

## ***What is the Bible? (II) – Reprise***

As I have said that I believe the Bible is ‘God-breathed’ (inspired), and therefore it is ‘profitable for...’ (various things, as Paul said to Timothy), that it is provided for us by the God-who-communicates and therefore we can trust God, by his Holy Spirit, to use it to speak to our souls.

This is foundational. God is a communicating God <full stop>.

How do I know this? That’s because God – as the eternally existing Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is three persons in one God, and therefore is in **mutual communication**. It is therefore God’s **eternal nature** to be in communication, in relationship, in love.

What is the primary way that God communicates with his creatures? Presumably it is through the Bible. We’d be in a mess without the Bible. That said, the early church didn’t have the Bible, but I suppose it had eyewitnesses who could tell people all about it.

However, I gave it as my view that, because the Bible was written by fallible authors, it is not infallible, and if we pretend that it is, we actually **devalue** scripture, especially in the eyes of outsiders. Also, the English Bibles that we read are even further from being infallible – compared to the Greek and Hebrew originals – because they were **translated** by fallible humans.

But please don’t panic! Have faith in God. We can trust the God-who-communicates because, in the chain of communication, God’s Holy Spirit is intimately involved:

HS inspires...	<b>Authors</b>	write...
HS inspires...	<b>Gk/Heb texts</b>	copied...
HS inspires...	<b>Theol’s/Trans.</b>	translate...
HS inspires...	<b>English text</b>	interpret...
HS inspires...	<b>Paul’s soul</b>	

How then does this communicating God communicate with his creation?

*In the past God **spoke** to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has **spoken** to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. (Hebrews 1:1,2)*

The Bible clearly places Jesus as the **supreme communication** from God; that’s why Jesus came to earth; that’s why **God** came to earth – to communicate with us in the flesh, i.e. in a language we can clearly understand. (Is it any wonder, therefore, that more has been written about this one human being than any other in the whole of history?!)

So I gave it as my view that any other communication, by definition, is subordinate to Jesus, subordinate to what Jesus said and did. But that means that the Bible itself must be subordinate to what Jesus said. The Bible must submit to Jesus Christ as the supreme communication.

I know it sounds a bit tautological, because the Bible is the only means by which we know what Jesus did say, but I think that’s just something we have to hold in tension, even though it feels as if we’re pulling ourselves up by our own boot laces.

So if I'm right that the Bible is subordinate to what Jesus said. Does that mean that the Gospels, as carriers of Jesus' words, are the most important books in the Bible? Maybe, but the rest of the New Testament contains reports of 'things that Jesus said', so is that equivalent to the Gospels? (Sorry, but I'm still thinking this through as I write, because this idea only occurred to me.)

But I guess what it does mean is that the New Testament, as concerning 'what Jesus said when he was on earth' should take precedence over the Old Testament. Do you think? (I'm thinking on my feet here, so please correct me if I've missed something.)

Anyway, let's step back again and ask: why is Jesus the supreme communication from God? It's because Jesus is **The Word of God** through whom the universe was created:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. (John 1:1-3)*

And what about the following scripture concerning 'the word of God'?

*For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring **word of God**. For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, 25 but the **word of the Lord** stands for ever." And this is the **word** that was preached to you. (1 Peter 1:23-25)*

I believe that for Peter, as for Paul, Jesus Christ is **The Word of God** and also **the word of God**. That is, Jesus is the One through whom God spoke and creation happened, and Jesus is also **the word** that was preached by the early church (and should be preached by us). And what was the word that was preached by the early church? It was the gospel, the **good news** of Jesus as Lord.

So it looks to me as if what we've got is an equivalence between the following:

**The Word of God** – through whom all things were created  
= Jesus Christ

**The Word of God** – through whom God spoke in human flesh  
= Jesus Christ

**the word of God** – as preached by the early church, and which spread like wildfire  
= Jesus Christ

**the gospel** – the good news as preached by the early church  
= Jesus Christ

What a glorious vision of what the God-who-communicates has done for us! Hallelujah!

But what a travesty that, in our desperation to stop the Bible from being ignored and swept away, we have ended up calling it (as that mainline Christian website did) 'The Word of God'.

No, **no**, **NO**! There's only one Word of God. And even calling the Bible 'the word of God' (little 'w'), in my view threatens Jesus' supremacy. Why not let's just call it 'the Bible', and (next time, hopefully) I will look at interpreting the Bible: How can we give the Bible its rightful place, as supremely attesting to **The** Word of God, but subordinate to Him?

Paul Bev. 22.2.19