

Inspiration of the Bible

by John R. Rice

John R. Rice emphasizes the divine inspiration of the Bible as essential to understanding Christianity and the nature of Christ.

Duration: 52:27

Scripture: Psalm 1:1

Topics: "Bible"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of reading the Bible. He encourages the audience to commit to reading the Bible through in the next 12 months, suggesting reading four chapters a day. The preacher highlights the idea of word-for-word inspiration, explaining that God inspired Moses to write down all the words of the Lord. He emphasizes that God reveals His truths through words and that every word in the Bible comes from God.

Transcript

I'm grateful, Dr. Hiles. Paul wrote to the people of Rome and said, your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. I think you can say that about this church, First Baptist Church of Hammond, and probably say it more truly about this church than any other church in the world.

I'm glad to be here. Dr. Hiles is one of my best friends, and of course I hold him up in prayer continually, as you do. I rejoice in his tremendous ministry.

And the ministry of you here, and his assistants and workers in the church, it's a joy to be at the college that finds a bunch of young people, and Dr. Billings and his staff. And so we're having a good time there. Now let's start.

Turn please to Mark. In your mind, one verse of Scripture. Mark 8 and verse 38 has something we ought to have here on this matter.

We start with the Bible. Jesus is talking, Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father and with the holy angels. Now remember Jesus said, Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words.

He said, I'll be ashamed of him when I come back in the glory of the Father and all the holy angels. Then you have the Bible and Christ, or you have no Bible and no Christ. And Jesus Himself stands upon His deity.

It depends on whether the Bible is true, whether it is all true, whether it is literally true as it claims to be. If the Bible is the very Word of God, then Jesus is God, born of a virgin. He is the Creator of all things.

He's coming back to reign. All the Bible says about Him is true if the Bible is true. If the Bible is not true, you have no Christ and no real Christianity.

If man came to evolution and set up a direct creation as the Bible says, that means not only that the Bible isn't true, but Jesus Christ is not the Son of God. Remember, Christ and the Bible stand or fall together. There is no Christianity without an inspired, reliable Bible without fault.

And so I want to talk to you about the inspiration of the Bible. There are some wonderful Scriptures about the inspiration. In 2 Timothy 3.16, the Scripture says, All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable.

It goes on to say what? It is given by inspiration of God. Unfortunate, that word inspiration, it comes from a Latin word, so we say a man expired, that means he died, he breathed out his last breath. And he expired.

Inspires to breathe into. And some people get the idea that the Bible is inspired, that God had men write the Bible, then God breathes into what they wrote. No, no.

The real, the Greek word there is, theopneus, that is the Bible is God breathed. That is, God breathed out the Bible. That is, the Bible came out as the breath of God.

The Bible is God breathed. And so then inspiration simply means that God Himself gave us a Bible word for word and letter for letter. So much so that in Jesus Himself, talking about the Bible, said in Matthew 5, He said, Think not I am come to destroy the law, He said, but He said, I am not come to destroy it, but to fulfill it.

He said, Not one jot nor tittle. Yod, the smallest Hebrew letter, or tittle, that is a little hook on some Hebrew letters distinguished from another letter. Not one jot or tittle can pass away till all be fulfilled.

I said, Jesus said the Bible is true not only of the words, but the spelling of it in the original manuscripts. The Bible is inspired. The very Word of God.

How much the Bible has to say about that. But let's go through some of the statements of it and we'll get into them. Wonderful truth.

The Bible claims to be the Word of God. So in Matthew 4, 4, Jesus said, now He is being tempted of the devil. He quotes from Deuteronomy 8, 3, and Jesus said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Where did the Bible come from? Every word proceedeth out of the mouth of God. So the Scripture says, Every word proceedeth out of the mouth of God. That means then that God gave the very words of the Bible in the original manuscripts.

And you heard about somebody said, I believe the King James Version just like Paul did. Well, I believe the King James Version, but Paul didn't see that. But the very words in the original manuscripts were given of God.

In 1 Peter 1, verses 10 to 12, some clear teaching on this. He said, Of which salvation? Peter says, The prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that did come unto you. What are they searching diligently? They're searching their own writings to see what they meant.

Listen now. Who prophesied of the grace comes searching. What manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which they now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into.

And what is this? Old time men wrote part of the Bible. God had them write down certain things. And they said, I wonder what that means.

There's coming a Messiah. There's coming a Savior. Where is He coming? And when is He coming? And what does it all mean? They diligently searched out what they had already been inspired to write.

They didn't think it out and then write it. They wrote it and then thought the best they could about it. And they knew that this is not written for me.

This is given me for other folks, for people of First Baptist Church in Hammond and on down after Jesus comes. Though they wrote what God told them to write, they learned what they could about it later. So then, the Bible.

Then God gave the words of the Bible. All the Bible is inspired. And Jesus said so.

Jesus said in Matthew 5, verse 17-18, I came not to destroy the law, He said, but to fulfill it. Or He said, not a jot nor a tittle shall pass away till all be fulfilled. And again in this matter, in John 10.35, Jesus is speaking and very incidentally He said it as if He was talking about other matters.

And He said, for the Scripture cannot be broken. The Scripture cannot be broken. That is, the Bible is infallible Word of God.

No fault in it. It cannot never find one fault in it. Never one mistake in it.

Never one false prophecy in it. Never one false record in it. Not one genealogy is off and not one date is off.

No, no. The Scripture cannot be broken, He said. That's what Jesus said.

And again in Matthew 4, for a man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Now that means then that the Bible is inspired word for word. There are several theories about inspiration.

There's one Bible teaching about inspiration. That's different. Some people said, well, the Bible is inspired in part.

Our parts of the Bible are inspired. And they mean like we say sometimes that Tennyson was inspired when he wrote The Princess and when he wrote some of the other memoriam and so on. Or they mean Shakespeare was inspired when he wrote some of the plays.

Or Wordsworth or Milton when he wrote. Well, no. No, not that kind of inspiration.

We do not simply mean that there were some divine apparatus, that there were some divine uplift. More than that, when you're talking about the Bible, we mean God gave the words of the Bible. No.

Other people say, well, God called men and in some way supervised them so that He gave them the content and the meaning and then they put it in their own words. For they say, isn't there a difference in vocabularies? And doesn't Paul have one style of writing and James had one style of writing and so on, and John another? And isn't there a difference in the beautiful language of Isaiah and the sharp language of Ezekiel? And so they said, men have their own personalities and their vocabularies. And so these people say, God gave the meaning and said, now John, you pick out the words, but I give you the thought.

No, no. That's not what the Bible teaches. That is not the way inspiration came.

God gave the very words of the Bible. Someone has said, well, just so God supervised it it may have come out right. No, but you're going to have to take inspiration.

You take what the Bible says about it and the Bible says God gave the words. Well, let's see. For example, I'll start with 1 Corinthians 2 and then we'll go back to the Old Testament.

I can show you that the Bible claims all the way through that the Bible is the very Word of God given in the words of God in 1 Corinthians 2, beginning with verse 10. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom. He says, I'm speaking.

Actually, he is writing, or have another man write it down. Even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world under our glory, which none of the princes of the world knew were had they known it did not have crucified the Lord Jesus, but as it is written, listen carefully, this verse is often misinterpreted. As it is written, I have not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for them that love Him.

He's always talking about heaven. No, he's talking about the Bible. The next scripture goes on.

But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit asserteth all things, yea, the deep things of God. Well now, God has told some wonderful things in the Bible. All that God prepared for those that love Him, He's put in the Bible.

And how are you going to understand them? And these things He said, God revealed them to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit asserteth all things, yea, the deep things of God. What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man? Do you think a bug knows how a man feels? Do you think an animal knows how a man feels, unless it's a man? Well, how could anybody know what God feels unless the Spirit of God comes to show him about it? What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God. No man is wise enough, even if God told him the general matter, no man is wise enough to put it down in words that are exactly accurate.

Man's not that good. Men wouldn't say it alike. No paraphrase of the Bible is as reliable as an exact translation.

By the way, if I were you, I'd avoid paraphrases. Not the Living Bible, not Good News from Water and Man, not Philip's translation, not any of the paraphrases. I'd take an honest verse-by-verse and literal translation.

King James Version is the best. I have 17 or 18 versions of the Bible. But listen to this now.

But here the Scripture says that we receive, verse 12, not the spirit of the world but the Spirit which is of God that we might know the things that are freely given us of God. Now wait. God has given the material, but what about the words? I read on.

Which things also we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Comparing spiritual things, the American Standard Version makes it a little clearer, with spiritual matter. Spiritual words with spiritual things.

God gave the thought, then God gave the words, the very words. Now listen. How can you have mathematics without figures? How can you have a song without notes? Well, then how can you have a thought without words? The simple truth is that no child can think until he learns some words to think with.

And if God is going to reveal things, it has to be done in words. And so He said, now God revealed them by His Spirit, and which things we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches comparing spiritual things and spiritual words. God gives the matter and God gives the very words.

So the Scripture said, the words are God's words. Again, I remind you, that's what Jesus said in Matthew 4, 4, facing the devil. Jesus said, it is written, He said, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Every word that proceeds from God. Every word comes from God. That's what He said.

Now, even the spelling. In Galatians, Paul says, unto Abraham and his seed were the promises given. Not seeds, many, but one seed.

What is that, Paul? He says that for the singular plural, the very spelling of the word is inspired of God. Paul is saying there. Alright, so then the very words.

Let's go back and see. Moses was inspired to write Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy and so on. Or, let's see, how were they given then? How did they get that? I turn to Exodus, chapter 24.

And here, verse 3, And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord. And all the judgments and all the people answered. And one voice said, all the words which the Lord has said we will do.

The words the Lord said. Verse 4, And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord. Then Moses decided, no, no.

Well, Moses, you're putting your own word? No. Moses wrote all the words of the Lord. He rose up early in the morning and built an altar.

Now, verse 5, And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words. Moses wrote down the words of the Lord. So then, the Pentateuch given in actual words of God.

Well, let's turn further. Suppose we find how it was with David. David wrote the Psalms and so we're in 2 Samuel 23, verses 1 and 2. Now, these be the last words of David.

David the son of Jesse said, The man who was raised up on high and anointed of God, the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue. God did the talking, though He used David's tongue and David's fan. But the word of God was in his tongue.

Well, let's see. What about Isaiah? Here's a wonderful one. Years ago, we had a great fight in Texas.

And I was a young man on the inspiration of the Bible. And a big crap on in the Baptist standards. Then the largest circulation of Baptist paper in the world.

And I took up the matter. Word for word inspiration. And I remember Dr. I.M. Haldeman, that time pastor of the great First Baptist Church of New York City, wrote me with his own trembling hand.

And he called my attention to this verse in Isaiah 52, verse 16. He called my attention to it. And listen to it now.

Then verse 16, But I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth and say unto Zion, Thou art my people. I have put my words in thy mouth. How did Isaiah write? He wrote the very words of God.

God put His words in Isaiah's mouth. I'm talking about word for word inspiration. Jeremiah 1, verses 9 and 10.

Jeremiah, how did you get it? Well, I got the very words. Listen to it now. Then the Lord put forth His hand that touched my mouth, and the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

See, I put this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms to root out, to pull down, to destroy, and to throw down, and to build, and not plant. I have put my words in thy mouth. Here's a wonderfully interesting thing about Jeremiah.

Jeremiah was in prison, and he had written out the prophecies. And so one of the men brings it before the king. And the king sat in his wonder house, and there was a fire before the king.

And these nobles said, Jeremiah says captivity is coming. Jeremiah said if we don't repent and turn back to God and never connect to His arm, He's going to take it. They're besieging Jerusalem.

He's going to get it. And so he said, Bring me the manuscript. And they brought it to him.

And he said, Read it. He wrote a few words. They read some of it aloud, and the king, Jehoiachim, he grabbed that manuscript and cut it with a pen knife and put it on the grate to burn it up.

And now this is what happened then about that. Because I want you to see about the very words of God. I go further in Jeremiah 36.

Now they came back and told Jeremiah. Then Jeremiah took another roll and gave it to Barak the scribe, the son of Bernieriah, who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiachim, king of Judah, had burned in the fire, and there were added besides unto them many words. You mean he wrote again the exact words that were on that manuscript? Yes, exactly the same.

Exactly the same. Because God didn't forget, you know. And God had to write down the very words of the Lord.

Let's see, Ezekiel, how did you get your inspiration? Well, all the way through the Bible this way. In Ezekiel 2, verse 7, he said to Ezekiel, I shall speak My words unto them, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear, for they are most rebellious. My words.

In chapter 3, verse 4, And his son said to him, Son of man, go get in the house of Israel and speak with My words unto them. And Ezekiel 3, verse 10, Moreover he said to him, Son of man, all My words that I speak unto thee receive in thine heart and hear with thine ears. God gave the very words of the Bible and the prophecies of Ezekiel.

So all the writings of Pentateuch and of the Psalms of David and of the writings of Isaiah and of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. And so it was in the New Testament, Paul the Apostle, which were things we speak not only in the words of man's wisdom, but the words which the Holy Ghost teaches. He said, God gave the very words of the Bible.

Oh, wonderful truth! I have the words of God. How much is involved in that? You ought to think about it. Well, let's see.

Are there any examples of direct, word for word, without any possible doubt? Next is chapter 20. The Scripture starts out, And God spake all these words. What's that? He gave the words of the Ten Commandments aloud in the voice of God from heaven.

And the people trembled and said, Oh, Moses, Moses! And the mountain was on fire. And if even so much as an animal came up on the mountain, they were to cut or stick it through with a dart and kill it, and every man who touched it would die. And the great Mount Sinai trembled and the fire roared to the heavens.

And God spake these words aloud. And the people said, Moses, have God tell you, we'll all die. We can't hear the voice of God.

So God had Moses bring stones up on the mountain to tables. And on those he wrote, With the finger of God, the Bible says, the Ten Commandments, the very words. Now, is that somebody's usual vocabulary? No, God wrote the very words of God in that.

Oh, good, many places where the Bible makes it such clear that the words were God's word. Let's see. Balaam.

Balak the king said, I want you to pronounce a curse on Israel for me. I'll fill your house filled with gold. I'll give you great honor.

And he tried to go, and the Lord said, you'd better not go. But he kind of insisted, so he started out. And as he goes along, there's an angel in front and the donkey on which he rides sees the angel.

And the donkey stops and so on. And he beats the donkey. And he goes on and on, and in the right place, an angel in front, and the donkey crowds him against the wall.

And he says, the donkey sees the angel, but old blind prophet Balaam didn't see him. And so he beats the donkey, and the donkey speaks up and says, why did you beat me for? He said, because you disobeyed me. If I had a sword, I'd kill you.

He said, I've been your donkey all these years. Did you ever act this way before? No. You mean the donkey did? Alright.

Was that the usual manner of conversation of that donkey, do you think? Was that a peculiar vocabulary the donkey used? No, those are the very words of God. That's inspiration. If God could do that with a donkey, He could do it with a man, couldn't He? And so He did.

Oh, how often. Yondis Belshazzar. He's the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar.

And now his father Nabonidus is out in wars and he's in charge of the kingdom and has made a feast for a thousand of his lords and wives and concubines. And they've sinned for the golden vessel stolen from Jerusalem in the temple. And out of that they drink wine and so on, they drink toast to the gods that they worship and serve their idol gods.

And suddenly there came on the plaster of the wall a hand of a man and wrote, Mene, Mene, Tika, Euphorsem. What in the world is that? And he trembled and his knees knocked together and he spilled the wine. And his mother came and said, there's a man in the kingdom, a sure father, grandfather of Nebuchadnezzar.

He had the Spirit of God in him. His name is Daniel. And old Daniel, about 90 years old, was called.

It came before him and said, can you tell me what these words mean? Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting. The kingdom is divided and so on. Your days are numbered.

That night Darius the king broke in and took the kingdom. Belshazzar was slain. Now, let me tell you, was that kind of inspiration from God? The fingers of man's hand.

That finger of the man's hand, do they go around writing things generally? That's peculiar vocabulary that uses? No. I'm saying word for word inspiration. That's not hard for God to do, is it? Wait and come to a wicked old man, New Testament, Caiaphas, high priest when Jesus was crucified.

And one time he said, don't you know anything? To the others of the Sanhedrin Jewish leaders, don't you know anything at all? It's better for one man to die for the people. And that he said being high priest and didn't know what he was saying, what he meant was let's kill him for the Romans take away our kingdom. What he really meant was let's kill him.

But what God meant was, don't you know Jesus is dying and atoning death for the whole nation? Now, was that because he was so smart? Did he have the general thought and select his own words? No. No, he didn't have the thought. God put the words in so he said them.

You see, God, couldn't God use an intelligent man as well as a wicked enemy? Couldn't God dictate to a prophet as well as to a donkey? Couldn't God put it in the hand of a man who wrote down the Bible as well as writing on the plaster wall of a palace? Sure, word for word inspiration. So the Bible claims and so it is.

That means this then.

That means I'm talking about inspiration of the original manuscripts. That doesn't mean that every preacher that preaches the Bible will get it exactly right. That doesn't mean that every schoolboy that copies out part of the Bible will get it right.

That doesn't mean that everybody that translates it into another language will get all of it right. We're not talking about the translation. We're talking about the original manuscripts verse for verse, the autographs.

But we have this good thing though. We have so many manuscripts. We have way over 2,000 manuscripts of the New Testament.

And if we'll say 2 or 3 or 4 of them come or copied and somebody missed it and handed out, and you can check enough to find out about that, can't you? So the truth is we have substantially the very words of God. And if it's in some place that some copyist missed it, we can go back and check other manuscripts and find out. We have the very Word of God.

Word for word inspiration without fault is what the Bible claims. And so it is. Inspiration of the Bible, word for word.

But you say, now wait a minute, brother. There is some variety in the vocabulary and the manner of people writing. Yes, that's true.

Well, you say there had to be men making the difference. No, no. Don't you suppose that the Lord Himself could have as much variety in vocabulary as any man could? Don't you think so? Don't you think God could have variety? It is true there's some difference in vocabulary, and I'll come and I can show you very clearly how that's easily reconciled in a moment.

But the truth of the matter is that God could write in many varieties. Did anybody ever hear that little Christmas jingle? It was the night before Christmas and all through the house another creature was stirring, not even a mouse and so and so. How many have heard that little story? Have you? All right.

Did you know who wrote that? A famous theologian, professor in a seminary, and he wrote great impressive books of theology. And you never heard of him. And they weren't poetic, but he wrote that poem for his children.

Well, if that man could have two different styles, couldn't God furnish a couple of styles if He wanted to and so on? Now, let's see, but how then about this matter of difference of styles? Let's check up. Let's go back and talk to Isaiah. He'll tell us something wonderful here about it.

Isaiah 49. Something sweet and wonderful here. In Isaiah 49, Listen, O Isles unto me, and hearken, ye people from far.

The Lord hath called me from thy womb, and the bowels of my mother hath made mention of my name. You mean He was already named in heaven and God had Him planned out when He was conceived in His mother's womb. Read on.

And He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword, and the shadow of His hand hath He hid me, and made me a polished shaft, and the quiver hath He hid me, and said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, whom I have glorified, and so on. The Lord formed him, and now saith the Lord that formed me from the

womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob again to Him. Formed him in the womb.

Well, you see, God made Isaiah's vocabulary, didn't He? God made the man, made the vocabulary, and the rest of it, and so Isaiah's vocabulary is the Lord's vocabulary, isn't it? And the incidents that came along, the Lord took care of that, didn't He? Is it something bad that God used men? No, no, no. Is it bad that He allowed men to have their personality show through that? No, no, God made the personality too. Paul is in prison over in Rome.

And he writes to Timothy, and said, Timothy, by the time my departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith.

There is a crown laid upon me. He said, Timothy, I'm not going to last long. He said, Timothy, when you come, bring that cloak I left to Troy, because in the wintertime down here in the Mamertine Dungeons, it's cold, and bring those parchments and so on, but you better hurry and come before winter, Timothy.

Because he said, I'm not going to be here long. Now, did God inspire you? Oh, yeah. The truth is, God wanted you to know that Paul was in an old, cold prison and glad to die for Jesus.

And He wanted that color in there. He wants you to preach the gospel and teach the gospel. It isn't that God just wants men to hear the gospel, but He has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

That is, the gospel filtered through somebody's tears and burden and joy and witness and testimony and pleading and prayer. And God planned for us to have a part. Aren't you glad to let somebody have a part and write in the Bible? But God did it.

You'll say, well, Brother Rice, but if God did it, how can a man have... Well, let me ask you this. How could the Virgin Mary have a part in the making and forming of the body of the baby Jesus? That's man's part. But God's part was the dominating and creative part, wasn't it? And Mary was only the passive and willing participant.

Of what God was doing. Let me see. You think Mary determined about whether Jesus would have blue eyes or gray or dark brown? You think Mary determined how tall He'd be? No, no, the Lord settled all that.

But He used Mary and Mary's body to bring about the Savior. Now a long time ago, they fought out the matter of how Jesus could be both man and God and perfect man and perfect deity. And He is.

But now people need to face again the fact the Bible is human and yet perfectly divine. Infallibly correct. It's God's blessed Word, but God used man to write it down.

And God picked out, here's a man before He was born, and said, I'm going to fix this fellow. And notice He said, God said, Isaiah, I made thee a polished shaft. If you're much of a Bible student and read through, oh, that silver-tongued prophet Isaiah.

Oh, the beauty of his language. Oh my, how many times I've gone through and been delighted. I taught college English.

Now, Ezekiel is a little rough, and Jeremiah, and some others are not. But Isaiah, my, the sweetest. It's the Gospel in the Old Testament.

And Isaiah said, God made me a polished shaft in His quiver to bring Israel to Him. God worked that, didn't He? And He said, I've called you, Isaiah, Jeremiah, from the time He was born. And Paul says, the God that brought me from my mother's womb, so-and-so being an apostle.

Then God made the man and made the circumstances, and then God had men write it down. Now here's a wonderful truth about this matter of inspiration. This is a strange thing.

I turn to Psalm 119. And all that 119 is written on the Word of God, the inspiration of the Bible, and the meaning of the Word of God. It's amazing.

There are how many verses in it? Let's see. It's divided up in sections, and there are 176 verses in this, the longest chapter and longest psalm in the Bible. How did they do that? Well, they took every letter of the Hebrew language, and by divine inspiration, there are 8 verses under the first letter, alpha, and the next, and the alpha, base, emal, right on through, every of it, every letter in the Hebrew alphabet, there are 8 verses of it.

And they get down to 100 at that minute. And that's all about the Bible. Now look at verse 89.

Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven. God's Word is settled in heaven. When was it settled? After it was written? Well, it wasn't all written then.

Was the New Testament settled in heaven when God had David write this down? Huh? Jeremiah wasn't born yet, but it was Jeremiah's part. And Isaiah, that part written in heaven? Oh, the Word of God is really eternal like Jesus. You know that? Was Jesus somewhere before He was born of a virgin in Bethlehem? Well, the Word of God, before somebody wrote it down, was it already settled in heaven? Listen to this, for example.

Did God already know His Son was going to come and die slain before the foundation of the world? You mean all that was figured out ahead of time and God knew all that? Oh yes, it was. For instance, in Acts 15, and verse 18, the Scripture says, Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world. Known unto God are all His works.

You mean God knew all this ahead of time? Every last bit of it. And so the part in the Bible. Well, if He knew about the crucifixion, and knew about the meaning of the blood, and knew what it would have prophets do, and if God knew all that, did God know then about the types and shadows and the ceremonial law and the manna from heaven and the Passover lamb and the offering of sacrifices? But didn't God have to know all that if He had planned all that? Forever, O God, Thy Word is settled in heaven.

Known unto God are all His works from the foundation of the world. And in this same Psalm 119, and this time verse 111, Thy testimonies have I taken as inheritance forever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart, and I have inclined my heart for them, thy sepulchres always unto the end. Now in verse 152, Concerning Thy testimonies I have known of old, that Thou hast founded them forever.

Now, were they already founded forever when this psalm was written? They had to be. Oh, then. Well, when God had Isaiah, He said, I've got my word, I want to fix Isaiah, so it will be just right to say his part.

And so He took a man before Isaiah was born and got Isaiah ready in his vocabulary and the incidents already, so that when Isaiah came along, he gave and wrote down the words that were already settled in heaven. Yes. God controlled the situation, didn't He? Oh, yes.

And so, let's read that so you'll remember. In Acts chapter 15, and about this matter, because it's important to get it settled very clearly. Acts 15 and verse 18, Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.

Known unto God are all His works. So everything in the Bible, God knew and had settled in heaven from the beginning of the world. Just like it was settled that Jesus would be a Savior, and Jesus was there and agreed to it, and just how all the truth of God was already settled, and all the things God would promise was settled, and all the prophecies He was going to fulfill He had planned out were all settled.

So the Bible is all written in heaven before it was ever written on earth. Known. Oh, yes.

You suppose when the Lord wrote the Ten Commandments of the finger of God on Mount Sinai, you suppose He had to stop and figure out how to do it? Oh, no. He said, I've already got that written down. We'll just copy it from over on these stones here.

The Word of God in heaven. Wonderful word-for-word inspiration of the Bible. Well, someone said, Brother Isaac, well, that's mechanical dictation.

No, that's not mechanical. It's dictation alright. It's dictation if you want to call it that.

Is there something terrible about this business that God told men what to say? Has anybody here, you're so high and mighty that you'd be insulted if God told you literally what to say to somebody? For instance, I think He told me to come and say, For God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. I'm not ashamed to say the very words He said to say. Isn't that a strange thing? Anybody think that? No, if you want to be so smart and so bright and leave God out, men are so intelligent, and they've got a man-made religion.

No, no, God gave the very words. You say mechanical dictation? Before you ever quote that to anybody, I want you to remember that infidels and modernists use that terminology against verbal inspiration. A lot of fundamental Christian people say they believe in verbal inspiration, but they don't believe God gave the very words.

That's a contradiction. Verbal is the Latin word for word. Verbal inspiration is literally word inspiration.

That's what it says. One don't believe that God gave the very words. He doesn't believe in verbal inspiration.

He's just pretending. God gave the very words. Anybody think that God gave the general thought to a man and let the man write it down? He doesn't believe in verbal inspiration like God says, and he ought to use the term.

It's deceptive. No, verbal inspiration means God gave the very words of the Scriptures in the original Manuscript. And it's not mechanical.

Is it mechanical when I write? I dictated a sermon yesterday, and I went through it in great care. I had notes all through the Bible. I made four or five pages, and I had written notes and then dictated that.

Now, is that some insult to my secretary that she does it word for word just like I did it there? Is there something mechanical about that? All that study and planning and praying and digging in what I've done for years in the Bible, I have written notes on every chapter in the Bible, on every principle verse in the

Bible. God knows I love it, and I've dug in it all these years. Now, is that mechanical because I put down there and dictated the very words of it? No, no.

And it is not mechanical. When God gave Isaiah, He said, I made Isaiah, called him before he was born. When he was in the womb, I gave him his name, Isaiah, and I planned what he was going to do, and now in all the words written in heaven, I'll have him write part of it down.

Is that some insult to Isaiah that God so wonderfully used him in that? You think that donkey felt insulted when the Lord put those words in her mouth. No, she said, I've never thought it before, but it sure is funny. Yes.

You think that when those written in the fingers of a man's hand wrote on the wall and the plaster of the palace of Belshazzar predicting the doom that's coming on him and his kingdom, it ain't mean to me to take no use for him. Is that some disgrace that God gave the very words? No. Well, let me tell you, is Jesus then kind of an ignoramus because Jesus said, every word proceedeth out of the mouth of God? Matthew 4.4 Huh? Is Jesus kind of an ignoramus because He said, not a jot nor a tittle will pass away till all be fulfilled? Alright, put this down then.

If you're going to believe the Bible, you're going to have to believe God gave the very words of the Bible and God gave the matter of it. And God had it planned out centuries before and before the world began. He planned a savior to die.

He planned the prophets to come. He planned the birth in Bethlehem. He planned this second coming that we don't know yet the details about.

Ah, but known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world. The Bible is the verbally inspired, inerrant, eternal word of God then. You say, do we have a good translation? Yes, we have.

And I'll say frankly, those who are good students will know that in the word, you'll have to go 10,000 words in the Bible before you find a place where anybody doubts whether it's the right word or not. Ah, the Bible is the very word of God. And sometimes they are different whether it is one letter or two or another.

But there's never indifference about doctrine. Any doctrine in the Bible so clearly taught, there's never any shadow of doubt about the very word of God by any scholar. You can rely on the word of God.

I've come to press upon your heart this matter. You know, my great concern about fundamentalism. Oh, people believe the Bible.

Yes, sir, I believe the Bible cover to cover. I know. And keep the covers shut.

Well, I'm afraid for people that will be the nice Pharisee and go to church and believe the Bible and work in the bus business and so on, but they're not good Christians and don't love the Bible. Oh, you know, it isn't enough to believe the Bible. Devils believe and tremble.

You know that? Devils believe and tremble. You know, this part you do. You go to church and put a quarter in the collection and go to Sunday school and so on.

Judas Iscariot did all that. My great concern is we'll have a fundamentalism without the heart in it, without the devotion in it. This theoretical people, I believe the Bible but don't read it.

Let me ask you a question. How many here have read all the Bible? You're in a good church. You have good teaching and you have a better chance than most people do.

But I wonder how many have read every line in the Bible. I mean the genealogies and all. I mean Habakkuk.

I mean Revelation. I mean so and so begat so and so. I mean every line of it.

How many have read every line of the Bible? At least once. You ought to read it every year, surely. How many have read all the Bible? At least once.

Let's see your hand. Hold your hand just a moment. Just a moment.

Just a moment. Well, alright. That's not very much of a show, is it? Not, would you say, one-fourth of the people? Maybe.

I don't know. And boy, you're fundamental, aren't you? You're Mr. Church. You've got the biggest Sunday school.

You're shooting for 10,000, 20,000. And I hope you get them. I think you will.

Go in God's name. Oh, just a bundle of baby Christians and immature, carnal Christians. That's not enough in God's name.

You know in the first Psalm, blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of them, but in God and understands them in the way of sinners, and receives them in the sea of the scornful. You say, that's mean. I've quit the modernistic crowd.

I don't run with the devil's crowd, the infidels and the drunkards and so on. I know. But wait a minute.

But His delight is in... You say, believe the Bible. No, you're not talking about believing it. More than that.

His delight is in the law of the Lord and in His law does He meditate day and night. Day and night with the Bible. Day and night.

Oh, my, to love the Bible. I don't have many virtues. And I have a lot more sins than you know about.

God knows. I don't tell anybody else. Best I can, I try to hide them.

Brother, I do more to cover up my watergate than anybody in Washington. I have lots of sins. But if I may say one thing in favor of myself, I have a holy devotion to this Bible.

I don't want to believe it. I'm not going to believe it. I cherish it.

I delight in it. I dig in it. I just cry out of my heart to know it and follow it.

I have such a reverence for it through every word of it. And you've got to learn to love the Bible. His delight is in the law of the Lord and in it does He meditate day and night.

And you never read it one time. Jesus said, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Every word.

Somebody says, You ought to have a balanced diet. Wheat germ. No pork.

Not even ham. Dr. Hiles believes in salvation by grace and carrot juice. Now listen, you need a balanced diet, don't you, and the proper amount of carbohydrates and the proper amount of protein and the proper vitamins and so on and the enzymes and the animal acids and so on.

You need things right, don't you? Listen, in spiritual matters, you need it worse than that. You need everything in the Bible to balance it. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Every word. Every word. You'd better set out and say, I have a holy obligation.

I must know it all and love it and find things to chew on and find things to rejoice about and learn a devotion to the Bible. I want you to be good Christians. Nobody is much of a good Christian.

You want to win souls? That's fine. That's the best of all. But you're not going to be permanent.

Somebody come along and Pentecostal will get you or the Jehovah's Witnesses will get you or Bob Thien at Houston will get you or Herbert Armstrong, somebody leads you off, you're just half-baked. You don't know anything much about the Bible unless you read it. And what we need is somebody not only to be a fundamentalist in that, but oh, get a bedrock foundational Christian character.

The Lord said, Paul said to the preachers at Ephesus in Acts 20, verse 32, I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace. The Word which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those that are sanctified. Paul said, if you take that Word and dig in it and love it, it will set you apart.

You'll be separated to God more and more. God make it so about this great church. Let me ask you another word.

In Deuteronomy, there's very clear instructions on this matter. He said, give them the Ten Commandments and then comments on them. And then the Lord said, Deuteronomy 6.6 and 6-9, These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk with them when thou lies down, when thou risest up, and when thou walkest by the way.

He said, and you shall write them on the posts of your house and on your gates. Oh, talk about the Bible all the time, wherever you go, when you come in, when you sit down, when you rise up, when you go to bed, when you walk by the way, and teach it diligently to your children. The Bible.

Yes. Yes. How are you going to be a good Christian? How are you going to be a good Christian without taking time every day to have the Bible in the home? Read the Bible in the home.

Bible and prayer in the home. You just can't do it without the Bible. Let me ask you again.

I don't mean to be unkind. I may never preach to you again. I'm 77, 78 in December.

As far as I'm concerned, you may never hear me preaching again either. You're just likely to die as I am. So, I'm not unkind.

How many here say at my house we regularly have a time of Bible reading and prayer? Daily matter. Of Bible reading and prayer. Read a chapter in the Bible maybe in a circle of prayer with a Christian.

But how many say at my house we regularly have a time of Bible reading? Daily Bible reading and prayer. Let's see your hand. Let's see your hand.

God bless you. That's good. God bless you.

But that's not enough, is it? You know, of course, in an ever-great church you've got a lot of young Christians. That's wonderful. You'll have many people here saved last Sunday, saved the last week, saved the last year.

That's fine. That's wonderful. And that means in the nature of the case, we have to have with young Christians, we have to have a lot of teaching all the time.

Everybody's got to start over. And so on and so on. I'm not disturbed about that.

But don't you think all you young Christians, you better get to be mature Christians. Sit out and read the Bible in your home with your family in a circle of prayer every day with your family. Now you're going to be a good Christian.

Teach these things diligently to your children in my house. And I'm a poor example. But Ms. Reisner, we read through the Bible and our family read through the whole Bible, every line of it, reading aloud at the breakfast table five times.

And the book of Psalms, 15 times. The book of Proverbs, 15 times. The New Testament, 15 times.

I mean, every line of it read aloud at the breakfast table in a circle of prayer every day. And we memorized chapter after chapter after chapter. We memorized Mrs. Reisner and I and every one of my six daughters the first Psalm, the eighth Psalm, the fifteenth Psalm, the nineteenth Psalm, the twenty-third Psalm, the twenty-fourth Psalm, the thirty-fourth Psalm, the thirty-seventh Psalm, the one-hundredth Psalm, the hundred-and-third Psalm, the hundred-and-twenty-first Psalm, the hundred-and-twenty-sixth, hundred-and-twenty-seventh Psalm, and Isaiah chapter 53, and Isaiah chapter 55.

And we memorized the first chapter of John, the third chapter of John, and John chapter 14, John chapter 15, and Romans chapter 8, and Romans chapter 12, and Philippians chapter 4, and 1 Corinthians chapter 15, the love chapter, chapter 13 rather, and Matthew chapter 28, the resurrection chapter. Every Easter Sunday morning we'll say it from memory at my breakfast table we have for these years. And when Christmas, when they all come home, the children and grandchildren will all gather and turn to the second chapter of Luke.

And those of us older who memorized it, we'll say it from memory. And the rest, all the children and grandchildren will read it aloud about Jesus born in Bethlehem and the message of the angels, no room in the inn, and so on. Oh, how you're going to be a good Christian without the Bible every day unless you teach it diligently to your children.

We need to set out to raise some Christians in this country. You're going to have to have Christian homes and the Bible in the home and reading in the home. I preach about the verbal inspiration.

I love it. I'm glad to teach it. But I'll tell you now, believing the Bible is inspired, that's just a beginning point.

That's a place to start. That's not the end of it. That's not much apart until you get the rest of it.

I'm going to learn it. I'm going to read it and love it. Indeed, I'll lose every friend in the world to stand by it.

And I'll follow it wherever it leads me. I'm going to follow the Bible, the Word of God. I'll read it all and teach it to my children and memorize it and hide it in my heart and rejoice in the Bible.

So a Christian ought to, don't you think so? Isn't that right? You read the Bible through four chapters a day. You read the Bible through in about 11 months. That's not bad.

Read the Bible through. Read it with your family. Have family at worship.

Let's bow our head for a moment. I hope you believe what I've been saying. The Bible is the very Word of God.

I wonder how many say, Brother Rice, I'm going to set out to read it through myself earnestly. Let God help me in the next 12 months. That's not much.

Four chapters a day. 10 or 15 minutes. Maybe you ought to do more.

Maybe a lot of you ought to read it in an hour. But how many say, I'm setting out to read the Bible through. It's easy to read through four chapters a day.

Let's see your hand. Will you do that? Wouldn't that be right? Read the Bible through in a year. Lift your hand just a moment.

Lift your hand. Isn't that right? Thank you. Isn't that right? Thank you.

Hands down. Wait a minute. I wonder how many men say, Brother Rice, I ought to lead my family.

I'm going to set out if my wife will stand by me. I'm going to set out to have a family altar. And by that we mean reading the Bible, reading the Bible together in the home and praying together daily.

Oh, you say, I'm afraid to make mistakes. Everybody makes mistakes. You're not human if you don't make mistakes.

But the biggest mistake of all, the fellow don't try. Anybody trying to do right, it's better off than the fellow don't try, isn't it? I know God's better pleased than anybody wanting to do right. And the fellow don't want to.

How many men say, Brother Rice, if my wife will stand by me and God will help me, I'm going to set out to have a daily time of Bible reading and prayer in my home. I'll let your wife stand by you. And I'm going to stand up for you too in a moment.

How many men say, Brother Rice? Some of you already do. Let's renew our vows and say it again. Will you stand up with me as I pledge myself? I'll set out.

Will you do that? Men, stand up. I'm setting out to lead my family in family devotions in our house daily. You'll have to ask God to help you.

And your wife will have to help you and make room and time for it. And so on. I know there are emergencies you have to push.

Alright. Just a moment. Who else will do that? Other men? Other men.

Just a moment. Now, I wonder how many good women say, I want that. I'm going to stand up for my husband and with him in this matter.

And I'll back him up and help him make time for it. And see if this runs right. I'll do my part.

Will you stand with us, good women? Will you stand with us, good wives? Will you say, yes, I want that? Will you do that? Just a moment. That's right. God bless you.

Wait a minute. While you're standing, somebody else's husband will speak to your wife and say, you're willing to go along. Shall we do it? What do you say? Will you stand with me about it? Why don't you say, come on.

Will you do it, honey? Let's go together. You want to do that? Anybody else? Now, I wonder how many say, brother, I live in a home where I can't settle it for others. But I want my mother and my dad to have family altar.

And I want to learn the Bible and be a good Christian. I want to learn to delight in the Bible and enjoy the Bible. Will you say, I'm voting for my dad and mother if they'll have family altar.

Will you stand up, my young people, on that? You that have mothers and dads, you want them to do it. They will. You can't decide for the family, but you can say, I want to cooperate.

Will you do that? Will you do that, young people? Will you stand with us? Alright. Isn't that right? Our Heavenly Father, come in power and blessing on these with this holy vow we pray. Amen.

Be seated, please.

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