



Why Does the Bible Speak with Authority?

- SCAN - Sufficient | Clear | Authoritative | Necessary
- This week we complete this series with the Bible being authoritative and necessary.

There are many reasons the Bible is one of the most unique pieces of literature in the world. It's historical in a way that other religions are not. There have been archeological after archeological finds that confirm the times and the places and the people of the biblical story. When people try

and place the biblical narratives in the same category as Big Foot or the Loch Ness Monster or even Mormonism, they do so only by committing intellectual suicide.

- There is an entire field of study based upon the history of the Bible called archeology.

One of the main reasons the Bible is different than any other book is because of its voice. A book that was written by 66 different authors over a span of 1,000 years in multiple cultures in multiple languages and yet the Bible speaks to humanity with one voice of authority. And not just as one authority to be considered among many, but as the final and absolute authority concerning who God is and how He saves us. In other words, the Bible claims to be the final authority concerning spiritual truth.

Whenever the church compromises the word of God you will find a church that no longer speaks into culture, but you'll find a church that affirms the new morality of the day over Scripture. Every generation boasts a new morality of the day. Every generation thinks they are the most brilliant generation, until the next generation comes along and claims that title.

Whenever a Christian compromises the word of God, you'll find a Christian who picks and chooses according to their own judgment. In other words, they stand over the word and decide what in the word of God is acceptable.

This was the issue with Adam and Eve in the garden. In the garden, they heard a competing voice to that of God. When the devil asked "Did God really say?" he asserted a word that claimed to rival God's authority. That has been the case ever since. Who do we listen to?

This was one of the main questions of the Reformation when 500 years ago a monk by the name of Martin Luther demanded that the Catholic church reform according to the authority of Scripture. He was calling the church to repentance based upon Scriptural authority. But the church rejected Luther's view of Scripture.

Luther charged the church leadership was doing the same thing Jesus claimed the Pharisees of His day were doing when He said:

Mark 7:13

13 thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

The Bible is the authority that stands above the church. That was one of the conflicts of the great Reformation. Is the church over the word or is the word over the church? Did the church create the Bible? Or did the Bible create the church?

- The gospel is the power of God for salvation and that is what creates believers.

One of the great theologians of the Reformation, John Calvin, recognized the need for an absolute authority that stands above the church.

He wrote, “Christian faith must not be founded on human testimony, not propped up by doubtful opinion, not resting on human authority, but graven on our hearts by the finger of the living God, so as not to be obliterated by any coloring of error . . . We hold that the Word of God alone lies beyond the sphere of our judgment.”

He was basically saying all other claims to authority must be evaluated by the Scriptures. He insisted that “. . . Fathers and Councils are of authority only in so far as they agree with the rule

of the Word.” The Scriptures stand as the judge of the church and all human thought.

- Freud vs. Scripture on the nature of people

This morning, we’re going to look at four things the Bible claims about its authority.

First, the authority of the Bible comes from its Author. The only reason these words carry any weight is because of Who they come from. The Bible claims that there is no higher authority than God.

1. So, the first claim of the Bible’s authority is that it is absolute.

Isaiah 45:5

5 I am the Lord, and there is no other,
besides me there is no God;

Psalm 135:5-6

5 For I know that the Lord is great,
and that our Lord is above all gods.
6 Whatever the Lord pleases, he does,
in heaven and on earth,
in the seas and all deeps.

Psalm 138:2

2 I bow down toward your holy temple
and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your
faithfulness,
for you have exalted above all things
your name and your word.

This is the unique claim of the God of the Bible who is both absolute and personal. Being absolutely authoritative means that He needs nothing outside of Himself to validate His communication.

But God does validate His communication, because the point of His communication to humanity is truth.

John 18:37

³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for

this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”

Jesus tells us the truth about who He is and what He has done. And it's truth that is objective. This means that it is absolutely true. It's not true because you believe it. It's true because it's true. It happened. It's historical. It's reality.

By their very nature, all truth claims are narrow. Even when someone says, “I believe all religions are just different roads to the same god.” Even though this sounds like a very open-minded claim, it is actually narrow and dismissive.

It's narrow in that it says that if you don't believe this, then you are wrong about God. If you believe your God is the only God, you are wrong about that according to this view.

And it's dismissive, because Judaism doesn't believe it's only one of many ways to God. Neither do the Muslims believe Islam is just one of many ways to God, because their religion doesn't teach

that either. So, this claim that sounds so open-minded is really arrogantly dismissive of what the various world religions actually teach about themselves. And it says they're wrong.

So, when we discuss Christ with others, we want to stay away from statements that begin with, “I feel or I believe,” because those are subjective statements. When we're sharing Christ with others we don't want to attack their feelings. We present objective truth. So, we say things like, “Christianity teaches or Jesus said.” It's not personal. It's about the truth.

2. The second claim of the Bible's authority is that God's word creates. It brings things that were “not” into existence. When you can say, “Be,” and something appears — that's authority.

Psalm 33:6

⁶By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,
and by the breath of his mouth all their host.

Psalm 33:9

⁹For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm.

His word has power to create, because of who He is — the all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere at once God of the universe. That's why His word has authority. There is no higher authority in the universe than the word of God. That's why His word creates obligation on the part of humanity. If God commands — we are obligated to obey. If He promises — we are obligated to trust. When He shares His love — we are obligated to treasure it. When He gives us knowledge — we are obligated to believe it.

1 Peter 1:23

²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;

3. God's word not only creates, but His word also destroys or judges.

Jeremiah 5:14

¹⁴Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of hosts:
“Because you have spoken this word,
behold, I am making my words in your mouth a fire,
and this people wood, and the fire shall consume them.

Jeremiah 23:29

²⁹Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?

We will all be judged by how we have responded to God's word. Theologian John Frame says the history of the world is humanity's response to God's word. Jesus basically said the same thing.

John 12:47-48

⁴⁷If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.

- The Historical Nature of the Word

There is a final word. There is a final arbiter of truth. When you stand before the judgment seat of Christ you will be judged on the basis of how you responded to the word of Christ in this life. Did you receive the testimony that Christ left of Himself?

The Book That Understands Me -

French philosopher Emile Cailliet was an atheist who became very disillusioned during WW I after one of his friends was killed in front of him. He wrote, "By then, my thinking had no longer anything to do with philosophy taken for the sake of a qualifying exam... I too felt, not with my reason but with my whole being, that I was naked and - war or no war - destined to perish miserably when the hour came... During long watches in the foxholes I had in a strange way been longing - I must say it, however queer it

may sound - for a book that would understand me. But I knew of no such book."

So, he began his quest to compile one himself by gathering quotes from various other books that seemed to have something to say.

"I would file passages that would speak to my condition, then carefully copy them in a leather-bound pocket book I would always carry with me. The day came when I put the finishing touch to 'the book that would understand me,' speak to my condition, and help me through life's happenings."

After he spent his years in grad school compiling this book, he sat down to read it one day. "A beautiful, sunny day it was. I went out, sat under a tree, and opened my precious anthology. As I went on reading, however, a growing disappointment came over me. Instead of

speaking to my condition, the various passages reminded me of their context, of the circumstances of my labor over their selection. Then I knew that the whole undertaking would not work, simply because it was of my own making. It carried no strength of persuasion. In a dejected mood, I put the little book back in my pocket.”

Then at that very moment through a series of different circumstances, his wife showed up with a French Bible. He had never even seen a Bible before, so he took it and rushed to his study to read it.

“I opened and ‘chanced’ upon the Beatitudes! I read, and read, and read – now aloud with an indescribable warmth surging within. I could not find words to express my awe and wonder. And suddenly the realization dawned upon me: this was the book that would understand me! I continued to read deeply into the night, mostly

from the Gospels. And lo and behold, as I looked through them, the One of whom they spoke, the One who spoke and acted in them became alive to me. The providential circumstances amid which the book had found me now made it clear that while it seemed absurd to speak of a book understanding a man, this could be said of the Bible because its pages were animated by the presence of the living God and the power of his mighty acts. To this God I prayed that night, and the God who answered was the same God of whom it was spoken in the book.”

4. Thankfully, His word also brings grace.

Luke 7:1-10

⁷ After he had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. ² Now a centurion had a servant who was sick and at the point of death, who was highly valued by him. ³ When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. ⁴ And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, “He is worthy to have you do this for him, ⁵ for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue.” ⁶ And

Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. ⁷Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed. ⁸For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." ⁹When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." ¹⁰And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.

The point of having faith in the authority of Christ is that if Jesus says it, it will happen.

Jeremiah 1:12

¹² Then the Lord said to me, "You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it."

If Christ says, "Be saved," you will be saved.

If Christ says, "Peace," to your heart, you will have peace.

If Christ says, "Joy," you will have joy.

So, don't ask, "What do I need Christ to say to me? What is my need?" Ask, "What has Christ said to me already?" Then grab it, for He is watching over His word to perform it.

He has already said, "All who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved." If you need salvation, call upon the name of the Lord.

Jesus has already said, "My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

Christ has spoken. How have you responded?

Philippians 2:16

¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

Or are you shrinking away?

Mark 8:38

³⁸ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man

also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”