



“An Enduring Faith in a Post- Modern World”

#	Lesson Title	Presented
1	Be Faithful Until Death (<i>Our enemy: Post-modern Thought</i>)	Bible Class
2	GOD IS! (<i>Acts 17 “The Unknown God”</i>)	A.M. Worship
3	GOD Has Communicated (The <i>World Book</i> , The <i>Word Book</i> and the <i>Living Word</i> Christ Jesus; Exodus 3; Hebrews 1:1-2; Psalm 19:1-14)	P.M. Worship
4	God’s Book: <i>Inspired, Inerrant, and Authoritative</i>	Monday
5	The Canon of the Old and New Testament (<i>who decided what would be included, and when was it decided</i>)	Tuesday
6	God Has Preserved the Scriptures (<i>The same truth is ours today to learn, to live and to share it with others who are interested in what the Bible says</i>)	Wednesday

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“Be Faithful Until Death”

2017 Sermon # 01

“An Enduring Faith in a Post-Modern World”

Introduction:

- A. Let's begin with a series of passages that remind us of the importance of serving God day after day, year after year.
1. Our title is based on the words of **Revelation 2:10**.
 2. In a sense we are all stewards of the word of God: **1 Corinthians 4:1-2**.
 3. Faithfulness in sharing and standing for the truth: **2 Timothy 2:1-7**.
 4. Faithfulness is watching, avoiding and growing: **2 Peter 3:17-18**.
- B. The series title is “*An Enduring Faith in a Post-Modern World*”. Defining what we mean is the first order of business in any meaningful discussion.
1. Enduring means “*lasting, permanent*” (Dictionary.com).
 2. Faith might be best illustrated by some passages of Scripture:
 - a. **Hebrews 11:6**: Believing that God is, and that He is rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
 - b. **John 14:1**: “You believe in God, believe also in Me”
 - c. **Hebrews 11:1**: Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
 - i. **Hebrews 11:13-16** illustrates the principle:
 - aa. Abraham and others were seeking a homeland, a heavenly country.
 - bb. In faith “having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland” (**Hebrews 11:13-14**; NKJV)
 - cc. Convenience gave way to conviction, see **Hebrews 11:17**.
 - dd. How could they be so confident? (see **Hebrews 11:16**).
 - c. A Post-Modern World is best explained in simple terms using some of the key words or coined words that it has popularized in our day and time.

I. What is Postmodernism?

- A. According to Dictionary.com: Postmodernism. A general and wide ranging term which is applied to literature, art, philosophy, architecture, fiction, and cultural and literary criticism, among others. Postmodernism is largely a reaction to the assumed certainty of scientific, or objective, efforts to explain reality.
- B. Here are some quotations out of an extensive article on Postmodernism found on the Wikipedia site: (The numbering to identify is by this speaker, bvs)
1. “Postmodernism says that there is no real truth. It says that knowledge is always made or invented and not discovered. Because knowledge is made by people, a person cannot know something with certainty - all ideas and facts are 'believed' instead of 'known'. People believe that they know what the truth is, but they will think that the truth

is something different later. This is the opposite of 'objectivity', which says that the one truth is always there and people have to discover it."

"Since postmodernism says that the truth is just a thing that people invent, people can believe different things and think it is the truth and all be right. Postmodernism says that one person should not try to make another person believe what he believes, because it means nothing to say that one belief is right and the other is wrong. Postmodernism says that if somebody has a belief and tries to make somebody else believe it also, it means that they are just trying to gain power over them."

2. A quote from the final part of the information: "Postmodernist ideas can be seen in [philosophy](#), the study of [culture](#) and [society](#), [literature](#), [architecture](#), [design](#), as well as in [history](#) and [law](#). Postmodernism also led people to think differently about [love](#), [marriage](#), [popular culture](#), and the change in much of the [Western world](#) from an [industrial](#) to [service economy](#)."

C. Let's consider some of the popular terms associated with this concept of 1970-75 and on.

1. Enlightenment: It is believed that with such great insight from the fields of "reason, science and progress apart from supernatural influences" can steer man to a better world and a better understanding of his existence and purpose. Is it enlightenment or is it a trend toward utter darkness?
2. Tolerance: This word has taken on a new meaning in Postmodernism. It does not mean that we learn how to live with our differences, it calls for the eradication of anything that would suggest a certain behavior is wrong and calls for a complete subjugation to the acceptance and endorsement of this 'new' view.
3. Relative truth as opposed to Absolute truth: The only absolute truth is the declaration that there is no absolute truth. Yet John 8:31-36 and John 17:17 declare that truth can be found and followed.
4. Banishment of all suggestions of exclusivity: John 14:6 would go against "pluralism". Pluralism is a theory that there is more than one basic substance or principle" (Dictionary.com). Since no single one can be the only or exclusively accepted one, then all must be right.
5. No singular source of authority (one book is just as good as another)
6. No supernatural power of any nature (no special creation, no miracles, no resurrection, no historical Jesus or anything He claimed.)
7. No room for intolerance (insisting that one has the truth and others do not). This is seen as the worst possible condition. To the postmodernist "absolutism" is a serious danger not because it is seen as error but as intolerance. The error they perceive is linked with the notion that someone could actually insist that some restriction should be maintained on the basis of what they believe, and such a position of intolerance should not be found in a "free and open society" where everything and everyone is considered acceptable. It is ironic how those who insist there is no such thing as absolute truth are absolutely sure that intolerance is a serious matter that must be regulated out of existence "by the laws of a free and open society".
8. No standard of morality is maintained any longer. Evil is good, and good is evil.

There is no sin because there is no accountability except to those whom you may have offended or been “phobic” toward.

9. No traditional marriages exist, and certainly no parents guiding their children or bringing them up in the admonition of the Lord. Instead government legislated day pre-schools are set in place for the very young, and from the earliest grades references to the Bible, to God or to principles of right based on these are banished while new curriculums spew out *the gospel of Post-modernism with its focus on the new sexual freedom they have gained in their enlightenment.* Situation ethics is encouraged because any pre-moral judgments are erroneous in a free and open society, only you can determine what is best for you at any given time in this environment.

II. The Danger for the child of God

- A. Indifference: Ephesians 5:8-15.
- B. Influence of the world prevails: Romans 12:1-2; remember Demas, 2 Timothy 4:10.
- C. Compromise or acceptance of things once rejected: Exodus 23:2.
- D. Less confidence in the existence of God, the Deity of Christ, the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, Creation, Miracles of the Bible, the resurrection; etc.: Hebrews 6:4-12.
- E. Different priorities and goals in life: Ecclesiastes 12:13; Matthew 6:33.
- F. Lose our children and future generations: Ephesians 6:4: “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”; the foolish words of Hezekiah in 2 Kings 20:19: “19 So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the Lord which you have spoken is good!" For he said, "Will there not be peace and truth at least in my days?"(NKJV)

III. How do we hold our ground?

- A. **Remember** that God is on His throne: Psalm 11:3-4; and that in Him and His Son are “hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:2b-3).
 - 1. Remember that the greatest measure of man’s wisdom is but the shallows of God’s wisdom. (1 Corinthians 1:18-25, 1:26-31)
- B. **Recognize** our responsibility: Ephesians 6:10-18.
- C. **Take advantage** of every opportunity to meet with fellow-Christians and to encourage and be encouraged by them: Hebrews 10:24-25.
- D. **Study personally, pray frequently and never lose sight** of what God has promised: 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Timothy 4:13, 15; 1 Thessalonians 5:14-18; Hebrews 11:13-16.
- E. **Be actively involved** in the Lord’s work: 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Philippians 4:9.

Conclusion:

- A. Are you confident of your Savior and your salvation?
- B. Do you see yourself in this passage?
 - 1. Romans 12:9-21
- C. Invitation

“The God *Who Is!*”

2017 Sermon # 02

“An Enduring Faith in a Post-Modern World”

Introduction:

- A. We live in a world that has outsmarted itself.
- B. In spite of so many advances in so many fields of study, we have discarded a most important element of our existence, “The God who created us and sustains us”.
- C. How many people do you know who hold the God of all creation in reverence and respect?
- D. For the next few days (the Lord willing) we are entering into a study that we hope will add to your confidence, inspire you to greater study and encourage you to live and share your hope through Christ as expressed in the Bible.
- E. Before we talk about God’s Book, let’s talk about God.

I. It’s possible to be religious and be misdirected in your service

- A. One of the basic arguments for God’s existence stems from something which was discovered by anthropologists in their study of people in remote locations.
 - 1. No matter where they went they soon realized that people were engaged in worship of ‘Something’ or ‘Someone’.
 - 2. There is within each person a desire to worship and adore that seems to be as much a part of our nature as desire for social connection, attraction to a potential marriage partner, a desire to have children, and other basic needs of our body that call for attention including rest, food, beverage, etc..
 - 3. Paul in his travels to Athens was met with a similar experience.
 - a. According to Acts 17:16: “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols”.
 - b. Paul knew how important the truth was that he was following and in verse 17 we learn: “Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there” (NKJV).
 - c. He was questioned by the leading Epicurean and Stoic philosophers and they wanted him to share what he was preaching with a larger audience at Mars Hill (the Areopagus; vv. 18-21).
 - i. EPICUREANS: “The aim and end of life for every man is his own happiness, and happiness is primarily defined as pleasure. “Wherefore we call pleasure the Alpha and Omega of a blessed life. Pleasure is our first and kindred good. It is the starting-point of every choice and of every

aversion, and to it we come back, inasmuch as we make feeling the rule by which to judge every good thing" (Epicurus, Letter to Menoeceus). (from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright © 1996, 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

- ii. STOICS: The Stoics did not pursue knowledge for its own sake. They speculated about ultimate problems only for the practical purpose of discovering a rule of life and conduct. And in their ethics, the great commandment, "Follow Nature," is interpreted in a distinctly idealistic sense. It means, "Follow reason," as reason inheres both in man and in the universe as a whole. It is submission to Providence or the rational order of the universe, and the fulfilment of man's own rational nature. The life according to Nature is man's supreme good..... He therefore lives a consistent, harmonious life, in conformity with the perfect order of the universe. He discovers this order by knowledge or wisdom." (from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright ©1996, 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

d. Here's how Paul began his lesson at Mar's Hill: "Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD" (Acts 17:22; NKJV).

- 4. Paul did not shy away from sharing his knowledge of the true God with these people. He knew some would receive it and others would reject it or cast it off (Jesus had warned that would happen: Matthew 10:24-26; John 15:20).
- 5. **A person could be zealous, and yet be wrong**
 - a. A tireless worker but for the wrong reason (think of Saul of Tarsus, Acts 22:3-5; 26:9-11).
 - b. He could be evangelistic but sharing the wrong message (think of Apollos before he was redirected and properly instructed by Aquila and Priscilla, Acts 18:24-28).
 - c. They could be a good person committed to doing good things in service to God and others, but still not be a Christian or in Christ (think of Cornelius of Acts 10:1-2, 10:22, and Acts 11)

II. Paul Introduces The UNKNOWN GOD (Acts 17:23-31 with comments)

A. Paul had one intention when he stood before these great thinkers of that day and that was to remind them of One greater than themselves. At verse 23b, we find this

statement: “Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you:” (NKJV)

1. We say “remind” because Romans 1:18-23 declares that everyone knows *but not all want to give recognition to God or respect His role in our existence.*
- B. Any discussion about Bible matters must begin with “GOD” (*Paul does not disappoint us.*)
 1. **GOD is the Creator:** “who made the world and everything in it” (v. 24)
 - a. God (Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit made the world):
 - i. The Father was involved: Revelation 4:11.
 - ii. The Son was involved: John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17;
 - iii. The Holy Spirit was involved: Genesis 1:2; Psalm 104:30.
 - b. One God in three persons: see Matthew 28:18-20: “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Three personages in the Godhead, one name.)
 2. **“He is Lord of heaven and earth”** (every realm visible and invisible, temporal And Eternal: consider Ephesians 1:20-21)
 - a. Christ is now both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).
 3. **He “does not dwell in temples made with hands”**
 - a. Solomon realized the inadequacy of the temple: “And the temple which I build will be great, for our God is greater than all gods. But who is able to build Him a temple, since heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? Who am I then, that I should build Him a temple, except to sacrifice before Him? (2 Chronicles 2:5-6; NKJV)
 - b. This harmonizes with the words of Ephesians 4:6: “one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (NKJV)
 4. **God is self-sufficient and self-existent:** “Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things” (Acts 17:25, NKJV)
 - i. God will always be God *regardless of whether men acknowledge and reverence Him or disregard Him altogether.*
 - ii. However, we need to realize that we could not exist for one moment without God’s provision of “life, breath and all things”
 - iii. Through Jesus we learn that our worship must be in Spirit (*right attitude or disposition of heart*) and in truth (*in harmony with what His word teaches, Colossians 3:17; John 4:23-24*).
 5. **God made all men from one blood** (v. 26)
 - a. **One God as Creator** --- *and one human race as the result.*

- b. Made us all of one blood (humankind).
 - c. The Grecians thought they were 'superior', *Paul's lesson reminds us all we are the same (Creatures of God's Creation)*.
6. **"God determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings"**
- a. Nations rise and fall over time under the hand of God (Jeremiah 18:5-10; Job 12:23)
 - b. Our shrunken world tries to change all this but it fails.
 - i. Some who were at ease in their place of origin have to have additional vitamins to ward off disease in climates to which they have relocated.
6. **God wanted man to find Him and seek Him.** Listen to Paul's words: "so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'" (Acts 17:27-28, NKJV)
- a. There is built within man a desire to have a relationship with God.
 - b. Paul said before that statement he quoted from their poets: "For we are also His offspring"
 - i. Humans are made in the image of God: Genesis 1:26-27.
 - ii. God "in the beginning" made us male and female: Matthew 19:4.
 - c. God desires that we "should seek the Lord" (*look for Him, His presence is evident in the physical creation around us; Romans 1:18-20*).
 - d. He assures us: "that they might grope for Him and find Him" (*He can be found*)
 - e. Paul lets them know "though He is not far from each of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being" (*this is not teaching Pantheism: everything is God and God is everything; but the concept that God is still concerned and involved in our day-to-day situation*).
7. **Paul makes a clear statement regarding the ineffectiveness of believing "that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising".**
- a. His argument: we are God's offspring and we are living, viable, thinking persons.
 - b. Therefore, our Creator is also living, viable, and capable of thinking.
 - c. If we are the offspring of God, then He must be! (*He exists*)
8. **He concludes his lesson by declaring that idolatry might have been endured in the past but will no longer be tolerated.** (See Acts 17:30-31).

- a. Our Creator (the living, thinking being that we are fashioned like) is calling for us to repent (recognize our sin, regret it, reform our lives, resolve in our minds not to do it, and to return to God).
 - b. There will be an appointed day of judgment.
 - c. The world will be judged in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained (Christ)
 - d. We know that is so because “He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead” (v. 31).
- C. Paul completes his sermon and the focus seems to be centered on the “resurrection of the dead.” (*See how the chapter closes in Acts 17:32.*)
- D. Was any good accomplished? (*Consider verse 33.*)

Conclusion:

- A. This passage establishes that God is our Creator and we are His offspring.
- B. This passage helps us understand more about God and our need for Him.
- C. Read Hebrews 11:6, and set it forth.
- D. Are you a diligent seeker?
- E. Invitation.

“God Has Communicated!”

2017 Sermon # 03

“An Enduring Faith in a Post-Modern World”

Introduction:

- A. Kindly join me in Exodus 3.
- B. We want to revisit one of those familiar texts of our childhood Bible Classes, *the story of Moses and the burning bush*.
- C. Our main interest is in verses 1-7 of this text (read them from the Scriptures).
 - 1. Moses approached Mount Horeb (also called Mount Sinai, Exodus 19:11 and the Mountain of God, 3:1).
 - 2. Moses sees “the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed” (v. 2).
 - 3. Moses who had spent some 40 years in the wilderness of Midian and this bush intrigued him (“I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn” (v. 3).
 - 4. God called to him from the midst of the bush (v. 4).
 - 5. Moses immediately answered “Here I am” (v. 4)
 - 6. God told him that “the place where you stand *is* holy ground” and he is to remove his sandals (v. 5).
 - 7. Furthermore, God declared: “I *am* the God of your father---the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (v. 6).
 - 8. Moses “hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God” (v. 6).
- D. Let us stop here and fathom what has unfolded before Moses.
 - 1. There is a bush that is on fire but not consumed (only the Creator God could make or design such a bush and bring about such a result).
 - 2. There is a voice that is speaking out of the bush identified as “the God of your father”. God is not only identifying Himself but is personally addressing or communicating with Moses.
 - 3. Moses is soon to realize that the same God who is Creator is also the God of communication or revelation.
 - 4. If you read on in the immediate context you will see that God has work for Moses to do and a task to perform on behalf of God’s people (the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) (see Exodus 3:8-22 and beyond).
- E. It is that very connection between God our Creator (the theme of the previous lesson) and God the Communicator (the theme of this lesson) that we want to reinforce.

I. The First Two Ways God Communicates

- A. Our next stop in Scripture is found in Psalm 19:1-14 (read the Scripture).
 - 1. Psalm 19 seems to fall readily into two parts.
 - 2. Vv. 1-6: The World Book (the physical, visible creation)
 - 3. Vv. 7-11: The Word Book (the Bible).

B. The World Book (the physical, visible creation)

1. The heavens declare the glory of God (that which is over our heads, the realm of clouds and beyond which is spoken of in the next expression).
2. And the firmament shows His handiwork (firmament: think of the expanse of space, the stars [constellations: Job 9:9]; planets, the sun, and the moon, galaxies, etc).
 - a. Man is still amazed and has put the Hubble Telescope into orbit and sent various manned and unmanned spacecraft to further investigate.
 - b. The movement of the sun creates our seasons (Genesis 8:22), the rising and setting of the sun marks day and night. The movement of the moon has bearing on the tides rising and receding, and also marked Hebrews months and seasons. Space journeys to the moon are sent to the location where the moon will be in its orbit in the time it takes the spaceship to arrive there, not where it is now.
3. Their testimony is universal in scope (vv. 2-4)
 - a. Day after day, night after night (like clockwork).
 - b. No speech or language where their voice is not heard (observable by all).
 - c. Their line throughout all the earth and their words to the end of the world. (they speak to those who want to hear, not literally but by their presence and by their action).
4. One of the greatest testimonies to God's Creation is the Sun (vv. 4b-6)
 - a. It has its place in the firmament ("a tabernacle for the sun").
 - b. It comes forth like that radiant bridegroom out of his chamber.
 - c. Rejoices like a strong man to run its race (same speed, same pace)
 - d. Always rises in the east and sets in the west on planet Earth.
 - e. "Nothing is hidden from its heat" (v. 6).

C. The Word Book (the written communication of God; vv. 7-11)

1. Notice the variety of names by which it is referred in these verses:
 - a. **The law of the Lord** *is* perfect (v. 7)
 - b. **The testimony of the Lord** *is* sure (v. 7)
 - c. **The statutes of the Lord** *are* right (v. 8)
 - d. **The commandment of the Lord** *is* pure (v. 8)
 - e. **The fear of the Lord** *is* clean (v. 9)
 - f. **The judgments of the Lord** *are* true *and* righteous altogether (v. 9).
2. Now consider what they can do for us:
 - a. **Perfect:** "converting the soul" (v. 7)
 - b. **Sure:** "making wise the simple" (v. 7)
 - c. **Right:** "rejoicing the heart" (v. 8)
 - d. **Pure:** "enlightening the eyes" (v. 8)
 - e. **Clean:** "enduring forever" (v. 8)
 - f. **True and Righteous altogether:** "desired" "sweeter" and capable of "warn(ing) us"
3. Consider what they compare to:

- a. "More to be desired *are they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold" (v. 10).
 - b. "Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb" (v. 10).
 - c. "Moreover by them Your servant is warned" (v. 11)
 - d. "*And* in keeping them *there is* great reward" (v. 11).
4. What is the result for someone who follows this communication of God?
- a. **We can learn about our errors** (reproof): "Who can understand *his* errors?"
 - b. **It can help us overcome secret *faults*** (less apparent sins can be corrected): "Cleanse me from secret *faults*" (v. 12).
 - c. **It can restrain us from presumptuous *sins*** (things that can overpower us and that we might reason are alright): "Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous *sins*; let them not have dominion over me."
 - d. **It can teach us how to find forgiveness**: "Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression"
 - e. **It can guide me through life and lead me onward**: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer" (v. 14).

II. God's Final Living Message and Messenger

- A. We invite you to join us in Hebrews 1:1-4 (read it).
- 1. **Various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers** (Old Covenant times and before).
 - 2. **Has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son**
 - a. Appointed heir of all things (v. 2)
 - b. Through whom He made the worlds (v. 2)
 - c. Who being the brightness of *His* glory (v. 3)
 - d. And the express image of His person (v. 3)
 - e. Upholding all things by the word of His power (v. 3)
 - f. When He had by Himself purged our sins (v. 3)
 - g. Sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (v. 3)
 - h. Having become so much better than the angels (v. 4)
 - i. By inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they (v. 4).
- B. Here is the entrance of this **living Word** into our world
- 1. John 1:1: In the beginning...was The Word, was with God, was God
 - 2. John 1:14: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, Only Begotten
 - 3. He is referred to as "the Word of God" in Revelation 19:13 (the same One is called: Faithful and True, King of Kings and Lord of Lords in this context)
- C. Consider some of the ways Jesus spoke of His message:
- 1. Matthew 7:21-28: "he who does the will of My Father in heaven"; "these sayings of Mine"; wise man and foolish man; "taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes"
 - 2. John 4:10-14: "living water", "the water that I shall give him will never thirst", "shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life".
 - 3. John 8:31-32: Abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed; "you shall know

the truth, and the truth shall make you free”

4. John 12:48-50: Two choices: believe or not believe; the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day; “the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, what I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak”

D. The work started by Jesus would continue through His apostles and prophets after His return to heaven:

1. John 16:12-15: Jesus had much more to say but it would be revealed to the apostles by the Holy Spirit, they would continue the work He began (John 14:25-26; 15:26-27 and 16:12-15).
2. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21: God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself; Apostles as the ambassadors of Christ, “as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God”
3. Apostles and prophets were equipped to do this work.
 1. Ephesians 2:20: “the built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.”
 2. Ephesians 3:5: “it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.”
 3. 1 Peter 1:12 “through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit.”

Conclusion:

- A. There is a God!
- B. God has spoken or communicated.
 1. Through the World Book (His physical creation; cf. Romans 1:18-23).
 2. Through the Word Book (The Bible; Psalm 119:104).
 3. Through the Living Word (Christ) and those who continued after Him (apostles and prophets).
- C. The World Book can convince us that God is and His physical creation testifies to His Eternal Power and Godhead (Romans 1:18) but does little to reveal His person, His will or what He wishes for us to know.
- D. The Word Book can make known God’s will for our lives.
- E. The Living Word (Christ) can help us in our knowledge of God, His attributes, and His will.
 1. He shows the fulfilment of the multiplied Messianic promises (Luke 24:44-47)
 2. He was/is the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9; John 8:19).
 3. He teaches us the Father’s will and then lives it before us (John 9:4; 17:4-5).
 4. He is Immanuel with us (Matthew 1:23) and He said “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).
- F. Invitation to follow God’s Son.

“God’s Book: *Inspired, Inerrant, Authoritative*”

2017 Sermon # 04

“An Enduring Faith in a Post-Modern World”

Introduction:

- A. There was a time when the Lord’s people were known for their acquaintance with what the Bible said and their willingness to turn to the Scriptures to demonstrate what they believed (1 Peter 4:11).
- B. I was fortunate enough to grow up in that atmosphere where every Bible class was an exercise in discerning the truth revealed in the Scripture, based on the facts made known in that immediate context and in light of the entire revelation of God.
- C. When I first entered the pulpit it was expected that I would present Bible book, chapter and verse for what I was preaching and teaching. If one did that adequately they would hide themselves behind the cross of Christ and glorify God.
- D. Things have changed in what is considered acceptable preaching today and yet:
 - 1. The message of God is still just as true as it was almost fifty years ago.
 - 2. Just as needed as the power of God unto salvation as it was then.
 - 3. And it is just as relevant to the soul who wants to please and glorify God as it was then.
- E. The Bible hasn’t changed but our attitude toward the Bible has.
- F. The truth that is found in God’s word has not weakened but our appreciation of it has.
- G. The God behind it has not diminished it but our lack of respect for it has.
- H. In our last study we saw that the God of Creation is also the God of Revelation.
 - 1. His Eternal Power and Godhead are evident through His physical creation. General Revelation as this is sometimes called might better be remembered by calling it “The World Book”. It speaks of God’s existence, intelligence and design but cannot declare to us what He desires of us (Psalm 19:1-6).
 - 2. We observed that God has made a Special Divine Revelation to us in two distinct forms:
 - a. The Word of God (Bible) given by inspiration (our subject for tonight), we call it “The Word Book”. Written revelation of His mind.
 - b. The Living Word (Jesus the Christ) who by example, teaching and person reveals exactly what God is like so that we might follow Him and those He sent forth (viz. the apostles and the prophets of the New Testament; Ephesians 2:20). Living person as a teacher, example and Savior.

I. Some simple observations about the Bible:

- A. The Bible is more than a book, it is a virtual library of books.
- B. The Bible is *not* worthy of worship (Worship is for God exclusively; Revelation

22:8-9: not angels, not men, not idols, not books or artifacts).

- C. Its *origin* sets it apart from other books: It was "given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- D. Its *nature* sets it apart from other books: It is a revelation of God's will and mind for the sons of men (1 Corinthians 2:11,12; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; et al).
- E. Its *message* is farther reaching in scope than other books: It pictures an Eternal God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) involved in creation of all (Genesis 1:1,2; Revelation 4:11; John 1:3), the revelation of God's will (John 16:13-16), salvation for lost mankind (Ephesians 3:8-11; 1 John 4:9,10,14; Ephesians 3:5; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14), and the eternal state at the end of time (Matthew 25:46).
- F. Its *harmony* is unequalled in any other multiple writer effort: It was written by over 40 different men, who themselves came from a diversity of backgrounds, and a variety of time frames spanning several thousand years. Only inspiration could accomplish such a feat. (*Borrowed but have misplaced the source, bvs*)
- G. Its *concise statements* about matters that most of would tend to write on and on.
 - 1. The healing of the blind man in John 9:1-6, with one summary statement of what unfolded in verse 6: "So he went and washed and came back seeing".
 - 2. When Nathan the prophet confronted David about his conduct with Bathsheba, he gave a simple parable and then declared: "You are the man" (2 Samuel 12:7, NKJV)
- H. Its *unbiased reports* of both the good and the bad in people. We tend to either be for someone or against them, but the Bible speaks of David in his excellence as king and in his utter sinfulness after having defiled a faithful soldier's wife, trying everything to cover it up, and finally having the man carry his own death warrant back to the commanding officer of the day. Some might wonder about how David could be a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 16:1; Acts 13:22), but if you follow him carefully you will see that though David may sin or transgress that he is soon mournful over what he has done and seeks to correct it before God.
- I. It is *clear and plain manner* of declaring that there is reward for good doing and punishment for evil doing. It shows that just as certain as there is a place of reward (heaven), so also there is a place of punishment (hell). It speaks clearly of a judgment day and a final estate for man beyond this life. Men do not like to address those issues and may try to candy-coat them, but God through His word makes it very, very clear. We will want to do everything within our power to avoid the one and enter the other.
- J. It is *always relevant*. The scenery on the stage may have changed (advance of electronics, computerization, appliances of convenience, cars, etc.) but the people

are still as they were in the beginning (creatures of God's creation and in need of some insight that is greater than they can find in themselves or other humans). The Bible may not identify every modern innovation or expression but it covers the entire range of our needs and never needs an updating except in the minds of men who would rather rewrite it to the texture of Pabulum and deliver it with the lackluster approach of a Casper Milquetoast. Unlike Encyclopedias of the past that required yearly or annual update volumes, the Bible remains as it was and is still fully capable of doing what God intended when He sent it forth (Isaiah 55:11).

I. The Bible is INSPIRED of God (God has made it known to men)

- A. James E. Cooper, in his lecture on "The Inspiration of the Bible" asked, "If some stranger introduced himself, you would accept his self-identification as correct unless you had information to the contrary. The Bible should be treated with the same degree of fairness. We must accept what it says about its origin, unless evidence is produced that would prove otherwise." (F. C. Lectures 1990, p. 147)
- B. Our study of inspiration finds a good starting place in 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
"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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (NKJV).
 - 1. "All" includes both Old and New Testament Scriptures.
 - 2. God's Spirit inspired both the Old Testament and New Testament writers (1 Peter 1:9-12).
 - 3. God breathed it out (it is His book, His revelation to man).
 - 4. It is sufficient for our every need: doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in Righteousness (2 Timothy 4:1-5 parallels these things as essentials in our preaching).
 - 5. Result: the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.
- C. 2 Peter 1:3: "As His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness" (NKJV).
- D. 2 Peter 1:19-21: "prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (NKJV).
- E. Let's consider some passages that will help us appreciate "inspiration" as shown in the Bible and as the method by which God's will in heaven could be made known on earth (Consider first the words of Matthew 6:10 in the model prayer, Matthew 16:19).
 - 1. Consider the words of this promise that Jesus gave to the apostles in Matthew 10:16-20: "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about **how** or **what** you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it

- is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you” (NKJV)
- a. Do not worry about **HOW** (the manner of your speech, tone, inflection, etc.)
 - b.. Do not worry about **WHAT** (the content of the answer that you will make)
 - c. “For it will be given you at that hour what you should speak”
 - d. “For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you”
2. John 14:26; 15:26-27; and 16:5-11, 12-15 all speak of the Holy Spirit coming upon the apostles and what would result (they would speak by inspiration).
 - a. John 14:26: “... He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” (NKJV)
 - b. John 15:26-27: “... He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.” (NKJV)
 - c. John 16:5-11: “... And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.” (NKJV)
 - d. John 16:12-15: “... He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.” (NKJV)
 - e. Ephesians 2:20 declares: “having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.”)
 3. 1 Corinthians 2:13: “These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” (NKJV)
 4. 1 Corinthians 14:37: “If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.” (NKJV)
 5. Galatians 1:11-12: “But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ” (NKJV)
 6. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 helps us understand what resulted from inspiration.
 7. And others as well.
- F. Henry M. Morris, in his *Many Infallible Proofs*, p 157 shows that **there are references in the Old Testament to confirm it too was inspired of God.**
1. In the Pentateuch (first 5 books of the Bible): 680 claims of inspiration.
 2. In the Historical books (Joshua through Nehemiah): 418 claims of inspiration.
 3. In the poetical books (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon): 195 claims of inspiration.
 4. In the prophetic books (Major 5 and Minor 12): 1,307 claims of inspiration.
 5. That means over 2,600 claims of inspiration in the Old Testament alone.
- G. As a result we maintain that in the original copies that **the Bible is inspired in all**

its parts and therefore we believe in “plenary inspiration”.

H. We believe the Bible text was not just left to guess work but was watched over carefully by God’s Spirit **to the very precise words that were used in the original**, and hence we believe in “verbal inspiration” (see 1 Corinthians 2:13 which speaks of “words” which the Holy Spirit teaches).

II. The Bible is *Inerrant* ((The original manuscripts were without error, flawless, perfect).

A. Here is a significant point that shows the confidence we can have in the Bible:

1. It’s silence can be used to show that it recorded nothing regarding a matter (Silence is not a blank check to be filled in but a check without any information on it) in order to make a point: see Hebrews 7:13-14.

B. Ronny Milliner, in his *The Inspiration of the Bible* spoke of the exactness of the Scriptures in this fashion (p. 15):

1. Argument from a single phrase: “Hebrews 12:27: “Now this, ‘Yet once more,’ indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, ...”
2. Argument from a single word: “Matthew 22:45, “If David then calls Him ‘Lord’, how is he his son?”
3. Argument based on the singularity of a word. “Galatians 3:16, “...He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ.
4. Argument based on the tense of a verb. Matthew 22:32, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob...” [*The point being that God is, was and always will be the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, for He is the God of the living and the dead (dead only to this earth-life, bvs).*]

C. Deuteronomy 18:18-22 provides a test to see if a prophet is speaking the truth or from his own imagination.

1. We are not speaking of vague generalizations but specific, identifiable details.
2. Failure to have it unfold as it was set forth nullifies the prophet and the prophecy.
3. Consider the words of Luke 24:44-47.
 - a. “All things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me” (v. 44).
 - b. “And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures” (v. 45).
 - c. “Thus it written, and thus it was necessary...” (v. 46)
4. Watch carefully the language of 1 Corinthians 15:3:
 - a. “For I delivered first of all that which I also received:”
 - b. “that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (v. 3)
 - c. “and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (v. 4).
5. Let’s draw one from another source. Remember when the wise men arrived in the vicinity of Herod looking for the Christ child (it could have been almost two years after His birth). Herod summoned the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.
 - a. Watch carefully how they answer in Matthew 2:5-6.

- b. He in turn sent the wise men to Bethlehem to search out the child.
- D. One illustration of accurate fulfilment of Scripture.
 1. The text is found in Ezekiel 26:3-14.
 2. History bears out that Nebuchadnezzar was the first to destroy the city on the Mainland.
 3. Years later Alexander the Great took the remains of the mainland city and built a causeway out to the island they now occupied as Tyre.
 4. He destroyed it so that it would become a place for the drying of nets. It has never again been a place of habitation even as God revealed by His Spirit.

III. It is *Authoritative*: (It has everything we need to know in order to live the best life now and be among the saved in the world to come if we respect and uphold it.)

- A. 2 Timothy 3:16-17: last portion of the verse 17: “that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work”
- B. 2 Peter 1:3: “has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness” (NKJV)
- C. We don’t need more than we have:
 1. 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 and Acts 15:6-18 (partial gives way to perfect)
 - a. Best illustration: the issue over circumcision of the Gentile converts.
 - b. In the partial period bring Peter, Barnabas and Paul and James to each testify concerning God’s desire for the Gentiles to be included in gospel.
 - i. Peter argues that he was sent by God to the Gentiles and God set the approved example before them of receiving them on an equal footing. Here is how Peter put it, “So, God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as *He did* to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:8, NKJV).
 - ii. Barnabas (a prophet, Acts 13:1) and Paul reasoned from necessary conclusion or inference. “Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders of God had worked through them among the Gentiles” (Acts 15:12, NKJV).
 - iii. James sets forth a direct command or statement by quoting from the Old Testament prophet Amos and showing God had intended to include the Gentiles in the blessings associated with Christ “from eternity” (Acts 15:14-18)
 - c. It is important to note that the resolution is expressed in this fashion: “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things” (Acts 15:28, NKJV).
 - d. In the complete or perfect revelation period (in which we find ourselves) we only have to turn to Galatians 6:15: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation” (NKJV).
 2. Jude 3: “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend

- earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” (NKJV)
3. There are several very stern warnings from God about His word:
 - a. Deuteronomy 4:2: “ You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.” (NKJV)
 - b. Proverbs 30:6: “Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.” (NKJV)
 - c. Revelation 22:18-19: “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.” (NKJV)
 - D. 1 Peter 4:11: “If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.”
 - E. Several passages point out the need to hear and do the will of God: James 1:21-25: “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves”; Matthew 7:21-23: hear and do; Revelation 22:14-15: “Blessed are those who do His commandments”
 - F. Here are but a few passages that speak of what we gain by following God’s will as revealed in the Bible: Ecclesiastes 12:13: “this is the whole of man”; Isaiah 8:20, failing to speak according to the law and the testimony is to walk without light; Psalms 119:104-106: “Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.” Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I have sworn and confirmed that I will keep Your righteous judgments”; Psalms 119:130: “The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple;” 1 Timothy 4:12-13; 15-16.
 - G. It is intelligible (capable of being understood).
 1. Nehemiah 8:1-8 illustrates it could be grasped by accountable people.
 2. 2 Corinthians 1:13-14: “13 For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end 14 (as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.” (NKJV)
 3. Ephesians 3:1-7: “...by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ:”
 4. Ephesians 5:17: “Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (NKJV)
 5. Some find an excuse for their lack of study on the basis of Peter’s words in 2 Peter 3:15-16, but that is vastly different than what Peter stated.
 6. Even the apostle believed others could understand, see 2 Corinthians 1:13-14.

Conclusion:

- A. Don’t ever think that the Bible is just so much black printing on white paper.

- B. Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” (NKJV)
- C. Isaiah 55:11: “11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” (NKJV)
- D. 1 Thessalonians 2:13: “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.” (NKJV)
- E. 1 Peter 1:22-25: “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because “All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, But the word of the Lord endures forever.” Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.” (NKJV)
- F. Luke 4:4: “But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'" (NKJV)
- G. Our biggest problem today is not that we need a new revelation, or a new paradigm but that we need to be students of the word who read it, meditate upon it, apply it and then share it.
- H. Invitation.

“God’s Book: The Canon of the Old and New Testament

(who decided what would be included, and when was it decided)

2017 Sermon # 05

“An Enduring Faith in a Post-Modern World”

Introduction:

- A. Throughout my years of preaching I cannot remember hearing any lessons on today’s subject, “The Canon of the Old and New Testament”.
- B. That does not mean that the subject has never been addressed, for I have in my library several Lecture Books that have excellent lessons on this subject (including F.C. Lectures: 1990 with “The Canonicity of the Bible” by Martin Pickup; 1999 with “The Problem of the Canon” by Shane Scott; 2008 with “How Can I Be Sure The Bible Contains The Right Books” by Tom Hamilton; along with other lessons on Inspiration and Inerrancy in the same volumes).
 - 1. That is only what can be found among their lectures and there is a lot of other writing that can also be researched on this subject as long as we are aware that some has a Calvinist slant and some has a Catholic slant and that truth must be discerned from error.
 - a. The Calvinist slant suggests that if the Holy Spirit convinces you at heart that they are part of the canon, then you can believe them. This is not vastly different from what the Mormon encourages early in a study, to pray about their revelations and when your heart agrees you will want to learn more.
 - b. The danger of the Catholic position is that it wants you to exalt the Catholic church as the institution that has supreme insight over the Scriptures, producing them, protecting them and authorizing them.
- C. This was one of the subjects that was suggested for this series and it grew from that. It is my hope that all of us will have a better grasp of the subject when we finish this lesson.
- D. “Canon” as used here means a “rule” or a “measure”.
- E. What we are most interested in centers in three main questions:
 - 1. Who decided whether a book belonged in the Bible collection or not?
 - 2. On the basis of what criteria were books chosen, and by whom?
 - 3. When was the ‘canon’ actually established?
- F. One common understanding is that a series of church councils met and decided over a course of 400 years what the Canon would consist of. This is what provides the argument that Catholicism gave the rest of the world the Bible, a view adopted by many including Protestants.
 - 1. I reject that notion for it contrary to the autonomous nature of the church that Jesus said He would build and the keys He would supply (Matthew 16:18-19).
 - 2. History shows that the Catholic Church did all it could to keep the Bible away

From the common folk for many years and counted those who participated in its availability as heretics to be punished or executed.

- G. Another common notion is that over 350-400 years the church (seen as some form of an institution vastly different than the autonomous congregations pictured in the New Testament) slowly determined what would be included and what would be questioned about belonging in the canon of the Scriptures.
- H. For all intents and purposes the Old Testament canon was established years before the first coming of Jesus Christ to this earth, and the New Testament canon was recognized nearer to the early A.D. 100's (approximately AD 110). The reason for believing this will be set forth in the lesson.
- I. Some in an effort to ultimately support the notion that Catholicism is owed a debt of gratitude for establishing the canon of Scripture will declare that much of the decision making was done at what is called The Council of Jamnia in about AD 90. Though ancient church history (commonly referred as the church fathers) mentions the meeting at Jamnia, it also reveals that those who met there "did not meet to add to or take from the canon, but to answer questions about some of the books that were included such as Ezekiel, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Proverbs and Esther". It has been summarized by saying that they "re-evaluated and re-affirmed the validity of a canon which had long been accepted". (a partial quote of Martin Pickup's material from FC Lectures of 1990, p. 168)
- J. One writer on the subject stated: "The apostles and other inspired writers (prophets) authored the various gospels and epistles of the New Testament, and the early Christians simply recognized these works as inspired and circulated them throughout the empire. This is Dunbar's conclusion: "The apparently spontaneous development of the New Testament canon suggests that is more appropriate to speak of a recognition rather than a selection of the New Testament books" (Dunbar, David G.; "The Biblical Canon," *Hermeneutics, Authority and Canon*, as quoted by and surrounded by words of Shane Scott, *The Problem of the Canon*, FC Lectures 1999, p. 141)

I. The Old Testament Canon

- A. The 39 books that make up our Old Testament were counted differently by the physical descendants of Abraham (the Jews).
 - 1. Those who have studied that in detail have pointed out that whether the count was 22 books or 24 books, they amounted to the same books as we have in our Old Testament.
 - 2. The difference in count comes from the immediate coupling of all the two volume books as one: 1 and 2 Samuel; 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles become single volumes counting but one book for each. Ezra and Nehemiah are counted as one, and the 12 Minor Prophets are considered one book (that should equal 24, as indicated by the Masoretic text.)
 - 3. To get a count of 22 books involves appending Lamentations to Jeremiah and attaching the text of Ruth to the book of Judges.

- B. The LXX or Septuagint was a Greek edition of the Old Testament Scriptures that was brought in almost two hundred (200) years before Christ walked on this earth.
1. According to some it was the text of the Old Testament most often quoted by Christ during His earthly ministry.
 2. Although real early copies of this have not been preserved, it is believed that the original may not have included the Apocryphal books as later versions do.
 3. Jesus did not argue against its accuracy when He used it.
 4. It contained the accepted and received books of the Old Testament years before Jesus came, so any dating effort later than that is too late.
- C. One of the greatest proofs we have of the confidence we can place in the Books that make up our Old Testament is the recognition of it by Jesus the Christ.
1. Bro. Ferrell Jenkins reprinted an 1889 study of Aticus G. Haygood in 1963 and made it available for purchase at a reasonable cost. It was recommended to me and I acquired a copy for perusal.
 2. The original study was called "The Man of Galilee".
 3. Haygood treats Matthew, Mark, Luke and John as legitimate historic records about Jesus that help us identify His Deity (Godhood).
 4. We mention that because Christ is going to be our witness as to the completeness and accuracy of the Old Testament Scriptures and the New Testament Scriptures as we will demonstrate shortly.
 5. If we believe that Jesus is the Christ, we will believe everything He was, everything He did, and everything He taught: *His Statements, His Promises and His commands*.
- D. Before drawing some quotes from Jesus about the Scriptures (the Old Testament will be shown first and then the New Testament Scriptures) we want to be aware of two significant things:
1. According to Martin Pickup (op cit, p. 167): "Every book of the Jewish canon is expressly quoted in the New Testament except Judges/Ruth, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Ezra/Nehemiah, and Chronicles."
 2. Again, from Martin Pickup, op. cit., p. 169: "It is significant that Jesus and the New Testament writers never quote from the Apocryphal Books."
- E. How significant were the Old Testament Scriptures to Jesus?
1. Luke 24:25-27: refers to them as "foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!" At verse 27: "And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (NKJV).
 2. Luke 24:44-49: see the text.
 - a. "that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms" (the way the Jew would describe the Old Testament library of books).
 - b. "And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures" (v. 45; NKJV).
 - c. Watch carefully these words: "Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and

thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46-47, NKJV).

- d. They (the apostles) would be witnesses of these things.
3. On one occasion he spoke of people who were mistaken (“erred” in the KJV) because they did not believe in a resurrection in the last day. Here is what He had to say in Matthew 22:29 to the Sadducees: “Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.” (NKJV).
4. In a chapter where Jesus gives witnesses to His true identity, we find a couple of references that show His confidence in the Scriptures and His disappointment with others because of their failure to believe them.
 - a. John 5:39-40: “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life” (NKJV)
 - b. John 5:45-47: “Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you — Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” (NKJV)
5. Matt 26:52-56: When Jesus is arrested in the garden and Peter cuts off a man’s ear.
 - a. Consider the question of verse 54: “How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?”
 - b. “But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled” (v. 56, NKJV)
 - c. Remember His earlier words of Matthew 5:18: “For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled” (NKJV).
6. John 7:23 reveals that among the Jews circumcision was done even on the Sabbath “so that the law of Moses should not be broken”
7. John 10:34-36 supplies this insight to us: “Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, “You are gods”’? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? (NKJV)

II. The Canon of the New Testament

- A. The actual books that make up our New Testament were written between the years 50 AD and 96 AD approximately.
- B. Encouragement to share was woven within some of the writings and history reveals that many were aware of the various books that were being recognized and respected for what they had to share and offer beyond the spoken word.
- C. No special committee was formed, nor was some declaration from heaven issued

that listed the books that would ultimately be recognized as the N.T. canon.

- D. Books were received and included on the basis of the authority behind them, the conviction that they were inspired of God and suitable to be circulated and shared among the people of God in various geographical locations drew them together into what was recognized as the essential elements of a library that we call the New Testament today.
- E. Martin Pickup, in his 1990 Lecture on the “Canonicity of the Bible” commented about “Therefore, the question which Christians have always needed to ask is this: “What apostolic, inspired writings are available to us? Whatever apostolic teaching is available would be what Christ said we should follow as our standard, i.e., the New Testament canon. The equity of God makes it certain that He would see to the composition and preservation of a sufficient number of inspired writings so that men throughout time could know His complete will.” (p. 169).
- F. We have already studied the Inspiration of the Scriptures and in that we included abundant references from the New Testament to demonstrate that the writers were convinced and convicted that they were making known God’s will (see an earlier lesson in the series).
 - 1. Peter spoke of Paul’s writing and linked it with “the rest of the Scriptures” (2 Peter 3:15-16). Paul is associated with thirteen (13) of our New Testament epistles: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus. Peter’s inclusion of Paul’s writings with “the rest of the Scriptures” is an indication of their acceptance very early, even if some of them arrived later than that time.
 - 2. Paul in 1 Timothy 5:18 prefaces his quotes with these words: “For the Scripture says” then he quotes a passage from Deuteronomy 25:4 and the exact words of Luke 10:7, counting Luke’s quotation as part of the Scriptures.
- G. In his F.C. Lecture of 1990, Martin Pickup had included a chart that showed the places the New Testament books were evidenced by AD 110. That chart is to be found on pp. 177-178 of his lecture and you can access it there. We are simply going to point out that according to his research and the chart that most of the books of the New Testament had a fairly wide circulation by that time with a few exceptions that might have more to do with the date at which they were written or the speed with which they were passed on to others which would include the book of James and the Book of Jude.
- H. Modern critics and even some preachers try to deny the authenticity of certain books, chapters or teachings within the New Testament. Personally, I get very worried when someone suddenly decides that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are spoken of as not addressing any matters of significance for the New Covenant, when what they are trying to avoid is what Jesus teaches very clearly on Marriage and acceptable Divorce only for fornication (Matthew 19:3-12).
 - 1. Luther (1522 AD) referred to James as “epistle of straw” because he didn’t appreciate its handling of faith and works in James 2 or the epistle in general. In his translation of the New Testament, Luther moved Hebrews and James out

of the usual order, to join Jude and the Revelation at the end, and differentiated these books from the other books which he consider “the true and certain chief books of the New Testament.His views on some of these books changed in later years, and became more positive.” (Luther also questioned the inclusion of Esther but included the apocryphal books between the Old and New Testaments with the title “Apocrypha” because the LXX included them, but he noted they were for enjoyment by reading and not of the same nature as the other books.)

III. Can we be confident that we have the Word of God?

- A. Just to be clear, we cannot turn to a given passage that will give a listing from God of all of the New Testament Books that we should have or follow.
- B. We are encouraged to be ready to give an answer to any who ask concerning the faith which is within us (1 Peter 3:15) and there is abundant resources that we can search and gather from in this area of study.
- C. When all is said and done, we must by faith accept that the God who made us, and was concerned enough about us to communicate to us, has also preserved what we need to know in order to be saved. That information is found in the Bibles of today, based on abundant manuscript finds that take us closer to the inspired originals.
 - 1. Finds that have unfolded by the diligent efforts of archaeologists have only confirmed that what we have in our modern English versions is in sync with the oldest manuscripts, not drastically modified or altered.
- D. Our faith and confidence in Jesus as the Christ gives us confidence in receiving the 39 books of the Old Testament and with His great care to ensure that His apostles and prophets would continue the work of revelation He started (Hebrews 1:1; Ephesians 2:20; John 14, 15, 16; et al) we can have confidence in our 27 books of the New Testament which complete our Bible.
- E. Time and space prohibit us from including the supporting quotes of what are commonly called “the church fathers” and historians like Josephus who show us a settled view of the canon early in the second century.
- F. Why do the Catholic’s have the apocryphal books in their Bible? These were authorized by the Catholic church to be officially included much later than the first or second century. A study of the actual books they include will reveal that many of them do not add information to the existing books of the Old Testament. They are referred to as “of unknown origin” because that is the grouping they belong to. Some like 1 Maccabees provides historical information about the children of Israel in the period between the Old and New Testaments. Some of those books address matters of “praying to the saints” and a form of “purgatory” which have been adopted by the Catholic church, but which would otherwise be contrary to Scripture.

Conclusion:

- A. May we encourage you to become familiar with the content of the Bible.
- B. A dear friend of mine once told me that in all the reading I do, the Bible needs

to be a great part. You can't teach what you don't know, and you can't know unless you study the word of God (Romans 10:17).

C. There is no better guidebook for your life than the word of God.

D. May we encourage you to read it, study it, follow it and share it.

E. Invitation.

“God Has Preserved the Scriptures”

(The same truth is ours today to learn, to live and to share with those who are interested in what the Bible says)

2017 Sermon # 06

“An Enduring Faith in a Post-Modern World”

Introduction:

- A. Although we did not delve into the transformation of the Bible into our modern, standard versions, one thing is certain and that is that God has preserved His word for our generation and for those yet to come.
- B. In a study that I entertained in my own work in Bancroft, Ontario, Canada we learned that what we have in our standard English versions of Scripture is a reasonable facsimile of what was there in the original manuscripts.
- C. There is more early manuscript evidence for the Bible than for any other writing in the world.
 - 1. Even if earlier manuscripts are discovered by those who dig and research into the past, they add support to the accuracy of the translators and scribes who penned them.
 - 2. This does not surprise me in the least for if God could inspire the writers to pen His word and will in the first place, He is fully capable of preserving it to the day of judgment.
- D. Early in the “Sermon on the Mount” Jesus stated the reason for His coming in these words: “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law and the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled” (Matthew 5:17-18, NKJV).
- E. Jesus on one occasion stated: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (Matthew 24:35, NKJV).
- F. When others failed to heed His teachings Jesus reminded them that one day they would meet them again, He said, “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.” (John 12:48; NKJV)
- G. According to Paul as he wrote by inspiration in Romans 2:16: “in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel” (NKJV)
- H. In this last study of this current series it seemed appropriate that we encourage each one here to appreciate the Scriptures, to seek to learn what they teach, to live what we learn from the Bible, and to share what we find with others who are truly interested in what the Bible teaches.
- I. People today can find smooth and palatable religion in any shape, variety or form they desire but it will give them a momentary warm feeling of delight in their emotions, a sense of strength without much effort and a feeling that they

have arrived, or they can be challenged at every level of their being: intellect, will or purpose, and emotion. To do that we must provide the food that their soul hungers for, the pure word of God. As Jesus responded to the devil in the garden of temptation, He said, "It is written that man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4; quotation from Deuteronomy 8:3).

- J. What the world needs today is for us to preach or speak "as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11).

I. We have God's plan from before the foundation of the world

A. Things from "before the ages"

1. 1 Corinthians 2:7-10: "hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory"....." Involves crucifixion of Christ (v. 8). Was a "mystery" but is now "made known".
2. Ephesians 3:5-11: "which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in Godaccording to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord," (NKJV).
3. Colossians 1:24-28: "...the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints" (NKJV).

B. From The "Foundation Of The World"

1. Matthew 13:35: regarding parables: "things kept secret from the foundation of the world"
2. Matthew 25:34: "kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"
3. Romans 16:25-27: "the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began, but now made manifest...."
4. Ephesians 1:4: "chose us in Him before the foundation of the world"
5. Hebrews 4:3: regarding 'rest': "the works were finished from the foundation of the world".
6. 1 Peter 1:20: "He was indeed foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you..."
7. Revelation 13:8: "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"
8. Revelation 17:8: "Book of Life from the foundation of the world"

C. God's Purpose or Plan

1. Acts 2:23: "determined purpose and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 4:28)
2. Romans 8:28-30: "the called according to His purpose"
3. Ephesians 1:11: "according to the purpose of Him who works all things"
4. Ephesians 3:11: "according to the eternal purpose which He..."
5. 2 Timothy 1:9: "given in Christ Jesus before time began..."

- D. The first unfolding of God's plan was in Genesis 3:15 (the seed of woman, Galatians 4:4; Luke 1:31-35).
- E. The second great unfurling of God's plan was to Abraham (Genesis 12:3b; 18:18; 22:18), his son Isaac (26:4), and his grandson Jacob: (28:14): that through their seed all nations of the earth would be blessed.
 - 1. Paul in Galatians 3:8 declares God preached the gospel before unto Abraham.
 - 2. Then he identifies the seed as Christ (Galatians 3:16).
 - 3. We are shown how we can appropriate this blessing in Christ in Galatians 3:26-29.
- F. This explains the preciseness of the Messianic Promises (well over 300 of them) and the fulfilment of many being brought to our attention in the New Testament Scriptures.
- G. It explains how Jesus knew exactly what would unfold as revealed by His three statements in Matthew 16:21; 17:22-23; and 20:18-19.
 - 1. It helps us appreciate the fact that He had to yield to the happenings so that God's plan could unfold and man could be saved.
 - a. Luke 22:53: "But this is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Satan was probably grinning now, but watch carefully what happens next).
 - b. Hebrews 2:14-15: Jesus conquered death and destroyed the devil and his hold that created fear in mankind.
 - c. Consider the words of Jesus in Revelation 1:18.
 - d. Think about the reasonableness of His promises in John 11:24-27; Revelation 14:12-13; John 5:28-29.
- H. In God's eternal plan Satan goes down to defeat and so do all his allies. As Jesus put it so plainly: "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he had nothing in Me" (John 14:30).

II. God was aware of our need to be connected

- A. Can we be certain that this message is a message for us?
- B. What has often been called the theme of John's gospel puts it in these words: "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30-31; NKJV)
- C. "Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:28-29; NKJV)
- D. In His prayer for the Heavenly Father Jesus prayed for the apostles and then added this thought that includes us: "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who

will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:20-23; NKJV).

- E. Paul wanted those to whom he wrote to imitate him (1 Corinthians 11:1; and Philippians 4:9: “The things which you have learned and received, and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you” (NKJV).

III. Nothing in today’s world can compare to God’s power through the Gospel.

A. Paul was persuaded that nothing was as powerful as the gospel (Romans 1:16-17).

B. In it (that is: in the gospel) is God’s plan of righteousness (how we can be righteous).

C. The world mocks it and ridicules it, but God shows it is the power of salvation for those who respond to Him (see 1 Corinthians 1:18-25).

D. God’s approach is altogether different than what man might imagine (1 Corinthians 1:26-31): Paul begins this section with these words: “For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called” (1 Corinthians 1:26, NKJV).

1. Regarding the “calling” consider it in light of Acts 2:39 and 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14.

2. It is no wonder that Paul was convinced that one message and only one message was an important part of preaching (see 1 Corinthians 2:2).

E. Here’s what we learn about God’s approach (1 Corinthians 1:26-31)

1. “God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise”. (one person told me years ago that I was naïve for believing the gospel, it was too simple to do anything). (1 Corinthians 1:27)

2. “God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty” (The death of Christ was an essential part of God’s plan of salvation, just as our need to humble ourselves and yield to His will through immersion in water is essential. Some are too proud to think that would work, but our Savior demonstrated a willingness to leave heaven and go to the death of the cross (Philippians 2:5-11). (1 Corinthians 1:27).

3. “And the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are that no flesh should glory in His presence” (1 Corinthians 1:28-29).

Conclusion:

A. The world can call me what it likes but I believe in God my Creator and the God of Revelation.

B. I believe in His Son, of the very nature of the Father, Deity Himself, Immanuel, God with us, Jesus the Christ.

- C. I believe in the Bible, the inspired word of God and my guide to heaven above.
- D. I believe in everything that Jesus was and claimed to be:
 - 1. The Messiah: John 4:26.
 - 2. The Great "I AM": John 8:58.
 - 3. The Son of God: John 9:35-38
 - 4. The King: John 18:37.
 - 5. The Way, the truth, and the Life: John 14:6.
 - 6. And a host of other designations and roles He plays and is.
- E. I believe in everything He did:
 - 1. Came to this earth to save mankind (John 3:17).
 - 2. Willingly laid down His life as a sacrifice for our sin (John 12:27)
- F. I believe in everything He said
 - 1. Every statement no matter how unbelievable it may be
 - 2. Every promise no matter how far it reaches beyond our imagination.
 - 3. Every command no matter how humbling it makes me feel to yield to it.
- G. What about you?