“FOCUSING ON THE WORD OF GOD”: LETTING GOD’S WORD (GROUND AND) GUIDE US IN ALL THINGS

NCD District Conference, April 7, 2024
2 Peter 1:19-21
2 Timothy 3:14-17
Greg Strand

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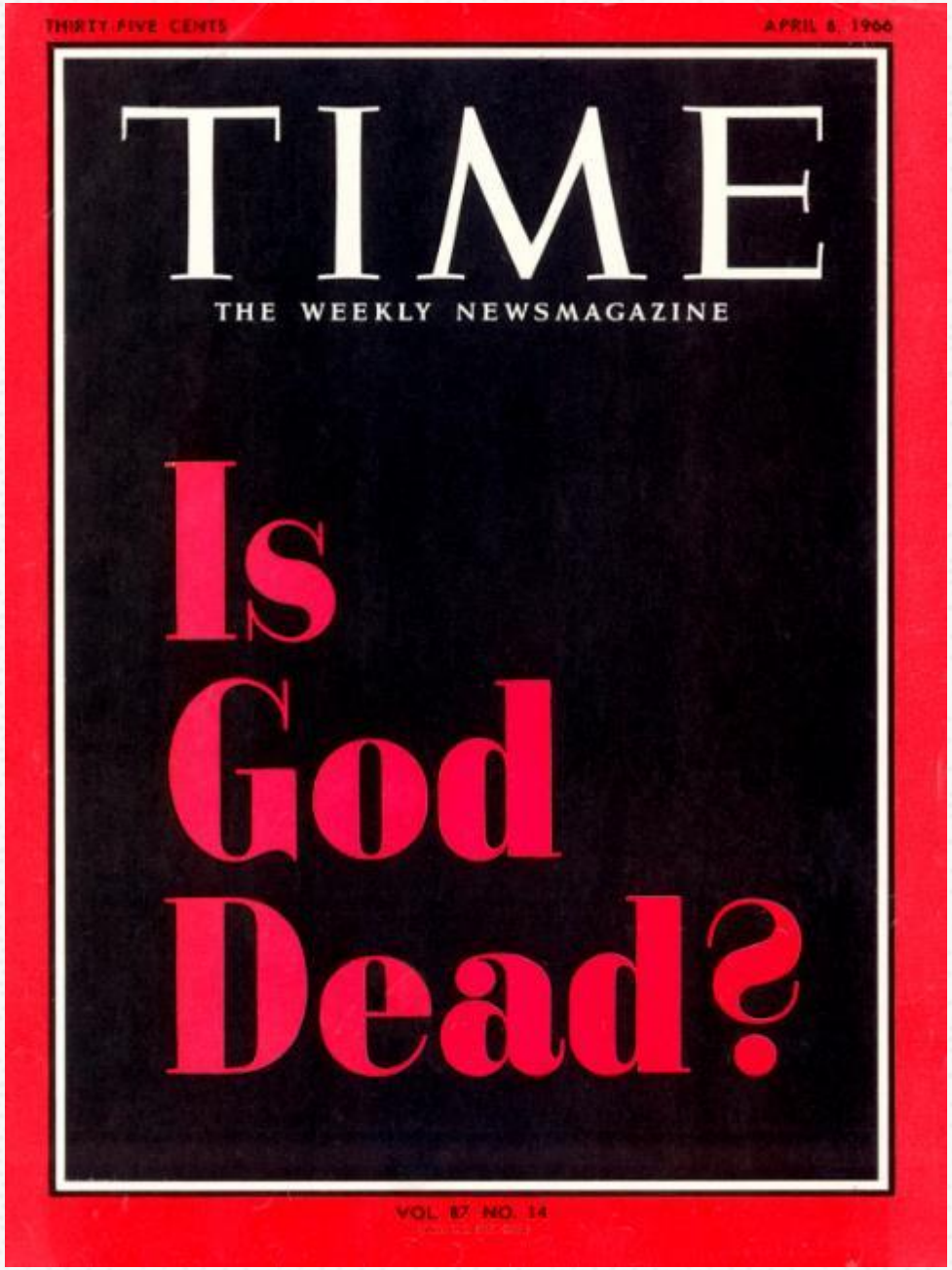
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Bible in One Hand, Newspaper In the Other

I. GROUNDED IN GOD'S WORD

A. STATEMENT OF FAITH, ARTICLE 2, THE BIBLE

The Bible

2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

God's gospel is authoritatively revealed in the Scriptures.

We believe . . .

God Has Spoken and Still Speaks

1. We believe God has spoken in the Scriptures through the words of human authors (Matt. 1:22; 4:4; 19:4,5; Lk. 1:1-4; Heb. 1:1-2).
2. We believe the Scriptures, the Word of God, the Bible consist of both Old and New Testaments (Matt. 5:17-20; Lk. 24:44; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 2 Pet. 3:15, 16).

Verbally inspired and Without Error

3. We believe the Bible, as the verbally inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21), is without error in the original writings (2 Sam. 7:28; Prov. 30:5; Num. 23:19; Ps. 119:89, 96; Matt. 5:18; Jn. 10:35; 17:17; Tit. 1:1,2).

Complete Revelation

4. We believe the Bible is the complete revelation of God's will for salvation (Isa. 40:6, 8; Lk. 16:29-31; Gal. 1:8,9; 2 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 1:1-2; 1 Pet. 1:24-25).

Ultimate Authority

5. We believe the Bible is the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged (Ps. 12:6; 119:160; Matt. 24:35; Jn. 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 Pet. 1:23).

Response

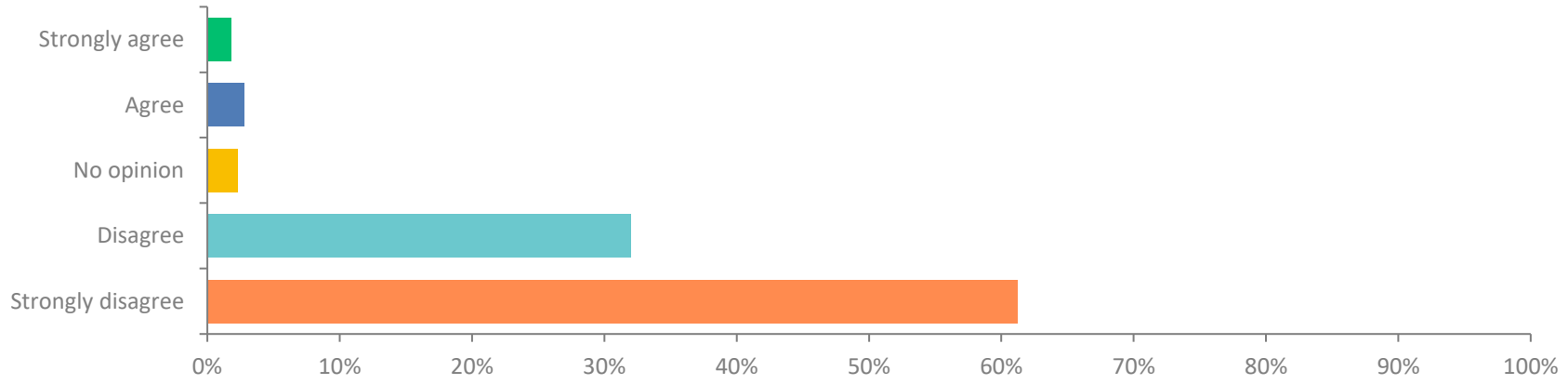
6. We believe all that the Bible teaches (Matt. 22:29; Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:16).
7. We obey all that the Bible requires (Ps. 119:44-45, 162-168; Matt. 28:20; 2 Thess. 3:14; Heb. 4:12; 1 Jn. 2:5).
8. We trust all that the Bible promises (Rom. 1:2; 4:21; Heb. 10:23; 2 Pet. 1:4; 3:13).

Q12 What is your view of this statement: “The Bible is not authoritative when it touches on maters of history or science.”

- ❑Strongly agree
- ❑Agree
- ❑No opinion
- ❑Disagree
- ❑Strongly disagree

Q12: What is your view of this statement: "The Bible is not authoritative when it touches on matters of history or science."

Answered: 1355 Skipped: 90



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	1.77%	24
Agree	2.80%	38
No opinion	2.29%	31
Disagree	31.96%	433
Strongly disagree	61.18%	829
TOTAL		1355

B. THE PROCESS: MEN MOVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT (2 PETER 1:19-21)

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

Process - Men moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:20-21)

1. This is extremely important to know and understand – "knowing this **first of all**." (1:20a).
2. Scripture/Prophecy does not originate in the mind or will of the prophet, or based on his assessment or interpretation of an event, either past or future – "**no prophecy of Scripture** comes from someone's own interpretation" (1:20b).

3. Scripture/Prophecy did not have its origin in man, but in God: “but men spoke from **God**” (1:21b).
4. Men were the means through which God communicated his infallible and inerrant Word – “but **men spoke from God**” (1:21b).
5. The Holy Spirit guided the process of inspiration, which resulted in inerrancy, as they ensured men communicated through writing the very words of God – “as they were **carried along by the Holy Spirit** (1:21c).

C. THE RESULT: ALL SCRIPTURE IS GOD-BREATHED (2 TIMOTHY 3:14-17)

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

Result: All Scripture is God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

1. The Divine Origin of Scripture – "All Scripture is **breathed out by God**," i.e., **God-breathed**" (3:16a).
2. The Extent of Inspiration – "**All Scripture** is breathed out by God (3:16a; cf. Ps. 119:160; Jn. 10:35).
3. The Focus of Scripture – the "sacred writings . . . are able to make you wise for **salvation through faith in Christ Jesus** (3:15b; cf. Matt. 5:17-20; Lk. 24:25-27; Jn. 5:39; 2 Cor. 1:20).

4. The Broad <u>Usefulness</u> of Scripture– ". . . And **profitable** for **teaching,** for **reproof,** for **correction,** and for **training in righteousness**" (3:16b; cf. Dt. 32:47; Matt. 4:4; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Tim. 4:2-5).

Scripture is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16) . . .

- A teaching

    B reproof

    B^1 correction

- A^1 training in righteousness

Scripture is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16) . . .

- Creed
  - for teaching the truth and
  - reproof, or rebuking or refuting error, and
- Conduct
  - for correction and
  - training in righteousness or discipline in right living

5. The Specific Purpose of the Scripture – "**that** the man of God may be **competent, equipped for every good work**" (3:17; cf. Eph. 2:10).

II. GUIDED BY GOD'S WORD

A. WITNESS TO THE BIBLE'S AUTHORITY

In 1522, one year after his bold confession, “Here I stand, God help me,” at Worms (April 18, 1521), Luther described how it was that the Reformation had been brought about solely by the Bible while he went about his daily routines. He writes (*LW* 51:77, which comes from Luther’s second Invocavit sermon delivered on March 10, 1522),

- Take me, for example. I opposed indulgences and all papists, but never by force. I simply taught, preached, wrote God’s Word; otherwise I did nothing. And then, while I slept, or drank Wittenberg beer with my Philip [Melanchthon] and my [Nicholaus von] Amsdorf, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that never a prince or emperor did such damage to it. I did nothing. The Word did it all.

Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892) referred to John Bunyan (1628-1688) as one who bleeds Bibline.

- I would quote John Bunyan as an instance of what I mean. Read anything of his, and you will see that it is almost like the reading the Bible itself. He had read it till his very soul was saturated with Scripture; and, though his writings are charmingly full of poetry, yet he cannot give us his *Pilgrim's Progress*—that sweetest of all prose poems — without continually making us feel and say, "Why, this man is a living Bible!" Prick him anywhere—his blood is Bibline, the very essence of the Bible flows from him. He cannot speak without quoting a text, for his very soul is full of the Word of God. I commend his example to you, beloved.

B. GOD AND HIS WORD: BELIEVED, TRUSTED, OBEYED

"Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises."

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Genesis 1:1-3: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

- *God has spoken, and his word has creative power. What is the significance of this truth personally and in ministry?*

Deuteronomy 17:18-20: "And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.

- *What are the ways that God and his Word are foundational and fundamental in my life and ministry, and what are the ways in which and the disciplines to which I engage ensure this?*

Isaiah 66:1-2: Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.

- *Response to God is reflected in a response to his Word. How do I foster and nourish this posture before the Word of the Lord and the Lord of the Word, and how do I live, teach and lead others to do the same?*

Matthew 4:4: But he answered, "It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

- *True and lasting life is not found in the things of this earth, as good as they may be (though fallen), but rather in "every word that comes from the mouth of God." We are verbivores! What are the implications of this truth personally and in ministry? Why is it critical that all ministry must be a Word-based ministry?*

Hebrews 3:7-15: Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.' As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.'" Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."

- *What is the significance of the author quoting from the Old Testament and referring to that statement as "the Holy Spirit says" in the present tense (Heb. 4:12-13)? Since the Scriptures are the way God speaks to us today, now in the present tense, what impact does this have on our lives, on our teaching, on the way we understand and teach the Bible in the church?*

C. GOD AND HIS WORD: CHALLENGED, UNDERMINED, DENIED

Genesis 3:1, 4-5: "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?". . . But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

- *What are the ways today that the Deceiver, the Liar is saying, "Did God actually say?"*

Deuteronomy 8:11-20: 11 "Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today . . . then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery . . . Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. And if you forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. Like the nations that the LORD makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God."

- *What are the ways we are tempted to become comfortable and forget God? What idols have we created which have caused us to forget God and his Word?*

1 Kings 22:19-23: “And Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left; and the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said one thing, and another said another. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, saying, 'I will entice him.' And the LORD said to him, 'By what means?' And he said, 'I will go out, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And he said, 'You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do so.’ Now therefore behold, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; the LORD has declared disaster for you."

- *What is the message of the “lying spirit” we are hearing from the mouths of contemporary prophets?*

Matthew 4:1-11: And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'". . . . "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "'He will command his angels concerning you,' and "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'". . . . And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him."

- *What are the tempter's temptations for believers and the people of God today?*

2 Timothy 4:1-5: “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

- *What is the origin of the present-day “itching ears” and what is the message they are hearing “to suit their own passions,” and how will we faithfully “fulfill your ministry”?*

D. SUBTLE WAYS TO UNDERMINE THE AUTHORITY OF THE WORD OF GOD

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1. Hermeneutics

1. Hermeneutics
2. Misplaced Emphasis

1. Hermeneutics
2. Misplaced Emphasis
3. “Imperious ignorance”

1. Hermeneutics
2. Misplaced Emphasis
3. “Imperious ignorance”
4. Biblical Truth Plus Application (or Lived Experience or Culture)

1. Hermeneutics
2. Misplaced Emphasis
3. “Imperious ignorance”
4. Biblical Truth Plus Application (or Lived Experience or Culture)
5. Word and Spirit

E. OUR RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF GOD

Letting God's Word Guide Us In All Things

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"What should be the believer's posture in relation to the Bible?" These are not given in order of importance, and are not exhaustive.

We, like Luther, sit under the Word and let It judge us; we, unlike Erasmus, do not sit above the Word and Judge It.

- Believe the Word (Lk. 24:25)
- Study the Word (2 Tim. 2:15)
- Obey the Word (Lk. 11:28; Jms. 1:22)
- Preach/Teach the Word (2 Tim. 4:2)
- Hide the Word in the heart (Ps. 119:11)

- Delight in the Word (Ps. 1:2a)
- Meditate on the Word (Ps. 1:2b)
- Listen/Hear the Word (Lk. 9:35; 11:28)
- Eagerness for the Word (Acts 17:11a)
- Examination of the Word (Acts 17:11b)
- Dependent upon the Lord/Word (Jn. 15:5; Rom. 11:33-36)
- Growth in Christlikeness through the Word (Jn. 17:17)
- Living and Active, Life-Transforming Word (Heb. 4:12)

- Prayerful under the Word (Ps. 119:18; 1 Cor. 2:12-14; Eph. 1:17-21)
- Expectant because of the Word (Isa. 55:11)
- Open to be changed by the Lord/Word (Ps. 119:18; Lk. 24:45; Acts 16:14)
- Nourishment/Food/Life from the Word (Dt. 8:3; Matt. 4:4)
- Read the Word (1 Tim. 4:13)
- Bow/Worship the Lord of the Word before the Word of the Lord (Neh. 8:5-6)