

WORD OF GOD

I. OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

From our previous studies, what is the basic distinction between the Old and New Testament?

Hebrews 9:15-17

When did the new covenant or New Testament come into effect?

Observations. Now that Christ has come, we are no longer under the Old Testament. We learn about God and the history of Him bringing His Son through the Jews to save the world in the Old Testament. However, the Old Testament is fulfilled with the coming of Christ who brings us a better covenant of grace. This is what the New Testament is all about. (Additional verses on the Old Law if needed: Galatians 3:19-25; Acts 13:38-39; Romans 7:1-6; Romans 8:1-4; Hebrews 8:6-13; Hebrews 10:9-10; John 1:17)



II. THE SCRIPTURES AND GOD

II Timothy 3:16-17

What does it mean that scripture is “God breathed?”

What does it mean that the word of God is useful?

Give examples of some areas of life that the Scripture equips us for good works.

Observations. All Scripture is inspired or comes to us from God. It is not simply to be read but it is to be applied to our lives. It will make a difference at work, with friends, in a marriage, with parents, with children, and at school. It gives financial insight and most of all the word of God instructs us on how to live for God. Remember medicine that is not taken is of no value.



During the last night Jesus has with his apostles he knows and communicates that they will need more information than they could handle at the time. Read John 16:12-15.

What are the links between God the Father and the apostles concerning the words of God?

If you were one of Jesus’ apostles what would encourage you from these statements of Jesus? (all truth, the Father communicates through Jesus and the Spirit, the apostles will know what God wants them to do and teach, etc.)

Observations. Jesus teaches that Scripture originates with the Father, is committed to Jesus, and is communicated to the apostles through the Holy Spirit. God is active at every communication point.

II Peter 1:20-21

Though the Bible has many writers how many authors does it have?

Who is the author?

From the author's perspective how many interpretations are there to be?

Our goal should be to determine God's interpretation. How can we do that?

What is the Spirit's role in revealing Scripture?

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Thanks to Deb Strubel (See John 15:1-6)

11-01-2000

I DON'T THINK THAT IS WHAT JESUS HAD IN MIND IN HIS TEACHINGS ON BEING FRUITFUL

Observations. No Scripture is the prophet's own interpretation (not made up by prophets nor is it open to private interpretation). The Bible is not up for all kinds of interpretation. It is not interpreting the Bible that is the problem (as a rule) but the fact people are trained from a perspective different from Scripture or in religious traditions or by their own personal feelings. The concept of one Author (God) should indicate there is one interpretation from the author's perspective (Luke 21:15 points out that there would be a consistent message, in other words, no contradictions even when the apostles would be persecuted). The Holy Spirit inspired the men who wrote the books of the Bible. (Other Scriptures to look at include: I Thess. 2:13 and 2 Peter 3:13-16 identifying Paul's writings as Scripture)

Hebrews 4:12-13

How is it that the word of God is living and active rather than being a "dead" book?

Why would the Scriptures be referred to as a sharp double-edged sword?

What do you think God would be trying to cut out of our lives?

Observations. The Word of God is living and active. It is not outdated or irrelevant - but powerful and meaningful to our lives TODAY because man has not changed, just our technology. The Word cuts (hurts) - but pain is good in that it is a warning to us. People would not normally go in for surgery even if it were free. But if a person knew they had a malignant brain tumor, they would go for surgery in order to save their life. The Word cuts like a scalpel. It is good to be cut by the Word of God because it cuts out the bad. When you read a passage of Scripture that convicts (cuts) it does NOT mean something bad is happening. It is cutting out the sin from our lives. Sin, like cancer, is ultimately destructive if it is not removed.



Review:

What is God doing by giving us the Bible or Scripture?

III. Response to the Word of God

I Timothy 4:15-16

What does Paul tell Timothy to watch closely? What is “life?” What is “doctrine?”

Which is more important, life or doctrine? Why?

Who does your life and belief influence?

Observations. Life (how you live) and doctrine (what you believe) are inseparable. The problem is people tend to emphasize one over the other. Neither life nor doctrine is more important. It would be like trying to fly an airplane with only one wing. Only having life or doctrine right will lead to disaster. It is important to learn, live and teach the right doctrine to save yourself and those who hear and watch you.



Acts 17:10–12

List some things the Bereans did to be described as having “noble character?”

How would someone show that they accept the word with eagerness?

Why is it important that they checked out what Paul was teaching?

What impact did the word have on some of the Bereans?

Observations. A mark of noble character is an “eagerness” to receive the Word of God. Note the fact that the Bereans examined what Paul said to see if it was true. We need to respect religious leaders, but it is important to examine from the Bible to see if what is being taught is true. They studied the Scriptures every day. These people were not even Christians yet but they daily searched the Scriptures. Their example calls us to get into the Word of God each day. This search led them to believe. They were not studying the Bible just to learn new things but to gather enough information to make a decision about following God. Note: It is hearing Scripture that will bring someone to the point of faith, Romans 10:17.

Jesus is concluding what is called “The Sermon on the Mount” and shares the following. Read Matthew 7:21-23.

How serious is Jesus about this concept of needing to obey the will of God?

Why might someone think they were right with God even though they were disobeying Scripture?

What is Jesus saying to you in this text?

What do you understand God is calling you to understand from these verses?

Will each of us determine to surrender to God and his word as our standard? YES or NO

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION DEALING WITH MAN'S TRADITIONS

Matthew 15:1 - 14

Traditions of the Elders - The Jews believed that Moses was also given an oral law by God and that this oral law had the same authority as the written Word. The washing of hands as a religious act was not commanded in Scripture.

Honor - not only means to respect but also to support with money (if the need should arise).

Gift devoted to God - a person could declare that all their possessions belonged to God (even though a person still had full use and control over them), and thus could claim they had nothing to give his father or mother.

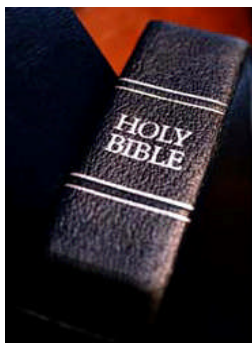


These verses present a basic problem throughout religious history: What should be a Christian's response to the traditions of men in religion (that which is not taught in the Bible)?

What are the traditions that upset Jesus? (The traditions that are taught as if they were the Word of God, of equal authority. What are some of these traditions today?)

How bad is it to worship in traditions of men? (1) Traditions nullify the Word of God. (2) Jesus addresses those who did so as hypocrites. (3) It is only paying lip service to God. (4) Their hearts are far from God. (5) They worship in vain. (What does it mean to worship in vain?)

Jesus indicates in verses 13 and 14 that the solution to the problem of being involved in a situation where traditions are nullifying the word of God is to leave those religious leaders whom are teaching and enforcing these traditions. Jesus calls them blind guides. When someone leaves these traditions they then need to begin to follow Jesus and his word.



II Timothy 4:1 - 4

The reality is that there will be false teachers because not everyone will like what the Word of God says. Part of this rejection will lie in the fact that Scripture calls us to change and be holy before God. Therefore some reject the truth because it may disagree with what they want. The result is that people will turn away from the truth of God's word and will turn to people who will tell them what they WANT to hear. God, through the apostle Paul in his last letter calls us to submit to Scripture even if we do not like what it says.