



## The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

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### **Distinctive Anabaptist Teaching: Authority of the Scriptures**

In relation to it being a distinctive Anabaptist teaching, the thought is that it is a precept and a doctrine that was characteristic of Anabaptist people. It is a teaching that is and was unmistakably different from the other reformers and the State churches at that time. Our subject is a very basic doctrine. If we miss it on this point that the Scriptures have authority, we probably have

missed it all. We might as well close the book. That is what we would like to present. This is a teaching that is foundational to the acceptance and the appreciation of all other Scripture — everything contained in the Scriptures.

Before one can really understand this concept there needs to be a knowledge of what we mean by the term, “Scriptures.” We

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say that is easy. It is the Bible. (And it is). However, there are many “bibles” around. There are carpenters’ and electrician’s bibles, and we can list on and on, but this is more than a Bible, it is the Word of God. We must recognize it as that. The Scriptures are the Word of God. As we go through this, I hope that we could, as it were, get a renewed sense of direction. Yes, we always believed that the Scriptures do have authority, but

when it comes down to practical everyday living and applications, sometimes we wonder if we all understand it as we ought.

We are thinking of beliefs and concepts that are understood by faith alone. I would like to notice a few Scriptures in Hebrews 11. When I say the concept of the Scriptures being authoritative is understood by faith, we understand God by faith. We understand the Scriptures by faith. “Now faith is the substance of

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things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (verses 1, 3). As children grow up they may have been taught, heard glimpses, or heard their parents talking about how the world came into being — that God made the world — God made the birds and the bees. That is how children are instructed, and we receive that. Finally though, when it comes down to submitting to the Word and its direction, we need to understand that this is possibly understood only by faith.

The Scriptures say, “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). The Scriptures have authority and they say what they mean and they mean what they say. It is a very simple conclusion we could say to that thought. Really, as we think of this fact, the desire, the ability, and the power to understand and believe that the Scriptures have authority comes right to us from within the Scriptures themselves. The Bible instructs us in that. We get the truth from the Scriptures themselves that they are authoritative in their content and counsels.

To be able to understand this

one must be born again and have the indwelling presence of the Spirit of God within to help illuminate the individual. I am saying that upon the authority of the Scriptures. That is what we are talking about. A person does not need to be apologetic about stating Scriptures as they are given because they come from God. They are the Word of God.

The Scriptures testify to us that the only way to understand them is through the help of the Spirit. “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:10–14). Notice

verse 14. That is why we would all believe and conclude that a person needs to be born of the Spirit, born of God and have this Spirit dwelling within to help us understand the deep things of God.

We are talking about authority. We are talking about the Scriptures. We are also talking about the authority that they have. The definition of authority would be, “the power and the right to give command or to enforce obedience, to take action, or to make final decisions — a jurisdiction.” That is the dictionary definition and I believe that is accurate. Does the Bible really have that kind of authority? Does the Bible have the right to tell me what to do and then make me do it? Does the Bible take action against me and finally have the last word? We agree that it does. We can say that. Sometimes in experience it is a little hard to understand.

The first article of our 18 articles of faith — the Garden City Confession of Faith says “Article I, of the Word of God. We believe in the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Bible as the Word of God; that it is authentic in its matter, authoritative in its counsels, inerrant in the original Writings, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice.” I

think that is a statement that is well written. This statement was written in 1921. We accept the finality of the Scriptures. The Bible is able to testify of this truth better than what we can. Since we accept that the Scriptures are the Word of God, then we readily accept the truth that we see there.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:1–4). Also in 2 Timothy 3:15–17 the apostle Paul wrote to us “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. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” The thought that I want there is that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”

A study on how the Bible came together, how many years between the writers and how these men from different ages

wrote God's Word is very interesting because God inspired them to write it. Whether they understood all they were writing, we really do not know. However, we have a collection, or what we call the Canon of Scripture that is inspired by God. That is why we can readily say it is the Word of God. Is it any different if God would be standing here and speaking directly to us? So it is when we read the Scriptures. I do not think there is any difference. God speaks to us and reveals Himself to us through the Scriptures. If God has authority then so does His Word. This is the emphasis.

Psalm 119:160 says, "Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever." "For I am God, and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:22b). "For I am the LORD, I change not" (Malachi 3:6). I bring those Scriptures in to help us understand that the God who is the God of these Scriptures — the God of the Bible and has given us His Word is the One that is supreme.

Let us be convinced today, even as our forefathers were, that the Scriptures are the Word of a supreme, infinite, eternal, and immutable God. God is supreme — there is none else. He is infi-

nite. He knows everything. He is eternal. God has no beginning and no end. He is immutable. Therefore, nothing changes. He does not change His Word to us or anyone else. We have it and can trust in it that it will not change.

He is the God who is all powerful and whose eyes, "are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3), "from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34). Therefore we would conclude that the Scriptures are "authoritative in its counsels" as our discipline statement reflects.

The very fact that we believe and teach this, we owe so much to our Anabaptist heritage. To really trust the Scriptures — that they are true — is that something that we can simply pick out of the air? Is it something that we can read somewhere and it states, "Here it is, the Bible is true?" How often do we think back and reflect on how much influence our upbringing and our heritage had in relation to the fact that we accept the Scriptures for what they are and we believe them?

One can rightly assume that the Anabaptists, during the Reformation, believed that the Scriptures have authority and they taught the same. One of the favourite verses of Menno

Simons was, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11). I do not think Menno would have understood this the way we say or use it, but the thought is that they built on that. Sometimes we use the word “ground,” meaning the ground to build on, or we have “solid footing” and “solid ground” to base something on. The Anabaptists came out right. Yes, there were some who did not.

They knew the Scriptures and under test they quoted them. They recited Scripture especially when they were being persecuted or interrogated, with the idea that they were to recant and give up the faith. They were put under severe tests. They would simply quote the Bible. They knew the Scriptures. Those who were persecuting them testified that these people knew the Bible. How could it have been otherwise? How could they have faced the racks, the hot tongs, the drownings, and the burning stakes had it not been for the fact that they placed their faith and trust in God, and they received that understanding through the Scriptures. Thus, they truly believed God by faith.

*The question is for us today then is, “How are we being influenced by this distinctive*

*Anabaptist teaching?”* We grew up with it. It is not a new doctrine. It was not a new doctrine for them. The fact that the Bible is true and that it is authoritative was not the first time in the Reformation that they understood this. Yes, they received new glimpses of it through studying it. The Scriptures have within them the ability to do that. If a person opens themselves to learning the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit is there to help and cause a person to understand them. There is a blessing also pronounced upon one that readeth and him who understands the Scriptures. Thus, it is not a new doctrine but it is one that enables the believer to accept, by faith, everything in the Scriptures, whether we understand it or not. We struggle sometimes in saying that we do not quite understand it. People who are not ready to submit, or to fully commit themselves, sort of get up “hung up.” They do not really understand it. Do we need to understand everything the Bible contains before we believe it? Certainly not. If that would be the case none of us would probably ever come to believe it.

Having said that, it is not so difficult for us to accept that the Scriptures have authority and that they are authoritative.

Rather, the Scriptures have the power and the right to authorization. What I mean by that is that the Scriptures have the power and the authority to delegate authority. The Scripture delegates Its authority upon men, upon the Church, and upon leaders in the Church. We do not try to reconcile the Church and the State. God has, in His wisdom, so designed that the delegation of authority is not only on the Church. It is for different purposes. Romans 13:1 says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." We know it is talking about the civil authority. God has the authority to delegate authority and the Scriptures show to us how that authority is delegated to men. That might be a little harder to understand and apply than to simply say that the Scriptures have authority.

*Reasons why people may not accept the authority of the Scriptures.* We have met those kind of people, they are simply not sure. I have a neighbour who considers himself as an elder in his church, yet he made the statement that "The Bible is the hardest book to understand that was ever written. Man simply cannot understand it." If a person says

we cannot understand the Bible, how does it relate to the fact that the Bible is true and that it is authoritative? They probably do not.

1) *People might only be hearing a partial Gospel.* They may not be hearing it all. Or, they may be hearing the Gospel preached, but they are not ready to accept all of it. Also, they are probably resisting the call to make application to daily living. "Is nonconformity really necessary," they would say. Some would say, "Well, it is only men's rules. It is simply some man's idea." Since we have a discipline and it gives some guidelines to application in relation to nonconformity they would say, "Well, it is men that brought that together." The clothing regulations are a problem with some. They do not make the connection between the authority of the Scriptures, its call to holiness, and to have good, solid moral standings and how that relates to nonconformity.

Those who would say these things tend to say, "Well, after all, God looketh on the heart" — "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). That is somewhat said, I believe, to justify what they are doing. However, several things

are wrong with this. First, they borrowed it from the Old Testament, and they have taken it out of context. This verse is not really speaking of that. God was, through Samuel, choosing a king. He was looking at character, not necessarily the outward appearance of clothing. He took it out of context, and I do not believe it anyway. The person says this as a shield — as a justification that God looketh on the heart. If he really believes that, I believe, he would bring his life in harmony with the will of God.

2) *Situational ethics*. We have heard that one used too. People say because of a certain problem or a certain unique situation they find themselves in, God will see it differently. He will overlook some things. God will overlook the sin that may be involved or the wrong that they are living in. God says, “the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4, 20). We realize that God may move in varied ways in relation to man’s response to Him. To His Scriptures, God may move in varied ways. We know that Lot was brought out of Sodom because of Abraham and his prayer. Thus, God did, in essence, maybe change or vary His course there. However, we know that God always acts according to His sovereign will

and His unchanging eternal Word. On of the authority of the Scriptures, we can say that without any apology.

Jesus spoke “as one having authority” (Matthew 7:29). This is what they said about Him. He was teaching. He was a man yet, “he taught them as one having authority.” Jesus was the Word made flesh and dwelling among men. [John 1:14] Some caught that and believed it. Many did not believe that. They held the banner high that they were children of Abraham and were God’s people, but they missed completely that Christ was God’s Word in the flesh. The faithful Christian’s living testimony may also become an authoritative word of witness that the Holy Spirit can use to either call people or to judge them. We want to remember that.

3) *The acceptance of some other revelations from God*. We have such that would say “Yes, the Bible says thus and thus, but I received a revelation from God that is over and above that, or that is broader.” Or, “I received some new light or new direction.” People go that route. They will not trust the authority of the Scriptures. They will finally not have the kind of faith that they should have in God. All revelations from God, whether they

come through the Word, through the witness of the Spirit, or by some other channels, will always be in accordance with the principles of truth. Therefore, they will be in perfect harmony with the God of revelation Himself.

Thus, every revelation from God is in perfect agreement with His Word. There is no deviation from that, and we must be convinced of that. If people come and knock on our door and say that they have light that we do not have, the first question is “Where are they getting it from?” The second is, “Does it line up with the Scriptures that God has revealed to us — His Word?” Let us go back to the verse, “For I am the LORD, I change not” (Malachi 3:16). God does not change that. We do not need to be unsettled when someone comes and tries to tell us that the Bible is out of date, because God does not change and neither does His Word.

4) *Unbelief and spiritual blindness.* “But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed” (John 12:37, 38)? Also, in verses 47 and 48 we see

the rejection of Christ and His Word and the judgments of the Word. “And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. 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.”

People do not believe. They have unbelief. There could be various reasons for that. It can come from spiritual blindness as we are thinking of, or it can come because of some pre-concluded philosophy. There is a thought in John 9:27. This is the account of the man who was born blind and was healed. They had questions about him. They did not want to believe in Jesus. They did not want to believe the man because Jesus had healed him. “He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear.” Do we think they literally did not hear? I believe he told them. They were hearing that he was talking, but they did not want to hear what he had to say, “wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?”

Of course, we know what happened. They reviled him. They discredited the work of Christ. They ascribed the work of Christ to the devil, in their hearts,

because they could not receive Christ. Some pre-concluded philosophies held them to the place where they finally were spiritually blind to what was presented there to them. They could not see Christ. They could not accept Him.

5) *Another reason people do not believe, or do not accept the authority of the Scriptures is that they resist the Holy Ghost's illumination.* It is the very power that comes from God and helps us understand. How can we understand that the Scriptures have authority, if we resist the power of God to understand the Word? In Acts 7:51–53 Stephen had given them the history of their people and he says, “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.” He was telling them they were stiff-necked and uncircumcised, and the reason is, “ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.”

We know that when Jesus was born, there was one in the

Temple who came and knew right away. He took that little baby in his arms and blessed Him. He knew that the salvation of Israel was coming to that place there. However, many of them rejected Jesus Christ because of their resisting of the Word itself and the Holy Ghost that helps them understand it.

6) *Suggesting that the Bible contradicts itself.* We do not hear so much of that in our circles. Our children growing up have a sense of belonging as far as relating to the Scriptures. They see how we relate to it, how we believe it, and respect it. One example from the Scriptures say, “for I am God, and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:22; 46:9). I stated that. Many other Scriptures in the Bible would indicate there is but one God. There is none else. There is no other. There is one and only one God. Then, the Bible says that He is God the Father and it uses a term that He is God the Son, and He is God the Holy Ghost. Now it talks about three, so people wrongly conclude sometimes. It is a confusion. The Bible says there is only one and then it says there are three. The heathen people relate to god's, — many gods — but we do not. We relate to one God. This should not be a contradiction. It should not be a

question for us, not at all. “There is but one God” (1 Corinthians 8:6), and this one God manifests Himself to man in three persons. These two facts are of equal importance. We need to believe there is one God and we need to believe that He manifests Himself and reveals Himself to us in these distinct personalities or persons.

We should believe this without question. We can do that because the Bible tells us “with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26; Mark 10:27). We are not obligated at all to try to reconcile that there is one and then there is three. The thing we are asked to do (or what we should do) is simply believe it. As a person truly believes that it is that way God will even reveal to that person how that thought can be reconciled.

*God is the supreme authority and His Word has the same authority. Equally as important to know, is that the authority of the Scriptures is also valid and binding in principle form.* Not only in the Word is it stated, but in Its principle form the Scriptures have authority as well, and they become binding. That is why we have a confession of faith and a discipline statement. We do not simply throw that out the door. It was brought together

by prayer and by seeking direction from God, and by men of wisdom, and understanding, and faith, but we respect that. Let us not take lightly the issues the church speaks on. God has vested authority in the Church and where the Scriptures are held forth. We will certainly answer to God for that.

God has also delegated His authority in a way that He does not lose His own. We said already that when someone who is in a place of authority (whether it be a father in the home or a manager of a business) leaves and he delegates authority, there is a sense in which he loses some of that authority. That is, what he may desire may not be fully carried out. When returns, he may never find out whether it was carried out or whether his authority was respected. Not so with God. He does not lose His own authority because He will have the last word. We want to remember that as we think of delegated authority — how we relate to our brethren, and how we relate to church leaders. Finally, God has delegated authority and we cannot bypass that. We cannot bypass the authority of the Word as well and say “Because of this or that, why it does not mean me.” God, finally will have the last word.

An unreserved acceptance of the authority of the Scriptures is finally foundational to our life and our very existence as a faithful church. That is seeking and working to conserve the truth and the values taught in the Scriptures. Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice” (John 10:27). He also said, “and they follow me.” If we want some inspiration on this thought of God having authority and giving directions and as it were laying down an ultimatum, “You do this, I will do this,” read Deuteronomy 4–8. It is very interesting reading there, how as they were going into the promised land, God was giving them

directions for that. He was saying, “You follow my commandments. You do this, and this, and this.” Then about chapter 9 or the end of chapter 8 it begins by telling them, “Because ye did not do this, there are things beginning to happen.” They did not follow the commands of God. They were reaping for that. We will do the same if we take the Scriptures and see them as not really that valid or not having authority over us. We will also come under the judgments of God. May we be the believers and the progenitors of this distinctive Anabaptist teaching of the authority of the Scriptures. May the Lord bless.

## **The Authority of the Word — Hebrews 4:12**

I would like to look at the thought of the authority of the Word. I will use Hebrews 4:12 as our text verse, although I will not be looking at this verse a lot throughout the message, but somewhat as a spring board for our consideration. We would like to look at a few other verses surrounding this verse, which bring into focus the Word of God. “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the

thoughts and intents of the heart.” Do we notice what the Word of God does in our experience here?

It talks about the Word of God being quick. That means it is alive. It says it is powerful. Its message is able to penetrate our being. It is able to divide. It is able to help us understand what we are. It is able to help us see ourselves. It is able to help us understand our own thoughts, motives and actions. The Word of God is able to do that. In 2 Peter 1:19–21, we have the thought here of the “more sure word of prophecy.” Peter relates

the account of the time when God had related to his hearers in verse 17, “This is my beloved Son.” He talks about this voice that they heard and says “[Now] we have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” This passage brings into focus how we receive the Word. It was given by the Holy Ghost. “Holy men of God,” wrote the Scripture as we have it today.

I would like to draw a few more thoughts from 2 Timothy 3:16, 17. Verse 15 calls us to the awareness of the “scriptures, which are able to make [us] wise unto salvation.” verse 16 then says, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” It is interesting that these verses bring into focus the fact that it is the Word of God that is able to make us a perfect man. Outside

of the Word of God, we are unable to understand His will, much less do the will of God. It is the Word of God that is profitable to help us understand what to believe. It is profitable to help us in times of reproof or correction or to guide us in the right way.

Then, in 2 Timothy 4:2, we are called to, “Preach the word.” That verse simply means to me that our responsibility, since we have the Scriptures, we are called to share the Word with those who need inspiration, and all of us truly need that. We need inspired from the Word of God because of what It is able to do for us. Our article of faith, “Article I, Of the Word of God,” simply relates to what we believe about the Word of God. “We believe in the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Bible as the Word of God; that it is authentic in its matter, authoritative in its counsels, inerrant in the original Writings, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice.”

Brethren and sisters, we must ever understand and believe that fact. The Bible, as the concluding statement in that article says, is, “the only infallible rule of faith and practice. Anything outside of that is not of God. I will look at the subject in three areas. 1) I would like to notice The

Word — Its basis of authority. 2) The Word — its appeal to man. Then, 3) The Word and some practical challenges today.

1) *The Word — its basis of authority.* I would raise a couple of questions and then endeavour to answer as we look at the Word as the basis of authority. *By what right is the Word of God authoritative to life and conduct, or authoritative to life and practice?* Also how can we prove the validity of the Scriptures to be of more value than any other writings? Those are some of the questions that arise today in the minds of individuals, particularly people who have never been taught the way of truth. There are probably a number of answers that we will look at. Primarily, the basic answer to this question (the basis of authority we could say) rests upon the Author. This not true of any other writing. The basis of authority rests upon its author and that Author we know is God.

We read that in 1 Peter 1. It is a “more sure word of prophecy.” God spake and man wrote it down. No book or writing is of any value unless we can prove the author to be genuine and one who knows what he is talking about or promoting to be true and factual. When we pick up any kind of book, if you are like me,

you like to first of all see who wrote it. If we know anything about the author then right away it does something to how we read the book. Is it authoritative? Is the author genuine? Does he know what he is talking about? Historians’ writings are only authoritative if the facts set forth are true to actual happenings. Any historian that is of any value is only valuable if that which he writes is historically correct. If we pick up a history book of any kind and read it, and then we discover that a lot of the facts have been tainted and have been made to fit into his own philosophy, why that history writing is of no value. Historians’ writings are only authoritative if the facts set forth are true to actual happenings. The same could be true in science or other things along that way.

Now, we raise another question, *By what right does the Word written by God prove to be authoritative?* I have a couple of answers that I would like to give here. a) *The Word written by God is proven to be authoritative because Its Author is the Creator of time and eternity, the Beginner and Concluder of life.* On that basis His Word is authoritative. Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” No other person or

being has set in motion the universe with its creation and sovereignly sustains its function from its beginning without flaw or interruption. It does not matter what we try to do, build, or create in our own self. There are normally a few flaws and a few interruptions to our project. This is not so with our God, the Creator, in Genesis 1, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” No other being has set in motion the universe without flaw, without interruption. In fact, in Genesis 2:1 God says about His work after He had completed, “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.” God created it. Therefore, on that right, it is authoritative because its Author is the Creator of time and eternity.

b) Secondly, what right does the Word written by God prove to be authoritative? *It is because what God has said came to pass.* In Genesis 1, I would like to notice a few verses in relation to the Creation. In Genesis 1 we have a number of truths that are noteworthy. Notice verse 3, when God was in his creative work, “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.” Verse 6, “And God said, Let there be a firmament.” Verse 7, “And God made the firmament.” The

conclusion of verse 7 says, “it was so.” Verse 9, “And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered,” and we have God calling “the dry land Earth” (verse 10). Verse 12, “God saw that it was good.” Verse 11, “God said, Let the earth.” Again another phrase, “Let the earth bring forth.” Verse 14, “And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament,” and we have God bringing those lights into focus. Verse 20, “And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly.” Verse 21, “God created great whales,” and so on. “And God saw that it was good.” Verse 24, “And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind . . . and it was so.” Verse 26, “And God said, Let us make man in our image.” Verse 27, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them,” and God said, and it was so.

Again, God is authoritative. God’s Word is authoritative because what God said came to pass. God spake and it was done. Other men speak but only from the context of what was already done. God however, spoke and brought into existence that from which there was not previous matter or existence. Hebrews 11:3 says, “Through faith we

understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” There was no matter and there was no resemblance of anything that we have today, but God said, and it was so. God created it. We speak from the context of that which was already done, but God spoke and brought into existence that from which there was no previous matter or resemblance.

c) *God’s message is authoritative because its message is historically correct.* We can go through the entire Word of God and the generations recorded can be traced. We can follow them the whole way back. The facts recorded about each person actually happened. It was not something that was imaginary. Therefore, it is historically correct.

d) *Also the Word is authoritative because the prophecy set forth came to pass.* Notice in Genesis 3:15 the prophecy regarding the coming of the Lord Jesus. Think about the prophecies regarding the birth of Christ. Isaiah 9:6, 7 brings into focus the prophecy regarding our Lord. I would like to note that, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his

name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.” Regarding the birth of Christ, the prophecy set forth came to pass. We turn to Luke 2 and we read the account of Jesus being born into the world. It happened as it was outlined. It was recorded in the Old Testament that He would be born at Bethlehem. We can find that in Micah and the prophecies came to pass.

I thought about some of them regarding the death and the experiences of various Old Testament kings. I thought about king Ahab and the prophecy that God had told of how he would be killed, and it happened. I thought about king Ahaziah, the one that fell and how God told him he would die. I thought about king Asa and how the Lord worked in his life. We could think about king Hezekiah. (2 Kings 20; Isaiah 39) After king Hezekiah had showed the people from Babylon all of his kingdom, the message came from God, “Because you have done this, you are going to

be carried away captive down to Babylon,” and that is exactly what happened. It came to pass. The words, the message did happen.

I thought also about the prophecies of disobedience to God’s message. My mind went to the old prophet at Bethel. Do we remember the account where the prophet cried against the altar at Bethel (1 Kings 13)? The man there told him to come back and eat with him and he said, “God told me I should not go back and eat and drink, but I am to return right back to where I came from.” Nevertheless we know the story, he turned aside and he went back to the old man supposedly of God, and we have him being destroyed as God said he would. My mind also went to the account in Exodus 12:21–28, the time of the Passover at Egypt regarding disobedience to God’s message. God said in the applying of the blood that if they would not do it then there would be destruction. We remember the account. It was the Egyptians who failed to apply this and they were destroyed.

I thought about the time in 1 Kings 3, God had spoken with Solomon in his dream and told him that if you love and obey me and do my will I will establish your kingdom. However, we

know the account in chapter 11 how Solomon had allowed his wives to turn his heart away from God. I think we ought to turn to that and notice the downfall of Solomon’s experience. Solomon was the great king, the one who had led the children of Israel to what we could call the zenith of power in their day, but in Chapter 11:1, we notice something beginning to work. “But king Solomon loved many strange women.” We see his fall into immoral sin. Verse 6, “And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father.” Notice verses 9–11, “And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded. Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.” We know that happened following the death of Solomon as God said it would.

We could look at the prophe-

cies regarding obedience to Its message. Again, let our mind go back to the passover time in Egypt. Those who applied the blood were obedient to what God had said, and they were saved. I thought about Noah in Genesis 6 and 7. God told Noah to build that ark and Noah faithfully obeyed God. In Genesis 7:1 God said, “Come thou and all thy house into the ark.” In that entire experience God brought salvation. Why? Because Noah was obedient. God had prophesied to Noah that if he was obedient he would be saved.

I thought about Abraham. Abraham had received that direct call from God. He left his homeland. He then was promised a son. Then, he was called to offer that son and in his obedience to every detail of God’s will for him, God came to him and through his message it was Abraham that received the covenant of promise. The prophecies set forth in the Bible came to pass. It is authoritative in that sense.

e) *It is authoritative because its message is still directing the lives of individuals today.* People who follow its principles that are set forth, reap a life of joy and bliss. Whereas those who reject its message and live for self and pleasure, reap a life

of misery and eternal sorrow. Do we not see that today? Do we not understand that those who allow the message to direct their lives, truly experience a life of joy. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 brings this right into focus — the fact that it is there to guide and direct our way of life. It “is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

2) *The Word — Its appeal to man.* Remember, the authority of the Word, causes man to respond to its message either positively or negatively. We either respond in obedience to the message of God, or else we turn from its message and go our own way. We can never, in any way, be neutral to the Scripture. We either respond positively or we negatively to it.

How does the Word appeal to man? I would like to look at this thought of appeal (not attractively necessarily), as it calls, or as it speaks to us. How does it appeal to us? How does it call? how does it speak to us? The Word appeals to man through the work of the Holy Spirit. This may be seen in various ways in each of our experiences differently. A) *However, in a real sense the Word of God appeals to man through the work of the Holy Spirit. In*

John 14:16 Jesus said that He would send the Comforter who would guide us into all truth. Thus it is the Holy Spirit that guides us and shows us the Word of God, helps us to understand His will and His message.

I would like to notice 1 John 2:20 and 27–29. It was interesting as I meditated on these verses, and as we talk about the Holy Spirit that guides us in to all truth, “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.” As I would understand that unction is the Spirit of God dwelling within. “But the anointing [which is the Holy Spirit] which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.” We have the Holy Spirit indwelling within us that teaches us, guides us, and shows us the way to go.

Without the aid of the Spirit, the Word of God will not make its appeal to man. It is the Spirit

that takes the message of truth and brings to conviction to the heart. It is the Spirit that provides comfort in times of need as one meditates on the Word. It is the Spirit that brings light and brings to light the knowledge of truth in times of testing and temptation. We must ever understand that it is the work of the Spirit in our lives that allows the message to bring conviction, comfort or to light the areas, and help us to know how to choose right in times of testing and temptation. Let us also understand that regardless of how far from truth one is, or regardless of background or heritage, the Spirit makes His appeal to all men and leads men to the knowledge of the truth as they are open to be shown the will of God. Regardless of whether we are in the most heathen countries of our land, it is the Spirit of God, who is able to take and bring to man the awareness of his need of God.

I would like to bring this question into focus in 1 John 4:1–6 then. *How do I know the Spirit is of God and is of the truth?* These are questions that are sometimes raised as we think about understanding the Word of God, and when we talk about the Spirit that helps us to know what is the will of God. How do I know the Spirit is of God and is

of the truth? “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.”

There are three things that are directly in focus here that help us to understand that. i) Do we notice what he says in verse 2? The Spirit that is of God points us to Jesus Christ. “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.” It is significant that it brings into focus that Jesus came in the flesh. This is noteworthy. ii) Verse 4, the Spirit that is of

God enables us to live the overcoming life. “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them.” Overcome what? Overcome the false spirits around “because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

iii) Notice also in verse 5 the Spirit that is of God has a message that is not of this world. “They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us.” Many today claim to live by the authority of the Word when in actuality they are living in direct opposition to truth. Let us ever remember that the Spirit of God will always complement the teachings of Christ. That is always true. The Spirit of God and the teachings of Christ never run in conflict. Therefore, the Spirit of God helps us to understand that the teachings of Christ as He taught in the Sermon on the Mount relating to nonresistance and many practical areas of life, are for us to live by today.

Think about the teachings of the apostle Paul. Paul said, “the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 14:37). The Spirit of God never conflicts the message of truth — the commands of the Scripture. It will always

complement the teachings of Christ. It is also interesting that the Spirit of God will always show us the path of victory over the flesh. The Spirit of God never allows our flesh to be in control but helps us to live in victory over the flesh. It is the Spirit of God then that leads us to obedience to truth rather than to be in favour with the world. When the spirits around us call us to live closer to the world and to identify more with the spirit of this age, it is of the world. In contrast, the Spirit of God leads us to obedience to truth and not be in favour with the world.

Unless we are governed by the Spirit of God, the spirit of the evil one will move us to a closer identity with the world, into spiritual defeat, and finally denial of the person and work of Jesus Christ. This is why it talks about the antichrist here in verse 3, “that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” “Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God.” Let us understand that Jesus came in the flesh. It was Jesus that outlined the will for us to follow and live in. It was Jesus who came in the flesh and then died on the cross that we might have redemption. He shed His blood that we might have life and that fact we must

believe.

*How do we believe in the authority of the Word? How is it authoritative in our life? And how is it valid?* B) *We also understand that it appeals to us through nature.* We talked about all men having the awareness and understanding of the creative powers and beings that are beyond. We find that in Romans 1:18–20. “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.” This verse brings right into focus that all men “are without excuse.”

I read sometime back (and I was thinking about that as I was preparing for this message) about a man in a heathen country who, as he viewed the creation around him and he saw all the orderliness of the universe, he simply, in his own mind, knew there had to be something more than this coming into being by accident. Therefore, he looked up into the

sky and prayed, “If there is a being beyond that has brought all this into focus, I would be like to be better acquainted with that being.” It was interesting how that God, through that prayer of simple faith, led him to an understanding of truth.

It is the awareness, that the things that are clearly seen are understood. Yes, the people who live in the heathen lands who have never been exposed to truth are truly not as accountable as we are. However, they are finally accountable for the little bit of light and knowledge that they gain from the universe as it moves and functions. Think about the changing scenes that always occur. The sun rises and sets. It is the work of God. Think about our own experience, in our own bodies the unique function and precision of the human body. Could we make our body as it is to function the way it does, without having to go back and make a few things over again? God appeals through nature.

C) *God also appeals through the change that it effects in the lives of those who yield to its authority.* Let your mind go with me to the demon possessed man who was running around like a mad man. When he was touched by the authority of the Word, the

Bible says he was “sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind” (Mark 5:15). Think about the apostle Paul. Before his conversion he was persecuting the Church. He was conflicting the faith, but finally after the Lord got a hold of his life — after the authority of the Word touched him — he was contending for the faith. Peter before Pentecost denied the Lord. After the Word of God got a hold of his experience, he died for his Lord. I thought about an individual that we can read about in the some of the history books. The Late Daniel Kauffman, as a young man was running for political office. After he had surrendered his life to the Lord, he became an influential leader in the Church. This happens yet today, does it not? It is the change that it effects in the lives of those who yield to its authority.

D) *Another appeal of the Word is the change in our own life.* Think about your own life personally. Can we not all say that “Once I was blind, but now I can see.” Can we not all say from our own experience that it was God that “set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings” (Psalm 40:2)? Can we not also say that “old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17), after

the Word of God has touched our life? Is not that its appeal to our experience? This is the appeal that we can share with the world. We know what the Word of God does in our life.

3) *Some practical challenges for today.* One of the continual challenges that face all of us (especially in the end times) is to continually be aware that the Word of God is unchanging and that God has always, and will continue to mean what He says. That is a challenge that faces us in the day which we live. God means what He says, it has always been that way, it will always be that way. Today relativism has destroyed the absolutes of the Word. Situational ethics allows situations to govern responses to life issues instead of Biblical principles. In other words, if lying works to your advantage, go ahead, in fact, to get through life you cannot be totally honest. That is the philosophy around us today. Those are the challenges that face us.

How do we relate to relativism and the situational ethics? I would like to share a few very simple points. A) *The challenge that the Word faces for us today is to remember that the Word is authoritative to life and conduct.* We said that in the beginning but

we say it here in the conclusion. The Word is authoritative to life and conduct and it is a Scripture that is applicable to every issue of life. In fact there is no issue that we face that the Bible does not give us direction to. The Bible talks about purity and talks about holiness. It tells us how to live and how to order our life. Read through the book of Proverbs as it relates to purity. God says in 1 Peter 1:16, “Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

B) *The Bible talks about peaceful brotherhood relationships.* It talks about home relationships where we are called as husbands to love our wives, where the wives are called to submit themselves unto their husbands. The Bible gives directions as to how children are to relate to parents, “Children, obey your parents.” (Ephesians 6:1) “Honour thy father and mother.” (Ephesians 6:2) That is all a part of the Word of God. The Bible gives direction to how to respond when we are mistreated, when someone does something that we did not fully understand and/or fully appreciate. It tells us how to respond to those situations. Our Sunday School lessons deal with some of that at times.

*The Bible talks about and outlines the order of headship — God, Christ, Man and Woman,*

*and how to find our place in that order.* The Bible gives direction to wholesome Church life and how we can enjoy relationships one with another. Well, the Word is authoritative to life and conduct. People who fail to allow the Word of God to govern every action of their life do not know the joy of holiness, the joy of peaceful brotherhood relationships, or the joy of relating to parents in a God-honouring way. We can know the joy that comes from turning the other cheek when mistreated as God commanded us to do. We can know the joy and the rest that comes by following God's order of headship and know the satisfaction that comes in church life that is governed by God. The Word of God is authoritative to life and conduct.

Another challenge we must understand is the Word will someday judge my life. Amos 7:7, 8 talks about the plumbline — the standard of measurement. Let us ever understand that it is the Word of God that will finally judge my life. We can set ourselves against the Word of God. We can say, "Yes, but it is better to do it this way, in this our generation," but that does not change the facts of the Scripture. The Bible says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4,

20). The Bible says that if I live contrary to the will of God, I will come under his wrath. That is applicable today as it ever was. The plumbline that has been set by God (the standard of measurement whereby all of us need to order our life by) we cannot somehow shift it and make situational ethics and relativism satisfy our own outlook. We finally need to order our life according to the Word of God.

C) *The word "obey," produces a changed life and brings peace and joy to our heart.* We probably touched this some already. As I thought about the blessing that we receive from the Word of God, the word "obey," produces a changed life and brings joy and peace to our heart. In Acts 2, when Peter preached that message on the day of Pentecost and they were pricked in their heart and they said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do (verse 37)? Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized" (verse 38). When they followed that formula then there was joy and gladness of heart. Let us think a bit about the word, "obey," and how that it produces a changed life, brings joy, and peace in the heart. Think about the steps that are outlined for salvation. Is it not the Word that shows us how to get saved? 1 John 1:19 talks about confessing

sin. Romans 10:9 talks about confessing the Lord Jesus. It shows us how to get saved if we follow that formula. We can experience salvation. The Bible shows us how to stay saved as we follow the principles as set forth in the Word. Then, the Bible shows us how to enjoy being saved in 1 John 5. It helps us to know how to enjoy being saved. The assurance of salvation is based upon the authority of the Word of God. We rest on that. Without the authority of the Scripture there is no basis of salvation. There is no way to live holy lives and there is no way to enjoy our salvation. Our salvation rests upon the authority of the Word of God. Is it not the songwriter that says, "God said it, and I believe it and that settles it for me." Let us rest on that this morning. God said it and I believe it. It settles it for me.

D) *The Word provides comfort and hope for the future.* Jesus said, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." (John 14:3) The Scripture also says, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:19, 20). Job says, "yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:26). We will some-

day meet our God. We anticipate His return. There is comfort that we enjoy from the Scriptures.

E) *For the Word of God to be effective in my life, then I must meditate upon its precepts and determine by the power of God to follow its directives.* We must meditate upon it. We must read it and determine by the power of God to follow its directives. I would just like to turn back to Psalm 119 quickly and notice a number of Scriptures here that call us to the meditation and to following its directives. Psalm 119:15,16 "I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word." "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." (verse 18) "Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way. Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear. Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy

judgments are good. Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness” (verses 33–40).

“O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day” (verse 97). “How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth” (verse 103)! “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (verse 105). “Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them. The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple” (verses 129, 130). The Word of God is that which guides and directs us. As we move through life it is authoritative to our experience. We sing this little children’s song sometimes, but I think it captures the thought of the Word of God as it speaks to us. It is authoritative. The song goes like this. “God’s Word is like a Hammer that breaketh the rock in twain, a Lamp to guide our footsteps and a Light on the

stormy main. A Sword that has two edges, a Mirror ourselves to see. Oh yes it is the Book of books, The B-I-B-L-E.” Let us allow the Word of God to direct our life. Let us meditate upon its precepts. Let us understand that it is the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

If we want to get to glory, the Bible must be followed. It must be lived out practically. As I thought then about the practicality of the Book, are we not glad this morning that we have a brotherhood and a Church that gives applications to the Scriptures that help us know how to live in this godless world so that we can someday be with the redeemed for all eternity? Let us be faithful to our God. Let us be people of the Book. Let us be people who love the Lord. Let us meditate upon its precepts so that someday we can be with our God for all eternity as we have aligned ourselves with His Word here in time.

### Scripture References

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## From the Previous Issue:

### Taste Tested Christians

From a devotional by Marvin Martin

Thursday, January 1, 1998

Richland Mennonite Church

### New Testament Guidelines for Giving

From a sermon by Ernest Wine

Thursday, January 13, 1994

Winter Bible School Topic

Richland Mennonite Church

**Book Reprint** (Continued)  
**One Hundred Lessons In Bible Study**

LESSON 40.

**Elisha.**

I. His anointing. — 1 Kings 19:19–21.

II. Accompanies Elijah on his last journey. — 2 Kings 2:1–12.

NOTE. — Five things are brought to light in this narrative: (1) Elisha's determination to follow Elijah to the last, (2) Elisha's humble request, (3) the transfer of Elijah's mantle, (4) the transfer of power from Elijah to Elisha, (5) a wrong conception, on the part of the sons of prophets, of the nature of Elijah's departure.

III. His miracles.

1. Divides Jordan. — 2 Kings 2:14.
2. Heals the unwholesome waters. — 2 Kings 2:19–22.
3. Multiplies the widow's oil. — 2 Kings 4:1–7.
4. Raises the Shunammite's son. — 2 Kings 4:18–35.
5. Heals the deadly pottage. — 2 Kings 4:36–41.
6. Naaman healed of leprosy. — 2 Kings 5:1–14.
7. Gehazi smitten with leprosy. — 2 Kings 5:27.
8. Iron made to swim. — 2 Kings 6:5–7.
9. Syrian army smitten with blindness. — 2 Kings 6:13–23.

IV. Prophecies and their fulfillment.

1. Supply of water for the armies of Judah, Israel, and Edom. — 2 Kings 3:16, 17. — Fulfilled, 2 Kings 3:20.
2. Defeat of Moabites. — 2 Kings 3:18, 19. — Fulfilled 2 Kings 3:21–25.
3. Supply of provisions in Samaria. — 2 Kings 7:1. — Fulfilled, 2 Kings 7:18.
4. Defeat of the Syrians. — 2 Kings 13:19. — Fulfilled, — 2 Kings 13:25.

V. Thoughts on his life.

1. Elijah's life was a record of startling events; Elisha's, a record of miracles.
2. The question has been asked why Gehazi failed to raise the

Shunammite's son, when Elisha afterwards did the same without very much trouble. We are not sure that we can answer the question; but Gehazi's dealings with Naaman proved him to have at least one weakness (covetousness) which usually produces a "leanness of soul."

3. Gehazi coveted the wealth of Naaman. He not only received his two talents of silver, but his disease. In coveting the wealth of this world, we may or may not get the riches; but we are almost sure to get the disease — sin.

4. Elisha's dying moments were full of good deeds. The true follower of Christ labors earnestly until the last. The deathbed is often the scene of the most effective work.

5. In his contest with the Syrians, Elisha had the visible assistance of one servant, and the invisible assistance of the innumerable hosts of God. "One with God is a majority."

1. Compare Elisha with Elijah.

2. What king reigned in Israel during the prophecy of Elisha?

In Judah?

3. Whose services do you consider the greater, Elijah's or Elisha's? Why?

4. What miracle was performed with Elisha's bones after his death?

5. How was the Shunammite repaid for hospitality?

## LESSON 41.

### **Isaiah.**

I. Lineage.

1. Real. — Son of Amoz.

2. Traditional. — Of royal blood.

II. Time of prophecy. — During the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. — Isaiah 1:1.

III. Style of his writing. — He is said to be the most eloquent of prophets. Jerome says that his writings are an abridgement of the Holy Scriptures; a collection of the most uncommon knowledge that the mind is capable of; of natural philosophy, morality, and divinity. His diction is pure, and his description sublime and magnificent. His writings are referred to oftener by New Testament writers than the writings of any

other prophet.

Some writers divide the Book of Isaiah into two parts. (1) Earlier fulfillment (1–39;); (2) Later fulfillment (40–66).

#### IV. Incidents in his life.

1. His vision. — 6.
2. Is sent to Ahaz. — 7.
3. Married a prophetess. — 8:3.
4. His sons. — 7:3; 8:3.
5. Sennacherib's invasion. — 37.
6. Hezekiah's life lengthened. — 38.
7. Visit of Merodach-baladan, of Babylon, to Hezekiah. — 39.

#### V. Prophecies,

1. Christ.
  - a. His advent. — 7:14.
  - b. The coming of His kingdom. — 2:1–5, 9:1–7, 28:16, 17.
  - c. Blessedness of His kingdom. — 2; 11:1–9; 35; 42:1–4.
  - d. Sent to the Gentiles. — 49:5–12.
  - e. His sufferings. — 53.
  - f. His office. — 61:1–3; 63:1–4.
2. John the Baptist. — 40:3–8.
3. The church. — 18:7; 19:18–22; 30:18–26; 49:13–26; 60.
4. Israel.
  - a. Against alliance with Egypt. — 30; 31.
  - b. Captivity in Babylon. — 39.
  - c. Consolation of the remnant. — 26; 27.
    - i. Song of confidence.
    - ii. Exhortation.
    - iii. God's care over all.
5. Against other nations.
  - a. Assyria. — 10:5–19; 14:24–28; 31:8, 9.
  - b. Babylon. — 13; 14:4–23; 21:1–10; 47.
  - c. Moab. — 15; 16:6–14.
  - d. Ethiopia. — 18:1–6; 20.
  - e. Egypt. — 19:1–17; 20.
  - f. Tyre. — 23.

VI. Woes pronounced.

1. Upon pride and drunkenness. — 28.
2. Ariel — Rebellious children of Jerusalem. — 29; 30.
3. Those who trust in earthly help. — 31; 33.
4. The enemies of the church. — 34.

VII. From the life, prophecies, and environments of Isaiah, we learn:

1. That God has a great work for people who are ready to respond to His call.
2. That the service of the Lord is a lifelong occupation.
3. That it becomes necessary sometimes to further harden sin-hardened souls that a few may be saved.
4. That there is power in the prayers of God's people.
5. That where prayer is matched against blasphemy, there can be but one result.
6. That when a known enemy comes to sympathize, there is reason to be on the alert.
7. That God's judgment rests upon wicked nations.
8. That God sometimes uses wicked people to discipline His people.

1. What book, not now extant, was written by Isaiah?
2. Do we know anything concerning the death of Isaiah?
3. How does Isaiah rank with the other prophets?
4. What is to be learned from Isaiah's vision?
5. What prophets were contemporary with Isaiah?

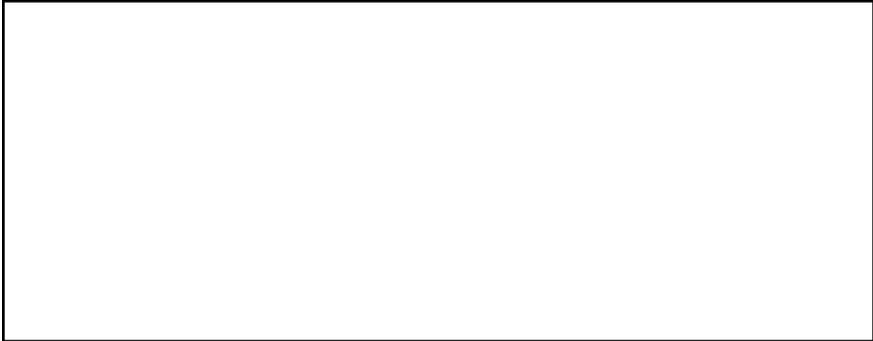
## FIFTY FUNDAMENTAL FACTS

**10. Man, through yielding to temptation, fell from his original ideal state.**

The third chapter of Genesis tells of causes and results of the fall. The idea that man's fall consisted in "a failure to rise" is the product of a brain that is either without faith or without sane reasoning powers. Genesis 3 either

means what it says or is unworthy of a place in God's holy Book. Ecclesiastes 7:29 says: "God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." Paul gives us this description of fallen man: "We ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in mal-

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ice and envy, hateful, and hating one another” (Titus 3:3); “. . . and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Ephesians 2:3). Of the sinful, degenerate, fallen creature, he says, “Even their mind and con-

science is defiled.” For the great contrast between man in his original pure and holy state, and man as he became after his fall, compare the second chapter of Genesis with the latter half of the first chapter of Romans.

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