

Biblical Studies #101

Introduction

Welcome to class, please take out your Bibles and prepare to take copious notes as the information that follows is of great value. You must first go through these basic lessons before going on to other areas of study here at the institute because the Bible is the rule and norm for all we say and do as Christians, and it is the basis for a sound and cohesive biblical worldview.

Rainfall in the spring tends to make things green and plants healthy. Water in proper and abundant amounts has an amazing effect on plants. In the same way, God's Word in proper and abundant amounts has an amazing effect on the human soul. We have summarily reviewed the triune nature of God and the human and divine natures of Christ. In the Admissions Building these truths can only be seen with the eyes of faith. In the same way, the 66 books by approximately 45ish writers (we cannot be sure of the exact number of writers because we do not know how many sons of Korah there were, and the actual writer of some books is not given) can only be acknowledged as divinely inspired through those same eyes of faith. 2 Tim 3:16 "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." However just because biblical authority rests on faith does not mean its truth has been in any way discredited in the realms of science, archaeology, history, or any other humanly devised scientific system of validation, without wholly resting on human reason (i.e. faith in man).

That is the dividing line between all who study God's word. Some choose to place their faith in God and others choose to place their faith in man. There is no debate about what God's word says because with over 25,000 manuscripts (some over 2,200 years old), there is an amazing consensus among ancient linguistic scholars (of all faith groups) about what actually constitutes "The Holy Bible" and what it actually says. The points of scholastic disagreement are statistically and substantially irrelevant because they have no real bearing on what the Bible says.

The debate is about what it means. This is where we have two basic groups of biblical scholars. First: those who hold a "human world view" that says human reason has authority over God's Word. This group uses what is known as the "Historical Critical" method to study and deduce meaning from scripture. Second: those who hold a "biblical world view" that says God's Word stands above human reason. This group uses the "Historical Grammatical" method to study and deduce meaning from scripture. The question is not are you biased—we are all biased—the question is which bias to be biased with. When God's Word says things that are illogical or irrational (which it often does), the first group finds a man-pleasing logical explanation, while the second group defers to God's truth, accepting it on faith, and does not try to explain what God does not.

So, while I acknowledge my bias, that does not mean we can agree to disagree about the truth. The truth is absolute and stands whether or not we choose to agree with it. Another phrase that irritates me is: "Well, that is your interpretation." This is the postmodern way of dismissing what a person says whether or not you disagree, so you don't even have to deal with it. This statement implies that truth is relative...your truth is your truth, and my truth is my truth. While this might be politically correct, it is illogical. If I do not believe in gravity, will my nose not break if I trip and fall on it? The answer is clear in this example and it can be equally clear with biblical truth if we acknowledge who its divine author is and defer our reason to His revealed truth.

I do not desire to put God's word in a nice little box that suits my needs. I will acknowledge that God is so great that a single verse of scripture can have many clear and truthful understandings and applications. However, if you and I have applications that contradict each other... one of them must logically be wrong, and if we derive a meaning that contradicts any other clear scriptural truth, that meaning is wrong. In this day and age, it is not P.C. to say that something or someone is wrong or sinful. But just because our society is afraid to call someone or something sinful doesn't make it any less so.

If you are without sin, I invite you to continue reading this series as a scholastic endeavor to improve on your perfection. But for the rest of us, I will continue to explore God's Word. While I have acknowledged my

bias, scriptural authority is an issue of faith. There are also mountains of evidence in the realms of science, history, and archaeology that give clear witness to God's nature, and the inerrant (without error) and infallible (without fault) nature of His Word.

God gives clear witness to these truths in His creation. Rom 1:19-20 "since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them." Again, I cite a biblical truth that speaks to the heart of everyone. God's word tells us all we need to know. However, it does not promise, nor does it provide all we want to know. For the unanswered questions, we must lean on the peace that surpasses all understanding. And if you say that is not enough, I would argue that you have not tasted the sweetness of internal peace that the selfless God of creation purchased for you on the cross, and so richly desires all to have.

In Christ,
Pastor Portier