

## Search the Scriptures for *Absolute Truth*

**Question:** Is the Bible a means of grace?

**Answer:** “[Ye] Search the **scriptures**; for in them ye think ye have eternal **life**. . . And ye will not come to **Me**, that ye might have **life**” (*Jn. 5:39, 40*).

**Comment:** As discussed in the previous article on this subject, “means of grace” is a phrase generally referring to an external “means” by which God applies grace and gives the Holy Spirit to man. However, since God clearly teaches that nothing earthly or physical can impart heavenly, spiritual changes (*Jn. 3:6; Heb. 9:23*), water baptism and the Lord’s Supper, the two chief ceremonial signs given the New Testament church, could *not* be the instruments of saving anyone’s soul. For the church age, these were merely shadows describing, and pointing to the spiritual washing and feeding that only God’s eternal children experience (*1 Pet. 3:21; Tit. 3:5; Jn. 6:51, 63; 1 Cor. 12:13*).

In the same vein, the written word of God, the scriptures, the Bible, too, has been regarded as *the* tool, *the* means by which man could become regenerate. However, as the Samaritan woman was to properly distinguish the physical water from that “living” (*Jn. 4:6-15*), the absolute distinction between the spiritual, living Word – Christ in His glory (*Jn. 1:1, 6:62, 17:5*) – and this Word physically manifest – Christ in the flesh, His physical actions and words (*Jn. 1:14; 1Jn1:1*) – must be drawn. In fact, Jesus clearly declares that those who physically heard His physically audible words clearly did *not* hear Him, *nor* the Father (*Jn. 8:43, 5:37*). In contrast, there are some who have blessed “eyes” and “ears” that “see” and “hear” (*Mt. 13:16*). Indeed, these are they who have been given *spiritual* life to “see” God Who is “Spirit” and “hear” and His heavenly language, which “cannot be uttered” (*Rom. 8:26*) nor heard in the realm of flesh and blood (*cf. 1 Cor. 2:9*). This is the Word that is “quick [living] and powerful” (*Heb. 4:12*), that which is “spirit” and “life” (*Jn. 6:63*), spoken of the Spirit to the souls of His elect (*Jn. 10:3ff; Eph. 4:21*). The Jews searched the scriptures – the letter that kills (*2 Cor. 3:6*) - hoping to find eternal life therein, *rather than in Christ the Lord* – the Spirit which gives life. How about us?

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