

Every Need Is Met Through This Gift

If you are to become established as a believer, your relationship to the Bible must be as strong as your relationship to Christ.

Once we have laid in our own lives the foundation of a personal encounter with Christ, how can we continue to build upon this foundation? The answer to this question is found in the well-known parable about the wise man and the foolish man, each of whom built a house.

“‘Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall’” (Matt. 7:24-27, NKJV).

Each man’s house had to endure the storm—the wind, the rain, the floods. But the wise man built upon a foundation of rock, the foolish man upon a foundation of sand. The wise man built in such a way that his house survived the storm unmoved and secure; the foolish man built in such a way that his house could not weather the storm.

Just what are we to understand by this metaphor of building upon a rock? What does it mean for each of us as Christians? Christ Himself makes this very clear.

“‘Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock’” (Matt. 7:24). It is God’s Word alone—as we hear it and do it,

as we study it and apply it—that is able to build up within us a strong, secure edifice of faith, laid upon the foundation of Christ Himself (see Acts 20:32).

This brings us to a subject of supreme importance in the Christian faith: the relationship between Christ and the Bible, and, hence, the relationship of each Christian to the Bible.

Christ, The Bible and The Believer

Throughout its pages the Bible declares itself to be the Word of God. On the other hand, in a number of passages this same title is given to Jesus Christ Himself. For example: “In the beginning was the the Word was God” (John 1:1).

The Bible is the Word of God, and Christ is the Word of God. Each alike is a divine, authoritative, perfect revelation of God. Each agrees perfectly with the other. The Bible perfectly reveals Christ. Christ perfectly fulfills the Bible. The Bible is the written Word of God; Christ is the personal Word of God.

Before His incarnation Christ was the eternal Word with the Father. In His incarnation Christ is the Word made flesh. The same Holy Spirit who reveals God through His written Word also reveals God in the Word made flesh, Jesus of Nazareth. If Christ is perfectly one with the Bible, then it follows that the relationship of the believer to the Bible must be the same as his or her relationship to Christ.

Your attitude toward God’s Word is your attitude toward God Himself. You do not love God more than You love His Word. You do not obey God more than you obey His Word.

You do not honor God more than you honor His Word. You do not have more room in your heart and life for God than you have for His Word. God means as much to you as His Word means to you—just that much, and no more.

The Standard of Truth

We are living in a time when it is increasingly necessary to emphasize the supremacy of the Scripture over every other source of revelation or doctrine. The Scripture warns us that, side by side with the increased activity and manifestation of the Holy Spirit, there will be a parallel increase in the activity of demonic forces, which always seek to oppose God's people and God's purposes in the earth.

Speaking about this same period of time, Christ Himself warned us: "'Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand'" (Matt. 24:23-25).

In the same way, the apostle Paul wrote: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth" (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

I believe God speaks to His believing people through prophecies, visions, dreams and other forms of supernatural revelation. Nevertheless, I hold most firmly that the Scriptures are the supreme, authoritative means by which God speaks to His people, reveals Himself to them and guides and directs them. All other forms of revelation must be carefully proved by reference to the Scriptures and accepted only insofar as they accord with the doctrines, precepts, practices and examples set forth therein.

It is wrong to quench any genuine manifestation of the Holy Spirit. It is wrong to despise any prophecy given through Him

(see 1 Thess. 5:19-21).

But it is vitally necessary to test any manifestation or any prophecy, by reference to the Scriptures. No doctrine, no practice, no prophecy, no revelation is to be accepted if it is not in full accord with the Word of God.

Unity of Word and Spirit

It is not God's plan that the Word should ever work apart from the Spirit or the Spirit apart from the Word. By this divine standard of truth we are enabled to detect all forms of satanic error and deception.

The Scriptures say, "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Ps. 33:6).

The word here translated "breath" is actually the normal Hebrew word for "spirit." However, the use of the word "breath" suggests a beautiful picture of the working of God's Spirit.

As God's Word goes out of His mouth, so His Spirit—which is His breath—goes with it. In this way God's Word and God's Spirit are always together, perfectly united in one single divine operation.

To seek the manifestations of the Spirit apart from the Word will always end in foolishness, fanaticism and error. To profess the Word without the quickening of the Spirit results only in dead, powerless orthodoxy and religious formalism.

God's Word and God's Spirit united in our lives contain all the creative authority and power of God Himself. Through them God will supply every need and will work out His perfect will and plan for us.

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