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EVERY WORD OF GOD IS PURE

When reading the Bible, we see emphasis placed upon the fact that the entirety of the Bible is truth. David said, *"The sum of thy word is truth ..."* (Ps. 119:160, ASV). Some record it, "Your word is true from beginning to end." The point of the verse is that every word within the pages of the Bible is inspired. It is "God-breathed" and must be respected as such (II Tim. 3:16-17). Not only do we read Scripture that emphasizes the value of the words used, but we also read Scripture which shows us that the very *letters* used to form the words are inspired of God. I know this because in Galatians 3, God inspired the apostle to argue for Christ being the promised "*seed of Abraham*" based on the letter "*s*"! He told the Galatians, "*Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ*" (Gal. 3:16). On four

occasions, the Bible commands us to respect every word God inspired men to write. For example, Deuteronomy 8:3 says, *"And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live."* Jesus later quoted this when tempted by Satan (Matt. 4:4; Lk. 4:4). Solomon declared, "*Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him*" (Prov. 30:5). The following verse states, "*Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar*" (Prov. 30:6). Therefore, we see emphasis upon God's word from the standpoint of not adding to or taking from the teaching. It is also emphasized that we must respect every word contained

within the Bible! Why make this observation? It is because I know folks who say they respect the Bible, but it is obvious they do not appreciate every word they read within the Bible! Sometimes, this comes from reading too fast or being unobservant, but either way, the result is that we miss out on vital truth and deep insight into the Bible when we read without an appreciation for **“every word”** that proceeds from the mouth of God. I am doing my best to follow my own “advice,” and brethren, I am learning to appreciate God’s word more and more every day! One brother in Christ has helped me to stop and truly think about the words in the Bible. He has even encouraged me to read aloud to myself as one way to help me comprehend what I am reading. Reading aloud to yourself allows the eyes to see and the ears to hear the words in the Bible. Friend, it works! Another brother in Christ is careful in his sermons to emphasize certain words to get the correct meaning. I remember listening to one of his sermons where he read from Matthew 15:25, where the Syro-Phoenician woman cried to Christ, saying, *“Lord help me.”* Then, by slowing down, he took the time to ask, “How did she say that? Well, how would you say that?” He then emphasized each word (**“Lord, help me”**; **“Lord, help me”**; **“Lord, help me”**) and showed what

happens when we emphasize different words. Try it for yourself, and see! The point is that every word written in the Bible is essential and has meaning. Yes, we need to respect the context, observing whether things were spoken under the Old or New Covenants, “to whom” things were spoken, and “why” they were spoken. Yet the way we will know the answer to these questions is by taking note of the very words used! They are important. God said so. David wrote that the *“blessed man”* is the one who *“meditates”* in God’s word *“day and night”* (Ps. 1:2). The term “meditate” carries with it the idea of one who thinks, ponders, or carefully considers something. This person does not merely give it a passing glance but considers what is said within the context. We need more people God can call “blessed”! Friends, when the apostle makes an argument based upon one letter in a word (Gal. 3:16), we can be assured that the words are necessary! Let us resolve to slow down and think carefully about the very words which make up the sentences in the verses of the Bible. It will do us good spiritually and lead us in the way we ought to go (Ps. 119:105). — Jarrod Jacobs **God Is Good** As I studied the book of Zephaniah, I wondered how we as humans could be wicked to a God that is so loving (Zeph. 1:5, 17)? As we study Zephaniah, we can conclude that despite what

man does, God is good. **God is good because of His long-suffering.** As you read the pages of Zephaniah, God's anger is the result of all the sins and transgressions that His people committed against Him. We can also read that His people have turned their backs on Him (Zeph. 1:6). His people were unconcerned (v. 12a). Yet, He still was long-suffering (v. 12b). **God is good because of His warnings.** He gives men warning before His anger gets worse (Zeph. 2:2). He wants all people to repent (II Pet. 3:9). **God is good because He wants us to seek Him.** He wants us to have a right heart. In His goodness, He warns us so we may be hidden in the day of His anger (Zeph. 2:3). **God is good because he is our Deliverer.** Despite everything His people have done in their sin, He still delivers His people who are in captivity. That means He still has compassion for His people and turns His anger towards their enemies (Zeph. 2:8-10). **God is good because of His consistency.** He brings His judgments to light. He is constant and does not fail (Zeph. 3:5). **God is good because He wants us to be right.** He wants us to fear Him and wants us also to receive instruction, even though people continued to rise early and corrupt all their doings (Zeph. 3:7). This is long-suffering! **God is good because He forgives.** In verse 15 of Zephaniah 3, He took away His

judgments. This means God forgave the people. He loves being in the midst of His people. He has joy, and He even sings at the thought of blessing His people (Zeph. 3:16-17)! - J.D. Espinoza **It Won't Really Matter** It has been said, "he who dies with the most toys wins." In truth, he who dies with the most toys still dies. And after that, he will face the judgment. For it is written, "*And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment*" (Heb. 9:27). When that time comes, all the toys in the world won't make a difference. Then dear reader, a lot of things won't matter. For example: It won't really matter what kind of car you drove, how nice a house you lived in, how many degrees you earned, how many vacations you took, how many baseball cards you collected, how many famous people you met, how much money you made, who your momma and daddy were, where you lived, how high you could jump, how fast you could run, how many trophy bucks you killed, how many fish you caught, how many games you won, how many people you knew, how many children you raised, how many pets you loved, how many birthdays you had, how much weight you lost, how many concerts you attended, how many articles you read, how many compliments you've received, etc.

- David McPherson

People, Places, and Things of the **BIBLE**



Smiting Gods Found From Baal Worship

A pair of smiting gods and other rare ritual artifacts are among the fascinating discoveries described in a recently published comprehensive report of the 2013-2017 excavations of the archaeology-rich Lachish site. The report digs deep into 12th century BCE Canaanite worship practices, from the modest temple structure, to ritual items discovered inside. Israeli archaeologist Yosef Garfinkel uncovered the ruins of a Canaanite temple from the 12th century B.C. The excavation site, located in Lachish, one of the most important Old Testament cities in the region, has yielded a trove of artifacts used in Canaanite worship, including jewelry, daggers, and two four-inch-tall bronze figurines of “smiting gods.” Perhaps the most significant discovery at the temple is a bronze scepter coated with silver. Garfinkel believes it was held by a human-sized statue of the Canaanite god Baal. The statue itself was not found, but large statues of ancient Canaanite gods are rare. “This excavation has been breathtaking,” said lead archaeologist Professor Yosef Garfinkel at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem’s Institute of Archaeology in a press release on Monday. The excavation report, “The Level VI North-East Temple At Tel Lachish,” was recently published in the academic journal *Levant: The Journal of The Council for British Research In the Levant*.



“Only once every 30 or 40 years do we get the chance to excavate a Canaanite temple in Israel. What we found sheds new light on ancient life in the region. It would be hard to overstate the importance of these findings,” said Garfinkel, who led the excavation along with Professor Michael Hasel of Southern Adventist University in Tennessee.