

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“... Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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THE AUTHORITY AND ALL SUFFICIENCY OF GOD'S WORD

Part Two
by Ted J. Clarke

2 Tim 3:16-17

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

INTRODUCTION

Last month's article pointed out the all sufficiency and absolute authority of God's Word. We pointed out that one must take all that the Bible says or nothing from it really matters. If it is not all inspired no one has the ability to say what is or is not God's Words. Thus it would become merely a subjective exercise in determining what one wanted to accept or reject. The verses quoted above do not allow us logically to maintain such a position.

Another point made last month was that the Scriptures are God's complete and final authority in religious matters. Christ promised the apostles that **they** would be taught "*all things*" by the Holy Spirit, and that He would "*guide you [the apostles] into all the truth*" (John 14:26; 16:13). The apostles (and prophets upon whom the apostles laid their hands) would in turn preach and write down that fully revealed Word so that all men for all time would be able to know God's will for us (John 17:14, 17, 20; 20:30-31; Ephesians 3:3-5; Jude 3; 2 Peter 1:2-3; et al.).

WATCH OUT FOR THESE PEOPLE AND IDEAS!

LIBERALS

Watch out for anyone that tries to deny that the Bible is all inspired or

that it is complete and final! Such people have an agenda that can lead you astray or destroy your faith in the Scriptures. They either want to convince you that you cannot know what is or is not God's Word, or that the Scriptures are incomplete and that further modern-day revelations are needed to know what is God's complete will. Either way these people put their own souls in jeopardy and yours too.

The religious world is filled with liberal theologians, professors, preachers and priests who **do not** believe in the Scriptures as being all inspired. I use the word "liberal" to mean one who is not strict in holding to what the Bible says about itself in the matter of its origin with God's Holy Spirit and its being fully inspired by the Spirit. When I say "all inspired" I mean that every word of the original writings of the apostles and prophets that make up Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments was written because God revealed it for that purpose. Although some of these liberals may say they believe in "inspiration," they mean a limited type of inspiration, like the natural genius of poets and writers such as John Milton or William Shakespeare, or a partial type of inspiration. They do not believe that God gave selected men the words He wanted them to write, using their vocabularies and styles in

accomplishing the process (cf. Ephesians 3:3-5). However, consider Paul's claim: "*but as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And (which) entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. But unto us God revealed (them) through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual (words)*" (1 Corinthians 2:9-13, ASV). If the apostle Paul were not telling the truth here how could he be trusted in anything he said? Consider also the principle of inspiration in Christ's promise to his disciples (Matthew 10:18-20; Mark 13:9-11; Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15).

Most people who profess Christianity have little understanding as to how the Scriptures came to be in their present state. Two very good books that deal with the overall matter of how we came to have our Bibles as God's inspired word are: H.S. Miller, **General Biblical Introduction** (Houghton, NY: Word-Bearer Press, 1940 revised edition); and Norman L. Geisler and William Nix, **A General Introduction to the Bible** (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986 revised edition). Unfortunately, Miller's book is out of print but might be found from some used booksellers. While these books are

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quite good this is not a blanket endorsement of everything in them. They do give a good presentation as to why we can say we believe with confidence in the fully inspired words of the Bible as having come from God. These volumes are also good in exposing the errors of claiming lesser forms of inspiration for The Book.

There are also some very good books written by brethren in the Lord's church that deal with these topics in a somewhat briefer manner, but in a way that is, perhaps, more easily understood than the two volumes just mentioned. Brother Jerry Moffitt directed the First Annual Gulf Coast Lectures and edited the book, **Biblical Inerrancy: "The Scripture Cannot Be Broken"** (Portland, TX: Portland Church of Christ, 1993); Keith Mosher, Sr. has written two volumes entitled, **The Book God "Breathed,"** volume one dealing with the "Verbal, Plenary [full] Inspiration of the Bible," and volume two treating the "Canonicity of the Bible," discussing which books

belong in the Bible. There are no title pages in brother Mosher's books giving publication information, but you can contact him at 4688 Desoto Rd., Walls, MS 38680 to order copies. Having a good understanding of how our Bible has come to us from God will increase your faith and help you to properly instruct others who may be tempted to disbelieve because liberals in religion have influenced them.

DENOMINATIONS CLAIMING LATTER-DAY REVELATIONS

The major reason for claiming latter-day revelations from God is because those who make such claims want to bind something up mankind that is **not revealed in Scripture**. Much of what Roman Catholicism teaches cannot be found in the Bible. So it is with Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists, Mormons, Christian Scientists, and a whole host of lesser known denominations (many of them Pentecostal) whose leaders claim that God spoke to them in some manner, giving them additional revelation after the Bible was completed in the first century AD.

Jehovah's Witnesses would not be what they are without the supposedly inspired writings of Charles T. Russell; nor would the Seventh-Day Adventists believe as they do without the claimed inspired offerings of Ellen G. White; the Mormons are what they are because of the pretensions of inspiration by Joseph Smith's many volumes; and so with the supposedly inspired claim of Mary Baker Eddy of Christian Science to have the "key to the Scriptures." The oft repeated claims of most televangelists that, "God spoke to me...the Lord revealed this to me...God told me...etc. etc.," are likewise boasts of having direct connections with God that give these people direct information that you and I could not have without them. These people have super-egos that

are constantly fed by repeated and exaggerated claims that they are receiving constant additional teaching and information directly from God's Spirit. If the declarations of any of these people were true, they should be able to prove their claims by working miracles of all kinds, as the apostles and prophets who wrote the New Testament were able to do (cf. Mark 16:15-20; Acts 14:1-3). *"For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will"* (Hebrews 2:2-4). Besides an inability to perform miracles to confirm their supposed revelations from God as genuine, the New Testament closed the door on any additional revelations from God. First, Jesus promised that the apostles would be guided into "**all truth**"; something that had to happen in their lifetimes and ministry on earth (John 14:26; 16:13). Second, around AD 68 the apostle Paul told Timothy that the inspired Scriptures were sufficient to equip him and all other Christians for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17). No latter-day revelations would be needed! Third, Jude, written about the same time, said that Christians should "*contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints*" (Jude 3). Fourth, the NT book of Revelation warns about adding to or taking away from the word God has revealed (Revelation 22:18-19). This is a consistent teaching in Scripture (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:5-6).

Denominational creed books, though those who accept them would deny it, also given an impression of

needing more revelation than the Bible gives. While the particular denominational points in the creed books are given Scriptures that purportedly prove them to be true, oftentimes a doctrinal stance is taken because a particular group of officials (such as a board, council, etc.) in that denomination said it should be that way. If a creed book says more or less than the Scriptures it sets itself above the Scriptures; if it says the same thing as the Bible then it is unnecessary.

CONCLUSION

Books about the Bible can be very helpful in discovering the meaning of certain things in the Bible. For example, history books dealing with

manners and customs of the times in which the Bible was written can be helpful in understanding why things were done as they were or what a particular practice might mean. The parables of the Sower or the Ten Virgins are examples of this. Word study books such as Greek--English Lexicons can provide essential information as to the meaning of some words that are not properly translated from the Greek into English or some other language. For example, the Greek word *baptizo* literally means to immerse, to dip, and to submerge. However, most translations do not correctly translate the word. They cloud the real meaning by making the Greek word *baptizo* into an English word,

“baptize.” Good Bible commentaries bring out such helpful matters in their attempts to give the true and original meaning of a Bible passage. So books about the Bible can be valuable resources.

However, when a book denies that the Bible is the fully inspired Word of God or attempts to cast doubt on the completeness and final authority of God’s Word--watch out! It is “*the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*” (2 Timothy 3:15). The Holy Scriptures will never lead you astray! But people will try to lead you astray by leading you **away from** what the Bible says. **Know your Bible, believe it, obey it, and hold it fast!**

BIBLE INSTITUTE OF MISSOURI

Looking For A Few Good Men!

In the April issue of **FCGN** we mentioned the **Bible Institute of Missouri (BIM)** and the fact that I am leaving the work in Mammoth Spring, AR to become a full time instructor at the school. **BIM** is a work overseen by the elders of the Kansas Expressway church of Christ in Springfield, MO, and is directed by brother Jerry Sullins. Brother Sullins asked me if I might spread the news through **FCGN** that the school is interested in speaking with any men who have entertained the idea of entering the work of preaching the gospel. If you have even the slightest interest we would like to talk to you about the possibility of attending **BIM** to receive your training.

BIM is located in Springfield, MO in the foothills of the Ozarks. Springfield (population over 150,000) has been rated among the top five cities in the nation as a great place to raise a family. Blessed with

a healthy job market, great schools and excellent health care facilities, Springfield offers an overall moral atmosphere not found in many larger cities. Also, studies show that the cost of living in Springfield is about ten percent less than the national average.

BIM offers a two-year program of college level instruction (2400 clock hours, equivalent to 133 semester hours required for a Bachelor’s degree). This training is tuition free. Students need only raise the funds required for their personal living expenses. Because of the intense study schedule, six hours a day in class and an additional four to six hours of study and preparation each day outside the classroom, it is not possible for students to work a secular job and keep up their schoolwork. Instruction includes 34 courses covering every book in the Bible, plus related courses in

Christian evidences, defending the truth against denominational doctrines, local and foreign evangelism, the preacher and his work and other important topics. These courses are modeled after the curriculums found in other successful and faithful schools of preaching.

BIM began its classes in August of 2003 in a new 4000 square foot facility, which is fully expandable to match its growth. In addition to student classrooms there are faculty offices, a break-room and a library and computer room for research. There are nine objectives listed in the catalog that we will strive to maintain: (1) To honor God’s Word as the verbally inspired Word of God, perfect and complete, without error or contradiction; (2) To uphold the need for accepting the Word of God as final authority in all matters of faith and practice; (3) To provide a well-rounded program of Bible

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instruction designed to fully equip men to proclaim God's message to the whole world; (4) To strive for the highest quality in instructors and students; (5) To provide quality instruction for men who desire to serve in the Kingdom as gospel preachers; (6) To avoid extremism and radicalism; (7) To emphasize the necessity of maintaining a Christian spirit in the Lord's work; (8) To encourage the evangelism of the world by offering advanced training in missions; and (9) To provide extension classes, seminars and workshops for leadership training in local churches.

Full time instructors at **BIM** are Jerry Sullins (director), Max Patterson, Kurt Nelson and Ted J. Clarke. Part time faculty members are Ray Sullins and Kevin Patterson. The academic credentials and experience of these men are listed in the General Catalog for the school. You can receive a catalog and application by writing or calling the school. Write to: **Bible Institute of Missouri**, 2540-A Kansas Expressway, Springfield, MO 65803. You may call (417) 865-4543, which is the **BIM** school number, or the church office at (417) 869-2284. If you want to speak to someone regarding more information about the school you may call either number. If brother Sullins or other instructors are not available, please leave your name and a number where you can be reached. Information can also be accessed at <http://www.bibleinstituteofmissouri.com>. While brother Sullins is in Zambia, Africa, (June & July) brother Kurt Nelson is covering student recruitment. His home phone is (660) 477-9229; cell (660) 492-2504.

Brother Gus Nichols, a truly great gospel preacher of the past generation, used to say, "If I could

live a thousand lifetimes, I would want to be a gospel preacher in every one of them." Preaching is difficult, but it is the greatest work in the world. If you have an interest in becoming a gospel preacher or in helping us to train them, please contact us. Since the school is just concluding its first year of operation we need contacts for prospective students, your prayers and your financial support. **BIM** can well serve the Lord and Mid-America with His blessings and your help!

STILL SEEKING FINANCIAL SUPPORT

As noted in my April announcement, my work with the church in Mammoth Spring terminates at the end of June. I am still seeking support for my work as a full time instructor with the Bible Institute of Missouri. Beginning in July I will be traveling as needed to raise funds for the school and recruiting students. I would like to have my own financial support secured as soon as possible. If you can help me in any amount, on a one-time basis or a sustained monthly support, please contact me for more information. No amount is too small (or too large)! I will be happy to send you more information and answer your questions about this great work for the Lord. Write to me at: Ted J. Clarke, P.O. Box 855, Mammoth Spring, AR 72554-0855, or call me at: (870) 625-7585, or cell phone (501) 412-6938. I also covet your prayers as I begin this new work.

May and June contributions for FCGN will be in the July issue.

MOVING? CHANGING TO 911?

Be sure to send us your change of address.



GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

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