

Foundations for the Study of God's Word. For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Heb 4:12 NASB) All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness. (2 Tim 3:16 NASB) The *sum* of thy word is **Truth**; And every one of thy righteous ordinances endures for ever. (Psa119:160 NASB)

**def-i-ni-tions<sup>©</sup>** is dedicated to the Truth and meaning of Biblical words and precepts!

## What is the Bible?

It seems like a simple question until you examine the results of those who profess Christianity. The world says that the Bible is just a great work of literature, mostly fiction. They won't claim it's historical accuracy or it's moral value. They have been successful in removing prayer from schools, and the Ten Commandments from public places. The Christian Church professes that the Bible is our guide book that connects us to God, but when you compare the life styles of the Church with the world there are getting to be very few perceivable differences. The divorce rate within the Church is close to that of the world. The Church has a very high rate of abortions. The Church is assimilating into the world's entertainment and life styles. The Church is more and more accepting unmarried 'partnerships', and it is currently estimated that up to 40% of the Church body regularly visits porn sites on the internet. While the Bible teaches a separate life for the Christian, the Church is looking more and more like the world. So let's take a closer look at 'What is the Bible'.

**Word, Bible – Logos [G3056]** The Logos [or, Word] of God is *not* the name of an object, but an expression of thought, not our thoughts, but from God Himself –

**And this is where the miracle begins.**

*...and that from childhood you have known 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; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*<sup>1</sup>

*For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*<sup>2</sup>

The Word created all things from nothing<sup>3</sup>. The Word will cast *all* evil into hell at the end of time and set eternity onto a never ending journey<sup>4</sup>. The Word has accurately described the past – and has accurately predicted the future. It describes the fallen nature of man and the forgiveness and salvation that is available to all men. All problems are directly related to sin and one day sin will cease to exist. But until that day Jesus gave us the 'keys to the kingdom of God' so that we can be overcomers. It is up to us to 'choose' to take those keys.<sup>5</sup> The word 'keys' is plural meaning there is more than one key. The first key is 'choosing' to [repent and turn from sin]. I bracketed that phrase to emphasize that repentance and turning from sin are two actions that cannot be separated. You cannot only repent and continue sinning to achieve God's forgiveness. Also, that repentance and turning from sin is a continual process. The concept of choice for the Christian life will be covered later, but it is important to recognize at this point that as we mature in Christ and the sanctification process, that when we study the Word and get to know the great price that was paid for our salvation, sin will become more and more distasteful, and we will want to be continually cleansed from the effects of our fallen nature.

## More than a set of rules

The Word of God is more than a set of rules – it is the very expression of God's heart and love for His creation. Every word is there for a purpose and it is there for our good and not for our harm<sup>6</sup>. He desires that

no man should perish and He has made available to all, the opportunity to inherit eternal life<sup>7</sup>. God exempts no one from salvation, but man, and man alone *chooses* to accept or reject God's call. Man alone *chooses* to be obedient or disobedient to God's instructions.

You've heard the expression "I can't see the forest for all the tress". Well that's how we get when reading the Word unless we can step back and see what God is trying to tell us. Just a few statistics about the Bible: there are 66 books written by 40 authors over approximately 2,000 years. In those 66 books there are 1,189 chapters and 31,875 verses. That's a lot of information and it is easy to see why we can lose perspective at times. You cannot turn to one chapter in the Bible and learn all there is to know about salvation. Sin isn't discussed in just one chapter. Prophecy about the second return of Christ is so important to the Believer that discussion on this subject starts in Genesis and it doesn't stop until the end of the Book of Revelation. Psalms 119.160 says that "**The sum of Your word is truth**". All scripture is inspired for our doctrine in 2 Timothy 3.15-17.

I would like to give you a different way to digest all this information. I like to separate the Bible into four important divisions. Jesus declared that He was the 'First and the Last' the 'Alpha and Omega', so two important divisions are the first two chapters of Genesis and the last two chapters of Revelation. I try to urge everyone to read and re-read those four chapters to get a fresh perspective of God's heart. These chapters deal with God's intentions for man without our sin nature. The first two chapters of course deal with the miracle of creation. Before God created man He created everything man would need for existence. God made our bodies to last forever. He provided all that we need for food and pleasure in a perfect environment. He gave only one command on what not to do. It was paradise, heaven on earth.

In the last two chapters of the book of Revelation we have the promise of restoration back to heaven on earth. The last two chapters tell us that sin will be no more. No more tears. No more death and sickness. Time will cease to exist and eternity will begin. God is currently preparing a place for us

that is unimaginable. And in God's Love, He also gives us some warnings on how to avoid missing all that He has for us. In the first two chapters of Genesis, He warned that disobedience would bring death<sup>8</sup> to this perfect garden. In the last two chapters of Revelation, He gives two warnings<sup>9</sup> that those who are disobedient will not be there.

The third major division, all the books and chapters that occur after the first two of Genesis and prior to the last two of Revelation, reveal God's never ending love for His creation and His attempts and provision for restoration back into fellowship with Him. In chapter three of Genesis, sin and the consequences of sin, entered man<sup>10</sup>. Man *choose* to disobey the instruction of God, and man **must choose daily**<sup>11</sup> to go back into fellowship with Him and to stay in fellowship with Him. Sin, from the very first act of disobedience, separates us from God<sup>12</sup>. The biggest myth today is the lie that when we sin, it doesn't affect anyone else. How many times have you heard in the news that 'what we do in private is our business'? "What happens in Las Vegas stays in Las Vegas". Well Adam proved that wrong because there was only him and Eve at that time, and their sin has affected every person since. Sin is NEVER private. Not only that, but the Bible says that when we sin it not only affects many around us, but more importantly, we sin against God Himself<sup>13</sup>.

The fourth division deals with the provision of God for our restoration. God lowered Himself to become man, so that He could be tempted in all points just as we are.<sup>14</sup> God had to become man because God cannot die, and there had to be a perfect sacrifice to pay for our sins against Him. So God became Jesus the Christ, who is the living Word. I love the Book of Hebrews. I have studied it several times. It reminds me of a great courtroom setting where we are in a pre-trial setting, and the attorney is presenting closing arguments to what God did for us. He goes into great detail documenting who Jesus Christ is, that He is the perfect Lamb of God that came to be a perfect sacrifice for our sins. He is better than man, better than angels, better than earthly priests. The attorney goes on to say the Jesus is ever faithful, that He will lead us into perfect rest and forgive-

ness of sins. "...how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"<sup>15</sup> "For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified".<sup>16</sup> God in His Word has warned us that there is a future judgment day.<sup>17</sup> That attorney, in my mind, is none other than the Holy Spirit Himself talking directly to us both physically through the Word, and spiritually through our spirit confirming what God has to say to us.

The Book of Hebrews is the perfect example of the importance of the Logos (Word) in our daily life. We need to understand that the writer of the Book of Hebrews was addressing Jews who had converted from Judaism to Christianity and because of pressures from Orthodox Judaism and the world's rejection of Christ and the persecution of Christians, they were contemplating the rejection of Jesus as their Savior, and going back under the law. This book is both about our faith and more importantly how *choices* affect our faith and the consequences of our choices. The Jews of the 1<sup>st</sup> century Church had thoughts of going back under the law - that is apostasy. Apostasy is defined as 'rejecting and turning away from your religious belief'. There is an important fact about apostasy that is never talked about much. And that is that apostasy does *not* all of a sudden happen. People who reject their religious beliefs do not just wake up one morning and say "I am changing my belief". Rejecting God happens very subtly. That is why we are told to "hold fast our confidence"<sup>18</sup> and to "*Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God*".<sup>19</sup> There are three common ways that we grow cold in our relationship with God. First we start getting very busy with 'important' things. This leads to being too tired to spend time in the Word, and then we are completely back to walking in the flesh to take care of the needs of this life. The second very common way that we grow cold in our relationship with God is that we are not disciplined and trained to understand the precepts of the Word and the plans that God has for our new life. Every Christian, young or old, should be involved in an on-going discipleship program in addition to regular Sunday wor-

ship. The third way that we have to grow cold is by re-defining the definitions of scripture. God's Truth is a standard that applies to all at all times. Yet today, I hear people saying that they reserve the 'right' to interpret the Bible by their own standards. Some would rather believe that science or philosophy has more insight than God's Word. God says that sex outside of marriage between a man and a woman is sin, yet today we have whole denominations re-defining the inspired Word to fit their own sinful ways.

Today we have a similar situation as the 1<sup>st</sup> century Jews, with the pressures of the worldly materialist views, heavy debt and being overly involved in activities for our families. While there has always been persecution of the Christians in 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries, we in America have not really experienced persecution, until recently. Because of the rise and threats of Islam, political correctness, the ACLU, the public education system, the liberal news media, and decisions by our courts to remove God from public view, the world is becoming more and more vocal in its disdain for anything to do with Jesus Christ and the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We are beginning to face that persecution Jesus talked about in Matthew 5.11-12. The world is trying to force us to re-define our values and belief systems and it is succeeding at an alarming rate. And unless the Church becomes well established in the Word, people will easily succumb to the pressures. As we have already established that the Church is looking more and more like the world because of its neglect of the Word. But the writer of Hebrews gives us this important warning;

*"For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?"* Hebrews 2:1-3 NASB

With today's political and religious climate, this is NOT the time to relax our understanding of the Word and our relationship with God. This is the time to "*Be dili-*

*gent(Study) to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth."* 2 Timothy 2:15 NASB

I am reminded of a personal situation we had a number of years ago, when our area in Northern California was experiencing a major fire that was promoted by 70 mph winds. It was hot and very dry. Hundreds of homes and structures had been destroyed, and the fire was headed right for our house. The Sheriff came to our house and warned us to evacuate because the fire was advancing so rapidly. Because we wanted to take every precaution of saving our home and belongings, we said that we would leave 'when we saw the flames'. Well we went to work trying to wet everything down the best we could, but to our dismay, the fire had melted so many plastic water pipes in the area, that we had very little water pressure. Then all of a sudden we saw the flames, and they were headed directly for our house. They were 15 to 20 feet high and moving rapidly. The fire reached our fence within 100 feet of our house, and decided to take a more Southerly direction, so it burned along our fence and the ten acres directly behind us roared with fire and in less than 5 minutes it had completely burned and then proceeded a little further and completely burned a house just south of us.

The point I want to make with this story is that we *neglected* the warning to evacuate. In this case it turned out for our good, but for hundreds, it was disaster. We, in the Church, cannot afford the same neglect to the warnings God has placed in His Word to us. That final day is coming and God said "*For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.*" (1 Thessalonians 5:2 NASB) There won't be anyone knocking on your door 5 minutes before the final day. And there won't be any escape if "we neglect" the warnings. We have to establish the fact that God's Word is Truth and is both a warning and salvation to us – God said what He meant to say, and He means what He says.

## The Natural Man cannot heed God's Warnings

I say all of this to answer the questions "If the Church is reading the Word, then why don't we have different results?" Why are fewer Christians reading the Bible today? The answer is that when the natural man reads the *Logos* of God, he is going to read words and content that appears like any other book of literature. It will be information and not connection to the Holy Spirit. God said "*the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" (1 Corinthians 2:14 KJV) Why do you suppose that so many Christians can read the Word, and assume that he has done his daily duty to God, but does not exhibit any change in his life? Because we usually try to stick our devotion time into the midst of all our other problems and pressures, and by doing that, we are just reading.

I find that many people, who profess Christianity, regard their devotional time as optional, or out of guilt. We must redefine our time spent with God as an act of obedience that comes out of our love for Him. When we become Christians, The Holy Spirit begins a process of filling us with the love of Jesus Christ. And the more time we spend with God, loving Him and hungering and thirsting for His righteousness, the more our love for Him grows. Our faith and love comes by being in the Word.<sup>20</sup> Second, we must step out of the natural mind and 'put on' the mind of Christ.<sup>21</sup> We do that by making the choice to be filled with the Spirit. We are commanded to be 'Filled with the Spirit'<sup>22</sup> and to be "*continually filled*",<sup>23</sup> and to renew our minds daily.<sup>24</sup> When we are filled with the Holy Spirit<sup>25</sup> then the Holy Spirit will reveal the Word of Truth to us<sup>26</sup> and direct our paths.

Many Christians think that being filled with the Spirit is automatic, but the Scriptures clearly tell us that it is a choice that we must make. And that choice should not be limited to our devotion time. We have access to the Throne of God on demand, any time we want, 24/7, we can go to God. We have the opportunity to take the benefits of being

filled with the Spirit with us into our job, our family, and our recreation time. We do it by conscientiously making the decision to allow the Holy Spirit to train us, and to guide our footsteps throughout the day. The god of this world is out to deceive us. He is after our children, our families, our churches. This is not the time to neglect our time in the Word. The Bible is our *only* standard of Truth. It is alive and active and we must choose to allow it to be alive in our life. It will teach us every good thing. It will reproof us of error. It will correct our thinking. It will train us in righteousness; so that we may be adequately equipped for every good work that God has for us.

My prayer is that as you choose to be led by the Spirit, that He will guide you into a fuller knowledge of Him and that what ever your hand finds to do, that you do it as unto the Lord and that it will be blessed beyond measure.

We invite you to visit our website for additional articles on preserving the Definitions of the Word of God.

[www.mark4.com](http://www.mark4.com)

Comments are welcome: email to:  
[response@mark4.com](mailto:response@mark4.com)

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#### Endnote References

- <sup>1</sup> 2 Timothy 3:15-17 NASB
- <sup>2</sup> Hebrews 4:12 NASB
- <sup>3</sup> John 1.1-3Heb 11.3
- <sup>4</sup> Revelation 21 & 22
- <sup>5</sup> Matthew 16.19
- <sup>6</sup> Jeremiah 29.11
- <sup>7</sup> John 3.16; 2 Peter 3.9
- <sup>8</sup> Genesis 2.17
- <sup>9</sup> Revelation 21.8; 22.15
- <sup>10</sup> Genesis 3; Romans 5.12
- <sup>11</sup> Deuteronomy 30.19; Joshua 24.15
- <sup>12</sup> Romans 6.23; 8.13; 1 Corinthians 6.9; Ephesians 5.6
- <sup>13</sup> 1Thessalonians 4.8; Luke 10.16; Genesis 39.9; Deut 20.18; Jeremiah 16.10; 1 John 3.8
- <sup>14</sup> Hebrews 4.15
- <sup>15</sup> Hebrews 9:14 NASB
- <sup>16</sup> Hebrews 10:14 NASB
- <sup>17</sup> Matthew 12.36; Roman 2.5; 2 Peter 2.9
- <sup>18</sup> Hebrews 3.6
- <sup>19</sup> Hebrews 3.12
- <sup>20</sup> Romans 10.17
- <sup>21</sup> 1 Corinthians 2.16; 1 Corinthians 1.10; Eph 4.24; 6.11; Col chapter 3
- <sup>22</sup> Ephesians 5.18
- <sup>23</sup> Acts 13.52
- <sup>24</sup> Romans 12.1-2
- <sup>25</sup> Acts 4.8; 4.31; 13.52; Ephesians 5.18
- <sup>26</sup> 1 Corinthians 2.9-13