

## THE BIBLE AND THE BEREANS

Text: Acts 17:10-13

The Bereans were used of God in a very special way in the early days of the Church. God used these people to emphasize that Paul wrote with the same authority the previous prophets ministered with such as Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Malachi. They possessed a:

- (1) Regal approach to the Word of God. "These were more noble..." (Acts 17:11a).
- (2) Ready mind to obey the Word of God. "...they received the Word with all readiness of mind..." (Acts 17:11:b).
- (3) Resolute heart to confirm the Word of God. "...searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17: 11c).

I Thessalonians 2:13; I Corinthians 14:37; Luke 1:70; Jeremiah 30:2; II Peter 1:16-21; 3:14-16.

Inspiration is not a high level of achievement of man; it is the Word of God.

The Bible is true. We believers know and believe that, but not everybody does. If we were to place it on trial, there are seven witnesses that could step forward to prove the case of the veracity of this Bible, the only book God ever wrote. The first witness we would bring forward is:

### 1. DECLARATION

The Bible declares itself to be the Word of God. The Bible says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16). The Greek word θεόπνευστος (*theopneustos*), which we translate "inspired," denotes God-breathed or breathed-out-by-God. The Greek word πᾶς (*pas*) which we translate "all," means in the sense of each (every) part; the emphasis of the total picture then is on "one piece at a time." We believe in the plenary inspiration of the Bible. Plenary means unqualified and absolute, complete and fully. We believe that all parts of the Bible are equally authoritative. Listen to the way David expressed this truth of his understanding of inspiration: "The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue" (II Samuel 23:2). Luke reconfirms this truth in Acts 1:16: "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake..." More than 3,800 times in the Old Testament the claim is made that the Scriptures are the word or words of God. For instance, "And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book..." (Exodus 17:14). "Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth" (Jeremiah 1:9). The Scriptures are exalted as the Word of God 175 times in Psalm 119 alone! Psalm 119:160 says, "Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever." In the New Testament Paul made a most dogmatic stance in declaration of the Word of God when he said, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (I Thessalonians 2:13). We believe God authored the Bible over a period of 1,500 years using the vocabularies, culture and personalities of 40 different men, choosing not only the thoughts, but the very words to be placed into

Holy Writ. "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it" (Psalm 68:11). "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him" (Proverbs 30:5).

## **2. DURATION**

Our second witness speaks to the fact that the Bible has outlasted its enemies. My father likened the Bible to the old massive anvil in the blacksmith shop. The hammers over the decades were worn out on the anvil, but the anvil remained. The atheists, who have attempted to denounce the Word of God, die and perish, but the Word of God remains. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33). "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isaiah 40:8). This infallible Word of God brings us salvation. Like the Word of God, our salvation is eternal. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (I Peter 1:23). "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89).

## **3. PRESERVATION**

Just as great as the miracle of biblical inspiration is biblical preservation. Since the Bible cannot and will not be destroyed, there is no way man in his puny existence can do away with the Word of God. The Bible says, "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever" (Psalm 12:6, 7).

God is not only interested in preserving His Word to the Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic and Latin languages of the world, He wants His Word to go with His gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. How thankful I am that, for the English-speaking peoples of the world, we have a perfectly preserved copy of the Word of God in the King James translation of 1611. This was a time when our language was at its apex. It was free of many of the modern double meanings and nuances that reflect a more cultural slang. It was a time when our language matched the original languages of Scripture and therefore made for a cleaner and clearer translation. God loves all of His people and His plan is that they have the Word of God. This why we are on a quest to see other countries have their own translations.

Satan desires to destroy the Word of God. If he cannot destroy it, he wishes to devalue it. It is revealed in Genesis--his first attack was the Word of God. We see this in his wording, "...Yea, hath God said..." (Genesis 3:1b). Here the Devil questions God's word, then denies it, saying, "...Ye shall not surely die..." (Genesis 3:4b). Satan's methods have not changed. Take for instance the mad rush for new translations of the Scriptures. Please notice that most all the modern translations of the Scriptures base their reliability on what is called the Critical Text which is based on impure and flawed manuscripts, whereas the King James translation is based upon the *Textus Receptus*, often called the Received Text. The Received Text is based upon over 5,000 manuscripts that agree on all major points of translation, whereas the Critical Text is based on a mere handful of manuscripts that don't even agree within themselves. If you have a copy of the King James Bible, I am safe in saying you have the Word of God as

it has been preserved throughout the ages. And Satan has not been able to water it down or take one thing away from it.

#### **4. INFORMATION**

Another witness to step forward is the witness of information. The Bible provides us with information about ourselves that irrefutably tells us of its truth. The Bible tells us, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). It tells us who we are, where we are going and what we can do to live peacefully in this life with heaven at the end of our life. One man of God commented, "I know the Bible is the Word of God because man would not say those things about himself." Although the Bible tells us the truth about ourselves negatively, the Word of God also tells us what we can do about it. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

#### **5. VALIDATION**

The Bible is not a science book as such, but everything it says about science is true. The earth was declared to be round before man discovered it (Isaiah 40:22). The Bible is not a history book, but everything it says about history is true. The Bible prophesied the reign of Cyrus by name over 150 years before he was born (Isaiah 44:28).

#### **6. TRANSFORMATION**

Our sixth witness to come to the stand is the transformed life! I have never heard a testimony of people reading other books and finding deliverance from alcohol, drugs or other addictions. Myriad is the number I have heard testify of the Lord through His word converting and changing people. "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple" (Psalm 19:7).

#### **7. VOLITION**

The seventh and final witness I call is our own personal volition. We have a free choice in this life and I choose to believe the Bible is the Word of God. You may think this is not as good a reason as some of the others I have listed, but it is perhaps the one thing that makes the difference. If you don't believe, it is because you don't want to believe. I want to believe that if I call on the name of the Lord I will be saved (Romans 10:13). I want to believe that God answers my earnest prayer (Matthew 7:7). I want to believe that when this world is over we have a place prepared for us in Heaven by Christ as He promised (John 14:1-3). This is evidence that demands a verdict; what say you? I say the Bible is the Word of God!

-Pastor Pope-