

ISSUE

19.1

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

January 1,
2017

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter

Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Steve Dixon

Ryan Ferguson

Arend Gressley

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Brady McAlister

Walker McAnear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Rusty Scott

Justin Smiley

Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



The Preservation of God's Word

How the Bible Came to Us (2)

By Kyle Pope

My grandchildren have some puzzles we keep in a box of toys in the room where they stay whenever they visit. They are simple puzzles with only about 20 pieces but occasionally one or two of the pieces gets misplaced. When that happens, even if all the other pieces are in place it's not a complete picture—something is missing. We learned in our first lesson that the writers who wrote the Bible claim to have done so by the direct guidance of God. If we accept their claim a question that immediately arises is how can we know that the Holy Spirit did not also inspire other authors to write other books not found in the Bible? Does the Bible have all of God's revealed word or is something missing?

Three Facts About God and His Word

If we accept that God has revealed Himself through the written word we must notice some things God has revealed about Himself and His word.

1. God is All-Powerful. Unlike gods of mythology and false religion the God revealed in the Bible is *omnipotent*, a word that means "all-powerful." Solomon declared, "**our God is**

greater than all gods” (2 Chron. 7:5). Jeremiah wrote, **“Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You”** (Jer. 33:17). God is **“the Maker of all things”** (Jer. 10:16; 51:19), and Jesus, God in the flesh said, **“with God all things are possible”** (Matt. 19:26). So that means while humans may try to resist God’s will they cannot overpower Him.

2. God’s Word Accomplishes Its Purpose. When God spoke to Isaiah

He compared His word to rain and snow that water the earth and cause growth. He declared, **“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”** (Isa. 55:11). So if God sends forth His word and God is all-powerful man cannot prevent God’s word from accomplishing its intended purpose. As a result...

3. God’s Word Endures Forever. All throughout the Bible it is taught that God’s word cannot pass away. David proclaimed, **“The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever”** (Psa. 119:160). Isaiah was told to, **“Cry out!”** the truth that **“All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field...The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever”** (Isa. 40:6-8). Jesus, God in the flesh, declared, **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away”** (Matt. 24:34; Mark 13:30; Luke 21:32). Finally, Peter described the word of the gospel of Christ as an **“incorruptible”** seed that is **“the word of God which lives and abides forever”** going on to quote Isaiah 40:6-8 (1 Pet. 1:22-25).



So if God is all-powerful, and His word endures forever, what does that tell us about whether the Bible is missing something? If man could successfully remove, destroy, erase, or delete something from the divine revelation God intended to preserve, wouldn’t that mean human beings had overcome God? Yes. So along with the claim that the Bible is from God we must also understand that it teaches the principle that God will preserve His word.

Freewill and Providence

How can that be true if we all have the freedom to choose right or wrong? I could make the decision right now to take a Bible and cut out all the pages that teach things I don't like. I could burn every bookstore that sells Bibles and force everyone I could to give up their Bibles to be burned. Wouldn't that succeed in destroying God's word? No. We'll see in future lessons that there actually have been times when people tried to do these very things, but even though human beings have *freewill* (the right to choose right or wrong) an all-powerful God always exercises *providence*.

The word *providence* comes from a Latin word that means "to foresee." It refers to the ways God *provides* things to His people. The Bible makes it clear that God knows everything that will happen long before it ever does. James declared, "**Known to God from eternity are all His works**" (Acts 15:18). Isaiah taught that God is One, "**Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done...**" (Isa. 46:10). Imagine that you knew someone was about to hit you in the face—would you move your head to prevent him from hitting you? Would you take steps to try and make him change his mind about taking that swing? If you let him hit you would you put some ice nearby to soothe the pain? God is so far above us! God knows everything we will ever do and can act in ways to make certain that even if people try to destroy His word it will be preserved for those who need it or for the time when people will follow it.

Examples of God Preserving His Word

Let's notice two examples of this recorded in the Bible. Near the final days of the southern kingdom of Judah the Israelites had become so wicked they had given themselves to the most extreme forms of idolatry ever practiced in ancient times including child sacrifice and temple prostitution (cf. 2 Kings 23:7-10). Any remnants of true worship according to the Law of Moses came only from traditions held in the memory of the people. This happened because God's word fell into such disuse that the book of the Law had actually been lost! On one occasion when the temple was being cleared Scripture records, "**Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the**



LORD, given by Moses. Then Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, ‘I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD,.’ And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan” (2 Chron. 34:14). When the law was read to king Josiah he committed himself to lead the nation in restoration of true worship of God according to His word.

Unfortunately Josiah’s son, Jehoiakim did not have the same respect for God’s word. When the

Lord led Jeremiah to send a message from Him to the king, the Bible records, **“And it happened, when Jehudi had read three or four columns, that the king cut it with the scribe’s knife and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the scroll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth”** (Jer. 36:23). Because he didn’t like what God said Jehoiakim tried to destroy it!

Did he succeed? No. God commanded Jeremiah, **“Take yet another scroll, and write on it all the former words that were in the first scroll which Jehoiakim the king of Judah has burned”** (Jer. 36:28).

Even though people disregarded God’s word so much that it was lost, God preserved it for the time when good hearts would obey its commands. Even though people tried to silence and destroy God’s word, God preserved it for those who would respect it. Today we can trust that God has preserved His word just as He intended it. Nothing is lost. Nothing is missing. It exists just as God intended it. In future lessons we will see historical examples of this in God’s providential preservation of His word through the ages.



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