

Is the Bible the Only Word of God?

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God." - Jesus Christ

One of the slow eating cancers which affects the minds of the religious in this century is the peculiar notion that the Bible is the "the only Word of God". Sometimes it is also assumed that since the Bible is the Word of God, that it has no errors in all aspects including science, word for word, letter for letter. As much reverence as is due the Bible, it is beyond the limit of truth and good sense to call it the only infallible Word of God, as a brief study of the Scriptures themselves will easily show. This article will only deal with the accepted belief that when the term "Word Of God" is quoted from scripture, that it is always talking about the Bible itself.

The Word of God is what God says, just as your word is what you say. When the Word of God comes, it comes from God's mouth (Dt.8:3; Isa.45:23; Jer.9:20). The Bible on the other hand, is the divinely-inspired record of the history which occurred when the Word of God came to various individuals. It is a record written by faithful men, men who would not lie. **"The Word of God came"** is a phrase used many times in the Bible, and clearly, one should not understand that phrase to mean that "the Bible came".

When the Word of God comes, it comes "SAYING". According to evidence presented to us in the Bible, one never "reads the Word of God"; rather, the Word is always a thing to be "heard", most often by the righteous who believe in a God that still speaks.



The Word of God came "saying" to many prophets and other especially blessed people. Here are some notable ones: The Word came to Abram "saying". . . (Gen.15:1,4); The Word came to Samuel "saying". . . (1Sam.15:10); The Word came to Elijah "saying". . . (1Kgs.17:2); The Word came to Jacob "saying". . . (1Kgs.18:31); The Word came to David "saying". . . (1Chron.22:8); The Word came to Isaiah "saying". . . (2Kgs.20:4). And there are many more not listed here.

Can any rational person believe that the Bible came talking to these men? Of course not. **The Word of God is something that is heard!**

NEW INFORMATION...

The Lord spoke the Word to Moses (Josh.14:10), and He was not quoting the scriptures. It was entirely new information being given; still, it was the Word which was being spoken. Jesus spoke the Word, and even though he quoted from the Law and prophets, anyone would have to admit that the Word he spoke was new to mankind (Mt.5:21-22, 27-28; John 13:34, etc.). Jesus was not preaching his own words, but only the Word he received from his Father (John 8:26).

God's Word is a spoken thing. It is not a dead letter. It is something that is spoken by God to men, and then, the content of that Word is delivered by those men to others, either orally or in writing. The Bible is the book which contains the testimonies of the Word of God which came to them.

When the Bible says that **"the Word of God came unto John in the wilderness"** (Luke 3:2), should we think that some one traveled into the wilderness to bring John a Bible? When Philip took the Word of God to the Samaritans and they received it (Acts 8:14), what sensible person could possibly believe that Philip was passing out Bibles? Or when

we are told that Jesus gave the Word of God to his disciples (John 17:14,17), should we believe that he passed out copies of the scriptures? When we read of the "Word of God" which will come riding on a white horse (Rev.19:11-13), can we honestly say that we believe the Bible will come horseback riding?!

Taken to its logical conclusion, the belief that the Bible is the Word of God must lead one to draw some very strange conclusions. For the sake of argument, let's say the Bible is the Word of God and see, using Biblical examples, how absurd that thought really is:

IF THE BIBLE WERE THE WORD OF GOD...

The Word of God was in Balaam's mouth (Num.22:38) indicating that Balaam's mouth must have been enormously wide to be able to accommodate a Bible (even sideways!). However, surgery was probably not required, as it was with King David, for we are told that the Word of God was in David's tongue (2Sam.23:2). And what medical procedure was needed to get the Word of God in his people's hearts (Dt.30:14; Rom.10:8; Ps.119:11)? If a person becomes sick, he should place the Bible on his hurting parts, because the Word of God heals and delivers (Ps.107:20). And anyone desiring spiritual cleanliness should take the Bible apart and tape the pages all over himself, for the Word of God sanctifies (1Tim.4:5). Exactly how the earliest church washed itself using the Bible is unclear (Eph.5:26), but if we do bathe using the Bible, we should praise God as David did when the Word of God cleansed him (Ps.119:9).

The Bible must have mysterious reproductive powers, for we read in Acts 12:24 that the Word of God "multiplied". However, the increasing number of Bibles was no problem to Paul who knew the Word can be "rightly divided" (2Tim.2:15). Although they had some difficulty dealing

with "disappearing Bibles" in Samuel's day when the Word of God was "hard to find" (1 Sam.3:1), disappearing ones would seem less disturbing than the overly aggressive Bibles that "cause many to stumble" as we read about in 1Pet.2:8.

Now, friends, can any of us any longer cling to the bizarre idea that the Bible itself is the Word of God?

WE NEED THE WORD OF GOD TODAY!

The Word of God is alive, will live forever, and is far sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating the souls of men, not their bodies, and discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb.4:12; 1Pet.1:23,25). The life-giving Word of God is the light, the guidance of God, which comes through the leading of the Spirit of God. For this reason the Spirit is called the Word of God (Eph.6:17). If the Scriptures were the actual Word of God, they could give life. But they aren't, and so they can't.

The Word of God is a thing to be preached, not read (Mk.2:2; Acts 8:4, 25; Tit.1:3). To "preach the Bible", as some boast of doing, is nothing, for even Satan quoted Scripture to entrap Jesus; that obviously could not be considered "preaching the Word of God". Those not ordained by God are condemned to preach nothing but what they have heard and read of others. That is the only gospel they have to offer. And that is why they must teach that the Bible is the Word of God. They can claim to have the Word of God if it is a book. Doing so excuses their lack of a testimony of experiencing the Word being spoken to them. They have no Word of God to preach, because God has not spoken to them. It is often by those who hold up the Bible as the "infallible Word of God" that the true Word of God is corrupted (2Cor.2:17) and frequently contradicted when it is revealed. Men without the Word of God will resist this message "just as their fathers did resist the holy Spirit" (Acts 7:51).

"He whom God hath sent speaks the words of God" (John 3:34). He whom God sends will not simply repeat the Word of God sent to other men. He has his own commission, fresh from God, and he has an authority that no man can have except he be sent from the Lord. The true gospel is not "a word only gospel". **"The kingdom is not in word", Paul said, "but in power"** (1Cor.2:4-5). God confirms that He has spoken to someone by granting miracles and wonders to be performed by their hands (Mk.16:20).

Every man that is truly sent of God will lead others to the power and life of the Spirit that Jesus suffered for us to receive from God: **"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God"** (1Cor.2:4- 5). The Word of God is still revealed through the power of God!

The covenant we have been made partakers of is one in which we are commanded to worship "in Spirit and in truth". Men who have not received God's Spirit or the Word of God which comes only from that Spirit, can claim to have something from God when they preach that the Bible is God's Word. But what they speak is not "the Word of the Lord" for **"the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"** (2Cor.3:17). Let us "speak plainly" the Word of God for this generation: **"Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his"** (Rom.8:9). There is no such thing as the "Word of God" saying a person can be born again without the Spirit. And there is no such thing as receiving the Spirit without the Spirit "confessing Christ" (with stammering lips and speaking with other tongues) when it enters our hearts (1Jn.4:2-3; Is.28:11- 12; 1Cor.12:3). In fact, the scriptures makes a most astonishing claim, that the word of God is embodied in one

person Jesus Christ **"And the word became flesh, and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth"** John 1:14

CONCLUSION

Despite the reverence for God which appears to attend the somber declaration that the Bible is "the only infallible Word of God", that declaration sprouts from the envious heart of an adversary, who would rather glory in the works of men - even the Bible, the written work of righteous men - than to glory in the living power of God, our **Lord Jesus Christ**. This is what is call in the eastern orthodox church bibliolatry. Using the Bible as an Idol or an end in itself. Our worship should go to God and not the scriptures themselves. This is not to deny the authority of the scriptures in the church, but to bring us to an understanding of the sacred tradition that **"even though the church distinguishes between record and truth, and esteems also other records of the life of the Holy Spirit in the church, the bible still remains the primary record in the theological tradition and worship of the church"**¹. It is the adversary who inspired that unknown person who first proclaimed the Bible to be the "infallible word of God". His evil purpose was to discourage fervent prayer, disrupt the unity of the church and to discourage men from fellowship; that is, simply to "read the Bible" rather than humbly prepare their hearts to receive the living Word and communion with the church.

The Word of God is what God is saying this moment to the world, not what He said two thousand years ago, or even what He said yesterday. It is true He doesn't change; still, the Bible bears witness to the truth that **His instructions to mankind have changed many times to fit the current world and culture.**

¹ Introducing the Orthodox Church: Anthony M. Coniaris

All of adversary's devices against the church are intended to prevent or destroy unity and fellowship, thus slowing down the spreading of the good news to a lost world! *The church will never be perfected without fellowship.* As members of the body of Christ, we are vitally important to one another. I need your testimony. You need mine. Satan understands this better than the church understands it. And because this is true, he has worked harder to prevent fellowship than we have labored to achieve it. He has preached the Bible is the only infallible Word of God more fervently than we have prayed fervently to receive the living Word of God. The end result has been our relegation to a second-place position our life-giving communion with God through the Holy Spirit, and the breakup of the unity of the catholic (universal) church throughout history, in favor of a death-like grip to the Bible. The reformation started in the fifteenth century, and continues today, bares witness to this. It is revealing that there is only "one faith", while there are countless versions and interpretations of the Bible, for the ministers whose Word of God is only the Bible have nothing to offer the saints but confusion, division, discouragement, and eventually, death. ***"for the letter brings death, but the Spirit gives life" (2Cor.3:6) NAB.***

Even as the Scriptures themselves warn us, our only access to God is by the Spirit (Eph.2:18). Jesus promised us the Spirit after the resurrection, which was fulfilled at Pentecost: ***"When the spirit comes, whom I will send you from the Father, he will testify of me" John 15:26*** It is a Christ centered faith that we must confess. It cannot be said any clearer then what the Bible itself proclaims ***"In these last days, he spoke to us through his son, whom he made heir of all things, and through whom he created the universe" Hebrew 1:2*** This is the essence of the mystery we call the Trinity. The fellowship of God the

Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit! When we become one with Christ, we share in the mystical body of Christ, the Triune God and the church.

May God help us to confess our desperate need to be made one in Christ through the power, love, and wisdom available through the Holy Spirit. The fellowship which results when the church is taught by men who have truly heard the Word of God is the church's only hope of attaining to a common knowledge of God, and unity of faith and doctrine (1Jn.1:7). The early church fathers understood this from the beginning, which led them to teach that the Holy Spirit lives in the church and that the unity of the church was essential to the spreading of the Gospel. It is in the church, that we will find the guidance to the proper interpretation of the scriptures. This is why in the western church, as well as in the east, it can be said, **"Still, the Christian faith is not a 'religion of the book.' Christianity is the religion of the 'Word of God' a word which is not a written and mute word, but the Word which is incarnate and living. If the Scriptures are not to remain a dead letter, Christ, the eternal Word of the living God, must, through the Holy Spirit, open [our] minds to understanding the Scriptures."**²

When Jesus Christ the living Word of God comes again, He will prevail, and all who hear and obey His Word are destined to prevail with Him. **"Behold, I am coming soon" Revelation 22:12**

Fervently seek the Word of God. . . the Spirit is still speaking!

Recommended reading: "The ultimate Heresy" ...the doctrine of Biblical Inerrancy; Rodger L. Cragun; Boreal Light, Two Harbors Publishing 1996.

² Catechism of The Catholic Church: p.108