

BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE

INTRODUCTION

A surprising number of volumes claim to be "the Word of God." Must we read each of them as they appear in order to determine whether or not they are authentic? Are there enough years in a lifetime to examine them all?

The Biblical Christian does not seriously entertain the proposition that additional revelation exists outside the Bible. This is neither a novel nor an adversarial approach. Millions have believed and do now believe that the Bible is God's only volume of Scripture and on that basis automatically rule out the possibility that any other book could be so designated. There are convincing reasons for this. These reasons were not formulated recently. It is because of PRINCIPLE, not an attempt to refute particular organizations, that we accept only the Bible as the Word of God.

1. JESUS CHRIST PROPHESED THAT THE REVELATION OF ALL TRUTH WOULD BE COMPLETE BY THE END OF THE FIRST CENTURY.

- a. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth. . ." (John 16:13).
 - (1) An examination of the broad context beginning in chapter 13 will demonstrate that our Lord was addressing 11 of the original 12 apostles. By the time of our text, Judas had departed to betray Christ. The point is simply this: John 16:13 was spoken to a very specific audience at a known period in history. Furthermore, this audience resided in a particular geographical location.
 - (2) These apostles were promised that THEY would be guided into ALL TRUTH. If language has any meaning, it is clear that all the truth God intended to reveal would be delivered before the last of the original apostles died. They could not be guided into all truth if all truth was not available to them during their lifetime and in their geographical location.
 - (3) Therefore, upon the authority of Jesus Christ Himself, it may be confidently stated that the completion of God's revelation to mankind would occur by A.D. 100 in the eastern hemisphere through the instrumentality of first century apostles.
- b. The "all truth" spoken of by Christ would be known as "the word of God."

- (1) In a prayer to His Heavenly Father, Jesus said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).
 - (2) Following John 16:13 by just one chapter, the words of John 17:17 naturally relate closely to the previous discussion. God's truth is now designated as God's Word.
 - (3) And it should be noted that our Lord did not say that God's Word would simply contain truth or that it would comprise a portion of the truth. Rather, God's Word is the very embodiment of truth.
- c. God's revelation would come in the form of scripture.
- (1) "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16,17).
 - (2) There is nothing more comprehensive than being "perfect" and equipped for "all good works." The instrument to accomplish these goals is the written Word, scripture.
 - (3) Because of the surpassing importance of scripture, the apostle John could write, ". . .Ye need not that any man teach you. . ." (1 John 2:27). It is only as men speak forth accurately what God has recorded in scripture that their words carry divine authority.
- d. Based upon this evidence we ask a crucial question? What volume of Scripture was completed before the end of the first century in the eastern hemisphere through the instrumentality of Christ's apostles, is known as the Word of God, and, therefore constitutes "all truth?" We submit that the Bible and only the Bible meets these God-given tests of authenticity. And if the Bible is "all truth," then no other book can also be the Word of God.

2. GOD HAS PLEDGED TO PRESERVE HIS WORD ETERNALLY.

- a. The question is often raised, "But has the Word of God survived through the centuries?" In other words, has a restoration of truth been needed? Let us see what the Bible has to say about this vital issue.
- b. The preservation of Scripture is expressly stated to be the will of God.

- (1) "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:23).
- (2) "For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations" (Psalm 100:5).
- (3) "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).
- (4) "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18).
- (5) "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).
- (6) "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth" (Psalm 119:89,90).
- (7) "Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever" (Psalm 119:160).

c. God's will must come to pass.

- (1) The character of God is at stake in this discussion. Is God able to actually accomplish that which He has clearly stated that He wants to do, namely to preserve His Word?
- (2) "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isaiah 46:9,10).
- (3) "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations" (Psalm 33:10).
- (4) "There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord" (Proverbs 21:30).
- (5) "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand" (Isaiah 14:24).

- (6) ". . .If it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it. . ." (Acts 5:39).
- d. The purpose of God in salvation is linked to the preservation of His Word .
 - (1) "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:23-25).
 - (2) "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).
 - (3) "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9).

3. ADDITIONS TO THE BIBLE ARE PROHIBITED.

- a. Once it has been determined that the Bible is God's exclusive and eternally preserved Word, the various warnings about altering or adding to it are both logical and conclusive.
- b. "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. . ." (Revelation 22:18,19). It should be noted that reliable scholarship places the book of Revelation chronologically last of all the 66 books of the Bible, greatly intensifying the force of this warning.
- c. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it. . ." (Deuteronomy 4:2).
- d. "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).

CONCLUSION

Is there anything a person now needs to know about time or eternity which is not found in the Bible? Multiplied millions of humble Bible believers enthusiastically testify to the complete sufficiency of this ancient treasure-house of inspired knowledge and wisdom.

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