

The Authority of Scripture (2)

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The Authority of the Word of God

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:1,14).

The name given to Jesus is the *Word*. The authority of the Word of God comes from the fact that it is the testimony Jesus Christ has given of himself: "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true ... I am one who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me." (John 6:14,18).

The authority of the Word of God does not come from the study of the historical accuracy of the Bible; the study of archaeology to prove the validity of the Bible; nor the study of science to prove the account of creation. Instead we believe the authority of the Word because it was given by Jesus Christ. This is called "presuppositionalism."

Presuppositionalism, a definition: The authority of the Word of God is presupposed (believed ahead of time). If you have been born-again, you are under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Word. The Bible is the supreme source of authority for your life. The authority of the Word of God does not come from us being able to prove that it is true. The authority of the Word of God comes from the fact that it is God's Word. God spoke it; it is truth.

Presuppositionalism is the opposite of *evidentialism*, the idea that we must seek to prove that the Bible is true by offering evidence. Evidentialism is not wrong, for it is important to defend what we believe. However, it is impossible to "prove" Scripture using evidence from philosophy, history, archaeology, science, and other rational proofs. To do so would be to claim that these proofs had the infallible authority of Scripture.

The Word of God preached is all the evidence of the truth man needs in order to be saved. We do not need to "prove" the Gospel in order for it to be effective. The Word of God preached is a living and powerful sword which pierces the heart of man. In fact, the Word preached is the *only* weapon of our warfare.

Presuppositionalism does not deny evidentialism completely. Paul preached a presuppositional sermon in Athens (Acts 17:23-31), but also appealed to evidences that God exists from Greek philosophy. The Gospel message for all time is this: "In the past you were ignorant, now you are hearing the Gospel and are responsible to repent and believe!"

¹ The original article by Jay Rogers is not divided in five separate files, but is presented as one essay. No changes were made to the text of the article. We acknowledge the authorship of Jay Rogers and refer readers to other insightful articles he wrote: <http://www.forerunner.com>

There is already *much* evidence of the truth in natural revelation (Rom. 1:20). But the truth preached, not the evidence that the truth is true, is the only effective message of salvation. "Let God be true, and every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4).

Two Question Test

The following is a two question self-test for deciding whether you are a presuppositionalist or an evidentialist.

1. *Where is your starting point for deciding what is true?*

A. The evidence that supports the truth of the Word of God.

B. The Word of God alone.

2. *What does man need in order to be saved?*

A. Man needs more evidence so that he can decide what is true -- Man can only accept salvation once he understands the truth.

B. Man needs to repent and believe the gospel -- God sets man free by giving him knowledge of the truth.

Truth is revealed not by evidence, but by the Word preached. Man's problem is not that he lacks understanding and needs more information. His problem is that he is a sinner and needs repentance.

The Authority of the Word of God

Authority of the Bible is implied by the fact that we call it: "God's Word." *Inspiration* is the means by which the Bible received its authority. *Canonization* is the process by which the books of the Bible received their final acceptance.

The people of God have played a crucial role in the process of canonization through the centuries. In order to fulfill this role they had to look for certain earmarks of divine authority. How would one recognize an inspired book if he saw it? What are the characteristics which distinguish a divine declaration from a purely human one? Several criteria were involved in this recognition process.