

A LIVING DOCUMENT

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We are often told by some political pundits that the United States Constitution is a “living document” and, as a result, is ever changing and developing. Others, in response, would say that it is not an ever changing and evolving document. The truth is that the Constitution is a living document but it is not ever changing and evolving. It is a living document because it is alive and effective today, unlike Hammurabi’s Code or any other code or constitution that is not in use today.

However, just because the United States document is a living document does not mean it can be changed or, a whim by the President, the Supreme Court the political party in power, or any others who want to see something different in the Constitution. There is a mechanism for changing the Constitution and that is set forth in the document itself. That mechanism is that any changes or amendments must be approved through the ballot box and it must be approved by two thirds of the states before it can become part of the constitution. Sometimes amendments are offered and are approved. On other occasions they do not get sufficient votes and do not become part of the Constitution.

The Bible is also a “living document.” Note what the Hebrews writer states:

“FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS QUICK, AND POWERFUL, AND SHARPER THAN ANY TWO EDGED SWORD, PIERCING EVEN TO THE DIVIDING ASUNDER OF SOUL AND SPIRIT, AND OF THE JOINTS AND MARROW AND IS A DISCERNER OF THE THOUGHTS AND INTENTS OF THE HEART” (**Hebrews 4:12**)

The word *quick*, we are told from the dictionary, means in Old English; “alive, animated, alert.” The American Standard Version translates the passage:

“FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS **LIVING, AND ACTIVE** AND SHARPER THAN ANY TWO-EDGED SWORD, AND PIERCING EVEN TO THE DIVIDING OF SOUL AND SPIRIT, OF BOTH JOINTS AND MARROW, AND QUICK TO DISCERN THE THOUGHTS AND INTENTS OF THE HEART” (emp. KC).

Thayer’s Lexicon gives us the prime definition of the Greek word translated “quick” as being “to live, breathe, be among the living (not lifeless, not dead).” We still occasionally use the word “quick” in this way as in the “quick and the dead.”

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Since the Bible is a “living document,” does that mean that it can be changed? It would, if it contained a mechanism for bringing about change, as does the United States Constitution. However, the Bible contains no such mechanism, but rather teaches that it is not changeable and gives dire warning to those who would seek to change it. The children of Israel were warned concerning the Old Testament law:

“FOR ASK NOW OF THE DAYS THAT ARE PAST, WHICH WERE BEFORE THEE, SINCE THE DAY THAT GOD CREATED MAN UPON THE EARTH, AND ASK FROM THE ONE SIDE OF HEAVEN UNTO THE OTHER, WHETHER THERE HATH BEEN ANY SUCH THING AS THIS GREAT THING IS, OR HATH BEEN HEARD LIKE IT?” (**Deuteronomy 4:32**).

The Proverbs writer tells us:

“EVERY WORD OF GOD IS PURE: HE IS A SHIELD UNTO THEM THAT PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIM. ADD THOU NOT UNTO HIS WORDS, LEST HE REPROVE THEE, AND THOU BE FOUND A LIAR.” (**Proverbs 30:5-6**).

In the final book of the Bible, close to the end of the last chapter, John writes:

“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (**Revelation 22:18-19**).

Yes, the Bible, God’s Word, is a living document. It is still binding today, and no man, group of men, or denomination has the God-given right to change it by adding to or taking away from that which God has, by inspiration, given to us. Let us never be guilty of seeking to change God’s Word to suit our desires and thereby bring on us the wrath of God.