

Sunday, January 3, 2010—Final Authority: Locating God's Word in English—What is Inspiration?

### Introduction

- Our first series of studies as we enter into 2010 is going to deal with the very important issue of locating God's Word in English.
- If you have been to a Christian book store lately and walked through the Bible section one is presented with literally hundreds of translations of the Bible into English.
- Display stack of Bibles.
- Grace Life Bible Church is a Bible Church. That means we hold forth the Bible as the final authority in all matters of both faith and practice. In other words, everything we teach and believe is supported words on the page in a book, not manmade creeds or traditions.
- One of the five major doctrines of the Protestant Revolution was *Sola Scriptura* or by scripture alone. In addition, the Reformers believed that the common people should have a Bible in their own language and they could understand the Bible on their own apart from the Roman Catholic system.
- Since none of us speak or read Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek the original languages the Bible was written in we are left to utilize an English translation.
- But which one? How do we know which translation is accurate? Aren't all the translations essentially the same?
- After considering the Biblical, historical, and textual evidence those saints who were instrumental in the founding of this assembly believe that the King James Bible is not only the most accurate in English Translation but have adopted it as our final authority in all matters of faith and practice.
- Everything that I have every taught in this church has been based upon what I have learned from my King James Bible.
- As I make this statement I am very aware of the following:
  - This position runs contrary to the accepted scholarly viewpoint. (Personal Studies)
  - We could have more people in this church if we did not take a stand on this issue.
  - This entire topic is a deeply emotional topic for many believers. (Personal Story)
- The real issue here is not scholarship, popularity, numbers, or our personal feelings but truth. It's about the need to have a final authority.

- All I ask is that you give the information a fair hearing prior to deciding whether you agree or disagree.

### **Common Misconceptions**

- Most Christians believe the following regarding English translations:
  - All versions are essentially the same.
  - All versions contain the basic doctrines of the Christian faith without deviation.
  - Modern translations are simply updates of the outdated language of the King James Bible.
  - The important thing in Bible translation is communication of the ideas and not the words themselves.
  - In order to really understand the Bible one needs to know the original languages.

### **Viewpoint of Faith**

- Textual Criticism: is the task of determining which variant readings in the ancient manuscripts most likely preserve the original wording and then reconstruct a text that best represents the autographs.
- Before we go further let me ask you the following series of questions. Do you believe
  - that God created the world in six days?
  - that God destroyed the earth through a flood saving only Noah and his family?
  - that God confounded the languages of men and scattered them across the face of the earth?
  - that God through Moses delivered Israel out of Egyptian slavery through the Red Sea?
  - that David killed Goliath?
  - that Jonah was swallowed by a whale?
  - that Jesus Christ was the incarnated, Virgin Born Son of God who died on the cross for our sins and rose again the third day?
- Why do you believe these things? Because you believe the Bible.
- So then why when it comes to the issue of textual criticism and the reconstruction of the text and its translation into English why do so many believers leave the viewpoint of faith in favor of textual theories and human viewpoint?
- We need to believe what the Bible teaches about itself. We need to remember that the Bible is God's book and that when we deal with the Bible we are dealing with God himself. We need to adopt the viewpoint of faith.

## Inspiration

- In order to begin our study we need to look first at the doctrine of inspiration.
- Inspiration is the Bible's claim for itself. That is to say the Bible says that it is an inspired book.
- II Timothy 3:16—"all" every part of the Bible is the word of God, it is all inspired. Not just the parts you like, or the parts that speak to you, the entirety of the Bible is inspired.
- I Timothy 5:18—the first part of this verse is a quotation from Deuteronomy 25:4. The second part of this verse is a quotation from Luke 10:7. Notice that God the Holy Spirit calls both Scripture. In other words, both the Old and New Testaments are inspired.
- II Timothy 3:16—"scripture" comes from the Greek word *grafe* which means that which is written down. Paul is not saying that the writer is inspired but the writings.
- II Timothy 3:16—"inspiration" comes from the words God and to breath. As a result, the Scriptures are God breathed that is they came out of the mouth of God.
- Psalm 33:6—the words that were written down came from the mouth of God.
- II Peter 1:21—the prophets did not write of their own will or in their own words rather they recorded the words God told them to say.
- Five Views on Inspiration
  - Natural View—the Bible is a high level of human achievement
  - Partial View—certain parts are inspired
  - Existential View—only the parts that speak to me are inspired
  - Dynamic View—it is the concept or thought that is inspired.
  - Plenary Verbal Inspiration—all the words are inspired by God.

## The Case for Plenary Verbal Inspiration

- It wasn't simply God's message that men were free to state in their own words; their very choice of words was from God.
- Exodus 4:14-15
- Numbers 22:38
- Deuteronomy 18:18

- II Samuel 23:1-2
- Jeremiah 1:9
- Jeremiah 5:14
- Jeremiah 15:16—the word singular is made up of the words plural.
- Jeremiah 23:9
- Jeremiah 36:1-4
- Biblical inspiration is not only verbal (located in the words), but it is also plenary, meaning that it extends to every part of the words and all they teach or imply.

### **Formulating a Complete Definition of Inspiration**

- **The Bible is of Divine Origin:** the ultimate source of a divinely inspired Bible is God Himself. For the Scriptures did not originate from human impulse (II Peter 1:20-21), and every word of Scripture come from the mouth of God by inspiration of the Holy Spirit (II Timothy 3:16).
- **The Bible Came Through Human Agency:** judging by the various vocabulary, grammar, styles, figures of speech, and human interests of the various authors, God did not disregard the personality and culture of the biblical writers when he supernaturally placed his words in their mouths and in their pens.
- **The Bible Is a Written Authority:** inspiration deals with the written text of Scripture (*graphie*). This is evidenced by the Bibles continued use of the phrase “it is written” which reveals that the focus of God’s authority for his people is on his written word.
- **The Bible Has Final Authority:** when speaking of its divine authority, the Bible makes it clear that this is a final authority, the court of last appeal in everything it affirms (or implies). Psalm 138:2, Psalm 119:89
- **The Sixty-Six Canonical Books of the Bible Alone Possess Divine Authority:** this element is one of the distinguishing factors between the evangelical and Roman Catholic views of Scripture: The sixty six canonical books of the Protestant canon alone are invested with divine authority. No other source equals or surpasses that of Scripture; the Bible and the Bible alone, is a supremely authoritative book in matters of faith and practice.