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The dictionary is a book with authority. If two people have a disagreement about the meaning of a word, a dictionary has the power to settle it, because its definitions have been approved by language authorities. However, we can see that the authority of the dictionary has been extended, enlarged, and changed over the years. A modern dictionary has more words in it than one from one hundred years ago. Also, the current meaning of some words is different today than it was a century or two ago. The dictionary never seems to be complete, and it does not remain up-to-date for very long. It constantly needs to be changed as the language changes.

Unlike the dictionary, the Bible does not change with time, neither does it lose its authority nor its power. God said He would protect His Word so no one could harm it. David said that God's Word is settled in heaven forever (Psalm 119:89). This is a place where neither moth nor rust can cause damage, and where thieves cannot break in nor steal (Matthew 6:20).

This does not mean that the Bible will only be preserved in heaven, for, what good is God's Word if man cannot have access to it here on the earth? No, God keeps His Word safe here on earth as well, from generation to generation.

Today, we have the same words that God gave to holy men of old, over a time period of hundreds and even thousands of years. We can read them, study them, and live by them. Psalm 12:7 tells us, "Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever". And in Matthew 24:35 Jesus says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away".

Although God revealed his will progressively over thousands of years, there came a time when He had said everything He needed to say to man. In the last book of the Bible, He says that if anyone dares to add to its words, or take away from them, He will punish that person with terrible plagues, and take away his salvation (Revelation 22:18, 19). This is a terrible sin to commit.

Since we are told to never add or take away from the writings of Revelation, by extension, the same would hold true for the rest of Scripture as well, especially since we are told that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God..." (2 Timothy 3:16). The canon of Scripture has been closed; the Holy Bible is a complete unit of sixty-six books, and no more.

In fact, in the Bible, God declares that His Word is perfect and complete. It has all that man needs to please Him, and to live an abundant, victorious life. Second Peter 1:3 is one such verse: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue". Another verse is 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works".

The "abundant life" declared in the Scriptures (John 10:10) is not just a nice thought, or an

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experience reserved for super Christians. This is for every individual Christian who believes God's Word and obeys it (Romans 3:22). Is this not wonderful?! God made sure the Bible had everything we needed for today and for every day in our future! However, we must not receive the words of the Bible only as the words of the men who wrote them, but rather as what they really are—the Word of God as one unit. “Ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

Ephesians 1:19 says that God's mighty power will work with “exceeding greatness” in us if we believe. God has sufficient power and ability to change the heart of any person, giving them abundant life, no matter how vile and evil they are, if only they are willing to believe what is written in His Word.

Sadly, today there are numerous ideas and influences that have persuaded many believers to doubt that the Bible actually has all the answers we need to live an abundant Christian life and to be full of joy. However, the Apostle John tells us by divine inspiration that the things he has written are able to give us full joy (1 John 1:4). God said it. Do we believe it?

The Bible further shows that from the start of our Christian life, God through His Word has given us everything we need to withstand Satan's temptations. We can be victorious through each one of them, remaining faithful unto the end of our life. Read about the armor of God in Ephesians 6. There we find that God has already provided us with a complete suit of armor. If we wear the whole armor of God, we will “be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” and “to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (verses 11 and 13). What more do we need? If God was able to make all grace “abound to every good work” for the early church believers (2 Corinthians 9:8), can He not do the same for us today? Sure, He can. And He does! We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us!

Therefore, God will not add any more content to the Scriptures, and He will not give us any further revelation than that which He has already given us in the Bible. Unlike our dictionary, the content of this Book does not need to be changed or modified. In fact, it is the other way around. We ourselves must be changed and sanctified by it: “[Christ gave himself for the church] that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Ephesians 5:26). Do you believe without a shadow of a doubt that, as you read and believe what is written in God's Word, His Spirit will cleanse you from every uncleanness and sin in your life, if you allow Him to do so? Nothing else and nobody else can do this for you.

What Is Adding or Taking Away?

We tend to think that adding or taking away from Scripture only means adding or omitting words from the Bible. But it actually begins before that. Following the illustration in the introduction, how does a dictionary get modified? First, a group of people change the meaning of a word, and use it frequently in their private and public communication. Next, other groups of people adopt it, until finally, the vast majority of people are using the new meaning. This is when language authorities consider modifying the dictionary, because the new meaning has become so widespread.

Something similar happens with God's Word. When a person receives extra-biblical information through a vision, a dream, or from an angel, it does not get added immediately to

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the Bible (that would be too obvious!), and seldom does this happen. Rather, it is spread to others by word of mouth and it is broadcasted through radio, television, internet, and other types of recorded audio or video format. It is printed in books and magazines, and preached across church pulpits.

However, the fact that some Christians have visions, or claim to have received messages from angels, does not mean that God has been communicating with them. Matthew 7:22 declares that hell-bound people can prophesy, cast out demons, and perform miracles. Many people in both Christianity and pagan religions receive messages from the spirit world, but this does not mean that these messages have come from God.

The Bible says clearly, “If he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him” (2 Corinthians 11:4). There are three “anothers” here. The second and third “another” means another kind (Gr. heteros) of spirit and gospel (e.g., different as in an apple and an orange). The first “another” means another of the same kind, which looks identical in many ways (e.g., another as in an apple and another apple). False teachers preach a Jesus who, at first sight, is identical to the real Jesus. The only Jesus we must follow is the Jesus who is clearly declared and defined in God’s Word, the Holy Bible.

Galatians 1:8 pronounces a curse on anyone, even an apostle or an angel from heaven, who preaches any other gospel than that which was originally shared by Christ and His Apostles. This verse can also be translated as follows. “Though we or an angel from heaven preach a gospel besides (Gr. para; as in parallel) that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed”. Therefore, a parallel gospel or word from God means extra-biblical revelation that agrees with Scripture! An example of this was when Satan tempted Jesus. He actually quoted Scripture word for word, but it stood for another parallel gospel meant to deceive. This should not come as a surprise, because “Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14).

Another example of this is the demonized man Jesus encountered in the synagogue. Evil spirits had revealed to him things that were true and agreed with Scripture. He said, “I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God” (Luke 3:34). Just because a vision portrays something that is true is not proof enough that it comes from God. The same also applies to extra-biblical revelation, even though it may agree with Scripture.

Someone asked this question: “If the Devil only quoted Scripture, would you allow him to preach over your pulpit?” What did Jesus say to him in the desert? “Get thee hence Satan”. All this teaches us that we should not only reject extra-biblical revelation that disagrees with Scripture, but also reject extra-biblical revelation which agrees with Scripture. We are warned to contend for the “faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3), lest we fall under God’s curse. It is not speaking of a faith given to the saints once upon a time, but rather the [only] faith that was delivered once and for all. No more or further revelation is needed, nor allowed!

Suppose someone would say, “But this does not mean we can’t receive other revelations from God, besides the Bible. We are just not supposed to add them to the Bible?” However, this seems to defeat God’s purpose for prohibiting additions to the Bible. In His Word, God has declared that He has given us all the instruction we need to find His will, and to live a godly life. Therefore, by accepting any extra-biblical revelation we would be denying the sufficiency

of Scripture, and we would be undermining the finality of biblical authority.

Dare we say that, while we may not add revelation to the “Bible” itself, we are free to publish it in another book written besides the Bible, portraying it to be divine revelation? Of course not, that would be absurd. God condemns ALL extra-biblical revelation. Thus, claiming any further revelation as divinely inspired, opens the door to the awful influence of deceiving spirits, and puts us dangerously close to the curse of Revelation 22.

Are we in any way limiting God by saying that He does not give any further revelation? Not in the least. We must simply limit ourselves to what God has said in His Word.

Ways of Adding or Taking Away

We know that adding to, or taking away from Scripture can mean altering the words of the actual Bible, such as when a translator adds or omits words from the original when making the translation. But, as we have said a few paragraphs before, it can also happen when people accept and spread extra-biblical revelations that disagree with the Scriptures, as well as those that agree with the Scriptures.

The obvious manifestations of adding or taking away, are when people receive dreams and visions, or hear voices that teach things that disagree with Scripture. We may wonder who would fall for this type of deception. But surprisingly, there are many sincere believers who follow a Charismatic type of persuasion who actually believe this way. Others would say they do not worship the Book, but that the voice of the Spirit is greater than the Bible, and we should not limit God by a book (i.e. the Bible). In these circles, leaders caution people not to think too deeply and even not to read the Bible. Amazing, but true! It is sad that so many sincere people are ensnared by these deceptions, and are in danger of God’s judgment.

Other ways of adding or taking away can be much more subtle. It can take the form of sincere believers, or even children, receiving dreams and visions that depict scenes of Heaven, interacting with Jesus, and concepts that do not necessarily contradict Scripture, but nonetheless, are not revealed in Scripture. This would fall into the category of extra-biblical revelation that seems to agree with Scripture. But as we have seen, this also is condemned by God. The Bible says that Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, but “these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:31).

Many are the things that could arise from human imagination or demonic suggestion that do not appear to contradict revealed truth, but cannot be proven nor disproven. God deliberately chose to limit revelation, and gave us everything we needed to have life abundant. He does not reveal any more information, because He has revealed all that is necessary in the Scriptures, as it is written.

Furthermore, at a public level, and in a more indirect way, adding to, or taking away from, can occur when preachers, teachers, and authors twist Scripture to fit their own desires, lifestyles, or agendas, and thereby teach a gospel that suits the whims of their audience or their readers. It also happens when religious people refuse to take a stand against false doctrine, and ignore Scriptures that convict them or others of sin.

Finally, it can also happen at a personal level. If an individual knowingly is living in sin, or is believing and promoting a false idea, a false teaching, or a false doctrine, he can be adding or taking away from Scripture as well. By ignoring or twisting the Scriptures where they do not agree with his lifestyle, he then finds himself in the same error. But the Bible condemns this very harshly: “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Isaiah 5:20-21).

Why Do People Add or Take Away?

In 2 Timothy 4:3-4, God teaches us that a time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine. They will seek out teachers who will teach them exactly what they want to hear, and they will not listen to the truth. They will turn to fables, or myths (Gr. muthos). And they will do this because of their own lusts. Evil desires are a very common reason why Christians turn away from the truth, and accept twisted teachings and false gospels. This is why they turn to made-up stories about Creation, the nature of man, sin, Heaven, and many other topics. Friends, this is actually happening today, and in our very own circles!

Many Christians allow themselves to be in a tough predicament. They know that the Bible condemns current extra-biblical revelation, but they also sense the sincerity of those who supposedly have had them. This becomes more apparent when the individual in question is a child. We assume that since a child is innocent and sincere, they will not be touched by Satan. And understandably so, it is difficult for us to grasp why God would allow Satan to influence or work through young innocent children, but Scripture is clear that these things do happen. One example is found in Matthew 17:18. But we must not be deceived by Christian sincerity or childhood innocence. In Matthew 7:22, those who appeared before God said they had prophesied in His name, cast out demons in His name, and even performed miracles in His name. But God said, “Depart from me, ye that work iniquity”. Therefore, we see that sincerity and miracles do not prove that something comes from God.

Another reason for accepting extra-biblical revelation may be simply a lack of faith. When we do not believe that God divinely inspired His Word in order that today we have everything we need to live a godly and victorious life, then we will tend to look for other things that make us feel more spiritual or more blessed. We will start to believe that seeing miracles or visions of angels and Heaven, will increase our faith. But the Bible does not say “blessed are those who experience miracles or see Jesus”, but rather, “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (John 20:29).

Similar to a dictionary, the Bible is also a book with authority. The words of Scripture are what give the Bible its authority. Its pages are full of edification, admonition, commandments, and promises that speak to the many situations we face in life.

The Bible also contains statements that appear more than once, in order to give God’s words proper weight or significance in their place and context in the Scriptures. Taking away any words, even repeated statements, is condemned by God. Likewise, adding any words, even if they agree with Scripture, comes under God’s judgment. The canon of Scripture is closed. Therefore, while the dictionary needs to be constantly updated, the authority of God’s Word is complete. In order for it to have power in our lives we simply need to believe it. There is no further revelation from Heaven than that which has been given to us in the Bible.

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“Unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it” (Hebrews 4:2). May we be among those who mix God’s Word with faith, and someday will hear His blessed words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” (Matthew 25:21).

Editor’s Note:

This article is meant to address the problem of supposedly receiving divine revelation that would be additional to God’s Word—that which is received through dreams, visions, near-death experiences, spirit guides, visions of angels, listening prayer, etc. In no way is this article endeavoring to teach against the clear Biblical teachings of: Prayer, and Walking in the Spirit, etc. These topics will be covered in another article at another time.

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