

Systematic Theology Week 4

[From Wikipedia]

The original manuscripts did not contain the chapter and verse divisions in the numbered form familiar to modern readers. In antiquity Hebrew texts were divided into paragraphs (*parashot*) that were identified by two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. *Pe* indicated an "open" paragraph that began on a new line, while *Samekh* indicated a "closed" paragraph that began on the same line after a small space.

The earliest known copies of the Book of Isaiah from the Dead Sea Scrolls use these two Hebrew letters for their paragraph divisions, although they differ slightly from the Masoretic divisions.

The Hebrew Bible was also divided into some larger sections. In Israel the five books of Moses were divided into 154 sections so that they could be read through aloud in weekly worship over the course of three years. In Babylonia, the Torah was divided into 53 or 54 sections so it could be read through in one year.

The New Testament was divided into topical sections known as *kephalaia* (the head, or a heading) by the fourth century. Eusebius of Caesarea divided the gospels into parts that he listed in tables or canons. Neither of these systems corresponds with modern chapter divisions.

Archbishop Stephen Langton and Cardinal Hugo de Sancto Caro developed different schemas for systematic division of the Bible in the early 13th century. It is the system of Archbishop Langton on which the modern chapter divisions are based.

For at least a thousand years the Tanakh (the Jewish Scriptures) has contained an extensive system of multiple levels of section, paragraph, and phrasal divisions that were indicated in Masoretic vocalization and cantillation (liturgical chanting) markings. One of the most frequent of these was a special type of punctuation, the *sof passuq*, symbol for a full stop or sentence break, resembling the colon (:) of English and Latin orthography.

With the advent of the printing press and the translation of the Bible into English, Old Testament versifications were made that correspond predominantly with the existing Hebrew full stops, with a few isolated exceptions. A product of meticulous labor and unwearied attention, the Old Testament verse divisions stand today in essentially the same places as they have been passed down since antiquity. Most attribute these to Rabbi Isaac Nathan ben Kalonymus's work for the first Hebrew Bible concordance around 1440.

The first person to divide New Testament chapters into verses was Italian Dominican biblical scholar Santi Pagnini (1470–1541), but his system was never widely adopted. Robert Estienne created an alternate numbering in his 1551 edition of the Greek New Testament, which was also used in his 1553 publication of the Bible in French. Estienne's system of division was widely adopted and it is this system that is found in almost all modern

The first English New Testament to use the verse divisions was a 1557 translation by William Whittingham (c. 1524-1579). The first Bible in English to use both chapters and verses was the Geneva Bible published shortly afterwards in 1560. These verse divisions soon gained acceptance as a standard way to notate verses, and have since been used in nearly all English Bibles and the vast majority of those in other languages.

So, since the Bible is verifiably true – which means that it is indeed the word of God, and therefore the best verification of itself, the best defense of itself and the best explanation of itself. The word is the best source for knowledge of God, the revelation of God's will, and the expectations placed on all those whom He has elected and called.

The Bible is its own best authority.

What God has said is so important to God that when His Son appeared on the stage of history, He was given the name, Logos, translated "the Word." Jesus was the word of God incarnate ... He was the embodiment of everything God had said, walking in shoe leather on this dusty ball.

Jesus is called “the Word.” Not the action. Not the work. Not the plan, intention, or purpose. The Word. Logos. Intelligence demonstrated by spoken word. Jesus was directly identified with the revelation of God through what he SAID to His people.

I don't know how to express the supremacy of God's word over everything else any better than by reading:

John 1:1-4 --In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Let's go way back ---

The earliest writing of God's word is probably the Ten Commandments, written by the finger of God. They were apparently written in Hebrew, a known, spoken language, so they were written for man by God. Once they were written (twice, no less), they were non-negotiable. The people of Israel had no say in the matter.

God's word is rigorous. Moses had to follow every direction and assignment in detail. He was not allowed to change it, rearrange it, modify it, simplify it, make it more palatable, or adjust it according to the majority opinion within the camp. Israel did not vote on it.

This tabernacle, made this way, with this furniture, with these sacrifices, at this time, with this incense, and this showbread, by this priest. No ifs, ands, or buts.

(“God said it. I believe it. That settles it.”)

As the Old Testament progressed and God revealed more and more about Himself, His prophets repeatedly pointed to God's word and emphasized it's faithfulness, stability, and dependability.

"My covenant I will not violate, Nor will I alter the utterance of My lips.
(Ps. 89:34)

The Scriptures cannot be broken (destroyed or dissolved), according to Jesus in John 10:35.

One of the most common phrases in Davidic / Psalmic literature is "According to thy word"

According to Amos 8:11, when God punishes people, He does so by withholding His word –

Amos 8:11

"Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord GOD, "When I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, But rather for hearing the words of the LORD.

But, the blessing of God is when His word descends --

Isaiah. 55:10-11

"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

Isa. 66:1-2

"Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the Lord. This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word."

Talking about the gospel like they know what it is. Lack of reverence, lack of fear. In the Bible, men like Isaiah or Ezekiel saw visions of God that made them tremble. The children of Israel were fearful of the dark clouds, thunders, and the voice that spoke from Sinai. But, we have become too familiar with the word that we forget to be reverently fearful ... to tremble at the word of God and know that He isn't playing around. He's serious about every word that proceeds from His mouth. So should we be.

Tangential preaching is tantamount to a denial of the sufficiency and power of God's word.