

Women & More

It is Written!

October 24, 2013

We are talking about God's Word—the Bible! Before it was ever once preached or taught, it was written: The Divine Author inspired every word, and directed 40 humans over 1,400 years to pen exactly what He wanted recorded. *The Bible is the only Book whose Author is always present when it is read.* Beat that!

And God knows how to tell a story! Genesis 1:1 grabs us with “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,*” and does it again in John 1:1 “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” Wow...what a beginning! We learn that God already **was** in the beginning and that Jesus was the *Word* of God!

God's own finger has written **1) on tablets of stone**, the Ten Commandments—twice—in the company of Moses, **2) on a wall** to announce the fall of Babylon, **3) in the dirt** to judge those who wanted a woman caught in adultery stoned, and **4) on the palm of His own hand** every believer's name. Hebrews 8:10 tells us that God writes **5) on our hearts!** God speaks graphically throughout the Bible: Jacob's dream, Daniel's vision and Nebuchadnezzar's nightmare in the Old Testament; Saul's trance, Peter's dream and John's revelation in the New. God used a thundering voice and a still small voice, and Jesus told 38 parables—stories to display a truth—in the New Testament.

“The Old Testament is the story of a nation. The New Testament is the account of a Man. The Nation was founded and nurtured of God to bring the Man into the world,” says Henry Holley in his Bible Handbook. God builds suspense through the Old Testament and...then Jesus! And through faith in the Man, Jesus, we receive God's pardon and escape sin's penalty. And the same faith that is Christ-given for us to be saved is Christ-given for us to live (Reference: Galatians 3:3, 11). All this with the permanent ‘seal’ of the Holy Spirit in us!

What is *written* in the Bible invigorates, inspires, insures, insulates, invests and inoculates us, but even more profoundly, every bit of it is involved. And what is *written* must be fulfilled, and will be fulfilled—every word in every line. Mark 14:49-50 “*Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.*” ⁵⁰ *Then everyone deserted him and fled.*” We must know what is *written* that we may know God and what he will fulfill in us and through us! Job 12:11 “*Does not the ear test words as the tongue tastes food?*” Psalm 85:8 “*I will hear what God, the Lord, will speak....*”

Personal friend, and author of *Bible, Babel and Babble*, Dr. Scott Munger explains: “The ability to read and write may well be the most important achievement of humanity. Of all that has ever been written, without a doubt the Bible is the most influential. It has shaped lives, languages, cultures, societies and entire epochs. The Bible began over three thousand years ago with an insignificant people, the Hebrews. Miraculously, their descendants, language, culture and Book are still with us today. That Book spread to the Greeks through the Septuagint, a translation began in the 3rd century B.C. The real Author of the Book then visited earth in human form. And the world has never been the same.”

We want to learn that God’s Word has the power to make a difference and to change our lives—inside out—forever! **We not only want to learn to read, study and put to memory God’s Word everyday, but to become advocates for the Bible: of its preaching, translation and distribution!** Psalm 119:89 “*Your word, O LORD, is eternal: it stands firm in the heavens.*” A 1999 *Operation World* report shows that at least a portion of the translated Scriptures exists in more than 2,000 languages, spoken by more than 90% of the world’s population.

What about what is *written*—Scripture—are we reading it? Is it making a difference in us? Those who have experienced the new birth, but neglect God’s Word, may not even realize that they are spiritually malnourished, because they have not ‘eaten’ regularly since they were saved. Because just as we are not nourished by the memory of food, so we cannot be spiritually sustained on past appropriations of God’s Word—we need it every day. Proverbs 8:24 “*Blessed are those who listen to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway.*”

The Gospel of John—written by the disciple whom Jesus loved—ends with these words in 21:25, “*Jesus did many other things as well. **If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.***” Then Acts 1:1-2a opens with Luke stating: “*In my former book, Theophilis, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven....*”

2 Timothy 3:16 “*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.*” Imagine that God’s breath is all over every word in every verse! And about speaking God’s word, 1 Peter 4:10-11a, says, “*Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. **11If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God.***”

Acts 18:28 (Luke speaking of Apollos’ preaching) “*For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, **proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.***”

●Throughout the New Testament, its authors, especially Jesus, regularly referenced the Old Testament—most frequently Deuteronomy, the Psalms, and Isaiah—reminding us that “it is written”. Matthew 4:4 Jesus, when tempted by the devil answered, *“It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”* Paul references Habakkuk 2:4 in Romans 1:17 *“For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as **it is written**: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’”*

Matthew, writing to Greek-speaking Jews, had a concern and focus on the fulfillment of prophecy, so he has more quotations from, and allusions to, the Old Testament than any other New Testament writer. His main purpose is to prove to his Jewish readers that Jesus is their Messiah by showing how Jesus in his life and ministry fulfilled Old Testament Scriptures. And though all of the Gospel writers quote the Old Testament, Matthew includes nine additional proof texts to drive home his theme.

Jesus references Scripture in Luke 14 when two disciples were walking on the road to Emmaus, and talking about all that had happened in Jerusalem since Jesus’ arrest. They talked about what they had seen, and what they were hearing about what had happened to Jesus—the Christ. They conversed about His person, and about how he had lived before God, the good works and the miracles he had done. Then Jesus Christ, Himself, joined them on the road—unbeknown to them. Verse 32 says *“They asked each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and **opened the Scriptures to us?**’”*

Paul gives his testimony to a crowd in Acts 22:3-9 *“I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. 4I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.*

6*“About noon (it was about noon that Jesus met with the woman at the well in John 4—noon-hour meetings that changed lives) as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. 7I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, ‘Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?’*

8*“‘Who are you, Lord?’ I asked.*

9*“‘I am Jesus, of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,’ he replied. 9My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me” (Jesus’ voice is not understood by Saul’s companions).*

God had used a ‘graphic’—bright light—and a ‘voice’ to get Saul’s attention, and though he allowed Saul’s companions to see the light, he did not let them

know what was being said. Do we realize the miracle of that? Saul was as lost as they were; why were they not able to understand what the voice was saying? God himself reveals his truth, and, in his Sovereignty, he can conceal it.

Later in Damascus, Saul was met by Ananias who said to him in verse 14: “*The God of our fathers has **chosen** you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and **to hear words from his mouth**.* 15*You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.*” And Luke, the writer of Acts, makes sure that these words Saul heard and what he said about them were written down.

Are we amazed yet by God and his word? Just three verses on in Acts 22:17-18 Saul gets to **see God speaking to him**: “*When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance 18and **saw the Lord speaking**. ‘Quick!’ he said to me. ‘Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’”*

Two chapters later in Acts 24:14b-16 Paul tells Felix, “*...I believe everything that agrees with the Law and **that is written** in the Prophets, 15and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. 16So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.*”

Skip to verses 24-27 “*Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. **He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus**. 25As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, ‘That’s enough for now! You may leave. **When I find it convenient, I will send for you.**’ 26At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him.*

“27When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison.”

Some will hear God’s Word from many godly preachers and ignore it—makes me think of a TV show host, and all the many interviews he has done with Billy Graham and his son Franklin, the late Jerry Falwell and John Hagee and many others. What this interviewer’s motivation for hearing them is, we cannot know. **But what we can see is a passive listener of the Divine Word...ignoring it!**

Jesus talks about those who hear his words and obey them, and those who do not, in Matthew 7:24 “*Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.*”

To listen passively to Scripture, which is the eternal Word of the living God, is an insult to God—it is sin. The finest intellect in the world who will not sit

under its tutelage and learn, will be ignorant of the great truths of God. Again, we must know what is *written* that we may know God and what he will fulfill in us and through us! Joshua 1:8 *“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”*

In ancient days, and today, the Bible invites us to discover the covenant relationship that the LORD desires to have with each of us. Through the words of those holy pages, we are taught also how to live a life that pleases Him, and how to embrace His commandments for living. Through God's Word we learn how to deal with adversity and stand strong in the face of opposition and suffering. We find hope, grace, forgiveness, peace and purpose.

◆Daniel Christiansen tells about a relative, a Romanian soldier in World War II, named Ana Gheorghe. In 1941, enemy troops had overrun the Romanian region of Bessarabia and entered Moldavia. Ana and his comrades were badly frightened as bullets whizzed around them, and mortar shells shook the earth. By day Ana sought relief by reading his Bible, but at night he could only crouch close to the earth and recall verses he'd memorized.

One day during a spray of enemy fire, Ana got separated from his company. In a panic, he bolted deeper and deeper into the woods until, exhausted, he fell asleep at the base of a large tree. The next day, trying to find his comrades, he moved cautiously toward the front, staying in the shadows of the trees, nibbling a crust of bread and drinking from streams. Hearing the battle closing in, he unslung his rifle, pulled the bolt, and watched for the enemy, his nerves were near the breaking point. Twenty yards away, a Russian soldier suddenly appeared.

“All my mental rehearsals of bravery served me nothing. I dropped my gun and fell to my knees, then buried my face in my sweating palms and began to pray. While praying, I waited for the cold touch of the Russian's rifle barrel against my head.

“I felt a slight pressure on my shoulder close to my neck. I opened my eyes slowly. There was my enemy kneeling in front of me, his gun lying next to mine among the wildflowers. His eyes were closed in prayer. We did not understand a single word of the other's language, but we could pray. We ended our prayer with two words that need no translation: “Alleluia...Amen!”

“Then, after a tearful embrace, we walked quickly to opposite sides of the clearing and disappeared beneath the trees.” God Is...in that moment!