

Article 1 – The Scriptures Back to the Basics

Intro – Dr. Kramer’s View of Scripture

- When I was a student at the University of Tennessee I was forced to take Anthropology 101 and 201 in my last semester. If I refused to do so, I wouldn’t be permitted to graduate.
- Anthro 101 was on Wednesday night, so I already didn’t like it because I had to miss church to attend a 3-hour lecture. My professor was a nice man who identified himself as Jewish.
- For several weeks I listened to him lecture about the origins of the human species. He explained that all humans descended from apes and as such there was no need for a “creation.”
- I remember we took a break during one of our classes. During the break I asked him how he was able to square his view of mankind with the Jewish Scriptures he professed to believe.
- He said this – “I don’t believe the Scriptures are accurate at every point. The Bible is not a book of history and science. Rather it is a book of good moral lessons – not to be believed at every point.”
- In other words, he believed is just a good book, but by no means is it the inerrant Word of God. Is he right? Is the Bible just a good book of morals, or is it the very Word of God?
- Tonight we embark on a series of messages focused on our church’s doctrinal confession – The Baptist Faith and Message 2000. In a world that has tossed doctrine to the side, it’s vitally important that we get back to the basics.

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

“The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired...”

- The first three words of our doctrinal statement are a declaration that “The Holy Bible” constitutes the Scriptures. Not the Muslim Quran, the Hindu Vedas, or the Buddhist Sutras.
- Christians have long held that the Bible – the 66 books contained in the Old and New Testaments – are the very Word of God. Those 66 books are a part of what we call the canon of Scripture.
- The canon of Scripture was a source of much debate, both among Jews and Christians. The Hebrew canon was in place by about 250 A.D. and the NT canon was settled by the 4th century.
- Those who prayed and sought the Lord’s counsel regarding the canon of Scripture DID NOT determine the canon of Scripture – they simply allowed the Lord to show them His Word.
- The Bible was “written by men.” In fact, the Bible was written on 3 continents in 3 languages by 40 different writers over a period of 1500 years.

- Most of the writers of Scripture never met one another, and yet their writing all points to one figure – the Lord Jesus Christ. People from all walks of life were inspired to write God’s Word.
- Article 1 says that “men were divinely inspired.” That explains the consistency of their message. Though there were 40 writers involved, there is one One Author – the Holy Spirit.
- 2 Peter 1:20-21 explains the process – “*no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*”
- Evangelicals believe in what we call “the verbal plenary inspiration of Scripture.” Plenary means that all parts of the Bible are equally of divine origin and equally authoritative.
- Verbal plenary inspiration means that God did not dictate word for word what He wanted the writer to record. Rather, He spoke through their unique personalities to give us His Word.
- And while 40 different writers were involved in the Scripture’s composition, there is only One Author – “*All Scripture is **God-breathed**, and profitable for doctrine, reproof, etc.*” (2 Tim. 3:16).

“God’s revelation of Himself to man”

- Scripture is one of the means through which God has elected to reveal Himself to the human race. Theologians speak of two types of revelation – general revelation and special revelation.
- General revelation involves the ways in which God has revealed Himself to the entire human race.

- Among those means are:
 - **Creation** – “*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.*” (Psalm 19:1)
 - Romans 1:18-20 – “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.*”
 - **Conscience** – “*or when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, 15 who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them)*” (Romans 2:14-15)
- Special revelation is different than general revelation. General revelation is universal because everyone has access to creation & conscience. Special revelation is contained in Christ and the Word of God – there are still many people that don’t know about Jesus & the Word.
- Special revelation is also different in that it goes into much greater detail about the Lord. Jesus is the Living Word and Scripture is the Written Word.

- Through the pages of Scripture, God has actually revealed Himself to mankind. The Bible is not just a record of God’s revelation in the past – it is still God’s revelation today. We come to know who God is through His Word!

“It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy.”

- Because the Bible is the Word of God, we believe it is “a perfect treasure of divine instruction.” Some have underscored this truth by using a syllogism:
 - God is perfect
 - The Bible is the Word of God
 - Thus, the Word of God is perfect
- We believe Scripture is perfect because “it has God for its author.” If God is the Author of Scripture, and His Word has not been changed for contaminated by anyone or anything else, it is the perfect Word of God because it comes from Him!
- The Bible also has “salvation for its end.” In other words, the ultimate purpose of Scripture is that you and I would come to a saving knowledge of Christ.
- The Apostle John said it like this – *“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name”* (John 20:30-31).
- “Truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter” – there are no errors in the Word of God. Scripture bears out this testimony:
 - Psalm 19:7-9 – *“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; 8 The statutes 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 and righteous altogether.”*
 - Psalm 12:6-7 – *“The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. 7 You shall keep them, O Lord, you shall preserve them from this generation forever.”*
 - Critics always like to point out what they believe to be errors or contradictions in the Word of God, and sometimes there arguments are very persuasive.
 - The truth is that there is a valid explanation for every objection raised against the Word of God. Critics either don’t care about those explanations or they choose to ignore them.
 - Because the Bible is the very Word of God, “all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy.” That’s why the psalmist said, *“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.”* (Psalm 119:9) There are many things you can’t trust, but you can trust your life to the Word.

“It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried.”

- The Scripture is very clear about the certainty of God’s judgment:
 - Heb. 9:27 – *“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.”*
 - 2 Cor. 5:10 – *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”*
- Not only has God revealed to us the truth about judgment, but He’s also provided us with the “principles by which God judges us,” and those principles never change – they “remain to the end of the world.”
- 1 Peter 1:24-25 – *“All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, 25 But the [b]word of the Lord endures forever.”*
- Because the Bible is the perfect summation of God’s righteous judgments, it is “the true center of Christian.” In other words, our fellowship must be based on the Word of God. We must discontinue fellowship with those who operate outside the bounds of Scripture.
- The Bereans are the perfect example of this. They were not willing to believe Paul and his missionary companions until they consulted the Word of God (Acts 17).

- Scripture is also “the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried.” So, not only must our fellowship be supported by Scripture, but even our deeds, creeds, and beliefs must be as well.
- Think of Scripture as a filter. Everyone in your life should run through the filter. What you see and hear from others should be run through it. What you seen in churches and leaders should be run through. Only that which passes the filter of Scripture should be believed and celebrated.
- The Bible is “a hill worth dying on.” Nothing can be more important than our fidelity to Christ and His Word. No amount of money, no amount of power, no amount of political correctness – nothing! **Better to stand alone & faithful than to be surrounded & compromise.**
- Beware of those who pledge allegiance to Jesus but show disdain for His Word. You can’t be faithful to the Living Word until you’re obedient to the Written Word. It’s a package deal!

“All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.”

- Jesus is the focus of God’s revelation, and Jesus Himself is the most perfect revelation of God to man! As such, “all Scripture is a testimony to Christ” – the whole of God’s Word points to Jesus!
- John 5:39 – *“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.”*
- It is impossible to read through the Word of God without being pointed to Jesus over and over!

- Just think about it:
 - In Genesis we're pointed to Jesus in the Garden of Eden as the One who will crush the head of the serpent.
 - In Exodus we're pointed to Jesus in the midst of the burning bush.
 - In Leviticus we're pointed to Jesus as the only One who can perfectly fulfill the Law!
 - In Numbers we're pointed to Christ through a bronze serpent lifted up in the wilderness.
 - In Deuteronomy we're pointed to a Messiah who overcomes all temptation.
- And that's just the first 5 books of Scripture! When you get to the New Testament, the Gospel writers tell us about Jesus, the Acts tells us of those who served Him, Romans tells us about His righteousness, the epistles tell us how to live for him, and the Revelation tells us what will happen when Jesus comes again!
- Why is Jesus the focus of divine revelation? Because He alone is the only hope for mankind. He is the only One God sent to redeem the human race.