

HARD QUESTIONS

THE AUTHORITY AND SUFFICIENCY OF THE BIBLE

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NOTES

After many years of ministry, I have heard the following statement many times: “the Bible says it, I believe it, that settles it.” I can hear the loud “amen” from the amen corner. Yet, experience has taught me that in the midst of the crowd sits someone who silently struggles and says “I’m not sure”, “I have questions”, “I’m struggling.”

I am firmly and deeply convinced that the church should be a safe place for people to ask hard questions. Questions that make us uncomfortable, questions that make us think and examine what we believe. Why do I say this, because I have complete confidence in the Bible and in Jesus Christ. I am convinced we must answer the hard questions or we continue to risk the faith of the next generation. Young people see the shallowness of most and are unwilling to simply swallow pat answers and clichés from Christians. Let’s step up and allow honest, open dialogue believing in the power of the gospel and the authority of God’s Word.

(2 Peter 3:14-18; Genesis 3:1; Luke 4:1-13)

It doesn’t matter what our desires, our culture say, we must conform ourselves to the Word of God. We should always be suspect when we have suddenly found a new interpretation of the Bible that no one has found in 2,000 years and somehow conforms to what societal norms have become. Seems odd on the surface. (J.D. Greear)

“Anytime someone writes a lengthy article or puts up an entire website to explain why a passage in the Bible does not actually mean the clearest, most natural meaning of the words in the text, I’m always glad the author is not my pharmacist.” – *Hershael York*

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2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21

QUESTION? Can I have confidence that the Bible is authentic/accurate?

While most of us would affirm the authenticity of the Scripture, we must ask, “Am I willing to live under the authority and sufficiency of the Scripture?” Perhaps you are here today and you have asked or been asked the question, “How can I know that the Bible is true?” In 2 Timothy 3, Paul encouraged Timothy to live with confidence that God’s Word is trustworthy, the authority, and sufficient for his life.

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KEY THOUGHT:

I want you to live each day with confidence in God's Word as trustworthy, the authority, and the sufficiency for everything you need in life.

About forty men were engaged in the writing of the Bible, during a period of about 1,600 years – that is, from 1500 B.C. to A.D. 100. These men wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet. 1:21). They wrote not in words of human wisdom, but in words divinely taught (1 Cor. 2:13).

The Bible contains 3,566,480 letters, 773,746 words, 31,102 verses, 1,189 chapters, and 66 books. The Old Testament contains 39 books; the New Testament, 27 books. In point of length, the average word of the Bible contains fewer than five letters. What a lesson for the fellow who has a mania for big words!

A biblical worldview interprets, understands, and responds to God, man, creation, and all of life through the lens of God's special revelation, the Holy Scriptures. (Darryl Craft)

"A truly Christian worldview begins with the conviction that God himself has spoken in Scripture." (John MacArthur, THINKING BIBLICALLY, 21)

1. LOOK TO THE SCRIPTURE AS TRUSTWORTHY!

A. External evidence

Norman Geisler "there is more evidence that the New Testament is an accurate historical record than for any book from the ancient world."

As a part of a focus on 'conversational apologetics'

- Manuscripts – example – NT – "the number of the earliest manuscripts available far exceed the number of manuscripts available for any other work in history" 5300 copies of the Greek Texts, 10,000 copies of Latin texts, 9300 copies from other versions exist from the early church era.
- Archaeology
- Early dating of the NT

There are other kinds of evidence that the Bible is true. These have to do with internal consistency and coherence. Although the Bible was written over many centuries by different writers, the messages it contains are coherent and consistent. The Bible presents a coherent theology and worldview and presents this material consistently. Moreover, the Christian worldview is robust, reasonable and grounded in history. (Robert Velarde, Focus on the Family)

B. Internal evidence

- Old Testament evidence – Exodus 4:10-12; Exodus 34:27; Psalm 119
- New Testament evidence

Speaking of 2 Timothy 3:16, John MacArthur has said, "No other passage in the New Testament speaks so concisely of the nature and work of God's Word in salvation and sanctification. In this text, the spiritually transforming power of divine revelation is delineated."

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2 Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;”

Jesus evidence

- » Jesus treated OT passages as statements of fact.
- » Jesus used the OT as the final arbiter in all matters of faith and conduct.
- » Jesus viewed the OT as predicting his life and ministry (John 5:39)
- » Jesus stated the authority of the Old Testament in John 10:35.

2. LIVE AS THE SCRIPTURE IS YOUR AUTHORITY! 2 TIMOTHY 3:16

BF&M: The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

A. All Scripture

“All” is *pas* (πας), which when used with a singular substantive without the article, means “every,” not “all.” “Scripture” here is *graphē* (γραφή), “a writing, thing written,” used of the writings of the o.t. prophets (Matthew 26:56), and of the o.t. Scriptures in general (Matthew 26:54).

B. Inspired

Theopneustos (inspired by God) literally means, “breathed out by God,” or simply, “God-breathed.”

2 Peter 1:20–21 (NASB95) “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

Theopneustos is a word made up of two words. And the imagery back of it is the playing with a flute, blowing through a flute. God blowing through an instrument. And the two words that make it up are *theos*, “God,” and *neustos*. All Scripture—the whole Bible, all of it, “*pas*”—all of it is God’s breath; the Lord’s instrument through which he breathes the truth of the Scriptures.

Inerrancy - John Broadus “Did the inspired writers receive everything by direct revelation? The inspired writers learned many things by observation or inquiry, but they were preserved by the Holy Spirit from error, whether in learning or in writing these things.”

- Verbal – extending to the very words, not just the ideas of Scripture
- Plenary – extending equally to every part of Scripture
- Clear – sufficiently clear for the average person to understand

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3. LEAN ON THE SCRIPTURE IN ITS SUFFICIENCY! HEBREWS 4:12

Clement of Rome ca A.D. 100 “Look carefully into the Scriptures which are the true utterances of the Holy Spirit.”

Hebrews 4:12 (NASB95) “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

A. Profitable

Teaching - *didaskalia* does not refer to the process or method of teaching but to its content. In this context, as in most others in the New Testament, *didaskalia* refers specifically and exclusively to divine instruction, or doctrine, given to believers through God’s Word,

Reproof” is *elegmos* (ἐλεγμος), “conviction.” The verbal form *elegchō* (ἐλεγχω) means “to rebuke another with such effectual wielding of the victorious arms of the truth, as to bring him, if not always to a confession, yet at least to a conviction of his sin” (Trench).

Correction - “Correction” is *epanorthōsis* (ἐπανορθωσις), “restoration to an upright or right state, correction or improvement” of life or character. Vincent translates, “setting right.”

Training - “Instruction” is *paideia* (παιδεία), “the whole training and education of children which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose, now commands and admonitions,

B. Perfecting

“Perfect” is *artios* (ἄρτιος), “complete, fitted,” having reference to special aptitude for given uses. It speaks of “a mutual, symmetrical adjustment of all that goes to make a man: a harmonious combination of different qualities and powers” (Vincent).

Adequate - “Thoroughly furnished” is *exartizō* (ἐξαρτιζω), “to complete, finish.” It has the same root as *artios* (ἄρτιος), the word for “perfect.”

Equipped for every good work - The prefixed preposition *ex* (ἐξ) means “out,” and makes the compound verb mean, “fitted out.”¹

God’s Word is sufficient to meet every need of the human soul as David verifies frequently in his psalms. Psalm 19:7-14 is the most comprehensive statement regarding the sufficiency of Scripture.

TAKE AWAY:

Three Steps to Arming Yourself with the Sword of the Spirit (the Bible).

1. Know It “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11).

2. Be Led By It “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (Psalm 119:105).

3. Obey It “How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.” (Psalm 119:9).

Jesus said, “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who builds his house on the rock” (Matthew 7:24). The Apostle James wrote: “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says” (James 1:22).