

Beyond the Bible

John Mark Weaver



Our beloved Bible holds the record of being the most printed and translated book, having been translated into over 1200 languages. It also holds the title to being the book with the widest range of opinions concerning it. Some folks revere it, while others mock it. To some it is a law or moral ethics book, while other individuals say it is out of date. Some folks use it as a guide for life while a different group finds it to be confusion.

Of utmost importance is your answer to the question, "What do you think of the Bible?" We do need, however, more than an opinion in regards to Scripture. We need conviction, that is, a firm or fixed belief.

Divine inspiration is directly claimed or implied some 3,000 times in the Word. Since it is God's Word, our convictions concerning it are inseparable from our convictions about Jehovah Himself. What we believe about one reveals what we believe about the other, for God and His Word cannot be divided.

A rather common concept is, "We have to go beyond the Bible." This thought, given in many forms, is shared

by anyone from theological professors to lay people. As a matter of fact, many churches sing the very phrase, "Beyond the sacred page, I seek Thee, Lord ..." I will give a critique on a few statements made by those who "go beyond."

- "We must bridge the gap between what the Bible meant and what it means today."

The inference is that the Bible is old-fashioned and no longer applies to us today in the same way it did when it was written. Is God so little that we have outgrown Him? Is God so finite and mortal that He could only author a book soon to be outdated? Never! 1 Peter 1 tells us the Word of God liveth and abideth forever. Something eternal does not change with the winds of culture. It met the need when written and does the same today. The Bible still means women should be silent in the church and it will always mean divorce and remarriage is wrong. If it indicates something is sin, it applies to us today.

What God intended for us has not changed, and the deepest needs of mankind have not changed either. It is

the height of pride and arrogance to think we are more civilized or have different needs than those in ages past.

- “We must go beyond the Bible in knowing God.”

I cannot find Scripture to support this idea. On the contrary, the Scripture says we cannot know God through man’s wisdom but are saved by the foolishness of Bible preaching. 1 Co. 1:18-31 James affirms that, telling us the Word is able to save our souls when we receive it. Ja. 1:21 Peter echoes the message, speaking of being born again by incorruptible seed—the Word of God. 1 Pe. 1:23

- “The closing of the canon did not put an end to the development of doctrine.”

This is again the idea that man keeps changing, so we have to keep “developing new doctrine” and redefining what the Bible means. It is deception and unbelief, for the Bible says it is profitable for doctrine. 2 Ti. 3:16 In fact, it is so profitable Paul says, “That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Ti. 3:17 The term “throughly furnished” simply means out-fitted or fully equipped. The Bible fully equips us for life and all that God wants us to be.

We may think at times that the Word does not give us what we need on certain subjects. Could it be the Bible message is too simple and direct for us in our human wisdom to grasp or believe? We need to quit apologizing for God and learn to live by the foolishness of the cross.

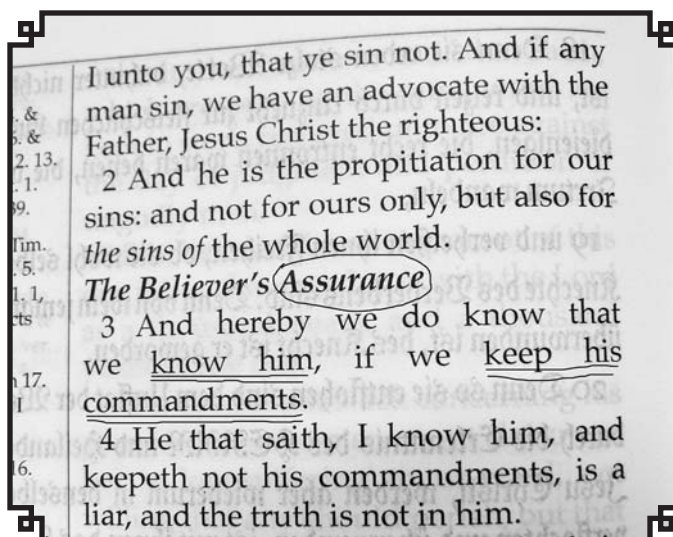
- “The Pharisees were Biblicists who followed the letter of the Law but did not know God.”

It is true they did not know God, but they most definitely did not know, nor believe, their Bibles. The law they followed to the letter was not Moses’ Law, but their own traditions and doctrines. Read Jesus’ indictments against them: they were full of evil and corruption, did not believe Moses, did not keep the Law, did not have God’s Word abiding in them, and made void the commandments of God by their tradition. Mk. 7:13

It is in the Word that we learn of God, His precepts, and His love; not beyond.

Pharisaism is putting our own ideas and systems ahead of Scripture, yet professing to be in tune with God. The Pharisees were the very ones who went “beyond the Bible.” We are no different today if we let culture, traditions, or doctrine supersede

the Word, or if we throw out all outward nonconformity to the world, saying it is the heart that matters.



Knowing God and obedience are inseparable.

Is tradition wrong? Only if it is in conflict with the commands of the Word. Our lifestyle and doctrine must be built on the Bible, not in conflict with it.

Don’t let anyone convince you knowing God is more important than obeying the Bible, for knowing God and obedience are inseparable. Don’t go beyond the Bible to the wilderness of Pharisee Land, as do many today who claim they know God, but in works they deny Him.

Beyond the Bible—to what? The only thing beyond the Bible is the jungle of unbelief and deception. The desire to go beyond the Word often comes from an unwillingness to go to the Bible or a refusal to obey it.

You may think the witness of the Spirit and the Spirit’s leading in our lives is beyond the Bible. But remember, the Spirit and the Word are one. Many people claiming the Spirit’s guidance have taken a road in conflict with the Scripture and have perished in the jungle. The Bible is our source and anchor; in fact, it is the main anchor by which we determine if the Spirit leading us is truly the Spirit of God.

It is *in* the Word that we learn of God, His precepts, and His love; not *beyond*. The Book is not just a law or code book; rather, through faith in it and obedience to it, we know God. 1 Jo. 2:3

When we believe and obey the Scripture, it becomes alive and powerful by the Spirit of God. It is powerful enough to redeem us, hold us in God’s love, and keep us looking for Jesus’ return.

“To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.” Is. 66:2 ~