

## **“God – His Word”**

### **II Timothy 3:16-17**

#### **Introduction**

- Tonight we continue our series we have entitled “ground work – laying a foundation for faith”
  - The reason we are doing this is it is so important that everyone of us are able to give a reason for the things we believe
  - That is what Peter encourages us to do

**“Always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you.” – I Peter 3:15**

- We are suppose to understand what we believe and as the verse above states, we are to consider, ‘why’ we believe it
  - Why do we hold the convictions that we do

#### **Last time we started at the very foundation.**

- why do we believe that God exists
  - if we are going to take the time to study theology, the study of God, then it makes sense that we need to know why we believe that God exists
- Now that I believe we have that established, the next question we need to answer before we take time to open God’s word and learn what it says about God and us is why is the Bible to be trusted
  - Why is it different than every other religious book that is written

I see that is logical, in fact even probably that someone out there greater than myself exists and designed this world and holds it together

#### **But why would I believe what the Bible says about such a god?**

- why would I not believe in the god of the Muslims or the gods of the Hindus?
  - What makes this religious book different that all the rest?
  - That is the question I hope to answer tonight

#### **The most important verse in all the Bible when it comes to understanding what this book is and why it is important is found in II Timothy 3:16**

**“All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” – II Timothy 3:16-17**

- Let’s consider what this verse teaches us about the Word of God

#### **Important traits concerning the Word of God**

##### **The Word of God is “inspired”**

- **That word “inspired” means “God breathed”**
  - So often man thinks of this book as a list of good advice, written by godly people who knew God well
  - This book is far more than that – It is the very breath of God, given to you and me
- And of course Paul tells us that “all scripture is inspired”
  - All means all– every bit of it, is God breathed

##### **And this is not a trivial point**

- For if I begin to move away from that standard – just believing what it says in this book - then I become the judge of what is good and to be followed and what is not

**“My God shall supply all of your need according to His riches.” - Philippians 4:19 – oh I like that verse, that verse is inspired**

- **“All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” – 2 Timothy 3:12** – oh I don’t like that verse, that verse was only for the first century, that was not inspired
  - and what happens is I start to become the judge of scripture
  - Instead of the Bible judging me, I start to judge the bible – and the result is always chaos
- So I believe all of it is inspired, I believe all of it is God breathed
  - Now because of that

### **Important traits concerning the Word of God**

**The Word of God is “inspired”**

**The Word of God is “inerrant”**

- **“inerrant” means without error**

- of course you understand when we are speaking about inspired and inerrant we are talking about the original documents, called by scholars – the autographs

**“The Autographs” = Original documents written by the apostles**

- I am not saying that some copyist in the 5<sup>th</sup> century wasn’t falling asleep and added a zero or misspelled a word in one of the copies every once in a while
  - That did happen and we will talk about it in just a moment
- But the originals were perfect and we know what we have in our laps is so close to the originals, because no copyist error has ever affected any major doctrine or teaching or truth about the Lord Jesus Christ – we are talking about stuff like, the numbers of troops or the spelling of a King’s name

**The Word of God is inerrant**

- it speaks the truth, and it does it in such a way that there is no error found within it
  - if it was man’s opinion, there would be constant need to change it, as has happened with other religious books
  - Joseph Smith used to teach there will people living on the Moon – that is error
    - You do not find that in the Bible

### **Important traits concerning the Word of God**

**The Word of God is “inspired”**

**The Word of God is “inerrant”**

**The Word of God is “infallible”**

- **“infallible” means it is unfailingly accurate**

- when speaking on a subject, it records it just as it happened
- The Bible is not a history text book – but when speaking on History you can take it to the bank
  - The Bible is not a science text book – but when speaking on matters of science you can count on it to be true
- Sometimes the Bible speaks on things that are horrible and you might not agree with
  - David having multiple wives, Solomon taking it one step further – innocent people being killed
  - Just because the Bible says it happens, does not mean God agreed with the act
- What it is speaking to is the fact the Bible is Infallible, recording events just as they happened

**But how can we be sure**

- pastor Jason you have just told me what you believe – the Bible is inspired, “God breathed”, inerrant, “without error, and infallible, ‘unfailingly accurate’”
  - but you have not told us why you believe that to be so

**Why should we believe the Bible is inspired? And how do we know that what we have in our laps is anywhere close to what was originally written down by Moses or Daniel or Paul the apostle or Peter? How did the Bible get from God to us?**

- to answer all of those questions, we have to start with the last one - How did the Bible get from God to us?
  - Did the authors go into a trance?
  - Did they lose all control of their bodies?

### **Step #1 - Inspiration**

**“Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” – II Peter 1:21**

- The apostle Peter, who should know what it was like to be inspired to write the Bible describes it for us first hand in his book
  - Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit

**The word there for moved is the same word Luke used to describe a ship being directed by the wind in Acts 27:15**

- It was not as if they men were doing nothing
  - But all their actions were being lead by what the wind wanted to do
- Lewis Sperry Chafer described it this way in his book Major Bible Themes, **“God so directed human authors, that without destroying their individuality, His complete and connected thought toward man was recorded.” – Lewis Sperry Chafer**
  - God worked through human vessels, giving them His word, and what they wrote down was exactly from His heart

**So that is how the inspiration took place – what happened next**

**I mean it was around 3,500 years ago when Moses wrote the first books of the Old Testament. While we still have his words with us today, those original documents have long since been destroyed. So how do we know what we have today is what Moses penned many years ago. #2 - Duplication**

- The answer lies in how those words arrived in our hands. In ancient times, there were diligent Jewish scribes who spent their entire careers copying material.
  - These individuals were very meticulous in regard to providing an exact duplicate of the original document.

**One group of scribes, known as the Masoretes, set its standards much higher than all the other scribes.**

- The Masoretes counted every single letter, word, and verse of the Old Testament in order to preserve its accuracy.
  - If it differed when they were done copying, they were to burn all the work they had done up to that point – that would make you careful
- This would also happen if the manuscript became faded or old
  - They didn't want the text to be copied incorrectly and so they would burn and bury the older texts

**Now the Jewish scholars devotion to copying the text and burning and burying the older copies is why we don't have many copies of the Hebrew Old Testament older than the 10<sup>th</sup> century**

- the proof that these scholars did their job is when their work is compared to other sources of the Old Testament

**The Greek versions of the Old Testament were called the Septuagint, named after 70 scholars that theoretically translated the text from Hebrew to Greek**

- We have copies of the Septuagint from the second and third centuries and they match

perfectly

**Another proof that these early scribes did their job in conserving the accuracy of the original text was proven with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls – Pictures of the Dead Sea Scrolls**

- In 1948, an Arab boy was looking for a lost goat. As most children would, this young boy entertained himself by throwing rocks as he walked.
  - He threw one of those rocks into a small cave, and heard the sound of pottery breaking. Scampering up the hill and into the cave, the boy found some leather scrolls with ancient writing on them.
- Inside the cave were hundreds of scrolls, most likely written by a group of people known as the Essenes.

**One scroll found in the Dead Sea caves was of particular importance. It was a scroll of the book of Isaiah**

- What was amazing about this scroll was that, when it was compared to the text of Isaiah we had written almost 1,000 years later the two matched word for word!
  - Thus, we can be confident those old testament scholars did their job and the Old Testament we hold in our hands today is worded exactly as the original writers wrote it, it's the same as studied by the apostle and Jesus
  - It is the inspired Word of God

**Now how about the New Testament?**

- The New Testament was written just like the old Testament as Peter said, when “Holy men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit” – this happen between approximately A.D. 35 and A.D. 100.
  - The New Testament is made up of accounts of the life of Christ, we call gospels, the history of the early church, the book of Acts, letters that were sent to congregations of the Lord's church from the apostle Paul and others, called epistles and a prophecy of the future, called the book of Revelation

**Those books were priceless to those who received them. Because of that, copies and copies and copies were made. Unlike the scribes who copied the Old Testament, people who copied the New Testament books did not see the need to bury or burn old, worn-out copies of the Scriptures.**

- As a result, we still possess literally thousands of manuscripts of the New Testament

**A manuscript is a hand-written copy of a document**

- We have over 5,700 manuscripts of the New Testament.

**That number of manuscripts is amazing, especially when compared to other ancient books. For example, Homer's Iliad is one of the most famous ancient books in history. But there are less than 700 copies of his book, to check and verify authenticity**

**There are only 9 manuscript copies of Josephus, and 10 of Caesar's Gallic Wars**

- Most of what we know about Roman and Jewish history we can only verify with 19 copies
- And yet the New Testament has again, 5,700 manuscripts and many dates just years after the New Testament was originally penned or in other words, possibly first copies

**Now because you have so many copies of the New Testament you have many differences between the copies**

- that is why when an educated Bible critic says, there are 200,000 errors in the Bible, this is what they are taking about

- but what are the differences
- In spelling of names, word order
- There is no disagreement or variants as to what the text is, only the order and spelling of how it is said.
  - There is certainty on 99.5 percent of the Bible and .5 percent of disagreements, nothing effects doctrine, teachings about Jesus, salvation
  - Again it is word order and spelling of names.

**Even if we did not have the manuscript evidence to check and verify the authenticity of what we have in our laps, but we could actually reconstruct the entire New Testament just from quotes from the writings of the church fathers in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and third century**

- You may rest assured: the Bible, both the old and new testament you hold in your hand today is the inspired Word of God, just as God breathed it into existence to be

**Now after the Word of God was inspiration and duplication next the Bible went through a process called #3 - “Canonization”**

- **the word “Canon” means reed or rod and in context it means the standard of scripture**
  - the church had to decide which books were really inspired and which were not
  - this had to take place because of the many, many Christian writings that were developing
  - some of them were not so good

**Can you image if everything in the Christian book store today was claiming to be from God**

- How would you know the difference
  - So the Bible had to go through a process of canonization, deciding what was really scripture

**But understand the process**

- sometimes I think we have in our minds men sitting in a room, men we don't really know if they were in a bad mood at the time deciding what was accepted as the Word of God
  - but that is not true
  - most of the scripture was already universally accepted as the Word of God
  - they were just deciding what was not

**From the very beginning true scripture was recognized as that, the Word of God**

- Note the following examples of how Scripture was immediately recognized as the Word of God by the target audience.

**Scripture was immediately recognized as the Word of God by the target audience. #1 - Moses' writings were placed beside the Ark of the Covenant (Deut. 31:24-29).**

**#2 - Daniel, a contemporary of Jeremiah, regarded Jeremiah's prophetic writings as Scripture (Dan. 9:1-2 cf. Jer. 25:11).**

**#3 - Peter recognized Paul's writing as being on a par with the Old Testament Scriptures (2 Pet. 3:14-16).**

**Let's look at that last one**

**“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, 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.” – II Peter 3:15-16**

- Peter says what Paul is writing is scripture

**Now even though it was self evidence, the early church did have to meet and decide what was not scripture as certain documents would show up**

- some of them claiming to be scripture but teachings these totally contrary to the Word of God
  - so the tests the early church Fathers gave those New Testament books were

### **Tests for Canonization**

#### **#1 – Was the book recognized as scripture by the early church?**

- Paul letters, Peter’s letters – these were passed around and studied by the early church – read in the early churches – was the church saying –this is from God

#### **#2 – Was it written by a recognized leader in the early church?**

- was the author an apostle, a prophet, a recognized church leader?
  - Much of what we call the apocrypha, (**apocrypha – “not clear or in questions writings”**) and the pseudepigrapha (**Pseudepigrapha – ‘false writings’**) were rejected because the authorship wasn’t trusted

#### **#3 – Does the book aligned doctrinally with the rest of the Bible?**

- God does not believe one way one time and one the next – Gospel of Thomas 3:1-3 – Jesus kills a kid???
  - God is not the author of confusion

#### **#4 – Is it self evident?**

- when you read it, do you sense God was speaking to you

**Now, did this four step process make sure that every book that was of God made it into the Bible?**

- No – but what it did do was ensure the books that are in the Word of God, you can know without any doubt were inspired – God breathed

### **Now one last bit of history and that is how we got our English Bibles - #4 - Translation**

- the Bible was originally written by the men in the Word in either Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek
  - so how did we get from that to our English Bibles of today

**From the time of Christ until 1380 the only language the Bible was available in other than the original languages was Latin**

- but that began to change with a man by the name of **John Wycliffe** – he wanted the Bible to be the tongue of the common English people
  - this was not received well by the Catholic Church that in that time didn’t believe the people should have a Bible that they could read on their own
- The Pope was so infuriated by Wycliffe’s translation of the Bible into English that 44 years after Wycliffe had died, he ordered the bones to be dug-up, crushed, and scattered in the river!

**One of Wycliffe’s followers, **John Hus**, actively promoted Wycliffe’s ideas: that people should be permitted to read the Bible in their own language**

- for this belief Hus was burned at the stake in 1415, with Wycliffe’s manuscript Bibles used as kindling for the fire.
  - But the revolution could not be stopped

**William Tyndale holds the distinction of being the first man to ever print the New Testament in the English language.**

- Tyndale was a true scholar and a genius, so fluent in eight languages that it was said one would think any one of them to be his native tongue.

- Tyndale's translations of the Bible were burned as soon as the Bishop could confiscate them, but copies trickled through and actually ended up in the bedroom of King Henry VIII, which was probably the best thing to end up in the bedroom of King Henry VIII

**Today, there are only two known copies left of Tyndale's 1525-26 First Edition.**

- Ironically, Tyndale's biggest customer was the King's men, who would buy up every copy available to burn them... and Tyndale used their money to print even more!
  - In the end, Tyndale was caught: betrayed by an Englishman that he had befriended. Tyndale was incarcerated for 500 days before he was strangled and burned at the stake in 1536. Tyndale's last words were, "Oh Lord, open the King of England's eyes".
- This prayer would be answered just three years later in 1539, when King Henry VIII finally allowed, and even funded, the printing of an English Bible known as the "Great Bible"

**In 1539, Thomas Cranmer, not Krammer the Archbishop of Canterbury, hired Myles Coverdale at the request of King Henry VIII to publish the "Great Bible".** - It became the first English Bible authorized for public use, as it was distributed to every church, chained to the pulpit, and a reader was even provided so that the illiterate could hear the Word of God in plain English.

**Troubles continued for the English Version of the Bible during the reign of King Henry the VIII's daughter – Mary, who was a catholic and wanted England to return under Rome's oversight**

- but when **King James I** became King of England after Henry's other daughter Queen Elizabeth died, the version to end all other versions, so they said was authorized

**The King James Bible was the result of the combined effort of about fifty scholars.**

- They took into consideration: The Tyndale New Testament, The Coverdale Bible, The Matthews Bible, The Great Bible, The Geneva Bible, and even the Rheims New Testament. (the six English versions of the Bible to come before it) and spent 7 years painstakingly researching the Greek, Hebrew and English versions of the Bible to produce The King James version of the Bible
  - It is funny because when I was pastoring in Texas I would run into people who believed the King James Bible was the only Bible anyone should use
  - I had one guy tell me the King James Version was prophesied in the Old Testament – Psalm 12:6

**"The Words of the Lord are pure Words, like silver tried in the furnace of earth, purified seven times" – Psalm 12:6**

- you see the King James Version was the 7<sup>th</sup> English translation
  - I had even one guy tell me, if the King James was good enough for Jesus and Paul, it should be good enough for us

**I poke fun at those who don't realize the King James Version didn't exist until 1,600 years after Paul and Jesus**

- But really for over 200 years the King James version was the standard for English Translations
  - I today use the New King James Bible which is basically the same as the King James Bible without the the's and the thou's

**Now today we have numerous translations in English but they all basically come from one of two types of Greek Manuscripts**

- the King James and New King James version come from the Greek manuscripts known as the **Textus Receptus – the basis of the King James and New King**

## James Bibles

- all other versions come from Older manuscripts that were not available to the translators of the King James Bible, Known as **The Alexandrian Manuscripts – older and more numerous**

**Now personally I don't teach out of those versions based (I love, read and study from them) on the Alexandrian manuscripts because I am of the opinion that when it comes to manuscripts older and more numerous are not always better**

- now that sounds counter intuitive but consider the argument
  - these older manuscripts come from the region of Alexandria, Egypt
  - the problem with the ancient church in Alexandria is it was always the hot bed of heretical teaching – Gnosticism - no trinity, Jesus didn't really have a physical body – all originally came out of the church in Alexandria

**And so my wonder is – do we have older and more of the Alexandrian manuscripts because they were better or because they didn't get worn out because no one wanted to copy them as they did the Textus Receptus**

**You see If I have two books here (one worn out, one looking brand new) – which one does it look like I prefer**

- The one that is worn, which I will eventually have to throw out and get a newer one is my favorite
  - So this one will some day be older than my replaced version – but the reason it lasted was not because it was better, it was because I didn't use it

**I also question all those verses in your Bible that the Alexandrian says isn't in the original text**

- Great example is I John 5:7-8

**“For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.” – I John 5:7-8**

- Only the newer manuscripts (Textus receptus) have these words in Greek

**But my question is, why is it never a verse about the weather or what Paul was wearing**

- it always deals with essential doctrine
  - so does that mean you should get rid of your NIV, NAS Bibles - no way
  - the most important thing is that you read your Bible and pray every single day – and that you find a version that will help you do that

**But as a bible teacher I am far more comfortable with the New King James Version and so that is why I use the version I do, as many have asked**

- so now that I have bored you with 45 minutes of history, on how the Bible went from God to us, to English - we really still have not answered the question of why this book is different from every other religious book
  - are there any good reasons to believe it is inspired
  - for that you will have to come back next week

Inspiration, copy, canonization, translation

- ideas have consequences is good for next week intro when we start the Trinity