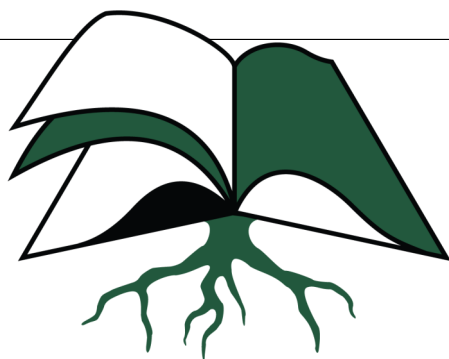


Pennsylvania Bible Teaching Fellowship

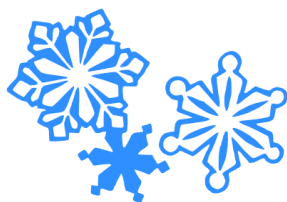
Winter Newsletter



This quarterly newsletter is written to enhearten, encourage and inspire so that the Word of God may continue to grow and increase both in quantity and quality in the hearts of God's beloved.

*...receive with meekness the implanted Word,
which is able to save [deliver] your souls.*

James 1:21b WT



WINTER

2019



THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD

By Shawn Weir

1st John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of **the Word of life**

There has never been and there never will be another book like the Bible. Though the origin of the word “Bible” simply comes from the Greek word *biblia* meaning “book,” the Bible is like no other book. Even from a secular standpoint, the facts about the Bible are staggering:

The Bible is the best-selling book of all time

Though it is impossible to calculate exact numbers, it is estimated that 6 billion copies of the Bible have been sold and distributed. Annually, over 100 million copies of the Bible are sold. You never see it on the lists, but the Bible is the best-selling book of the year, every year. Other religious texts don’t even come close.

The Bible is the most translated book

The entire Bible has been translated into 683 languages. The New Testament has been translated into 1,534 languages. Currently, there is translation work happening in 2,658 additional languages. The English language leads the way for versions of the Bible with over 300 English translations published since the first Wycliffe Bible produced in 1382.



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The Bible has more ancient manuscripts

For most books of antiquity, there are often a few dozen to a hundred existing manuscripts. Though more are always being discovered, the current New Testament Greek manuscript total is more than 5,850. In addition, there are over 19,000 copies in the Syriac, Latin, Coptic, and Aramaic languages.

Here's a way to visualize just how astounding this is: If you took all the manuscripts of an average classical work and stacked them on top of each other it would be about 4 feet high. If you did the same with all the manuscripts of the New Testament it would stack over one mile high and the entire Bible would tower over 2½ miles high.

The Bible has the greatest variety of writers

The Bible was penned by over 40 different writers ranging from shepherds, kings, farmers, priests, songwriters, scribes, fisherman, tax collectors, and a former Pharisee. They wrote from wildly different places (wilderness, prison, palaces), covering three different continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe), through the rise and fall of many nations, in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek), and over an approximately 1500 year span they produced a combined:

31,102 verses, 1,189 chapters,
and 66 books



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However, the most crucial fact (above all the sales, translations, manuscripts, writers, unparalleled historical impact, profound cross-cultural reach, and incalculable daily readership) is that the Bible has the exclusive claim to one author alone: **God Himself**. The Bible is as it claims to be, “The Word of God.” It is backed by God, protected by God, and inspired by God. This gives the Bible an inherent value that no other book will ever compete with.

Acknowledging that the Bible is, in fact, the Word of God is a truth that cannot be overstated. If I gave you a genuine \$100 bill, but you didn’t believe that it was truly coined by the government of the United States of America, how valuable would it be to you? If you didn’t believe it to be a genuine banknote, despite all the federal authority backing it in Washington, for you there would be little appreciation. I could describe all the details of Benjamin Franklin’s portrait on the front, but if you didn’t believe it was truly produced by the United States treasury then all that effort would be wasted. You first need to be assured of its authenticity. Without that; I might as well have handed you a \$100 bill from a Monopoly set.

So must men acknowledge that the Bible is not:

“the word of men, but as it is in truth,
the word of God”

2nd Thessalonians 2:13b



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If it is a word of men, then it is a forgery and unworthy of our further attention. However, if it is indeed the inspired truth from the holy God in heaven on high given for men to read and believe, then its significance is ineffable. In fact, this is exactly what it claims to be:

2nd Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness

The Greek word for “inspiration of God” in that verse is *theopneustos*, which literally translates to “God-breathed.” Please note, it does not say “some” or “most”, but it proclaims that “all” Scripture is God-breathed. God gave the revelation for each and every word from **Genesis 1:1** to **Revelation 22:21**. These words didn’t come from the musings of now dead men, but by spiritual revelation from the living God. He still watches over them and gives life and power to His Words.

Hebrew 4:12 For the word of God is quick (living), and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.



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Since the Author of the Word of God is living and powerful so also is His Word. Since the day they were first given, these Words are just as actively effective today to sharply give discernment on matters that man is otherwise helpless to navigate: the issues of soul and spirit. So then, the question is not whether these Words have value to rightly judge every thought and intent of the heart, but whether I allow these Words to be as a wise judge holding court over the thoughts and intents of my heart? How foolish and ironic for men to stand in criticism of these Words when in truth these Words are the critic of man. In fact, I find that the loudest opponents of the Bible are most often people who've never even read it!

There's a great record comparing the worthlessness of men's words in contrast to God's Words in the book of **Jeremiah**:

Jeremiah 23:16, 18 ESV

16 Thus says the LORD of hosts: Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD.

18 For who among them has stood in the council of the LORD to see and to hear his word, or who has paid attention to his word and listened?

God sent Jeremiah, a true and faithful prophet, to tell His people to not listen to the words of the other prophets. Those men were speaking, but not the true Words of God. They had neither stood in God's council, nor heard His Words. They preached from their own minds, not from God's mouth. Sadly, this is still true of many who claim to be speaking God's Word today.

Jeremiah 23:21 – 22 ESV

21 I did not send the prophets, yet they ran; I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied.

22 But if they had stood in my council, then they would have proclaimed my words to my people, and they would have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their deeds.

God did not send these prophets to His people, and yet they ran to them. He did not speak to them, yet they claimed to speak for Him. You then see the heart of God for what could have been. If these men wanted to speak for God, His Words were available.

If those men would have stood in His council then they would have had His Words to speak to His people. If they had spoken His Words, they would have been speaking forth something living and powerful, they would have brought His deliverance, they would have turned His people away from evil. How sad that this is still true of many who claim to be speaking God's Word today.



Jeremiah 23:28 – 32 ESV

28 Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the LORD.

The words of men compared to the Word of God is like straw compared to wheat. Straw (or chaff) is the waste that the wind would drive away after the wheat had been harvested. Sure, you could put both in your mouth, but only one has nutritional value. Only a fool would eat straw when wheat is available.

29 Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?

Again, God's Words are living and powerful. His Words are like a fire to burn away the straw words of men. His Word is mighty like a hammer smashing a hard rock into fragments. The words of men will always fail and fade; God's Word stands forever.

30 Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, declares the LORD, who steal my words from one another.

31 Behold, I am against the prophets, declares the LORD, who use their tongues and declare, 'declares the LORD.'



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32 Behold, I am against those who prophesy lying dreams, declares the LORD, and who tell them and lead my people astray by their lies and their recklessness, when I did not send them or charge them. So they do not profit this people at all, declares the LORD.

Have you ever had someone misquote you? How angered do you get if someone puts words in your mouth? Well, God was enraged against these prophets who proclaimed to be declaring His Words when, in fact, they were speaking their own. In doing so, they stole His Words away from His people. We saw in **2nd Timothy** that every Word of God is profitable; the lying words of these reckless men did not profit anyone at all, and instead, they brought great ruin.

This is why it is paramount for us today to acknowledge that the Bible is not the words of men, but the revealed Word of God. There are no unprofitable, non-nutritional, additive words of men's minds. "Every word of God is pure." (**Proverbs 30:5a**)

Lastly, because God is the Author of the Bible you can be personally assured of something else: every time you open these Words and read them, no matter where you are, the Author is there with you.



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God is living. God is powerful. These are His Words. God is your Father. He can personally teach them to you and cause you to understand them with the same power, fervor, and life as when He originally gave them to those holy men of old to write down for the very first time. He revealed these Words to them by His spirit and He will teach them to you by His spirit in you today.

I love to read books to my children. They often stop me while I'm reading to ask me questions. "Dad, can we give a mouse a cookie?", "Dad, why is that caterpillar so very, very hungry?", "Dad, why doesn't Sam like green eggs and ham?" They ask me because I'm right there with them and because they really desire to know. We should always be doing the same with our Father and His Word. He is not only the greatest Author of all time, but also the greatest Teacher.

Psalm 119:33 – 34

33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.

34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

So, instead of racing through a chapter to finish your reading for today or flipping through the concordance to see all the big Hebrew and Greek words, just be still for a moment.



THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD

Acknowledge that you are reading His book, and that He is there with you. Pray for Him to teach you and to give you understanding, as the Psalmist did. Then read with Him and watch Him enlighten you.

The Bible is unlike any other book because it has an Author unlike any other. Therefore, these Words have been preserved and have stood the test of time. It may be the best seller, it may be the most translated, it may have the greatest manuscript count, it may contain the greatest compilation of writers, but my prayer for you is that these Words are life to you. Don't let this incomparable book be just another book to you. These are His Words. The Scriptures are not hollow truths to fill our brain databanks. They aren't for heartless memorization and robotic regurgitation. They are powerfully active because of your God Who is powerful and living!

Appreciate what your Father gave it to be: The Word of life. May your heart be assured of the source of these Words and live by them, just as our Lord Jesus Christ said:

It is written,
Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that proceedeth out of
the mouth of God.

Matthew 4:4b



UPCOMING EVENTS

<u>Event</u>	<u>When</u>	<u>Details</u>
Area Fellowship	<u>March 10th</u>	In the Community Room at Messiah Village. A Children's Fellowship will be available.
Area Fellowship	<u>April 7th</u>	In the Community Room at Messiah Village. A Children's Fellowship will be available.
Day in God's Word	<u>April 13th</u>	Our topic will be the epistle to Titus. The whole day will be in the Community Room at Messiah Village.
Area Fellowship	<u>May 12th</u>	In the Community Room at Messiah Village. A Children's Fellowship will be available.
Spring Teen-30s	<u>May 23rd - 27th</u>	A camp for all teens to thirty-somethings to be together and get into the greatness of God's Word.
Pentecost Picnic	<u>June 8th</u>	<u>Please note the date change.</u> Our main fellowship will be in the pavilion at George Park. Children's fellowship will be available behind the playground. After the teaching, we'll fire up the grills and enjoy some sweet time eating and fellowshiping with one another.

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