

WORD OF GOD

Bible, Scripture, Sacred Writings, Sword of the Spirit

Let him who has My word speak My word in truth. What does straw have in common with grain?” declares the Lord.

“Is not My word like fire?” declares the Lord, “and like a hammer which shatters a rock?”

(Jeremiah 23:28, 29)

. . . the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

(2 Timothy 3:15–17)

The Word of God is our spiritual food. We need to “feed” on it, so we can grow and be established. We read the Word of God to get to know the Author—God, our Father. Beloved, we are truly blessed, for we have the written Word of God available to us, as well as the living Word—Jesus—within us. Jesus is the foundation of our faith.

For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

(1 Corinthians 3:11)

The world is ever changing and men’s teachings are full of errors. We need to know the truth, for only then can we recognize error. Knowing the truth protects us from false teachings. People’s traditions and our own preconceived ideas and beliefs are great enemies of the truth as well. Without personal relationship with Jesus Christ, we cannot know truth.

Jesus quoted the Scriptures, thus testifying to the truth of the Scriptures. He also told His disciples,

“If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;

and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

(John 8:31, 32)

Everything that comes to our minds has to be sifted through the Word of God—through the message of grace. The Bible is our guideline for life. It is written for our benefit.

I can honestly say that nothing excites me more than God's "love letters"—the Bible. And since Jesus is the Word of God (the gospel of John, chapter one), and He is alive, the Bible is alive (Hebrews 4:12). No wonder it is so exciting! Every time I read my Bible, God reveals to me something new about Himself. My goal as a Christian is to get to know God, and to fully grasp the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, so I may be filled up to all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:19). For it is the grace and love of God flowing into our lives that motivates us toward godly living.

We love, because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). Not understanding this important truth of God's unconditional love and His total forgiveness will hinder us in loving and forgiving others in the same way.

One thing I had to learn was to rely on the Holy Spirit for my understanding of God's Word, realizing that God is spirit and His Word has to be discerned spiritually. Ponder this verse:

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

(1 Corinthians 2:14)

We have to let the Holy Spirit teach us, and He will guide us into all truth (John 16:13).

And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

(1 John 2:27)

All the confusion and all the errors among Christians are the results of our interpretation of the Word of God apart from the Holy Spirit. Yes, we could be true believers and still read God's Word without relying on the Holy Spirit. That is why we have so many denominations. Among believers who gained knowledge of the Word of God through the teaching of the Holy Spirit is unity. There is only one truth. Truth is what we should be seeking all the time, and Jesus said that He is the Truth (John 14:6).

I accepted the Bible by faith as the Word of God from the very beginning. In my reasoning I came to the conclusion that if God is who He said He is, He is, without a doubt, able to preserve His Word. That settled the issue about the validity of the Bible for me. I read and read and pondered and wondered, and I began to learn about God. In His Word, God has been revealing to me His character and His dealings with people from the beginning.

I learned about myself, why I am here, and much more. Everything I need to know for life and how to experience the abundant life Jesus promised is at my "fingertips." Nobody had to tell me to read my Bible. I was like a sponge, soaking it all in. I clearly remember the statement I made the first time I opened the Bible: "This is the book I have

been waiting for all my life!” I was thirty-six years old at that time. All it took for me to make this statement was to read first few chapters of the gospel of John. My heart was ready for Jesus.

It was in my Bible that I learned about Jesus Christ and God’s plan of salvation, and eventually asked Jesus to come into my heart and be my Lord and Savior.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”

(Romans 1:16, 17)

When I received Jesus, I received everything: God’s total forgiveness, eternal life, and new identity—child of God, just to name a few truths.

The Scriptures are divided into two parts:

1. The Old Testament (covenant)
2. The New Testament (covenant)

The Old Testament records God’s dealings with Israel on the basis of the covenant which was given through Moses. The New Testament records God’s dealings with humanity through Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures consist of sixty-six books, thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament. They were written by at least forty different writers, from kings to fishermen, in a span of about 1,600 years. All the books are in agreement. Supernatural, isn’t it?

If you come across some verses that sound contradictory, just keep on reading. There is explanation for everything. It takes time to see spiritual truths through God’s eyes. Keep in mind that God’s kingdom is not of this world. We have to learn to think differently—God’s way. Sift the difficult verses through the message of grace. Stick with what you know for sure. Beloved, don’t take verses out of context, and start a “new doctrine,” but read the whole letter and understand the Word of God in its fullness.

The Old Testament can be divided into three parts:

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| 1. Historical books | Genesis to Esther |
| 2. Poetic books | Job to Song of Solomon |
| 3. Prophetic books | Isaiah to Malachi |

The New Testament consists of four parts:

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| 1. Gospels | Matthew to John |
| 2. Historical | Acts |
| 3. Epistles | Romans to Jude |
| 4. Prophecy | Revelation |

What could be confusing through this division is a lack of understanding that the New Testament (covenant) didn't take effect until the death of Jesus. The book of Hebrews, chapter nine, clearly explains this truth.

For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it.

For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.

(Hebrews 9:16, 17)

Jesus was born under the Law (Galatians 4:4) and spent His entire life under the Old Testament. In His life He fulfilled the Old Testament, the Law—He lived by perfect love. His death ushered in the New Testament.

The Cross and the Resurrection are the dividing line in the history of humanity: before the Cross—the Old Testament, and after the Cross—the New Testament. To grasp this important truth is of paramount importance. Let me give you a couple of examples:

When Jesus is teaching His disciples how to pray, He is heading for the Cross. **Sins are not yet forgiven.** The forgiveness was accomplished on the Cross. The verses, which **we call** the “Lord’s Prayer” reflect the Old Testament attitude.

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. . . .

For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

(Matthew 6:12, 14, 15)

Believers Have Forgiveness

The sin issue was settled on the cross. Sins are now forgiven. Jesus—the Lamb of God—**took away** the sin of the world (John 1:29). He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Hebrews 9:26). The forgiveness is in Him. If we have Jesus, we have forgiveness for our sins. We, the New Testament believers don't ask God for forgiveness, instead, we thank Him for His forgiveness. Thank you Jesus!

This is the New Testament attitude about forgiving:

And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as **God in Christ also has forgiven you.**

(Ephesians 4:32)

. . . bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as **the Lord forgave you**, so also should you.

(Colossians 3:13)

If you are one of those people who believe that God **forgave** your sins on the cross, and also believe that if you confess your sins and ask God for forgiveness, He **will** forgive you, I would like you to go to your Bible and ask God to teach you about His forgiveness. You may believe both of these statements, but since they are contradictory, you can put your faith only in one or the other. You either put your faith in the truth that you are a forgiven person, and you rest in it (it will change your Christian walk), or you put your faith in the error and keep asking God for something He has already done. (Read chapter “Forgiveness.”) Brothers and sisters, we have to think everything through with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. To understand the total forgiveness of God is of a supreme importance.

Many of us ignore all the Scripture verses about our total forgiveness in Jesus Christ, and hang on 1 John 1:9. But even this verse doesn’t say, “Confess your sins and ask God for forgiveness.” Right? We have to understand that in the first chapter of his letter John is addressing the unbelieving Gnostics who had begun to make inroads among churches in his days, claiming that they had no sin. John identifies with them (writers commonly identify themselves with their readers) and says,

“If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

(1 John 1:8)

Contrast: The believers have the truth in them forever (2 John 1:2).

It is the unbelievers who need to realize that they are sinful in the eyes of God and turn to Jesus for salvation. When they do, the forgiveness of sins will apply to them. “He is faithful and righteous to have forgiven our sins and to have cleansed us from all unrighteousness” is literal Greek translation. Whoever has Jesus indwelling him or her is forgiven. The one who does not have Jesus will die in his sins (John 8:24). Just because a lot of people believe something and teach it does not guarantee that it is God’s truth. The forgiveness issue is a perfect example. Don’t ever put any person on pedestal.

Believers Live Under the New Testament

The entire Bible is the Word of God, but not everything is applicable to us. What sense would it make for us to pray like King David did in Psalm 51:11 when he asked God not to take away the Holy Spirit from him. Absolutely none. King David lived under the Old Testament, when the Holy Spirit came upon people only for a certain time to enable them to do something for God’s purpose, and God could take the Spirit away whenever He chose to. Contrast: Under the New Testament every believer is immediately and permanently indwelled by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit seals us for eternity. Thank you Jesus!

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,

who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

(Ephesians 1:13, 14)

According to the Scriptures, whoever doesn't have the Holy Spirit doesn't belong to God.

However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. **But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.**

(Romans 8:9)

Law and Grace

Essential for understanding the Word of God is to fully grasp not just that in Christ we are forgiven, but also comprehend the difference between law and grace. (Read chapters "Law" and "Grace.") If we don't understand these central truths, confusion may set in, and so often, instead of going to God for the answers, we rely on our own understanding, or we go to others for explanation. We read the notes on the bottom of our Bible—other person's opinions, and we may come to a conclusion based upon that. So often we assume "things" without pondering them and letting the Holy Spirit teach us.

Assumption Is a Serious Problem

For example: I have noticed that a lot of believers think that the Bible is written only to believers. But that is an error. The Word of God is for *all* people. It is able to give unbelievers the wisdom that leads to salvation (2 Timothy 3:15).

Not to understand the truth that the Word of God is written for all people will lead us to all kinds of errors. Great example is the first chapter of 1 John, mentioned in the previous pages.

The book of Acts is a historical book, a book of transition. We have to keep that in mind as well.

Beloved, we have to learn to meditate (think everything through with the guidance of the Holy Spirit) on the Word of God. We have to keep in mind God's words through His prophet Isaiah:

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord.

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts."

(Isaiah 55:8, 9)

We have the mind of Christ. Let us use it!

(1 Corinthians 2:16)