

## **“THE UNWRITTEN AND WRITTEN WORD OF GOD.”**

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**First Christian Reformed Church**

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**Sermon Texts: Psalm 19:7-11; II Peter 1:20-21**

### **Introduction.**

Psalm 19 begins:

**Psalm 19:1-6** The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. 2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.

And then in verse 7 it changes direction:

**Psalm 19:7** The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;

Last week we called these the two revelations of God, general revelation in creation and special revelation in the Word of God. The Belgic Confession speaks of these two revelations as two books in which we can read and learn about God. Of the two books the second is clearly superior to the first.

From Psalm 19 we see what a great glorious gift and treasure the Word of God is. There are hardly enough adjectives to describe it. The first book is awesome, but it cannot make us wise to salvation. We need our Bibles to reveal to us that God is also a redeemer.

It is superior because:

**Deuteronomy 32:47** It is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land.

**Isaiah 40:8** The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

You may recall a sermon from several years ago when I had a huge anvil set here and I spoke of how the anvil of the Word has worn out many hammers.

BC Article Two: “God makes himself known to us *more openly by his holy and divine Word*, as much as we need in this life, for his glory and for the salvation of his own.”

BC Articles Three through Seven are all about the Scripture, the written Word of God. This many articles devoted to one topic should get our attention. We are dealing with something very important and fundamental and foundational to our faith.

If the Bible truly is the Word of God there are two things you could expect to be true about it.

**First, the written Word of God should have all the characteristics of its author, God.**

It reflects His character and nature.

The Word of God reflects God's character and nature. It's divine, holy, unchangeable, true, trustworthy, without error, cannot fail. As God cannot sin, so His Word contains no sin, it never fails us or misleads us. God's holiness guarantees the holiness of the Scriptures.

There are countless billions of books written in our world, but there is only one Bible, only one Word of God to man. The Bible is the only book in the entire world that is without error.

As John Calvin said so clearly on II Timothy 3:16, "We owe to the Scripture the same reverence which we owe to God."

This book is divine and holy and to dismiss it or ridicule it, rejects Him who wrote it.

### **Second, if it is from God it will be hated by the enemy of God.**

Another way you can tell the Bible is the holy and divine Word of God is by the way Satan has relentlessly attacked the Word of God from the very beginning.

Satan has been working feverishly from the beginning to cast doubt on the Word of God. Beginning in the garden he cast doubt in Eve's mind, "Did God really say...?" That battle continues relentlessly to this day.

Over the centuries and especially in the past 150 years Satan's attack has gained ground. A thing called Higher Criticism has focused on undermining confidence in the text and confidence in the authority of the Bible. Rationalism and liberalism have eroded the pillars and foundation of the truth.

For a couple of decades now there has been a movement called the Jesus Seminar, which is a group of 150 scholars trying to determine what parts of the Bible are original and authentic. They are trying to reconstruct the historical Jesus and figure out which of His recorded words are actually His. Some say it is only what is in red if even all of that.

Some have started saying the Bible "contains" the revelation of God. It contains other things too, myths, legends, errors. Some preachers start reading by saying, "Listen for the Word of God" rather than "Listen to the Word of God."

We see the erosion of trust in the Word of God by the back seat it is taking in churches today to visual presentations, dramatic performances, self-help oriented messages and watered down talks on how to have a better life and be a better you.

### **The Word of God is Holy and Divine, not of human origin.**

There was an unwritten Word of God before there was a written Word of God. The Holy Spirit was intimately involved in preserving and protecting God's revelation from the very beginning. This is called inspiration.

### **The Verbal, Plenary Inspiration of Scripture.**

**II Peter 1:19-21** And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but *men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

**II Timothy 3:14-17** But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 *All Scripture is breathed out by God* and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

The Greek word Paul uses in II Timothy is never used anywhere else in the NT. Theopneustos – God-breathed. It’s the very breath of God. What the Bible says, God says. “It is written, thus saith the Lord.” “Thy Word is Truth.”

Scripture is completely inspired by God as if He had hand written the entire Bible and not just the two tablets of the Law.

### ***Inspiration.***

How does this Holy Spirit inspiration work in conjunction with human authors? There are four different views or conceptions of inspiration.

#### *The first is called mechanical or mechanistic.*

In this view the human authors were completely passive like puppets or robots. It’s as if God unscrewed the top of their heads and dumped a bunch of words in. They might have been in a trance. Those of this view thought this was the only way to insure the infallibility of what came from their pens.

This is sometimes called the dictation theory, with God literally dictating word for word what they wrote. This is a fundamentalists reaction to liberal dynamism. Muslims believe this view for how Allah actually moved the pen of Mohammed.

#### *The second view is called dualistic.*

This view has the human authors doing the work and only being kept from error by the Holy Spirit as necessary, like a guard rail. This view is held by Roman Catholicism.

#### *The third view is called dynamic.*

This view holds the Holy Spirit didn’t give them the words but stirred their hearts or “inspired” them to write like the way a poet feels inspired to write poetry. This view puts the Bible on the level of other so called inspired religious literature like that written by Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed or Joseph Smith.

This view understands inspiration to affect the writers but not the writings. We are reading their “inspired” feelings and thoughts. This is the view of liberalism.

Lots of pastors and professors like to speak in glowing terms of Karl Barth. And he did say many good things, but his views of inspiration are very low and undercut the very foundation of the faith he is trying in other places to build up.

To him and other liberals who follow in his footsteps the Bible becomes true to us when God makes it so in the moment. Indeed, “Listen for the Word of God.”

*The fourth view which is the Reformed view is called organic.*

The thoughts of God were given to their minds and were communicated through their individual personalities and nature. Who they were was very much alive and active in the process all of which was guided by the penetrating powerful influence of the Holy Spirit. This explains the individual differences in language, style, grammar, personality, background, interests and outlook between the different authors and books of the Bible.

Jews wrote like Jews, Greeks wrote like Greeks, shepherds wrote like shepherds and doctors wrote like doctors. John wrote differently from James, as did Peter from Paul.

God illuminated their minds and understanding and carefully guided them in their writing to only say what God wanted said so that their words are His infallible Words.

It originates with God. His providence guides it by His Holy Spirit.

**John 14:25-26** “These things I have spoken to you, while abiding with you. 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 that I said to you.”

**John 16:12-14** “I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you.”

***How much of the Bible is inspired?***

The partial view says the moral, ethical and religious teachings are inspired, but the history, archaeology and chronology may not be. The writers could have made mistakes about events and times and names. Many opponents of the Scriptures say it must be partially inspired because of all the supposed inaccuracies and errors.

The Biblical view is that God’s Word is without error. We hold to the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible.

Plenary means all the words are inspired, not just ideas or concepts. “All Scripture is God-breathed.”

Verbal means the words themselves are inspired.

**Matthew 5:18** For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

The iota is the smallest Hebrew letter, in Hebrew yod. Down to the dot on the “i” and the cross on the “t.”

Jesus and Paul made theological arguments based on single words in a Scripture verse (Matthew 22:41-45; John 10:34-35; Galatians 3:16).

By the way, this is a point against red letter Bibles. Readers tend to think the words in red are more holy or more inspired. No, every word is holy and divine, God-breathed.

## **But what about apparent problems.**

Let me just say a brief word about apparent problems in the Bible. What about discrepancies? What about different reporting of numbers and facts? What about people and places that are not confirmed to exist?

First of all, we will not sacrifice the verbal, plenary, organic inspiration of the divine Word of God because we cannot figure out every apparent problem. We caulk it up to our limitations not to the limitations of God's Word. We ought to humble ourselves before the Word of God and admit our limitations and ignorance and trust God and live by faith.

Many of the objections come from ignorance or refusal to believe in the supernatural or a general dislike of God and His Truth.

The whole Bible has been around for about 1900 years now. Every possible objection or possible error has been identified and researched. There is a plausible explanation for every one of them.

## **Application and conclusion.**

God is a Father God. He speaks clearly to His children, He makes His will known, He warns and disciplines and gives clear blessings and curses. Imagine a father who didn't speak, who was silent and distant and kept his children in the dark. These are the words of a loving heavenly Father speaking clearly the truth to His children.

God who is the overflowing fountain of all good, seeing our need, and out of His deep and special care for us, condescended to our level and to our language to speak to us in a way we could understand.

**Nehemiah 9:13-14** You came down on Mount Sinai and spoke with them from heaven and gave them right rules and true laws, good statutes and commandments, 14 and you made known to them your holy Sabbath and commanded them commandments and statutes and a law by Moses your servant.

Out of God's Fatherly love and special care *for us and for our salvation* He has revealed secret things.

"... which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."

**Deuteronomy 29:29** "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

God has reveals His mighty hand in creation. He has shown us His unique blessing of creating us in His image. He has told us the tragic story of our descent into sin. He has revealed to us His divine plan to redeem us by His only Son our beloved Savior. He we read all we need to know about our sin and our God. Here is laid out for us the plan of our salvation at the cross of Jesus and how we may obtain eternal life by believing Him and trusting Him and obeying Him. Here is everything we need to know to lead a godly life by faith in Christ Jesus.