

Skyland Conference 1988 (Two Kingdoms) - Part 3

by William MacDonald

The Bible is the Word of God, and its authority and inspiration are essential for our faith and understanding of God's plan.

Duration: 38:27

Scripture: Romans 5:1, Romans 14:17, 1 Corinthians 2:13, 2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 6:10, 2 Peter 1:20-21

Topics: "Kingdom Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of the Bible in our lives and the attacks it faces. He explains that we must believe in the Bible first and then we will see its truth. The speaker also addresses common arguments against the scriptures, such as the idea that certain teachings are only for the kingdom. He encourages listeners to stand firm in their belief in the Word of God, regardless of the consequences.

Transcript

And then you'll remember that we were listing some of the wonderful advantages that Christ's kingdom offered. Just by way of review, we talked about the forgiveness of sins. What a wonderful thing that is, the forgiveness of sins.

He's in chapter 1-7, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. Eternal life, John 3-16, known to all of us. Love, not lust.

The love that God has shown us, or the love that's shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Joy, independent of circumstances. Romans 14-17.

Peace, Romans 5-1. Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The wonderful hope that we have, Hebrew 6-10, an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.

And we talked about the worldwide family, that is the portion of all of those who are in Christ's kingdom. And then last night we came down to the subject of the Bible, 2 Timothy 3, chapter 16. And I'd like to just pause on that subject of the Bible this morning and talk a little bit about it.

Just think what the Bible has meant in your life. Think what your life would be today if you didn't have the Bible. Really a wonderful treasure.

The Bible is always under attack. It's under attack, and our day always has been and always will be. And I think it's good for us to refresh our minds on what the Scriptures teach about the Bible.

We believe in the verbal plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. The verbal inspiration of the Scriptures means that the very words that God gave were inspired of him. They were God's words, the very words as originally given.

1 Corinthians 2, verse 13. 1 Corinthians 2, verse 13. Perhaps I could just explain this chapter a little bit.

In this chapter, Paul is dealing with three specific subjects with regard to the Holy Scriptures. The first subject is revelation. He tells us how the Spirit of God revealed the Scriptures to the prophets and apostles of the New Testament period.

Revelation. For instance, in verse 7, we, and when you come to us in this chapter, it's not we ourselves sitting here at Skyland Bible Conference. It's the apostles of the New Testament period.

We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew, for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, I have not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love him. Now, Paul here quotes from Isaiah chapter 64, verse 4, and we usually apply that verse to heaven, don't we? No eye has seen, nor ear heard, has never entered into the heart of man the wonderful things that are reserved for us in heaven.

But that's really not, I mean, that's good. It's a good application of the verse, but it's not what the verse is saying. It's saying Isaiah is saying in that verse that nobody has ever conceived the wonderful truth that would be revealed in the New Testament era.

That's what he's really saying. In Isaiah's time, no eye had ever seen, no ear had ever heard, never entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for us in this dispensation. You say, how do you know? Because the next verse says so.

But God has revealed them to us by his spirit, and we have them today in the pages of the New Testament. The things that Isaiah was speaking about in chapter 64 and verse 4 are with us today in the pages of the New Testament. For the spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things are.

That's revelation. God revealed these wonderful truths to the prophets and apostles of the New Testament era. Then you have inspiration, verse 13.

These things we always speak, also speak. The we here is the apostles. These things we also speak.

Now notice, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches. Comparing spiritual things with spiritual, or conveying spiritual truths with spirit-given words. If that verse says anything at all, it teaches that the very words which the apostle Paul wrote were words which were given to him by the Holy Spirit of God.

I think it's very important to see that. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches. God didn't say to Paul, well Paul, just sit down and write it the way you think it should be.

You write it according to human wisdom. He didn't do that. Words which the Holy Spirit teaches, conveying spiritual truths with spirit-given words.

Inspiration of the scriptures. And then our understanding of the scriptures, verse 14. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him, but we have the mind of Christ. So we believe that the very words which we have in the scriptures as originally given, were the very words of God.

Actually, the Bible goes beyond the words of scripture. Jesus said not one jot or tittle would pass from the law till all be fulfilled. Jot or tittle.

Let me give you an illustration of what that could mean. This would be an equivalent today. A jot would be like an apostrophe mark.

It's greater than a word, isn't it? Smaller than a word. And the tittle would be a stroke. For instance, think of the difference between a capital F and a capital E. There's only one difference between a capital F and a capital E, and that's that bottom stroke on the E, right? Jesus said not one would pass from the law till all be fulfilled.

That's pretty minute inspiration, isn't it? And not only that, but the apostle Paul writing to the Galatians makes the distinction between the singular and the plural as being inspired. He said not to seeds, which are many, but to thy seed, singular, which is Christ. The difference between the singular and the plural.

We believe in the verbal inspiration of the scriptures, and it even goes beyond verbal, doesn't it? Goes to jots and tittles, and goes to singulars and plurals. And we believe that the entire Bible is God-breathed from Genesis to Revelation. 2 Peter 1 and verse 21.

Begin in verse 20. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation. For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Now, generally, we understand verse 20 to say that no man has a right to his own private interpretation of the scriptures, but that's really not what it's speaking about. Verses 20 and 21 are telling how the Bible came to us. It has to do with the origin of the Bible, not with our interpretation of it after we get it.

And what verse 20 is saying, and 21 too, is that Isaiah didn't serve as a Dan Rather, giving his own private interpretation of current events or of future events either. That isn't the way he wrote. Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

That has to do with the origin of the scriptures. They did not write it down the way they thought it should be written down. They wrote it down the way the Holy Spirit gave them to write it down.

Read it in that connection. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation. This has to do with the men who wrote it.

It was not their private interpretation of how it should be written. Prophecy never came by the will of men, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit of God. So, we believe the entire Bible

is inspired not just in matter of faith and morals, but in everything.

It is the Word of God, and it's foolish to speak about degrees of inspiration. It's all totally inspired by the Lord. Now, there are things in the Bible that are difficult, aren't there? B. H. Carroll said that when he was a young man, he found a thousand difficulties in the Bible, a thousand contradictions in the Bible.

He said over the years, he had gained the answer to 994 of those contradictions. And he said, I think if I just had a little more sense, I could get the answer to the other six. And that's right.

That's right. He thought there were a thousand contradictions in the Bible, but he kept studying it, and he found that wasn't the case at all, that if he had a little more sense, he could find the rest. Some people speak of the Bible today as being authoritative.

I personally don't like that word. I don't like to hear people say, I believe in the authority of the Scriptures. I like to hear them say, I believe in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.

You know why? Because I believe in the authority of the Constitution of the United States, but I don't think it's inspired. There's a difference, isn't there? There's a difference between authority and inspiration, but that's a word that's bandied around a great deal today. Well, people say, McDonnell, then you believe in mechanical dictation.

You believe that God controls the men in what they... I certainly do. Well, they say that's mechanical dictation. Oh, I don't object to mechanical dictation.

People, here's a man, and he has a secretary, and has a very important letter to write, and he dictates the letter to the secretary. He wants it the way he dictated it. He doesn't want her to rewrite it the way she thinks it should be.

But the wonderful thing is that in giving the Scriptures, God somehow took into account the personalities and the styles of the individual writers. Oh, I don't know how he did that, but he did it. For instance, there is a distinctive Pauline style.

You can read Paul, you say, yeah, that's Paul. There's a distinctive Peter style, and God somehow took these things into account when he conveyed the Scriptures to us. Somebody says, yeah, but McDonnell, you say that inspiration applies to the original manuscript.

That's right. I believe that the words that's originally given were inspired of God. They were the very words of God.

You say, well, we don't have the originals today. What about the Bible that you're holding in your hand today? No great difficulty. First of all, the Old Testament Scriptures was accepted by the Lord Jesus as the Word of God.

He quoted the Old Testament Scriptures as the Word of God. That's good enough for me. But that isn't the whole story either.

When the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, and especially the Book of Isaiah, everyone was holding his breath. Do we really have the real Book of Isaiah? Are the Dead Sea Scrolls going to disprove the Bible that we have? And so the textual critics went to work, and they studied that scroll, the Dead Sea Scroll, which is now in Israel in the Shrine of the Book. One of the men working on the Revised Standard Version

of the Bible, it was a Jew, non-believer, same as Harry Orlinsky, and he studied the entire Book of Isaiah, and he studied Isaiah as it was given in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

And he suggested 13 word changes. Now listen, 66 chapters. Sixty-six chapters of the Book of Isaiah, and he suggested 13 word changes.

And those word changes were not very important. They had to do with something like this. The difference in spelling, this is an illustration of what they would be, the difference in spelling between the British and the Americans.

The British spell judgment J-U-D-G-E-M-E-N-T. There's an E in there. The Americans spell it J-U-D-G-M-E-N-T.

Now that was the type of difference. Thirteen words in the entire Book of Isaiah, and the changes were more spelling changes than anything else. And after years of study, he said, I feel I have been hasty in ten of those changes.

Now what do you think of that? You say, what about the New Testament? There are so many manuscripts of the New Testament that textual critics today, people who go and study it intensively, feel that they have achieved more than 99.9% purity of the text. Well, that's better than ivory soaps, isn't it? I said more than 99.9% purity of the text. What does that mean? It means that I can stand before you this morning and hold this Bible up and say, this is the Word of God.

And I do. I say that without hesitation. People say, yeah, but what version is the Word of God? I don't have any trouble with that.

Any reputable version presents the Word of God. Do you know the Lord Jesus used a version of the Bible when he was on Earth, didn't he? That settles the version question for me. He didn't have the original of the New Testament.

He used a version of the Old Testament scriptures. And if he used a version, I can use a reputable version of the Bible. Now that wouldn't include the Jehovah's Witness version, would it? Where they have to twist and turn the scriptures to prove their false doctrines.

They have to do that. They could never use this Bible that we're using and disprove the deity of Christ. No great problem.

No great problems at all. But I thank God today that we have the Word of God and we can preach it and see its power in men's lives. No one who has ever felt the force of it is likely to deny the source of it.

And I'll tell you, no book has ever worked in my life like the Bible. No book has ever exposed me to myself like the Bible. It showed me my need of a savior and pointed me to the Christ of Calvary.

When you say, how can you prove that the Bible is the Word of God? Well, actually there are many proofs that the Bible is the Word of God. But I don't believe it today because somebody proved it to be the Word of God. I accepted the Bible by faith that God showed me that it was the Word.

Some years ago, many years ago, Billy Graham was down in Southern California. He was a young man and he was at the Forest Home Conference there. And he had been listening to some of the doubts and denials concerning the scriptures that were being peddled in certain seminaries.

He'd been listening to them. And he was being shaken by them. And he went up on the hill, the mountain above the conference center, and he was having a duel with God about the scriptures.

His face was shaken. And he wrestled with the Lord up there about the inspiration of the scriptures. But you know, finally it came to him and he got down on his knees and he says, Lord, I accept your word by faith.

And right after that was the great Los Angeles crusade where Billy Graham went forth. And for the first time, he began to say the Bible says. And he said that there was a new authority in his message that had never been there before.

That was the beginning of the great ministry. He accepted it by, this is God's order. Believe and then you'll see.

Man doesn't like that. Man wants to see and then believe. God says you believe and then you'll see.

You accept the Bible by faith and then you'll see that it is indeed the word of God. Jesus said to Martha, said I not unto thee that if thou is believed, thou shouldest see the glory of God. You believe first Martha and you'll see.

First John 5, 13, these things have I written unto you that believe that you may know that you have eternal life. You believe first and then you'll know. Well, the Lord Jesus was hanging on the cross.

He said come down from the cross that we may see and believe, right? That's man's way that we may see and believe. I believe because he didn't come down from the cross. And you find this a divine principle and it applies to the word of God as well.

I think Christian evidences are good. Proofs of the Bible are good for those who are already believers. But when I come to people who are unsafe, I just present the word of God to them.

But let the word of God take root in their lives. When I was in college one day, we were, I was out with the National Youth Administration trying to earn a little money. We were painting cyclone fences, so vivid in my mind.

And the fellow next to me was a seminarian. It was a universalist seminary. They didn't believe anything.

And I was witnessing to him in my own poor feeble way. And every time I'd quote the scripture to him, he'd say, you don't have to quote that book to me. He said, I don't believe the Bible.

He was going to become a minister in the universalist church. And I became thoroughly frustrated. Every time I'd quote the Bible, he'd say to me, don't quote the Bible to me.

You're wasting your time. I don't believe the Bible. Well, I went home that night and we had a guest in our home that night.

It was Dr. Ironside. And when there was a lull in the conversation, which there wasn't usually, I jumped in and I said, I told him about my incident. I said, Dr. Ironside, what do you do when you're witnessing to somebody and they say, and you're quoting the Bible and they say they don't believe in the Bible.

And he looked at me with a merry twinkle in his eye and he said, I just quote more of it. And you know, that was a good lesson to me. Sure, you're dueling with somebody and he says to you, I don't believe that sword is steel.

What do you do? Give him another jab with it. And that's true of the word of God too. It's the word of God that has power.

Not our words. Our words don't have power, but the word of God has power. No wonder he kept saying, I don't believe it.

He was feeling the force of it in his life, wasn't he? Very important to see that. But you know, what I want to emphasize this morning too, is that it's possible to be very orthodox concerning the scriptures, to believe in those verbal plenary inspiration of the scriptures. And yet, when we come to a scripture we don't like, we can explain it away.

And I think that's a serious thing. And yet I feel we do it. We're something like Saul.

Saul in the Old Testament, remember, he banned witches from the kingdom. Not going to be any witches in my kingdom, you know. But what did he do? Well, he wanted to consult a witch.

And so we have 60 theological ways in which we can get around the clear meaning of the word of God. And let me give you some of them. Number one, it couldn't mean that literally.

Hmm? Ever hear that? When we come to the stern teachings of the Lord Jesus, you know, and they really come home to us, we say, well, it couldn't mean that literally. You know, I think that's especially true when it comes to a person's wallet. The most sensitive part of modern man's anatomy is his wallet.

And one of the problems that the Holy Spirit has is to sever the nerve between a man's brain and his wallet. Now, that's not good anatomy, but it's true just the same. And we say that, we say, well, it couldn't mean that literally.

But it does mean that literally. It means the same in the Greek as it means in the English, and vice versa. If you can read the teachings of the Lord Jesus and be comfortable, you're not getting the point.

They were never intended to make us comfortable. The Lord Jesus knew what he was teaching, and he knew the world would never be evangelized in any other way. And it isn't evangelized today because we explain away the scriptures.

We say they don't mean what they say. Here's another one. We've never done it that way.

We come to the scriptures, we read what they say, we say, yes, but we've never done it that way. Mark chapter 7. This is the tradition, the argument of tradition. Mark chapter 7. Verse 9. Verse 9. Yes, he said to them, all too well you reject the commandment of God that you may keep your tradition.

But Moses said, honor your father and your mother. And he who curses father and mother, let him be put to death. But you say, if a man says to his father or mother, whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban.

That is dedicated to the temple. And you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the word of God of no effect through your tradition, which you have handed down, and many such things

you do. See, they had developed this cute way in the Jewish economy.

Here's a father and he doesn't have social security. He doesn't have SSI. He has no means of support.

And he goes to his son and he says, son, I need your help. And the son said to him, look dad, anything that I might have been able to give to you has been dedicated to the Lord. It doesn't mean the Lord got it.

It doesn't mean that the temple ever saw it. It just means it was dedicated to the Lord. And he got around his obligation by that traditional argument.

The argument of tradition. We were talking at the breakfast table that in Israel, sometimes the Jews still do that. You know, the law says, let your land lie fallow in the seventh year.

So on the seventh year, they take the land, their land, and they put it in the name of an Arab nominee. He better not try to get his hands on it. That Arab.

It's just a legal device. They put it in the name of an Arab nominee, and then they go ahead and cultivate it. And they're not breaking the law because it's not their land.

As I say, he better not try to get it. It's a device to get around the scriptures. We do that.

We do that. We've never done it that way. Here's a third way we get around the inspiration of the scriptures.

I know that's what the Bible says, but God wants to make an exception in my life. You see, nobody would say it. They say it all the time.

They say it all the time. A pretty young girl, and she falls in love, a Christian girl, and she falls in love with an unsaved fellow. And you say, look, you can't marry that fellow.

He's unsaved. You say you're a Christian, and he's an unbeliever. And the scripture says, don't be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.

She said, I know that's what the Bible says. She says, in my case, God wants to make an exception so I can marry him and lead him to Christ. So much for the scriptures.

Make me think of the poet Ruskin. He was an unsaved man. He fell in love with a Christian girl.

And he proposed to her. And she said to him, do you love me more than you love Jesus Christ? He said, I'd have to say that I do. Well, she said, I couldn't marry you.

And you know, that girl was stricken with tuberculosis. She was in bed. And even after that, Ruskin came one day, and he wanted to see her.

And she sent out a message to him. And she said, you still love me more than you love Jesus Christ. And he sent back word in that he did.

And she said, no good would come from an interview. She didn't try to get around the scriptures, did she? She accepted them the way they are and let it go at that. Here's a cultural argument.

That was just for Paul's day. And this is very common today. You say, well, thank God it's not in the assembly.

It is in the assembly. But we're so moved by the change in culture, for instance, the feminist movement, that anything we come to that violates the feminist movement, we say, well, those verses were just for Paul's day. Watch out.

Listen, if you can explain away the scriptures on a cultural basis, you can get rid of baptism. You can get rid of the Lord's Supper. You can get rid of anything you want.

Just say it was for the culture of that day. Number five, God knows I have to live, doesn't he? I mean, the Bible speaks explicitly, clearly. We know what it says.

And we say, well, God knows I have to live. A young man said that to Spurgeon once when Spurgeon was pressing upon him the stern demands of Christ. Tell us that God knows I have to live, doesn't he? Spurgeon said, I don't admit that.

We have to obey God. But that's right. We don't have to live.

Where does it say we have to live? We have to obey God and leave the consequences with him. Number six, but you have to be prudent, don't you? You have to use common sense. Well, I tell you, there's something better than common sense, and that's divine revelation.

And divine revelation is higher than common sense. Common sense is fallible, isn't it? Prudence is fallible. I often tell the story of praying with a group of OMs in Belgium years ago.

Ray Lynch was praying, and he told the Lord that the oftentimes of the things of God, common sense is no better than rat poison. Is that true too? That's true. He made his point.

Number seven, these scriptures reveal Paul's prejudices. Paul was a male chauvinist. Well, listen, if that's true, you might as well get rid of your Bible.

If you can't trust those portions of, who's to say where error begins and ends? When you want to admit error in the Bible, when you want to admit prejudice in the Bible, who's to say where it begins and where it ends? That's the problem that some of these critics of the Bible have to deal with. Daniel Fuller of Fuller Seminary says, we know the Bible contains error. Imagine, because the Bible, Jesus said the mustard seed was the smallest of all seeds.

We know the mustard seed is not the smallest of all seeds. Therefore, the Bible contains error. If Daniel Fuller is right, then not only the Bible contains error, but we have a fallible savior.

Jesus wasn't given a scientific discourse on the size of seeds. He was speaking in the context of the days in which the people lived in the woman's pantry. And as she looked into her pantry, doubtless, mustard seeds were the smallest of all seeds, in the context of her life.

I tell you, they're pretty hard, hard up for arguments when they see something like that, aren't they? Number eight, you wouldn't want to do it if it would offend somebody, would you? I was speaking down in Fullerton not too long ago, and I was pressing a certain portion of the Word of God. A girl came up to me afterwards, and she said, well, you wouldn't do it if it would offend somebody. I said, of course I do it.

My conscience is captive to the Word of God, as Martin Luther said. But that's where we have to stand, isn't it? My conscience is captive to the Word of God. The consequences belong to the Lord.

Here's a good one. Well, those scriptures are all right for a bachelor, but they wouldn't do for a man with six kids. What kind of a God do you have? Imagine a God who can take care of a bachelor better than he can take care of a family of eight.

Really, the weakness of these arguments that are brought against the scriptures. Another argument, these teachings are for the kingdom. Actually, I was brought up in that type of teaching, that if there were some teachings that were rather difficult, we'd put them in a kingdom pigeonhole, you know? You can get rid of a lot of them.

That's what the ultra-dispensationalists do. When the ultra-dispensationalists get through with the New Testament, all you have left is the prison epistles. I'm serious.

I'm serious. Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Anything else they can say, that's the kingdom.

We all have that discourse, the kingdom. The Sermon on the Mount has nothing to do with us, it ain't. It's terrible, really, what we can do with the scriptures.

It's terrible how family can influence us in our treatment of the scriptures. How friends can influence us. How money can influence us.

How even a job can influence us. How people can soft-pedal the Word of God because of some of these things. The other day, I was reading an article by John Whitcomb.

He was reviewing a book by E. J. Carnell. The book was called *The Case for Orthodox Theology*, but actually the book was undermining the scriptures. For instance, Carnell says in this book, Adam could well have received his body from a previously evolved ape so that Genesis could be non-historical and non-scientific.

And John Whitcomb was debating with another man about this book. He criticized the book to Dr. George Eldon Ladd. And you know what Ladd said? He said, well, you don't know him personally as I do.

He's a gracious gentleman, a godly man. See? It's okay to undermine the scriptures as long as you're a gracious gentleman, a godly man. This is the way we're influenced, how men are influenced to take sides against the scriptures just because of friendship, or just because of family relationships, or just because of money.

It's really amazing how men can be influenced by the power of money. And that's something we've got to be very wary of in the day in which we live. Money is power, and power corrupts.

And our stand must be for the word of God first, last, and always. What is Christ's kingdom offers us? The word of God, the Bible, inspired from cover to cover. And God loves the man, the woman, who trembles at his word.

That's where we want to be. Not trying to explain it away, not trying to soften the force of the word of God, but accepting it as the word, and say, that's what it says, that's what I'm going to do. Shall we pray? Father, we do thank you this morning for this marvelous treasure that we have in our hands and in our

hearts.

Think of all that the scriptures have meant to us, how faith came to us by hearing the word of God. We pray, Lord, that you'll deliver us from all the pressures that are around us today to soften the meaning of the scriptures, to explain them away. Lord, may you find among us a people who will indeed tremble at your word, who will accept it as your word, read it, study it, memorize it, and most of all, obey it.

We ask in Jesus' name, amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/7/SID7729.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-macdonald/skyland-conference-1988-two-kingdoms-part-3/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net