



## Chapter 2

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# SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: A MUST IN THESE LAST DAYS

**W**e have heard much of the “unsinkable” *Titanic*. Its tragic fate screams to posterity of man’s apathy and disregard for caution in the face of danger. Now, as we seem to be speeding toward the end of the age and the ultimate conflict between good and evil, are we similarly choosing to ignore blatant warnings? Are we ready with the Spirit’s Sword in hand, prepared to stand against an enemy bent on our destruction? Or do we lounge in comfortable apathy, like those on the *Titanic*, clinging to a false security of what we want to believe will never change?

In the end, there are two things in this whole world that will endure against the backdrop of eternity — two things that will last forever — the soul of man, and the Word of God. You and I will live forever in the light of our earthly commitment. Only by hiding the eternal utterances of God in our hearts can we maintain focus on eternal worth in a world of accelerating evil and chaos.

Genesis 2:7 tells us:

*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. (KJV)*

Notice that the Lord God *breathed into his nostrils the breath of life*. The soul of man is God-breathed! And,

*All Scripture is God-breathed.... (II Timothy 3:16)*

Man's soul and God's Word are on the same wave length. They have the same root source. It is through His Word that God breathes sustaining life into our souls. Scripture is our umbilical cord to our Creator.

Jesus Himself said:

*"The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life." (John 6:63)*

I am not a Greek scholar, but the back of my concordance says that the word *spirit* here is the Greek word *pneuma* meaning a "current of air" or "breath". So Jesus was saying, "The words that I speak to you, they are *breath* and they are *life*". God's powerful declaration, given to His people through Moses, also echoes to us down through the centuries:

*"They are not just idle words for you — they are your life." (Deuteronomy 32:47 - emphasis added)*

Our souls must have constant sustenance from our eternal source in order for us to function as spiritual beings. When He was tempted by Satan, Jesus said:

*“Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”  
(Matthew 4:4)*

In other words, we must have this world’s bread in order to function physically, but the heavenly bread of God’s holy Word is every bit as vital in order for us to function spiritually.

Physical bread we understand. We know that if we don’t eat regularly and adequately, we’ll be weak and sickly. But do we see a spiritual diet that is infrequent and skimpy as detrimental to our spiritual well-being?

A healthy body lets us know in no uncertain terms when it needs food. But at one time when I went on a fast that got out of control, I found that the body’s natural hunger for food gradually diminishes as we approach starvation until both the desire and capacity for food almost disappear.

Barna Research published statistics indicating that 60 - 80% of all Christians do not even *read their Bibles* for as much as 5 minutes *a week*.

*If* this is true, then the vast majority of Christians today are starving spiritually. How could it be that the majority of us who profess to love and serve the eternal God would have little or no appetite for His Word and give it such low priority?

Could it be that we have been so busy feeding on the garbage of this world that our appetite for the

meat and potatoes of Scripture has diminished to the starvation level?

What generation in all of history has enjoyed what you and I take for granted? Who has ever had the abundance of Bibles and the variety of translations that fill our shelves? But what have we done with these lavish resources?

We are all given 10,080 minutes every week to invest as we see fit. Of those, we spend approximately 300 to 400 minutes in actual eating time and that's with no allowance for purchasing or preparation. All of this to assure that these physical bodies are adequately nourished. And how much time do we allow for direct *spiritual* nourishment from God's Word? Could it be that most of us spend less than 5 minutes out of 10,080 that make up a week?

Apparently many of us profess to serve a God for whom we have no time. We seem to have no appetite for His communication to us and must believe that we have no need for His input (or maybe interference) in our lives.

Pouring out his most intimate thoughts to the Lord, the psalmist exclaimed:

*My soul is consumed with longing for Your laws at all times. (Psalm 119:20)*

This should be the natural hunger of God's people for His Word.

A solemn prophecy is recorded in the Book of Amos:

*"The days are coming," declares the Sovereign Lord, "when I will send a famine through the land —*

*not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. Men will stagger from sea to sea and wander from north to east, searching for the Word of the Lord, but they will not find it. In that day the lovely young women and strong young men will faint because of thirst.”*  
(Amos 8:11-13)

This was a sober judgment on people who disregarded the Word of God when they had it. The Lord, in essence, just said, “Okay, if you’re not interested in what I’m saying to you, I’ll no longer give you the option of ignoring it.” And He vowed to remove every trace from their land. Could this be where we are headed?

You and I are living at a very crucial time in history. In recent years we’ve seen Judeo-Christian principles plummet from being the accepted standard of behavior and ethics to the present climate of skepticism, even animosity.

Nero blamed the fire of Rome on Christians in order to create prejudice preparatory to launching his cruel persecutions. Hitler blamed the Jews for misfortunes in Germany preceding the holocaust. It’s interesting that in recent years we have seen so called “Right Wing Extremists” accused by some of everything from the assassination of John Kennedy to the Oklahoma City bombing. And often, it seems an effort is made to also include the Christian Coalition and/or the Moral Majority.

We see the effort more and more to cast Christians as vicious, mean, narrow-minded extremists trying to tell everyone else how to live and “forcing” their beliefs on

others. I think we can look forward to seeing these attitudes becoming increasingly more aggressive.

So, as we see absolutes disappear and moral standards decline to base animal instincts, it's not difficult to anticipate a time, perhaps not far away, when our precious Scriptures could well be viewed as a threat to governmental authority and targeted for confiscation. Whereas a few years ago this would have been unthinkable, today it seems almost imminent. But many Christians still cling to the comfortable assurances we have enjoyed in the past, ignoring ominous clouds that threaten our future. We need to be aware. It was William Buckley who cautioned us, "Little clouds on the horizon grow to be big clouds that engulf us."

Yes, the ill-fated Titanic looms in history as a landmark example of similar apathy and presumption.

The Titanic was the largest and most sumptuous vessel ever put to sea. It carried the world's richest and most famous people. It towered 175 feet into the air, about the equivalent of a 21 story building and was 900 feet long, about 1/6 of a mile. Many considered it unsinkable.

Before the voyage, the Captain, in his delusion of infallibility was quoted as saying, "I can't imagine any condition that would cause this ship to flounder. Modern technology has gotten beyond that." Such misplaced confidence undoubtedly contributed to his doom, his and more than 1500 others.

On the Titanic nothing had been spared in regard to comfort, accommodation, convenience, style and luxury. It was described as a "*floating palace*". The social

atmosphere was said to be “*too good to last*”. The wireless operators were so busy sending and receiving messages for the passengers they didn’t even bother delivering some of the warning messages to the bridge. (Those that did make it were pretty much ignored. After all, the ship was unsinkable, wasn’t it?) The idea of sending the first S.O.S. was regarded as an enormous joke. One historian noted, “*Complacency* was written over the entire story.”

This was the atmosphere that set the stage for what has been called the most tragic shipwreck in history. In hindsight, it seems like a tragedy that by all accounts might have been avoided had there been adequate concern and caution by those in charge. There seem to be a lot of “if only’s” that could have made the difference between life and death for some, if not all, of those who perished in the icy waters of the North Atlantic.

If only the captain had not blindly accepted what was considered to be the status quo and taken the iceberg warnings seriously.

If only the ship had slowed down or stopped for the night instead of increasing speed in order to get through the ice field in a hurry.

If only they hadn’t tried to turn the ship when they spotted the massive iceberg.

If only the *California* had responded to the distress rockets that burst brightly in the night sky. It was less than 20 miles away.

If only there had been adequate life boats. (There were only enough to accommodate about half of those

on board because they were considered merely cosmetic. Everyone “knew” they would never be used.) If only the lifeboats that were only partially filled had made more of an effort to rescue some of the screaming people drowning in the icy waters.

It appears that one of the greatest tragedies of all was that many of the passengers on the Titanic just could not bring themselves to believe that their lavish floating city could ever sink. Even when stewards knocked on doors to alert passengers, there were those who just rolled over in bed convinced that nothing could be seriously wrong. Their faith in the ship was unsinkable, but the object of their faith could not stand the test.

Many chose to cling to the lights, warmth and music of the sinking vessel rather than board life boats and face the unknown of a dark night and freezing waters.

Some lifeboats left with only a handful of people, while many who could have been saved clung to a false security realizing their folly only when it was too late to correct.

Of the 2200+ people on board only 705 were saved in lifeboats that had a capacity for 1178, while more than 1500 perished in the freezing water.

Are the parallels not evident? Do you see many Christians today clinging to a false security even now as rockets erupt on all sides warning us that we are no longer in friendly waters?

Do we find the warmth of Christian fellowship, the spoon feeding of Bible teachers and the seeming security of our sheltered existence too comfortable for us



to stir from our lethargy and take note that our ship is starting to flounder?

Is the *discipline* part of discipleship too distasteful for us to accept?

What about taking God's Word seriously and giving it priority in our lives?

What about facing up to our need for constant spiritual sustenance for survival?

What about memorizing Scripture, not just a verse here and there, but building verses into chapters and chapters into books?

What about facing up to the reality that after all, we are targets of a powerful and aggressive enemy who is bent on our destruction and the destruction of all we hold dear?

What about preparing for spiritual warfare that promises to be more devastating than anything ever before experienced in all of history?

And just where is God's army in all this? Oh, you may not hear these exact words, but in their own way many respond, "Who wants to be bothered? Memorizing Scripture is a drag! It requires discipline. It requires commitment and *time*. Who has the time?" Many actually see this vital part of the Christian life, this joy and enormous privilege, as an intrusion on the sweet apathy that consumes their life.

**But there are icebergs ahead!!**

Paul told us:

*...mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. (II Timothy 3:1 )*

Nearly every prophesy scholar I know is saying that we will almost surely go into persecution if the Lord tarries.

Speaking about the last days Jesus Himself said:

*“Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.” (Matthew 24:12-13)*

*The love of most will grow cold....* This has to mean that the majority of Christians are going to crumble amidst the advance of evil we can expect in the last days. And if you and I are going to *stand firm*, we need to be sure we’re standing on solid ground, not on a sinking ship.

Have you noticed how many times the word *stand* is used in that powerful passage on spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6?

*Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes... put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then.... (emphasis added)*

*How?* How are we commanded to prepare for such warfare in order to *stand* against the forces of evil?

Our Lord doesn't just give us a mere suggestion or recommendation on how to prepare. We have here an *order* from our Commander in Chief, the One who is well aware of what is ahead for us. He has told us that if we don't know how to stand we're going to be overrun with the evil that is coming. This is His command to His troops, "***Stand!***"

***with the belt of truth buckled around your waist:***

Where do we find truth in all this universe, if not in Scripture? Jesus left no room for doubt. Talking with His Father, He said:

***"Father... Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth."*** (John 17:1,17, KJV - *emphasis added*)

***with the breastplate of righteousness in place:***

What is the secret of living a righteous life? What did Jesus say?

***"Father... Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth."*** (*emphasis added*)

The word *sanctify* here is the Greek word *haglazo* which means "to make holy" or "to purify". Jesus' prayer for you and me was that we would be *purified* and *made holy*. And how was this to be accomplished? Jesus tells us, it is through His Word! Through the precious Word of God.

The cause and effect relevancy between memorizing God's Word, and a righteous life is clearly taught throughout Scripture.

The psalmist said:

*I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You. (Psalm 119:11)*

Why did he hide God's Word in his heart? He didn't want to sin! He knew the secret of a godly life. It was hiding God's Word in his heart. It was in his heart, not just in a revered book lying on the coffee table.

Speaking about a righteous man, David said:

*The law of his God is in his heart; his feet do not slip. (Psalm 37:31)*

Why was he able to stand? Why didn't his feet slip? *The law of His God was in his heart.* It wasn't just in a book he carried around with him.

***with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace:***

Where is it that we learn about the *gospel of peace* and what is our instrument for spreading it if not through the Word of God?

***take up the shield of faith:***

Where does faith come from?

*...faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. (Romans 10:17, NKJV)*

***take the helmet of salvation:***

Again assurance of our eternal salvation lies only in the integrity of our God and in His Word.

***and (take) the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God:***

To complete our armor and equip us for spiritual combat, the Lord gives us the most powerful weapon available on this earth, *the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God*. It is the only piece of our armor that can be used for offensive as well as for defensive warfare.

How long do you think a soldier of that day would last if he left his sword at home when he went out to face an aggressive enemy?

Yet how many of us go out every day to face an enemy whose sole aim is to steal, kill and destroy, and leave our sword at home on the coffee table? It's only as we *memorize* Scripture that it becomes a sword we have with us to use when we need it. Our enemy doesn't say, "Okay, I'll be launching an attack at 3:15 this afternoon, so you'd better take your Bible." That's not the way he works, is it? He slams us in our weakest point when we least expect it. And if we're not prepared, we'll surely be the victim, not the victor.

Now as never before, as satanic forces launch toward the showdown of the ages, we need to make sure that we have our armor securely in place and our Sword firmly in hand. With new technology and perverted

minds, things could get very ugly very fast. Our Lord has told us that when this happens, most of us are not going to be able to handle it.

The very fact that you're reading this book says that you are aware of the power of Scripture and have a desire to enter more deeply into its truths. *You* were chosen before the creation of the world to live at this particular time in history and to stand for the Lord in this crucial day. You're not reading this now by mere coincidence, but by the design of the One who wants to guide your life. What you do from here will be vital not only for you but for your wife, your husband, your children, your friends, your church, and every life you touch.

We don't know what is ahead, but we do know that we are entering treacherous waters. I challenge you to start storing God's Word, in context, in your heart where no one can ever take it from you. This is a place where it will diffuse into your daily life and give you a solid base on which to stand now and in the days ahead.

Remember, there are two things in this world that will last forever — the soul of man and the Word of God. Again let me say, if you truly want to walk with the Lord and stand against a treacherous enemy now in his last desperate struggle for survival, be sure God's Word is living in your heart as you memorize it and make it a vital part of your life.