



“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (II Timothy 3:16).

The Sword of the Spirit

Central Truth: The inspired Word is the measure of the Holy Spirit's direction.

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“The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts binding, its histories true, and its decisions immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to nourish you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. It condemns all who trifle with its sacred contents and rewards those who study and obey it” (anonymous).

No wonder God commands, *“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success”* (Joshua 1:8).

“But,” someone objects, “I cannot understand the Bible. It is too mysterious and difficult for me.”

Not so! The Holy Spirit of God gave the Bible by inspiration. He is present with each believer to direct him in understanding the Bible. The Bible purposes to reveal God, not to hide Him. In the Bible is all one needs to know concerning doctrine and behavior. God leads His children by the Bible. “The inspired Word is the measure of the Holy Spirit's direction.”

I. AUTHORITY OF THE WORD

“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” (II Peter 1:19, 20).

“We have a more sure word of prophecy” (II Peter 1:19). That is a surprising statement. Peter has been discussing personal experience concerning Jesus Christ. He said, *“We...were eyewitnesses of his majesty....This voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount”* (II Peter 1:16, 18). Yet, the word of prophecy is *“more sure.”*

The clear statements of Holy Scripture carry greater authority and are more to be trusted than one's own personal experience of seeing, hearing, or touching. When personal experience contradicts the Bible, the Bible is the authority! That is amazing, isn't it?

“All his commandments are sure” (Psalm 111:7). Look at the whole scope of divine revelation and you will conclude, *“There hath not failed one word of all his good promise”* (I Kings 8:56).

What one does with the Word of God, he is doing with the God of the Word. To reject the Bible is to reject God. To obey the Bible is to obey God.

Judgment will surely come on the one who turns from the Bible. *“Thus saith the LORD...I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept his commandments”* (Amos 2:4). Jesus said, *“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”* (John 12:48). That is the authority of *“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”* (Ephesians 6:17).

II. SPIRITUALITY OF THE WORD

“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” (II Peter 1:20-21).

The Bible is the Word of God, not the words of man. It is a divine book, not a human book. To say it is not *“of any private interpretation”* means it is not to be understood by one's natural powers, interpreted by one's own mind, nor is it to be thought up by mortal man. It cannot be interpreted

by man because it did not come from man.

No prophetic teaching ever originated because some man willed to set forth a prophecy. God was involved. It was spiritual in its issue, in its preservation, and in its understanding today.

Thank God for the Holy Spirit whom He has given to be our Teacher. *“When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth”* (John 16:13). *“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit”* (I Corinthians 2:9, 10).

The Word is spiritual. Its Author, its Interpreter, and its Wielder is the Holy Spirit of God. It is *“the sword of the Spirit”* (Ephesians 6:17).

III. SOURCE OF THE WORD

How did the Bible come to us? Peter is careful to point out that it is no book of human origin. Instead, *“Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”* (II Peter 1:21). It was by the ministry of the Holy Spirit that the Bible came to be.

The Holy Spirit *“moved”* men to write the Scripture. That verb means they were “under the influence,” “carried away,” and “impelled” by the Holy Spirit. The point is that God was in full control when the Scriptures were given.

Not the prophetic scriptures only, of which Peter wrote, but *“all scripture is given by inspiration of God”* (II Timothy 3:16). Each and every verse, the whole of Holy Writ, has God as its author.

The miracle of inspiration is that men wrote according to their own vocabulary and style, but the result was the Word of God rather than the words of men. *“The word of the LORD came expressly”* upon a prophet (Ezekiel 1:3) saying, *“Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee”* (Jeremiah 36:2). Thus *“the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables”* (Exodus 32:16).

IV. SIMPLICITY OF THE WORD

“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (II Timothy 3:15).

No person will ever understand all that is in the Bible. It is beyond the scope of human comprehension. But every person can understand all he

needs to know about the Bible.

“From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures,” Paul wrote to Timothy (II Timothy 3:15). That word *“child”* means babe, infant, one in early childhood. Timothy's parents (particularly his godly mother and grandmother, II Timothy 1:5) gave much time to instructing him in Bible teaching when he was still a very small child. And he understood much of what was taught. He understood enough that he came to personal faith in Jesus when he reached the age of responsibility. Many things which are beyond “the wise and prudent” have been revealed to *“babes”* (Matthew 11:25). Blessed is the child who is made familiar with the Bible; he will come to faith. Why, then, should any adult complain that he cannot understand the Bible? Let one be willing to obey the Word and he will come to know the Word (John 7:17).

V. MINISTRY OF THE WORD

“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 perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (II Timothy 3:16, 17).

The text speaks of four specific applications and one great result which come from exposure to the Word of God.

“Doctrine” means “teaching.” The same word can be used to refer to the act of teaching or to the truth taught. The text says profit always comes when the truth of the Bible is taught.

“Reproof” means “refuting error” by revealing its nature and setting forth the truth. The true meaning of things is set forth by Holy Scripture as it refutes error.

“Correction” means “setting straight.” It suggests teaching which sets one on the right way with right beliefs.

“Instruction in righteousness” means “training in the right way,” “instruction in right doing and good living.”

The Bible is given to men for the practical purposes of setting forth truth which would refute error with the result that a straight course would be set as people are trained in right living.

What a blessed ministry! What are the end results of Bible instruction? Verse 17 reports the man of God is made adequate and perfectly fitted at every point being thoroughly equipped for every good work which Christian ministry involves. What a blessed ministry for the Word of God!

VI. PURITY OF THE WORD

“The words of Agur the son of Jakeh. even the prophecy: the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal. Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy. Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell? Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him” (Proverbs 30:1-5).

“Every word of God is pure” (Proverbs 30:5). That means there is nothing in the Word of God which adulterates, taints, or defiles it. It is perfect and faultless. That is the doctrine of the infallibility of the Scripture. Every word of God is perfect truth without mixture of error.

The pure Word of God makes pure those who receive it. *“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word”* (Psalm 119:9). Jesus said He sanctifies and cleanses His church *“with the washing of water by the word”* (Ephesians 5:26). And the same is effected in the individual believer. *“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you”* (John 15:3). It can be said of each Christian. *“Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit”* (I Peter 1:22). The person who is having problems with personal purity needs to approach the Word of God and live by it.

VII. INTEGRITY OF THE WORD

“Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Proverbs 30:6).

The revelation of God in the Bible is final and complete. It needs no “new revelations” or additions to its contents. It is *“that which is perfect”* which has come and done away with all partial revelations which had gone before (I Corinthians 13:10).

To tamper with the Word of God, adding to it or taking away portions of it, is to invite the judgment of God. In the Old Testament, God commands, *“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God”* (Deuteronomy 4:2). *“What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it”* (Deuteronomy 12:32).

The New Testament revelation is guarded by a solemn warning from God. *“If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book”* (Revelation 22:18, 19).

The Bible is a holy book which is sacred to God. He guards it as He guards His own integrity. There is no need to change it. Just read it, study it, know it, and obey it. The Bible is never improved by man's attempts.

Look back over the major points of these comments. Those statements are made regarding your Bible. Take advantage of the opportunity you have to meet God in His Word each day. There is no substitute for Bible study. It is *“the sword of the Spirit”* (Ephesians 6:17) by which you can fight the good fight of faith.

“Thy word is very pure: therefore, thy servant loveth it” (Psalm 119:140).

Questions

1. How would you describe the Bible to one not acquainted with it?
2. Why does the Bible have authority over you?
3. What does II Peter 1:20 mean to you?
4. What does II Timothy 3:16 mean?
5. What does II Timothy 3:15 teach you?
6. What is the purpose of the Bible according to II Timothy 3:16?
7. How does the Bible qualify one to serve (II Timothy 3:17)?
8. How do we know the Bible is reliable today?
9. In what way is the Bible “the sword of the Spirit”?
10. How can you put this study into practical application in your life?