Included in This Study Guide

- Message Outline

- Looking Back Study Notes

Message Outline

Don't Ask That: Can I Trust the Bible?

2 Peter 1:16-21

Titus O'Bryant
October 27, 2019

Can I trust the Bible historically?

Can I trust the Bible's text?

Can I trust the Bible culturally?

Looking Back

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God chose to reveal himself to everyone through the worlds he has created and specifically to reveal his character by sending his Son, Jesus into our world, and explaining and spreading the message about Jesus by giving us the Bible through a process called inspiration. Inspiration is translated from the Greek word, theopneustos, which simply means "God-breathed." This word applied to Scripture (used in 2 Timothy 3:16 and explained in 2 Peter 1:21) means that God used human authors—including their unique perspectives, vocabularies, experiences, and personalities—to communicate His message by writing down the words of the Bible.

Because of this the Bible is true, reliable, and without error while also existing within the limits of human language and often the perspective of individual human authors. The Bible can't tell us everything there is to know about God because God is bigger than any explanation about him. However, the Bible is a trustworthy guide for life that reveals us to the character of God, the nature of the world we live in, and our relationship with God and His world. The Bible is a witness to the person who is the Eternal Word of God—Jesus Christ—and through the voice of Scripture we see, hear, and understand who Jesus is. This week we are answering three critical questions to affirm the reliability of the Bible.

The distinctive mark of theology today is its dreadful ambiguity. The chaos of American theology today can be traced back to its roots in the rejection of biblical infallibility. Preaching is not the act of unfolding our personal convictions. It is the duty of informing men of all that God has spoken. To move off from the pages of Scripture is to enter into the wastelands of our own subjectivity. Scripture plays an important role in the salvation of men. The Bible is a divinely provided map of the spiritual order. It contains the directions and markings to guide a person into reconciliation with God. ~ Clark Pinnock

Canonicity is determined or established authoritatively by God; it is merely discovered by man. ~ Norm Geisler

Most people are bothered by those passages of Scripture they do not understand, but the passages that bother me are those I do understand. ~ Mark Twain

Working It Out

1. How have you faced challenges about the reliability of Scripture rising from your own questions or questions from others? Did any of the ideas from this weekend's sermon respond to those challenges? If not, you can send your question into askanything@gfcnow.com.
2. Read 2 Peter 1:16-21. What do you observe about the quality, character, and process of writing Scripture from Peter's description in these verses?
3. How would you identify the human and divine elements of writing the words of Scripture from this passage in verses:

    a. 16

    b. 17-19

    c. 20

    d. 21

4. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. What does this reveal about the nature of Scripture and how does our passage from 2 Peter explain these two verses from 2 Timothy? From these two passages, why are we assured of the trustworthiness of Scripture?
5. Why is our belief about the nature and quality of Scripture so important (refer back to the first two paragraphs of this guide)?
    a. How does understanding the balance and cooperative effort between human and divine activity in creating Scripture help our approach to studying the Bible and applying it?
    b. What happens if we lean entirely on the human side (the Bible is a book like any other book written by people) or the divine side (God took control of human writers who wrote down words He dictated) of inspiration?
6. As you continue reading Scripture, here are three questions you can ask of any particular text: What does it say (observe)? What does it mean (interpret)? What difference does it make (apply)? This week devote some time to examine these six verses from 2 Peter 1:16-21 by answering these three questions.