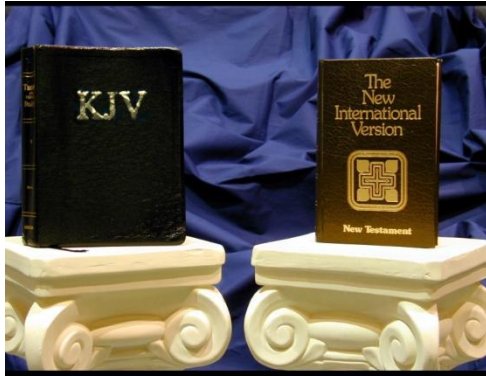


SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 9



TAKING FROM AND ADDING TO GOD'S WORD

Scripture Texts: Psalm 119:89; Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelation 22:18-19; Revelation 20:12

There is nothing modern about the doubting of God's Word. Satan cast doubt on it in Eden. Eve believed his persuasion that God did not mean it like He said it. Men have doubted God's Word ever since, doubting and calling their doubt "modern thought." Often the doubters are men and women of education who call their theories "advanced" and "scientific". They set man's wisdom as superior to God's. Paul warned Timothy against such in **1 Timothy 6:20-21**.

Men, down through the ages, have attempted to change God's Word by burning it, shelving it, rewriting it, trashing it, renaming it, degrading it, and bringing it down to man's level. But it still stands, unchanged, as God's inspired truth.

If we will give serious thought to these Scriptures in our lesson, we will find that they are sufficient to show clearly God's attitude toward His Word in relationship to man. Today's lesson is a warning from God.

MEMORY VERSE: *Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.*

—*Proverbs 30:6*

God's Word Is Unchangeable

Psalm 119:89 God's word is truth (**John 17:17**). Truth is eternal. Truth never changes. Therefore, God's Word never changes. It is **forever . . . settled in heaven**. There is but one revealed truth concerning the Gospel. Since it is established out of man's reach and in the mind of God, man cannot change the Word itself. All he can do is change his opinion of it and his teaching of it. A person whose views differ from those taught in God's Word should not be heeded.

There are many ways of changing God's Word. One may add to it or subtract (1) by teaching as necessary, rules not commanded there, or as unnecessary, those which are commanded there, (2) by forming creeds and rules by which people are to live, (3) by emphasizing certain doctrines out of biblical proportions, (4) by looking to other sources than the Bible for spiritual authority such as to denominational heads, traditional teachings, or to an admired person, (5) by disregarding Bible teachings as non-essential, or (6) by calling the Bible a human book, thus taking away its divine authority. There are other ways, and we must avoid every, last one of them.

We Shall Not Add Nor Subtract

Deuteronomy 4:2 Because it is God's Word, its commands have His authority behind them. Because we are His creation, we owe Him love, reverence, respect, and obedience. Reverence for Him includes reverence for His Word. Because of this respect, we will fear and shun laying our hands on His commands to profane them. Read **Deuteronomy 12:32**. Besides this, we have His clear direction against it, **Ye shall not add unto the word . . . neither shall ye diminish ought from it**. Why? For one thing, **that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord . . .** If we are to obey His commands, we must know them as He gave them. We must pass them on to others unchanged.

Our day sees many new versions of the Bible. Some are translations, and some are interpretations or paraphrases. The Bible books were originally written—the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek. A translation is a transfer from the Hebrew and Greek into the words of another language. For us, this is English. If the work is well done, the English words are the nearest possible counterpart of the original. A

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paraphrase is an attempt to give in other words the meaning as the writer understands it. A paraphrase has much more likelihood of being changed or limited by the writer's thinking than has a translation.

God's hand is on His Word, and it cannot be destroyed. The Bible teaches the basic truths of God and Satan, Heaven and hell, sin and salvation, and how to know God and live in such a way as to reach Heaven. We want the very Words God gave. The King James Version is the most accurate translation.

Penalties for Adding or Subtracting

Revelation 22:18-19 To change God's Word is to change one's own destiny. God gave this warning specifically to John at the end of the Revelation, but it permeates all the rest of the Bible. God's Word has authority which no human has the right to touch. To do so bring upon the meddler the **plagues** or curses named throughout the Bible. Terrifying as this punishment is, it is not all. Taking away from God's Word brings loss of its joys in this life and of the blessings of Heaven and loss of one's part in **the book of life** where his name must be if he is to enter Heaven. Read **Revelation 20:15**. Changing God's Word is serious indeed when it results in such great loss as eternal separation from God.

God has prepared His Book and given it over to mankind to handle as they will. It is possible to do most anything with it—believe and follow or disbelieve, ignore, contradict, blaspheme, distort, ridicule, twist, burn, prohibit, deny, and defy. One thing they cannot do is escape judgment for their handling of it. Read **Matthew 24:35**. Doubters and believers alike will meet God's Word at the Judgment, there to receive the consequences for their use of it. God gave His Word for our salvation (**2 Timothy 3:15**). If we neglect or refuse to use it to accomplish this, what are we doing to our own best good?

The Standard of the Judgment

Revelation 20:12 **And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.** As the laws of the state are the standard by which the accused in our courts are judged, so the books of God—the Bible and the book of life—are the standard by which we will be judged when we stand before God. If the truth of this struck in full force on our consciousness, what care we would use to measure to each requirement! Read **2 Corinthians 7:11**. But Satan draws a curtain of obscurity and tells us we can suit God's Word to our situation that the interpretations of men are just as good, and even that certain men have the right to change the Bible. Do not be fooled by his trickery. He is a liar from the beginning.

Why Change It?

Why should any person wish to change God's Word? Some reasons are: (1) To make its practice more pleasing to the flesh. See **Romans 8:13**. (2) To quiet the conscience as to its obligations and warnings. Will we not meet them anyway? See **2 Chronicles 36:16**. (3) To gain a following by presenting a new teaching. Satan's purpose is to overthrow God's authority and cheat us of His blessings. The Bible is given as the means to our eternal salvation.

JUST A THOUGHT

**"A modest dress will not make a spiritual woman,
but a spiritual woman will make a modest dress."**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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