

"God's Inspired Word"

Some think this book, the Bible, is full of myths and fables. Is the Bible a human product or did it come from God? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study, "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to explore the concept of God's inspired Word. Stay with us.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way. We're here to search God's Holy Word for the Lord's Way. The Bible is more than just another book; it's the Divine Word of God. No other book in all of history is like it. It contains the greatest hope and the greatest message of all time. The Bible blesses and improves life wherever it goes. Without the Word of God, our lives would be empty, darkened, and futile. We need God's Holy Word. And that's why we study it each week. We've always been delighted to spend this time with you. And we hope you'll make us a part of your life each week.

Some people think the Bible was written to another culture in another age and says little or nothing to us today. They think it has no relevance to us and deny it has any authority over our lives. Some think the Bible is merely a sentimental book of old stories and myths. They believe its concepts of sin and righteousness are out-of-date. Some today are ready to discard the Bible altogether.

But, what if the Bible is divinely inspired? What if it gives us the spiritual truth and the moral guidance that we need? And what if it is authoritative and has the standard by which God will one day judge us? If the Bible is indeed God's word, it contains a message that we must know. It has a history that affects us. It has a message that will make a profound difference in how we see ourselves, our world, and our Lord. Now this is easily the most important question of our day. Can we put our trust in the Word of God? So...what proof do we have that the Bible is from God? Well we're going to take some time today looking into God's Word to see its nature and its proofs.

We offer the information on this program about God's inspired Word free to those who ask. If you'd like a printed copy our study, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our toll-free number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also stream this program on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 2 Timothy 3:16 to 17, and we'll explore the idea of the Bible as God's inspired Word.

Our reading today comes from 2 Timothy 3, verses 16 and 17, and there the Apostle Paul is encouraging Timothy to give himself to the scriptures and he reminds him why. He says in verses 16 and 17, "All Scripture is (given by inspiration, or) inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

That's the way the Bible is, it gives us all that we need to know for life and Godliness. Let's pray together. "Father we're thankful for Your Word that is able to do so many things in our lives, to teach us, to reprove and correct us, and to train us to do what's right. Help us to always do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

The Bible points to God as its source. The apostle Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1:20 to 21, "knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." Peter is saying that no person made up the Bible and put it into its own interpretation. Men of God spoke or wrote these words as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Should you hear me say that Paul or Peter or James or John or any of the other writers of the Bible said something, let me be clear: God was behind the writing of it! The Bible carries with it the authority of God.

Paul said clearly in 2 Timothy 3:16 to 17, that "All Scripture is breathed out (inspired) by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent (that is adequate), equipped for every (every) good work." God breathed out Scripture. Its source is first and foremost in Him, God inspired the writing of every Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. God gave us the Word to train and equip Christians to do every good work. The Bible equips us for doing good works by teaching us, reproofing us (that is, telling us what's wrong), correcting us by showing what's right, and training us in righteousness. God's word has an undeniable power to change people's lives.

On another occasion Paul declared, that "If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I'm writing to you are a command of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 14:37). Paul said he was speaking at the commandment of the Lord Jesus. And his writings were not his own, but the Lord Jesus was behind them, and those who read them needed to obey them. The power of the Bible is not that it's just a good book or a wise book or a classic. The power of God's word arises from the fact that it is from God.

King David, who was also a prophet, said in 2 Samuel 23, verses 1 and 2, "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and his word was on my tongue." Now David was saying that his words were not his own but the Lord spoke in and through him. Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 2:12 to 13, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words." The Bible reveals that God's words and thoughts are His.

And so, the Bible uses phrases like, "Thus says the Lord," or "God spoke," or "The Lord testified." And those phrases can be found some 3800 times. In Jeremiah 1 verse 9 God tells Jeremiah, "I have put my words in your mouth." And even Jesus gives God the Father credit for His words. The Lord said in John 12:49 to 50, "For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. I know that His commandment is eternal life; and therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me." Now this is why Jesus holds His words and His teaching to be authoritative and why that word will judge us in the last day.

Now someone says at this point, "Phil, just because the Bible claims to be inspired doesn't mean it's divine. Many books claim to be inspired but are human products. What proof do you have that the Bible is inspired? Surely you don't believe in Adam and Eve, some might say, or believe in Noah and the Flood, or Jonah being swallowed by the fish as actual historical events?" Well these are important questions, and yes I do believe in these historical accounts recorded in the Bible. There is indeed evidence supporting the inspiration and divine character of the Bible, and you should know why I believe.

Well let's talk about the evidences for the Bible. First, the Bible provides many prophecies about Christ and about other matters as well. God has made a test in Deuteronomy 18:18 to 21 for us to know if the message has come from Him. He said, "I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words, which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him. But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And you may say in your heart, 'Well how shall we know the word which the Lord has not

spoken?' Well, when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing, which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

Now only God knows the future; and many who pretend to know do not know at all. God said in Isaiah 46:8 to 10, "Remember this, and be assured; Recall it to mind, you transgressors. Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.'"

In all the writings of Buddha, Confucius or Lao-tse, there's not one single predicted prophecy. In the Koran (that is the Islamic writings of Mohammed) there is one instance of a specific prophecy, a self-fulfilling prophecy, that Muhammad would return to Mecca. Well he did; but this is quite different from the prophecy of Jesus that He would return from the grave. Muhammad could easily go back to Mecca on his own ability, but it takes God for one to come back from the grave.

Modern so-called prophets like Jean Dixon, who was famous, make some clever guesses; but do they come true as the Bible prophecies do? In 1952, 1956, and 1960 Dixon prophesied who would be the presidential candidate in each major party and who would be elected President of the United States. Well how did she do? Well she missed every candidate and every election. By the test of Deuteronomy 18, we have presumptuous people not prophets.

Historians know how difficult it is to predict the future, because the events of life turn on so many "ifs." Ecclesiastes 7 and verse 14 says, "In the day of prosperity be happy, But in the day of adversity consider—God has made the one as well as the other, So that man may not discover anything that will be after him." The Bible further says in Ecclesiastes 9 and verse 11, "I again saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, the battle is not to the warriors, and neither is bread to the wise, nor wealth to the discerning, nor favor to men of ability; for time and chance overtake them all." We don't know and can't know the future as humans. We don't even know our own future on this earth. We must depend upon God and his Word to tell us, and His grace to allow us to live.

When I consider the number of prophecies and how specific those prophecies are, it seems clear the Bible does indeed come from God. Some scholars say there are more than 300 prophecies in the Old Testament. Now these prophecies cover much of the life of Jesus, and about many other facts. Many of the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled were totally beyond the power of human control, such as: (1) the place of birth in Bethlehem, (2) the time of his birth in the kingdom of the Romans, (3) the manner of His birth by a virgin woman, (4) his betrayal for thirty pieces of silver, (5) the manner of death in crucifixion, (6) people's reactions at his death, (7) the piercing of his body, and (8) His burial with the rich. Now as you read the prophecies, you can't help but marvel at God's ability to see the future and how He inspired these prophets.

Now concerning these eight prophecies I just mentioned, Peter Stoner in Science Speaks estimated the probability of anyone fulfilling all of them is 1 in 10 to the 17th power. That would be 1 in 100 quintillion, seventeen zeros after the one. In order to help us comprehend this staggering probability, Stoner illustrates by supposing that we take 10 to the seventeenth power, that number of silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and then you stir the whole mess of dollars, all the mass of them thoroughly, all over the state. And then you blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes anywhere he wants, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one?

I tell you, only God could have made these prophecies, and only God could have fulfilled these prophecies in one person. God was giving us evidence that Jesus is truly His Son. Christ viewed Scripture, all Scripture, as utterly true and trustworthy; and so should we. Our attitude toward the Scriptures shows our attitude toward Christ. We can count on the words of the Bible, we can count them as inspired, we can count them as infallible, and we can know that they are authoritative, because they come from God. For Jesus nothing could break the Scripture, nothing could change it, nothing could be added to it, or taken from it. He claimed that it would last forever.

Several times Jesus built His whole teaching on a single word or phrase of Scripture. Surely this indicates the importance of studying every word of Scripture carefully, for every word is sacred. Christ considered the word of God to be authoritative. Thus, when we read the Bible Jesus knew that it is God who is speaking to us! And we should read this Word carefully, and consider its message, we should live by its teaching, and share it with others.

Hebrews 2:1 to 4 says, "Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect so great of a salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will." The message declared to us "proved reliable." And we should not doubt the truthfulness of God's Word. God spoke the truth to us, and for that reason we must pay much closer attention.

The Holy Spirit confirmed the teaching of Jesus by the signs and wonders that He and His disciples performed. The Holy Spirit proved the message to be "reliable." If we fail to listen to that word, we will neglect our great salvation purchased by the blood of Jesus. When you reject the Lord Jesus, you're also rejecting the forgiveness He offers. You're turning down your salvation and the promise of eternal life in heaven.

When you stop paying attention to the Bible, when you ignore Christ, when you leave the church, and live an immoral life, you're only hurting yourself. You're saying the cross doesn't mean anything to you. You're risking your soul. You can't say no to the Bible and at the same time say yes to Jesus. When you reject the gospel of Christ, you're rejecting Christ himself. Oh, build your house on the rock by hearing and obeying the words of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray together. "Father we're thankful that Your word is trustworthy and true. Father help us to put our trust in You and in Your word, and to follow You, and to do Your will always. May our love for You grow more and more, as we see all of Your blessing. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen."

The gospel saves us, but it also trains us to be God's people. The Bible gives us the mind of Christ. And it sets the example for us in how to think, to love, to live, to speak, and to serve. When God's Word touches our lives, we're enriched in every way. God uses His Word to reshape our lives, so that we may be conformed to the image of Christ. When people study and meditate on the Word of God, it transforms them from being ungodly to living godly, from selfishness to service, and from being agnostics to becoming believers. Believe and live your faith!

When Christians fail to listen to the Word, they fall away from Christ. The New Testament tells of Christians who had become dull of hearing and allowed sin back into their lives. I hope you haven't done that or haven't become a non-practicing Christian or a Christian in name only. We must stop

drifting away from God; we must return to Him. The Lord's message of the cross and the resurrection matters! It's the source of our life, our hope, and our future with God.

Now if you're not yet a Christian, believe in Jesus Christ with all your heart, turn away from anything sinful, confess Him before others, and be baptized. Baptism is an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Now when you obey the gospel of Christ, God forgives your sins and adds you to his family, the church. Now stay faithful to the Lord. And don't let anything stand in the way of serving Him.

We hope that today's study about God's Inspired Word has challenged you to make a change in your life. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." And when you watch the program, be sure to like it, that helps spread the program around. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, if you get a hold of us, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

We do ask that you focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. And there's probably a church of Christ near you. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. Well we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.