

Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



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The Word of God

How we view the origin of the Bible heavily influences how we respond to its instructions. That explains why so many today pay no attention to it.

“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe” (1 Thess. 2:13).

In some respects, the Bible is a book just like any other book. It has human authors, several of whom have well-documented biographies. It has a plot, with a beginning and end. It covers many of the same topics that are covered in other books: history, philosophy, ethics, theology, and so on. It depends on translators to get it into languages that people can understand. It is even subject to all the gremlins of the publication process that plague any other published work (I once knew of a church that got a good deal on a shipment of pew Bibles. Only after they purchased them did they find out why they were such a good deal: the Bibles were loaded with typographical errors. My favorite was 1 Tim. 6:6 — “Godliness with contentment is great gain” was mistyped as “Godliness with

contentment is great *pain*.” Try building a sermon around that.)

There is one characteristic of the Bible, however, that makes it unique among the books of the world: its origin. It claims to have come to us “by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16), literally, “God-breathed.” The human authors, in other words, were simply agents through which God revealed His mind. The message, including the very words that comprise the message, came from God Himself. Theologians call this process “verbal plenary inspiration.” See 2 Pet. 1:21 and 1 Cor. 2:13 for further descriptions of how this process worked.

Those of us who accept this model of Biblical inspiration consequently view the Bible as being literally “the word of God.” Like the Thessalonians, we welcome this message as “the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.” We take great pains to study it carefully and sift out its meaning, believing that we are discerning the will of God for our lives. Our lives are shaped and molded by what we read, because of the high respect we have for

its origin. We believe it, therefore we live it.

But many do not share that view of the Bible’s origin. Rather than see it as a message from God, they view it as “the word of men,” a human record of man’s attempt to find God. Assuming a human origin, they consequently view the Bible as perhaps useful, but certainly not authoritative. They have no qualms about dissecting the Bible and discarding those pieces they believe are out of touch with modern thought. For these people, the Bible is just one influence in their lives among many.

This latter view of the origin of the Bible prevails in our society today. As a result, the Bible does not have the influence in the hearts and lives of people it once had. Whatever lessons it might offer are generally lost among a population who sees it as a dusty old book from a bygone era, a literary relic that is no longer relevant to our more enlightened age. Because people have such a low opinion of its origin, they don’t take its teachings seriously. And society is paying a steep price for that disrespect.

– David King