

REVELATION



INSPIRATION

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ANIMATION



COLLECTION



TRANSLATION



ILLUMINATION



INTERPRETATION



APPLICATION



COMMUNICATION

THE WRITTEN WORD

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, May 31, 2009

Jesus & the Authority of Scripture

It ought to be self-evident that, if anyone claims to truly be a disciple (a devoted student and follower) of Jesus Christ, they will faithfully believe what He Himself believed and taught about the trustworthiness and authority of Scripture.

I. HE AFFIRMED THEIR ABSOLUTE AND UNIVERSAL AUTHORITY.

- A. The Bible was written over a 1,500 year span of time, on three different continents, in three different languages, within multiple generations, by a variety of authors--all from radically different walks of life, cultures and experiences--who wrote on hundreds of different controversial subjects. And yet, there is such an amazing unity of theme in its various parts, and such an absence of contradiction between its assertions, that it's as if it had only one Author.
- B. Jesus thus spoke of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, not as independent books, but as an organic unit (Luke 16:16; 24:44); and treated its assertions as the commandments of God (Mark 7:9-10) that had been given by inspiration through human instruments (Mark 12:35-37). He affirmed this by asserting that, throughout time, the Scriptures of the whole Old Testament will prove to be enduringly trustworthy and authoritative (Matthew 5:17-18; see also 24:35).

II. HE HELD TO THE RELIABILITY OF THEIR HISTORICAL AFFIRMATIONS.

- A. Jesus treated the stories and events of the Old Testament--including the miracles--as if they were factual historic events; and not as if they were mere myths or allegories (Matthew 12:39-42; 19:4-6; Luke 17:26-32).
- B. Someone may argue that the fact that Jesus treated these things as historically true doesn't prove that they actually were. But it does force us to come to one of three conclusions about Jesus Himself: That either (1) He believed that they were factual historic events and was mistaken; or (2) He knew that they were not historic events and only pretend to believe that they were; or (3) He knew them to be historically true and was correct in asserting them to be so. From the Bible's own presentation of Him, it's clear that it means for us to view the third is the only valid option.

III. HE TAUGHT AS THOUGH THE EXTENT OF THEIR RELIABILITY AND AUTHORITY WAS COMPLETE.

- A. Before a hostile audience of biblical scholars, Jesus based His argument for His own deity as the Son of God on just one word from the Old Testament (Matthew 22:41-45). Thus, Jesus viewed the authority of Scripture to extend to its individual words.
- B. Similarly, He based a controversial argument before this same hostile crowd on the fact that a single verb was in the present tense rather than in the past tense (Matthew 22:31-32). Thus, Jesus's view of the authority of Scripture extends even to the grammatical particulars of individual words.

C. He even asserted the divine authority of the individual letters and pen-strokes in which the Scriptures were written (Matthew 5:18; Luke 16:17). Note that when Jesus speaks of the "jot", He was referring to the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet ך (yode) which is silent; and when speaking of the "tittle", He was referring to a tiny little pen-stroke that differentiated one Hebrew letter from another (much like the small stroke that distinguishes an "E" from an "F"), such as in the subtle difference between ך (daleth) and ך (reysh). Thus, Jesus viewed the authority of Scripture to be so complete as to extend to the most thorough level possible.

IV. HE PROMISED EQUAL AUTHORITY FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT AS THAT POSSESSED BY THE OLD TESTAMENT.

- A. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles in their presentation of all that Jesus spoke and taught (John 14:25-26; 16:12-15).
- B. Those apostles affirmed the same truth about their own writings (1 Corinthians 2:12-13); claiming the same authority for their written testimonies as was given to the Old Testament Scriptures (Ephesians 2:20; 2 Peter 3:15-16; Revelation 1:1-3; 22:18-19).

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“The evidence is clear: To Christ the Old Testament was true, authoritative, inspired. To Him the God of the Old Testament was the living God and the teaching of the Old Testament was the teaching of the living God. To Him, what Scripture said, God said” (John Wenham, *Christ and the Bible* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1997], p. 44).