

RETURN TO BASIC BIBLE AUTHORITY

Bill Jackson

In Matthew 21:25, in discussing the baptism of John, our Lord directed this question to the Jewish leaders: “The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?” This piercing question confounded these leaders in Judaism, and they were uncomfortable in being brought to the critical point of seeing that all religious matters boil down to this: either God authorized it, or it is a thing of man! We, today, need to recognize that there has been no change in this basic truth.

A generation or so ago, churches of Christ were known as those who demanded a “thus saith the Lord” for all religious practice. Many of those who were urged to forsake denominationalism and obey the truth were first impressed with the fact that the Bible was demanded for all things religious, and they were able to see this as the line separating sectarianism from the Lord’s body. We must recognize today that, in the church, there is not that same stress on the Word as the only authority, and in such a move away from God, we will not and cannot bear the fruit demanded of us. If there is a single cry that needs to be made, for all to hear, it would be this: “Let us return to the Bible as the basis of all of our actions in religion!” There is really no hope for us unless we do this.

Let us now list a few reasons why we must have a return to the Bible:

- (1) Jesus tells us that His Word will be the basis of judgment (John 12:48). He plainly says that the Word will judge us. If the Bible is to be the basis of our judgment, then it is surely vital that we abide by that volume.
- (2) The Bible is inspired (God-breathed), and profitable for us. In 2 Timothy 3:16 Paul tells us that God breathed-out the Scriptures, and that for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, this is the volume giving us the help we need. That being so, then to refuse to be guided by the Bible is to refuse that which God has said is the profitable course. Man will rely on something, if just his own will and pleasure. In spurning the Bible as authority, whatever man turns to will be that which cannot profit nor deliver (1 Sam. 12:21).
- (3) In the same context, 1 Timothy 3, the apostle continues and lets us know that the Bible furnishes a man completely unto all good works (3:17). The work of the Christ, in forming us as a people, was to develop a people for God’s own possession zealous of good works (Titus 2:14). God’s children labor in the realm of doing that which is good, and behind that is the fact that God Himself has declared unto us that which is the good and right thing. To enable us to work in the area of good, and to remain only in that area, God has provided us with the Bible as the authoritative and infallible Guide. We are thus furnished unto every good work. I can thus know that any given work is not good if it is not authorized by the Bible.
- (4) Finally, and certainly not the least in importance, is the fact that our Lord will condemn us if we refuse to abide by the Bible as our authority. The warning is given: “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God” (2 John 9). John continues and brands one a false teacher who does not so abide by this doctrine, and calls the works of such a one “evil deeds” (2 John 11). It is imperative, then, that the people of God remain with the Word of God, and they must if the blessings of God continue to rest upon them.

We have thus noticed that the Lord has made us in Himself, that we might be those who live right and do right, and this is possible only if we abide by the right standard—the Bible! The present-day apostasy is characterized by a disdain for the Word of God, and by a non-caring attitude regarding Bible authority. The same departures from the Bible standard that we have long seen in sectarianism are now too often witnessed among our own people. Many individuals live their lives, and many congregations conduct their activities, with little regard for what the Bible says. In these lines, we have tried to call men back to basic Bible authority in all things, and herein is our only hope! Urging from the apostle Peter is appropriate here: “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11).

IS OUR BIBLE RELIABLE?

Abraham Smith

“The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.” (Psalms 19:9-11). We all ought to place the same value upon scriptures as did the Psalmist, for the Bible is the word of God our Creator. Thus the Savior said *“Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and these are they which testify of me”* (John 5:39).

But some may say, “How do we know that the Bible has not changed”? This is a relevant question. If men changed God’s Word, no longer would it be a message of God, but a message of man. But God assures us, *“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever”* (Isaiah 40:8). In Isaiah 40:26 we read of *“the strength of His power.”* So God has the power to preserve His Word and guard it against corruption. *“Is anything too hard for the Lord?”* (Genesis 18:14). If God who cannot lie says a thing, shall He not do it?

There is so much evidence to show us that the Bible’s message has not changed. Textual Criticism is one way that we can be sure that the New Testament we read is the same one read in the first century. By it, we can know how much change has occurred and by it, one can establish the exact words that were used even if errors are made in some of the manuscripts. In fact, this can be done even if no single manuscript is perfectly accurate.

Let’s suppose that the correct spelling of a word is “Abraham.” Let’s say that there are hundreds of documents with this name on it but some of them are incorrectly spelled. Most give the correct spelling “Abraham,” but the following variants are found in some manuscripts: Arraham, Ebrahim, Abcaham, Abratam, Abreham, and Abrahan. Not one of these latter 6 spellings is correct but any textual critic could determine that the original spelling was Abraham. All a textual critic needs are enough copies to compare.

There is no other document in existence that compares to the New Testament documents in the number of copies. There are in existence over 24,000 ancient copies of the N.T. documents in whole or in part. The earliest was written 25 years after its original writing. When so many manuscripts can be dated so close to the time when written, we should surely agree with the renowned scholar Sir Frederic Kenyon who said, “No other ancient book has anything like such early and plentiful testimony to its text, and no unbiased scholar would deny that the text that has come down to us is substantially sound.”

When we take into consideration the value that copyists placed upon the Scriptures, it is easy to understand why there are no more errors. Their attitude was like the Psalmist who said, *“Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.”* (Psalms 119:127). The Word was precious to them, so they exercised extreme care in copying the scriptures.

So often we hear individuals say something like, “Good reasoning would tell you that after so many years and so many copies that there would be some changes and additions of the copyist’s own “opinion.” It is senseless to put aside evidence available to us that would tell us conclusively whether or how much change had occurred in the Bible in favor of our own reasoning void of evidence. Now we can see why the Bible says in Isaiah 40:8, *“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”* (Adapted by tjk. I do not know the author)

NEWS AND NOTES

“I was sick, and ye visited me...” (Matthew 25:36)

Remember in Prayer:

Nita Felts will have her pacemaker replaced tomorrow, August 31st.

Gretchen Pruitt is receiving rehab after her hip surgery last week and is in Room 5109 at NEA.

Remember those who are suffering from the loss of loved ones:

Jody Pickens in the passing of his mother *Joanne Pickens*. Her graveside service was yesterday in Searcy.

Paul Sherman, whose sister *Michelle Stavonovich*, passed away in Michigan.

Congratulations to new great-grandparents Gerald and Sandy George on their new great-granddaughter born to *Caleb and Courtney George*. Her name is *Kynlee Mae*, and she was 7 pounds, 15 ounces and 21 ½ inches long.

Please check the bulletin boards for updates on Prayer Request Lists.

Please update us if needed.

Pray for those directly and indirectly affected by Covid-19, and please keep us updated.

In Other News:

The Drop-In Wedding Shower for *Kara Kee and David Stone* will be this afternoon, August 30th, in the basement. Hostesses have planned carefully to make it a special and safe occasion. Come inside for refreshments and visit any time from 2 to 4.

Bible classes for 2 years through 6th grade are postponed till further notice. You may find Bible lessons on theleahjournal.com. Let us know if you would like them printed.

Those Privileged To Serve

August 30, 2020

SUNDAY MORNING

Song Leader: Mark Wooten
Opening Prayer: Jeff Presley
Closing Prayer: Stan Honeycutt
Bible Reading: Craig Nelson
Preacher: Terry Joe Kee

LORD'S TABLE

Presiding: J. L. May
Stacy Eddleman Barry Roush
David Loggins Jerry Dodson
Tom Carner Gerald George

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jody Pickens

SUNDAY EVENING

Song Leader: Mark Wooten
Opening Prayer: Mike Felts
Closing Prayer: Coltin Powell
Preacher: Noah Flanrey

WEDNESDAY NIGHT

September 2, 2020
Song Leader: *Singing Night*
Opening Prayer: Jason Garland
Closing Prayer: Ryan Manley

DEVOTIONAL SPEAKER

September 2, 2020
Mike Felts

NUMBERS FOR THE WEEK

Week Of

August 23, 2020

Sunday Bible Study	82
Sunday AM Worship	118
Sunday PM Worship	85
Wednesday Bible Study	82
Contribution	\$6221

“He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: he that keepeth understanding shall find good.”

Proverbs 19:8

The Friend of Truth

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“Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” (Galatians 4:16)

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KeepNotes

I know that under the present circumstances it is not always easy to be upbeat and cheerful. There is no doubt but that depression can set in and we can become very discouraged. When we are so discouraged or depressed, what can help us overcome?

First good music can help. King Saul was often burdened with the burdens of being king and distressed (cf. I Sam. 16:14ff). Saul’s servants suggested music would help and David was called to come and play the harp for Saul. The Bible says that whenever Saul was distressed “David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him” (I Sam.16:23). How much better a Christian can feel when he is singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (cf. Jam. 5:13)?

Secondly, we are helped by good company. When Elijah had fought with the prophets of Baal and defeated them and Ahab wanted to kill him, Elijah thought he was all alone. God told him that there were 7000 who had not bowed their knees to Baal and told him to get up and continue his work (I Kgs. 19:1-18). It was also about this time that Elijah began to mentor Elisha (I Kgs. 19:19-21). Sometimes our loneliness can overcome us and we become depressed. Therefore a good help is to be surrounded by our brethren as often as we can.

Third, good news can always help. “As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country” (Prov. 25:25), the wise man said. From a Roman prison, Paul sent Timothy to Philippi to the brethren so that “I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state” (Phil. 2:19). Good news is refreshing! Where can you go to hear any better good news than in the assembly of the saints hearing the good news of Jesus Christ each week? Then we can meditate upon these things all week and continue to be helped.

Finally, good prayers always help. Elkanah’s wife Hannah was very sad. She had not been able to have children. Furthermore, she was being provoked by Peninnah and made to feel miserable so much so that she “wept and did not eat” (I Sam. 1:1-7). With a “bitterness of soul” Hannah “prayed to the LORD and wept sore” (I Sam. 1:10). After praying she went on her way and the scripture says, “her countenance was no more sad” (I Sam. 1:18). Try these four suggestions and see if your day is “no more sad.”

(These thoughts are revised and adapted from an article by Brent Smith)

SHEPHERDS

Dan Nichols
Randy Oden
Jody Pickens

DEACONS

Scottie Blanchard
Jerry Dodson
Mike Felts
Jason Garland
Marshall Lands
Mark Wooten

EVANGELIST

Terry Joe Kee

MISSIONARIES

Michael Hughes
Samrit Kammanee
Arnold Kelley
Guyana, South America
Warren, PA

SERVICES

SUNDAY

Classes 9:00 a.m.
Worship 10:00 a.m.
5:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the Word of God
Romans 10:17

Believe the Word of God
John 8:24

Repent of your sins
Luke 13:3

Confess your faith in Jesus as the Son of God
Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for the remission of your sins
Acts 2:38

Live faithfully
Revelation 2:10

“Where there is no vision, the people perish....”
Proverbs 29:18

God Give Us 2020 Vision in 2020

Visit Our Website: greensbororoadchurchofchrist.com