

Baptist Distinctives: The Authority of the Bible

The Central Idea: The Bible is the words and thoughts of God. Therefore, the Bible is our authority for Christian life and practice.

Introduction: Our Current Cultural Climate

1. Our Culture is Anti-Authority
2. Norm for today – You are your own authority
 - a. Human Reason, Experience
 - b. Human Autonomy
 - c. Religion is a matter of personal inclination
3. American Rights and Freedom are good, but often Trump dogmatic assertions of biblical authority
4. The Secular, Humanistic Postmodern World
 - a. Mantra: *What is true for you may not be true for me*
 - b. Truth becomes Subjective (**Judges 21:25**)
5. Truth is Absolute and Objective

Historical Witness & Baptist Doctrine of Biblical Authority

1. 1611 – John Smyth and Thomas Helwys held Scripture above any human authority (Popes, Councils, Synods)
2. Confessions & Statements of Faith
 - a. The Helwys Confession of Faith, 1611
 - b. The Orthodox Creed, 1647
 - c. The Baptist Faith & Message, 2000
3. The Reformation of the Church
 - a. Roman Catholicism has raised tradition as equal to the Scriptures (**See The Catechism of the RCC**)
 - b. Protestants Reject this, Baptists believe they are the logical conclusion of *Sola Scriptura* (Bible Alone)

Definition Of The Authority Of The Bible/Divine Revelation

1. Revelation is the key to God's authority so that the two, revelation and authority may be regarded as the two sides of the same reality. In revelation, God declares His authority (*The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*)
2. Grudem: All words in Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey them would be to disbelieve or disobey God. (*Systematic Theology*)

Foundations Of Biblical Authority: The Being Of God

1. Jesus is God and He has ALL Authority (**Matt 28; Jn 1**)
2. God has all authority, and Scripture comes from God, meaning it has all authority
3. God is Independent and Free (**Psalm 115:3**)
 - a. Any authority that exists on the earth is subordinate to God (parents, government, employment)
4. God is holy, immutable, does not lie – Embodies Truth
 - a. God & Scripture is Unchangeable (**Matt 24:35**)
 - b. God is His own Authority (**Heb 6:13, Ps 103:19**)
 - c. God & Scripture is Holy (**Rom 1:1-2**)
 - d. God & Scripture is Powerful (**Heb 4:12**)
5. Bible Self-Attests to its Authority (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**)
 - a. *All Scripture* – Canonicity of the Bible, the Church recognizes the Voice of God (**John 10:27**)
 - i. The Old Testament (**Is 51:16; Jer 36:6; Mal 1:1**)
 - ii. The New Testament (**2 Pet 3; 2 Tim 5:18; 1 Thess 2:13; Lk 24**)
 - b. *God-Breathed* = Holy Spirit Inspired (**2 Pt 1:20-21**)
 - i. Verbal-Plenary Inspiration – Complete, Vocal
 - c. *Is Profitable*
 - i. The Bible Commands and Obligates Obedience (**Js 1:22; Lk 11:26; Ps 138:2**)

Problems & Objections and the Historical Witness (2)

1. Reason & Evidence – argumentation does not convince
 - a. **See 1 Corinthians 2:14**
 - b. The Holy Spirit convinces the heart and mind
2. Subjective Religious Experience
 - a. 19th-20th Century raises religious experience either equal to or above the authority of the Bible
 - b. Product of the Age of Enlightenment
 - c. Peter subordinates his own religious experience to the Bible (**2 Peter 1:16-19**)
3. Tradition – RCC raised tradition as equal to the Bible
 - a. Inconsistent in their teaching throughout the ages
 - b. Examples of Documents back to the Second Century
 - c. Protestants and Baptists hold to *Sola Scriptura*
 - d. Baptists believe they are the logical conclusion to *Sola Scriptura*: Infant Baptism is not found in the Bible (*Believer's Baptism Next Week*)