



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Psalm 19

“Authority and Inspiration of Scripture”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Well this is a wonderful privilege to be able to take some of you through the study of the Christian faith. Now you will notice that there are twelve studies and we're covering a great deal of ground, but I will do my best to make it interesting for you and when we conclude with the last study I hope that at least you will have a good introduction to the word of God.

Now our procedure each Friday night will be to start on time. I was afraid that tonight I was going to be late and have to make my first remarks as, “From now on we will start on time,” but fortunately there was no traffic on the way and no cop [Laughter] and so I managed to make it. But we will try to start right at 8 o'clock each Friday night and then as a general rule I will go ahead and teach for the hour and open it up for questions at 9 o'clock.

Now for those of you that can spare only one hour we'll give you an opportunity to get up and leave at that point if you wish. However, if you want to stay on I will stay on for fifteen minutes and try to answer any questions from the floor about the lesson and also about anything else that may be troubling you that has to do with the Bible.

Then at 9:15 we will, as a rule, close. And if some of you want to speak about something that is a little more personal I'll usually try to stay around and you feel free to come and ask me about it.

One of the things that we usually have a little bit of difficulty with when we first begin classes is for everybody to feel at home and feel free to ask questions. So when 9 o'clock comes I hope you will feel free to ask any questions and I hope, too, that you will not think that the question that you are asking is too stupid to be asked. Because I know some of the people in this room and they're not really very smart [Laughter] so if you go ahead and ask a stupid question I'm sure it won't be over Curtis' head or some of the rest of us. So I hope you will feel free to ask questions when the question time comes.

Now the first of our series of studies is The Authority and Inspiration of the Scriptures. And so I'm going to ask you, if you will, to take your Bibles and turn with me to a passage in the psalms. It's the 19th psalm, a very, very familiar psalm, and we're going to read this psalm as our Scripture reading, Psalm 19. Now we'll try to give you time to find your passages in your Bible. Do not feel ashamed to turn to the index. And if the person next to you has opened his Bible up right at Psalm 19 and you feel a little embarrassed about even trying to look for it just don't, go ahead and look at the index because he probably, or she, probably had to look at the index once too. So look at the index and find the passage and I want you especially to notice the text of Scripture yourself.

Psalm 19, and verses 1 through 14. Now I think next week some of you that come in early if you will come up and take these seats on the front then that will make it a little easier for those who come in a little tardier. Psalm 19, and verse 1. Now as we read this psalm I want you to notice two things; I want you to notice that in the first part of the psalm the psalmist is especially interested in setting forth the significance of the heavens and their contribution to his knowledge of God, then in the latter part of the

psalm beginning with the 7th verse, I want you to notice that he is especially concerned with the law of the Lord and its contribution to the knowledge of God.

Now when he says the law of the Lord he means what for him was his Bible. That is, the Old Testament Scriptures that he possessed. Verse 1, “The heavens,” oh by the way, before I begin, it does not disturb me when people come in. So don’t think it does, don’t be upset for me if someone comes in, it doesn’t upset me at all. So we’ll just go ahead and even if people have to come in a little late we’ll continue right along.

Psalm 19, and verse 1,

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.”

Now our subject tonight, “The Authority and Inspiration of the Scriptures,” is surely one of the most important subjects that we could ever expect to talk about. In fact, authority by itself is one of the eternally contemporaneous issues. Today the subject of authority is one of the greatest subjects that faces the world, and especially our Western world.

And as a matter of fact, it is a subject that faces us in the United States in a very, very definite way. It affects the moral problems which are about us. We read in the newspapers in our church papers of the new morality. The subject of authority affects the new morality definitely and directly.

Authority affects us in our social problems. It affects civil disobedience. It affects violence. It affects many areas of our social life, authority. But most of all it affects us in our spiritual life. For in the final analysis the question of authority is going to be the root of our spiritual existence. In the Old Testament Job, one of the Old Testament books, and Job the author of it said, “Oh that I knew where I might come,” well let’s look it up. We want to be sure and develop a habit. It’s Job chapter 23, and verse 3. Job is, just turn back a few pages in the Book of Psalms, to Job chapter 23, and verse 3. Job says, referring to God, “Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat, (or to his throne)!”

Now notice what he says, “Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!” Now I think that this longing that Job expresses for the knowledge of God and for a sense of authority in his life that is sure and steadfast is something that is common to many men. They would like to have a source of reference to which they can appeal and for which they can have some assurance that here is something that is solid and steadfast and stable.

“We are living in the age of futility,” so Camus said. We are living in the age of obscurity,” so Satre said. And Camus called our present existence a nightmare. And if we

can get settled in our minds the question of authority we will have a foundation that will stand us in good stead.

Now when we speak of authority we immediately think of the different positions that men have taken with regard to authority and let me just name a few. And as we go along in our study I think that as you think about these things you will begin to put the Scriptures in their proper place with regard to them.

Generally speaking there are four differing positions with regard to authority. There is one which is the position of religious liberalism. Now I'm going to abbreviate just to save a little time. In religious liberalism the source of authority is generally speaking subjective. That is, ultimate truth is the final authority for men, but this ultimate truth is perceived by religious experience, it is perceived by insight, it is perceived by reason, it is perceived by common sense, sometimes.

Then a second position is the position of some that the source of authority is the Scriptures plus tradition. Now according to this position the Bible is authority, but also in a co-authoritative position with the Bible is church tradition.

A third position is that Jesus Christ is our authority. And this is very common today. Generally speaking Jesus Christ is the authority for those who are called by most of our religious leaders today. I started to say religious [unintelligible]. Neo-orthodoxy, in neo-orthodoxy Jesus Christ is authority. And then generally speaking in the orthodox Christian churches the Scriptures have been regarded as authoritative. Now the Scriptures, of course, are authoritative in the sense that they reflect the mind of God. Essentially, orthodoxy believes that God is the ultimate source of authority but that God's authority is mediated to us through Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ is revealed in the Scriptures.

Well let me put it on the board another way. Is Curtis here?

[Answer from audience member]

[Johnson] Oh. I think it's a little warm for them Beverly if we can...

[Answer from audience member]

[Johnson] Isn't it?

[Comment from same audience member]

[Johnson] We all have to go through the process of... So the fourth source of authority is that God is authoritative through the word of God. Now when we think about the knowledge of God we need to remember this, that we can never know an infinite being. If God is an infinite being and if he is the authority in this universe then he must make himself known to us. It is impossible for us who are finite beings to know an infinite God. He can only make himself known to us by divine self revelation.

The astronaut Titov, when he went up and then when he came down from his journey he was reported in our newspapers to have said, “I saw no evidence of God or angles as I traveled around the globe.” Well now, of course, if you know anything about God as an infinite being who is beyond our perception it's not surprising at all that Titov didn't see any evidence of God.

Laplace, a French astronomer, took his astronomer and turned it up toward the skies and said that he saw no evidence of God. And President Sawyer who afterwards heard about it, not our president, but President Sawyer, an educator, said, “He might just as well have swept the kitchen with his broom because you cannot discover God by means of astronomy.”

Now since God is an infinite being he cannot be known by so-called scientific method for investigating the physical sciences. I do not want to give the impression at all that I think light of the scientific method. I think it is tremendous and we are greatly

indebted to the scientific method. But scientific methods have to do with material objects, they are adjusted to their objects of investigation and they are principles whereby we can learn facts about physical objects or materials or whatever we may be investigating. But all of our scientific methodology cannot possibly help us in discovering an infinite God. Consequently if we are to have a true scientific method for discovering God it must be a method that is adapted to an object who is an infinite being. Therefore, we cannot know God by so-called scientific methods. But there is a scientific method for knowing God and that is divine self revelation. Now the word of God, the Scriptures, which you have in your hands make the claim that in this word of God we have a scientific revelation of God. It is his self revelation which he has given us.

Some years ago I was out in California speaking with one of the engineers of aerospace and he took me in and showed me around the plant. There were three or four of the engineers who were outstanding Christian men. We went in, we looked at the great bank of computers which charted John Glenn's flight, and then we began to discuss some of the things that they were engaged in doing. And one of the young men whom I saw just about three weeks ago in California, his duty was to design an instrument to measure the moon's surface, and that was what he was working on. He was working on an instrument which they would put on the moon and when it reached the surface of the moon it would send back proper signals designed to tell us down here what the surface of the moon really was.

He was engaged in something that was very scientific but his object determined the principles whereby he was constructing his machine or whatever it was which he would use to investigate the moon's surface. Now I'm stressing this because I think that this is very important for us to realize, that we cannot know God in this way. We cannot put God in a test tube. We cannot understand God who is an infinite, invisible, immaterial being except if he himself is pleased to reveal himself to us.

Now, if this be true then God is authoritative and we cannot know him unless he reveals himself. Now the word of God, I say, makes the claim that God has revealed himself. It says, as a matter of fact, that he has revealed himself in a two volume book. This book of divine self revelation contains volume one and volume two. And volume one is nature. Now we read from volume one in Psalm 19. We read, in the 19th psalm, if you'll turn back there for just a moment,

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.”

In other words God has revealed himself in nature. Now theologians, when they speak about the revelation of God they speak about the revelation of God in two ways. And to be general I should have told you this first, they speak of general revelation and then they speak of special revelation. They sometimes speak of primary revelation and secondary revelation. But if we look at it this way it would be this; secondary, primary. And God's general revelation is his revelation in nature, his revelation also in conscience, his revelation in history. Was it not someone who said after Waterloo, “Waterloo was God.” In that, there was a recognition of the fact that God speaks through history, he speaks through providence too. Only a Christian can know that, of course. But nevertheless God speaks in nature and he speaks in the other general ways.

He also speaks specially, and that is his word. He speaks secondarily in nature, providence, history, conscience, and he speaks primarily in his word. So let's just put his word here as God's second method of revelation. Now when we speak of God's revelation of himself in nature we, of course, notice such things as the glory of God from Psalm 19. We notice that as we look at the days we have language that comes from God.



At night there is knowledge given to us. But this knowledge that God gives us in nature is knowledge that does not really meet human need. It is knowledge that is given to us as a man. But unfortunately something has happened to man. In our third study we are going to discover and study what has happened to man.

But the revelation of God in nature does not meet the need that exists in the heart of men. And so we have a second revelation, this is his revelation in his word. Now in order to discover exactly what he reveals to us in nature in a theological way, I'm going to ask you to turn now to the New Testament if you will, to the Book of Romans and we'll just read a few verses, Romans 1, 18 through 21. Now look in your index, Romans 1, verse 18 through verse 21. The general revelation of God in nature, Romans 1, 18 through 21. Now if you are in the Book of Acts, you're wrong [Laughter]. If you're in 1st Corinthians, you're wrong. Romans chapter 1, now let's begin with verse 18. Paul is writing and he says,

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him, (that is, the things we cannot see, those characteristics of his nature,) for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, (that is, from the time that he created he revealed these invisible things of himself,) being understood by the things that are made, (the creation,) even, (and this is what we know from the creation,) even his eternal power and Godhead, (or deity, or divinity perhaps. In other words we can know God's power and we can know his divinity from creation but our knowledge of God is limited. It is limited to his power, it is limited to his divinity. Now isn't it interesting that in our newspapers we frequently see reference to God as the Supreme Being. Now all of us in this room have seen that title for God, the Supreme Being. Now you will not find that anywhere in the Bible. You will not find God called

the Supreme Being. That is a revelation of himself that has come to men by means of nature, and man as he has seen evidence of God in nature, has come to express what Paul expresses here as his eternal power and divinity, or deity. He is a supreme being. And so in the very expressions that we find in our newspapers we find the evidence of the fact that this revelation that Paul tells us is, in nature, has been received by man. Now you will notice that Paul finishes that 20th verse by saying,) so that they are without excuse.”

In other words, we know enough in creation to move us on beyond that to know more about, to desire to know more about, him. So nature is volume one of God's book of self revelation. But, I say, this does not speak to our need because man is not simply a man now. Something happened in the Garden of Eden that changed man's status before God. And since that time man has had a tremendous need that is deep down in his heart for not only the knowledge of God, but also for the forgiveness of sins. And so God now has revealed himself secondly in his word.

Now his word is addressed to men as sinners. His revelation of himself in nature is addressed to men as men. But now in his word he addresses himself to us as we are morally independent beings. Now notice the way we are born and that is the way we live.

I had a young girl in my study this afternoon, she's just a teenager, real fine young girl, and this is her problem: she's attempting to live somewhat independently of God. She happens to be a Christian but she's a little disturbed. And the reason for it is because she's trying to live independently of God. And we can never be happy because we were made to be dependent. We can never, in our human existence; we can be no more happy as individuals outside of dependence upon God than a fish can be happy out of water. A fish was made for water. But beasts were made for the forests. And we were

made for God, and dependency upon him. That’s why we’re unhappy often, because we are not dependent upon him.

So the word of God is addressed to our need. And I want you to now turn to a passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews. So turn on past Romans, on past [unintelligible], until you come almost nearly into the New Testament, and let’s read three verses in the 1st chapter of the Letter to the Hebrews, Hebrews chapter 1. Now this is one of the great books of the - are you cold?

[Answer from audience member]

[Johnson] We provide all kinds of service [Laughter]. Now have you found Hebrews? Hebrews chapter 1, verses 1 through 3. Now listen to the apostle as he writes, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, (now notice he says in the Old Testament God spoke by his prophets, in the New Testament he has spoken unto us by his Son,) whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, (Now in other words he says that actually this volume one of God’s creation has come to us through God’s Son. But he’s not primarily interested in that, as you see he goes on to say,) Who being the brightness, (or let me finish verse 2,) whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

In other words, while Jesus Christ is the one through whom God has created nature, he has especially been God’s message to us as the means for the forgiveness of

sins. He has, by himself, purged our sins, the third verse says, and has sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.

Now let me finish what we have here on the board of my diagram, I'm simply pointing out that God has spoken to us in the word and the text states that in the Old Testament he spoke unto the fathers by the prophets, and so let's just put prophets here. And the prophets wrote, now this is the general term for the Old Testament authors, they wrote the Old Testament.

Now in the New Testament we are told in this passage that Jesus Christ is God's message to us. God has spoken to us now in his Son. The one message that God desires for men to receive is the message concerning his Son, Jesus Christ. Now as we analyze this, and I'm going to have to skip a few things just to save a little time, we know that this message concerning the Son has come to us by means of some other individuals. Jesus Christ did not write any book, he did not actually give us anything in writing. What we have concerning Jesus Christ has come to us through, generally speaking, the apostles who were commissioned by the Lord Jesus to give us the Scriptures. So we have some individuals, Paul is one of them, who have given us the New Testament.

So to sum up what we've been saying about God as authority; God is authority, he has spoken to men in nature, he has spoken to men in his word, this is volume one, this is volume two, this is God's divine self revelation. His revelation in his word is composed of an Old Testament and a New Testament. The Old Testament which has come through the prophets and the New Testament which has come directly from the Son intermediately through the apostles to us as the New Testament Scriptures. So that the two together, the Old and the New Testament make God's divine self revelation in his word.

Last year I went out to the north of White Rock Lake and I was the speaker at a hootenanny. Some of you in this room have heard me refer to this, but for about two hours the kids had a wonderful time and we had a little intermission, we had a little refreshment, and then afterwards there were a few more combos that played a little. And

finally near the end of the night, I guess it was about 10 o'clock, those who were conducting the meeting began to get a little serious and they spoke to the kids, there were about one hundred and fifty high school and college kids there, and they went on to say, that in folk music today there is a note that indicates that deep down in the hearts of many of those who are interested in folk music is a longing after some reality of life. And beginning there they moved on into the discussion, briefly, of spiritual things and introduced me to the kids, and I spoke to them on the subject, who was Jesus Christ.

And I tried to set forth for them what the Bible said about Jesus Christ and how in Jesus Christ we have the answer to our needs. And that he is the one who has given us as God's self revelation an answer to the problems of life. Now when I finished I opened it up for questions and there was an Indian, that is a man from India, and he was right in front of me, a student at SMU. And when the questions came he held up his hand and he said, “Dr. Johnson I'd like to ask you a question.” He said, “I've traveled over the world and have had a lot of contact with different religions.” He said, “For example, I happen to be a Hindu at the present time,” he's not too well settled in his Hinduism now, by the way, but he did say he was a Hindu. He said, “I know Mohammedans and I know others.” And he said, “You know, out of all the religions that I've had contact with there is one thing that is common to them, each one claims to possess the truth.” He said, “Now how can you tell me,” he was very earnest, he said, “how can you give me some - how can you prove to me, that the revelation of God in Jesus Christ is the correct revelation?” He said, “I hope I would have the grace to accept that revelation if it is correct. But I would like to know why you say that the Christian revelation is the correct revelation, is God's revelation.”

Well I gave him an answer which the New Testament gives, and which all ultimately come to. I said, “The one thing that distinguishes Christianity from every other religion is the fact that we have a resurrected Lord. And that this resurrection of Jesus

Christ is attested by competent witnesses, by many witnesses. Not by just one book, but by many witnesses.

Now some are puzzled immediately because, well, do we have testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ outside the Bible? No, we really do not. We have some indirect evidence. We, of course, have evidence of the existence of Jesus Christ. We have evidence of the existence of the fact of his death. But we do not have any evidence outside the Scriptures of his resurrection. But, you see, the reason I said that we have many witnesses is because in the New Testament itself we have many witnesses who have given their story. And then this is something that many people fail to remember. The books of the New Testament are twenty-seven in number. These twenty-seven books circulated for many years as separate testimonies. The Bible did not come into existence at once. The first book of the Bible may have been written in the 40s of the 1st Century. The last book of the Bible was no doubt written in the 90s.

For fifty years, perhaps, or forty years, over forty years, the New Testament was in the process of being written. And the books, as they circulated, circulated separately. As far as we know, the Pauline epistles were not collected together in total until about, at the earliest, 90 A.D. The gospels were not collected together as a group of gospels until about 140, at the earliest, A.D. But we know as the New Testament was not collected together and circulated as a book until the later part of the 2nd Century, so these testimonies that we have in the New Testament now in this one book are separate testimonies. Mark's testimony is a separate testimony. Luke's testimony is a separate testimony. Matthew's is a separate testimony. John's is a separate testimony. Paul's is a separate testimony. And within their own testimonies they have separate testimonies of many other individuals such as Mary Magdalene and so on.

So that we have, in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, an authenticated historically event that we do not have in any other revelation, so-called revelation. Now not only do we have the Christian revelation attested by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but I think

that it is true and honest and accurate to say that the best attested fact of ancient history is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We have more testimony to that event than we have for any other ancient fact. That may startle you but it's true.

As a matter of fact in the Bible, which we possess, or the New Testament, I have a Hebrew Old Testament there and this is a Greek New Testament. Now this Greek New Testament we have approximately five thousand manuscripts of the Greek New Testament, we do not have any other book of ancient times that has anything like the testimony to its credibility and reliability than we have for the New Testament. We have not only five thousand, approximately, manuscripts of the Greek New Testament, we also have other copies of the New Testament that were made extremely early. So when we come to the question of the Christian revelation we should not be ashamed of the evidence that we possess because we possess the strongest evidence for the resurrection that we could possibly have, I think.

Now in addition to this we also have, of course, the testimony of history to the truthfulness of the word of God, the testimony of archeology, the testimony of the Bible's influence, the testimony of its ethics. Why, even Harry Truman thought that the ethics of the Bible were tremendous ethics and I think that is a great testimony to the Bible myself [Laughter]. It is remarkable how many people praise the ethics of the Bible who do not really know a whole lot about the Bible. For example, so common a statement as, “God is love.” We do not have anything like, “God is love,” among the heathen religions before the time of Christianity, that is a product of Christianity. When you find in other systems of truth that God is love it's of an entirely different type of thing than you have in the New Testament. They are dependent upon the word of God for that information. The heathen had plenty of gods but they were gods that were cruel, they were gods that were careless, they gods that were sexy, but they did not have any god who was love who gave his son as a sacrifice for our sins.

The Bible has testified too, so far as its reliability is concerned, by its fulfilled prophecy. I wish it were possible for us to study this for a long period of time because there are hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament that have been fulfilled and fulfilled to the letter in the New Testament in the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus and the apostles. There is also the testimony of conscience and the testimony of experience. The Bible does for us what only God could do. And it invites men to come and taste and see of the things that are found within it.

J. B. Phillips has written a very interesting book, it's called *Your God is Too Small*. And in this book Mr. Phillips who is famous for his translation of the New Testament and now of parts of the Old Testament has said that if we want to reject the historical fact of the resurrection we must answer three questions. And the first question he says is the question, what changed the early disciples? Because after all, these men who had come to believe in Jesus Christ lived out their entire lives without a single one of them, so far as we know, ever changing his faith. As far as we know every one of them recanted, they went to the end of their lives in a conviction that Jesus Christ had been raised from the dead even though it meant for them the loss of everything that men naturally would call dear to themselves.

Mr. Phillips said a second question we have to answer is, if the resurrection did not happen then who was Jesus Christ? Either he was a lunatic, an idealist suffering from folie de grandeur on the biggest scale, or perhaps an imposter, or the only other alternative is that he really was what he said that he was. This was a famous tri-rumor that Rabbi Duncan from Scotland used to propound for those who rejected the testimony of Jesus Christ, he said, “Well who was Jesus Christ?” There are only three alternatives. Either he was deceived himself, a man who was afflicted with folie de grandeur, as Phillip said, megalomania. Or else he was a deceiver who consciously tried to deceive men. Or he was what he claimed to be. And then Phillip said, “The third question that we must answer is this, why are so many Christians sure that Jesus Christ not only arose but is alive



today?” Now this question he went on to say, “May enrage the critic but it’s a fair one.” A man finds difficulty in writing a poem and he cries out, “Oh William Shakespeare, help me!” and nothing happens. If he wants courage Mr. Phillips said he might say, “Oh Horatio Nelson, help me!” We wouldn’t say that down south, we’d say, “Robert E. Lee, help me!” [Laughter], and nothing happens. But if we reach the end of ourselves morally and spiritually and we cry out to God through Jesus Christ, “Jesus Christ, help me!” something happens at once. And there have been millions of believers who have testified to the fact that Jesus Christ as revealed in the word of God does for us what only God could do. He can change the human heart.

So then God has revealed himself in a two fold work; nature and his word. In nature we can discover that God is great, that he is powerful, that he is a supreme being. In his word we discover that he is a merciful and gracious God and that through Jesus Christ who died for our sins we may have forgiveness, we may become sons of God, we may be justified, declared righteous; we’ll talk about some of these things later on. These are the products of the saving work of Jesus Christ.

Now the second thing that we want to talk about a little more briefly tonight is inspiration. If revelation is the content, the message of God, and in the Bible we have his special revelation, what is inspiration? Well inspiration is the means by God has given us this revelation. In other words, he has by means of inspiration given us this revelation so that in the process of communication it has not lost its content or its force.

So revelation has to do with the content which God desires to communicate with men. Inspiration has to do with the means whereby he brings this content, this message, to us. So I want you to turn now to another place in the New Testament. Let’s turn to 2nd Timothy chapter 3. Now if you’ll turn back a few pages from Romans, a few pages you will reach 2nd Timothy. And if you are at 1st Timothy you are wrong. 2nd Timothy, or if you are Titus you are near the Promised Land. Titus, chapter 3, 2nd Timothy, chapter 3 now, in verse 15. Now I want you to notice carefully what the apostle writes.

2nd Timothy, chapter 3, verse 15. Now Paul the apostle is in prison and he's in prison in Rome, but he writes to one of his apostolic legates, a man who represented him in the carrying on the testimony of the Lord Jesus. And in the course of this one of the little swan song of the apostles he writes in the 15th verse, “And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, (that's just what I've been saying,) through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” Now let's just stop there. The rest of the text you can read when you go home tonight. But let's just stop with this, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”

What does Paul mean? “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” Many people think that what this means is that there came a time when Moses and the rest of the men of the Bible wrote their works and let me finish the works of God looked down and he saw Moses' writing of Genesis and he said, “You know, that's a very good book. I think I will inspire it.” And so he breathed into it divine authority and power. And as time went on and Moses finished and Isaiah wrote his book and David wrote his psalms, and then in the New Testament when the apostles and others wrote their books that this process went on. Men wrote and God inspired. He breathed into what they said.

Now that is really not what Paul states. The word inspired of God is really one word in the Greek text, it's the word theopneustos. Would you like to know how that's spelled? This is really a transliteration of the Greek word, theopneustos. Now the word theo is the word for God. Pneustos means, well, the word pneuma is the word in Greek for spirit. You know what a pneumatic tool is, don't you? Well that's an air tool because pneuma is a word that in Greek means air and it means wind and it means spirit. And the Holy Spirit is the holy pneuma. Theopneustos really means not so much inspired but spired or breathe out. Really what Paul is saying is that all Scripture is breathed out by God. He's really saying all Scripture is the product of God. So that really he's being just

about as strong as he could possibly be when he says that all Scripture is God breathed. It is the product of God.

Oh but you might say, “But Paul, did not Scripture also come from man?” Yes, it comes from man. But Scripture is not the product of God and man as an equal part in this, Paul would not have subscribed to that. Actually he would have said Scripture is the product of God by man. In other words, God is the author of Scripture, but man is the one through whom this word has come to us.

Now I'm not suggesting by this that God dictated Scripture, as if he woke Isaiah up one morning, tapped him on the shoulder and said, “Isaiah wake up, I have a few chapters to dictate to you, get your pen ready or turn on the Dictaphone machine, whatever it may have been, and I will dictate to you some of the word.” That is not what Paul means.

Now there were some passages in Scripture that were dictated, occasionally God did give the message in that form. But most of the time God used the capacities that the authors of the Scripture possessed naturally. As a matter of fact from the human standpoint he prepared Isaiah for the writing of that tremendous book by the background out of which he grew. Isaiah was a man of the court, he was a man who was well acquainted with the nobles of the day. He has a tremendous vocabulary, all you have to do is ask a beginning student in Hebrew and ask him about the vocabulary of Isaiah. He will believe after just one assignment that Isaiah was a man who had a tremendous Hebrew vocabulary. But Amos was just a farmer.

Now God used the background, the education, the minds, and there was middle activity as they wrote Scripture. But nevertheless, he was moving so that the result is the word of God. It is the product of God through men. Not mechanical inspiration. Scripture is, however, a product of God.

So he states, then, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” If you want to know something about the process now just turn on back a few -- not back towards 1st

Timothy but the other way in your Bible -- and let's look at 2nd Peter. Now that's just after 1st Peter. I know these comments of mine are very illuminating but, after all, I have to say something while you're looking up these passages [Laughter]. 2nd Peter, chapter 1. Now you can always spot the self righteous ones in the crowd, they're the ones who find it very quickly and have that real satisfied look on their faces and they kind of look over at the person next to them, you know, and say, “My goodness, doesn't even know where 2nd Peter is, not nearly so spiritual as I am.” [Laughter] Does that comfort the rest of you? Now have you found it?

2nd Peter chapter 1, and let's read verses 19 through 21. Peter is talking and he says,

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation, (now of course he does not mean that we must allow someone else to interpret the Bible for us. He means that we must not take one Scripture out of its context and interpret it without reference to the background out of which it arose. And also he means for us to remember in the interpretation of Scripture that Scripture is the product of God and not men.) For, (he says in verse 21,) the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, (in other words, Moses didn't get up one day and say, ‘I think I'll write a book.’ It was God who moved him to write his book.) For the prophecy came not in the old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

Men spoke but it was the spirit who moved. Now if we had time, and we don't have time, I'd like to turn to Acts chapter 27 and point out when Luke and Paul were taking their trip to Rome, Luke speaks about how on that boat they were in the midst of a

tremendous storm and they were driven by the wind. Now the word that is used for being driven by the wind is the very same word that is used here of being moved by the holy wind. And just as Paul and the ones who were on the boat with him had freedom of movement on the boat, but nevertheless were moved by the breath of the wind as it hit the sails of that boat, so the writers of holy Scripture had the freedom within their own mind to write what they think they want to write, but they are really the subjects of the working of God.

So all Scripture is God breathed, it comes from God. It is God who moves men, who have a relative freedom of their own preparation, their own attainments, their own mental activity. But the product is the word of God.

Now this inspiration of the word of God is something that extends not only to all Scripture as Paul says when he says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” but it also extends to the minutest parts of the Bible. Now the reason for this, and the reason why the New Testament teaches this, is evident when we consider words such as our Lord spoke when he said, “The Scripture cannot be broken.” The writers of Scripture argue on the basis of on one word. They argue on the basis of the difference between a singular and a plural. But you might say, “Dr. Johnson, do you mean to say that our English text which is before us here is inspired word for word?” No, it isn't. What you have in your hands is a translation.

As a matter of fact, what I have over here on the couch or sofa is the Greek New Testament, but if you look at it you will notice that there is a text above and at the bottom there is a critical apparatus. Not all of the almost five thousand Greek manuscripts of the New Testament agree. After all, men copied the New Testament. And you well know that if you try to copy something by hand, that's why they are called manuscripts, they're written by hand, if you copy something by hand it's impossible to keep from making some mistake.

Now, of course, we know the kinds of mistakes you make, you know the kind too. You repeat a word once and again. Sometimes your eye drops from one line to the next line. Sometimes you see the same word up here and you're copying along and then as you look down at your paper and you look back again you catch, and if there's a same word two or three lines down, your eye might catch that and you pick it up from there and you've dropped out several lines. Scribes have known habits and it's scientific textual criticism. And so by the size of textual criticism what I have here is an edited or critical text. The manuscripts come under the investigation of the textual critics and as a result of the manuscripts and the methodology what you have before you is a critical text of the New Testament. It is extremely reliable, I won't say it's ninety-nine point nine percent or ninety-nine point seven percent, but no doctrine is affected by any variation. And we know that it is either this word in the text or this one in the apparatus which is found in some other manuscript.

So the Bible is an extremely, carefully, preserved book. But it is not inspired in its copies, it is not inspired in its translations. It is inspired in its original. Now there are twenty-seven originals of the New Testament. We do not have any original of the New Testament. Ah, then the New Testament's not very reliable. Did you know that we do not have the original of ancient writing? Did you know that? We don't for the simple reason that people used these books, and furthermore, most of the books could not be preserved because of the weather. In one part of the ancient world which was very dry manuscripts could be preserved, Egypt, and so some of our earliest manuscripts come from Egypt because of the suitable conditions there.

But in the case of the New Testament we have this great mass of testimony because the New Testament was loved and believed and was regarded as authoritative. It changed people's lives; they thought it was so wonderful, and so worthwhile that they kept copying. And that's why we have so many copies, because so many ancient people

thought so much of it. That’s why the Bible is still one of our best sellers and always will be, in my opinion. That’s a prophecy, by the way [Laughter].

So when the apostle states, then, that the writing or all Scripture is inspired he refers to the autographer. Now I’m giving you a few big words tonight, don’t get disturbed. Autographer, the writings themselves. Auto means to write, autog is intensive pronoun, so we have the writings themselves. Inspiration extends to the original. So if I’m expounding the text or your preacher is expounding the text and he says, “The Greek word of such and such is so and so and should be translated such and such and your text is wrong, don’t get upset and throw your translation away. It’s a translation. All of the doctrines of the Bible are preserved in your English translation, which also has many mistakes in it. But don’t let that disturb you because the truth of the New Testament does not depend upon one text. The truth of the New Testament depends upon many, many texts.

So what I’m trying to say is inspiration extends to the original writings, it does not extend to the King James Version. Consequently when you hear someone say about the King James Version, “What was good enough for Paul is good enough for me,” you’ll know, of course, that person has not sat in on our studies [Laughter].

Now finally, well it’s 9 o’clock, isn’t that too bad? And I had one more thing I wanted to say so I’m just going to say it. And then as we study together this will come out again. We cannot understand the Bible if we do not have spiritual help. 1st Corinthians 2:14 the apostle states, oh I don’t think it would hurt us to look there. My watch may be one minute fast anyway [Laughter]. 1st Corinthians 2:14, will you notice this text now, 1st Corinthians 2:14. This is a very important text, by the way. You know, when I was in the insurance business in Birmingham, Alabama and when I was - when I became a Christian at age twenty-five, this text had a great deal to do with it. I had always thought that anyone could understand the Bible. But I discovered that the reason I couldn’t understand the Bible was because I didn’t have the proper teacher.

Now verse 14 states, and here we have to do with the doctrine of illumination. Revelation has to do with the content of Scripture, inspiration has to do with the means whereby the content contents comes to us, illumination has to do with the work of God in giving us understanding in his revelation.

“But, (he says,) the natural man, (this is the man who does not possess the Holy Spirit, this is the man who is not yet a believer in Christ,) but the nature man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

They are discerned by those who posses the Holy Spirit. So if you take the Bible and you open it up and you say to your wife after you’ve read a little bit in it, “This is nonsense,” you have fulfilled Scripture. Would you like to fulfill Scripture? I wouldn’t like to fulfill it in that way but I must confess that I did. And often hear people say, “I read the Bible but I cannot get anything out of it.” I frequently turn them to 1st Corinthians 2:14, “A natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Perhaps, sir, it is because you have not yet received the Spirit.

Now I hope that as a result of our studies that you learn some things from this human teacher. But the infallible teacher of holy Scripture is the one who wrote it, the Spirit of God. And if we have him as our teacher then we are sure to have some light. He throws a great deal of light on the book that he wrote. If Shakespeare were here he could throw an awful lot of light on what he wrote. And I’m sure that there are a lot of people that would be very embarrassed if he did come back and read their interpretations of him.

Now the last question is, “Well how do we get the Holy Spirit?” Well the Holy Spirit comes very simply, when we recognize that we need him and when we see that



Jesus Christ has become man's sacrifice and has taken away all that makes for a barrier between man and God, our independence, our [unintelligible]. And when we say to God, simply, “Thank you, Lord, for giving Jesus Christ to die for me,” the moment that we believe in Jesus Christ, as a conscious act of faith, the Holy Spirit comes as a free gift from God to indwell us. That's what the Lord said in John chapter 7, verses 37 through 39, he's given to as many as receive him.

When that event takes place the Holy Spirit comes to take up his dwelling in our hearts and then we have the teacher who will teach us holy Scripture. Now if you are going to arrive on time I have to stop when I should stop. So we must stop. And I'm going to close with a word of prayer and then we'll open it up for any questions that you may have.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the privilege of study. We thank Thee for Thy word. And we pray that as we consider it in our series of studies that we may learn the things that will help us to know...

**[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]**