

The Sword of the Spirit

by Tim Conway

This sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing the Bible as the Word of God and the need to tremble before it, obey its teachings, and conform our lives to its truths. It highlights the power of Scripture in resisting the devil and the significance of humbly approaching God's Word with reverence and obedience.

Scripture: Jeremiah 3:25, Jeremiah 6:10, Jeremiah 7:13, Ephesians 6:17, 1 Peter 1:20, Galatians 1:11, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Corinthians 2:13, James 1:22, Jeremiah 23:17

Topics: "Reverence for Scripture", "Obedience to God's Word"

Description

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Transcript

So, in the U.S., we have something that is called the Christian Defense League. We have some other organizations that are similar. There's a guy in the U.S. named Jay Sekulow.

So, anyways, these are organizations that are put in place, typically manned by Christian attorneys, and they'll come fight for Christians when maybe they're wrongly removed from a college campus, wrongly charged with some crime related to preaching the gospel or something that has to do with our Christian rights. And you have the same type of organizations here. Anybody know what they're called? Christian what? Institute.

Institute, yes, that's exactly. And so, Mike Judge, who is the editor for the Evangelical Times, he moderated the meeting yesterday, and he used to work for them. He's pastoring now, but from the sounds of it, he was with that institute for a number of years.

And so, I did, I had brought tracts with me simply to be able to give to the guys because it's got my phone number on it, and I did bring out the brand new one that some of you were out distributing yesterday, and I said, hey guys, you know, I don't have the best feel for exactly what your government tolerates and what it does not tolerate, and I said, would you guys take a look at the tract and tell me if you think it's going to get me into trouble? And Mike, having been with the institute and several others, they did not hesitate. They said, you will go to jail for this tract. And one of the guys said, but they won't have a case.

It's much like Dale McAlpine when he was arrested three different times, I guess. In the end, rather than him having to pay a fine, they had to pay him. And one of the pastors just told me, you probably will go to jail for this.

He said, but just don't pay any fines. Tell them you want the thing taken to court. He said, they will not be able to charge you, but he just said the way the climate is right now.

I said, so what you're saying is maybe I should hold off distributing this until I have my more permanent visa. He said, oh yeah, I would recommend you do that. I said, well, the problem with that is that we have a bunch of the folks handing them out right this second, which I have no reservations about.

May God use it. The church is called to disseminate the truth, right? We have an obligation that, preach the word, what does it say? Preach the word when? In season and out of season. Well, in the days when they're going to put you in jail to preach it, that's obviously out of season.

So be that as it may. We leave that to the Lord. But nothing in me recoils from having to spend a night in jail or even a week in jail.

So anyway, I thought you just might be interested in the perspective of these guys on our new track. And I toned it down. I mean, in the beginning, Sonny told me that I should basically let the scripture speak.

But increasingly, from my understanding is, they're not okay with that. They're not okay just that the Bible says it. In fact, what's eventually going to happen, and your country is moving very, and I mean, I'm going to be here.

This is basically becoming my country because it's where God has me to proclaim the truth. And it's very quickly moving in the direction that if you even claim the Bible as your religious document because it supposedly espouses hate speech, it doesn't matter any longer if you're just quoting scripture. They're going to come after us just for holding to the Bible.

But that's okay. And in fact, that is the theme. We're dealing with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

That is found in Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 17. Ephesians 6. We've been looking for a whole number of weeks at the spiritual warfare, and we're just about done with this. Ephesians chapter 6, we see the warfare.

Verse 10, finally be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Now you know what? I'm going to develop this as we go along. This is telling you, you need to access the power of God.

This is a very interesting thing. It's a very interesting concept when you have the author of scripture tell us that we need to avail ourselves of the power of God. God has power.

He's telling you, tap into it. This is key. Because this book contains the Word of God, and the Word of God is what is analogously spoken of as the sword of the Spirit.

And the thing is, you are to take up this book. But the reality is, this book in the hands of many is powerless. This book in the hands of many doesn't drive the devil away.

The devil can quote scripture by the way. For this to be a weapon in our hands, you see it's for our own personal defense. If this book is going to be somehow a defensive element, and by the way, a sword is the one component of all of the armor and the weaponry here that is offensive, that we can strike out, that we can go on the offensive with.

Armor basically shields us from what's coming at us. But the sword, not so much. The sword I can actually make, I can jab, I can thrust.

I can strike. But the thing is, it's got to have power. And God doesn't just empower this word in the hands of any.

And so we're going to look at that. We're going to develop this. Put on the whole armor of God, verse 11, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. No, we do not. We do not.

And we can talk about governments. Brethren, think with me here. When you go back and you read the book of Daniel, it very clearly tells us that the beasts, there are different beasts that Daniel sees in these prophetic visions.

Those beasts are very clearly described as nations. Sometimes you get, especially in this whole pre-millennial dispensational camp today, you know, all the rapture crazy people. They come over to the book of Revelation and they see beasts.

And they immediately wanted to describe some kind of human individual who's the antichrist. He's the beast. That is not interpreting Scripture faithfully, for starters.

The reality is, we want Scripture to help us interpret Scripture. And God gives us the keys for unlocking the imagery of Scripture. You don't want to run to Revelation and see the beast is this one individual antichrist who, and I don't know if you think the same way over in Europe like they do in the US, but it's always, you know, this European Union was going to breed this character.

And what I'm telling you is this. The beasts are nations. And Satan is in league with and deceiving these nations and using them to accomplish his purposes.

When we talk about what the English government is doing and what's coming down and the kind of opposition that we have against this book, we're not wrestling against human beings. There is a whole, and here it is, we see it. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers, over this present darkness, the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

This is where we're doing battle. And so, even though we can look at political figures and we can get aggravated or we can sigh, we can groan, we can take issue with, we recognize it lacks wisdom. Look, we can look at our political figures and we can be honest about the reality that they oftentimes make very unwise decisions.

They're often driven by greed, by lust for power. We recognize that. But what we need to recognize is this.

These nations, I mean, somehow there is an invisible army that is moving and influences and impacts these people that make up these government institutions. And that's what's happening. This is who we're

wrestling against.

This present darkness against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand firm. And so we take, this is how we stand, this is how we tap the strength of the Lord.

So, we stand fastening on the belt of truth. Having put on the breastplate of righteousness. Shoes for our feet.

Put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation.

We dealt with that. The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. And that's where we're at today.

The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. So, here's the thing. This is probably going to be two weeks.

I jumped into it right away. You know, I jumped into it thinking, okay, one week, we're going to deal with this. And you know what was easy for me to do? It's just to launch right out.

Sword of the Spirit. I basically create this imagery of the sword, the Roman soldier. He's speaking to Ephesian Christians.

They knew about these Roman soldiers. They had that image in their mind. Very commonplace.

The sword. Swords in that day was the primary, as it was over here in England, primary weapon when you had hand-to-hand combat. Just developing the imagery.

But you know what? I stopped in my tracks. Because I recognize this. Sometimes we can just take things for granted.

And I have this image in my mind of just like two weeks ago, three weeks ago. There was a Muslim down in the city center here in Middleton. And he just kept... You know, it's the very typical, pre-programmed Muslim response to the Scriptures.

They're written by men. And the case closed. It's a man-made document.

And it's full of... You know, you credit it to men and immediately you go down that next path. It's got error in it. It's got inconsistencies.

It's got problems. And so, the Word of God. Think with me.

The Word of God. Think what we have. I mean, yes, we all see it.

Yet, we're to take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. But I wonder, do you sometimes stop and just recognize? I mean, do we appreciate this as we ought? Do we feel this as deeply as we ought? That we actually do possess a book. And it's unlike any other book.

Because God only gave us one book. It's made up of 66, I recognize, and multiple authors. But the reality is, this book that we carry in our hands into a place like this when we come to worship God, there is nothing else like this on the face of the earth.

There is nothing else like this in any library. We have something that is extremely unique. You just want to think for a second.

How do we pray? How did Jesus teach us to pray? Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Now, we pray to Him, and there's some sense that He is even here. And yet, when Solomon built that temple, he recognized the heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth.

It cannot contain this God. Scripture says that His name is above the nations. And His glory, it's above the heavens.

When you go to Scripture, there is a high and holy habitation. It's outside this world. It's outside this realm.

Do you recognize? We have a word from another world, from another realm. You know, men, do you know how much? Men want to send all this exploration into outer space. They are willing to spend, not just billions, but trillions of dollars, pounds, to find some voice out there.

We set up all of our antennas and the latest and the greatest and the most sensitive. And what are we listening for? The scientists, they want to hear something. They want to hear some form of communication that shows us that there's some kind of intelligent life out there.

Don't you realize the most intelligent of all life has actually spoken in to mankind? And that's exactly what we have here. The God who exists outside of the physical senses. It says inapproachable light.

We can't behold Him. And yet what has happened? He has spoken to mankind. He's spoken to you and He's spoken to me.

I mean, what we have is the divine mind has conceived channels through which He would communicate His thoughts, His commands, His ideas, His own words. He would reveal Himself. That's what we have.

It's revelation. We call it God breathed. That's the real word there.

Sometimes we talk all scripture is inspired. But you know, inspired, it's actually the word spired. It's not that God breathed into.

Inspired. It's spired. God breathed out.

God has proclaimed something. And here's the thing. What you want to recognize is this is the sword of the Spirit.

He's the swordsmith. This came out of His shop. This came out of His furnace and off His anvil.

And I want to take you for a second to see the Spirit of God forging this two edged sword. Because scripture tells us how this thing was conceived. Look at 2 Peter.

Turn in your Bibles to 2 Peter. We love to quote this. But you know, sometimes we need to really stop.

Sometimes we need to hear what we're quoting. That is one of the things about being a Christian for a number of years and reading your Bible for a number of years. You know, you can really get to the place where you just take it for granted.

Oh yeah, we know that truth. Of course we know the Word of God. We talk that way.

Word of God. Scriptures. The Bible.

Yes, it's the sword of the Spirit. We recognize these things. Most of us can, at least in rough form, we can paraphrase this text in 2 Peter.

But I want to get a look at it. 2 Peter 1 verse 20. No prophecy of Scripture.

This is 2 Peter 1 verse 20. No prophecy of Scripture. Now see, I want to start right there because I want you to see we know about prophesying.

Typically we recognize that has to do with foretelling. The prophet's foretold events. But the way Peter is talking is when he's talking about prophesying, he's talking about basically the uttering of Scripture.

You see that here. This is the prophecy of Scripture. It doesn't come from someone's own interpretation.

Now we could sit and develop that, but that's not my agenda today. I'm really wanting us to dive into verse 21. No prophecy of Scripture.

You can carry that over from verse 20 because that's what he's talking about. He's already established that. No prophecy of Scripture was ever, you want to get this, was ever produced by the will of man.

Lay that down. That's what our Muslim friend does not recognize. See, as soon as people say men wrote that book, we grant it, but it did not happen according to their will.

You see, the automatic assumption is it was according to their will. In other words, men dreamt this up. This came by their will power.

This came by their device and design. This is something that they actually applied themselves to and created. Notice what this says.

No prophecy of Scripture was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke. Yes, they did speak. We grant that.

They wrote. We grant that. But notice this.

It's from God, and I'm reading from the ESV, from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. No matter whatever translation you have, it communicates the same reality here. We readily grant that all 66 books of our Bible, yes, they were indeed written by men.

They came off. Either Paul wrote with his own hand, or he dictated to somebody else. This is how all Scripture... Jeremiah may have dictated to Baruch, but the reality is this came off their hands, off their lips in one way or another.

Men were the instruments by which these 66 books... There's no question about it. No prophecy of Scripture was ever... This is the thing you want to get. Two things you want to really notice about this.

Yes, men did it, but it never, no prophecy of Scripture was ever produced, ever made by the will of man. Two, you see this. The Scripture came about how? As the Spirit of God.

This is where I took you. The sword maker. Why is it called the sword of the Spirit? Because He gave it to us.

Because it's of His making. And what I wanted to do was I wanted to take you to His metalworking shop and see Him in there. He's got the hammer.

Bang, bang, bang. You ever seen a sword maker? Have you ever watched a documentary on that? Extremely interesting. Boy, I think if you lived a thousand years ago, that would have been... I mean, maybe it was just grueling work, I can imagine, but you know, very satisfying to be able to produce a sword of the highest quality.

We've got a sword that has been made of the highest, highest quality. And what you need to recognize is this. The Scripture came about as these men were being... Now your Bible either says born along or carried along.

Right? They all say that. By the Spirit of God. That's what we see.

Men carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. This is a word of God because the Spirit of God inspired men to write every single portion of it. That's the thing.

What we need to recognize, when it says it's not according to human will, it's not by their impulse. The Spirit gave them the impulse. In other words, you had a guy over there that was living his life and he never would have produced this word until the Spirit of God came to him and somehow worked in him and caused him to write that.

That's exactly what it's saying to us. Men could not and would not have ever written any portion of the Bible apart from the Spirit superintending work. That's what Peter's telling us here.

Men were carried. Men were born along by the Spirit. This makes God the primary author of Scripture.

That's what this means. This thing, it was not primarily authored by men. Men only authored the word in so far and to the extent that the Spirit of God was there, was active, was initiating, and basically provided the impulse for these men to write what they wrote.

In other words, they didn't dream up the message. The message came from outside of themselves. It's kind of like me coming up to you with my notes here and giving them into your hand and saying, would you please read that to the rest of the people? Well, yes, is it you reading them? Yes, obviously it's you reading them.

But would you have ever read those words if I hadn't come up? This is exactly the kind of thing that we see here. It's never done by the will of man. They would have never written this on their own.

That's what it means when it says that it was never produced, never made by the will of man. It was produced by the will of the Spirit. And that means that all the words in this book, it's all God's revelation.

It comes from God. We have to recognize that. But God, we have a word from outside this world.

Men need not to go around in their blindness and in their darkness. God has spoken to us. That's the thing.

In fact, I want you to listen to this, because I think, you know, sometimes we get these people, oh, people just make these dogmatic claims about Scripture. Ah, it's written by man. Oh, you just write it off.

But, you know, the people that say that have never read it. You know one of the things that if you go into this book and you read it, what you recognize is you see how the message came from outside the men. You say, what do you mean? Well, just think about this.

Have you ever noticed that Scripture also says these men did not always understand the message that was given to them? That they sought to inquire into what the Holy Spirit that was within them was actually saying? Have you ever read that? Peter tells us that too. Turn over just one book. 1 Peter.

1 Peter chapter 1. 1 Peter 1 verse 10. The prophets who prophesied these are the same guys that he was telling us about. 2 Peter.

These prophets who prophesied. This is the prophecy of Scripture. Notice what it says about the grace that was to be yours.

What did these guys do? Well, they searched and they inquired carefully. Inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them. You see, there's the Spirit.

The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ. This Spirit is in them. That's what He means by bearing them along.

He's in them operating, working, giving them the message. And He is indicating something to them. And they're trying to figure out what He's indicating when He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

I mean, here the prophets are. They received this divine revelation. The Spirit of Christ in them was indicating certain things.

But what I really want you to notice is that the prophets themselves, what it says is they're inquiring. It's like they've been given this message. Can you imagine Isaiah receiving that message in Isaiah 53 that we've been looking at over these past weeks? Or Psalm 22 that we looked at before that? Can you imagine if you're David and you wrote Psalm 22 or you're Isaiah and you wrote Isaiah 53 and you're looking at it.

You see, we have hindsight. We've got the New Testament. We've got much further revelation.

But they received these things. Don't think they understood everything. I mean, that's one of the great indications of the authenticity of this book.

I'll tell you this, if this was only written by men you never have guys that are trying to figure out what they themselves dreamt up. Because they already know. They're like, what is this? You know, it didn't just start with the Ethiopian eunuch.

You remember him? He's looking at Isaiah 53 and here comes Philip and he says tell me, who's he talking about? Is the prophet talking about himself or is he talking about somebody else? I can't figure this out. Well, you know, Philip knew. But Isaiah didn't know.

Isaiah was just like the Ethiopian eunuch. He's like, what is this? Who is it? I mean, what is this? When you go back now and you read in Zechariah or you read in Hosea or you're reading these prophets and you find out oh, they're giving these glorious pictures of the coming kingdom and the church and Christ and His activity. You need to recognize that sometimes, you know, as a young believer you start reading

those and you're like, wow, this is really wild.

I can't figure this out. But it didn't start with you. I mean, the prophets themselves were baffled by it.

That's what it's telling us. I mean, if anything proves that these guys didn't write according to their own will, it's this. They prophesied what the Spirit gave them, gave them impulse to write even if they didn't comprehend it.

That's it. One of the most certain proofs they didn't create the things they wrote is this. And look, I'll tell you this, go see if Muhammad ever inquired in or Joseph Smith ever inquired about the meaning of the things given to them.

Now I think you'll find they were quite certain about what all the meanings were. Now I'm not saying they dreamt those things up on their own. I think those are devilish contrivances.

But listen, do you know this term carried along? The Spirit carried them or bore them along. That word is found other places in our Bible and a beautiful picture of this, I'm going to give you this exact word. Don't look at this, just hear it.

In Acts chapter 27, this is the account where Paul has been taken prisoner. He's on his way to Rome. You will remember that he took ships to get there.

In Acts 27, it says when the ship was caught and could not face the wind. You remember that? The storm came. Paul's telling them, guys, don't do this.

And they did it anyway. And they got caught in the storm. Remember that? And they got driven by the storm.

Here's what it says. It says, they could not face the wind. We gave way to it.

Luke is writing, and we're driven along. There's our word right there. Driven along.

Just, here's the picture. You see the word? This is the word, these prophets were driven along by the Spirit of God. Just as the ship is driven along by this wind of this storm.

I mean, you can put these things together. Just as that ship upon which Paul sailed knew not its own will. What was it subject to? The will of the wind.

That's the reality. In the same way, it was driven along by the will of the wind so the prophets, aside from any will of their own, they were driven by the wind of the Spirit of God in the production of the Holy Scriptures. Now, let me tell you something else.

It's not just that the prophets looked at the Scripture that the Spirit was giving them the impulse to write, and sometimes couldn't understand what they were writing, and other times they all too well understood and resisted it. Have you ever caught that in Scripture? Let me give you an example of that. Oh, there's more.

And I trim this down to just two examples. Here's Jeremiah. I've read Jeremiah through about four times in the last week or so.

And so it's fresh on my mind. But listen to what he says. Then I said, Ah, Lord God, behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.

Now here's one thing you have to recognize. The prophets often, and it wasn't just him. You remember Moses said the same thing, do you not? Lord, I can't do this.

I cannot be a mouthpiece for you. I don't have the, my tongue, I choke on my words, I'm not fluent, Lord. So that's one of the things we see.

One of the ways we recognize that they're actually hearing a voice from outside themselves is that they themselves often responded to that voice and said, no, not me. Choose somebody else. I'm not the guy for you, Lord.

And he said, but the Lord said to me, do not say I am only a youth, for to all to whom I send you, you shall go. You see, this is the way Scripture speaks. If you just, I mean, you don't have to even pay careful attention.

Everywhere Scripture is saying, this is a message from the Lord. This is how it talks all over. I mean, do you realize when you go into the Old Testament, you, more than 3,800 times, almost 4,000 times, you're going to hear the kind of language that says something like, the word of the Lord came to me.

Or you shall say to them, or hear the word of the Lord, or thus says the Lord. That is everywhere. I mean, that's exactly what you find here.

He's saying, Lord, not me. It's not a picture of Jeremiah dreaming this up. Oh, I think I need to create a message for the people in my day.

And he's dreaming this up. People don't talk like this who dream it up themselves. He's saying, uh uh, uh uh, uh uh.

And God says, I send you, you shall go. Whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them.

You see, that's another thing. When men create their own messages, they don't create messages that typically get them persecuted. They typically create messages that they know people want to hear and are going to make them successful and popular and get a pat on the back.

The problem with these guys, they were coming up with messages that were costing them their head. Do you ever read about the one who got sawn in half? I mean, we think that's Isaiah, but we know somebody did because the author of Hebrews tells us they did. I am with you to deliver you, declares the Lord.

And the Lord put out his hand, touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me, behold, I have put my words in your mouth. Or how about this? I mean, it's not just Jeremiah saying, no, don't send me. Now, it's, they did persecute him.

You remember they threw him in a pit full of mud? I mean, all sorts of things are happening. And he says, Lord, you've deceived me. You ever read that? You know, typically, when you create, if you just dream up a message, you're not actually going to write the script where you're finding fault with God.

He says, you deceived me, and I was deceived. You're stronger than I. You've prevailed. I've become a laughing stock all the day.

Everyone mocks me. Whenever I speak, I cry out, I shout, violence and destruction. For the Word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all the day long.

And you know what Jeremiah actually is going to now tell us? I got to the place where I didn't want to speak this anymore. This isn't he just dreaming it up and, oh, he can't wait to start writing and making up some account of his own. It's not that.

God is compelling him to speak, and you know what he says? I tried not to, but what happened inside him? Listen to this. He says, if I say I will not mention him or speak anymore in his name, there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I'm weary with holding it in, and I cannot. Think, here's the Spirit banging that sword on his anvil.

The sparks are flying. That's what's happening. He's crafting the Word of God.

And you know what? These men couldn't help but speak it. Because if they tried not to, they couldn't. That's how powerfully the Spirit was motivating them and carrying them along.

It's much like when the Spirit comes into the world today. What does He do? He convicts us of sin and righteousness and judgment. You know, just like when a sinner comes under the conviction of the Spirit of God.

And that's very powerful and very real. So these prophets, they felt that kind of burning, that kind of motivation, that kind of carrying force in their own soul. And of course, who can't forget Jonah? You think Jonah just, you think Jonah, if he wants to show himself to be the real man of God, would write that? You know, look at me.

Boy, I am the preacher. I'm a powerful preacher. And I really want to... You know, typically when men dream up their own messages, they're seeking to exalt themselves.

Which, by the way, Muhammad and Joseph Smith have had enormous attention drawn to themselves by their followers because of the things that came from them. But here's Jonah. And he's like, no.

What is Jonah? This guy's jumping on a boat to try to get a ship across the Mediterranean. He wants a way. He's trying to flee from this thing.

And then, listen to this. Amos 3.7, for the Lord God does nothing without revealing His secret. His secret to His servants.

He reveals. This is the God of Revelation. And He reveals this to His prophets.

And God reveals what's otherwise secret and unknown to man. Now, I want you to turn to the book of Zechariah. I could have you go to numerous places, but Zechariah... Can anybody list the last five books of the Old Testament very quickly? No.

Oh, come on. Even if they're not in order. Zechariah, Joel, Malachi.

Not Joel. You've got two Zs and two Hs and of course Malachi. Zephaniah.

Malachi. Habakkuk. Haggai.

Anyway. Look at this. Look at Zechariah.

Zechariah chapter 12. And I could take you to a number of places. I hope when you're reading Scripture you really pay attention.

You watch things. You're asking questions. We have to ask questions.

I'll tell you. There are portions where I'm trying to follow. Who's speaking to me? Like in Jeremiah.

We call Jeremiah the weeping prophet. But do you know there are times when I'm trying to follow and suddenly it sounds to me like, wait, this sounds like it's the Lord speaking to me directly. And there are some places in Jeremiah where I think it's the Lord who is the one saying that he weeps.

There's numerous places in the prophets, but I want you to hear this. Zechariah chapter 12. Verse 8 and 9. On that day.

Am I right? Does verse 8 start with on that day? Okay. Notice this. On that day the Lord.

Okay, what do you have? I mean, we recognize Zechariah is speaking. Now when the prophet talks about God and it's the prophet talking to us. Typically when you're looking for the prophet is first person.

He's speaking to us. We're second. He's speaking about the Lord.

Third person. We know. First person, second person, third person.

Me. Us. Him.

Watch what happens. And this is not uncommon in the prophets. On the day the Lord will protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

So that the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David. I don't want to stop and start preaching this verse because that is not. But the feeblest.

This is talking about the gospel age. The feeblest will be like David. A man after my own heart.

Sometimes if you're the feeblest among God's people you can feel like God doesn't really care about you. And there are many more important people. Just hear that.

Anyway. The house of David shall be like God. What? The feeblest among them on that day shall be like David and the house of David shall be like God.

Like the angel of the Lord going before them. Here's what I want you to see. Verse 9. And on that day I. Well see, if you just stopped right there you would say well you know that's obviously Zechariah still speaking.

But when you keep going you recognize wait a second. The pronouns just switched. On that day I will seek to destroy all the nations.

That's not Zechariah. You see in verse 1 the prophet is speaking about God in the third person and then suddenly without any indication of transition everything suddenly becomes first person. Instead of the

prophet speaking to me for God it's suddenly God speaking directly to me.

And I have at times reading the prophets just stopped in my tracks because I come across that kind of thing. And I marvel at it. I mean the words of the prophet seamlessly become the Lord speaking without any formal transition.

We don't even have to be notified that it's happening. The two are simply fused together. Why? Why? No distinction necessary.

Because God is speaking either way. And He's so much the author of what the prophet is saying that the prophet just disappears with no explanation necessary. You gotta love that.

That's how much what these guys spoke is God speaking. These guys are simply the human instrument. And there are times God just moves them right out of the way altogether.

And even though it's their mouth that's moving or their pen that's writing God just first persons Himself right in there. I love that. I don't know how you feel about it.

I mean again, just the fingerprints of God are all over this book. Let's jump to some New Testament witnesses. Let's go to Galatians.

Jump to Galatians in your New Testament. Galatians chapter 1. Brother, we're just establishing just the authenticity of Scripture. Scripture bears witness to itself.

That it is the Word of God. Repeatedly bears witness to itself. Galatians 1. Of course, we're very familiar with this, but I assume that.

But in case you're not, let's familiarize ourselves with it. Galatians chapter 1. Verse 11. Paul says this.

I would have you know brothers that the Gospel that was preached by me is not man's Gospel. For I did not receive it from any man. In other words, I didn't even receive it from myself.

I didn't dream this up. Now, I did receive it. But not from myself, not from my own musings, not from any dream I had.

Nope. Nor was I taught it, again, by any man. It didn't come to me from a teacher from a university.

I sat at the feet of Gamaliel. It didn't come to me from him. I received it through revelation of Jesus Christ.

It's self-authenticating. This is what Scripture tells us. Over and over and over again.

If you question Paul's Gospel, you know what he's saying? You question my Gospel? That is to imperil your own life. Why? Because my Gospel is not dreamt up by me. This is a message I got from Jesus Christ.

And if you reject me, you reject Him. And Jesus Himself said if you reject Him, you reject the one that sent Him. And to reject that God and His Son is to imperil your own soul.

See, that's the issue. And this is one of the reasons why Paul, have you ever noticed, especially like 2 Corinthians, have you ever just sized up 2 Corinthians and recognized what it is? It's a defense of Paul's apostleship. You know, he's got to tell them, you know, I'm speaking like a madman, I know somebody,

you know, actually even taken up into glory.

He's basically going through all of his credentials. And he's doing it in an embarrassed fashion. Have you ever wondered why he did it? It's not because he's being proud.

It's not because he's boasting or gloating. You know what he's doing? He's saying this, you're despising my apostleship. But you need to recognize, I didn't make myself an apostle, and I didn't make myself a voice piece for God.

He made me that. And He gave me His message. And you don't want to despise my apostleship.

And I will fight for my apostleship, even though I look like a madman and a fool. I will fight for it, because He cares about us. And He's saying, I am an apostle, and I have been given the Word.

I have been given this Gospel from outside this world that's been revealed to me by Jesus Christ Himself. And if you despise my apostleship, you despise my message. And if you despise my message, you despise Christ.

And you despise His Father. And the reality is, that's very dangerous. You don't want to go down that path.

That's what's happening here. Now, turn to 1 Thessalonians. 1 Thessalonians chapter 2. 1 Thessalonians 2.13 I love this.

We also thank God constantly for this. That when you received the Word of God, which you heard from us. Now get that right there.

Paul's not even, he's not denying the fact. You heard this message from me. Yep.

I'm just a human instrument. It came through me. But he said, you accepted it, what I said, not as the Word of men, but as what it really is, the Word of God.

Now you want to catch that. I mean, what happened? Paul realizes that there are people that are going to say, Paul, come off it. We heard you speak that message.

You know, it's like the guys at Athens. Paul went there to Mars Hill. And you had these guys and they're always, you know, they're saying well, these guys are bringing up some kind of new religion.

It's, you know, people can see the human being who's voicing the words. Paul realizes there are people who are going to say the Gospel, the Bible, is nothing more than the Word of men. Paul knows that.

Unbelievers, what do they do? They walk by sight. We, as believers, we walk by faith, not by sight. Unbelievers, they walk by sight, not by faith.

And so what happens? Well, there's a guy. There's a guy on Mars Hill. There's a guy out in the crowd.

And he's talking about, you know, some unknown God. Paul recognizes right away. They can see the human instrument.

They have no faith. They have no faith to even perceive that there's a God behind the man who's speaking behind the instrument. Nevertheless, Paul, he doesn't care.

You ever notice that about Paul? He doesn't care. And you know what? Why doesn't he care? Because he has really received. He doesn't flinch when he gives his testimony twice.

And he said, hey, I was walking down that Damascus road and suddenly, bang, there's Christ. Light from heaven. I couldn't see.

I ended up going into Damascus. I heard this voice. Christ is talking to me.

He's not bashful about that. He's not embarrassed of miracles. He doesn't care if he's standing before kings and high authorities and telling this story before all the Jewish leaders.

He doesn't care. Why? Because he's received a message from Christ and this is the message to save the world. And so he doesn't flinch.

He's not ashamed. He's going to say it how it is. Paul underscores the truth that while some out there, they might only regard the message that he speaks as just being some human message.

Simply because why? Paul is a man. Paul spoke it. He's the one that proclaimed it.

Paul knows this message did not originate with himself. And this message... This is why it doesn't matter if they're going to throw us in jail. It doesn't matter.

It doesn't matter if we're in a season that's out of season. We have a message that has come from outside this world. It's been crafted in the very workshop of the Spirit of God.

He's banged this thing out. We have it. It is powerful.

It is living. It is this message that is the power of God unto salvation. And we need to not flinch at it.

That's what he's doing. Paul knows this message. It doesn't come from him.

And this is one of the greatest indications that a person is genuinely saved. It's when they come to recognize. I recognize that Muslim man.

You know what? I know. He's where I used to be. I was never Muslim.

I was a nominal Catholic. But it's the same. We dwelt in darkness.

And we didn't know either. And we couldn't see either. And so we can humbly recognize why it is that somebody you do recognize what Paul's saying.

Paul says, Hey, you know, one of the great trademarks and hallmarks of genuine Christianity is upon you Thessalonians. Why? Because this message came and you didn't regard it merely as the message of men. You regarded it as what it is.

The Word of God. That's one of the things that the Spirit of God crafted it. And when the Spirit of God is causing us to be born again, one of the things that he opens our eyes to is the fact that this is a precious word.

And this is a heavenly word. Listen to this. Just, again, listen to this.

You don't need to turn to it. One of the things that, one of the things you recognize right off is when people say, Oh, the Bible is written by men. So? Case closed.

Men have such small views of God. Listen to this. Moses said to the Lord, Oh my Lord, I'm not eloquent.

Either in the past or since you had spoken to your servant, I'm slow to speech. I'm slow of tongue. And the Lord said to him, Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute or deaf or seen or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.

But he said, Oh my Lord, please send someone else. But did you hear what the Lord said? Moses, I made you. And I made your mouth.

I made your tongue. I did this. It's so common for people just to spout off about the Bible.

Why it can't be the Word of God. It was written by men. Don't you recognize God did not just author the Word that came through these men.

What God is saying is I author you, Moses. I'm not just the creator of the Word. I'm not just the source of this Word.

I'm the source of you. I created the very instruments that I determined to communicate my Word with. You do recognize that, right? It is God behind language.

God created our ability to actually have a brain that's connected to a tongue that's connected. Have you ever thought about it? Like I'm speaking words right now at this rate of speed. How is that even happening? Because my brain is putting together a thought and somehow it's controlling the way I breathe, the way my mouth moves, the way there's a tongue there, and those thoughts are able to be transmitted to you through the air into ears that God created.

I mean, do you recognize that God has done this? God created the very instruments by which He would communicate this. He designed Moses. You know what God didn't do? Wow! That was an oversight on my part, Moses.

I did not know that you were slow of speech. I was looking for somebody very articulate like your brother. I wish I had started with him.

I'll try to get this right next time. That is not the way God spoke. I'll tell you this.

When God wants a Moses, He designs a Moses. And when He wants an Isaiah, He designs an Isaiah. When He wants a John, when He wants a Paul, He knows how to make them.

That's what He's saying to Moses here. You see, men have such little views of God. Oh, how could God come down here? I mean, men are sinful.

What sort of little views do we have of God that He can't use men to actually communicate His Word and communicate it in a way that is without error. It is impeccable. Inerrant.

That's exactly what's happened. I mean, God is always in the ability to be able to create the man to communicate the message. You realize He creates the personality.

He creates everything about. He gave them the intelligence. Designed it all.

It's only big views of man and small views of God that would ever leave us to believe. Brethren, do you realize just how amazing this is? How amazing it is that you have 66 books of a Bible and they are not in contradiction with each other. You basically have this whole history, this redemptive narrative written by all these different men in different times and they have different personalities and there's different situations and yet, it is a flawless message.

There's a consistency. This is what the Lord has done. And then, you know what He did? He had it spoken out.

He had it written in these autograph the originals. And then what? And then He takes those originals from the mouths of the prophets. First, from the mouths of the prophets and He entrusts it to the Jews who were meticulous.

And then in the New Testament, it's all entrusted to the church. You think about that. If I spoke this verbatim, what I've got written in my notes, I spoke it verbatim and you're all out there and you want to get this and we come to know this is directly from God.

And so you all sit down and you copy my notes. And then you take them to other places and you spread them around and you spread them and they spread them around. Because this is from the apostle.

Do you recognize what you've just done? It's you've entrusted that to the very people on the face of the earth that actually have the greatest motivation to preserve those. And now you have scattered it all over. It's not like you just entrusted it to a Pope somewhere who if he all of a sudden wanted to change it, now nobody knows.

Because all the churches have copied it. Now if somebody changes it, everybody knows where it was changed. Because it's been committed so widely.

Do you recognize the wisdom of how God's done this? Men like to look at it and they like to find fault with it. It's got to come supernaturally like it did with Joseph Smith or with Muhammad. I keep going to those two things because it seems like it was devilish and it was done in a way that men like that.

When it was done to one man and oh yeah we buy into that. Do you recognize it's far more miraculous how it was done this way? It just shows the magnitude of God's wisdom and His power. Of course, then Christ comes along.

You want to notice this. Christ comes along. If ever there was somebody who would have set the Old Testament straight, if it was erroneous, it's Christ.

If the Son of God came into this world and He knew that men had corrupted or men had spoken on their own and yet you know how He spoke about the Old Testament Scriptures. When He spoke there in John 12, He said in the Scripture cannot be broken. You know He was talking about when God called in the Psalms called the Jews gods little g and He says in the Scripture can't be broken.

Do you realize what Jesus was saying? Jesus is saying that it's impossible for the Scriptures to ever be annulled or for its authority to be withstood or denied. It is truth. Lay it down.

You know, when He was dealing with people you just go through the Gospels and you look at the number of times He says have you never read? You ever read that? Do you know what He's implying every time

He said that? Basically, He wouldn't say that unless He was encountering an error that was in conflict with something that the Bible said. Where was His authority immediately? Scripture. Every time.

Scripture. Have you never read? He also said it's easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the law to become void. No hesitation.

Have you never read? That's what you say when you recognize here's a man before me. He's setting forth a view. Here's Scripture.

It sets forth a view. The man's doesn't square with what Scripture says. You say to him, did you never read that? In other words, if you would have read that, it would have set you straight.

In other words, that's the source. That is the standard. That's where you find the truth right there.

That's how you talk. Have you never read that? It's an appeal to the standard. It's an appeal to the authority.

Have you checked your truth? Have you checked the accuracy of what you believe by what is written in that book? That's what He's saying. And I'll tell you this. Have you ever noticed that Jesus Christ He said, Oh, do you guys have questions about divorce? Did you never read about Adam and Eve? And how God put them together, one man and one woman in the beginning? Do you recognize Jesus spoke about the Old Testament Scriptures all the way back to the early chapters of Genesis as though they are actual historical fact.

Did you never read that? You need to remember Lot's wife. Jesus thought Sodom and Gomorrah really happened. Just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days.

What? Jesus actually thinks that happened? You gotta be kidding me. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in that day than for those cities. Do you recognize Jesus spoke like that on a regular basis? He looked back at the people of those early chapters of Genesis as being absolute fact.

He didn't shy away from it. He wasn't embarrassed by it. He didn't say it's a myth.

Some ancient superstition. Scripture cannot be broken. And if you want a source of truth you go back there and read.

He said this as it was in the days of Noah so shall it be. What? Jesus you think the flood actually happened? Isn't that some fable? Isn't that what the evangelicals are saying today? That's all fable. That's fiction.

We've gotta unhitch it from Christianity. Now brethren, this is infallible. And this is the way the Scriptures speak about itself.

And you know what happens? Somebody comes along and they say Ah, you Christians. It's all circular reasoning. You ever heard that? Circular reasoning.

That's what they say. Why? We say well, Scripture is God's Word. Why? Because Scripture claims to be God's Word.

And we believe that what the Bible claims to be is in fact truth. We believe it to be God's Word. We believe that the Bible claims to be we believe everything it claims to be.

Because it is God's Word. And you say, that's just entirely circular. You say the one, you go to Scripture and it says it's God's Word and so you take it as being that.

And then you take it as being God's Word because God wrote it. And it's like, it's circular and so they want to accuse you. And then what do we feel? We feel we're backed into a corner.

You know, that's right. We don't really know what to say. Can I tell you something to say? So what? So what if that's circular reasoning? Does that in any way make it invalid? I mean look, the reality is this.

They do the same. Because what is every one of us going to make an appeal to? The highest authority that we have. You see, you never get away from circular reasoning any time you're trying to establish a supreme authority.

Why? Because ultimately the supreme authority is the one that you have to go back to ultimately. And look, we know this. We're talking about a spiritual matter here, not just a logical one.

Not just reasoning. Circular reasoning. You know what 1 Corinthians 2 tells us? It tells us exactly this.

We have received not the spirit of the world. There is that spirit again. The spirit who is from God.

That we might understand the things freely given us by God. What has God given us? This Word. This is exactly what He's talking about.

Now listen. We impart this. The things freely given us by God in words.

But notice this. Not taught by human wisdom. That's the reality.

But taught by the Spirit. Interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God for they're folly to Him.

And not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. You see, this is what we recognize. I knew this was the Bible before I was saved.

I guess, quite honestly, I didn't give a whole lot of thought to where it came from. But once God saved me, if anything, I had a conviction this is God's voice. And you know why? Because I could hear it.

It resonated with me. Because God had given me the Spirit. The same Spirit that crafted this sword was now in me.

And there was a it resonated in the same way that these guys are carried along to write this. I was being carried along to believe this. And that's what Scripture tells us.

And so we need to recognize in humility, that look, if we're going to understand this book, if we're going to bow before it, if we're going to tremble before it, if we're actually going to hear God's voice in it, we recognize the same Spirit that created this in His workshop is the same that has to work on us for us to really perceive exactly what this is. But realize what this is. This is the Word of God Himself.

And what Paul is saying to us is, brother, sister, take this up. Take up the Spirit, or the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Take it up.

Let me tell you something. Here's the thing. If you're going to take this book up, and you want God to cause to go through your arm and into that sword, such power is to resist the devil.

You need to remember something. God says this. To this man will I look.

In other words, God is going to set His eyes on you and empower you and help you if He who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at My Word. You want to think about that. One of the greatest indications that a person actually has the ability to take up this sword and use it to the defeating of cosmic powers is do you tremble before it? I told you.

I've been reading and re-reading Jeremiah. One of the things I did, one of the reasons that often times I will re-read a book like that over and over is because I begin to find certain aspects that I want to go back and re-read again and highlight and mark out. One of the things that I was curious about this time reading Jeremiah, I wanted to underline and read every single place in Jeremiah.

If you know the book, it's a book of judgment and the judgment came and that's how the book ends. We know that great judgment came upon them through Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon and I wanted to underline and read every single place where God tells us what their sins were that led Him to this. Now I recognize you can find different patterns but I'll tell you one that jumped out at me.

Jeremiah 3.25 We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God. Jeremiah 6.10 They cannot listen. Behold the word of the Lord is to them an object of scorn.

They take no pleasure in it. Jeremiah 6.19 They have paid no attention to my words. Jeremiah 7.13 When I spoke to you persistently you did not listen.

Jeremiah 7.23 Obey my voice. 24 But they did not obey or incline their ear but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts. Jeremiah 7.28 This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the Lord their God.

Jeremiah 8.9 They have rejected the word of the Lord. Now you need to recognize something. These people, they were cut down with famine.

They were cut down with sword. They were killed and they perished. These are evil people who went to hell.

These are people that were cast off by God. God specifically said this. I am going to turn my back to you and not my face.

And he punished them and he destroyed them and they were wicked. And this is their crime repeatedly. Jeremiah 9.13 They forsaken my law that I set before them and have not obeyed my voice or walked in accord with it.

Jeremiah 11.10 They have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers who refused to hear my words. Jeremiah 13.10 These evil people who refused to hear my words. You see where I'm going with this? We're talking about the word of God.

I'm talking about people that can take up this word and use it to effect against cosmic powers. And I'm telling you that if you despise this word, you are giving the greatest indication that God is not going to look to you and give you of his power to use this effectively. You need to recognize that rebellion and disobedience, God takes recognition of.

You cannot be thinking this. Oh, I'm going to take this up like it's some magic charm. Like a cross before a vampire.

I'm going to take up this word and somehow drive the hordes of hell back. What you have to recognize is this. The way that this becomes an effective instrument in your hand is if you fear the God who spoke it.

Believe in your heart he spoke it. Tremble before him that he should say such things and actually obey. This is what Christ said.

You prove to be my disciples if my word abides in you. Wise men, foolish men, don't deceive yourselves. Being hearers only is what James said.

Listen, we need to recognize this. One of the things about this word of God is that he has spoken it and he means us to listen to it. These are not suggestions.

These are not just good ideas. When the God from outside this world has given us a revelation of himself, we need to stand up and sit back and take notice. That's what he intends.

Listen, those... Jeremiah 23.17, those who despise the word of the Lord. Jeremiah 25.8, you have not obeyed my words. Jeremiah 32.23, they did not obey your voice or walk in your law.

They did nothing of all you commanded them to do. Jeremiah 35.14, I have spoken to you persistently but you have not listened to me. Jeremiah 37.2, neither the king nor his servants nor the people of the land listen to the words of the Lord.

Jeremiah 43, you sinned against the Lord and did not obey his voice. Jeremiah 42.21, you have not obeyed the voice of the Lord your God. 43.4, the people did not obey the voice of the Lord.

43.7, they did not obey the voice of the Lord. 44.23, you sinned against the Lord and did not obey the voice of the Lord or walk in his law and in his statutes and in his testimonies. What you need to recognize is this, there's a day when Moses was there and he saw that bush burning and God told him, you better stand back Moses and you better get those shoes off your feet.

What you need to recognize is we need to approach this book the same way. Do you know, when you start reading this book and it starts telling us things like we looked at on Friday, we need to love our enemies. Or you read in places where it says you need to sell your possessions and give to the poor.

Or you read in places here that you need to hate mother and father, husband and wife, brother and sister, son and daughter, even your own life. See, we need listen listen this book the God behind this book is the God that we meet on judgment day and what Jesus himself said is you're going to have one to judge you in that day and he said it's the word which he has spoken. You don't separate what's in this book from the God who spoke it and we may be a small group, a motley crew but I'll tell you this if we are people who fear before God and tremble at his word we will find we can take up this sword and drive the devil himself back out of Manchester and he'll fall away before us.

Let's not play games. We have the word of God and it is a privilege which you recognize to whom much is given much is required. Brethren what we need to live our lives doing is reading this book and conforming our lives to it.

Why? Because it is the word of God. Father I pray give us grace to do so. I pray in Christ's name.

Amen.

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