

MAN DOES NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. (Matt 4:4)

THE SCRIPTURES ARE ESSENTIAL TO YOUR SPIRITUAL HEALTH!

In a previous study *The Old Covenant and the New Covenant* we have pointed out that the Old Covenant is not the first 39 books of the Bible and that the New Covenant is not the last 27 books of the Bible. Just because these books of the Bible are not covenants however, does not mean that they are not important. They are! They are not only important, they are essential! It is impossible for the believer to survive without them. The Scriptures are just as important to you spiritually, as food is to you physically.

Please prayerfully focus your mental and spiritual energies on the words of Jesus "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God". Jesus quoted these words to the devil during His temptations in the wilderness. Obviously, every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God is important. It would be blasphemous to say otherwise. Immediately after Jesus was baptized He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (Matt. 4:1; Mk. 1:12). After fasting forty days the tempter came to Him with three great temptations. In each instance Jesus overcame the temptation by quoting Scripture.

First, the devil said: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread (Matt. 4:3). Obviously Jesus was hungry! (Matt. 4:2) At some point He would literally starve to death if He did not eat. The wicked one knew this and suggested that He use His miracle working power to change stones into bread. Some of these stones may have even resembled loaves of fresh baked bread. On this occasion Jesus quoted Deut. 8:3 - "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord". The second temptation was to attain instant fame by casting Himself down from the temple and trusting God for deliverance. Jesus also resisted this temptation by quoting Scripture. This time He quoted Deut. 6:16: "Do not test the Lord your God". The third temptation was to receive all the kingdoms of this world, and their glory, by falling down and worshiping Satan. Again Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy - "Fear the Lord your God, serve him only". (Deut. 6:13)

The Word of God is not only like food, it is also like a sword (Eph. 6:17) It is a powerful spiritual weapon that can defeat the devil and cause him to flee (Ja. 4:7). Unfortunately, those who do not know the Scriptures are defenseless when attacked by the devil. The point is, that just as man will die physically without physical food, he will also die spiritually without the Scriptures.

Let us observe parenthetically that these three great temptations Jesus overcame, represent all that is in the world (1 John 2:16). Satan invariably tempts us with:

- (1) The lust of the flesh.
- (2) The lust of the eyes.
- (3) The pride of life.

These same three temptations, as you know, were also used by Satan in the Garden of Eden to seduce Eve. (Gen. 3:6). She saw that the forbidden fruit was:

- (1) Good for food.
- (2) Pleasing to the eye.
- (3) Desirable for gaining wisdom.

Undoubtedly, all of us will also be tempted in the same three ways. That's why it is important to study the Scriptures. In order to successfully resist these temptations, we need to do what Jesus did - quote Scripture!

THE SCRIPTURES ARE INSPIRED OF GOD

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works". (2 Tim 3:16-17 KJV)

The first books of Scripture came from words that were spoken by God and written down by Moses. Note:

- "And the LORD said unto Moses, write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua" (Exod 17:14).
- "And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD" (Exod 24:4)
- "And the LORD said unto Moses, write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel". (Exod 34:27)
- "And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of the LORD: and these are their journeys according to their goings out". (Num 33:2)
- See also Deut 27:1-3, 8;
- "And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel". (Deut 31:9)
- "Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel". (Deut 31:19)
- The people knew that the writings of Moses came from the mouth of God and thus these Scriptures were kept in a special place beside the ark of the covenant (Deut. 31:26).

MANY MEN WERE INSPIRED TO WRITE SCRIPTURE

- The books of the Bible were written by more than forty different inspired men.
- These inspired books were written over a period of more than 1,500 years.
- Joshua, for example, wrote words in the book of the Law of God (Josh. 24:26)
- God also told Jeremiah to write all the words He had spoken unto him in a book (Jer. 30:2).
- God also told Habakkuk to write the vision he received (Hab. 2:2).
- John the apostle was told: "Write: for these words are true and faithful". (Rev 21:5)
- Peter wrote: "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit". (2 Pet 1:20-21 NIV)
- Since the writings of these other inspired men also came from God, they were placed with the Scriptures written by Moses. Today we call this compilation of Scriptures The Holy Bible . The word Bible simply means book . Though there are actually 66 books in the Bible they are considered as one because God was the Author of them all.

THE SCRIPTURES ARE DIFFERENT FROM THE COVENANT

(One could be seen and the other could not)

The Old Covenant (that is the Ten Commandments) was kept in a box called the Ark of the Covenant , or Ark of the Testimony (see Ex. 25:16 - 22; Nu. 10:3; 1 Ki. 8:9; etc.). This covenant could not be seen by any man. The men of Beth Shemesh tried to do so and died (1 Sam. 6:19).

The Scriptures, by contrast, were not only to be seen, they were to be studied. Consequently, they were not placed inside the ark, but beside it. Moses commanded: "Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God. There it will remain as a witness against you". (Deut 31:26 NIV)

God obviously had a reason for keeping the Covenant separate from the Scriptures as He repeated the same arrangement with the New Covenant.

Let us reflect upon this truth in greater detail. The Old Covenant, that is The Ten Commandments, were given by God when He took His people by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt (Jer. 31:32) The Ten Commandments were quoted by Moses in both Exodus and Deuteronomy (Ex. 20 and Deut. 5) but the original tablets could not be touched or seen by anybody. As we have already pointed out, the Scriptures were read and taught daily. The Hebrew word Shema means to hear . Since the following passage begins with the word hear the Jews call it the Shema . "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door-frames of your houses and on your gates". (Deut 6:4-9 NIV)

Joshua also emphasized the importance of studying the Scriptures. He said: "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". (Josh 1:8 NIV)

These Scriptures could easily be multiplied. The Scriptures were to be an integral part of Hebrew life from individuals and families to corporate worship at their annual festivals. Note, for example: Then Moses commanded them: "At the end of every seven years, in the year for cancelling debts, during the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose, you shall read this law before them in their hearing. Assemble the people-- men, women and children, and the aliens living in your towns-- so that they can listen and learn to fear the LORD your God and follow carefully all the words of this law. Their children, who do not know this law, must hear it and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess". (Deut 31:10-13 NIV)

MANNA AND THE SCRIPTURES

The words quoted by Jesus from Deut. 8:3 make a connection between the manna that came down from heaven and the Scriptures. Moses wrote about God: "He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD". (Deut 8:3 NIV)

Note that God gave them manna to teach them that man does not live by bread alone. We first read about manna in Ex. 16:15. It was literally bread from heaven. Since neither the people or their fathers had never seen anything like it, they called it “manna” which means “what is it”? Note the connection! Just as God gave manna from heaven to sustain them physically, He also sent down the Scriptures from heaven to sustain them spiritually. This symbolism is significant! They did not survive in the wilderness because of their hard work and cleverness, but because God gave them manna. The same principle is true spiritually. We cannot successfully live the Christian life without the Scriptures. Deut. 8:4 continues the theme of God provision by stating that their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell during their forty years of wandering .

THE NEW COVENANT ALSO CANNOT BE SEEN

“The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord. This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” (Heb 8:8-12 NIV)

While the Old Covenant and the New Covenant were different in many ways, they were alike in at least one respect. Both were written where no one could read them . When people are born again God writes His laws in their minds and on their hearts . This is the New Covenant! Since it is written in the minds and hearts of believers it obviously cannot be read by men. The fact that someone is born again does not mean that they do not need the Scriptures, quite to the contrary. Just as the Hebrews had the Covenant but could not survive without manna, so also those who have the New Covenant written in their hearts cannot survive without the Word of God. Remember! Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

WE CANNOT OVEREMPHASIZE THE FACT THAT GOD WANTS YOU TO STUDY THE BIBLE

- These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. (Deut 6:6-7 NIV)
- 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. (Josh 1:8 NIV)
- Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Tim 2:15 KJV)
- Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. (Acts 17:11 NIV)
- After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea. (Col 4:16 NIV)
- I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers. (1Thes 5:27 NIV)

- Jesus said: Search the Scriptures (John 5:39).
- These Scriptures could easily be multiplied.

Remember that ALL SCRIPTURE IS INSPIRED BY GOD AND PROFITABLE FOR TEACHING, REBUKING, CORRECTING, AND TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS. Man is not to receive spiritual nourishment from some of the words that come from the mouth of God, but from every word that comes from the mouth of God. It is important to study all of the Bible for The Word of God is like a lamp to our feet and a light unto our path (Ps. 119:105).

THE FACT, HOWEVER, THAT SOMEONE DOES NOT AGREE WITH YOU ON THE SCRIPTURES DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT THEY ARE NOT SAVED!!

Remember, we are saved by faith not knowledge. This is why it is important to remember that the Scriptures and the Covenant are not the same. When someone becomes a Christian God writes His laws in their minds and in their hearts. These new converts, however, begin their Christian life as newborn infants (1 Pet. 2:2). As such, they need spiritual milk, and not meat (1 Cor. 3:2). We are commanded to add knowledge to our faith (2 Pet. 1:5). As we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ we will be able to understand deeper truths which are like solid food rather than milk (Heb. 5:11 - 14). Because believers are at different levels of understanding and knowledge there will always be differences in the way we worship God (See Rom. 14:1 - 23). There will not, however, be differences in our moral conduct. Those who are truly born of God do not continue in sin (1 Jn. 3:9). Growing in knowledge does play an essential part in our spiritual development and growth and we gain this knowledge by studying the Scriptures.

THE DEVIL, OF COURSE, DOESN T WANT YOU TO STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

As we have already pointed out, from the very beginning God wanted His people to read, study, and teach His Holy Word. Bible study was not only encouraged by patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, but also by early Christian leaders like Justin Martyr, Jerome, Chrysostom, Augustine, and others. Bible study is important for every person, at every age, and every walk of life.

The Devil, however, doesn t want anyone to study the Bible. Throughout history he has consistently tried to destroy the Bible or get men to neglect it. For example, Antiochus Epiphenes was a Syrian King that came to power about 175 B.C. He invaded Jerusalem, desecrated the Jewish Temple, and destroyed every Bible he could find. To save the Bible holy men went out into the desert and hid their precious manuscripts. These manuscripts were hidden so well that they were not discovered for hundreds of years. Between 1947 and 1956 thousands of fragments of biblical and early Jewish documents were discovered in eleven caves near the Dead Sea. These important texts are called "The Dead Sea Scrolls" .

In 303 A.D. the Roman Emperor Diocletian also tried to destroy the Bible. Even church leaders and kings that were supposed to be Christian have also tried to keep men from reading the Bible. William Tyndale was strangled and burned at the stake on Oct. 6, 1536 for the crime of translating the Bible into the language of the common people. Obviously, the Devil has failed, for today there are millions of Bibles all over the world. Jesus said: Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. (Matt 24:35)

There is, however, little difference between the person who does not have a Bible, and the person who has a Bible and does not read it.

- Please prayerfully consider the possibility that Europe entered into the Dark Ages as a direct result of denying the people of God access to the Word of God.
- Please prayerfully consider the possibility that Europe experience the Renaissance as a direct result of allowing the people of God to have access to the Word of God.

A FAMINE OF THE WORDS OF THE LORD

The days are coming, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I will send a famine through the land-- not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the LORD. (Amos 8:11 NIV)

When people do not have food they die physically. When people do not have the Word of God they die spiritually. The affects of the Word of God are eternally significant. A famine of the words of the Lord is far more serious and significant than merely a physical famine.

Jesus once told the story of a rich man and a beggar (Lk. 16:19 - 31). The beggar had neither friends or food, but when he died he was taken to Paradise where he would be comforted forever. The rich man, by contrast, had his good things in this life, but went to a place of eternal torment.

Jesus said: For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matt 16:26)

Your personal study of the Scriptures needs to be a top priority for man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

START NOW YOUR DAILY STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES

- The greatest journey begins with a single step. You need to start now to study the Bible.
- When the Scriptures were originally written there were no printing presses and only a very few copies of the Bible to be shared by millions of people. It was not easy to study the Bible, yet the people of God were still expected to study the Scriptures and teach them to their children.
- When Paul preached in Berea the people there studied the Scriptures every day (Acts 17:11). Undoubtedly they did not own a personal copy of the Bible but had to go to the synagogue every day in order to study the Scriptures.
- From the very beginning God expected parents to teach His word to their children (Deut. 6:4 - 9). Note these words of Paul to Timothy: "from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus". (2 Tim 3:15)
- The moveable type printing press was invented by Johannes Gutenberg in A.D. 1447. Even today, however, there are still thousands believers who have never seen a Bible and thousands of languages into which the Bible is yet to be translated. It is our duty to see to it that the Word of God is made known through the whole world.
- Please prayerfully consider these words of Jesus: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matt 28:19-20 NIV)