

The term “Word of God” refers to what is uttered or expressed by God. It is a term that is used often in the Bible. When, in Luke 3:2, the “Word of God” came to John the Baptist, we understand that God spoke to John directly as He had spoken to the other Old Testament prophets. But in the parables about the kingdom of heaven, the “Word of God” refers to what Jesus taught, or “the gospel of the kingdom.” John chapter one teaches us that Jesus, a living person, is the “Word of God.” That Jesus as a living person and the words that He spoke are the “Word of God” is an ever recurring theme in the New Testament.

Paul teaches in Romans 1:19&20 that God has showed mankind the invisible things concerning Himself through creation. By the things that are made we understand clearly His eternal power and Godhead to the extent that we are without excuse if we refuse Him. Thus some people see “God in nature” and treat nature and environment as if it were a holy thing. God did indeed make it. It is beautiful and great. He speaks through it. But it is not divine, nor is it the “Word of God.” To Jesus alone belongs that title. To worship what has been created is to change the truth of God into a lie (Romans 1:25).

If God speaks to us clearly through nature, He speaks to us much more clearly through what has been written in the Bible. Without the Bible we would be ignorant of our origin and of our hope for the future. We wouldn’t understand sin, nor God’s provision for sinners. We wouldn’t know the truth about Jesus who is God’s Word and reconciles us to God. The Bible is very important to us. But it would be wrong to ascribe to a printed book what belongs to Jesus.

Many Christians today consider the bible alone to be the “Word of God.” They have such confidence in the Bible that they consider it their foundation. Some would even say that it is “God among us.” There are songs of praise in which the Bible is worshiped. Among the Jews, Jesus encountered people with a similar false view of the scriptures. He told them in John 5:39: “Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”

The goal of the Bible is to point us to Jesus and His teachings with the expectation that we will obey them and become more like Jesus and fit for His kingdom. He asked in Luke 6:46: “And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” He is the way to God (John 14:6) and by His words we will be judged (John 12:48).

But many people have read the Bible and have not been led to Jesus, nor have they become more like Him. Some of these people are violent and vengeful. Jesus was not that way. Some are rich and grasping. Jesus was not that way. Some indulge in much recreation and entertainment. Jesus was not that way. People have used the Bible instead to justify this anti-Christian behavior as well as many other sins such as slavery, warfare, abortion, homosexuality, to name a few. It has been said that you can use the Bible to prove anything. And you can! But you won’t if you are seeking the intent of Jesus. Those who use the Bible to justify their sins or weaknesses are not worthy to open the book. In fact, no man can be found who is worthy to “open the book” except Jesus (Revelations 5:4). He has “opened it” (Revelations 5:5). That means that we only begin to understand any part of the Bible as we compare the passage to what Jesus Himself said. Any teaching, to be true, must be compatible with Jesus’ example

and teachings.

It may be tempting to wish we could return to the Old Testament times when God spoke directly to people as He did to Moses, Abraham, Samuel, and the prophets. Let's remember that if you had lived then but weren't Moses, Abraham, Samuel, or an anointed prophet or priest, you didn't have the Holy Spirit and God just didn't speak directly to you. Now God has provided something better for us (Hebrews 11:40). Now God speaks clearly to each of us by the words that Jesus said as they are recorded in the New Testament. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in the time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son" (Hebrews 1:1-2). All believers are now given the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32), but the Spirit, too, does what the Bible is to do. He points us to Jesus and His Words. He will "bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I (Jesus) have said unto you" (John 14:26).

Jesus is greater than Jonas or Solomon (Matthew 12:41-42), or Jacob (John 4:12-13) or Abraham (John 8:58) or than any other prophet or king or priest, and His words hold more weight. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). But Jesus' words are "Spirit and they are life" (John 6:63).

David Donaldson
Box 125, Southbank, B.C. V0J 2P0
Canada