

The Essence of the Bible

Scripture Reading:

Hymn: 801

- 2 Tim. 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction or correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be complete fully equipped for every good work.
- 2 Pet. 1:21 For no prophecy was ever borne by the will of man, but men spoke from God while being borne by the Holy Spirit.
- John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.
- Matt. 4:4b Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God.

I. The origin of the Bible:

- A. The Bible is the breathing out of God—2 Tim. 3:16.
- B. The Bible is men's speaking from God while being borne by the Holy Spirit—2 Pet. 1:20-21.
- C. The Bible is God's speaking in the prophets, also His speaking to us in the Son—Heb. 1:1-2.
- D. The Bible is the Holy Spirit's revelation—John 16:13; Rev. 22:18, 19.

II. The essence of the Bible:

- A. The word of God is the breathing out of God—2 Tim. 3:16.
- B. The word of God is the spiritual milk—1 Pet. 2:2.
- C. The word of God is the spiritual food—Matt. 4:4.
- D. The word of God is spirit and life—John 6:63.
- E. God is the word, and the word is God—John 1:1.

III. The function of the Bible:

- A. To testify concerning the Lord Jesus—John 5:39.
- B. To make man wise unto salvation—2 Tim. 3:15.
- C. To cause man to be regenerated—1 Pet. 1:23.
- D. To be the believers' spiritual milk—1 Pet. 2:2.
- E. To be the believers' spiritual food—Matt. 4:4.
- F. To cause the believers to be complete—2 Tim. 3:16-17.

IV. The preciousness and sweetness of the Bible:

- A. Every word of the Lord is a pure word—Psa. 12:6, 119:140.
- B. The word of the Lord is sweeter than honey—Psa. 119:103.
- C. The word of the Lord is better than thousands of pieces of gold and silver—Psa. 119:72.
- D. The word of the Lord is our heritage forever—Psa. 119:111.
- E. No word will be impossible with God—Luke 1:37.

Reference Books:

On Knowing the Bible; Truth Lesson, Level 1, Volume 1; The Bible, A Lesson Book, Level 6; The Important Topics of the Bible, Book 2, published in Chinese but not in English, Lesson 21.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

After we are saved, in order to have spiritual growth, we must know the Bible. For two thousand years Christians have acknowledged one thing, that no one can know the Lord well without knowing the Bible.

The spiritual inheritance which God has given to us includes, on the one hand, the invisible Holy Spirit and, on the other hand, the visible Holy Bible. On the one hand, the Spirit is within us; on the other hand, the Scripture is outside of us. A proper Christian must be balanced in these two sides... If you are filled with the Holy Spirit within and you also know the Bible without, then, as a Christian, you are living and stable, and you are also active and accurate. You are a Christian who is living and stable as well as active and accurate. (*Truth Lessons*, Level 1, Volume 1, p. 2.)

The Origin of the Bible
The Bible Being God-breathed

The scripture is God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16). This tells us that the Scripture did not come out of man's thought, man's mind, but rather, it is God's breathing His thought and His word through His Spirit into and out of the writers. Hence, the Bible contains God's elements and carries His flavor. (*Truth Lessons*, Level 1, Volume 1, p. 2.)

The Bible Being the Speaking from God by Men Borne by the Holy Spirit

Since the Scripture is God's breathing His word out from men through His Spirit, no word of the Scripture can be of man's will; rather, men were borne by the Spirit and spoke out of God. The word, "men spoke from God, being borne by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:20-21), has a twofold meaning: first, men were borne by the Spirit; second, men spoke from God. In the original Greek, being borne by the Holy Spirit means being carried along as a ship by the wind. The writers of the Bible received God's inspiration, and they were under the power of the Holy Spirit, being borne and carried along by Him to speak out God's word. Furthermore, when they spoke, they spoke from within God. It was the Spirit of God carrying men along to speak, and it was also men speaking from within God. (*Truth Lessons*, Level 1, Volume 1, p. 3.)

The Bible Being God's Speaking in the Prophets and in the Son

The Old Testament is God's speaking in the prophets; the New Testament is God's speaking in the Son, our Lord Jesus (Heb. 1:1-2).

The Bible Being the Holy Spirit's Revelation

The Bible is the Holy Spirit's revelation. John 16:13 says, "But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come." The Lord's word here also proves that after the Spirit's descension, what His disciples spoke and wrote was disclosed to them by the Spirit. Hence, the Lord's word here proves that after His ascension, all the books of the New Testament, written by His disciples, were of the Spirit's revelation and their divine authority was acknowledged by Him. (*Truth Lessons*, Level 1, Volume 1, pp. 3-4.)

The Essence of God's Word
The Word of God is the Breathing Out of God

(The excerpt used here is similar to the one used in Chinese.)

The Bible is the breathing out of God. God breathes Himself out so that we can breathe Him in. When we breathe Him into us as our enjoyment, we sense a special taste. It is more than a sense of rest, or peace, or joy, or sweetness. It is beyond the description of human words. The greatest joy or blessing of being a Christian is to touch and taste God Himself through the God-breathed word. This is to eat the spiritual meal. By this, one will be fed and satisfied. (*On Knowing the Bible*, p. 21.)

The Word of God is the Spiritual Milk

When we first get saved, we do not have a strong enough comprehension concerning spiritual things. Some portion of the Scriptures are like milk that can nourish us and make us grow in our spiritual life (1 Pet. 2:2). Hence, a newly regenerated believer must long for the word of the Bible, like newborn babes longing for the guileless milk of the word. Otherwise, his spiritual life cannot grow, and he will continue to be one who is an infant in Christ (1 Cor. 3:1-2).

The Word of God is the Bread of Life

The word of the Scriptures is also our spiritual bread of life (Matt. 4:4). Just as our physical life needs nourishment, so also our spiritual life needs nourishment. The nourishment of our spiritual life can only be supplied by the word of the Bible. In order to be living and strong before God, we cannot depend on bread alone, but on every word, that is, the word of the Bible, that proceeds out through the mouth of God. We must take the word of God as food and eat it (Jer. 15:16), even regarding the word of the Bible as more important than our food (Job 23:12b). Otherwise, our spiritual life cannot grow. (*Truth Lessons*, Level 1, Volume 1, pp. 5-6.)

The Word of God is Spirit and Life

God's word is spirit and life. The Lord Jesus said, "the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." (John 6:63).

God is the Word, and The Word is God

God is Spirit. The Spirit, however, is very abstract. It is as abstract as the radio waves in the air. It is hard for man to touch Him or to understand Him. But the Bible is the embodiment of this Spirit. The Lord Jesus said in John 6:63 that the words He speaks are spirit. This shows us that God's word is the embodiment of God's Spirit...God the Spirit is contained in the word. This is why the Lord Jesus said that His word is spirit. In the same way, we can say the word in the Bible is the Spirit.

The Bible as the embodiment of God the Spirit is not only His expression, but also His dwelling place. God the Spirit resides in His word. From our experience, we know this is true. Many times, when we read the Bible, we touch God the Spirit. This is because the Bible is the dwelling place of God the Spirit. It is the place where God

the Spirit resides...God is Spirit. Whatever He does to us is through the Bible. Whatever God does toward us and whatever God wants us to do are done through His word. The word is the embodiment of God the Spirit. Hence, it is also the expression, the dwelling place, and the means of God the Spirit. Under normal circumstances, whenever we touch the word in the Bible, we should receive, touch, and feel the moving of God the Spirit and should contact God Himself. (*On Knowing the Bible*, pp. 22, 24.)

The spiritual inheritances God has given us are the Spirit which cannot be seen and the Bible which can be seen. Inside of us is the Spirit, and outside of us is the Bible. Christians throughout the ages can testify by experience that a proper Christian must be fully balanced in both respects—the Bible without and the Spirit within. These two aspects must be absolutely balanced. Any bias towards one side will result in serious problems. (*On Knowing the Bible*, p. 8.)

The Functions of the Bible Testifying Concerning the Lord Jesus

The first function of the Bible is to testify concerning the Lord Jesus (John 5:39). The Lord Jesus is the subject and contents of the Bible; the Bible is the explanation and expression of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus is God's living Word; the Bible is God's written Word. The Bible, God's written Word, must have the Lord Jesus, the living Word, as its reality; otherwise, it is but mere doctrines and empty letters.

Making Men Wise unto Salvation

The second function of the Bible towards us is to make us wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3:15); it reveals to us how God saves men in Christ, and how men may be saved by faith, so that we may know the way of salvation.

Causing Men to Be Regenerated

There is also the third function of the Bible, which is to cause us to be regenerated (1 Pet. 1:23). The Bible is the Word of the living God, and it contains the life of the living God. When we receive the word of the Scriptures into us by faith, it comes into us like a seed of life, sowing God's life into us; thus, we have God's life and are regenerated.

Being the Believers' Spiritual Milk

When we first get saved, we do not have a strong enough comprehension concerning spiritual things. Some portions of the Scriptures are like milk that can nourish us and make us grow in our spiritual life (1 Pet. 2:2).

Being the Believers' Bread of Life

The word of the Scriptures is also our spiritual bread of life (Matt. 4:4)...The nourishment of our spiritual life can only be supplied by the word of the Bible. In order to be living and strong before God, we cannot depend on bread alone, but on

every word, that is, the word of the Bible, that proceeds out through the mouth of God.

Making the Believers Complete

The teachings of the Bible can give us endurance, encouragement, and hope (Rom. 15:4). Many Christians have fallen into tribulation and sickness. Being unable to bear it, they feel sorrowful and hopeless, but when they read a portion or a sentence of the Bible, they have the enduring strength in their hearts, or they receive unspeakable comfort, and thus obtain hope that is beyond their expectation...after our regeneration, the Bible is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that we, the men of God, may be complete (2 Tim. 3:16-17). (*Truth Lessons*, Level 1, Volume 1, pp. 4-7.)

The Preciousness and Sweetness of the Bible

(The excerpt used here is similar to the one used in Chinese.)

Only the Bible tells us about God, His purpose, His reason for creation, man, man's problem, solutions to man's problem, and the destiny of creation and man.

There is only one book that is qualified to be God's book to man, and that is the Bible. All other books on earth do not pass the test because they are not written by God to reveal Himself to man. How we praise Him for giving us the Bible and letting us find the Bible. How much we need to treasure the Bible and see God revealed in the Bible. (*The Bible, A Lesson Book*, Level 6, p. 72.)

There is no other book on earth that can positively change people as dramatically as the Bible can. Scientific books cannot improve a person's disposition; on the contrary, some scientific advancements, such as the manufacture of modern weaponry, make it easier to destroy rather than improve humanity. Language books, instead of uplifting the readers' character, may just make them proud. Only the Bible dispositionally changes people in a positive way...Wherever the gospel went, the broken-hearted were healed, drunkards became sober, prodigal sons and daughters returned home, and evil people turned to God. Some did not regard their lives and were martyred for the Lord. What other book has such power to affect the lives of men? (*The Bible, A Lesson Book*, Level 6, pp. 78-79.)

Christians love the Bible. Some love it so much that they would even die for it. In the secular world, governments usually ban evil books and promote good ones. The Bible is definitely a book of love, a book of salvation, yet there has been much opposition to the Bible and persecution of its readers. Within three hundred years of the Lord's walk on this earth, the emperors of the Roman Empire tried their best to destroy the Bible and everyone who read and believed the Bible...Bible loving Christians were thrown into prisons. Some were hung and some were burned; this was done in order to force them to stop reading the Bible and to reveal the names of others who also loved the Bible. The ones who did not yield to these demands were tortured and killed. Some were sawn in two; others were covered with wax and burned like candles.

People love the Bible more than their own lives. How much we should treasure the Bible while we can read it freely! (*The Bible, A Lesson Book*, Level 6, p. 80.)

Questions:

1. Please explain what is the essence of the Bible according to the key verses in the scriptures?
2. What is the origin of the Bible? Please answer according to the Bible.
3. What are the functions of the Bible?
4. Why is the Bible so precious and sweet to the believers?