

## 18.04.2020 JESUS AND THE APOSTLES' VIEW OF THE BIBLE

*"But He answered and said, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" ' " Matthew 4:4*

Last week we studied that the Bible was given to man as a revelation by God; God reveals Himself. The method God has chosen to reveal Himself is inspiration; what the authors of the Bible wrote was 'breathed out' by God.

Because the Bible is a divine revelation and given to men by divine inspiration (it is the Word given to man by God), it therefore has **authority** over men.

**'The case for biblical authority stems from the claim that God has revealed himself in written form through human authors and that the information contained in canonical books is not of human origin'.**

For the past 200 years men have been deceived into believing that God does not exist. The natural consequence of such a world view is as follows: 'If God does not exist, then the Bible cannot be a divine revelation, it cannot be a written record of inspiration i.e. God speaking to men. Therefore, it has no authority over men's lives.'

Furthermore, society today does not like the words 'authority' and 'submission'. Those who remember the student uprisings of the 1960s will remember that it was a conscious revolt against established authority – government, church, family, tradition, the Bible and religion. What began as revolt now is often manifested in society as anarchy (a state of disorder due to absence or non-recognition of authority). Overall, this has resulted in a significant lowering of morals and standards.

So the world today declares that there is no God, there are no absolutes and therefore no basis for moral authority. If there is no basis for authority, there is then no reason why anyone should submit to authority.

It is in this context that the Christian is called to witness that he believes and submits to (obeys) the authority of God's Word.

### **Jesus and the authority of Scripture**

Jesus accepted the authority of Scripture and put His seal on both Old and New Testaments. We believe in the inspiration and authority of Scripture because Jesus Christ Himself endorsed the Scriptures. If we accept the authority of Jesus we have to accept the authority of the Bible.

### **Jesus and the Old Testament**

Jesus confirmed the authority of the Bible in the following ways:

1. His personal conduct; He obeyed the Scriptures.

*"Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "*  
*Matthew 4:10*

*Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."* Matthew 22:37-40

*"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled."*  
*Matthew 5:17, 18*

2. Jesus submitted Himself to the Old Testament prophecies about His life and mission as the Messiah.

*And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. Mark 8:31*

*“How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?” Matthew 26:54*

*And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24:27*

*Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Luke 24:44, 45*

3. Jesus used the Old Testament when confronted by the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and lawyers i.e. the leaders of His time. He addressed the arguments they brought to Him using the Old Testament, the Hebrew Scriptures.

*“What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” Luke 10:26*

*Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. Matthew 22:29*

*He said to them, “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition... making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.” Mark 7:9, 13*

*Jesus answered and said to them, “Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God? Mark 12:24*

4. Jesus accepted the historical record of the Old Testament.

He spoke of Creation and marriage (Mark 10:6-8, Matthew 19:4, 5), Noah and the Flood (Matthew 24:38), Elijah (Luke 4:25-27), David (Matthew 12:3, 4), Daniel (Matthew 24:15), Abel and the prophets (Luke 11:51).

## **Jesus and the New Testament**

How did Christ endorse the New Testament when it had not yet been written when He was on earth? The answer is that He made provision for it by authorising the apostles to teach in His name.

In the Old Testament, God was Deliverer, Redeemer and Judge and He raised up men to write a true record of His doings and His promise of Messiah, the ultimate Deliverer.

When Christ came, it was the fulfilment of vision and prophecy. He had come as Redeemer and Judge. The story of this supreme revelation of God in Christ Jesus could not be lost to future generations. As in Old Testament times, there must be faithful, authoritative writers and interpreters of the life and work of Jesus Christ and His pivotal role in salvation history. This task was given to the apostles (all Jesus' followers were called 'disciples'; only a specific few were called 'apostles'). It is widely accepted that Luke and Mark, though not apostles, nevertheless wrote down what Paul and Peter respectively, conveyed to them.

*Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles. Luke 6:12, 13*

*“You must also testify for you have been with Me from the beginning” John 15:27*

*For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty...And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 2 Peter 1:16, 19*

*Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead)... the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. Galatians 1:1, 11, 12*

*How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will? Hebrews 2:3, 4*

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:1-3*

## **The Apostles and the Scriptures**

The New Testament writers approach the Bible the same way that Jesus does. In matters of conduct, doctrine, ethics, and prophetic fulfilment, the Old Testament for them was the authoritative Word of God.

### **Conclusion:**

In a world where men and women refuse to accept the authority of God, we as Christians are called to show the world that we believe in God and we accept His authority over our lives. Today, many Christians also do not live *'by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'* They recognise His authority but only in a general sense; they do not receive Christ as Lord and Master. They decide to choose only to obey those words of the Bible that suit them. Any Christian who refuses to submit to the authority of Scripture is (whether he knows it or not) following the current world view that rejects the concepts of 'authority' and 'submission'.

And yet, if we call Christ 'Lord', we must submit to His authority. And if we submit to His authority, we must submit to the Bible's authority. In His messages to the churches in Revelation 2 and 3, Christ ends every message with the words *'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches...'* He is calling to us to listen to the Bible through which Christ speaks to His church by His Spirit. He is calling us to listen and to show that we accept His authority by obeying His Word.

*'We bow to the authority of Scripture because we bow to the authority of Christ.'* John Stott

"He [Christ] pointed to the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority, and we should do the same. The Bible is to be presented as the word of the infinite God, as the end of all controversy and the foundation of all faith". *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 39, 40.

***He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." Hebrews 10:8***

***"The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." John 8:29***

***"Blessed are those who do His commandments; that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city." Revelation 22:14***

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