

Sunday, January 10, 2010—Final Authority: Locating God’s Word in English—What is Preservation and Why is it Necessary?

Introduction

- Last week we began the year with a new series of studies devoted to locating God’s word in English.
- Display the stack of Bibles.
- Last week we made the following points:
 - Since none of us speak or read Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek the original languages the Bible was written in we are left to utilize an English translation. The question is which one.
 - I admitted the following:
 - This position runs contrary to the accepted scholarly viewpoint. (Make comment)
 - We could have more people in this church if we did not take a stand on this issue.
 - This entire topic is a deeply emotional topic for many believers.
 - We spoke about five common misconceptions regarding English translations of the Bible:
 - All versions are essentially the same.
 - All versions contain the basic doctrines of the Christian faith without deviation.
 - Modern translations are simply updates of the outdate language of the King James Bible.
 - The important thing in Bible translation is communication of the ideas and not the words themselves.
 - In order to really understand the Bible one needs to know the original languages.
 - I encouraged you to take the viewpoint of faith on this issue. We need to believe what the Bible teaches about itself. We need to remember that the Bible is God’s book and that when we deal with the Bible we are dealing with God himself.
- In apply the viewpoint of faith we began looking at the doctrine of inspiration. Inspiration is the Bible’s claim for itself. That is to say the Bible says that it is an inspired book.
 - II Timothy 3:16, II Peter 1:21
 - Plenary Verbal Inspiration-- It wasn’t simply God’s message that men were free to state in their own words; their very choice of words was from God. Biblical inspiration is not only verbal (located in the words), but it is also plenary, meaning that it extends to every part of the words and all they teach or imply.
 - Jeremiah 1:9, 5:14, 36:1-4

God's Purpose in Inspiration

- God's design in inspiration is to make the living and written word equal.
- John 1:1-3, 14—Jesus Christ is the living word.
- Hebrews 4:12-13—the Bible is a critic of the man who reads it. It knows the difference between your soul and spirit. It can discern your heart.
- Notice that verse 13 applies human characteristics to the word of God.
- Psalms 138:2
- Revelation 19:11-13—who is this passage describing? Jesus Christ the living word, his name is called the word of God. That is why the author of Hebrews attributes human characteristics to the word God. When you face one you are facing the other.
- Romans 9:17—who spoke to Pharaoh in the Old Testament? God through Moses. This verse says that the scriptures spoke to pharaoh. God the Holy Spirit uses the term scripture interchangeably for God.
- Galatians 3:8—who can foresee the future? God. This verse says that the Scriptures can to.
- God attributes his own attributes to his word. Is God perfect? Then his word must also be perfect or it would not be a reflection of His character.
- This verse is an absolute impossibility. Moses wrote the book of Genesis 500 years after the death of Abraham. The only way to figure this verse is to adopt the viewpoint of faith and believe what the Bible teaches about itself. That God's design in inspiration was to make the living and written word equal.
- Nehemiah 9:5—the name of God is exalted above all else. An attack on the word of God is an attack on God himself.
- The issue in inspiration is that God inspired every word of scripture and he did so with the intention of making the written word equal to himself.
- See handout from Bullinger's book.

Inspiration Demands Preservation

- At this point we need to pause and talk about another commonly held misconception regarding God's word.
- Virtually all fundamental evangelical scholars have written reams trying to prove the plenary verbal inspiration and argue for the inerrancy of the original autographs.
- Read sections from my paper.
- Consider the following doctrinal statements:
 - The verbal inspiration and plenary authority of the Bible in its original writings (GBC).
 - The entire Bible in its original writings is inerrant, being verbally inspired of God and is of plenary authority (GGF).
 - That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are inspired by God and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life (Navigators).
- What is the problem here? The original manuscripts no longer exist. What is the point of arguing for the inerrancy of something that everyone knows no longer exists?
- Virtually all evangelical churches, Bible Colleges, seminaries, and organization overlook or ignore the Bible doctrine of Preservation.
- Why did God inspire His word perfectly? Obviously the answer comes back, So that man could have every word of God, pure, complete, trustworthy, and without error. If God went to the trouble to perfectly inspire his word only to allow errors and mistakes to creep into the text it would be inconstant with His nature and character.
- Could God who overcame time (about 1,700 years transpired from the writing of the oldest Old Testament book and closing of the New Testament in 90 A.D.) and man's human nature to write the Bible perfectly in the first place, do the same thing to preserve it?
- Psalm 12:6—when God inspired the words they were pure, correct, and inerrant. There was nothing wrong with them.
- Psalm 12:7—what is the antecedent to the word “them” in verse 7? It is the pure “words” from verse 6. Therefore it is pure inerrant “words” in verse 6 that God has promise to preserve in verse 7.
- God promises that he will preserve all the words given by inspiration of God forever. Do you see why we spent so much time defining the Bible's own definition of inspiration?

- You either believe this or you don't.
- The doctrine of preservation teaches that the very words God inspired are the same words he is going to preserve. The doctrines of inspiration and preservation go hand in hand; you can't have one without the other.
- Psalm 33:11
- Psalm 119:89, 152
- Isaiah 29:18—God is going to preserve the words in the book through history until the millennium for them to read.
- Isaiah 30:8—it's the words on the pages of a book that will last forever.
- Matthew 5:18
- If God has not preserved His words as He said that He would (Psalms 12:6-7), then He has done two things He has never done before. First, he has wasted His own time. Second, God did not do that which He promised he would which would make him a liar.
- It is always to be remembered that the Bible is a spiritual book which God exerted supernatural force to conceive, and it is reasonable to assume that he could exert that same supernatural force to preserve.

Why Preservation is Necessary

- You and I are not the only ones interested in what God said. Satan also has a vested interest in what God has said. Therefore, Satan is also interested in the Bible.
- Genesis 3:1—the first time Satan shows up in the Bible he is questioning what God said.
- Genesis 3 outlines Satan's policy of evil against the word of God.
 - Step One: cause doubt to arise by questioning what God said (Genesis 3:1)
 - Step Two: doubt causes Eve to subtract from God's word (Genesis 3:2)
 - Step Three: doubt causes Eve to add to and water down God's word (Genesis 3:3)
 - Step Four: Satan flat-out denies and contradicts what God said (Genesis 3:4)
- It is Satan's policy of evil to destroy the final authority of the Word of God. He does so by creating a competing authority to the truth of God. Thus forcing you to decide and become your own authority.

- Satan desires to be worshipped. He has the ability to counterfeit God's actions, and definitely will be involved actively in attempting to destroy God's Word and/or our confidence in that Word, while seeking to replace it with his own version.
- Romans 10:17—by attacking the word of God, Satan is attacking the basis of our faith.
- Consequently, it is absolutely necessary that God preserve the very words that he inspired.

Conclusion

- Not only does the Bible claim to be inspired by God. God also promises to preserve the very same words he inspired for all eternity.
- If you are going to view this issue from God's perspective it will take you to a very different conclusion than the prevailing evangelical scholarship will.
- Next week we will look at what the Bible teaches about how preservation will occur.