

We are Baptist

Biblical Authority

Introduction

History stands with the relevance and preservation of the Bible. Clearly, God has used His Word mightily regardless of oppression or criticism. Understanding the key doctrines of Biblical Authority helps the believer understand why the Bible has stood the test of time and persecution.

I. Importance of Inspiration

A. What is inspiration?

Both the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Word of God is in view by the apostles, and it is such inspiration that Christians accept. Plenary Inspiration means that every book, chapter, and verse of the Bible comes directly from God. Verbal Inspiration explains that God divinely inspires both the text and the themes contained in Scripture.

The word “inspired” (theopneustos - a technical term for the Holy Spirit’s supernatural guidance of those men who received special revelation to write) actually comes from two Greek words “theos” (God), and “pneo” (to breathe). Therefore, the Scriptural use of the word means, “God-breathed”. The Scriptures originated with God.

Quotes on Inspiration:

- We hold to the verbal plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. That which states in drawing up the original manuscripts, the sacred authors were guided in such a way that they transmitted perfectly, without error, the exact message which God desired to communicate to man. (Rene Pache)
- It contains the same complete authority with believers, when they are satisfied of its divine origin, as if they heard the very words pronounced by God himself. (John Calvin)
- We contend for every word of the Bible and believe in the verbal, literal inspiration of the Holy Scripture. Indeed, we believe there can be no other kind of inspiration. If the words

are taken from us, the exact meaning is of itself lost. (Charles Spurgeon)

B. The Bible claims its own inerrancy (Jeremiah 1:7-9)

- 3808 times the authors claim to be transmitting the very words of God.
- (Deut. 4:2 / 6:1-2, 6-9 / 12:32)
- (Psalms 19:7 / 119:42, 96, 140, 142, 151, 160, 172)
- Matthew 5:18 – not one jot or tittle shall pass away
- John 10:35 – scripture cannot be broken
- Scripture is not by the will of man (1 Peter 2:20-21), but the prophets of old wrote as the Holy Spirit inspired them.

II. The Preservation of Scripture

"If you and I believe that the original writings of the Scriptures were verbally inspired by God, then of necessity they must have been providentially preserved through the ages." (John Bunyan)

(Psalm 12:6, 19:7, 33:11, 100:5, Matthew 24:35, Luke 16:17)

A. Preservation was necessary because of the attacks of Satan. All the way back in Genesis, Satan started questioning God's Word.

1. Yea hath God said?

Genesis 3:1 *Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*

2. Satan began to attack the preservation of God's Word.
3. Today people are still attacking God's Word.

- How do you know this is really God's Word?
- How do you know what God really meant?
- Aren't there many different ways to interpret the Bible?

B. Preservation is a matter of faith.

1. Would God inspire His Word only to have it pass away?

Psalm 100:5 *For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.*

Matt 24:35 *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*

- If you believe in inspiration, then to believe the Bible is still intact one must believe in the doctrine of preservation as well.

2. God's Word tells us that it is preserved!

Ps 33:11 *The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.*

Matt 24:35 *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*

C. God has kept His Word completely intact.

John 10:35 *If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;*

Question: Since the Bible was written so many years ago, and since other books have been written that claim to also be from God, how do we know what is and isn't Scripture?

III. Canonicity (man's recognition of God's Word)

A. Definition of canon

- A "canon" was a measuring rod or a reed used to measure (*Ezek. 40:3*)
- The word "canon" comes from the Greek word "kanon" which referred to a standard or rule by which one's writings or practices were measured (EX: *II Cor. 10:13; Gal. 6:16; Phil. 3:16*).
- Canonicity deals with the recognition and acceptance of Scripture by men.
- Whereas inspiration reveals how the Bible received its authority, canonization tells how the Bible received its acceptance.

NOTE: Men can only discover which books were inspired. It is God who determined which books were inspired.

B. Necessity of a canon

Having criteria to measure the authenticity of books, and then making a list of recognized books was necessary for the following reasons:

1. The death of the apostles
2. The abundance of false teachers
3. The production of false writings

- The Old Testament Apocrypha (14 "hidden" books)

I Esdras, II Esdras, Tobit, Judith, the rest of Esther, the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (the wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach), Baruch, the Son of the Three Holy Children, the History of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, the Prayer of Manasseh, I Maccabees, II Maccabees.

* These books were written during the silent years - 400 B.C. -- the birth of Christ.

- New Testament Pseudepigrapha ("false writings")

A large number of Jewish works attributed to men of Scripture, but were false (EX: I Enoch, Martyrdom of Isaiah, Sibylline Oracles).

- The New Testament Apocrypha

Books that circulated during the early stages of the Christian era, which supposedly related details about Christ and the apostles, but were never considered to be canonical.

EX: The Gospel of Peter, The Gospel of the Egyptians, The Gospel of Thomas, The Gospel of Nicodemus, the Epistle to the Laodiceans (which was a plagiarization of Philippians).

NOTE: The following list some of the reasons these books were rejected from the canon:

- They abound in historical and geographical inaccuracies (EX: II Maccabees)

- They teach doctrines which are false and contrary to inspired Scripture (much docetism, gnosticism and immorality (EX: Judith))
- They resort to literary types and display an artificiality of subject matter and style inconsistent with inspired Scripture (EX: Tobit)
- They propagate the fanciful, mystical (EX: Bel and the dragon), and fictitious.
- They lack the distinctive elements, which give genuine Scripture its divine character. Much imitation and plagiarism. (EX: II Esdras, the Epistle to the Laodiceans, the Epistle of Barnabas)

C. Rules for acknowledging canonicity

Principles were employed by early historians (Eusebius d. 340) and believers (Polycarp d. 155) in order to recognize which books measured up to the canon (standard).

NOTE: While no official list has been discovered of the rules they used, a compilation of their comments about Scripture in their writings would reveal the following criteria which they demanded before they would accept a book as being from God:

1. Apostolic origin or authority
(*Jn. 16:13; Jn. 2:22; Eph. 2:20-22; I Cor. 14:37; II Pet. 3:15-17; Heb. 1:1-3*)
2. Doctrinal consistency with former revelation and apostolic teaching
(*Gal. 1:8-9; Dt. 13*)
3. Evidence of divine inspiration
4. Reception and preservation by New Testament believers
(*1 Thes. 5:27, 1 Tim. 4:13, Col. 4:16*)
5. Christological – Is the book centered on Jesus Christ?
(*Luke 24:27, II Cor. 5:20*)

IV. Three Major Positions Concerning the Word of God

A. The King James Only Position

1. This view states that the King James Version of the Bible as a translation is inspired.
2. Problems with this view.
 - Most holding this view do not seek to base their position upon Scripture or even history as such. Rather, it is founded upon a circular rationale, which goes something like this: “The Bible is the inspired Word of God. The Bible I hold in my hand is the King James Version. Therefore, the King James Bible is the inspired Word of God. Accordingly, when the King James Version translators accomplished their translation in A.D. 1611, they were inspired. Thus, the result of their work, the King James Version, is inspired and is the exclusive manifestation of the Word of God in this age.”
 - The Bible we hold in our hand today is not the 1611 version. We use the 1769 edition. There were also eight other revisions and editions to the King James Version between 1611 and 1769: 1612, 1613, 1629, 1631, 1638, 1717, 1745, 1762)
 - It ignores the difference between inspiration and preservation.
 - It opens up for errors in translating into other languages when you do not go back to the Greek and Hebrew and instead try to translate from the English into another language.

B. The Critical Text Position

1. This can be summarized in this way: It is the science of comparing manuscripts with manuscripts to find what appears to be scribal errors.
 - Early manuscripts were all handwritten.
 - The Alexandria texts were purposely altered.

2 Cor 2:17 *For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.*

2. Problems with the critical text view

- Tries to use science to prove the spiritual.
- Uses only the part they want and ignore the fact that 99% of the critical texts they found agree with the received text, however, they only use about 50 documents to try to change the received text. They don't use the other 5,450 because they AGREE with the received text.
- The modern translations come from the critical texts and originated in the last 130 years through the work of Westcott and Hort. These men were liberal modernists who did not believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, nor did they accept that the Bible was inerrant!
- The modern texts come from the Alexandria text or corrupted text.

C. The Preserved Text Position (The Received Text View or Textus Receptus)

1. That the word of God has been preserved throughout the ages in Bible believing churches through the received text. It is called received because it was the accepted Bible by all orthodox, Bible Believing churches of whatever variety up until 120 years ago.

2. Criticisms of the preserved text position.

- You must by faith accept the fact that if God was going to inspire His Word, that He would also be able to preserve it from error as it was passed down through generations.
- It casts a cloud on the other versions as having errors. This is not a problem, but more of a reality.

Conclusion

With a proper understanding of our biblical doctrines, we believe that the King James Version is the Preserved Word of God for the English speaking people. The following are a few of the reasons we hold this view.

- It is the only English-speaking version still from the received text that has been blessed by God for over 400 years.
- It was accepted by all orthodox and independent churches for hundreds of years. There was never a reason to produce another one other than profit which is not a biblical reason.
- When you go back to when the KJV was put together, you can see a supernatural working of God in the production of this Bible. It has the fingerprint of God all over it! The modern texts do not have that element.
- To accept all English versions today is to produce an element of confusion and distraction to the church. Although many versions contain a lot of the Word of God, that is different than saying that they are the preserved Word of God.
- It provides consistency and confidence in the preserved Word of God for the church.