



THE SCRIPTURES AND EVANGELISM



By J. PAUL RENO

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*"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every
word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"*

(Matt: 4:4).

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The relationship of these two subjects is of extreme importance to the children of God. To avoid this issue may well prove destructive to the souls of men.

Often a matter is best brought into focus when the right questions are asked. Let us ask three questions as to the relationship of the Scriptures and Evangelism.

1. Are the Scriptures essential for evangelism and salvation?
2. Can someone be evangelized and saved apart from the Bible?
 - a) i.e. by man's words, writings, wisdom, scriptureless tracts, emotions, drama, illustrations, testimony, psychology, artwork, etc.
 - b) i.e. by man's words about God's Words
 - c) i.e. by corrupted forms of God's Words

3. Can someone be evangelized and saved without a confidence in the written Word of God as authoritative and accurate?
 - a) i.e. doubting its accuracy
 - b) i.e. despising either its authority or accuracy
 - c) i.e. finding fault with the Scriptures
 - d) i.e. rejecting its accuracy or authority

Let us turn to the Scriptures to find answers to these three questions. In **Psalm 119**, we have the longest chapter in the Bible, located near the center and having one theme ... the Scriptures. Let us look at five gracious verses found here:

1. **vs. 41** - "Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, even thy salvation, according to thy Word." Notice the relationship of the Word and salvation.
2. **vs. 49** - "Remember the Word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope." Our hope is based fully on the Word, another clear relationship.

3. **Vs. 81** - "My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy Word." All doubts are settled on the basis of the Word.

4. **vs. 130** - "The entrance of thy Words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." Only God's Words enlightened our souls when we were in the kingdom of darkness.

5. **Vs. 155** - "Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes." The wicked have no hope of salvation as long as they neglect the Bible. Nothing else will replace it.

In **Psm. 126:5, 6** we read, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." In the New Testament, a parable is given by Jesus. It tells of the sower, the soil, and the seed. Christ said, "The seed is the Word of God." It takes the Scriptures to produce the fruit of saved souls.

In **Prov. 13:13** we find a rather precise answer to the question of the salvation of those who despise the Word. "Whoso despiseth the Word shall be destroyed: But he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded." Our eternal destiny is here tied to our attitude to the Scriptures.

In **Luke 16:28-31** we have Jesus speaking to the issue of the centrality of the Scriptures to evangelism. In the story of the rich man and Lazarus, we have the rich man's plea and Abraham's response when both are existing on the other side of death, - one in Hell, and the other in Paradise. "I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment, Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Even the most sensational and convincing testimony cannot do the job God has given to the Scriptures. There is no hope of the lost

repenting unless they first respond to the speaking of the Scriptures.

In **John 5:39** we have Jesus teaching a group of religious people. “Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”

The Scriptures tell us accurately of Jesus. They are God’s witness to the souls of men, as seen in the following verses:

Acts 10:43 – “To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.”

Acts 18:28 – Apollos “mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ.”

John 20:31 – “These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.”

Further on in **John 5:46, 47** Jesus presses the point. “For had ye believed Moses, ye would have

believed Me; for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My Words?"

If they had had a proper belief in Moses or the first five books of the Old Testament, then they would have been able to have faith in Jesus. Doubt or unbelief in Moses, the first five books of the Old Testament, prohibits faith in Jesus. Deny creation and you do without the Creator. Reject the flood and you face judgment. Believe in Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph and you can have their Saviour. Accept Moses, the crossing of the Red Sea, the Manna, and the Law and you can have the benefits of Christ the Rock. The priests and sacrifices prepare us for Jesus, our High Priest, who purchased our Redemption with His own precious blood. What you do with these five books determines what you can do with Jesus.

In **James 1:16-25** the relationship of the Scriptures to evangelism is carried further. "Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (vss. **16 and 17**). Remember that the Bible did not originate on earth, but came

down from Heaven. “Forever O LORD, thy Word is settled in Heaven” (Psm. 119:89). It is not only a good gift, but also a perfect gift. Continuing in **James 1**, “Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures” (vs. 18). To become begotten into the family of God requires “the Word of truth”. That’s not opinion but Bible fact. God decided it. He willed it. That settled it. “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God” (vss. 19 and 20).

In the light of the necessity of the Scriptures for conversion, we must urge “everyone” to be careful of their attitude and response to the Bible. They should be eager and quick to listen, yet slow to speak about what they have heard. They should never speak against the Word, nor be angry over its rebukes. Their wrath can never produce righteousness; only Jesus can do that for us. “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the

engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls”
(James 1:21).

God’s Word is able to save souls. No such promises are made for man’s words. This word must be received with meekness; not questioned, doubted, resisted, or rejected. Our attitude and response are of eternal consequence.

In **I Pet. 1:23-25** this truth is further amplified. Perhaps these verses alone would be enough to answer the three questions at hand.

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“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever” (vs. 23). The Word of God gives birth. This same Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17).

The new birth found in **John 3** and the new birth of **I Peter 1** are not different, but one and the same. The Holy Spirit applies His Sword to sinners according to their need, that they might be born again. He uses the same Word to testify of Jesus and draw sinners with the light of the Light of the World.

God only uses the Scriptures that have stayed uncorrupted. Those that are corrupted or could be corrupted are unusable. This is not our choice but God's decision. Only the incorruptible seed produces true converts. This lesson must be understood by any and all involved in evangelism. "But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you" (**I Pet. 1:25**). God's Word is indestructible. Only such a Bible can be used to Biblically preach the Gospel. Anything less produces less than a complete Gospel with most defective results.

Rom. 1:1b, 2 "... the Gospel of God, (which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures.)"

I Cor. 15:1, 2a, 3b, 4 "... the Gospel ... By which also ye are saved Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."

Heb. 4:2 used the terms "Word" and "Gospel" interchangeably. It is as if they were the same. "For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."

Unless the Scriptures are heard and mixed with faith in the sinner, there is no profit. Their response of faith or no faith determines their response to the Gospel and salvation or no salvation. This is basic to evangelism. They should receive the Scriptures with meekness mixed with faith if they would ever be saved.

Paul wrote in **I Thess. 2:13** to a church of newly converted people. Again, the issue of the Scriptures and evangelism arises. "For this cause

also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”

The Word works effectually only in those that believe. Their attitude and response are of greatest importance. It must be believed. It must be received as God’s Word. Men’s word cannot do the job. Even the treating of the Scriptures as the words of men robs them of their effectual working. Such a weakened view of the Scriptures leaves men lost in their sins.

In **II Tim. 3:15**, Timothy is honored for having known the Scriptures from a child. “And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” These Scriptures were what God would use to make one to see salvation and obtain it through faith in Jesus Christ.

In **chapter 4 and verses 2-5**, the Apostle presses the argument further. In **verse 2**, he commands Timothy to “preach the Word”, while in **verse 5**, he tells him to “do the work of an evangelist”. These two concepts are tied together with warnings of those who would reject the Word for teachers and fables.

Philip is the only individual in the New Testament called an evangelist. He recognized the necessity of the Scriptures for evangelism in **Acts 8:35**. “Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.”

In **Rom. 10:16, 17** there are three key words: Gospel, Faith, and Word. They are inseparable, inescapable, and indestructible. They are the keys to evangelism.

In **II Thess. 2:10-12** we read of some who will perish, who are not saved. A short look is sufficient to tell why they have no hope. “... them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (**10b**).

It was not a lack of the Word (“Thy Word is truth”), nor a lack of receiving the Word that doomed them. It was that they never received the love of the truth. Their attitude towards it never changed. Their hearts were still the hearts of rebels. They never joyfully and lovingly submitted to it that they might be saved. They could not be saved without the Scriptures. They could not be saved by man’s words or by a corruption of God’s Words. They could not be saved without a submission to its authority and a confidence in its accuracy. They must come to love both it and its author. They won’t need to fear the unknown future because God knows the future and “perfect love casteth out fear”.

Matt. 4:4b states, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” True life requires the true Words of God. Eternal live requires the eternal Word of God. The Scriptures and evangelism must go together or else we have no real evangelism. Consider, “He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My Words, hath one that judgeth him: the Word

that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (**John 12:48**).