

The Authority of Scripture

It is a fundamental doctrine of true Christianity to view the Word of God as the sole authority in all matters of faith and practice. This serves as the foundation on which all the other doctrines are built upon. It is from the Word of God that all the other doctrines are revealed to us in God's truth and therefore it is absolutely essential that the Scriptures be entirely correct, without fault, and thus the very Word of God (we often see this stated as "Verbal Plenary Inspiration" or "The Inerrant, Infallible Word of God"). We believe that the Bible, in its original manuscripts, is most assuredly the Word of God and that the King James Version of the Bible is an accurate and faithful translation for the English speaking world.

We believe that there is an absolute need for a final authority. Without a final authority to guide the practices of the local church, confusion would most certainly enter in. Doctrines would be changed, ignored, removed, or added on. Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 4:2, ***Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.*** We are reminded of this again in Revelation 22:18-19.

Every church, whether or not it admits to it, will have some sort of final authority that guides its practices. The three authorities that most churches have are: Tradition, Human Reasoning, and The Bible.

Tradition based authority includes speech such as, "We have always done it this way!" and "I don't know where it's found in the Bible but I'm sure it's in there!" This authority came to be when unscriptural teachings entered into the church and was not rebuked. Instead, it was accepted and put into practice. Jesus did not approve of this stating in Matthew 15:3, ***But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition.***

Human Reasoning puts the emphases on the social norms on a people. What is generally accepted or rejected by most people becomes the standard on which the church runs. Obviously, this translates into a moving doctrine that changes from generation to generation. Human Reasoning based churches include speech such as, "It feels right to me", "I don't see what the big deal is", "I don't see the need in telling people about Christ, they'll find out somehow." Human Reasoning directly attacks the authority of Scripture by placing it beneath man's intellect. Isaiah reminds us, ***For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.***

Most churches base their authority on the previous two views. However, The only Scriptural view that is supported is that the Word of God is the sole authority for faith and practice. The following are scriptural reasons why.

I. They Come From God And Not Man.

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. - II Peter 1:21

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: - II Timothy 3:16

II. The Scriptures Point To Jesus Christ For Salvation

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. - II Timothy 3:15

III. The Scriptures Are Without Error

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. - Psalm 19:7-8

IV. The Scriptures Are Preserved

The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

- Psalm 12:6-7

We believe that the Bible is the inerrant, infallible, Word of God and it is the sole authority of all matters of faith and practice. This is a fundamental doctrine of true Christianity, which we as Baptists uphold.