

March 21, 2018: Further Introduction to the Priority and Purpose of God's Word

- Priority of God's Word
 - Gold, Honey, Experience of Ezekiel/Man/Jesus
 - The People of the Book
- Attributes / Aspects of God's Word
 - Stands Forever, Pure
 - Titles for the Word of God (including Fear of the Lord)
 - Purposes of the Law / God's Word
 - Description of the Organization of God's Word
 - Transformative Nature of God's Word

Priority of God's Word

Luke 24:32

They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

Earlier David, in **Psalm 19:10**, wrote of the perfection of God's word in these terms:

"More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb."

Gold:

Intrinsic Value of God's Word

- In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. He did this by His Word.
- There is intrinsic worth or value in the Word of God.
- As desirable as gold may be, or certainly any earthly thing, God's Word has greater value than gold.
- His Word is what God has given us to understand him, understand ourselves, and how to live in the world in which he has placed us. It would not be an understatement to say that His Word, which is able to make us wise unto salvation, is of infinite value and not even comparable to anything in this world.

Honey: Experienced Delight in God's Word

- The Word of God has both an intrinsic value as well as an experienced value;
- The Word of God is better than honey flowing out of the honeycomb for our enjoyment;
- We have all tasted the sweetness of honey. The psalmist uses this common experience that we have to express the delight of tasting, enjoying, and experiencing the greatness (and indeed) the sweetness of God's Word in our spirit.
- In the same way that the hearts of the disciples burned within them while Jesus talked with them on the road to Emmaus, God desires that our hearts and spirits would experience delight in the Word of God.

Experience of Ezekiel

Ezekiel 2:8 – 3:4

- ⁸“But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Be not rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you.” ⁹And when I looked, behold, a hand was stretched out to me, and behold, a scroll of a book was in it. ¹⁰And he spread it before me. And it had writing on the front and on the back, and there were written on it words of lamentation and mourning and woe.
- **Ch. 3** And he said to me, “Son of man, eat whatever you find here. Eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.” ²So I opened my mouth, and he gave me this scroll to eat. ³And he said to me, “Son of man, feed your belly with this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it.” **Then I ate it, and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey.**
- ⁴And he said to me, “Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with my words to them.”
- The Word of God is to our spirit and ministry on earth what food is to the body. That was true for Ezekiel and it is true for us.

Experience of Man / Jesus

Deuteronomy 8:3b "... man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord."

John 4:31-34: Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." ³² But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." ³³ So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" ³⁴ Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work."

The People of the Book

We are the people of the book. Without the book to tell us who we are, we will become like the world around us. Sin is normalized and idols are welcomed when the word is not constantly before our eyes and we are not submitting to it in faith. We are not set apart from the people around us for any intrinsic reason but because God has opened our eyes and ears to hear his call through his word.

Pastor Josh Anderson (February 21, 2018 Repentance)

The Word of God Stands Forever Isaiah 40:6-8

⁶A voice says, "Cry!"

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.

⁷The grass withers, the flower fades
when the breath of the LORD blows on it;
surely the people are grass.

⁸The grass withers, the flower fades,
but **the word of our God will stand forever.**

Psalm 12:6 – The Purity of God’s Word

The words of the LORD are pure words,
like silver refined in a furnace on the
ground, purified seven times.

- God is perfect and pure;
- His Words are also pure

Titles for The Word of God

Psalm 19:7-9 (in bold)

7 **The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;**

- 1. Law = teaching, the word to instruct
- 2. Testimony = what God 'testifies to' as his truth and the truth about himself,
 the word to reveal

8 **the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;**

- 3. Precepts = the word as instruction for the details of daily life
- 4. Commandments = the word given by God for our obedience

9 **the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;
the rules / just decrees of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.**

- 5. Fear = the Word of God teaches man to fear God
- 6. Rules / Just Decrees = the authoritative pronouncements of a judge;
 the word expressing what the Lord himself has 'decided upon' as truth to hold

John Gill's Exposition of Psalm 19:9a

- **Psalms 19:9 The fear of the Lord [is] clean**
... gives a full account of the worship of God, which is often meant by the fear of God; it instructs in the matter and manner of worship; and nothing more powerfully engages to serve the Lord with reverence and godly fear than the Gospel does: and this is "clean"; and the doctrines of it direct to the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin, and to the righteousness of Christ, ... And this word is
- **enduring for ever;**
the law is done away; the ceremonial law entirely, and the moral law, as a covenant of works, and as to the ministration of it by Moses; but the Gospel continues; it is an everlasting one; it endures for ever, notwithstanding all the opposition made to it by open persecution, or false teachers;

Fear of the Lord (cont'd) – Proverbs

Proverbs 1:7

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;
fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,
and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

Fear of the Lord (cont'd)

Solomon's Prayer

1 Kings 8:38-43 (context of famine, pestilence, blight, mildew, locust...)

³⁸ whatever prayer, whatever plea is made by any man or by all your people Israel, each knowing the affliction of his own heart and stretching out his hands toward this house, ³⁹ then hear in heaven your dwelling place and forgive and act and render to each whose heart you know, according to all his ways (for you, you only, know the hearts of all the children of mankind), ⁴⁰ that they may fear you all the days that they live in the land that you gave to our fathers.

⁴¹ "Likewise, when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for your name's sake ⁴² (for they shall hear of your great name and your mighty hand, and of your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this house, ⁴³ hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name.

Fear of the Lord (cont'd) – 1 Kings 8

According to Solomon's prayer of dedication of the temple, the fear of the Lord is linked with the covenant and the ministry of the temple. This fear is not a terror of God, rather it is a response of reverent awe and trust to the redemptive revelation of God.

It is the Old Testament equivalent of trusting Christ or believing the gospel. The fear of the Lord is the response of faith to all that God has done to redeem his people, as he himself interprets what he has done by his Word.

GG (p174): The Word of God and his saving acts provide the framework for the response of trust and reverence. The quest for true knowledge and wisdom starts from this "fear of the Lord."

The Three Purposes of the Law

1. To be a mirror reflecting to us both the perfect righteousness of God and our own sinfulness and shortcomings. As Augustine wrote, "the law bids us, as we try to fulfil its requirements, and become wearied in our weakness under it, to know how to ask the help of grace." The law is meant to give knowledge of sin, and by showing us our need of pardon and our danger of damnation to lead us to repentance and faith to Christ. [Romans 3:20, 4:15, 5:13, 7:7-11 and Gal 3:19-24.]
2. To restrain evil (the "civil use"). Though the law cannot change the heart, it can to some extent inhibit lawlessness by its threats of judgment, especially when backed by a civil code that administers punishment for proven offences. [Romans 13:3-4]
3. To guide the regenerate into the good works that God has planned for them. The law tells God's children what will please their heavenly father. Jesus spoke of obedience to his commands as proof of the reality of one's love for him. The Christian is free from the law as a system of salvation, but is "under the law of Christ." [Eph 2:10; Matt 28:20; John 14:15; Romans 6:14, 7:4 and 6; 1 Cor 9:20-21; Gal 2:15-19, 3:25.]

Purposes of God's Word

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Teaching: Scripture is to be used to instruct people to know God better.

Reproof: Scripture is profitable for reproof or rebuke, the idea of exposing or pointing out sin.

Correction: Scripture is useful for correction. Scripture both points out sin and offers a solution to it.

Training in Righteousness: Scripture is profitable for training in righteousness. Though similar to teaching, training is more focused on practical application. From Scripture we learn what is true, what is wrong, how to correct wrong, and how to apply truth.

Hebrews 4:12-13

¹² For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

¹³ And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Hebrew Scriptures: The Threefold Book

The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings

- 'The Law' is the title of the first five books (Genesis to Deuteronomy) or the Law of Moses.
- 'The Prophets' are 'The Former Prophets' (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings) and 'The Latter Prophets' (i.e. the major and minor prophets).
- 'The Writings' are the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

The Septuagint and Vulgate (and now our English versions) place Daniel in the Prophets and not the Writings.

Daniel was not referred to as a prophet, but rather a seer or wiseman, so the book was placed in the Writings along with the Psalms.

David and Daniel are certainly prophets (and their writings inspired). Jesus calls Daniel a prophet in Matt 24:15.

I should note as well that Daniel is found in 'The Prophets' in the Dead Sea Scrolls, so there is some dispute as to where it should be placed.

The Bible as Jesus Knew It

Luke 24:44; Mark 1:2; Matt 23:35

- 44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."
- The Third section is entitled, by Jesus, "the Psalms" after the largest book in the section known as the Writings.
 - Similarly, 'the Prophets' are referred to as Isaiah the Prophet (its first book) in Mark 1:2
 - In Matt 23:35, Jesus reviews the history of rejection of the Word of God and refers to it as "from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar." That is, from the first book (Genesis 4:8) to the last book (2 Chronicles 24:21).

We think of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings as "history", but the Hebrew classification of these books were as part of the Prophets.

Simple definition of a prophet: God speaks the word to the prophet and the prophet carries the word to the audience.

Moses changed Joshua's name from Hoshea ("Salvation") to Joshua, "Yahweh Saves" (Num. 13:16). It was a prophetic change, for Joshua had not only come to know the power of Yahweh, the promise-keeping God of his fathers, but he had learned that the children of Israel could not save themselves; only God Himself could save them.

HEBREW SCRIPTURES

LAW	PROPHETS	WRITINGS
Genesis	Joshua	Psalms
Exodus	Judges	Proverbs
Leviticus	Samuel	Job
Numbers	Kings	Song of Songs
Deuteronomy	The Twelve	Ruth
	Isaiah	Lamentations
	Jeremiah	Ecclesiastes
	Ezekiel	Esther
		Daniel
		Ezra-Nehemiah
* 24 books = 39 Christian		Chronicles

Where We Are Going and Application from this particular study:

- 1) Our focus will be on “How Jesus Christ has Fulfilled the Scriptures” with a specific emphasis on the various Feasts of the Lord (beginning with Passover, which is March 31)

- 2) Some Application / Exhortation for Tonight Based upon the Centrality of the Word in our Lives
 - a) Priority and Purpose of God’s Word (above);
 - b) Transformative Nature of God’s Word (yet)

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2 Corinthians 3:18 and Colossians 3:10

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this *comes from the Lord* who is the Spirit.

... and have *put on* the new self, which is being *renewed in knowledge* after the image of its creator.

How to Be Transformed

- We are transformed as we gaze on the glory of the Lord and *put on the new self* – which we do primarily in **His Word** (*renewed in knowledge*).
- We meditate on the character and description of the person and the work of Jesus Christ as revealed in His Word.
- We marvel at all He has accomplished, all he has fulfilled since before the beginning of creation, ... all the way to the promise that He has prepared a place for us to dwell with him in the New Heavens / Earth
- The more we receive into our hearts, by faith, the fullness of Christ, through the eyes of the heart as we read and meditate, the more we will be transformed into His image.
- The more we gaze at the Lord, the more we look, act, and live like Him.
- The transformation into His Image occurs in *knowledge*.
- Is this “knowledge” limited to the “New Testament” (last 25% of God’s Word)?

We, as believers, are new creatures; however, we must put on the new self. We must receive it. We receive it “*in knowledge*”

Galatians 3:7-9

⁷ Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." ⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Galatians 3:16-18

¹⁶ Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. ¹⁷ This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

Galatians 3:23-29

- ²³ Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.*

2 Corinthians 1:20

“For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.”

- When we read the Hebrew Scriptures, there are promises upon promises made to God’s people, and in Christ, they are ours.
- But we must know the promises to receive them.

Example: Hebrews 13:5-6 and Joshua 1:5 / Psalm 118

⁵ Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." ⁶ So we can confidently say,

"The Lord is my helper; I will not fear;
what can man do to me?"

- So we are exhorted to keep our lives from the love of money and be content with what we have. The argument the author of Hebrews makes is by referring to two passages in the Hebrew Scriptures:

Joshua 1:5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. **I will not leave you or forsake you.**

- Then he continues in verse 6, "So we can confidently say" — and then he quotes Psalm 118:6-7a

⁶The LORD is on my side; I will not fear.
What can man do to me? ⁷The LORD is on my side as my helper

- So, we hear the command, "Keep your life free from the love of money and be content". And the answer as to how to do it is to go to the book of Joshua and the Psalms. There we hear promises that find their YES in Christ and grant us peace.

Jesus Christ in All The Scriptures

- My goal in our few nights throughout this year, Lord willing, is not to go promise by promise through the Hebrew Scriptures (though I encourage you to do so)
- Our focus will be on “How Jesus Christ has Fulfilled the Scriptures” with a specific emphasis on the various Feasts of the Lord (beginning with Passover, which is March 31)

Feasts of the Lord



Resources

- The Scriptures (ESV, 2001 generally)
- According To Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible, Graeme Goldsworthy (2002)
- Loving the Old Testament, Alec Motyer (2015)
- The Scriptures Testify About Me. Jesus and the Gospel in the Old Testament, Edited by D.A. Carson (2013)
- How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart (2003)
- CHRIST in all the SCRIPTURES, A.M. Hodgkin (2004)
- The Institutes of Christian Religion, Calvin (Lane / Osborne, 1987)

- Chart (Slide 27): <http://restoringtheway.org/category/feasts-of-the-lord/>

Website

- These slides will be available on the Braidwood Bible Chapel website (shortly)