

International Bible Institute Library

BIBLE STUDY

≈ In View Of Hosea 4:6 ≈

His People Endure Forever

Shelf 7 — Volume 65

1 – Bible Scholarship - 5

2 – Cessation Of Revelation - 12

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We study our Bibles in view of the prophet's description of our times in His words to the fallen Israel:

*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.
I will also reject you so that you will be no priest to Me.
Seeing you have forgotten the law of your God,
I will also forget your children.*

(Hosea 4:6)

God desires that His inspired word be vigorously studied, lest we forget His commandments. Bible study is not something that necessarily needs to be commanded. If one claims to be a Christian, then naturally it will be his or her desire to seek communication from God. Therefore, it is assumed that one who loves God and His word, **will be zealous to study the Bible**. The older *King James Version* translated **2 Timothy 2:15** in the following manner: ***“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a***

workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Later versions more correctly translate the Greek wording of 2 Timothy 2:15. The *New King James Version* reads, **“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”**

If one diligently seeks God, then it is obvious that he or she will be a diligent student of the word of God. If the Bible were intended to be understood by the aid of the Holy Spirit, then we would wonder why there would be the necessity for diligent study. The fact that God calls on Christians to be diligent in their Bible study puts the responsibility for understanding the Scriptures on the shoulders of Christians, not the Holy Spirit.

Acts 17:11 is an example of **unbelievers** searching and studying the Old Testament Scriptures. Concerning the unbelieving Jews of Berea to whom Paul preached, Luke wrote,

*These were **more fair-minded** than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and **searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.***

Could the Bereans, with their own intellectual abilities to study, discover by their personal Bible study of the Old Testament Scriptures, understand the prophecies about which Paul preached? Certainly! They did not need the Holy Spirit to aid them in order to determine the truth of Paul’s message of the gospel. If these Bereans could understand the Old Testament Scriptures through diligent study, then certainly we can do the same today.

There is no quick solution for understanding the Bible other than diligent study. No individual’s interpretation is guaranteed to be inerrant. The fact that people will come to different interpretations of some Scriptures is evidence that the Holy Spirit does not directly guide biblical interpretation. **Those who maintain the teaching that the Holy Spirit directly**

controls interpretation must answer the question as to why every Bible student does not come to the same understanding of the word of God on every passage. The fact that there is division in the religious world over some Bible interpretations is evidence against the concept that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to guard against wrong interpretations.

The Bible is a book of divine revelation. This revelation was communicated to us in order that we understand both the work of God throughout history, as well as the fulfillment of prophecy in the revelation of the gospel of His Son. Christians are commanded to study the Bible in order to reaffirm their belief in the gospel. Unbelievers are warned not to reject the Bible. The Bible, therefore, was written in a manner that could be understood by both unbelievers and believers. Unbelievers should seek to discover the gospel through Bible study. Believers should seek to reaffirm their faith in the gospel by their own Bible study.

Nevertheless, some have affirmed that 2 Peter 1:20,21 teaches that the Scriptures were never meant to be interpreted by individuals. They unfortunately quote the following notation of Peter as proof of this conception:

*... knowing this first, that **no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.***

Verse 21 of this passage clearly explains the meaning of verse 20. **The Scriptures did not come to man by the invention of clever spiritual leaders.** On the contrary, Peter taught in this statement that the Scriptures were not the product of man. They were the product of God. The *New King James* adds a footnote to the word “interpretation.” The footnote correctly suggests that the word “origin” be used in the text for the word “interpretation.” In other words, the Scriptures were not of any private origin. Therefore, in 2 Peter 1:20,21 Peter was proclaiming the inspiration

of the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit, not one's individual interpretation or understanding of the Scriptures.

We must always keep in mind that the Bible was written to ordinary people with ordinary understanding. Therefore, God communicated in an ordinary manner. Through the Holy Spirit, God did not reveal truth in a manner that would confuse us. He did not reveal truth in a manner that would divide sincere Bible students. He communicated His will to all people in a manner that would bring harmony and unity between honest and sincere interpreters.

We must not forget that religion, not the word of God, causes division among people in reference to religious rites, rituals and ceremonies. The gospel that is revealed in the Bible brings people together as the one body of Christ. Religion drives us further apart. Gospel brings us closer together. Therefore, one can determine if he or she is interpreting the Scriptures from the prejudice of his or her own religious heritage if the result of one's studies do not bring him or her closer to other believers. If we seek to understand the gospel from the perspective of our religious heritage, then we will never come to the unity that the gospel naturally produces.

The reason people do not understand the Bible is not because it is difficult to understand. **We do not understand the Bible because we do not study it or we study it with preconceived religious ideas.** Tradition and wrong motives distort objective interpretations.

Our inadequacies in interpretation of the Scriptures must not be blamed on the Holy Spirit. If we do not understand the Bible, then we should look at ourselves. The Spirit has accomplished His work with the inerrant communication of God's will in written form. The truth of the gospel is revealed in the Bible, and thus, it is the responsibility of every person to study the word of God in order to discover this truth. But in our study, therefore, we must be assured that we can understand all fundamental principles and commands in order to be pleasing to God.

CHAPTER 1

BIBLE SCHOLARSHIP

Consider the fact that the decline in Bible study is the most challenging problem today that is facing Christians since the days of the Bible burnings of the Dark Ages. In those ages five centuries ago the Bible was forcefully taken from people of faith against their will. But in this century, the people are willingly taking the Bible from themselves. In most religious groups today Bible study is not a central part of the practice of most adherents. We live in an era where the Bible plays a small part in the faith of thousands of people.

We base our conclusions on history. For example, it has been centuries since great scholars of Christendom in general produced monumental Bible study aids that now are infrequently used among Bible students. In contrast to centuries of the past, in this age there are no Robert Youngs who would produce prolific volumes as the *Analytical Concordance To The Bible*. There are no M. R. Vincents who would produce such masterpieces as *Word Studies In The New Testament*. There are no renowned Bible scholars as W. E. Vine who would produce memorial study documents as *An Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words*. So where are those Bible scholars who would produce volumes as *The New Bible Dictionary*, or *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*?

Renown Bible scholars as Adam Clarke (*Clarke's Commentary*) and Orville J. Nave (*Nave's Topical Bible*) were Bible-obsessed students of the past. The modern-day Bible student must rely on scholars who lived over a century ago in order to research their studies today. In fact, it would be safe to say that most young "Bible students" today have not even heard of the masterpieces of Bible study aids that we have just mentioned.

In the 1800s Bible schools reflected the seriousness by which people studied their Bibles. One Bible school to train preachers required students to memorize a

chapter of the Old Testament in the morning, and then explain it in the evening. In the afternoon, students were required to memorize a chapter of the New Testament, and likewise explain its meaning in the evening. Another Bible school required the students to memorize Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and then quote the same books entirely before they were handed a diploma for graduation. They had to do their memorization in *Koine* Greek.

We have fallen a long way from our love of the word of God, and especially in our obsession to study the text. **The axiomatic truth about apostasy is that those who are involved in such never realize that they are.**

The clear and present danger to Christendom for the future is the growing disinterest in serious Bible study. Perhaps in the century to come, supposed Bible students will no longer use the products of serious Bible scholars of the past, if indeed they even research such monumental literary documents today. There are few “smartphone” Bible scholars today. Bible students today usually flip through the scholarship of the past, without any serious inclinations to delve into the text of the Bible. We are headed into a future where electronic “Bible reading” will give birth to a new generation of religionists who do not have the example of their fathers and mothers who sat down at kitchen tables and poured over Bible research in order to better understand the gospel that was revealed to us in the word of God.

As religionists head away from the Bible as their only authority in matters of faith, Christendom is becoming more religion bound with the authority of religious heritages as opposed to the authority of the Scriptures. Those who are now in their seventies and eighties know exactly what we are saying.

Nevertheless, the Bible teaches that the Scriptures must be seriously studied, and thus, understood. If people were inspired to understand the Bible today, then there would be no need for diligent study. One could simply pray for the Spirit to work in his or her life

in order to bring forth a correct understanding of the Bible. In conjunction with this thought, **there would be no misunderstanding of the Bible. All Christians would agree on every Bible subject.** There would be no division over opinions, for there would be no opinions. Every interpretation would supposedly be Spirit-inspired.

However, the following New Testament writers emphasized the fact that the faithful disciple must study his or her Bible. The inspired writers received a knowledge of the will of God through inspiration. We must receive it through diligence in many hours of Bible study.

A. Jesus Emphasized Diligent Study

Jesus said to those Jewish religious leaders who argued with Him, *“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me”* (Jn 5:39). If it were the work of the Spirit to inspire understanding, then why did not the Spirit inspire the Jewish leaders to correctly interpret the prophecies of the Scriptures to arrive at the conclusion that Jesus was the Messiah? The fact that these Bible students were rejecting Jesus of whom the Scriptures prophesied and testified was evidence that the Spirit did not give them any inspired understanding of the Scriptures. Nevertheless, if they would have objectively studied the prophecies of the Messiah they would have concluded that Jesus was the Messiah.

B. Peter Emphasized Diligent Study

In **2 Peter 3:15** Peter referred to Paul’s inspired Scriptures. Peter said that in these writings there *“are some things hard to understand”* (2 Pt 3:16).

Peter was himself an apostle who wrote two Spirit-inspired documents, 1 & 2 Peter. And yet, he had difficulty understanding some of Paul’s writings. He did not say that the difficult passages that Paul wrote were impossible to understand. He simply said that there were some things in Paul’s writings that were

hard to understand. As an inspired apostle, it would seem peculiar that Peter would say this about a fellow apostle if the Holy Spirit were supposed to aid one's interpretation of the Scriptures. If Peter had difficulty understanding some of Paul's writings, then certainly we will, though we have the advantage of possessing the entire written New Testament in order to compare notes.

If the Spirit did not lead Peter to understand Paul's writings, then certainly He will not lead us to do so. Only through diligent study will we understand the writings of Paul and the other New Testament writers.

C. Paul Emphasized Diligent Study

As stated previously, Paul instructed Timothy to **give diligence to present himself approved to God through Bible study** (2 Tm 2:15). Why would Paul make a statement as this if Timothy could understand the Scriptures with the aid of the Holy Spirit? Why did not Paul instruct Timothy to rely on the Spirit for a better understanding of the Scriptures?

The fact is that Timothy had been taught the Scriptures from a babe. He was **taught** by his mother and grandmother, not by the Holy Spirit (2 Tm 3:15). He was encouraged by Paul to continue his studies throughout his life.

It is also interesting to note that Paul set an example of personal Bible study. While in prison in Rome he wrote to Timothy, ***“Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus ... and the books, especially the parchments”*** (2 Tm 4:13). These materials certainly included Old Testament scrolls that Paul used in his personal studies. They could also have included copies of other inspired New Testament documents that had previously been written by the New Testament apostles and prophets. At the time Paul was in prison, many of the other New Testament Scriptures had not yet been written and circulated. Nevertheless, by example, the inspired apostle was here teaching that he continue in his personal studies. If it were the work

of the Spirit to inspire understanding of the Scriptures, then why did Paul continue his personal studies?

1 Corinthians 2:9-13 was Paul's explanation of how the Spirit brought to us an understanding of God's eternal mystery of the truth of the gospel. In this revelation, Paul explained the work of the Spirit: "*But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God*" (1 Co 2:10). This work of God was accomplished through the Spirit in order "*that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God*" (1 Co 2:12). Therefore, we can know the eternal mystery of the gospel because someone revealed such through Spirit-inspired Scripture. Paul stated,

These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Co 2:13).

The Spirit's work in revelation and inspiration was complete when He inspired the New Testament writers to record the eternal mystery of God. His work was to make the mystery of the gospel known, and then have it recorded for our understanding. Paul added,

... by revelation He made known to me the mystery [of the gospel] (as I wrote before in a few words, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of the truth of the gospel) (Ep 3:3,4).

In matters of revelation and inspiration, therefore, the Spirit accomplished His work in providing the written word of God in order for us to know the mystery of the truth of the gospel. He no longer has to reveal, or have the mystery of the gospel written. It is already written in the New Testament. Howard Winters, in his historical book on this subject, *The Holy Spirit*, correctly concluded,

The Holy Spirit was not given to illuminate the understanding. The revelation of the gospel was given through those who received the miraculous gifts of the Spirit in apostolic times, but the receivers had to exercise their own mind in understanding

the revelation once it was given just as all others did.

In apostolic times when the Holy Spirit was revealing the mystery of the gospel, **the Spirit revealed the mystery in a way that could be understood.** The Holy Spirit was given to the apostles and prophets to reveal the truth of the gospel, not to illuminate our understanding of the truth when it was revealed.

D. Luke Emphasized Diligent Study

It was Luke who recorded that the Berean Jews were more noble than the Thessalonian Jews. They were more noble, or fair-minded, **because they searched the Scriptures** (At 17:11). Fair-mindedness in the sight of God, therefore, results in being a diligent student of the word of God. **One cannot be fair-minded, or noble before God, and at the same time, willingly be ignorant of the word of God.**

We must remember that it is not possible for any one person to know all the Bible. Likewise, one person cannot know everything that is inferred in the Bible. However, **one can certainly know all fundamental truths of the gospel that are necessary for salvation.** This truth of the gospel comes to us in clear statements. **No interpretation is needed.** One simply needs to read the word of God with an open mind and heart and he or she will discover what God requires in reference to obedience to the gospel.

God provided the inspired Bible for mankind in a way that would constantly challenge the minds of both the novice student and the learned scholar. Therefore, we should not approach the Bible with the idea that we will be able to understand everything written therein. As one studies the Scriptures, his or her appreciation of the word of God grows. **The more one studies the Bible, the easier it is to understand.**

E. The Prophets Gave Examples Of Study

Simply because the Old Testament prophets were inspired to write the Scriptures, this did not mean that they were inspired to understand what they wrote. In

1 Peter 1:10-12, Peter wrote,

Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.

In the preceding statement, Peter wrote that one should do as the Old Testament prophets who *“inquired and searched diligently”* the revelation that had been given to them concerning the mystery of the gospel. The prophets wrote the prophecies concerning Jesus, **but many times they did not understand what they wrote**. To them, **the gospel was still a mystery**. If the Spirit inspires us to understand, then certainly He would have inspired an understanding of the great Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah as the Savior of the world.

The fact is that even the Old Testament prophets had to study what they wrote, just as we must study today what God has written for us concerning the truth of the gospel. The truth of the gospel has been revealed. It has been recorded in the pages of the New Testament. However, one can never know the gospel without studying its revelation in the New Testament. It is through diligent study that one is able to *“know the truth”* of the gospel as Jesus promised (Jn 8:32). In knowing this truth, we can be set free from sin by obedience to the gospel.

In James 1:5 James wrote, *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God.”* James encouraged Christians to pray for **wisdom**. However, there are no instructions in the word of God that we pray for knowledge, or the ability to interpret the Scriptures. Knowledge comes through study. The primary source of wisdom is experience. **Through wisdom one’s knowledge is applied to one’s life**. James’ promise

that God will give wisdom to those who ask is not a vain promise. Christians have a special source for wisdom. The source is God.

Through wisdom one may better understand the principles of the Bible. However, this is **an indirect manner** by which we would understand the Bible. If God inspired the Christian to understand the Scriptures, then the interpreter could simply read a passage, and then give an infallible explanation of the passage. He would never misunderstand a passage. He would never need to study. There would be no need for preachers and teachers of the word of God to study if they could simply be inspired to interpret the Scriptures in order to preach and teach.

But this was never God's intention for the saint in his or her relationship with the word of God. God desires that our characters be developed for eternal dwelling. He wants us to be a people who search the Scriptures in order to better understand the truth of the gospel. **We must not be spoiled children who are handed truth without diligent Bible study.** God does not give us inspired interpretation of the Scriptures. He does not because He is developing our thirst for Him through our diligent Bible study. As we study, we seek more knowledge from God in reference to the truth of the gospel. We thus hunger and thirst after righteousness in order to better know this God who gave His only begotten Son in order to bring us into eternity with Him.

CHAPTER 2

CESSATION OF REVELATION

In Bible studies, Bible students must clearly understand the termination of revelation from God. This fundamental Bible teaching must be understood clearly in order to seal for all time the complete revelation of all truth that God would have us know until the final coming of Jesus.

We live in a world of great religious division. Religious leaders throughout the world have affirmed

continued revelation from a god that they have often created after their own imaginations or worldly desires. Others who claim to be somewhat Christian, and thus have a limited understanding of the Bible, claim that the Holy Spirit continues to reveal truth from God. This claim is often made in order to encourage others to believe that they speak with some authority from the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the affirmation that God terminated His revelation in the first century is a vital teaching against those who assume that they must have further revelation from God, or direct inspiration by the Holy Spirit in order to understand that which has already been revealed.

There is little difference between the doctrine that one must be led in direct understanding of the Bible by the Holy Spirit and the doctrine of continued revelation of truth from God. Some have taught against the false doctrine of continued revelation of Scripture, but at the same time, they have believed and taught the doctrine of inspired understanding of the Scriptures. Both beliefs, however, are based on the same foundation of a false presupposition

The teaching that the Christian is inspired to understand the Scriptures is simply one step closer to the teaching that the Scriptures can be laid aside for the inspired proclamations of those who claim to have a direct link with the Holy Spirit to pronounce inspired statements of interpretation. But if God expects us to build our faith by understanding the Bible through diligent study, then there is no such thing as inspired interpretation or inspired pronouncements. If God has sealed the revelation of all truth with the writing of the book of Revelation, **then there has been no inspired revelation since John inscribed that book.** No one is inspired by the Holy Spirit to make statements that cannot be questioned.

Various religious groups today teach that revelation by the Holy Spirit did not terminate in the first century. For example, many years ago a man by the name of Hugh Ireland, in *The Elders Journal*, erroneously claimed,

There is nothing that so well proves apostasy from the Primitive Church as denial of the spirit of revelation. To state that God did once reveal Himself to His people, ... but that now He has ceased to reveal Himself, and that apostles, prophets, and inspiration are no longer needed, shows that there has indeed been a “falling away.”

Fred Rolapp in *Divine Revelation*, likewise affirmed that “without direct and continuous revelation from God, the Gospel cannot be understood and properly applied” J. M. Sjodahl, in a *Scrapbook of Mormon Literature*, unfortunately held to the same erroneous position:

To understand the Bible, even the plainest translation, all these things are necessary as helps, and yet, without the Spirit of God to lead into all truth, not all of these helps are sufficient; so numerous and so vast are the difficulties to be encountered in ascertaining the true meaning of the Bible.

If we are led to believe that we cannot understand the Bible without being inspired by the Holy Spirit, then normal individual abilities to simply read and understand the word of God **accuses God of not being able to deliver truth to His people in a manner they can understand**. Some assert that without the Spirit continuing to reveal understanding and truth to us, we are left to our own devices in reference to understanding the Bible. The Roman Catholic Church position on this matter was explained by Cardinal Gibbons when he wrote in the Roman Catholic sanctioned book, *The Faith of Our Fathers*:

The Church has authority from God to teach regarding faith and morals, and in her teaching **she is preserved from error by the special guidance of the Holy Spirit** (emphasis mine, R.E.D.).

The following points of this chapter are set forth as arguments against the concept of modern-day revelations and direct inspiration by the Holy Spirit to interpret the Bible. The Bible teaches that God has terminated His revelation of truth. The Holy

Spirit does not inspire new truth to be pronounced by would-be prognosticators, nor does He inspire people to understand the Bible. The revelation of truth from God has been terminated simply **because the Bible contains all truth that is necessary for godly living, which truth can be easily understood.**

A. Revelation Completed In 1st Century

The Bible teaches that the revelation of truth from God, especially in reference to the gospel message, was completed **in the first century**. This truth and gospel message was recorded in the Bible by those who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write a clear and distinct record of the gospel. Consider the following points that substantiate this truth:

1. All truth of the gospel promised:

Jesus promised that all truth would be revealed to the apostles, who would in turn, reveal the same truth to the world. In **John 14:26** Jesus promised that the Spirit of truth *“will teach you all things.”* He promised the apostles,

*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **He will teach you all things** and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*

Jesus made the same promise of John 14:26, but in different words in **John 16:13**:

*However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, **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.*

In order for the promises of John 14:26 and 16:13 to be fulfilled, all truth of the gospel had to be delivered to the Christ-sent apostles while they lived. Jesus made these promises specifically to the apostles. Therefore, we must assume that all truth in reference to the truth of the gospel was delivered to the apostles **before they died**. Jesus kept His promise.

2. Truth of gospel delivered to the church.

All truth was initially revealed to the apostles, and then to the prophets. It was recorded without error by the inspired apostles and prophets for the church (See 1 Co 2:10-13; 2 Tm 3:16,17; 2 Pt 3:16). There is no promise of truth to any other party outside the apostles, and then the Spirit-inspired New Testament prophets.

The truth of the gospel has once and for all time been delivered to the saints. The revelation of all truth that God wanted us to have was revealed and recorded in the first century for the saints. This truth, “the faith,” has once and for all time been revealed to the saints. Jude affirmed this in the following words:

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 (Jd 3).

Peter similarly wrote that God’s ...

... divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue (2 Pt 1:3).

Because the revelation of this truth was finalized by the time of the middle 60s when Jude and Peter wrote, Christians of the first century, as well as we today, **have been warned not to add to this revelation of the gospel.** The following key scriptures are warnings against any who would be so bold as to add authoritative “truth” to the gospel message:

a. Galatians 1:6-9

In this passage, Paul wrote,

I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As

we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

In the preceding text Paul used a hyperbole to say that if it were the case that even an angel from heaven should preach another gospel, then that angel would be accursed (destroyed). If Christians are warned not to listen to an angel speaking something different than that which has been revealed, then surely they should not listen to someone preaching a supplemented “gospel” that is not revealed in the Scriptures.

The “other gospel” about which Paul was speaking in Galatians 1 was adding our meritorious works to the truth of the gospel of the incarnation, atoning death, resurrection, ascension, coronation, kingdom reign, and eventual consummation of all things when Jesus comes again. There were some judaizing teachers among the Galatian disciples who were preaching the gospel of God’s grace through Jesus, but they were adding to this gospel the necessity of meritorious works. In the case of the Galatians, certain works of the Sinai law, as circumcision, were being added to the gospel as prerequisites for salvation. **When one adds any meritorious system of religious rites and rituals to the gospel of God’s grace, then he or she is preaching another gospel.** Paul’s argument in Galatians 1:6-9, therefore, is that we are justified freely by the cross, and not by the addition of works of merit.

b. 2 John 9-11

John wrote,

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

John warned that those who go beyond that which

has already been revealed (the “teaching of Christ”) **do not have God**. The revelation of the truth of the gospel of Christ is here considered final. Nothing is to be added to it. Therefore, if one would teach in a manner by which he or she binds on the conscience of people religious ceremonies and rites that are not a part of the teaching of Christ, then he or she has gone beyond the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. The fact that one must abide in and not go beyond the teaching of Christ, emphasizes the fact that by the time John wrote 2 John 9-11 all teaching had been revealed concerning that which was necessary for the Christian to understand and follow in order to be a disciple of Jesus.

c. John 12:48

Jesus 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.

Jesus’ word is the final authority by which we will be judged in the last day. Since His word will be the standard by which we will be judged, **then it follows that His word is final**. We will not be judged by the word of any other religious catechism or leader. This is true concerning any word that Jesus spoke to His disciples while He was with them in His earthly ministry, as well as all truth that He revealed to them when the Holy Spirit later came upon them (See Jn 14:26; 16:13).

d. Revelation 22:18,19

In his conclusion of the book of Revelation, John wrote,

*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.

Though this passage refers specifically to the book of Revelation, the principle is certainly all-inclusive in reference to all of God's revelation. Such was evident in passages as **Deuteronomy 4:2** where God told Israel, *"You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take anything from it."* With the same principle in mind, the Proverb writer warned, *"Do not add to His words, lest He reprove you and you be found a liar"* (Pv 30:6).

There are statements throughout the Bible that emphasize the fact that the Bible alone is God's final revelation. It is God's final communication, and thus, God expects every person on earth to submit to the principles of His will that are revealed in the Bible.

In **1 Corinthians 13:8-12** Paul discussed the cessation of the gift of prophecy. This gift centered around speaking the truth by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As discussed previously, this gift has ceased with the termination of the rest of the miraculous gifts. **Therefore, in the cessation of this gift, there is no more inspired speaking of God's word.** Christians today have in the Scriptures all that is necessary for godly living (2 Tm 3:16,17). They now have all that is necessary for godliness (2 Pt 1:3).

B. The Bible Is All-Sufficient

The fact that the Bible is all-sufficient argues against continued revelation of truth. Contrary to the teaching that we need more revelation of truth today in order to live in a modern world, the Bible teaches that it is completely sufficient to supply the Christian with all that is necessary for gospel living. The Christian's spiritual needs are fulfilled by one's direction in life through the Scriptures. In other words, any teaching that states that we need more revelation from God today for spiritual direction is a denial of the Bible teaching that it is completely sufficient to supply us with all things that are necessary for instructions in

living the gospel (See 2 Tm 3:16,17; 2 Pt 1:3).

1. The Scriptures are sufficient for gospel living.

The spiritual direction of the Scriptures that was available to Christians in the first century is also available to Christians today. The word of God still does for us today the following things that it has always done:

- a. The Scriptures can be heard (Mt 13:9,43; Lk 16:29; Jn 6:45), understood (Ep 3:4,5), and believed (Jn 20:30,31; At 8:12,13, 37,38; 13:48).
- b. The Scriptures can teach the Christian (Ps 119:103,104; Pv 22:6; Rm 15:4).
- c. The Scriptures admonish the Christian in moral conduct (1 Co 4:14; 10:11).
- d. The Scriptures reveal the will of God (2 Co 13:5,10; 2 Pt 1:12).
- e. The Scriptures give instructions as to how Christians relate with one another (Cl 1:4-10; 1 Tm 3:14,15).
- f. The Scriptures can guard the Christian against apostasy (Mt 4:4-11; 2 Tm 3:14-17; 2 Pt 1:12; Jd 17-21).
- g. The Scriptures assure the Christian of his or her salvation (2 Pt 1:9-11; 1 Jn 2:3-6; 5:13).
- h. The Scriptures reprove, rebuke, correct and instruct Christians (2 Tm 3:16).
- i. The Scriptures bring fellowship between Christians and God (1 Jn 1:1-4,6-10).
- j. The Scriptures motivate the Christian to live a better life (1 Pt 5:12; 2 Pt 1:12-14).

The word of God is able to accomplish at least the above functions in our lives. Those who seek added revelation from God today are asking for more than what God promised. They are asking for inspired direction and motivation from the Holy Spirit that God never promised to give outside the revelation of His word. If one asks for more than what the Scriptures provide, in reference to truth from God, then he or she is making an accusation against the Scriptures that it is insufficient. It is an accusation that says that God cannot do through the direction of His word that which He intended to accomplish in the life of the obedient. This is thus an attack against the sufficiency of the

Scriptures. It is an effort on the part of the individual to not take ownership of his or her own responsibility to study and apply the word of God to his or her own life.

2. Modern-day revelation could not accomplish more than the Scriptures.

The Bible teaches that the following could not be accomplished by new revelations from God. If these things cannot be accomplished through the word of God, then why would we need new revelations?

- a. New revelations could not deliver to us another gospel. Christians are under the strict command not to preach any other gospel than that which has been revealed (Gl 1:6-9; 2 Jn 9-11).
- b. New revelations could not produce another means of salvation. All that was necessary to produce salvation in the first century (the gospel of Christ) is also available for us today (Rm 1:16; 6:3-6; 1 Co 15:1-4). For one to be saved today, he or she must obey the gospel that is revealed in the Bible (2 Th 1:8).
- c. New revelations could not supply us with more spiritual blessings and direction. The Bible contains all necessary information concerning spiritual blessings and direction for Christian living (See Ep 1:3; 2 Tm 3:16,17; 1 Pt 2:2; 2 Pt 1:3).
- d. New revelations could not give us more truth that is necessary for salvation. All truth in reference to our salvation has once and for all time been delivered to the saints (See Jn 16:13; 1 Co 2:10-13; Gl 1:11,12; Jd 3).
- e. New revelations cannot help us better understand the Bible. The New Testament was written in order that we have the final revelation of the mystery of God (Ep 3:4,5).

The fact that the Bible claims to be complete and sufficient for the believer is the greatest argument against supposed modern-day revelations. **God would not and did not circumvent His revelation through the Scriptures by continuing revelation for us day. God did not minimize the existing Scriptures by adding new revelation.** Any teaching that affirms that God added revelation to the Bible after the close of the writing of the New Testament

in the first century is an affirmation that the Bible is incomplete.

Because of the will of some to place themselves in the bondage of religion, they allow religious rites and rituals to be bound on them. This desire to be brought into the bondage of religion is so strong that people will often reject the word of God in order to keep the religious traditions of their fathers (See Mk 7:1-9). People do this in order to be accepted by the group who maintains a particular catechism of traditions. But we must remember that when traditions are honored to the exclusion of the word of God, then we bring ourselves into bondage, and thus live contrary to the will of God. It is for this reason that the word of God must be our final authority in all things that pertain to faith.



ABREVIATIONS

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis - **Gn**, Exodus - **Ex**, Leviticus - **Lv**, Numbers - **Nm**, Deuteronomy - **Dt**, Joshua - **Ja**, Judges - **Jg**, Ruth - **Rt**, 1 Samuel - **1 Sm**, 2 Samuel - **2 Sm**, 1 Kings - **1 Kg**, 2 Kings - **2 Kg**, 1 Chronicles - **1 Ch**, 2 Chronicles - **2 Ch**, Ezra - **Er**, Nehemiah - **Ne**, Esther - **Et**, Job - **Jb**, Psalms - **Ps**, Proverbs - **Pv**, Ecclesiastes - **Ec**, Song of Solomon - **Ss**, Isaiah - **Is**, Jeremiah - **Jr**, Lamentations - **Lm**, Ezekiel - **Ez**, Daniel - **Dn**, Hosea - **Hs**, Joel - **Jl**, Amos - **Am**, Obadiah - **Ob**, Jonah - **Jh**, Micah - **Mc**, Nahum - **Nh**, Habakkuk - **Hk**, Zephaniah - **Zp**, Haggai - **Hg**, Zechariah - **Zc**, Malachi - **Ml**

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew - **Mt**, Mark - **Mk**, Luke - **Lk**, John - **Jn**, Acts - **At**, Romans - **Rm**, 1 Corinthians - **1 Co**, 2 Corinthians - **2 Co**, Galatians - **Gl**, Ephesians - **Ep**, Philippians - **Ph**, Colossians - **Cl**, 1 Thessalonians - **1 Th**, 2 Thessalonians - **2 Th**, 1 Timothy - **1 Tm**, 2 Timothy - **2 Tm**, Titus - **Ti**, Philemon - **Pl**, Hebrews - **Hb**, James - **Js**, 1 Peter - **1 Pt**, 2 Peter - **2 Pt**, 1 John - **1 Jn**, 2 John - **2 Jn**, 3 John - **3 Jn**, Jude - **Jd**, Revelation - **Rv**

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