

# Theological Equipping Class

## *What is the Word of God?*

February 5, 2023

### Ways “the Word of God” is Used

Words have more than one meaning

Trunk

Bat

Phrases do too

She’s really hot

I hope you break a leg

### The “Word of God” or “Word of the Lord”

- a message that a prophet receives:
  - *the oracle of him who hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down with his eyes uncovered: (Numbers 24:4)*
  - *After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” (Genesis 15:1)*
- God’s creative decree
  - *By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. (Hebrews 11:3)*
  - *By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host. (Psalm 33:6)*
- the providential word whereby God preserves the world
  - *He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high... (Hebrews 1:3)*
- the commandments of God
  - *He answered them, “And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? For God commanded, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ But you say, ‘If anyone tells his father or his mother, “What you would have gained from me is given to God,” he need not honor his father.’ So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God. You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: (Matthew 15:3–7)*
- Scripture
  - *If he called them gods to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be broken... (John 10:35)*

- the words of the apostles
  - *And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4:31)*
  - *And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. (1 Thessalonians 2:13)*
  
- the spread of the gospel
  - *And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. (Acts 6:7)*
  
- the gospel itself
  - *Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John... (Acts 8:14)*
  
- the words of pastors and teachers
  - *Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. (Hebrews 13:7)*
  
- the words of Christ
  - *On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret... (Luke 5:1)*
  
- the Son of God Himself
  - *He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. (Revelation 19:13)*
  - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)*
  - *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)*
  
- more generic uses
  - *Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. (Proverbs 30:5)*
  - *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. (Hebrews 4:12)*

#### PEWS

- P – Person
- E – Events
- W – Writings
- S – Speech

## P for person

- *He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. (Revelation 19:13)*
- *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)*
- *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)*

“This usage is not common. But it does indicate that among the members of the Trinity it is especially God the Son who in his person as well as in his words has the role of communicating the character of God to us and of expressing the will of God for us.”  
(Wayne Grudem)

## E for events

- *For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:10–11)*
- *And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. (Genesis 1:3)*
- *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. (Hebrews 4:12)*

## W for writings

- *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat. (Psalm 19:1–6)*
- *The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. (Psalm 19:7–11)*
- *Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. (Psalm 19:12)*
- God writes or commands that words be written
  - *And he gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God. (Exodus 31:18)*

- *The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets. (Exodus 32:16)*
- *And now, go, write it before them on a tablet and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come as a witness forever. (Isaiah 30:8)*
- *The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you. (Jeremiah 30:1–2)*

S for speech

- *"the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God" (Second Helvetic Confession)*
- *Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God. (John 8:47)*
- *The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:14–16)*

### **The Tendency to Separate the Son from Scripture**

- "Being a Christian is not about knowing a book. It's about knowing a person."
  - assumes that we can know Christ apart from Scripture.
- Back in Jesus' day, He encountered a somewhat related problem.
  - *You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me... (John 5:39)*
- "We don't worship the Bible, we worship God, and that means that sometimes we'll be led by our living real God to affirm new beliefs and practices, and at other times we'll be led by that same loving God to renounce previous beliefs and practices – even those in the Bible."
- The problem with dividing God from His Word
- You can't separate a person from their words.
- God has told us where to find Him.
- *You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me... (John 5:39)*
  - Two errors to avoid
- There are only two options when it comes to knowing God. Either He speaks or we guess.

## **Do Christians Worship the Bible?**

- **Worshipping the gifts of God**
  - *He removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (it was called Nehushtan). (2 Kings 18:4)*
- **the sin of bibliolatry? A misunderstanding of idolatry**
- **the Bible commends a love for Scripture.**
  - *In God, whose word I praise, in the Lord, whose word I praise... (Psalm 56:10)*
  - *I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word. (Psalm 138:2)*
  - *In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word. (Psalm 119:14–16)*
  - *Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. (Psalm 119:18)*
  - *My soul is consumed with longing for your rules at all times. (Psalm 119:20)*
  - *Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors. (Psalm 119:24)*
  - *And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for my hope is in your rules. (Psalm 119:43)*
  - *I will also speak of your testimonies before kings and shall not be put to shame, for I find my delight in your commandments, which I love. I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes. (Psalm 119:46–48)*
  - *The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces. (Psalm 119:72)*
  - *This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (Joshua 1:8)*
  - *Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4–9)*
  - *Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him..." (John 14:23)*
- **Illustrations**
  - A soldier and a picture or phone
  - The Bible as a window
  - The Twilight Zone: Time Enough at Last

## **Implications**

1. What you think about the Bible reveals quite a bit about what you think about God.
  - What does it mean if we don't desire to study the Bible?
  - What does it mean to disobey the Bible?
  - What does it mean to disbelieve the Bible?
  - Why does it mean to reject the Bible based on experience?
2. If you want to hear God speak, read the Bible. If you want to hear God speak audibly, read the Bible aloud.

*Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, (Hebrews 1:1-3)*

3. If you want to grow in your love for God, grow in your love for Scripture.

*For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:16-21)*

4. God delights to reveal Himself.
5. The word of God is our ultimate authority.

"The central biblical and Reformed claim is that God's Word is to rule all areas of human life."  
(John Frame)

6. All of the attributes of Scripture flow out of understanding what it is.

*Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar. (Proverbs 30:5-6)*

7. There are no parts of Scripture that are more inspired or more authoritative.

Have you not read?