

What About The Bible? Part-1, II Timothy 3:16 *The Old Testament*

Introduction

I heard the story about a formerly pagan New Hebrides chieftain who sat peacefully reading the Bible, when he was interrupted by a French trader. “Bah,” he said in French, “why are you reading the Bible? I suppose the missionaries have got hold of you, you poor fool. Throw it away! The Bible never did anybody any good.” To this the chieftain calmly replied, “If it wasn't for this Bible, you'd be over there in my kettle by now!”

Transition

The Bible is the number one bestseller of all time. But it is much more than just another book on the bestseller list isn't it. The Bible is the living and breathing word of God. It is the basis of faith and all knowledge. The Bible is not merely a collection of words on pages which are to be read and understood. It is only in the pages of the Bible that man is fully able to understand himself from the proper perspective of the God who created Him. Indeed, we do not simply read the Bible – the Bible reads us!

While the Bible is the inspired word of God it has not come to us dangling from a golden string dropped from the heavens in its present form. The Bible has come to us in its present form as a result of God providentially inspiring the prophets of Israel and the saints of the early Church. God spoke, they recorded what was said, and then God preserved and protected His word right up to this very day. Indeed, the story of the greatest book of all time is a story of God's Sovereign protection of His word of redemption and salvation to His creation!

For the next few weeks I will seek to offer a concise answer to the following questions; is the Bible accurate? Is the Bible trustworthy? Is the Bible understandable and if so, how is it to be understood? These are questions which have eternal significance. They are good questions deserve answers. It my prayer that we embark on this journey together, your faith will be strengthened, your mind will be fed, and that your heart will find satisfaction in Christ as you see Him revealed in the pages of the word of God!

Exposition

The Bible is made up of sixty six individual books which were written by forty divinely inspired writers over a period of more than sixteen hundred years.

This Bible is, in fact, not one book but several inspired texts which were collected by God's appointed servants over many years and later canonized into one book.

The Bible is composed of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament is made up of thirty nine books and is divided into five sections. The first five books of the Bible are known by the Christian Church as the Pentateuch or the "Five Books of Moses." They are also referred to as the Torah or the written law. These books, and most likely the book of Job, were written by Moses who almost certainly recorded history that had been passed down orally for a number of generations.

The Books of History are made up of twelve books which include books like Joshua, First and Second Kings, and the book of Esther. The Books of History provide detailed accounts of the history of the Nation of Israel and God's dealings with His people. These books were written by various authors such as Ezra and Jeremiah. These books provide ample information about the ancient world. Interestingly, modern archeology has confirmed much of the accounts of the biblical record. Prior to about the middle of the nineteenth century archeology was really little more than grave robbing. There are many treasures of antiquity which were found by way of destroying ancient sites.

The modern archeological era, though, has provided us with detailed accounts of ancient people groups – including the confirmation with strong historical evidence of many of the events that are recorded in the Bible. In the fifth and sixth chapters of the book of Joshua (5:13 - 6:27) are recorded the events of the battle of Jericho. God had instructed the Israelites to enter into the land which He had promised to them. In order to do this they were to face several battles on their conquest to occupy the land and drive out the pagan people groups who occupied the land at the time. The first battle associated with this conquest was the battle of Jericho.

Rather than fight a traditional battle with the inhabitants of the city, God commanded the Israelite soldiers to march around the great walls of the city once a day for six days while the priests blew the trumpet of the Lord. On the seventh day they were to blow the trumpet and all of the people were to shout and then the Lord would deliver the city into the hands of the Israelites. "So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city." (Joshua 6:20 NKJV)

For biblical scholars and archeologists alike the modern day remains of the city of Jericho are intriguing. If archeology can provide evidence which supports the biblical account then that evidence helps to support the historicity and accuracy of the Bible. If the Bible can be trusted in regard to historical accounts then this lends a great deal of credibility to the overall message of the Bible – namely the nature of God’s relationship with humanity.

In the 1930’s and later the remains of the city of Jericho were excavated extensively. John Garstang, the noted British archaeologist of the early twentieth century, found evidence of what he believed to be the remains of a double-walled city that had faced the army’s of Joshua. Garstang wrote; “The outer wall suffered most, its remains falling down the slope. The inner wall is preserved only where it abuts the citadel, or tower, to a height of eighteen feet; elsewhere it is found largely to have fallen, together with the remains of buildings upon it... traces of intense fire are plain to see, including reddened masses of brick, cracked stones, charred timbers and ashes... as to the main fact, then, there remains no doubt: the walls fell outwards so completely that the attackers would be able to clamber up and over their ruins into the city.” (Thompson Chain Reference Bible, 2218)

Garstang’s work was later confirmed by Kathleen Kenyon in the 1950’s, the German archeologists Ernst Sellin and Carl Watzinger, and others right up this very day. Even with such strong archeological evidence, there are of course many skeptics who say that it must have been an earthquake or some other natural occurrence which caused the walls of Jericho to fall.

It likely was an earthquake that God used to destroy the walls of the city of Jericho. The outward direction that the walls fell in is consistent with an earthquake. Only there are some factors which demand divine causality of the earthquake. The only wall which was left standing was the North wall. There is no architectural reason for this. All of the walls were built the same way and with the same material. The Bible does say, in Joshua 2:1, that Rahab the harlot had housed the spies that Joshua had sent into the city and that because of her support of the Israelites God would spare her life. Her house was built against the city wall. Apparently it was built against the North city wall. “And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father’s household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.” (Joshua 6:25 NKJV)

There is another factor which must be considered. How could Joshua possibly have known when and where an earthquake was to occur?

The Bible says that on the seventh day the Israelites blew the trumpets and all of the people shouted and the walls of this mighty city fell down. Since it is not possible or it is at least incredibly unlikely that the shouts of even several thousand people could make huge city walls fall down and since it is also not possible that Joshua knew when and where an earthquake was to strike we can conclude that there must have been some other factor involved. Since the biblical account has been proven to be accurate we can take stock, as the famed radio commentator Paul Harvey says, in the rest of the story.

God delivered the city into the hands of His people just as He had declared He would do. He also spared the life of Rahab just as He said He would do. While the Bible is not primarily a history or science book, God has provided an accurate record of historical events so that we can be sure of the accuracy of the redemptive message of the Bible. If the Bible can be trusted even in small details of historical events then it can be trusted in all that it says about humanity and redemption!

The Books of Poetry such as Psalms and Proverbs which contain wisdom and songs of praise and worship to God. The books of poetry also contain prophecy and instruction. Certainly, every book of the Bible speaks of God's glory and has something to say in regard to the chief message of the Bible – redemption. The books of the prophets, which number seventeen in all, are divided into the five Major Prophets and the twelve Minor Prophets. I remember several years ago a friend asked me, "Which is better; the Old Testament or the New Testament?" There are many Christians who wonder the same thing and most often it the Old Testament which is neglected or misunderstood because we have been taught that the stories in the Old Testament are little more than illustrations and life lessons. While there is much of that in the Old Testament there is so much more! In the Old Testament we find Christ concealed and in the New Testament we find Christ revealed.

While the Old Testament is the story of God's dealings with Israel, it is ultimately the story of the redemption of humanity.

Conclusion

The longer I am a Christian and the more time I spend studying the bible the more convinced I become of the trustworthiness of the Scriptures. The first words of the Bible are, "In the beginning God..." (Genesis 1:1 NKJV) God is what philosophy refers to as the uncaused cause. He is the starting point of all reality. He is the measure of all things.

He is the cause behind the effect of the universe and all that is in it. In the very first words of the Torah the eternality of God is expressed and by implication the nature of the word of God – both are eternal and unchanging. Psalms 90:2 says, “Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.” (NKJV)

When I was a teenager I lived for a couple of years high in the Rocky Mountains in Butte, Montana. One of my favorite things to do was to just take hike through the mountains. I would often ask someone to drop me off at the edge of town – which happened to be the base of a huge mountain range known as the Continental Divide. I would usually take along a little a back filled with food and water for the day’s adventure, a pocket knife and a few survival essentials, and my gold pan.

I would walk up and down the trails of the mountain; I would smell the clean air blowing through the pine trees; I would turn over rocks and gaze over the meadows and valleys that I would travel through. I would pray and commune with God. I would sometimes stop at the little streams to sift through the sand with my gold pan to see what I could find.

I found lots of treasures on my hikes as I experienced God and the wonder of His creation. It is just the same way with the Bible. As we come to God’s word we open the pages and turn over a few rocks, we take in the clean and refreshing air of the Bible’s message, and we too discover flakes and nuggets of gold! The gold that we find in the Bible however, is much more precious than any metal. We mine eternal truths, life changing certainties, and lasting hope.

The Bible is trustworthy and the more we learn through archeology and other sciences, the more its message is confirmed. The Bible is sure footing for this life and it is a treasure to be valued more than any other treasure on this earth!

What About The Bible? Part-2, II Timothy 3:16 *The New Testament – Truth*

Introduction

A clergyman took a seat in a dining car on a train traveling along the Hudson River. Opposite him was an atheist who, seeing his clerical collar, started a discussion. “I see you are a clergyman.” “Yes,” came the reply. “I am a minister of the gospel.” “I suppose you believe the Bible.” The clergyman, orthodox in his views, responded, “I certainly do believe the Bible to be the Word of God.” “But aren’t there things in the Bible you can’t explain?” With humility the minister answered, “Yes, there are places in the Bible too hard for me to understand.”

With an air of triumph as though he had cornered the preacher, the atheist asked, “Well, what do you do then?” Unruffled, the clergyman went on eating his dinner, which happened to be Hudson shad, a tasty fish but noted for its bony structure. Looking up, he said, “Sir, I do just the same as when eating this shad. When I come to the bones, I put them to the side of the plate and go on enjoying my lunch. I leave the bones for some fool to choke on.”

Transition

Indeed, the Bible is the word of God though the critics often do find themselves choking on the finer points of Scripture. Today we pick up where we left off last week in answering the question, “What about the Bible?” Last week we discussed the reliability of the Old Testament. We saw examples of how the Old Testament provides reliable historical accounts and if it provides accurate accounts of history then it can be trusted as a reliable document. If the Old Testament can be proven to be historically dependable then *great weight* is lent to its trustworthiness as an internally consistent record of God’s dealings with His people and its message in regard to salvation through Christ can be trusted as well.

This morning we will discuss the trustworthiness of the New Testament. The Old Testament is the seedbed for the New Testament and **salvation and truth** is the *fruit thereof*. This morning it is my hope that you will leave this place encouraged and renewed and refreshed in your *love of and trust in* God’s divine revelation to humanity – the Bible!

Exposition

After Jesus had been arrested and accused before the Jewish religious leadership, he was brought before the local Roman authority – Pontius Pilate.

The Jews had no love for the Romans, but Pilate was the only one with the authority to put Jesus to death, which was what the religious authorities had wanted to do all along. Jesus had challenged the establishment. Jesus had told us to lay aside wrath and revenge in favor of *love and forgiveness*. Jesus had said that the Kingdom of God is primarily invisible as it is made up of genuine believers and **not** worldly powers.

What Jesus had done was basically to undermine the power that the Jewish religious establishment had massed unto itself. In short, he had threatened their authority and control over the people and I think it was this, more than any other thing, which caused them to bring him before Pilate. Surely, they also thought him to be a blasphemer – calling himself equal with God – but there were lots of blasphemers in those days, what Jesus had done most of all, was to expose them to the **light of truth** and when the ugliness of the human condition is exposed to the beauty of that light, that light must be extinguished.

In John 18:33-38 the conversation between Jesus – *the light of God in the world* – and Pilate – *the local representative of worldly authority* – is recorded. In this conversation we see the Kingdom of Heaven conversing with the Kingdom of the world. In a very real sense Pilate, as a representative of perhaps the greatest worldly empire of all history, speaks on behalf of all worldly power when he asks what I believe is the most powerful and most important question that was ever posed to Jesus by anyone during His earthly ministry. “**What is truth?**” (v.38)

Indeed, from eternity past and ever since Pilate uttered this most important of questions, humanity has been seeking its answer. Postmodernism is the common philosophy of our day. It tells us that it is not possible to know truth. Truth is relative to what you want it to be. Truth is not so much a concrete reality as it is a subjective view point. To be sure, people have stopped looking to the Church or to the Bible as their source of truth. Media drives our culture doesn't it? For most people it is the television which gives them their news, their entertainment, and in many ways it is the media which drives our entire civilization and shapes the way in which we view and understand the world around us.

In a recent book entitled, “The Gospel According to Oprah” Marcia Z. Nelson explains the way that the celebrated talk show host Oprah Winfrey has amassed for herself something which resembles much more of a religious following than a studio audience. In her book she writes, “Watching the Oprah Show is something like attending a worship service.

Go to this house of worship and sit down for an inspiring hour that will engage you and give you a lift, an hour-long show five days a week adds up to a lot more pulpit time per week than the average pastor enjoys, and Oprah commands a lot bigger congregation.” The trouble with this is that if you examine the message that Oprah is preaching from her television pulpit, you will quickly find that her message is very much in keeping with the rest of the postmodern worldview; truth is ultimately unknowable and every road leads to the same god.

I am reminded of the words of Mark Twain, “Get your facts first, and then you can distort them as much as you please.” We need a better answer to Pilate’s very good question; “**What is truth?**” It isn’t particularly difficult to shatter the *myths of the modern worldview*. The agnostic says that you can’t know anything for sure. The trouble with this view of truth is that in affirming that you can not anything you are affirming the very notion of knowing something – namely, that you can’t know anything. As a basis for understanding truth this view is absurd and flawed.

The skeptic says that you should doubt everything. In our day skeptics abound. Perhaps you have met one of these folks. They offer near constant commentary on what is wrong and why this thing or that can not be trusted but they offer no alternatives. Skepticism is self defeating. *Should I also doubt that I should doubt?* In the New Testament God has given us much more sound criteria for evaluating truth. John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (NKJV)

Ultimate truth is found in the *very person and life of Jesus Christ alone!* In the pages of the New Testament the word truth is used more than 100 times. The New Testament declares what is truth – Jesus Christ is **truth**. In speaking of the coming of the messiah, the prophet Isaiah writes, “A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for **truth**.” (Isaiah 42:3 NKJV) In John 14:6 Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6 NKJV) The reliability of the New Testament is confirmed in the person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus quoted the Old Testament, Jesus empowered His followers to write the words of the New Testament, and then in order to prove that is the truth he did what absolutely no man has the power to do; he rose from the dead and appeared unto many witnesses! The writers of the New Testament were eye witnesses to the events. The writers of the New Testament were honest.

Even in cases where distorting the truth would have put them in a better light, they still wrote an accurate account. In the case of Peter denying Jesus three times on the eve of Jesus arrest, for example, the fact that embarrassing facts were recorded lends weight to the credibility of the account. Their honesty is also attested to in that they were willing to die for the plain and accurate account which gave of the plain and accurate details of the life of Jesus Christ. The writers of the New Testament gained nothing and lost everything for passing on to us the events of the life of Christ.

The internal evidence of the New Testament substantiates its credibility. The writings of the New Testament harmonize with each other. The historical accounts of the Gospels fit well together and in many cases are nearly identical. A common argument against the reliability of the New Testament is that there are supposed differences in the Gospel accounts. This supposed discrepancy is easy to explain. God used the individuals who penned the Bible in a dynamic way. While He inspired what they wrote perfectly, He also allowed their varying perspectives and personalities come through in their writing. Mathew was a Jew and his Gospel declares Christ as the King of the Jews who were his intended audience.

Mark wrote his Gospel to his people – the Romans. Mark is a gospel of action written to people of action. The word “straightway” is used 19 times in the King James Version of the Gospel of Mark to show the action of Jesus just as Romans were also a people of action. The Gospel of Luke was written by a physician and for this reason it is filled with wonderful detail. Luke was a Gentile and the book contains internal evidence that it was written to non-Jewish people as well.

The Gospel of John, my favorite Gospel, was written by John that we might believe that Jesus is the son of God. At least a dozen times the phrase, “Son of God” is used in reference to Jesus in this Gospel. Each writer spoke from his particular perspective and God used the experience and point of view of each individual to shape the message of truth to the world. It is not that the Gospel writers have offered conflicting accounts. It is much more than we are enriched by the varying perspectives of each author as God used them to write His eternal word to humanity. Regardless of the evidence there are always those who will say, “I don’t care what you tell me of what Jesus said nor did, I don’t care about the loads of ancient manuscripts which prove that the word has not changed through the centuries, because you Christians are just too narrow minded. You Christians want everybody to accept that there is only one truth and that you know his name – Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

Truth is narrow. If we were hiking and came to a wide river, and we learned that there was one bridge, down the river a mile or two, we wouldn't stomp in disgust and moan about how that was such a narrow way to think and that the bridge should be right there, where we were. Instead, thankful that there was a bridge, we would go to it and cross over.

Or consider the following. When we go to the doctor, we want a prescription for exactly what we will need to get well. We would be quite startled if the doctor said, "These pills ought to cure you if you're sincere. After all, we believe in health, don't we?" Or would you trust yourself to a surgeon who had received no specialized training but was simply a really good person who meant well? Of course not! You know that truth is narrow. And you will trust your life only to someone who knows exactly what he or she is doing. "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'" (John 14:6 NKJV)

What About The Bible? Part-3, II Timothy 3:16 *The Logos*

Introduction

A young man was once employed as clerk in a telegraph office in a town in England. In some way or other God led him to see that he was a sinner, and this caused him great distress of mind. The young man went to the office one morning greatly troubled, and praying, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13) when the click of his machine told him a message was coming. He looked and saw that it was from Windermere up among the beautiful lakes. There was first the name and residence of the one to whom the dispatch was sent, and then followed these words from the Bible: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), and "In whom we have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). Then followed the name of the person sending it.

This was a strange message to send by telegraph! The explanation of it was this: a servant girl living in the town was distressed about her sins; having a Christian brother she wrote to him of her condition, asking the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

The brother, being unable to write her at once, sent her the dispatch. The poor girl found her way to Jesus through the sweet words from her brother, and so did the young telegraph operator. This was a veritable telegram from Heaven to them both. *God's word did the work.*

Transition

For the last two weeks we have been talking about the trustworthiness of God's word. We have discussed both the truthfulness of both the Old and New Testaments and dependability as God's inspired word. This morning, as we conclude this sermon series, I hope to offer some insight into the ultimate expression of God as found in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the word incarnate. He is the word in the flesh; personified; in material form. Jesus is the very living and breathing expression of God.

Today, we will talk about the **Logos** – that is the word of God in the flesh – the God-man Jesus Christ, who is the fullest expression of God to humanity.

In Christ we have a sort of telegram from God, only this telegram is the living breathing presence of Immanuel – *God with us!* In the Scriptures there are many titles for Christ; Savior, The Bread of Life, The True Vine, The Rock, and many others. Today, we will focus on Jesus as Logos – the purest and truest expression of the nature and character of God to humanity.

“Christ is God acting like God in the lowly raiment of human flesh.” A.W. Tozer

Exposition

John 1:1-8, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.” (NKJV)

These words, the prologue to John's gospel, are no doubt among the richest collection of words in the entire Bible, for here we see a description of Jesus which defies understanding. We learn that Jesus Christ was not merely another wise and powerful prophet of God – He is the very word of God in the flesh. Speaking of them the famous reformation theologian, John Calvin wrote, “Rather should we be satisfied with this heavenly oracle, knowing that it says much more than our minds can take in.”

Here, we will not seek to truly understand that which can not be fully understood, rather, we will seek only to draw near to God as He has spoken to us in Jesus Christ. In this passage of Scripture, in the original writings, John uses the word “Logos.” In English Logos has been translated into word. In the beginning was the Logos – the word – and the Logos was with God – the word was with God – and the Logos was God – the word was God.

But the word Logos loses much of its significance when it is translated merely as word. As with much of the English translations in our Bibles, there is a historical aspect to the original word Logos which is lost in the English rendering because Logos implies much more than simply a word as a part of language or speech. Logos does not mean merely a descriptive device or part of language. It is the embodiment of an idea or the complete expression of a concept.

Some scholars believe that John borrowed the phrase Logos from the Greek language but I am more inclined to agree with many other scholars who believe that John called Jesus the Logos of God – the word of God – in regard to the Old Testament use of the phrase, “the Word of God,” which occurs more than 1,200 times in the Old Testament. Jesus is the expression or communication of the word of God. Jesus embodies the fullness of the Word of God and He is the ultimate communication of God to man.

Illustration

Ancient Greek poetry tells of a warrior, the hero of Troy, dressed in all his military armor, stretching out his arms to embrace his little son before going into battle. His child was frightened as he looked at the helmet and full military dress, and instead of falling into his father's arms he screamed in terror. However, under all the battle array was hidden a heart of fatherly love. The warrior threw off his armor, gathered his little boy in his arms, and held him tightly against his chest where he could hear the beating of his father's heart, as if saying, “I love you, I love you.”

That is what we see in Christ. God has set aside his power and expressed Himself, communicated to us, through the embrace of Jesus Christ in this world. In Christ He does not instill fear but attracts with His love. While God has revealed Himself to us in His written word, His greatest expression of Himself to us is found in Christ. The Bible is God’s written word but Christ is God’s living breathing word! It is the difference between a letter and a visit. It is the difference between a book *about* God and a warm embrace *from* the Father.

When we look at Jesus we see the fullness of God's nature. John 1:18 says, "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." (NKJV) Jesus – the Logos – is the communication of God. It has always been Jesus who has communicated God to His creation. We regularly discuss Christ as King, Christ as Savior, and Christ as Messiah but we do well to remember that Christ is the Logos – the full embodiment of God's word. As followers of Jesus Christ our worship is so much less enriched when we do not possess the whole picture of Christ as Logos.

People have been misunderstanding the true nature of Christ from the very beginning though. Christ's nature has been misunderstood from the very foundations of the Church right up to this very day. It is crucial that we understand who Jesus is in order to understand what God has said in His word. For the last couple of weeks we have been talking about the reliability and nature of the Bible. In regard to these matters, it is crucial that we understand who Jesus is because Jesus *is* the word, the expression, the telegraph of God – the **Logos**.

In the early Church there were many Christian sects who radically reinterpreted the nature of Christ to fit into their particular philosophical or theological leanings. The heritage of these groups is with us still today. The Ebionites were a remnant of extreme Judaizers. They denied the virgin birth and deity of Christ. They believed that Jesus was merely a man who happened to have fulfilled the Old Testament Messianic Prophecies in such a way that God chose him to be the Messiah. We see the modern legacy of this ancient heresy played in modern Liberal Christianity which likewise denies the virgin birth and questions the deity of Christ. These people speak much about the historical person of Jesus but deny the *Logos* – the true nature of Christ.

The Gnostics are an interesting group who I have researched extensively in the past. Their philosophy has survived the ages and is present in many corners of Christian thought today. Just recently I saw a book entitled "The Lost Gospels" which were written by the Gnostics at a popular bookstore. The word "Gnostic" is derived from the Greek word Gnosis which means knowledge. The Gnostics believed that they had gained special and hidden knowledge in regard to the nature of the Logos. There were many schools of Gnosticism. One of the more prominent leaders was Valentinus who founded his school in Rome in the middle of the second century.

Valentinus taught that the material world was evil and was the result of a lesser created god's mistaken creation.

In his system God was the ultimate creator who had created many lesser gods. Gnostic thought survives in the form of the New Age Movement. It is a rejection of the beauty of the physical world and a search for the ultimate beauty of a purely spiritual realm. The Gnostic Gospels are not gospels at all! They are a collection of writings which are profoundly untrue to the nature and true character of Christ. As we look at Jesus we see the heart of God.

Illustration

It was Napoleon who said, "Everything in Christ astonishes me. His spirit overawes me, and His will confounds me. His ideas and His sentiments, the truth which He announces, His manner of convincing are not explained either by human observation or the nature of things. His birth and the history of His life; the profundity of His doctrine, which grapples the mightiest difficulties, and which is of those difficulties the most admirable solution; His Gospel; His apparition; His empire; His march across the ages and the realms – everything is for me a prodigy, a mystery insoluble, which plunges me into a reverie from which I cannot escape – a mystery which is there before my eyes, a mystery which I can neither deny nor explain. Here I see nothing human. The nearer I approach, the more carefully I examine. Everything is above me. Everything remains grand – of a grandeur which overpowers. His religion is a revelation from an Intelligence which certainly is not that of man."

Conclusion

Jesus is the Logos; the communication; the expression of God. For the last two weeks we have been talking about the Bible. We set out to answer the question, "What about the Bible?" After seeing that the Old Testament is reliable and that the central theme of the New Testament is the truth of Jesus, we now see that the object of our faith – Jesus Christ – is the very word of God!

Illustration

The authorship of this book is wonderful. Here are words written by kings, by emperors, by princes, by poets, by sages, by philosophers, by fishermen, by statesmen; by men learned in the wisdom of Egypt, educated in the Schools of Babylon, trained at the feet of rabbis in Jerusalem. It was written by men in exile, in the desert, and in shepherds' tents, in "green pastures" and beside "still waters." Among its authors we find the fishermen, the tax-gatherer, the herdsman, the gatherer of sycamore fruit; we find poor men, rich men, statesmen, preachers, exiles, captains, legislators, judges--men of every grade and class. The authorship of this book is wonderful beyond all other books.

It required fifteen hundred years to write it, and the man who wrote the closing pages of it had no communication with the man who commenced it. How did these men, writing independently, produce such a book? Other books get out of date when they are ten or twenty years old; but this book lives on through the ages, and keeps abreast of the mightiest thought and intellect of every age. God alone has penned this word as He inspired and used the men who wrote it and Jesus Christ is the ultimate source of truth because He in fact is the very word of God to humanity. The Bible can be trusted and so can He!

And how much, in these troubles times where uncertainty abounds and questions besiege us on all sides, how much, do we need to know that there is something which is trustworthy and reliable? How much do we need someone to call on when the days seem dark and we feel alone? How long, oh Lord, will it be before each one of us commits ourselves to opening the pages of God's precious word that its precious truths might fill our souls and give us hope and encouragement and truth and life?

Today, I encourage you recommit, continue, or begin a new setting aside regular time to spend wading through the rich waters of God's word that your soul may find nourishment and peace. What about the Bible? It is our only and sure footing in an age of sifting sand. It is the rock of foundation for our lives.

“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. The 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. But 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. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” (Matthew 7:24-27 NIV)

Amen.