

*Christian denominations and institutions have been losing large numbers of people in recent decades. HOWEVER, in the last few years, this has accelerated after national and international crises like the COVID pandemic. Though this may sound counterintuitive, this is a sign a great move of God is nearing. This is the pruning of God's tree, so it can bear the greater fruit that is coming. The greatest revivals and movements in Scripture and in history were always preceded by spiritual malaise, widespread apostasy, and largescale backsliding from the faith. The greatest moves of God have emerged during times of great spiritual darkness. Thus, the increasing darkness of our time should not discourage us, but awaken us to watch, wait, and prepare for the great things God is about to do.*

Ricky Joyner

## **LESSON SIX**

### **THE INSPIRED, INERRANT WORD OF GOD**

Perhaps, other than bringing people into relationship with Jesus and baptizing them in His blood, the greatest function of the Holy Spirit was writing the Holy Word of God, which I and all the leadership at First Love believe is, in the original Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament, inerrant or without mistakes and sufficient. We don't need any additions. 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:16 tells us in the Amplified: *Every Scripture is God-breathed (given by His inspiration) and profitable for instruction, for reproof and conviction of sin, for correction of error and discipline in obedience [and] for training in righteousness (in holy living, in conformity to God's will in thought, purpose, and action).* Furthermore, 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:21b confirms this by saying: *Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit,* and even David affirms this in 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 23:2: *The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me. And His word was on my tongue.* The conclusion is the Holy Spirit is the author of the Bible. Men are the instruments used to speak or write down what the Holy Spirit told them. The final product is absolute truth, God-inspired, and free from any error. As the Psalmist said in Psalm 119:89: *Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.*

We all know from the wonderful Gospel of John that Jesus is *the Word made flesh*. John 1:14 states: *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we behold His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* Thus, the entire Word is the embodiment of Who Jesus is, and because we want to be like Jesus, and the Word says in Colossians 1:27 that *Christ in you, the hope of glory,* we can let our light shine for Jesus, be like Him most, and honor Him when we are emersed in the Word and sharing His Word with other. *Let the Redeemed of the Lord say so!* (Psalm 107:2a)

Somewhere around 40 different authors wrote the Bible over a period of 1500 years. The first of these authors was Moses who wrote the first five books of the Bible, referred to by the Jews as the Torah. The Old Testament contains 39 books and is called by the Jews, the Tanakh, based on an acronym of the three sections of the Old Testament: The Torah, again the first five books of the Bible; the Nev'im, the Prophetic books labelled by the Prophet who wrote that specific book; and the Ketauvin, which are the books of poetry (ex. Psalms), wisdom (ex. Proverbs), and history (ex. 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles). The New Testament contains 27 books. The authors of the New Testament include businessmen, such as Peter the fisherman; religious scholars, such as Paul; a medical doctor (Luke), and others. Luke, a gentile, wrote most of the New Testament, as far as number of words. Paul, a Pharisee of Pharisees, wrote the most books of the New Testament. He is the definitely author of 13 of the New Testament books, and I believe he also wrote Hebrews, although there is much disagreement about this, so I would say 14. There are 66 books of the Bible total. St Augustine said, concerning the Bible, "The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed."

In days gone by, one of the things that was asked each Sunday in many traditional churches and even put up on a board for the whole church to see, along with the number of attendees and

that day's offering, was the number of people who raised their hands to say that they were daily Bible readers. Also, there were both daily Bible reading and prayer in the public schools. That generation thought reading the Word was that important. I don't want to take a lot of time going over this here now, but the Lord emphasized this principle, i.e. daily Bible reading, by His commands to the children of Israel in the wilderness in how they were to eat the manna, which He sent for them to eat to keep them from perishing, and which symbolized the Bread of Life, or Jesus Himself, and ultimately symbolizes the Word of God.

My friend Pat Carver was an international faith minister from Mableton, Georgia, who is now with the Lord. She created many faith confessions, all straight from the Word of God. She said, according to the Word of God you are:

**“New creation, heir of God, Join-heir with Jesus; One with the Word; Righteousness of God in Christ Jesus; in Perfect Health; Chosen One; Blessed with every spiritual blessing; Standing and acting on the Word; Doer of the Word; Free from law and tradition; Free from want; In favor with God and man; Saved, redeemed, sanctified, forgiven, eternal, resurrected with Him, victorious in all things; Cleansed from all unrighteousness; Wealthy in all things; Part of His Body; Having no lack in anything; Set apart, peculiar, a gift, salt, a believer, a branch of the Vine; High and lifted up into Heavenly Places; An overcomer; Partaker of His Divine Nature; A member of the Royal Family; Unwavering; Loving; Redeemed from the curse of the law and its ability to rule you; Forgiving; Full of joy; Tenderhearted; Delivered from evil; Far from oppression and fear; Blessed of the Father; Temple of the Holy Spirit; Single-minded to His Word; Strong in Him and the power of His might; A Faith being; Walking in Victory; Healed; Steadfast; Reigning in life; Speaking faith-filled words; God-inside minded; Pulling down enemy strongholds in Jesus Name; Beloved in the brethren; Complete in Him; Bearing fruit that remains; Well-grounded in the Word; Living an abundant life in Him; Rejoicing in each day-things that are pure, lovely, honest and of good report; Clad in His full armor and trusting in His ability.”**

Pat Carver also made this statement: **“Since God so loved the World that He gave His only Son, Jesus, and I have believed in Him and made Him my Lord (John 3:16, Romans 10:8-10): I am a new creature, old things have passed away, all things are new and I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:17-21). I have been delivered from the authority and power of darkness (sickness, disease, worry, sadness, doubt, fear, loneliness, despair, rejection) and translated into the Kingdom of His Dear Son (Col. 1:13). I am blessed with all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:13). There is no condemnation, and I am free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:1-2). I am more than a conqueror (Romans 8:37). I am healed and whole (1st Peter 2:24). I reign in life by Christ Jesus (Romans 5:17). I am complete in Him (Colossians 2:9-10).”**

All of Pat Carver's faith confessions and declarations come directly from the Word of God. It is extremely important that we back up everything we teach and preach at First Love with the Word of God. I challenge you to confess daily during the next 40 days both of these Biblical confessions written by Pat, knowing that these words *are* from the Bible and were written by God the Holy Spirit. I believe you will be walking in a new measure of His Spirit, will be energized, and will sense His presence in a new way.

I end this lesson by personally thanking God the Holy Spirit for giving us the precious, invaluable Word of God!