

Is the Bible the Word of God?

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: John 17:8

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I want to talk to you today about the Word of God, the Word of God. Here is the title of this message: "Is the Bible the Word of God?"

I have chosen as my text a passage of Scripture from John 17. You will recognize that John 17 is the Lord's Prayer when our Lord Jesus Christ was praying that great high priestly prayer to the Father.

And he said in John 17:8, he said, "I have given them the words that you gave them. I have given them the words that you gave me. And they have received them, your words. And they know surely that I came from thee. And they believe that thou hast sent me."

Now to give men the words of God, the words of God that is the calling and responsibility of every true preacher, to give our hearers not our words all together, but the words of the Lord. That is what Paul told young Timothy. He said, "Timothy, preach the Word, in season, out of season." There is no season for preaching the Word. Every season is the time to preach the Word.

And we have the promise of God that he will bless his Word. He said in Isaiah 55:11 he said, "So shall my words be that goeth forth out of my mouth. My words, my words shall not return unto me void, but my words shall accomplish that which I please. And my words shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. Preach the Word."

A young man asked me several years ago, "Preacher, is the Bible really the words of God? Is the Bible really the words of God or is the Bible only the writing of religious men?"

Well, I answered in this way. The words of the Bible were actually written by men. The words of the Bible were written by 40 different men over a period of over 1500 years. But those words which those men wrote were given to them by the Spirit of God. Men wrote as they were moved by the Spirit of God to write. They wrote what God inspired them to write. The Scriptures, indeed, are the words of God.

Now here is what Peter said in 2 Peter 1. "The Scriptures," that is all of the Scriptures, Old Testament and New Testament, "The Scriptures came not in old times by the will of men, but holy men," and these men were men like you and me, but they were men sancti-

fied by God and chosen by God, sent by God special prophets, holy men. "Holy men wrote as they were moved and taught by the Spirit of God."

And then Paul said in 2 Timothy three, "All Scripture, all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Do you know what that word means? God breathed. That's right. All Scripture is God breathed.

So, young man, is the Bible truly the words of God? Yes, indeed. Yes, indeed, the words of God. God used men to write them, but they are the words of God.

You listen. I am going to give you several reasons today why I believe the Bible is, indeed, the Word of God. The title of the message is "Is the Bible the Word of God?" Now you listen carefully and then you order this tape and you play it for your children or your friends or your neighbors or your family.

First I want to give you...I am going to give you some elementary logical reasons why I believe the Bible is the Word of God, not the words of men. First of all, the Bible has overcome the barrier of time. You hear expressions like this. "Well, time changes everything."

No it doesn't. Time changes most things, but time has not changed the Word of God. The passing years have no effect on the Word of God.

Some of this Bible was written by men, God inspired them, over 3500 years ago. The Bible Moses wrote 3500 years ago, back in the days of the Pharaoh, the Pharaohs. And the last entry in this book was written 2000 years ago by John. Moses and the prophets wrote the Scriptures in Hebrew. And John completed the book writing in Greek. And the Bible has been preserved in its entirety over a period of 3500 years.

Where are the books of men 500 years old or 1000 years old or none 2000 years old that you know about?

Secondly, the Bible is the Word of God and has overcome the barrier of nationality. The Bible has been translated into over 1000 languages and dialects all over the world. The Bible has been translated into the English, French, Spanish, Russian, tribes in Africa and a language called the Pidgin language in New Guinea, the Bible has been translated. The Bible is read and loved by people of every kindred, every tongue, every nation on earth.

You know, there are not many Chinese books that you and I read as Americans and there are not many American books that Chinese people read or Russians don't read the Japanese books. The Japanese do not read the books from India. They read the books written by their people. But this Bible is read by all nations. It has overcome the barrier not only of time, but of nationality. And though it has been translated from one language to another by faithful men, it has been remarkably and supernaturally and providentially preserved by the hand of our God.

Martin Luther was in the exile and kept in a castle in Germany and he took the Word of God in the original language and translated it over a period of eight months into German. It has been preserved. That Martin Luther's translation is still preserved.

The Bible has overcome the barrier of time, the barrier of nationality and the barriers of age and station and class. Where are the books that are read by children, young people and senior citizens? Yet the Bible is read by all three. Where the books read by presidents and paupers? Where are the books read by professors down at the university and prisoners down at the local jail? The Bible is. The professors read the Bible and the prisoners, the presidents and the paupers, servants and masters, rich men, poor men, women and men, children, old folks. The Word of God is read and loved by all classes, ages, people all over this world. It is the same. It has the same message for everyone of them. And they all embrace it and love it and walk in it. It has overcome the barriers of time, nationality and ages and classes.

And the books of men...now listen to me. The books of men are written by either good men or bad men. There are good books and bad books. There are books written by bad men and good men. But the Bible cannot have been written by either one, not by bad men or good—so called—good men.

First of all somebody wrote this a long time ago. He said, "The Bible is a Jewish conspiracy written by evil men to deceive other people and to promote their kingdom."

Well, that can't be so. The Bible cannot be written as a conspiracy against anybody. It cannot be written by evil men at all because this Bible condemns deceit. This Bible all the way through from Genesis to Revelation condemns hypocrisy. It condemns lying and false claims. It does.

In Proverbs six the message is clear all the way through the word. Six things God hates. God hates a proud look. God hates a lying tongue. God hates hands that shed blood. God hates a heart that devises wickedness. God hates a false witness. Now that's written. So evil men didn't write those things. Evil men didn't write those things. The Scripture condemns evil words and evil ways and promises eternal condemnation to everyone who continues in this type of life. No, the Bible cannot be the work of evil men. It cannot be because it condemns their very thoughts and words and ways.

Secondly, the Bible could not be the works of good men. That's right. It couldn't be for all the way through the Scripture every writer holds forth the truth that they are sinners. That's right. There is none good the Bible says, no not one. A good man thinks he is good, claims to be good, self righteous. He will never call himself a sinner and yet every writer of the Scripture says man at his best state is all together vanity. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Every man used of God to write this Bible declared in no uncertain terms, "I am a sinner."

Listen to David. "My sins are every before me. Against God and God only have I sinned."

Listen to Isaiah. "I saw the Lord and I cried 'I am a man of unclean lips. I dwell among a people of unclean lips.'"

Listen to Peter. "Lord, depart from me. I am a sinful man."

Listen to the apostle Paul. "The Lord Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the chief."

None of them claimed to be good men. None of them claimed to be good men. None of them allowed people to call them good men. They said, "None good but God."

And these men that wrote the Bible they condemned self praise and self righteousness and self glory. They claimed that's the chief offense against God to profess to be good.

Well, if evil men didn't write the Bible and good men didn't write the Bible who did? God did. God did. All Scripture is God breathed.

And I am going to tell you another logical reason why I believe the Bible is the Word of God. This is elementary to me. I believe the Bible is the Word of God because it is a supernatural book. It continues to stand 3500 years, 2000 years ago. It continues to stand and prosper although most people do not believe it. That's right. It continues to stand although most people do not believe it. In fact, down through the years many people have spent their lives denying this book. They have spent their lives, time, effort, money. Powerful men and nations have tried to destroy it. The Russians tried for 70 years to destroy it. Religious leaders have tried to hide it from the people to keep them from reading it. They burned translations of the Bible. They discouraged people from printing the Bible. They discouraged people from reading the Bible, religious leaders.

Dishonest preachers have misquoted it, misused it, misapplied it, twisted its words, taken them out of context in order to gain themselves, using the Word of God for their own gain. And they are all dead. But the Bible still stands. It still stands. It still stands.

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of God still stands.

I read a poem years ago about a fellow came a blacksmith's shop and all around there were hammers chipped and broken and laying around useless hammers. And he looked at the blacksmith and he said, "How many anvils have you had. You've got all these broken hammers around here. How many anvils have you had?"

He said, "Just one. The anvil never wears out, only the hammers that beat on it."

And I tell you this. This is a supernatural book. This is God's book. This is God's Word and it never wears out and it is never destroyed and it cannot be defeated. It cannot be broken. It goes on, on, the Word of God.

Now then, those are logical reasons. Now here are logical reasons, but they are spiritual and they have to be revealed. Those others anybody with just a little bit of sense can see them. But this takes divine revelation. This takes some understanding of the Word to see these reasons.

God used...here is the first one...It must be revealed. God used 40 men to write the Word of God, Old Testament and New Testament over a period of 1500 years. And from Genesis to Revelation most of these men never met one another. They knew about one another and they quoted one another and they read the writings of those who preceded them, but most of them never knew one another.

Moses never met Peter. Isaiah never met John. David never met Paul. Those men never met one another. But they wrote as God inspired them to write and when all of these books came together, 39 Old Testament books, 27 New Testament books, 66 books, when all of them were brought together written by 40 different men inspired of God, all of them formed a clear revelation, a clear portrait of one person, the Lord Jesus Christ. Every one of these men.

“Moses wrote of me,” Christ said. “Abraham rejoiced to see my day.”

Job talked about my Redeemer.

David talked about the Lord my shepherd.

And when all of these men, when their writings were brought together there was a clear revelation and a portrait of one person, the Messiah, the Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.

Suppose you took 40 men over a period of 1500 years and gave each one of them a stone, just a large stone or maybe two. You see, Paul wrote several of the books and David wrote several of the psalms. Just give them all a stone and tell them to chisel it and shape it and do what they want to, sculpture it like they want to. And then when all of them had finished, all 40 men had finished their stones and you brought them all together, had 66 stones and you stacked them up together, what are the odds that they would fit? What are the odds that they would form anything that looked pleasant to the eyes? What are the odds that they would form a wall with a picture of one person, the Son of God?

One talked about this facet and another that, this attribute, that, this characteristic, that characteristic. And when you brought all of these together they showed us the portrait, a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ our Redeemer, our Savior, our Lord, our King. What are the odds?

Well, you wouldn't even quote odds on a thing like that. And yet the Bible...In Genesis the Lord Jesus Christ is the woman's seed. God said, “Woman will bear a son. He will be the seed of the woman and he will bruise the serpent's head.”

In Genesis he is Abraham's promised Son, miraculous Son. He is Abel's lamb.

In Exodus he is the Passover Lamb that God said, "I see the blood. I will pass over you."

In Exodus he is the smitten rock.

In Leviticus he is the tabernacle. He is the high priest. He is the mercy seat. He is the atonement.

In Numbers he is the brazen serpent lifted up. As Moses lifted up the brazen serpent so must the Son of man be lifted up.

In Deuteronomy he is the city of refuge.

In Joshua he is Rahab's scarlet line. That's Christ.

In Ruth he is our kinsman redeemer.

In the book of Kings he is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

In the Psalms he is my shepherd.

In Matthew he is Jesus who will save his people from their sins, King of the Jews.

In Mark he is the servant bearing our sins and our sorrows in his body on the tree.

In Luke he is the Son of man, became flesh, walked this earth, tempted in all points as we are yet without sin.

In John he is the Son of God. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and full of truth.

Yes, sir, this book reveals Christ. And this book is all a person needs to know this Messiah. All I need is his Word. All I need is his Word that I might know him whose name is wonderful, counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the prince of peace, the child born, the Son given and who he is and why he came and what he did and where he is now.

Listen to me. This book...Listen now carefully right here. This book, this Bible and this person Jesus Christ about whom this book is written are so in oneness and union, this book and this person, that they are both called the Word of God.

Did you hear that? This Bible is called the Word of God. Jesus Christ is called the Word of God. The Word incarnate, the Word written are the one in the same. That's right, the one in the same, the Word of God.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God and all things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. And we beheld his glory, the Son of God.

Peter says, "The Word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the Word which by the gospel of Christ is preached to you."

John 8:32 the Lord Jesus said, "You'll know the truth and the truth will make you free."

Who is the truth? He is the truth. He said, "I am the truth. I am the way, the truth and the life. He is the truth. The words of this book...now listen to me. They are so...the words of this Bible and Jesus Christ are so in oneness and unity they are both called the Word of God. You can't have one without the other.

And the words of this book are the words of life. These words give life. What I am doing right now has the power to give life. The Word of God, the gospel, is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

Listen to this in James 1:18. This Word gives life. This is the Word of life. It is not just words on paper. This is the Word of life. This is God's Word. "Of his own will begat he us with the Word of truth."

Peter said, "Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible seed by the Word of God which lives, lives and abides forever."

The words of this book receive and believe what not only give spiritual life, but it will change people into new persons.

Let me tell you something. This Word will change your life. It takes the Word of God. If any man be in Christ, the Word of God, he is a new creature. That's right. This Word changes people into new persons.

Paul said to Timothy, "Form a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation."

Through this Word fools become wise. Christ is made unto wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Fools become wise. Through this Word thieves become honest. I have seen that. Through this Word wickedness gives way to holiness. Through this Word hate turns to love. Intemperance turns to patience, love, joy, faith, humility, gentleness, goodness, patience and grace.

Old John Newton described it well. He said, "I am not what I ought to be. I am not what I want to be. I am not what I will be some day, but by the grace of God through Jesus Christ the Lord I am not what I used to be."

This is the Word of life. It reveals him who is life and it gives life and it changes people. And the Words of this book are so powerful they give faith. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. They are so powerful the comfort. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. They are so powerful, this book gives understanding of the spiritual things, of the deep things of God, of the very character of God, the will of God, understanding.

We...the Son of God hath come and given us an understanding that we may know him that is true. And we are in him that is true. Even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God. This is eternal life. This Word brings hope to the hopeless, peace into conflict.

Oh the power of the Word of God. It is the Word of life, the Word of life. It gives life. It changes men from thieves to honest men. It changes men from liars to men who tell the truth. It changed a blasphemer named Saul of Tarsus into a wonderful preacher of the grace of God.

My friends, get acquainted with the book. It is the words of almighty God. And by this book here are four things I want to leave with you.

This...only by the words of this book can a man know God. Now I know creation reveals the power of God and the glory of God in one sense. The heavens declare the glory of God. But only by the Word of God can you learn of the grace of God and the mercy of God and the purpose of God in redeeming sinners through his Son. You learn who God is by his Word.

Secondly, only by the words of this book can you come to know the Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Like is said, starting at...in Genesis he is the Lamb, he is the priest forever like Melchizedek, he is the Passover Lamb in Exodus. You learn who Christ is by reading the Word. And he became a man and fulfilled righteousness and died for our justification.

Only by the Word can you learn who you are, human nature. Human nature. We have got to find out what kind of shape we are in so that we will call on our God. And only by this Word can you learn the revealed will of God, how to live, how to live, how to give and now to forgive. This is the Word of life.

I leave you with a little poem written by one of the old writers.

“The moon and the stars shall lose their light. The sun shall sink in endless night. Both heaven and earth shall pass away. The works of men shall all decay. But what our Lord has said will be fulfilled. On this firm rock believers build. His Word shall stand. His truth prevail. And not one jot or one tittle will ever fail.”

Is the Bible the Word of God? Indeed it is the living Word of God.

Until next week may God bless you and your family is my prayer.