

THE FIREPLACE

“The place where Wisdom is transacted”



APOLOGETICS

SESSION EIGHT

AUTHENTICITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE BIBLE



Ps 119:89 NASB

*Forever, O LORD,
Thy word is settled in
heaven.*

Ps 19:7-11 NASB

*7 The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul;
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.*

*8 The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.*

*9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.*

10 They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold;

Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.

*11 Moreover, by them Thy servant is warned;
In keeping them there is great reward.*

NECESSITY OF EXAMINING AUTHENTICITY:

- 1. Time magazine (Dec. 18,1995)*
- 1. Jon Van Seeters of the University of North Carolina**
- 2. The Late Sheikh Ahmed Dedat of South Africa:*
- 3. Emperor Diocletian by royal edict in 303AD**

Robert M. Horn in his book “The Book that speaks for Itself”,(IVP) states:

“To put it at its most obvious, a person who denies God’s existence will not subscribe to belief in the Bible... A Muslim convinced that God cannot beget, will not accept as the word of God, a book that teaches that Christ is the only begotten Son of God.... Some believe that God is not personal, but rather the ultimate, the ground of being. Such will be predisposed to reject the Bible as God’s personal self-revelation. On their premise, the Bible cannot be the personal word of “I AM WHO I AM” (EX 3:14). Others rule out the supernatural. They will not be likely to give credence to the book which teaches Christ rose from the dead. Still others hold that God cannot communicate His truth undistorted through sinful men; hence they regard the Bible as, at least in parts, no more than human.”

Bernard Ramm says:

“A thousand times over the death Knell of the Bible has been sounded, the funeral procession formed, the inscription cut on the tombstone and committal read. But somehow the corpse never stays put.”

Authenticity of the Bible:

Here we are dealing with the questions of who wrote it? When was it written? Are they the true copies of the autographs? Were they actually written by the people who claim to have written them? Was he an eyewitness?

Reliability of the Bible:

Without establishing the reliability of scripture its authenticity is insignificant. Here we are establishing the fact that what it says as true is actually true. We are looking at whether we can depend on what it says. This gives the Bible authority in the lives of individuals.

OUR PURSUIT:

Establish that the **historical facts** are actually accurate.

Establish that the **non-historical facts** are non-contradictory.

Proposition:

When all facts are known about the Bible and the original autographs and properly interpreted, it will be shown that the Bible is true in anything that it asserts to be true whether the topic is history, science, philosophy, mathematics, doctrine or morality.

CHALLENGES TO BIBLICAL AUTHENTICITY

Ancient Near Eastern (ANE)

Critics point out that a number of Bible stories and laws are also found in other cultures in the ancient near Eastern some of which even predates the Bible.

- The Canaanite pantheon
- The Code of Hammurabi
- The Babylonian Creation Story
- Ugarit (Ras Shamra) Discoveries
- Others

Scientific Cosmogony: (Formation)

- **Creation Vs Evolution: Was their creation or we evolved?**
- **Noah's Flood: Was it universal or local**
- **Sun Standing Still: Did the sun stand still?**



Religious Pluralism:

All the other world religions claim that their books are the authentic word of God including fringe - Christian groups.

- Hindus -Baghvad Gita
- Muslims -The Koran and Hadith
- Mormons - Book of the Mormon
- Christian Science - Writings of Mrs. Baker

How do we prove to them that the Bible is the authentic one?



Literary Critics:

It is simply an impartial judgement or as nearly such as the given critic can render on whatever question is under consideration. It is divided into two:

Lower Criticism: More of a verbal and historical nature and is confined to the words or the collection of the words, as they stand in the manuscript or printed texts in the ancient versions and other legitimate sources of appeal.

Higher Criticism: This is the exercise of the judgement in reference to the text, on grounds taken from the nature, form, method, subject or arguments of the different books; the nature and connection of the context; the relation of passages to each other; the known circumstances of the writers and those of the persons for whose immediate use they wrote. This is sometimes referred to as radical criticism.

Historical -Critical School

This is a study of how the OT books came into their present state, what source or sources were used in the writing of these documents, when they were written, in what setting etc.

Documentary Hypothesis (source criticism)

Initiated by Julius Wellhausen in 1895: The Pentateuch was not written by Moses as the Bible claims but was completed years after Moses died.

- J - JHWH - dated around 900BC compiled around 650 BC made public 621BC
- E - Elohist - later in 9th century BC compiled around 650BC made public 621BC
- D - Deuteronomistic code found in 621BC
- P - Priestly writer (El-Shaddai) written about 5th century.

Response:

1. Influenced by evolutionary views- the Bible also evolved.
2. Uncertain to know which part was written by which author to separate the documents.
3. Anti-miracle stance
4. Difficult to sustain historically since the documents compares with other items of Moses time (1400 BC) and therefore could not have been written as late as 600 BC.

Form Criticism (Herman Gunkel)

Redaction Criticism

Canon Criticism

HOW OUR BIBLE CAME TO US

Inspiration:

This is the supernatural influences of the Holy Spirit upon the scripture writers which rendered their writings an accurate record of the revelation or which resulted in what they actually wrote being the word of God They were moved or born or carried along by the spirit.

2 Peter 1:20-21 NASB

“20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

2 Tim 3:16-17 NASB

“16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

Theories of Inspiration:

1. Natural inspiration or the intuition: The authors just had a superior insight.
2. Dynamic or Partial inscription: The Bible only inspired in matters of faith and practice but not of an immediately religious character.
3. The thoughts not the words are inspired: God left it up to man to put the revelation into words.
4. The Bible contains the word of God
5. Dictation theory: God dictated to the authors what to write.
6. Verbal inspiration: Inspiration is affirmed of only the autographs not of any of the versions, whether ancient or modern nor of any Hebrew or Greek manuscript in existence nor of any critical text. This does not reduce the trustworthiness of the manuscripts.

Other related words:

1. Revelation (Lk. 1:1-4; 1Jn 1:1-4)
2. Authority
3. Illumination (Rom 1:21; 1Cor 2:6-16; Eph1:18)
4. Inerrancy

Writing Materials:

Papyrus: Most common material used for writing was papyrus made from the papyrus plant. Earliest manuscripts (mss) were on papyrus and it was difficult for any to survive except in dry areas such as sands or caves similar to those of Qumran where the Dead Sea scrolls were found

Parchment:

Prepared skins of sheep, goats, antelopes and other animals. These skins were “shaved and scraped” in order to produce a more durable writing material.

Vellum: Calfskin. Often vellum was dyed purple.

Types of Writings:

Uncial Writings: Used capital letters that were deliberately and carefully executed. Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are uncial *mss.*

Miniscule Writings: A script of smaller letters in a running hand (connected) was created for the production of books

Divisions:

1. The first division (586BC) were of the Pentateuch into 154 groupings (*Sedarim*) to facilitate its reading in a 3-year cycle.
2. The Greeks made division around 250AD. The oldest system of chapter division is from 350AD in the margins of codex Vaticanus.
3. In 1227 Stephen Langton, a professor at the University of Paris and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury divided the Bible into the modern chapter divisions

CANONICITY:

- Meaning of Canon
- Tests for inclusion in the Canon
- The Hebrew Canon
- OT Apocryphal Literature

RELIABILITY OF THE BIBLE

- Bibliographical Test of the New Testament
- Mss Evidence of the New Testament
- Mss of NT Compared to other Literature
- Available NT Mss
- Early Versions of the NT

Bibliographical Test of the OT

Until the recent discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest MS was around 900 AD. This made a time gap of 1300 years since the OT was completed in 400BC. With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls a number of OT manuscripts have been found which scholars date before the time of Christ.

- 1. The Talmudist (AD 100-500)**
- 2. The Masoretic Period (AD 500-900)**
- 3. The Hebrew Text**
- 4. Other Witnesses to the OT**
- 5. External Witnesses**
 - 1. History**
 - 2. Archeology**

Alleged Biblical Discrepancies

Conclusion:

1. Internal consistency
2. Life Transforming power
3. Miraculous Abilities