

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Theology Bites–The Bible, Pt 2

Selected Passages

PowerPoint Presentation: None

Keywords: Word of God, Bible, Inerrancy, Infallible, Authority

SermonAudio blurb:

I. Introduction.

- A. We continue in this series on small bites of key theology.
 - 1. We have considered the person of God.
 - 2. Then we moved on to the doctrine of the bible. **(Show slides again)**
 - a. What I wish to teach on an orthodox view of the bible.
 - b. The challenge in many minds is how do we prove that these answers are correct?
 - c. Last week I began to teach on the fact that all people have presuppositions–impossible not to.
 - d. I also made a very strong statement that it is hard for me to believe that a person can be a Christian and actually believe that the bible is not true.
 - (1) There are men and women who claim Christ who have this position.
 - (2) At best their position as claiming Christ is an inconsistent one.

Bruce sent me an email last week in light of my sermon. What he wrote sheds light on this whole thing:

Here's a couple of things that relate to your current sermon series:

1. Mark Belling was commenting yesterday on Islamic Fascism and how seriously they take their faith. He wondered out loud how serious most professing Christians took theirs. He said he was the worst offender and did not give it much thought at all except at Easter and Christmas. He said he was shallow and he suspected that most were.

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He only took two calls and one guy mentioned that he tried to combat apathy by reading his Bible every day. Belling responded by saying reading it and believing it are two different things and that there was much in the Bible that is confusing. He also said it's a hard book because it judges.

He sounded sincerely reflective but came up short with taking calls. I think Belling was Catholic by birth but at one time attended Elmbrook. He was friends with a local news guy who was a Christian and died of cancer a few years ago so for all I know Belling is a nominal evangelical. He never bashes them anyway.

2. This appears in the Apr 4 edition of World:

"American Baptist College President Forrest Harris on what he says his critics were guilty of when they opposed his decision to allow a lesbian bishop to speak at the school. 'When people say [the Bible] is synonymous with God and the truth. We can't be guided and dictated by a first-century world view, '".

In Belling's case it appears that God can use the Islamo-Fascists to cause Christians to consider the seriousness of their professed faith.

In Harris' case God can expose the compromisers for what they are by their own words.

(3) Two men who would identify with the term "Christian" but both come up very empty when they come before the bible and how it fits into their lives.

- B. I introduced you to two terms, axiopic and autopistic and how they relate to this subject.
1. We learned that the bible does not seek to defend itself; rather, it makes claims that you and I are then challenged to believe or not.
 2. This is not to say that showing evidences from science or history has no value. But it does mean that these can never be the foundation upon which we rest our faith and hope.
 3. The bible is God-breathed and therefore profitable.
 4. The ultimate source of the bible is from God, not man.
 5. It claims things that nothing else can do:
 - a. It is perfect and therefore can restore a soul.
 - b. It is sure and therefore can make a simple person wise.
 - c. It is pure and therefore it enlightens the eye.

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- C. The bible is so unique and yet I believe we don't appreciate it as we ought.
1. Quote out of *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, pg 16, § 1C. 1-9.
 2. The bible has been attacked in every way and from every side and yet it continues to stand. Nothing else can compare to the scrutiny and presumption of guilt that has been poured upon it.
 - a. In A. D. 303 the emperor Diocletian issued an edict to have the bible destroyed. Churches were demolished and any scriptures found were burned (remember no presses back then). Yet survive and flourish is the reality.
 - b. I cannot underplay the effects of evolutionary thought in the modern age upon the new attacks on the bible.
 - (1) "Evolutionary views affected how scholars portrayed the 'unfolding development' of Old Testament faith. Rationalism encourages us to 'demythologize' statements, **not because the text offers grounds for interpreting them symbolically, but because our world view** excludes the possibility of taking them literally" (Goldingay, *Approaches to Old Testament Interpretation*, p. 18, emphasis mine).
 - (2) He is a liberal who freely acknowledges that the presupposition of evolution and the rejection of the supernatural requires certain assumptions on the purpose and meaning of the Old Testament text. This must be understood by those who read liberals or much hurt can occur. **This is their most common presupposition.**
 3. There were the attacks on the Old Testament, especially the Pentateuch.
 - a. "Documentary Hypothesis— key proponent Wellhausen.
 - (1) The presumption is that the first 5 books came from a broad number of different sources or writers. Therefore the goal is to ignore what the text actually says and try to discern who wrote what.
 - (2) This resulted in breaking these sources as P, D, J and E. Unfortunately since there is no way to prove that these even existed even the scholars who buy into this can't agree on who did what and where.

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- (3) Here are the presuppositions driving this movement:
 - (a) Assumption is evolutionary. Therefore mankind started with a primitive animism and evolved to a monotheistic position. It was not until Amos that there was a monotheistic idea of a god.
 - (b) Israel did not exist until Moses.
 - (c) The bulk of the Old Testament is after the Exile. Only a small amount of the Pentateuch was preserved in its original shape.
 - (d) There is no possibility of really knowing what took place in the Pentateuch from a historical position because it is not history, it is ancient myth and story-telling.
- b. Form Criticism.
 - (1) This is an outgrowth of the documentary hypothesis. The idea here is that instead of trying to find the various written sources behind the bible, instead we can try to discern the oral teachings that are behind the written sources that are behind the bible.
 - (2) The assumption is that because the Pentateuch is from multiple sources over multiple centuries and with multiple agendas and beliefs that careful study can discern the “life setting” that each tradition arose out of.
 - (3) Again you have no concern about what is actually written in the Old Testament. You merely have the presumption that it is not meaning what it says.
4. These ideas are carried forward into the New Testament with a few new twists..
 - a. However instead of going into all of that it is enough to say that there are certain driving presuppositions that move scholars to reject the New Testament as well.
 - b. The prevailing assumption is one of naturalism with denies supernaturalism.
 - (1) Therefore any account of anything that sounds like a miracle is rejected.

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- (2) God could not have been behind the writing of the text for there is no God.
 - (3) It makes the writers of the New Testament to be men who made up stories. And assumes that most of the books of the New Testament were not written by those who claim to have written them.
- D. So what do we do with all of this? How do we look at a person and tell him what the bible says and not blush?
1. It really goes back to what we said in the beginning. You either embrace what the bible says about itself or you don't.
 2. But once you do that you have much to consider that helps you.
 3. If the bible is God-breathed and if it is not the product of the minds of men but of God then we need to think about the person of God.

II. The Character of God and The Bible.

- A. God's innate truthfulness.
1. Note that this is important to notice. We are talking about the bible but we cannot do that in a vacuum. We must consider more theology and how all of it interacts with the others.
 2. Numbers 23:19.
 3. 2 Samuel 7:28 note its connection to revelation in vs 27.
 4. Titus 1:2 note its connection to hope and the gospel in the vss above and below.
 5. Hebrews 6:18.
 - a. Note here how the truthfulness of God is bound up in our eternal hope.
 - b. Notes regarding the hope. It is an anchor of the soul (19).
 - (1) Soul here represents the whole person, not just some immaterial part.
 - (2) Notice where the anchor is at?
 - (a) It is within the veil. What is that?
 - (b) The holy of holies in the temple in heaven.

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- (c) So, unlike a ship that lets its anchor go down to the ground in the sea; ours ascends into the very core of the holy place in heaven.
 - i) The holy of holies was where the nation of Israel received forgiveness. It was the place where the Ark was kept, which contained the covenant God had made. It was the holy place that spoke of God's covenant love and faithfulness. Yet it was only a shadow of the true one.
 - ii) This is because there is nothing in this world/age in which we can truly stand.
 - iii) As Ecclesiastes says, it is all *hevel*.
- 6. So we have the simple but powerful declaration that in God is truth, it is bound up in His character and person.
- B. The testimony of the scriptures themselves.
 - 1. Psalm 12:6 note therefore the result of them being pure in vs 7.
 - 2. Psalm 119:89.
 - 3. Proverbs 30:5— and it continues to be tested by every new generation of men, all who are continuing the lying words of Satan in the garden with Eve, “Has God really said?”
 - 4. Matthew 5:18.
 - 5. Matthew 24:35.
 - 6. John 17:17 — This one makes the Scripture the final standard of truth. It is by its very nature “truth.”
- C. Authority.
 - 1. If these are God's words and they are truth and tested then they have authority.
 - 2. Old Testament Prophets:
 - a. The introductory formulas for prophecy. “Thus saith the Lord” “The Lord spoke, saying” “The word of the Lord came”
 - b. Internal fulfillment perspectives.

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- (1) Daniel 9:2 — Here Daniel views the prophecy of Jeremiah 25:11-12 as literal and authoritative.
- (2) 1 Peter 1:10-11.
- c. Illustrations:
 - (1) Deuteronomy 32:45-47.
 - (2) Joshua 1:7-8; 8:32-35.
 - (3) Nehemiah 8, 13.
 - (4) Isaiah 40:6-8; 55:11.
 - (5) Jeremiah 5:14; 23:29.
3. The Lord Jesus Christ.
 - a. Note that to be errant in your bibliology will make you liberal in your Christology.
 - b. Backward-looking authority— Old Testament prophetic writings.
 - (1) Matthew 2:4-6; 4:4, 6, 10; 5:17-19 (note response in 7:28-29); 19:4-6; 22:23ff. (note response in vs. 46); 24:15, 35.
 - (2) Luke 16:17, 19-31; 18:31; 24:25-27, 44-47.
 - (3) John 5:45-47; 10:35b.
 - c. Forward-looking authority— New Testament apostolic writings.
 - (1) John 14:25-26; 15:26-27; 16:13-15 (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:37; 1 John 4:6). In John 14:25-26 Christ is not talking about illumination but inspiration.
 - (2) 1 Corinthians 2:6ff.
4. New Testament Apostles:
 - a. Acts 1:16, 20; 2:14-36 (note the response in vs. 37); 13:16-41 (note the responses in vss 42ff.).
 - b. 1 Corinthians 1:18; 24.
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10; 2:13; 4:2.
 - d. 2 Thessalonians 2:15.
 - e. 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

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- f. Hebrews 4:12-13.
- g. 1 Peter 1:23-25.
- h. 2 Peter 1:19-21; 3:2.
- i. Revelation 1:3.

III. Conclusion.

- A. The place of attack that is always guaranteed is upon the bible. Either in its truthfulness or its authority and usually both.
- B. The Christian faith declares and holds without apology that the bible is the Word of God, it is utterly trustworthy and it alone is authoritative for the Christian.
- C. Therefore let us be a people of the Word of God.

Community Group Questions

- **Make it a point to look up and consider any passages that were skipped in the sermon.**
- **Do you agree with this statement? “It is easier to believe that the bible is without error than it is to believe that it is wholly authoritative in my life?” Why or why not?**
- **Repeatedly in the sermon in one way or another the pastor noted the connection between the bible’s truthfulness and authority to our hope. Why did he think this was worth repeating?**