

LIVING BY GOD'S WORD

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Isaiah 55:10-11 says, "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and returns not thither, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: *so shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*" God is in full control of where the rain goes, and sends it exactly where it needs to go, and makes everything grow. The Lord compares the sending forth of His word to this. God is in complete control of where His word goes, and what it accomplishes. This also includes protecting and preserving His word.

God's work and blessings

God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him (Heb 11:6). He makes certain that no man who has decided to sincerely seek Him will be lost due to not having the opportunity to hear His word (Luke 11:9-10). He will help any person who is seeking Him to find His will (Matt 7:7-8). He gives increase in good and honest hearts when the seed is sown and watered (1 Cor 3:6-7). God has "made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, *though he be not far from every one of us*" (Acts 17:26-27). He is not far from anyone, and draws near to all who draw near to Him (Jas 4:8). Can these promises be fulfilled if we cannot even know for sure that the Bible is indeed the word of God? If we cannot be confident that what we read in our Bibles is word-for-word the revelation of our Creator to mankind, then we are destined to be ignorant of His will. And God plainly shows that spiritual ignorance is *not* bliss. "*And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commands all men every where to repent*" (Acts 17:30). God's righteousness is revealed by the gospel of Christ (Rom 1:16-17), and ignorance of God's righteousness caused many in Israel to not submit to it and they were therefore *lost* (Rom 10:1-3). This world is alienated from the life of God through their ignorance (Eph 4:17-18). God is going to judge all men by the same standard, and there is but one and only standard: the word of God

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(continued)

(John 12:48). Ignorance of that standard only leads to damnation. Therefore, God has preserved the purity and reliability of that standard.

Our foundation

Satan's first point of attack against Eve was to shake her faith in the word of God. Before her encounter with the serpent, Eve's faith was one hundred percent in what she had heard from God (Rom 10:17). Concerning the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the midst of the garden, she confidently affirmed: "*God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die*" (Gen 3:3). In reply, the serpent said to her, "*Ye shall not surely die*" (Gen 3:4). As soon as she doubted God's word, she was successfully deceived and committed the first sin (Gen 3:5-6). We should not be ignorant of this device of the devil (2 Cor 2:11), as he is trying to attack our faith in God's word too. Men like Jeroboam have attempted to physically destroy the documents upon which God's word has been written (Jer 36:20-26). But God does not let such attempts succeed in destroying our ability to know what He has said (Jer 36:27-32). Therefore, God has preserved completely accurate copies of the original documents upon which was written the words that He inspired through the prophets and apostles. He has also blessed mankind with trustworthy translations of His word into the various languages that people speak. God makes a promise in Matthew 7:7-8: "*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened.*" We can find our Creator's will because it is preserved in our Bibles. As our Lord said in Matthew 4:4, we truly can live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God!

2010 ATTENDANCE AVERAGES

Sunday mornings: 53.7 (46.8 in 2009)

Sunday evenings: 45.8 (41.0 in 2009)

Wednesday evenings: 41.4 (40.6 in 2009)