

THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.” —ISAIAH 40:8

Every movement has an authority at its source. In fact, that’s an important question to ask of any organization. Where does the authority lie? In Christendom, God is the absolute authority because He is sovereign over all creation. How does God express His sovereignty, His mind and His will? He does so through Scripture.

Whatever else you consider the Bible to be, it is a remarkable book. The Old Testament is about getting the right people in the right place for the right purpose and keeping them there. After 400 years of silence from God, His whole purpose for which he set apart the nation of Israel comes to fruition in the New Testament. Scripture is one continuous story of a Messiah who would reconcile humanity to God. Through Jesus Christ, the church was formed, and the church is every Christian, acting as God’s agent to minister to the world.

Over the last few centuries, the church of Jesus Christ has seen tremendous changes and divisions. In the 16th century there was a massive revolt led by Martin Luther against papal authority. Luther’s cry was, “Let’s get back to Scripture.” This was known as the Reformation and gave people freedom to think and read scripture for themselves.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, we have the Age of Enlightenment. Its purpose was to reform society by intellectual reasoning, which then ushered in the Scientific Age. That overturned many traditional concepts and introduced new perspectives on nature and man’s place within it.

Then in the 19th century a very liberal position, known as ‘Modernism’, came into being. Modernism permeated every part of society and culture, including the church. It subjected the Bible to the criteria of human reasoning, which condones many varying subjective truths. “All truth is God’s truth” became a valid statement. In other words, Scripture is true, but so are many other beliefs.

The point is we cannot conform or undermine God’s word to suit the times we live in. Churches that do are quickly drained of spiritual life and eventually die as they have no message left. Our position is that of the Reformers in which Scripture is the final authority in matters of faith and doctrine. It is sufficient for us. What the Bible doesn’t tell us, we don’t need to know, and if something is unclear, we don’t need to be dogmatic about it.

Scripture is truth and truth needs no justification or defence. C.H. Spurgeon said, “Why defend the Bible? That’s like saying, why defend a lion? I’d rather let the lion loose than try to defend it.” Let Scripture loose and it will speak for itself as it is the uncompromising, authoritative word of God that remains unchanged.

PRAYER: Thank You, Father, for the Bible where we come to know You and the purpose You have for this world. Give me discernment to help understand every word You say in it.

TO REFLECT UPON: Is my faith based entirely on the authority of Scripture, or am I influenced by other beliefs?