

# View

## Do you really believe the Bible is God's word?

BY MARK LARSON

"And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe" (1 Thess 2:13, NASB). Paul commended the Christians at Thessalonica for accepting the message that was preached to them "for what it really is, the word of God" instead of mere words of men. Could you be given such a complement?

Many people today claim to believe that the Bible is God's word, but their response to the Bible says otherwise. By the beliefs they hold and the lifestyle they live, they do not really believe that the Bible is God's word. For if they did, they would take it much more seriously and perform the good works that God commands in Scripture.

More and more "scholars" and theologians today are denying that the Bible is an inspired book. Although they may teach that Bible writers were influenced by God, they do not respect every word in Scripture as the actual words of God. Their perspective of the Bible has had a negative effect on the people; so much so, that many people do not revere the Bible as God's book to follow today.

To believe that the Bible is truly God's word is to understand the meaning of inspiration. 2 Timothy 3:16 declares: "All Scripture is inspired by God" (NASB). "Inspired" (*theopeustes*) means God (*theo*) breathed (*pneo*). Therefore, all Scripture is God inspired or God breathed! God Himself "breathed through" the Bible writers that spoke for Him! The breath of God is parallel to the word of the Lord (Ps. 33:6).

Commonly, "scholars" will speak of what Moses, Isaiah, John, Paul, Peter, etc. wrote (or said) as if they themselves came up with the words we read in Scripture! The assertion is, God gave them an idea or a concept and then they themselves chose

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Sunday Evening: 5:00 PM

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## Do we really believe the Bible is God's word?

the words to say. Such an understanding of Scripture demonstrates an ignorance of how inspiration works.

Consider how the prophets and apostles (writers of the Bible) got the words for the writing of Scripture. A genuine prophet was a "mouth" of the Lord. The actual words of God were placed in his mouth, not merely an idea placed in his mind: "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" (Dt. 18:18, NASB). Notice that God Himself chose the words to say, not the prophet. (See also Amos 3:7; 7:14-17; Micah 3:8).

The same was true for the apostles. The Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all the truth, giving them words which came from God (John 14:26;

16:13-14; 1 Pet.

1:10-12). The apostles spoke the words the Holy Spirit directed them to speak (e.g., Acts 2:1-4).

The apostles never preached a man-

made wisdom or words which they themselves chose, but only the exact words taught by the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:6-13). "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might 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" (1 Cor. 2:12-13, NASB).

The inspiration of Scripture is a wonderful blessing for us, for not only is the Bible God's word, but when we read it we can understand it! "That by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. And

by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit" (Eph. 3:3-5, NASB). The purpose of the inspiration of Scripture was not to confuse us with words too high and complex for our comprehension, but to supply us with words that even the common man can understand. As a result, we can know God's will for our lives (Eph. 5:17).

Thankfully, man's opinions or personal interpretations (i.e., explanations as to the meaning) are not involved in prophecy or in the writing of Scripture: "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was

ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Pet. 1:20-21, NASB). This means that we can have the assurance that the Bible is purely and solely from the mind of God. We can be confident that the Bible is God's will for us today (1 Pet. 1:23-25).

We can plainly recognize that the inspiration of Scripture is not a mere emotion that moves a person to write a story or paint a painting. The inspiration of Scripture is so much more! The Bible contains the words of God. If we really believe that the Bible is God's word, we will not shun it or try to change it, but we will respect it, learn it, and follow it carefully in life (2 Pet. 3:15-18).

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# The Power of Simplicity

BY BILL HALL

Jesus Christ had a deep appreciation for simple things. His teaching was profound, but always simple. He reached the hearts of His hearers, not with high-sounding philosophical jargon, but with illustrations and “to the point” teaching. He could see in a farmer sowing his seed, or a lily showing forth its beauty, or a shepherd leaving his flock to seek one lost sheep, or a loving father welcoming a wayward son, a lesson that could teach some spiritual truth.

His apostles were chosen from the humble class. He could appreciate people, not for what they possessed, but for what they were; and, in some cases, not for what they were, but for what they could become. He recognized true quality, and true quality is often found in the simple and humble.

The worship He ordained was simple in nature. “Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul... spoke to them ...” (Acts 20:7). Even the poorest could worship, for all that was required of a material nature was a little bread and fruit of the vine. Those of little talent could worship, for God was listening in view of the heart rather than the beauty of the voice.

He authorized a simple organization for His church, with each congregation appointing its own bishops and deacons (Philippians 1:1). There were no denominational associations, conferences, or synods. There were no inter-

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church organizations or societies. Yet, through the simple organization given the church by the Lord, the world of the first century was thoroughly evangelized and the needy among them provided for. The Lord knew that success in His work would not be brought about through complexity of organization, but through dedication, faith, and commitment on the part of His followers. We make a terrible mistake when we try to substitute the former for the latter.

Why this simplicity? “That no flesh should glory in His presence” (1 Corinthians 1:29). The complex systems which

men devise tend to bring glory to themselves rather than to God.

To return to the simplicity which our Lord ordained might not be impressive to the worldly-minded, but, then, Jesus Himself is not very impressive to the worldly-minded. Besides, our purpose is not to impress the worldly-minded, but to please God and bow in submission to His will. Let us do away with our super projects and complex systems. Let us learn to appreciate simple teaching and simple ways. Above all, let us learn to appreciate Bible teaching and Bible ways.

We like the following quote from Ed Harrell: “How foolish we are to think that God will be impressed with our voices when we sing; after all, He hears the angels sing! How foolish to think He will be impressed with our cathedrals; remember, He made the Grand Canyon!”

What He is seeking for is a heart that is pure, loving, and obedient to His will. And that’s simple.

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