

## **Every Word**

### **Matthew 4:4**

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 7-12-2014

#### **Introduction**

People tend to live up to the height of their vision. If they are not convinced that nations will once again rule by God's law, they may not be motivated to study what the Bible says about politics. If they are not convinced that the Bible speaks to science, they will not tend to notice what it says to that subject because they aren't looking. But our vision does tend to drive how we read the Bible.

My father was a pioneer missionary in Ethiopia. But unlike some missionaries, he had a pretty big vision of how the Bible transforms a culture. And he saw the treatment of women elevated because his vision called for it. He saw health practices change because his vision of what God expects called for it. His teaching was patterned after the methodology of Christ and the apostles. Instead of centralization of education, he taught others to teach others so that the word spread exponentially. And the results are remarkable. When I was a child, there were just a handful of churches in Kambata province, but now, 60 years later, over 95% of that province is solidly Christian, and over 90% of the neighboring province is the same.

Of course, not even my father anticipated such phenomenal growth, which means that they now need to think through many questions they had not even considered before – questions on city planning, Biblical jurisprudence, what are the Biblical limits of civil government, what are the Biblical limits to church government. If you were a missionary, could you give answers to those questions from the Bible alone? Could you answer their questions on why female circumcision is wrong, or why it is wrong to pull the uvula out of the back of children's throats. In some tribes they routinely did those kinds things. My father tried to change those practices, but many missionaries didn't want to oppose clitorectomies or female circumcision, thinking it was just a cultural issue. It is not. It is a Biblical issue, but could you teach them why that is the case?

I talked with the chief of a village of Dalits in India, and he begged me for teaching on how to rule a village from a Biblical viewpoint. He said that almost his entire village was now Christian, but he had never been taught how to replace Hindu concepts of ruling with Biblical concepts. Western missionaries weren't any help because they were only focused on evangelism, some personal growth issues, and some church issues. I was the

first one he had met that was giving him practical answers to the economic, business, and civil questions that he had. Missionaries were not used to living by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

I talked with a brilliant Indian by the name of Vishal Mangalwadi, and he said that he got converted to Christianity by trying to figure out why the West had been so blessed in technology, art, music, science, liberty, education, and so many other areas. And he discovered that it was the Bible that had been the foundation for virtually everything he admired in the West. And what shocked him is that the West has been abandoning the Bible as the foundation for life. When he came to the West, he was saddened that Christians hardly apply the Bible to anything. He was shocked to find pastors who didn't think that the Bible even speaks to music, science, or other disciplines. And he predicts that we are going to lose the amazing fruits of Western civilization if we do not get back to the roots of the Bible. But when he has talked to church leaders about it, they are not interested in sola Scriptura. He said that the Sun was setting on the West because we are no longer living by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. It's sad that it has to be a third world scholar who needs to rebuke the church of the West.

But what about the ordinary day to day issues? When families need counseling, where do they go? Rarely do they go to a Biblical counselor; they go to a psychologist schooled in the wisdom of the world. When Christians start a business, where do they go for wisdom? Rarely do they study the massive amounts of information that the Bible gives us on economics, administration, advertising, hiring principles, sales principles, and leadership principles. They go to secular wisdom. Why? Because the church no longer provides such teaching like they did in centuries past. Go through just about every discipline that is taught in Grade School through University and you will discover that Christians follow the teachings of humanism, not the teachings of Scripture. In fact, they don't even know how to dig those truths out of the Bible. Most Christian Colleges are not teaching a Biblical view on their disciplines. And I hope this verse turns your world upside down and gives you an enthusiasm for sola Scriptura. Let's read verse 4 in context of the first three verses:

**Matt. 4:1** Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

**Matt. 4:2** And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

**Matt. 4:3** Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”

**Matt. 4:4** But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*’ ”

## I. Jesus was quoting Deuteronomy 8

Let me give you a little bit of background before we dig into this passage. And the first thing I want to mention is that Jesus was quoting Deuteronomy 8. And the connection between the two passages is very strong. Just as Israel was tested in the wilderness, Jesus was tested in the wilderness. Both passages deal with a nation that had not learned how to trust God and both passages deal with a leader who was pointing people’s eyes to God after a period of fasting. Both passages call us to faith, prayer, dependence upon God, humility before God, and other issues that we won’t have time to get into. Both passages deal with how easy it is for Satan to suck us away from dependence upon God to independent thinking. And both passages deal with the fact that the Bible has been provided to guide our thinking on every facet of life. So we need to interpret this verse in light of Deuteronomy 8. Jesus was not doing eisegesis. He was not doing bad proof-texting. He was being a faithful applier of the Word of God.

## II. What He was not saying

### A. *Jesus is not ignoring the need for bread.*

The second thing that I want to do before we dig into the passage is to show four things that Jesus was not saying in Matthew 4. Jesus was not saying that we can ignore the need for bread. The word “alone” implies the exact opposite. “Man shall not live by bread *alone*” implies that we do need to live by bread. And when God had Israel fast in Deuteronomy 8, He was not denying that they needed bread. He promised to provide bread. What He was doing was testing whether they would have absolute dependence upon Him in every area of life – including eating and drinking. He commanded Israel to seek bread – in *His* time and in *His* way. Deuteronomy 8 makes it clear that even the issue of eating must conform to Scripture. That’s the point that Jesus was making.

### B. *Jesus is not saying that we don’t need to make a living.*

Secondly, Jesus is not saying that we don’t need to make a living. Again, the word “alone” implies the opposite. And certainly the context of Deuteronomy 8 mandated that Israel work hard to make a living. Jesus spent

the first 30 years of His life in a trade – carpentry. Why spend most of His life earning a living if it was not God’s intention to elevate the importance of physical work? But even physical work is totally subject to God’s will as expressed in Holy Scripture. There is no secular/sacred divide. Perhaps you remember Jesus’ words to his parents when he was twelve years old. He said, “I must be about My Father’s business.” He continued with his job of carpentry, which implies that carpentry was being about His Father’s business. He later said that He did not do anything apart from the will of God, and this means that He engaged all of life in light of the Scriptures. And if you don’t think that the Bible says much about carpentry, I’ll have to dig out a paper written by a friend of mine who was a shop teacher up in Canada. It says a lot about carpentry and other trades. Whether we eat or drink or whatever we do we must do all to the glory of God. And the only way we know how to glorify God is through His Word. So Jesus was not saying that we don’t need to make a living. We do. In fact, Scripture says, “If a man work not, neither shall he eat.”

***C. Jesus did not say that God is careless about our life – fasting was a reminder of their total dependence upon Him***

Thirdly, Jesus was not saying that God was uncaring about our life. On the contrary, Deuteronomy 8 shows that God cared very much, even though Satan was tempting them to think that God didn’t care. If Israel would have reminded themselves of the promises in God’s Word, they would have known that God did care about every aspect of their life. The short period of fasting was simply a test of their faith, even as it tested Christ’s faith.

***D. Jesus was not calling for life in a monastery – He had called mankind to dominion. But all dominion must be founded upon the Word of God***

Fourth, Jesus was not calling for escape from life into a monastery, as some have taken it. The context of Deuteronomy 8 actually reiterates the Dominion Mandate. But unlike Adam’s attempt to take dominion independently of God’s will, our attempts must be firmly grounded in God’s Word, and God’s word speaks to issues like stones and bread and making a living and every area of our dominion. So let’s take this verse apart word by word and see what it *does* mean. It really *is* a paradigm for our lives.

### III. This is a paradigm for our lives

#### A. *Jesus contradicted independent thinking (“But”)*

The first word is “But,” and that immediately indicates that Jesus was contradicting the devil. That doesn’t seem very polite in our pluralistic society. But it is absolutely imperative if we are to see long-term change. I have met many liberals who are quite willing for you to tell the truth. Their attitude is, “If you want to believe that, that’s fine. That is true and good for you and this is true and good for me.” But they get irate the moment you say, “*But*, what you are holding to is false.” It’s that “but” that gives antithesis. And it’s the antithesis that gives power to penetrate culture.

Years ago Francis Schaeffer was warning the evangelical church that they would lose the culture battles unless they started maintaining antithesis. Antithesis is a sharp distinction between truth and falsehood, between A and non-A, right and wrong, light and darkness. We have lost the battle because postmodern thinking has infected the church. Postmodernism rejects antithesis. Schaeffer pointed out that you have not fully defended the truth if you only state what is true. You must also deny the truth of the opposite. You must oppose falsehood. That’s not politically correct. Anyway, Francis Schaeffer said, “To the extent that anyone gives up the mentality of antithesis, he has moved over to the other side, even if he still tries to defend orthodoxy or evangelicalism.”<sup>1</sup> That, my friends, is an indictment of almost the entire evangelical church of today. They need to hear that message. Let me read that quote again. Francis Schaeffer said, “To the extent that anyone gives up the mentality of antithesis, he has moved over to the other side, even if he still tries to defend orthodoxy or evangelicalism.” The modern church wants nice conversation, not debate. They want opinions to be freely stated, but no opinion to be called false. The word heresy has ironically become heresy. Church discipline is castigated. Intolerance is ironically no longer tolerated.

They are thinking like post-modernist pagans. I’ve brought five copies of a brand new book that shows how to do this. This little book is a compilation of documents edited by Jay Grimstead and written by numerous scholars like E. Calvin Beisner. And these documents are calling the church back to the Bible in 24 areas of life. But the way they do it is fascinating. It is filled with affirmations and denials. The affirmations tell the truth from Scripture and the denials deny the truth of the opposite. And those denials

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Schaeffer, *The Complete Works of Francis Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview, Volume One* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1982), p. 47.

are critical. They keep closet liberals from being able to sign the documents: there's no wiggle room. It keeps cowardly evangelicals from pretending to be Reformers when they are not. But above all, it makes it clear what we believe and what we do not believe. We affirm this, and we deny the opposite. And such clear thinking is absolutely essential if we are to live in a way that is pleasing to God.

### ***B. Jesus had an answer***

The second thing to notice is that Jesus had an answer to every one of Satan's temptations. Verse 4 says, "But He answered and said..." He had an answer. And it is critical that the church learn to find answers from God's Word. Do you know how to discover an answer to your son's question, "Dad, can I wear a necklace?" Now, you may have your own prejudices one way or the other, but do you know what the Bible says? When my son and I studied the question, I was actually surprised by what the Bible says. Can you give Biblical guidance to your daughter on whether makeup is Biblical, and if so, to be able to give specific guidance on how to make it appropriate and where the focus and accent should be? Do you have a philosophy of makeup for your family that is solidly based upon the Word of God? I've got a little booklet that might give you a start. What about a philosophy of modesty?

Can you help your son to stop his poor purchasing choices by teaching him the 26 principles of resistance to salesmen techniques that are illustrated in Genesis 3? Maybe you didn't even know that that chapter described quite clearly the principle sales techniques in modern industry and how to learn sales resistance. But it is so clearly there. And my point in bringing up these illustrations is that the Bible must not be seen simply as a reference book that we occasionally open up out of curiosity about as often as we do a dictionary. No. It must be seen as a book to live by every day.

I'm an academic, so I use the Bible in arenas that you might not. Over the past 15 years I have had quite a few opportunities to interact with the students and professors at the five universities near our house. And I love showing how the Bible has the answers to the philosophical problems that plague the various disciplines - mathematics, for example. There are huge debates between the mathematical schools of Logicism,<sup>2</sup> Intuitionism,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> In the following footnotes I will give a tiny sampling of quotes that show the basics of each position. These are taken from an article at Stanford University <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/philosophy-mathematics/> This article summarizes: "The logicist project consists in attempting to reduce mathematics to logic. Since logic is supposed to be neutral about matters ontological, this project seemed to harmonize with the anti-platonistic atmosphere of the time.

## Formalism,<sup>4</sup> Predicativism,<sup>5</sup> or Platonism.<sup>6</sup> All of them have been stymied in proving the truthfulness of mathematics. Now, peons like us use

The idea that mathematics is logic in disguise goes back to Leibniz. But an earnest attempt to carry out the logicist program in detail could be made only when in the nineteenth century the basic principles of central mathematical theories were articulated (by Dedekind and Peano) and the principles of logic were uncovered (by Frege)”

Russell disproved Frege’s Basic Law V:

“ $\{x|Fx\}=\{x|Gx\} \equiv \forall x(Fx \equiv Gx)$ ,

In words: the set of the  $F$ s is identical with the set of the  $G$ s iff the  $F$ s are precisely the  $G$ s.”

“Unfortunately, Russell found that the principles of his typed logic did not suffice for deducing even the basic laws of arithmetic. He needed, among other things, to lay down as a basic principle that there exists an infinite collection of ground objects. This could hardly be regarded as a logical principle. Thus the second attempt to reduce mathematics to logic also faltered.”

<sup>3</sup> “Intuitionism originates in the work of the mathematician L.E.J. Brouwer (van Atten 2004). According to intuitionism, mathematics is essentially an activity of construction. The natural numbers are mental constructions, the real numbers are mental constructions, proofs and theorems are mental constructions, mathematical meaning is a mental construction... Mathematical constructions are produced by the *ideal* mathematician, i.e., abstraction is made from contingent, physical limitations of the real life mathematician. But even the ideal mathematician remains a finite being. She can never complete an infinite construction, even though she can complete arbitrarily large finite initial parts of it. This entails that intuitionism resolutely rejects the existence of the actual (or completed) infinite; only potentially infinite collections are given in the activity of construction. A basic example is the successive construction in time of the individual natural numbers.

From these general considerations about the nature of mathematics, intuitionists infer to a revisionist stance in logic and mathematics. They find non-constructive existence proofs unacceptable. Non-constructive existence proofs are proofs that purport to demonstrate the existence of a mathematical entity having a certain property without even implicitly containing a method for generating an example of such an entity. Intuitionism rejects non-constructive existence proofs as ‘theological’ and ‘metaphysical’.”

“The logic of intuitionistic mathematics is obtained by removing the principle of excluded third (and its equivalents) from classical logic. This of course leads to a revision of mathematical knowledge. For instance, the classical theory of elementary arithmetic, *Peano Arithmetic*, can no longer be accepted. Instead, an intuitionistic theory of arithmetic (called *Heyting Arithmetic*) is proposed which does not contain the principle of excluded third.”

<sup>4</sup> “David Hilbert agreed with the intuitionists that there is a sense in which the natural numbers are basic in mathematics. But unlike the intuitionists, Hilbert did not take the natural numbers to be mental constructions. Instead, he argued that the natural numbers can be taken to be *symbols*. Symbols are abstract entities, but perhaps physical entities could play the role of the natural numbers.”

“Then Kurt Gödel proved that there exist arithmetical statements that are undecidable in Peano Arithmetic (Gödel 1931). This has become known as his Gödel’s *first incompleteness theorem*. This did not bode well for Hilbert’s program, but it left open the possibility that the consistency of higher mathematics is not one of these undecidable statements. Unfortunately, Gödel then quickly realized that, unless (God forbid!) Peano Arithmetic is inconsistent, the consistency of Peano Arithmetic is independent of Peano Arithmetic. This is Gödel’s *second incompleteness theorem*. Gödel’s incompleteness theorems turn out to be generally applicable to all sufficiently strong but consistent recursively axiomatizable theories. Together, they entail that Hilbert’s program fails. It turns out that higher mathematics cannot be interpreted in a purely instrumental way.”

<sup>5</sup> “The origin of predicativism lies in the work of Russell. On a cue of Poincaré, he arrived at the following diagnosis of the Russell paradox. The argument of the Russell paradox defines the collection  $C$  of all mathematical entities that satisfy  $\neg x \in x$ . The argument then proceeds by asking whether  $C$  itself meets this condition, and derives a contradiction.

The Poincaré-Russell diagnosis of this argument states that this definition does not pick out a collection at all: it is impossible to define a collection  $S$  by a condition that implicitly refers to  $S$  itself. This is called the *vicious circle principle*. Definitions that violate the vicious circle principle are called *impredicative*. A sound definition of a collection only refers to entities that exist independently from the defined collection. Such definitions are called *predicative*. As Gödel later pointed out, a convinced platonist would find this line of reasoning unconvincing. If mathematical collections exist independently of the act of defining, then it is not immediately clear why there could not be collections that can *only* be defined impredicatively (Gödel 1944).”

<sup>6</sup> “Gödel was a platonist with respect to mathematical objects and with respect to mathematical concepts (Gödel 1944; Gödel 1964). But his platonistic view was more sophisticated than that of the mathematician in the street.

Gödel held that there is a strong parallelism between plausible theories of mathematical objects and concepts on the one hand, and plausible theories of physical objects and properties on the other hand. Like physical objects and properties,

mathematics because it works, but can you prove that it is true? Well, if you know the Bible as Jesus understood the Bible, you can prove it. The Bible provides all the axioms of mathematics. I've got a little booklet that gives an introduction to that. But in addition to axioms, the Bible gives us answers<sup>7</sup> that can completely slice through conundrums for mathematicians such as Benacerraf's Epistemological problem.<sup>8</sup> I've got an article on the table by Vern Poythress that is a marvelous introduction to a Biblical philosophy of mathematics that addresses many issues that most Christians don't know how to answer. And there are other books out there, like James Nichols' book, *Mathematics: Is God Silent*. I won't bore you with the details,<sup>9</sup> but the

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mathematical objects and concepts are not constructed by humans. Like physical objects and properties, mathematical objects and concepts are not reducible to mental entities. Mathematical objects and concepts are as objective as physical objects and properties. Mathematical objects and concepts are, like physical objects and properties, postulated in order to obtain a good satisfactory theory of our experience. Indeed, in a way that is analogous to our perceptual relation to physical objects and properties, through *mathematical intuition* we stand in a quasi-perceptual relation with mathematical objects and concepts. Our perception of physical objects and concepts is fallible and can be corrected. In the same way, mathematical intuition is not fool-proof — as the history of Frege's Basic Law V shows — but it can be trained and improved. Unlike physical objects and properties, mathematical objects do not exist in space and time, and mathematical concepts are not instantiated in space or time.

Our mathematical intuition provides *intrinsic evidence* for mathematical principles. Virtually all of our mathematical knowledge can be deduced from the axioms of *Zermelo-Fraenkel set theory with the Axiom of Choice* (ZFC). In Gödel's view, we have compelling intrinsic evidence for the truth of these axioms. But he also worried that mathematical intuition might not be strong enough to provide compelling evidence for axioms that significantly exceed the strength of ZFC.”

<sup>7</sup> See Poythress <http://www.frame-poythress.org/a-biblical-view-of-mathematics/>  
<http://www.frame-poythress.org/creation-and-mathematics-or-what-does-god-have-to-do-with-the-numbers/> For some other resources on math, see  
<http://www.christianperspective.net/math/god-and-math/>

<sup>8</sup> “Benacerraf formulated an epistemological problem for a variety of platonistic positions in the philosophy of science (Benacerraf 1973). The argument is specifically directed against accounts of mathematical intuition such as that of Gödel. Benacerraf's argument starts from the premise that our best theory of knowledge is the causal theory of knowledge. It is then noted that according to platonism, abstract objects are not spatially or temporally localized, whereas flesh and blood mathematicians are spatially and temporally localized. Our best epistemological theory then tells us that knowledge of mathematical entities should result from causal interaction with these entities. But it is difficult to imagine how this could be the case.

Today few epistemologists hold that the causal theory of knowledge is our best theory of knowledge. But it turns out that Benacerraf's problem is remarkably robust under variation of epistemological theory. For instance, let us assume for the sake of argument that reliabilism is our best theory of knowledge. Then the problem becomes to explain how we succeed in obtaining reliable beliefs about mathematical entities.

Hodes has formulated a semantical variant of Benacerraf's epistemological problem (Hodes 1984). According to our currently best semantic theory, causal-historical connections between humans and the world of concreta enable our words to refer to physical entities and properties. According to platonism, mathematics refers to abstract entities. The platonist therefore owes us a plausible account of how we (physically embodied humans) are able to refer to them. On the face of it, it appears that the causal theory of reference will be unable to supply us with the required account of the ‘microstructure of reference’ of mathematical discourse.”

<sup>9</sup> Theories that reject the idea that an infinite progression of numbers can have any relationship to a real entity are obviously ignoring the fact that God is infinite with infinite knowledge and He is real. This of course rejects a central thesis of intuitionism:

“Intuitionism originates in the work of the mathematician L.E.J. Brouwer (van Atten 2004). According to intuitionism, mathematics is essentially an activity of construction. The natural numbers are mental constructions, the real numbers are mental constructions, proofs and theorems are mental constructions, mathematical meaning is a mental



bottom line is that the Bible gives answers to the perplexing problems that even academics face in every discipline, by having an omniscient Creator infallibly revealing the axioms for all disciplines in the Bible, but also giving the worldview framework within which they make sense.

But it also gives practical answers to ethical dilemmas. I had a dear friend who called me from a Lincoln hospital asking for advice. His cousin had been in a car accident and was declared to be brain dead. My friend had medical power of attorney, and he was being pressured to give approval to immediately allow the harvesting of all of her organs. I asked him a few diagnostic questions, and then after going through the ethical principles in the Bible, I explained why the woman was not really dead by a Biblical definition, and under no circumstance should he allow the harvesting of organs unless the situation changed. To make a long story short, this supposedly dead woman was up and walking around a week later and perfectly well. She would have truly been dead if he had given permission for the organ harvesting. If I had not known how to counsel the young man on all of the issues at stake from the Bible, she would be dead. So the Bible gives the answers needed to decide which organ transplants are ethical and which ones are not. The Bible has answers that help doctors quickly reject faulty criterion for death (such as so-called brain death, which is not a

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construction... Mathematical constructions are produced by the *ideal* mathematician, i.e., abstraction is made from contingent, physical limitations of the real life mathematician. But even the ideal mathematician remains a finite being. She can never complete an infinite construction, even though she can complete arbitrarily large finite initial parts of it. This entails that intuitionism resolutely rejects the existence of the actual (or completed) infinite; only potentially infinite collections are given in the activity of construction. A basic example is the successive construction in time of the individual natural numbers.”

Theories that focus on a relationship between the physical world and mathematical get into trouble. “We seem to have no reason to believe that there could be *physical* worlds that contain highly transfinitely many entities.” But with God (and God’s putting of mathematics into our soul) that problem disappears.”

Fictionalism can be answered by the assertion that God knows all things possible because He knows what His power could do and He knows all things actual because He knows what His power will do.

“Fictionalism holds that mathematical theories are like fiction stories such as fairy tales and novels. Mathematical theories describe fictional entities, in the same way that literary fiction describes fictional characters. This position was first articulated in the introductory chapter of (Field 1989), and has in recent years been gaining in popularity.

This crude description of the fictionalist position immediately opens up the question what sort of entities fictional entities are. This appears to be a deep metaphysical ontological problem. One way to avoid this question altogether is to deny that there exist fictional entities. Mathematical theories should be viewed as invitations to participate in games of pretence, in which we act as if certain mathematical entities exist. Pretence or make-believe operators shield their propositional objects from existential exportation (Leng 2010).

If the fictionalist thesis is correct, then one demand that must be imposed on mathematical theories is surely consistency. Yet Field adds to this a second requirement: mathematics must be *conservative* over natural science. This means, roughly, that whenever a statement of an empirical theory can be derived using mathematics, it can in principle also be derived without using any mathematical theories. If this were not the case, then an indispensability argument could be played out against fictionalism. Whether mathematics is in fact conservative over physics, for instance, is currently a matter of controversy. Shapiro has formulated an incompleteness argument that intends to refute Field's claim (Shapiro 1983).”

Biblical criteria, and many organ transplants cannot happen without murder of a living person). It gives answers on what medical procedures are rights given by God and which are privileges that cannot be demanded. It answers questions on fertility studies, assisted suicide, and many other medical questions. But Christian leaders don't dig into the Scriptures deep enough to find these answers because they are not convinced that 2 Peter 1 is true when it says that the Scriptures have given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. Jesus was ready with an answer because He had already dug for answers in the Holy Scriptures.

### ***C. Jesus reasoned from the objective revelation of the Bible***

And that is the third thing that I want you to notice from our text. Jesus reasoned from the objective, written, revelation of the Bible. Matthew 4:4 says, "But He answered and said, "It is written." While the scribes and Pharisees were constantly saying, "You have heard it said," "or rabbi so-and-so said," or the fathers have said, Jesus bypassed the wisdom of man and said, "It is written." Jesus reasoned from the Bible. The Bible must be our axiomatic starting point for every area of life.

The Reformer, John Wycliffe, said, "All law, all philosophy, all ethics are in Scripture. In Holy Scripture is all truth." Now, he is not saying that the Bible is a textbook in the modern definition. Instead, he is saying that just as all mathematics flows from starting axioms, all truth in other disciplines flow from the starting axioms of the Bible. So even though the Bible is not a textbook on mathematics, it has every axiom needed to build an entire system of mathematics and from which to generate numerous textbooks. All Mathematics, philosophy, music, and truth systems flow from the Bible according to Wycliffe. Was that an exaggeration? Are there really the foundations for music in the Bible? Yes. I've been reading some of the most recent research on the Biblical foundations of early Western Music, like Gregorian chant and early church music theory. It was all carefully preserved in the diacritical marks of the Hebrew Bible. And these marks show not only the notes, and sometimes harmony, but also show variety in tempo, the scale (with the diatonic scale, and a couple of other scales – they obviously experimented with different scales by divine insight). These marks show the meter (which is sometimes 5/4, 4/4, and other meters). Josephus spoke about the different meters in which the Psalm music was written by David (yes, by David). Some people have been skeptics of these new studies and have said that the diacritical marks and the vowel points were not invented till the ninth century AD. Up until recently, that has been

the common wisdom. But I have irrefutable proof that the Reformers were right when they said that Ezra came up with the newer square text, the vowel points, and diacritical marks in order to clarify the meaning and to distinguish the true text from the corrupted Samaritan texts. I have some new stunning evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls and from other areas. But the point is, we shouldn't assume that these older writers were exaggerating till we examine the evidence. Now, I have barely begun my research on music, with some of it being a little bit above my head. But it makes perfect sense in terms of the philosophy that Scripture sets forth.

Luther said about Scripture that it is “in itself most certain, most easily understood, most plain, is its own interpreter, approving, judging, and illuminating *all the statements of all men.... Therefore nothing except the divine words* are to be the first principles [that's a synonym for “axioms” – the first principles] for Christians; all human words are conclusions drawn from them and must be brought back to them and approved by them.” Well, I dare say that very few Christians live that way, but that is the Reformation principle. The Bible provides the axioms or starting points or presuppositions upon which all thought, research, planning and teaching should be based, tested and evaluated.

***D. This is a paradigm for mankind, not just for Israel***

The next word in the sentence is the word “man.” “But He answered and said, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”’ ” Notice that it doesn't say, “*Israel* shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” No, the word “man” indicates that the paradigm He is about to give goes way beyond Israel, and includes us. And that is so important to understand.

In all the debates over God's case laws, people get distracted into trying to figure out which laws were moral laws for all mankind and which laws were ceremonial laws only intended for Israel. And that is indeed an important debate when it comes to ethics. We do need to understand that. The ceremonial law is not morally binding. But let me tell you something: ethics is just one part of life. We shouldn't think that because the ceremonial laws are no longer ethically binding that they are unimportant for living. Those ceremonial laws are absolutely packed with information for living. For example, several of the axioms of mathematics are found in the ceremonial law. Without the ceremonial law, you would not have a sufficient foundation for math. And if you like classical geometry, you will

have a hay-day studying the detailed structure of tabernacle and temple. Don't think that God intended to bore us to tears with irrelevant details when He described in great detail the number and shape of rings and clasps on every tapestry, and its length and width and how it was held up. Why would He include all that detail if it is no longer relevant for us? Sir Isaac Newton went crazy over that stuff. He loved it, and said that it was the Bible that gave him insight into many of his discoveries. I read with fascination his discussions of the Biblical cubit and his look at the geometry of the temple and its relationship to the size of the earth. He wasn't even an Orthodox Christian, but he had far more confidence in the wisdom of the Bible than most Bible believing Christians today do. It's sad.

My point is that in addition to giving Israel essential information for their ceremonial worship, those passages give us essential information on math, geometry, and aesthetics as well as giving us incredible symbolism of Christ, covenant, grace, and other kingdom realities. Two weeks ago I read some amazing health issues that came from the ceremonial law – it was a critique of some modern fad diets. For example, one fad diet says that it is unhealthy to eat meat, yet God commanded the Israelites to eat meat several times, including of course, at the Passover. Would God really command Jews to eat meat if it was really unhealthy? No. This essay was not trying to impose the ceremonial law. Instead, it was using the ceremonial law to show that it is legalism to mandate that we not eat meat. We are free to eat meat. The same essay corrected fad diets that forbid salt, saturated animal fats, honey, fruit, grains, and cheese, etc. She said that those laws were intended by God for Israel's good, and therefore, even though they are not binding, they demonstrate the falsity of these fad diets. Do you get the point? Now, I will have more to say about that in a bit. But we must live by even the ceremonial laws in some sense of the term "live" or we contradict Christ's words here. The Bible is not just for Israel. It is for mankind – every word of it. It gives wisdom for living.

***E. The Bible is not a replacement for living but the foundation for living***

Now, the next phrase indicates that the Bible is not a replacement for living but the foundation for living. Jesus did not say, "Man shall not live by bread, but only by the word of God." That would turn us all into ivory tower theologians who only study and end up starving to death. Instead, Jesus wanted us living out the Scriptures by taking dominion of and subduing planet earth to His glory. There is work to be done, but every bit of our

dominion work must be captive to Scripture. The moment we exclude the Scripture from rocks, bread, or any other area of life, we have entered the realm of humanism and independence. This was the great temptation of Adam and Eve. Their attitude was basically, “Who cares what God said about the trees? We can be scientists and figure this out for ourselves. We will judge for ourselves whether this tree is good to eat.” So Jesus was making exactly the same point that Deuteronomy 8 was – God tests us as to whether we will handle stones, food, and the rest of life by living according to His Word or whether we will take dominion independently of God’s will.

This means that it is impossible to glorify God by keeping our head in our books. God intends us to master the Bible so that whether we eat, or drink, or whatever we do, we will do all to the glory of God. We must live out the Scriptures in science, architecture, farming, chemistry, and every area of life. We must have orthopraxy as well as orthodoxy; godly living as well as godly thinking. Or as Jesus worded it, in addition to loving God with our mind, we must also love Him with our heart, soul, and strength.

#### ***F. Every word of Scripture is important***

The next word indicates that every word of Scripture is important. But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*’” This is a call to live by the whole Bible, and not just the New Testament. It is a call to live by every word in the Holy Scriptures.

I remember when I first began to realize that the church is still in the infancy stage of applying Scripture to life. I was at Covenant College, furiously taking notes as my genius math professor, Dr. J. C. Keister, was at the blackboard writing out the axioms of mathematics from the Bible – just using ordinary exegesis. I remember that he was demonstrating the distributive law of addition as revealed by God. The distributive law of addition is that  $a(b + c) = ab + ac$ . Now, the passages that demonstrate this law were boring passages that I had read numerous times, and yet I had never seen this obvious truth of mathematics. It had only become obvious because someone had pointed it out to me. I had never seen it before because I wasn’t looking for it. My vision clouded my interpretation. Our minds tend to filter all kinds of stuff out. My wife knows this. I don’t know how many times I have had to ask my wife to come over and help me to find a book. I know it is in my office, but I can’t see it. Usually the problem is that I am looking for something that doesn’t exist. Perhaps I think the book is red, when in reality it is blue. So even though the book I am looking for is right

in front of me, my mind filters it out because it isn't red. Well, that's what often happens when we read the Scriptures. Because we don't expect the Bible to speak to various disciplines, we don't look for it to speak, and our mind filters out the times that it does speak. In fact, during my devotions the day before Dr. Keister was writing this axiom on the blackboard, I had been reading precisely that passage and had wondered why God worded the passage so awkwardly. If God were simply telling a story, He could have worded the same history much more simply and elegantly. But when I saw that God was *also* communicating an axiom of mathematics – boom! the lights went on. It had to be worded in exactly that awkward way for it to communicate what God intended it to communicate. And I began looking much more carefully at Scripture. I began wondering what other axioms of other disciplines I had been missing. And as a result of that one event, I began noticing all kinds of amazing things in the order of words, the selection of words, the repetition of words. Every word in the Bible is significant. In fact, Paul makes a big deal about a single letter of a single word. And Jesus makes a big deal about the smallest jots and tittles of words.

It dawned on me that I had not been living by *every* word that proceeds out of God's mouth. I had just been living by the general meaning of strings of words. But when Jesus builds a doctrine of the resurrection on a tense of a verb, and Paul builds a doctrine on whether a word is singular or plural, and Paul later refutes feminism by the order of events in Genesis 2, I realized that I better take this word "every" a bit more seriously than I have been. We are to live by *every* word in the Bible.

And when we have faith that every word *counts*, we will start seeing all kinds of new things. We will start seeing what one team of logicians has seen – everything needed for logic in the Bible. In fact, I have a college level course on logic that is taught entirely from the Bible. I think it can be improved upon. And I'm looking forward to what this team of logicians comes up with. But when we have a confidence that God makes every word count, we will see the starting axioms for biology. And actually, we will see a lot more than simply axioms – we will see interpretation, worldview issues, and principles that will keep us from going down dead end roads in biological research and wasting millions of dollars. And I first began seeing some of these things at the same school that Dr. Keister taught at. Covenant College was a whole lot better back in those days. But anyway, there was a biology professor there by the name of Dr. Lothers. And he showed the

brilliant purpose of God's taxonomy of creatures and how it contrasts with the evolutionary taxonomy in our textbooks. I hadn't even thought about that before. And he gave some very interesting insights into biology based on that taxonomy. And I could go on and on in pointing to things that most Christians completely ignore.

The fact that we are not even remotely living by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God shows that we are still in the infancy of the church. I don't think that we are at the end of history. I wouldn't be surprised if we have another 100,000 years of history ahead of us. And there are many hints of that. For example, when God promises to be faithful in history to a thousand generations of those who love Him, we have at least 40,000 years of history, since a generation is about 40 years long. And we are only done with 6000 years of history. I would love to get a peek into how Christians will be using the Scriptures 10,000 years from now. If we saw that it would probably blow us away. But hey, God doesn't expect as much of infants as He does adults. The church really is still an infant when you think about it. But still, we should keep pressing forward, growing up, and maturing in our understanding of the application of the Bible, and constantly making new discoveries.

Every discipline in which I have been looking into in the Scriptures has been like a window opening up whole new fields that I would love to explore but don't have the time. For example, I was having fun two weeks ago reading preliminary research that some have been doing on fractal geometry in the Bible.<sup>10</sup> Fascinating stuff when applied to measurements. One tiny facet of that was looking at structures within structures in the Bible and seeing incredibly beautiful things. Don't think that the structure of books and inter-structural relationship between books is accidental. When I discovered the macro structure and microstructures of 1 and 2 Samuel and its relationship to 1 Kings, it blew me away. It relates to canonicity. And I have a book on the canon that is just volume one, and gives some insights into how the Bible is all you need to tell you what books of the Bible belong in the canon. And if you are skeptical, read the book. Others are working on Biblical information on space having physical structure, space having some

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<sup>10</sup> Meredith Kline junior accidentally introduced me to some of this when he showed the fascinating structure of the book of Ecclesiastes via color coding the morphology of the Hebrew text. The color patterns make the structure of the book jump out at you. The fascinating study of chiasms within chiasms, and the intricate structure of the book of Revelation is another area that needs research. Some sample articles that barely dip into other aspects of fractal geometry and the Bible are here <http://www.bullartistry.com.au/wp/2013/10/11/the-bible-is-a-fractal/> and here <http://caleb-drc.hubpages.com/hub/Fractal-Geometry-and-the-Bible> and here <http://caleb-drc.hubpages.com/hub/Fractal-Geometry-and-the-Bible-Part-2-the-mathematics>

sort of polarity (in other words a north - and modern science hasn't even caught up on that one, but it will eventually), space being elastic, expansion of the universe, information being in our physical bodies. How could that be? Well, it may be a reference to DNA – I'm not sure. But Scriptural statements like that give me goose bumps. It makes me want to run down a rabbit trail that I don't have time to run down. And there is other information in the Bible that may give rise to another scientific revolution if Christian scientists will only take it seriously.<sup>11</sup> You miss those kinds of things if you aren't looking at *every* word of Scripture.

### ***G. Propositional truth***

Anyway, Matthew 4:4 goes on by speaking of every *word*. Every *word* indicates that Christianity is not simply about feelings, experiences, relationship, relaxation, and work. All of those things must be governed by something more foundational – words, or what Francis Schaeffer spoke of as propositional truth. Words are important to God, and an understanding of propositional truth is critical to healthy living. We live in an age when people don't have much appreciation for that, but we will never become a mature Christianity until we become a people of the book, and until we see sola Scriptura as the defining characteristic of Christianity, and until we use logical thinking to wrestle with the text.

### ***H. Revelation from God***

The eighth feature of this paradigm is that these words are a *revelation* from God Himself. It speaks of every word that *proceeds from* the mouth of God. The phrase, “proceeds from” shows something coming from God to man. It deals with epistemology – in other words, how do we know that we know anything. And the answer is inspired revelation; not evidence, but revelation. And the Reformed church has got to get back to this. We do not know truth through science. We evaluate whether scientific statements are true or not through the Bible.

There is plenty of evidence all around us that unbelievers reject and that even believers doubt. In Luke 16, Jesus gave the story of the rich man and Lazarus. When the rich man was burning in hell, he looked up to paradise and asked Abraham to send Lazarus back from the dead to speak to his brothers so that they wouldn't come to hell. He wanted to give his

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<sup>11</sup> <http://caleb-drc.hubpages.com/hub/Is-there-any-proof-that-the-Bible-is-Gods-Word-Pt-2> see <http://www.frame-poythress.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/PoythressVernRedeemingScience.pdf>



brothers evidence of the afterlife. He thought that evidence could save them. But Jesus relates,

**Luke 16:29** Abraham said to him, “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’

**Luke 16:30** And he said, “No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’

**Luke 16:31** But he said to him, “If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’ ”

Where is God’s focus? Not on evidences, but on the word of God; not on miracles (as important as those are), but on the Word of God; not on experiences, but on the word of God. And if we have a faulty view of revelation, it will mess everything else up.

Liberals believe that words have no objective meaning. They don’t hold to a correspondence view of words, where a word has objective meaning and corresponds very literally to some objective reality. They can’t because they don’t believe that the words of Scripture have the same meaning for us as they did when they came out of the prophet’s mouth. They believe that any word I speak will be so colored by my understanding that it will be quite different from the meaning of the same word that another person speaks. So liberals are skeptical of absolute truth. Experience is more important to them than meaning. They don’t mind having an experience with the Bible, but they don’t go to the Bible for truth. And there are a lot of implications of this phrase which I simply don’t have time to get into. But evangelicals sometimes fail to take seriously this phrase in their view of knowledge. Talk to me sometime about the differences between univocal, analogical, and equivocal views of knowledge.

Now, I don’t have time to get into it, but it does affect the debate between Cornelius van Til and Gordon Clark on the nature of knowledge and words. And a number of modern Van Tillians (like John Frame) have adopted Gordon Clark’s view on at least that point. And I think it is an important point. I actually think that Van Til and Gordon Clark should be friends. They actually strengthen each other. But let me quickly summarize the three views: Liberals say that what God thinks and what I think are in two different orbits. There is no identity of meaning. There is no univocal meaning. So they hold to equivocal view of knowledge. Gordon Clark said that since God has truly had words traveling from His mouth to a prophet’s mouth, the words themselves must be a true communication of at least a bit of God’s mind into our minds. Otherwise it is not a revelation. So he held to

the univocal view of knowledge. Van Til insisted that there is no exact point of identity. Instead, there is just an analogy. It is like what God thinks. So he holds to the analogical view of knowledge.

Now, it is true that he was trying to defend the transcendence of God (which is a good thing), but where he went wrong is that he said that there is no correspondence whatsoever between what God is thinking and what we are thinking when a given word or a given object is thought about. But that leads to skepticism as well. And I think a number of Van Tillians have recognized that. If a revelation from God to man has occurred, then at least at some level we are thinking the same thoughts as God is thinking when we read the Scripture. Words came from His mouth to us.

### ***I. The Bible has all the authority of God***

But if the point I have just talked about is true, then that means that the Bible has all the authority of God. The Bible is infallible and inerrant because God is infallible and never makes mistakes. Matthew 4:4 speaks of every word that proceeds from the mouth of *God*. When Scripture speaks, it is God Himself speaking to you. And so Hebrews 4 says that the Scripture has the attributes of God backing it up. God is powerful, so His Word is powerful. God sees and exposes all things, so Hebrews 4 says that His Word sees and exposes all things in our hearts. God gives life, so the Scriptures give life. God gives healing, so the Scriptures give healing. If we took at all seriously the transforming power of the Scriptures, we would be memorizing vast sections of Scripture every day, and meditating on it day and night. One of the Biblical Blueprints booklets that Michael Elliott edited (but which is written by another author) shows you one technique for memorizing entire books of the Bible. It's possible. In our school, all of the children did that. From the time I was six years old I was made to spend half an hour of each day before breakfast memorizing Scripture. Why? Because it is God's very word to us, and Proverbs says that we need to treat it as being more precious than silver or gold. Very few Christians treat it that way. If they really believed it, they would memorize it, meditate on it, and treat it as more precious than silver or gold. Moses said this in Deuteronomy 32:

**Deut. 32:46** ... "Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law.

**Deut. 32:47** For it *is* not a futile thing for you, because it *is* your life, [let me repeat that: "because it is your life"] and by this word you shall prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess."

Even those who believe in the inerrancy of Scripture have a low view of the Scriptures, because they are not living by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. How many times have you even *read* through the entire Bible? Do you meditate on the Scriptures day and night? Why not? Deuteronomy 8 says that prosperity in living does not come from the abundance of things and of food. Satan was hoping to tempt Jesus to think the opposite. But Deuteronomy affirms that prosperity comes from hiding God's Word in our hearts, meditating upon it day and night, and conforming our lives to its every precept. Joshua 1 tells us

**Josh. 1:8** This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

That's exactly what the apostle Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:15.

...Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.

Do you really believe that this is God Himself giving His most precious possession to you – giving His very words? If you really believed it, you might treat it differently. Psalm 1 says that if you really believe it you won't walk in the counsel of the ungodly (which is basically what government school amounts to) because the counsel of God is so much more precious. Psalm 1 says,

**Psa. 1:1** ¶ Blessed *is* the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,  
Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

**Psa. 1:2** But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates  
day and night.

**Psa. 1:3** He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth  
its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does  
shall prosper.

**Psa. 1:4** The ungodly *are* not so, But *are* like the chaff which the wind drives  
away.

**Psa. 1:5** Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in  
the congregation of the righteous.

**Psa. 1:6** For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the  
ungodly shall perish.

Christians must stop walking in the counsel of the ungodly when it comes to economics and have a thoroughly Biblical economics. And two books that I would encourage you to start with are *Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt Manipulators*, by David Chilton. That is perhaps the finest

introduction to Biblical economics and worldview that can be had. The second one is *Prosperity and Poverty*, by E. Calvin Beisner, also a fine introduction. But you can dig so much deeper on biblical economics than those two books.

Christians must stop walking in the counsel of the ungodly when it comes to politics. Why are we ashamed of Biblical law in the public sphere? When Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8 and said,

... “It is written, ‘*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*’”

...the “every word” that Deuteronomy was referring to in context included every word of the case law of Deuteronomy. It’s a brilliant document for business, economics, science, ethics, politics, etc. But most Christians in America reject the case laws of Deuteronomy. They are directly disobeying Christ in Matthew 4:4. And in terms of politics, Deuteronomy said that there is nothing to be embarrassed about. Evangelicals today are embarrassed when Deuteronomy calls for the stoning of dangerous juvenile delinquents. I am not. It is the perfect answer to the horrible parental abuse happening in the Bronx and other parts of New York City where parents are in fear of their lives. Of course it takes both parents to testify against such a son. But far from being embarrassed by God’s law, Jesus here tells us to live by *every word of the Bible which includes the case laws of Deuteronomy*. In fact, Deuteronomy 4:5-9 says that eventually pagan nations will become jealous when Christian nations live by that law and they will desire to have the same laws that bring such blessing. It’s already happened. That’s how Vishal Mangalwadi became jealous of Christianity and became a Christian. He saw the incredible blessings that came to the West when the West was willing to live by every word of God.

## Conclusion

I’ll end with one more passage from Jesus. It’s the next chapter: Matthew 5:17-19

**Matt. 5:17** ¶ “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

**Matt. 5:18** For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

**Matt. 5:19** Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

If you both live by and teach others to live by the case laws of the Old Testament, Jesus considers you to be great in the kingdom. And when Jesus referred to the “least of these commandments” he was referring to Deuteronomy 22:6 – the passage about not taking both a mother bird and her young, but letting the mother bird go. You may not understand the purpose of that law, which the Jews considered to be the least of the laws, but Jesus said that till heaven and earth passes away, even that law is still relevant. The last I looked, heaven and earth hasn’t passed away yet. Very literally, we are to live by every word that proceeds out of God’s mouth. May it be so Lord Jesus. Amen.