

The Bible: Our Gold Standard

Joe Slater

On June 5, 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt took the United States off the gold standard. Prior to that time, you could walk into a bank and exchange your paper money for a set amount of gold. The value of goods and services could be measured against gold. Now the dollar floats; its value depends on the confidence people have in the economy.

Regardless of your opinion about the gold standard as monetary policy, think of it in spiritual terms. God's word (the Bible) is the gold standard. The worth of any teaching, opinion, or idea must be measured against the Bible. Even when the apostle Paul was preaching in the city of Berea, those who heard him are remembered to this day because they *"examined the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so"* (Acts 17:11).

In every age where God's word has been written, He has forbidden people to add to it, take from it, or alter it in any way. *"You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor shall you take from it . . ."* (Deut. 4:2). *"For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, and from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book"* (Revelation 22:18, 19).

We live in an "anything goes" world! Let us be diligent and careful that we may *"prove all things; hold fast to what is good"* (1 Thessalonians 5:21). We must measure everything by the gold standard: The Bible, God's written word.

The Inspector

About midway through my career, I worked as a machinist inspector. My primary job was to assure that machining operations conformed to the specifications. After a part or vehicle was machined with new surfaces or holes, I would measure the dimensions and compare those measurements to the technical drawings. If the dimensions didn't match the ones on the drawing, then I had to reject the work.

A lot of the time my friends had worked very hard on the job, and it was very difficult to tell them they would have to do it all over again. Needless to say, there were times they weren't very happy with me, but I had a job to do and had no choice but to hang that "red tag" on their work.

As a minister of the gospel of Christ I have the responsibility of teaching and preaching according to the standards laid out in the inspired word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). I have an obligation to study and learn those standards so I can convey them to you in a way that is truthful and easy to understand. Just as with inspecting my friends work on the job there are times that I have to preach about things I know some of my church family members struggle with and it's difficult for me to do. But just as the worker has to correct his mistakes, you and I must do our best to correct those things in our lives that go against God's standards.

"Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20).

--Jay Launius (Maud, TX)

Keep Your Flame Lit!

The Olympics has a very long and illustrious history. For thousands of years, some of the most talented people in the world have displayed their abilities. Over such time, several events have come and gone. One such event was a Greek race with a strange objective. Each person was given a torch, but the goal wasn't to win. The goal was to simply finish the entire race with your torch still lit (J. Stowell, Fan The Flame, Moody, 1986, p. 32).

The Christian life is often compared to a race (Hebrews 12:1; Galatians 5:7; 2 Timothy 4:7). It's not a sprint. The point isn't to get to heaven the fastest. The goal is simply to make it to the finish with our spiritual torches still aflame.

Satan would like nothing more than to see us fail this race. Far too many storms and difficulties threaten to blow out our spiritual flames. We must endure! *"Blessed is the man who endures temptation"* (James 1:12). *"We also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance, and perseverance character, and character hope"* (Romans 5:3-4). *"For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise"* Hebrews 10:36).

So, keep going. Keep pressing on. Keep your eye on the prize. Don't give up. Let's assist each other. Let's support each other. Let's help each other get to heaven. Then, at long last, we will be rewarded with that prize, the crown of life, for finishing the race (Revelation 2:10).

No matter what, keep your spiritual flame burning and finish this race!

--via Athens, AL