

Why We Need The Bible Pt. 2
“Jesus and The Bible”
John 5:31-47

Introduction- Last Sunday we looked together at the subject of God and The Bible. The Bible is divine revelation. God in the Bible is unveiling himself! The origin of scripture is God himself. I want to ask today, *not* what is their origin, but *what is their purpose? Why were they given?* The answer to this question is found in our text (John 5:39-40) From these words of Jesus, we learn two profound and complementary truths about *Jesus and the Bible*. They form the two main points of my sermon.

1. The Scriptures bear witness to Jesus.

2. Jesus bears witness to the scriptures.

1. The Scriptures Bear Witness to Jesus.

Jesus makes this very clear in verse 39. “They are they which testify of me.” The context of this verse is the testimony of Christ to be equal with God (John 5:17-18). Self-testimony is inadequate; so Jesus says in vs. 32, “there is another...” Who is this other witness? The Father (vs. 37). They had the witness of John. It was God the Father himself!

How did the Father witness to Jesus?

1. Through the might works (vs. 36).

2. Through the scriptures, the Father’s own word (vv. 37-39).

Jesus is the central theme of scripture. Jesus said- see vv. 41-47. Note “for he wrote of me.”

Illus.: Luke 24:25-27

Illus.: Jesus said, John 8:56, “Abraham rejoiced to see my day.”

Illus.: At the beginning of his ministry when Jesus went into the synagogue at Nazareth he read from Isaiah 61 about the Messiah’s mission and message of Liberation; Luke 4:21. Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

Illus.: The first five books of Moses:

Genesis- Our creator God.
Exodus- Our Passover Lamb.
Leviticus- Our sacrifice for sin.
Numbers- Our lifted up one.
Deuteronomy- Our true prophet.

Jesus made it clear that all of Scripture bear witness to Him. But Christ's contemporaries missed this testimony. Note vs. 39, "ye do search the scriptures." Illus.: They used to count the number of words; even the number of letters in every book. But they didn't see Jesus or come to Jesus (vv. 39-40).

It's the wrong approach and attitude toward scripture.

"Let me illustrate their problem. Imagine you are standing on the observation floor of the Sears Tower in Chicago. You are overlooking the city, the sun is going down in the west, the lights are coming on along Lake Michigan. You are drinking it all in and are caught up in what you are seeing when someone tugs on your cuff. You turn to see a little man standing next to you. He says, "My! Isn't this a wonderful window! Do you see how it is set in steel and how the glass is tinted?" Then he unfolds his pocket knife and begins to scrape at the corner of the window saying, "I'm going to do a chemical analysis of this window, and if you will give me your name and phone number, I'll call you and let you know what this window is made out of." Of course we would think the man is a little strange. He missed the whole purpose of the window. The window was created to show the great beauty of the city and the surrounding scenery, but all he saw was the frame. The Bible is a wonderful window, but we must look through that window to see the beautiful realities of Christ and God. While I am committed to the need for detailed study of the Word of God, it must not be done just for the sake of literary analysis, graphs, or statistics. The Bible is not an end in itself but is a window through which we can learn marvelous truths about God and Jesus Christ. Those studious Jews had not gotten beyond the study of the window." - R. Kent Hughes

Sadly, many Christians make the same mistake. The key to Bible study is to look for and find Jesus!

2. Jesus Bear's Witness to The Scriptures.

How did Jesus view the scriptures? He viewed them as the Father's word!

Why is this important?

Illus.: One critical scholar said that we cannot know that the Bible is without error because "only an omniscient being" could know that it was accurate in every detail. (In

Christ, this doubter gets exactly what he wants: *the omniscient Lord, teaching that the Old Testament is without error!*)

“Since the New Testament was not yet written, Jesus’ words apply directly only to the Old Testament. However, since Jesus made certain promises to the apostles about new Testament truth, and since the apostolic writings were considered on par with the Old Testament, then what Jesus taught about the divine authority of the Old Testament applies indirectly to the New Testament as well.” - Norman Geisler

What did Jesus the omniscient Lord teach about the Old Testament?

1. Jesus affirmed its divine authority.

Matthew 4:4, “*Man does not live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.*” (Note context) See Matt. 19:4-5, so vs. 4, God spoke through Moses.

2. Jesus affirmed its imperishability.

3. Jesus declared its supremacy.

Why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?... Thus nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. (Matt. 15:3, 6).

4. Jesus asserted its unbreakability.

John 10:35, “*the scripture cannot be broken,*” same as saying it’s *infallible* and it’s *trustworthy* or *sure*.

5. Jesus affirmed its factual inerrancy.

Jesus replied, ‘*You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God*’ (Matt. 22:29). Again, Jesus said to the Father, “*Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth*” (John 17:17). In brief, the Bible is wholly true, without any error.

6. Jesus insisted on it’s historical reliability.

- A. That God created Adam and Eve (Matt. 19:45).
- B. Noah and the flood (Matt. 24:37-39).
- C. Jonah was swallowed by a great fish (Matt. 12:40).
- D. Lot and Sodom’s judgement (Luke 17:29).

E. The Burning Bush (Luke 20:37).

F. Lifting up the serpent in the wilderness (John 3:14).

So the Authority of the Bible is confirmed by the authority of Jesus; If He is the Son of God, then the Bible is the word of God, even if Jesus is only a prophet of God, the Bible is the word of God, only if you reject the divine authority of Christ can you reject the divine authority of scripture, for if Jesus is telling the truth, then the Bible is the very word of God.

So we believe the scriptures because of Christ. He endorsed the Old Testament and made provision for the writing of the New Testament by giving to the apostles his authority.

“We therefore receive the Bible from the hand of Jesus Christ. It is he who has invested it with his own authority. And since we are determined to submit to him, we are determined to submit to it. Our doctrine of Scripture is bound up with our loyalty to Jesus Christ. If he is our Teacher and Lord, we have no liberty to disagree with him. Our view of Scripture must be his.” - John Stott

“At this point some people raise an understandable objection. “The Scriptures bear witness to Christ and Christ bears witness to the Scriptures,” they say, accurately summarizing what we have been saying, “But surely,” they continue, “this reciprocal testimony, each bearing witness to the other, is a circular argument? Does it not assume the very truth you are wanting to prove? That is, in order to demonstrate the inspiration of Scripture you appeal to the teaching of Jesus, but you believe the teaching of Jesus only because of the inspired Scriptures. Isn’t that a circular argument, and therefore invalid?” This is an important objection to face. But actually our argument has been misstated, for it is linear and not circular reasoning.

Let me put it in this way: When we first listen to the biblical witness to Christ, we read our New Testament with no preconceived doctrine of inspiration. We simply accept it as a collection of first-century historical documents, which indeed it is. Through this historical testimony, however, quite apart from any theory of biblical inspiration, the Holy Spirit brings us to faith in Jesus. Then this Jesus, in whom we have come to believe, sends us back to the Bible and gives us in his teaching a doctrine of Scripture which we did not have when we started our reading. For he now tells us that its historical testimony is also divine testimony, and that through the human agency of prophets and apostles his Father is bearing witness to him. Whenever you read the Bible, I want to be you to remember its major purpose. is the Father’s testimony to the Son. It points to him. It says to us, “Go to him in order to find life- abundant life- in him.” Therefore any preoccupation with the biblical text which does not lead to a stronger commitment to Jesus Christ, in faith, love, worship and obedience, is seriously perverted. It brings us under the

rebuke of Jesus. “You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life’ and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me [to whom they bear witness] that you may have life.”

Scripture, as Luther used to say, is the manger or cradle in which the infant Jesus lies. Don’t let us inspect the cradle and forget to worship the Baby, Scripture, we might say is the star which still leads wise people to Jesus. Don’t let us allow our astronomical curiosity so to preoccupy us that we miss the house to which it is leading, and within it the Christ-child himself. Or, we might say, Scripture is the box in which the jewel of Jesus Christ is displayed. Don’t let us admire the box and over look the jewel.

Rochester, once put the matter admirably. He said: The Bible is the protrait of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospels are the figure itself in the portrait. The Old Testament is the background leading up to the divine Figure, pointing towards it and absolutely necessary to the composition as a whole. The Epistles serve as the dress and accoutrements of the Figure, explaining and describing it. The while by our Bible reading we study the portrait as a great whole, the miracle happens, the Figure comes to life, and stepping down from the canvas of the written word the everlasting Christ of the Emmaus story becomes himself our Bible teacher, to interpret to us in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

It is not enough to possess a Bible, to read the Bible, love the Bible, study the Bible, know the Bible. We need to ask ourselves, Is the Christ of the Bible the center of our lives? If not, all our Bible reading has been futile, for this is the end to which the Bible is intended to be the means.” -John Stott