

***Thy Word Is a Lamp Unto My Feet: The Bible for Today***

***The Word of God Endures***

Lesson #13 for June 30, 2007

Scriptures: Micah 6:6-8; John 3:14-17; 10:10; Romans 4:21; Ephesians 2:8,9; Philippians 4:7; 2 Peter 3:9.

1. Why do you think the Bible has had such an incredible impact on humanity? It was written and preserved by a small minority of the world's population. It is thousands of years old. Yet, millions, perhaps billions, of individuals think it is as fresh as tomorrow's sunrise!
2. There are thousands of ancient books. Some were written by men with very famous names such as Aristotle or Julius Caesar. Nobody seems to care much about those other books. They are of historical interest. But certainly, no one uses them as a primary guide for their lives! So, why is the Bible still so relevant today after so many years?
3. How is it possible for a book—written thousands of years ago to people in a very different time and a very different culture and in a language very little understood in our day—to be so relevant now?
4. Is the Bible more than just a book? What are the implications of being “inspired”? The critical questions are these: 1) Does God exist? 2) If He does exist, does He communicate with human beings? 3) Is there sufficient evidence in Scripture to suggest that God is its author?
5. Scripture suggests that God created our universe and our world. (Genesis 1:1; Psalms 33:6,9) It makes lots of suggestions and gives illustrations about how we should and should not live our lives. It points out that God will return one day and bring the whole world into judgment. But, to those who know God, it promises an eternal peace, safety, and wonderful future that is “out of this world!” Should we believe these words?
6. One of the main points in our lesson for today is that God does not change. (Malachi 3:6) How does that idea fit with 1 Samuel 15:10,29,35 and Genesis 6:6,7? But He promises that His plans will stand firm forever. (Psalms 33:11) What plans is He talking about? Do we really believe and accept the idea that God wants to save everyone? (John 3:14-17; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9) The Bible teaches us that it is relevant to our lives because it reveals a God who is very much alive and active!
7. There are several examples in biblical times when the reading or study of God's Word made a tremendous transformation in the lives of those who read or heard it. (Nehemiah 8:1-18; 2 Kings 22:1-23:30) Why do you think that was? Does the Bible still have that power to transform lives?
8. There are many, many promises in Scripture that we know only from its pages. Without these inspired words, we would know little or nothing about the return of Jesus Christ, the final judgment of this earth, heaven and a new earth, a Messiah who was willing to “become sin for us,” God's plan to resurrect the righteous dead and take them to heaven, and God's plan for the ultimate peace and security that He will give His people right here on planet Earth. There will be no more tears; no more death; no grief, crying, or pain! (Isaiah 65:17; Matthew 24:30; 1 Corinthians 6:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 2:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Romans 8:3; 1 Timothy 1:15; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 20:14; 21:4)

9. So, everything seems to hinge on whether or not the Bible is in fact God's "words." We say that the Scriptures are "inspired." What does that mean to you?
10. Many claims are made about God and Scripture. Why do you choose to believe those claims? Or do you? Do you have doubts about some of those claims? Satan has also made a number of claims. Some of them are quoted in Scripture. (Genesis 3:1-4) Why do we choose to believe God's claims and refuse to believe Satan's claims? What percentage of the Bible is claims? How much of the Bible is made up of stories about people doing various kinds of good things? Or bad things? What is the relevance of all the stories in the Bible? Do the stories make the Bible more believable?
11. Another aspect of the Bible that has made it endure is the fulfilled promises or prophecies. How many prophecies or promises from God can you think of that have been very specifically fulfilled? Do those fulfilled prophecies make the Bible itself more believable?
12. One interesting aspect about the Bible that we sometimes do not mention is its answers. The great philosophical questions that men have raised down through the centuries are answered in the Bible: Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? What will happen after I die? How do I achieve the greatest meaning in life? The Bible provides answers to these great questions.
13. There are many stories about individuals and groups down through history who have been determined to destroy the Bible. Some have even been so bold as to predict that the Bible would be gone within their lifetimes! Think of the claims of Voltaire ("In 100 years this book will be forgotten and eliminated...") and Thomas Paine! Now read Matthew 24:35. Which side seems to have the enduring arguments? Despite all the attempts—by violence, philosophy, science, and higher criticism—to destroy the influence of, or even eradicate, Scripture, the Bible is more widely-translated and more available than ever before.

At the start of the nineteenth century, Scriptures were available in just 68 languages. Today, Scriptures are available in no less than 2,403 languages, with the complete Bible having been translated into at least 426 languages, and the New Testament into some 1,115. (See [www.biblesociety.org](http://www.biblesociety.org))

In 2006, translation of the New Testament became available in 31 additional languages and the entire Bible became available in 3 additional languages. By the end of 2006, at least one complete book of the Bible had been translated in 2,426 languages.

14. Jesus stated repeatedly that the Word of God is supposed to be like "food" for us. (Deuteronomy 8:3; Jeremiah 15:16; Matthew 4:4). What does that mean?
15. Read again the wonderful chapter entitled, "The Scriptures a Safeguard" by Ellen G. White in *The Great Controversy*, pp. 593-602. Why would anyone want to do without this wonderful treasure we call "the Word of God"?

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## **ONE SOLITARY LIFE**

He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another obscure village, where He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher.

He never had a family or owned a home. He never set foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never wrote a book, or held an office. He did none of the things that usually accompany greatness.

While He was still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against Him. His friends deserted Him. He was turned over to His enemies, and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While He was dying, His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had—His coat.

When He was dead, He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave.

Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today He is the central figure for much of the human race. All the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever sailed, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as this “One Solitary Life”.

*The Real Jesus and Other Sermons*, p. 123 by Dr. James Allan Francis, published by The Judson Press (Phil.) in 1926