And he believed in the infallibility and the preservation of the Scriptures of truth. And when men deny these things they are calling God a liar. And that is the utter simplicity of it.

In 1 John five we read, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater."⁴³ That's the point.

For this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son...He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.⁴⁴

⁴² 2 Peter 1:21.

⁴³ 1 John 5:9.

⁴⁴ 1 John 5:10-11.

Now what is the record? You make God a liar if you don't believe the record. What is the record? "These things have I written unto you."⁴⁵ That's the record. That which God has written in his Word is the record of his Son.

"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."⁴⁶

This is the record that God has given of his Son. And "he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son."⁴⁷

And this is why all the forces of hell are routed against this book because "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."⁴⁸

"Of his own will begat he us with the word of [God]."⁴⁹

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."⁵⁰

"From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation."⁵¹

"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."⁵²

"But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."⁵³

Unless men can hear the Word of God they will be lost forever.

"By the law is the knowledge of sin."⁵⁴

It is only the living and powerful Word of God that will convict men of sin, of righteousness and of justice. It is only the Word like a hammer that will break the rock in pieces.⁵⁵ It is only the Word that will tell me of God the Son who came from glory to die in the room instead of guilty, hell deserving sinners. It is only the word that will warn men to flee for mercy to the cleansing blood of Calvary's cross.

⁴⁵ 1 John 5:13.

⁴⁶ Luke 24:27.

⁴⁷ 1 John 5:10.

⁴⁸ Romans 10:17.

⁴⁹ James 1:18.

⁵⁰ 1 Peter 1:23.

⁵¹ 2 Timothy 3:15.

⁵² John 5:24.

⁵³ 1 Peter 1:25.

⁵⁴ Romans 3:20.

⁵⁵ Jeremiah 23:29.

And this ought to be our message today. “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”⁵⁶

Let’s bow our heads in prayer.

Our Father, we thank you that today we have the blessed privilege of gathering to study this Word that you have given us, a Word which we know to be preserved in its integrity for us in this day in which we are living, a Word that you have promised to protect that it might endure unto the coming of the Lord Jesus that men might hear the good news, have opportunity to repent of their sin and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

We know, Father, that we are living today in the midst of a great battle that is raging on every hand. The vast majority of the people of this world don’t even know of its existence. And yet how we do pray that in the halls of learning, in the hearts of men, in the minds of those who are the theologians and operation in this world today that you will help us to understand the things that are taking place and that in the midst of all these difficulties as the enemy comes in like a flood that you will lift up a standard against him.

We realize that we need not pray this prayer except in knowledge that it will be done because we know that in every age in the midst of the darkness of human ignorance that you have never left yourself without a witness. Lord, we know that many times those witnesses have been called upon to give their life, to pay the price of wearing the martyr’s crown to see this truth preserved. And, Father, how we shudder to think of those conditions coming to this world in which we are living today. In these days when thy people are rich and increased with goods and having need of nothing and this day when men are so weak and so unwilling to stand up for thy truth how we do pray that each of us might see the significance of these great things, that we might realize that if we don’t understand these things it is because we have been unfaithful in studying thy Word and being willing to see the importance of the preservation of this truth that you have given us. Help us to get a burden for lifting up a standard in this darkened world that men might take knowledge of us that we have been with the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the midst of all these things we pray that you will save souls, that should there be even one here tonight who is outside the Savior, that you will show them the desperate need for eternal salvation, the reason why we should be willing to die for this truth that they might be saved. We pray these things in Jesus’ precious name. Amen.

⁵⁶ Isaiah 40:8.