

We Can Believe

Part 4

Text – II Timothy 3 : 13 – 17

Intro - Some years ago, a young man wanted to travel to Germany to attend theological seminary there. His father, knowing about the liberalism that pervaded those seminaries, pleaded with his son not to go.

The father would often say, “Son, if you go to that German seminary, they will take Jonah from you.” The son wouldn’t be persuaded and so flew off to Germany. After 3 years of study the young man returned home. The first question his father asked was, “Son, do you still have Jonah?” The son scoffed and said, “Father, even you don’t have Jonah.”

The father was puzzled, and so after getting home from the airport, he took his Bible and opened it to the O.T. To his amazement, the Book of Jonah was gone. Unbeknownst to the father, his son, 3 years earlier, had taken a razor blade and carefully cut the Book of Jonah from his father’s Bible.

This story leads us to the question: “Which is worse; to lose the Word of God through liberalism or neglect?”

There are many voices out there today that argue against the inerrancy, reliability, and relevance of the Bible.

Last week we discovered **Why Believing the Bible matters**. Today we will consider what the Bible teaches us about the Inspiration of Scripture.

I. What the Bible Teaches about Inerrancy –

- You may remember that last week we talked about the Three “I”s of Scripture: **Inspired, Inerrant, & Infallible**.
 - Inerrancy, of course, means that the Bible has no errors. There are no inconsistencies, contradictions, or anything that is errant in the Word of God.
- With that being said, what does the Bible say about its inerrancy?
 - 1. There is no book like it in its *continuity and consistency* –**
 - From Genesis through Revelation, there is the continuous and consistent message of...
 - **Salvation - Genesis 3:15** – “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel.”
 - Theologians refer to this as the protoevangelium.

- **God's expectations of man - Matthew 22:37-40-** And He said to him, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."
- **Here's why we see consistency and continuity in the Scriptures – II Pet. 1:16-21.**
 - We need to understand the following **truths** about God's Word:
 - A. Apostolic Testimony – Vss. 16-18**
 - "Peter solemnly declared that the testimony of the apostles – testimony they endured torture and gave their lives for – was not based on clever fables or even half-truths, but on eyewitness testimony; that they were eyewitnesses of His majesty."
 - Note that Peter insists his and the other apostles' testimony was not composed of **"wise tales."**
 - The phrase, "wise tales," is translated from the Greek word, "mythos," from which we get our word "myth."
 - In **verses 17 – 18**, Peter is referring to the Mt. of Transfiguration when Jesus was transfigured (**glorified**) in front of them.
 - Peter, James, and John actually beheld this and bore witness to what they saw.
 - B. Evidence – Vs. 19**
 - Peter calls our attention to the fulfilled prophecy cited in Scripture and the assurance he has in encouraging us to "pay attention" to it.
 - "Peter's experience at the transfiguration was amazing. But the testimony of God's word about Jesus was even more sure than Peter's personal experience. The fulfillment of the prophetic word confirmed is a certain, reliable testimony of the truth of the Scriptures."
 - I really want us to catch this. **Peter is saying that the validity of God's prophetic Word is to be held in higher esteem than his own eyewitness testimony of the Transfiguration.**
 - In an age of "my truth, my happiness, & my experiences," this reminder couldn't be any more relevant than it is today!

- Think about this fact: “There are at least 332 distinct Old Testament predictions regarding the Messiah that Jesus fulfilled perfectly (His birth place, His virgin birth, coming out of Egypt, His crucifixion, His miracles, etc.). The combination of this evidence together, from a simple statistical perspective, is absolutely overwhelming.”

C. Biblical Assurance – Vss. 20-21

- “Even in Peter’s time, enemies of Jesus twisted Old Testament prophecies, giving them personal and bizarre meanings attempting to exclude Jesus from their fulfillment. But Peter says that prophecy is not of any private interpretation; its meaning is evident and can be confirmed by others.”
- On a practical note, it is important for us to understand that the interpretation of Scripture relies on God and God alone.
 - Only He determines what His Word says and means.
 - This is why we need to be aware of those who say, “Well that’s your interpretation and this is mine.”
 - There’s only one interpretation, and that’s God’s!
 - God may apply His Word to our hearts in various ways, but there’s only one interpretation.
- Peter goes on to teach in verse 21: “It is wrong and invalid to twist prophecy to our own personal meaning, because prophecy does not come from man but from God. It does come through holy men of God– but only as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”
 - This movement of the Holy Spirit is what we mean by the term inspiration.
 - These human writers were brought along (Greek - carried along) by the Spirit of God so that they wrote exactly what God wanted written, while retaining their own personalities and writing forms.
 - The Word of God is absolutely amazing!

2. There is no book like it in its honesty –

- God does not shy away in exposing the sins of the Bible’s greatest heroes of the faith: Moses, Samson, the nation of Israel, King David, and the Apostle Peter.

- As Paul states in **I Corinthians 10:6** – “Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.”
- God is not compromised or snatched off the throne by His children who failed or sinned.

3. There is no book like it in its circulation –

- According to the numbers, the Bible has the widest circulation and has been the highest selling book in the world.
- Just over the past 50 years, in excess of **3.9 billion** copies of the Bible have been sold.
- It is the best-selling book of the year, every year.
- God promised that His Word would go forth and accomplish what He wills it to accomplish. **Isaiah 55:11** – “So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.”

4. There is no book like it in its survival –

- There have been many who have tried to destroy the Bible. All who have tried have failed.
- **ILLUSTRATION** – “In 2005 the *London Times* reported that a new “teaching document” issued by the Roman Catholic bishops of England, Wales and Scotland warns that Catholics should not take the Bible literally – that it’s not infallible. ‘We should not expect to find in Scripture full scientific accuracy or complete historical precision,’ they say in the booklet, ***The Gift of Scripture***. So, what sorts of things aren’t accurate? Creation, for one. Genesis, they note, has two different, and sometimes conflicting, creation stories and cannot be considered ‘historical.’ Rather, the bishops say, it simply contains **“historical traces.”**
- Evil men and false teachers have tried to destroy or diminish the Bible for years.
- Listen to **Isaiah 40:8** – “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.”
- In the N.T., the **Apostle Paul** was imprisoned because of his faith and for preaching the Word of God.
 - Listen to this mighty man’s description of the Word – “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. **But the word of God is not bound!**” (II Tim. 2:8-9, ESV)
- The Word of God is indestructible. It can’t be bound, burned, or blown away. It stands forever!

5. There is no book like it in its influence and life-changing power –

- Beloved, the Bible is not just one book among many; it is the living, breathing Word of God.
- In **II Timothy 3:16-17**, Paul reminds Timothy and us of the Bible's profit.
- It is profitable for...
 - A. Teaching** – telling us the truth about God, man, salvation, purpose, the here-and-now, and the life hereafter.
 - B. Reproof & Correction** – The Word of God has the authority to rebuke us when we are wrong and correct us in how we should act, think, and behave.
 - You'll note that the Word just doesn't rebuke; it also stands us up and corrects us in how to live more productively.
 - C. Training in Righteousness** – living a grace-filled life aimed at being righteous and displaying righteousness in all we do and speak.
 - D. Completing (adequate)** – God's desire for His children is to be complete in spiritual maturity and development.
 - The goal is not perfection, but completion.
 - E. Equipping** – As believers, we seek to become spiritually equipped to live in this world of sin and darkness. We are mindful of our Lord's command to be salt and light in representing Him well in the days which we live.

INVITATION - A story was told of a man who loved old books. He met with an acquaintance who had just thrown away a Bible that had been stored in the attic of his family home for generations.

"I couldn't read it," the friend explained. "Somebody named **Guten-something** had printed it."

"Not Gutenberg!" the book lover exclaimed in horror. "That Bible was one of the first books ever printed. Why, a copy just sold for over two million dollars!"

His friend was unimpressed. "**Mine wouldn't have brought a dollar. Some fellow named Martin Luther had scribbled all over it in German.**"

Always remember, the Word of God is more valuable than any amount of money; for it is God's living Word given to us for our instruction and good.