

SERMON
SERIES

AND WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM, FOR WHOEVER WOULD DRAW NEAR TO GOD MUST BELIEVE THAT HE EXISTS AND THAT HE REWARDS THOSE WHO SEEK HIM.

HEBREW'S



26

HEBREW'S
VERSE BY
VERSE STUDYLET US DRAW NEAR IN
*Faith***SESSION OBJECTIVE: HEBREWS 4:12-13**

To understand what “the Word of God” means.

Read the Text:

“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:12-13, ESV)

Study the Text:**What is the Word of God?**

What is the Word of God? There are many assumptions made when we come to this text. Your initial instinct is to answer that question with: “The Bible!” But you are making an assumption, and one that is not necessarily correct. It isn’t wrong, but it’s not *entirely right*, either. I want to convince you that when you examine both the Old and New Testaments, “the Word of God” can refer to at least three different things, all of which are interconnected but distinct. Below is a breakdown of each of the three referents that “Word of God” can mean.

The Divine Speech

Beginning the book of Genesis, we find that “the Word of God” is simply what we will refer to as “Divine Speech.” Genesis 1:1-2 says, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” In the beginning, God already existed. In other words, God pre-dates time itself because He exists outside of time. And then verse 3 says: “And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.” God’s first act of creation comes by way of divine speech. This is one of the attributes of God’s Word; it is life-giving.

THE DIVINE SPEECH IS LIFE-GIVING

Throughout Genesis chapter 1, this pattern continues: verse 6: “And God said,” followed by a creative act. Verse 9: “And God said,” followed by a creative act. Verse 11: “And God said,” followed by a creative act. And this pattern recurs in verses 14, 20, and 24, and then, in verse 26, God says something especially interesting about how He is going to make man and woman. He says, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” God not only speaks, but He does so in the plural, indicating from the beginning the Trinitarian nature of God as Father, Son, and Spirit. Genesis 1:1 unveils the eternal God, the Father; Genesis 1:2 reveals the Spirit of God hovering over the waters; and Genesis 1:3 presents the Word of God creating all things. Psalm 33:6 affirms these connections: “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by *the breath* of His mouth all their host.” That term “breath” is ruach, meaning “breath or Spirit.” The Word of God, along with the Spirit of God, were there creating, and giving life. However, the Divine Speech does much, much more.

DIVINE SPEECH EXPOSES THE WICKED

In Jeremiah 23, God condemns the various false prophets of Jeremiah’s day, and in verse 29, He says, “Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?” God’s Word is described as that which lays bare the wicked. Sometimes, when God speaks, the wicked are exposed in their evil deeds. But sometimes, when God speaks, it isn’t to expose the wicked, but to comfort the wary.

DIVINE SPEECH COMFORTS THE WARY

In Genesis 15:1, God’s Word comes to comfort Abraham, who is at this point in a bit of a crisis. It says: “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.’” God often speaks to His people when they are fearful or anxious in order to comfort them. Beyond that, Divine Speech illuminates the lost.

DIVINE SPEECH ILLUMINATES THE LOST

Psalm 119:105 says, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Sometimes, when God speaks, it shows us the way when we are lost. It is to illuminate our path so that we do not walk in darkness.

DIVINE SPEECH HEALS AND SAVES

Psalm 107:20 says, “He sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction.” In the New Testament, the book of James tells us to “receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”

DIVINE SPEECH IS TRUTH

God says to Job in Job 36:4, “For truly my words are not false; one who is perfect in knowledge is with you.” Jesus Himself prayed to the Father in His “High Priestly Prayer,” John 17:17: “Sanctify them in your truth; your word is truth.”

When you survey the entirety of Scripture, you discover that the Word of God is, first and foremost, God’s Divine Speech to His creation. And His Divine Speech is incredibly powerful, which brings up an important point about God that separates God from us. When we, as human beings, speak, our speech is never ontologically equivalent to our being. Speech is something you do, not something you are. But God is different. God’s speech *is equivalent* to God’s Being. Which is why John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The Word of God was both with God and was equal to God. Which means this: the Word of God is not only Divine Speech, but also the Divine Son.

The Divine Son

What does John 1 go on to say about the Word of God, who was both “with God” and “was God” John 1:14: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory,” what kind of glory? “Glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” Jesus Christ is the incarnate Word of God, and therefore everything that has been said about the Divine Speech can also be said of the Divine Son.

THE DIVINE SON IS LIFE-GIVING

John 1:3-4: “All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

THE DIVINE SON EXPOSES THE WICKED

John 3:19-20: “And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.” The light of the Divine Son has exposed the darkness. The Divine Son also comforts the wary.

THE DIVINE SON COMFORTS THE WARY

Jesus says in Matthew 11:28-30: “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

THE DIVINE SON ILLUMINATES THE LOST

Jesus said in John 8:12: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 1:9, speaking of Jesus, says: “The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.” The Divine Son doesn’t just illuminate the paths of the lost; He illuminates the world.

THE DIVINE SON HEALS AND SAVES

In Mark 2, Jesus both heals a paralyzed man and forgives his sins. The Divine Son heals and saves many. In fact, when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, what were they shouting out? Mark 11:9-10: “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! 10 Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!” Hosanna is just a Hebrew word that means, “Save us, we pray!” He is called Healer and Savior because the Divine Son heals and saves.

THE DIVINE SON IS TRUTH

Jesus says in John 14:6: “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” John 1:17 says, “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

Everything that can be said of the Divine Speech can be said of the Divine Son. The Word of God is not simply what God has said; the Word of God is God the Son. The Word of God is a Person, of the same essence as God, who possesses the same will and nature as God, but who is a distinct person from God the Father. The Word of God is Divine Speech, it is the Divine Son, and finally, it is the Divine Scripture.

The Divine Scripture

Jesus, the Divine Son, promised His disciples that His Words would continue by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 16:12-14). Jesus promises His disciples that the Spirit of God will carry the Divine Speech of the Divine Son and deliver it to us as Divine Scripture. This is why 2 Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is breathed out by God.” The verb “breathed out” is the Greek θεόπνευστος (theopneustos), a compound word of

θεός (theos), meaning “God,” and πνέω (pneo), meaning “to breathe or blow as wind.” Scripture is literally God-breathed. In other words, the Holy Spirit of God delivers the living Word of God to the people of God in the form of the written Word of God. As such, all of the attributes of the Divine Speech and the Divine Son apply to Divine Scripture as well.

THE DIVINE SCRIPTURE IS LIFE-GIVING

1 Peter 1:23 says that we are born again “not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.” The Scriptures are imperishable seeds that bring life.

THE DIVINE SCRIPTURE EXPOSES THE WICKED

In 2 Kings 22, King Josiah hears the written Scriptures, which expose his sin and devastate him. Verse 11 says: “When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes.” In Deuteronomy 31, the Divine Scripture is described as “a witness” against the sin of the people of God.

THE DIVINE SCRIPTURE COMFORTS THE WARY

Paul says in Romans 15:4: “For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” The Divine Scripture brings hope to us; it comforts us. It also, like the Divine Speech and the Divine Son, illuminates the lost.

THE DIVINE SCRIPTURE ILLUMINATES THE LOST

The apostle Peter says in 2 Peter 1:19: “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.” The Divine Scripture is like a lamp shining in dark places which proceeds, not from man, but from the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

THE DIVINE SCRIPTURE HEALS AND SAVES

Paul refers to Scripture as “the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” The Divine Scripture is able to save us because it reflects the Divine Son, who saves us from our sins.

THE DIVINE SCRIPTURE IS TRUTH

In Ephesians 1:13, Paul refers to the Scriptures as “the word of truth.”

Which Word?

When we ask the question, “What is the Word of God?”, it is hopefully clear that “The Bible” isn’t a sufficient answer. Yes, the Word of God *is* the Bible; it is Divine Scripture, but Divine Scripture is the result of the Spirit of God delivering to us both the Divine Speech and the Divine Son. This is why Hebrews 4:12 says, “The Word of God is living and active.” This isn’t an exaggeration; the Word is always at work. Whenever you read the Word of God, it is always at work in your heart, giving you spiritual life, exposing you in your sin, comforting you, illuminating your path, saving and sanctifying you, and establishing for you the objective standard of truth by which you are to live.

So the big question is this: “Which ‘Word of God’ is Hebrews 4:12 talking about?” It is almost certainly referring to the Divine Son. Why? Because of verse 13: “And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” The Divine Speech and the Divine Scripture don’t have eyes, but the Divine Son does, and it is to Him that all must answer. 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due

for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.” All will stand before the Divine Son and give an account for how we obeyed the Divine Speech communicated to us through the Divine Scripture.

Discuss the Text!

Session 9 Discussion: The Word Matters

Hopefully, it is clear how significant the Word of God is to the vitality of the Christian life. As a group, discuss what you need to do to make the Word more central to your lives.

1. Icebreaker: What's your favorite book of the Bible? Why?
2. Do you have a regular rhythm of reading Scripture? How often?
3. What's your biggest challenge when it comes to reading the Scriptures regularly?
4. When you make decisions in your life, how often do you think about those decisions in light of what the written Word of God says?
5. Think about some of your greatest mistakes in life; would those mistakes have been avoided if you had considered the Scripture before acting?
6. Kid Talk (For Home): Give your child a Bible! If you can take your child to a store (e.g., Mardel), go and pick one out. If that isn't possible, consider finding one online together and ordering it. Have their name put on it, and write something special on the inside of it, and stress to them the importance of the written Word of God for their life.

Takeaways:

1. The Word of God is sometimes referred to as the Divine Speech of God.
2. The Word of God is sometimes referred to as the Divine Son.
3. The Word of God is sometimes referred to as the Divine Scripture.