

# “When the Bible Speaks!”

## 2 Timothy 3:14-17

**Intro.** – A D.C. lawyer was opening the door to his BMW 740i when a car came along and hit it ripping the door off its hinges. The police arrived and found the lawyer hopping up and down in a rage, complaining about the damage done to his automobile. The officer commented, “You lawyers are so materialistic, you make me sick. You’re so concerned about your precious Bimmer, you didn’t even notice your left arm was ripped off!” “Oh, no!” said the lawyer looking down at his bloody stump where his arm had been. “Where’s my Rolex?!”

It is always a good time to examine our priorities/motives as a church. This means examining our heritage as a local congregation. Historically, we belong to what is called *The Restoration Movement*. This is not a religion, a denomination or a cult. It is simply a movement to *restore* New Testament Christianity. One of the early leaders of *The Restoration Movement* was Thomas Campbell. T.C. immigrated to the US from Ireland. He had been a preacher in a denomination there and was quick to join the same denomination here in the US. He settled near Pittsburg and was given four counties from this denomination for which he was to preach.

One Sunday, Campbell found himself in a community that had not participated in the Lord’s Supper for a long time. T.C. was a member of the Presbyterian Church. Now there were “sects” in the Presbyterian Church. T.C. was a member of “The Old Light, Anti-Burger, Seceder Presbyterian.” This sect had a rule that one could not have the Lord’s Supper with other sects. You can guess what happened and the results... (censored, kicked out of preaching in the Presbyterian Church)...

Gathering with his family and friends they began to worship on their own. In course of these gatherings they began to decide what they were going to do. They had all witnessed what jealousy and the total disregard for the authority of God’s Word had done to *Christianity*... (suspicion, hate, division). T.C. and this group all knew that Scripture was clear about division. Finally, it was decided this group would seek unity. They would follow one principle. T.C. stated that principle as follows: “Where the Scriptures speak, we speak and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.”

Want to leave this scene for a moment and talk about this slogan. Why is this significant or is it? Does it really matter what the Bible says or doesn’t say? Do we practice this as a local congregation and if we do so what and if we don’t so what?

*Purpose: to look at why the Bible is our complete and final authority in all matters*

### I THE BIBLE IS DIVINE

- all other books are of human origin... the Bible is of God!

#### A. The Bible is God’s *Revelation*

1. God has not brought you and me into this world and left us without a way of knowing His will.
2. Bible is God’s *final, complete, and unique revelation*:
  - a. final = don’t expect any other revelation from God...
  - b. complete = don’t need any other revelation...
  - c. unique = no other book in the world like it:
    - written by 40 men, over period of 1500 yrs., 3 different continents, 3 languages...
    - yet, its message is unified throughout all 66 books – Jesus *restoring* man to fellowship...

#### B. The Bible is “*God Breathed*”

1. Word *inspired* = “exhaled” or “God breathed”... not in same way some think of Shakespeare or Milton
2. Spirit of God *superintended* or *moved* over the 40 authors of the Bible = each used their own style, but God made sure His message was communicated exactly the way He intended it to be!
3. 2 Peter 1:16-21 “*For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty... But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*”

### C. The Bible is Without *Error*

1. 1986 North American Christian Convention (Indianapolis, IN) preacher from big West Coast Church point blank said, “Bible has errors...” and that he didn’t have a problem with that...
  - this in itself was/is disturbing, what more disturbing he got stand ovation for saying it!
2. Problem with even hinting the Bible is not inerrant (original copies error free)... who is going to determine what is and what is not “truth” in the Bible then?
3. Bible has never been proven wrong... in addition, though doesn’t claim to be a book on medicine, science, biology, mathematics etc. the Bible has never been proven wrong even in these areas!
4. Noted archaeologist, Dr. J.O. Kinnaman said, “Of the hundreds of thousands of artifacts found by archaeologists, not one has ever been discovered that contradicts or denies one word, phrase, clause or sentence of the Bible, but always confirms and verifies the facts of the Biblical record.

## II THE BIBLE IS *AUTHORITATIVE*

### A. The Bible is the Right *Standard*

1. What our text states is also the *application* of the Restoration Movement – Bible speaks...
2. Bible alone is all that is necessary to meet our spiritual needs – it is the ultimate/final authority for faith and life itself!
3. When Thomas Campbell first declared this principle there was stunned silence. Finally, Andrew Munro said, “Mr. Campbell, if we adopt this as a basis, then such is the end of infant baptism.” T.C. replied, “Of course, if infant baptism be not found in Scriptures, we can have nothing to do with it.” Upon hearing this, Thomas Acheson said, “I hope that I may never see the day when my heart will renounce the blessed saying of Jesus, ‘Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for such is the kingdom of heaven.’” He then burst into tears. After things settled down James Foster said, “Mr. Acheson, I would remind you that in the portion of Scripture you have quoted, there is no reference whatsoever to infant baptism.”
4. Significance to this, here’s a group of people realized Bible was authoritative and accepted it as such!

### B. The Bible is the *Only* Standard

- false standards of authority abound:
1. Tradition = human traditions one of the biggest challenges to Biblical authority... note: traditional practices not necessarily wrong UNTIL they are elevated to level of or even above the Bible.
    - Illus. – church where picture was removed to illustrate this very point...
  2. Personal experience/opinion = e.g. “I-thinkism” or experience elevated to new revelation from X!
    - to elevate anything or one above Scripture is FALSE authority!
  3. Bible ALONE = authoritative rule in *faith* and *practice*!
    - a. why T.C. got into trouble when serving Lord’s Supper – the following of creeds or man-made traditions *always* divides!
    - b. some say, “But those creeds are just parts of the Bible or at least come from the Bible.”
    - c. if it is more than the Bible, it is too much... if it is less than the Bible, it is not enough... if it is the same as the Bible, then it is not necessary!

## III THE BIBLE IS *ALL SUFFICIENT*

### A. The *Source* of Faith

1. Romans 10:17 “*So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*”
2. What brought people to faith in Christ in the First Century? 2<sup>nd</sup> Century? Etc. UNTIL man made creeds, councils, confessions of faith started coming on scene... Unless you accepted these you were not considered a Christian!

### B. The *Sustainer* of Faith

1. Jesus is the Object & Sustainer... all done through His Word/Spirit!

2. Illus. – Raccoon John Smith – 2 men discussing their convictions... Asked an impartial bystander to resolve their conflict. Bystander was wise and asked one question: “What do you believe?”
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Man – “I believe in Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible.”
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Man – “I believe in the Philadelphia Confession of Faith and the articles it contains.”Turning to the 1<sup>st</sup> man, “When you die you will go to be in the presence of the Lord.” Turning to the 2<sup>nd</sup> man, “When you die you will go to Philadelphia.”
3. Creeds, councils, and names of men are unimportant in comparison to God’s Word!

**Conclusion:** “Where the Scriptures speak, we speak.” There is a second part to this principle: “Where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.”

We cannot and must not bind anything on anyone nor preach anything that is NOT found in God’s Word. So much of the religious world is divided not by what God says, but, by what man puts in place of what God says! E.G. some will say can’t be a Christian if you ladies wear make-up and jewelry... Some will say can’t use Bible School material... church buildings... instruments... coat racks... multiple communion cups... On and on we could go, things people hold as matters of faith; yet, things the Bible has nothing about which to say.

Brethren, friend, we are not going to do that. We are not a denomination. We are part of a movement who have fellowship with Jesus Christ and who are trying to *restore* New Testament Christianity. If the Scriptures speak on it, then we preach and practice “it.” But if the Scriptures are silent on it, we refuse to make “it” a test of fellowship. We are not perfect people. We have not arrive as of yet in this matter of restoring the New Testament Church to all that she can and ought to be..., but, we are trying!